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A  
DISSERTATION  
CONCERNING THE  
ANTIQUITY  
OF THE  
HEBREW-LANGUAGE,  
LETTERS,  
VOWEL-POINTS,  
AND  
ACCENTS.

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By JOHN GILL, D.D.

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Imo vero censeo, nullius mortalis, licet in Hebræis literis docte versati, tantum esse acumen, peritiam, perspicaciam, ut prophetæ nostro (Jesaiæ) longe pluribus locis reddere poterit genuinum suum sensum; nisi *lectio antiqua synagogica* per traditionem in scholis Hebræorum fuisset conservata, ut eam nunc *Masoretharum punctulis* expressam habemus: quorum proinde studium et laborem nemo pro merito deprædicet. Quod enim in hoc viridario deliciarî possimus, ipsis debemus, viris perinde doctis et acri judicio præditis.

*Vitrînga*, Præfat. ad Comment. in  
Jesaiam, Vol. I. p. 5.

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**T**HE following Differtation has long lain by me; nor was it written at first with any design to publish it to the world; but was written at leisure hours for my own amusement, and by way of essay to try how far back the antiquity of the things treated of in it could be carried. And what has prevailed upon me now to let it go into the world, and take its fate in it, are the confidence which some late writers on the opposite side have expressed, their contempt of 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, which is far from being the case; and what seeming advantages are obtained, are chiefly owing to the indolence and sloth of men, who read only on one side of the question, and such who write one after another, and take things upon trust, without examining into them themselves, either through want of ability, or through unwillingness to be at any pains about it.

I CONFESS, it has given me offence to observe the *Jews* called by such opprobrious names, as villains, wilful corrupters of the *Hebrew* text, &c. It must be owned indeed, that they are very ignorant of divine things, and therefore the more to be pitied; and many of them are, no doubt, very immoral persons; but have we not such of both sorts among ourselves? yet, 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 in other things. I have never, as yet, seen nor read any thing, that has convinced me that they have wilfully corrupted any one passage in the sacred text<sup>a</sup>, no not that celebrated one in *Psf.* xxii. 16. Their copiers indeed may have made mistakes in transcribing, which are common to all writings; and the *Jews* meeting with a various reading, they may have preferred one to another, which made most for their own sentiments; nor is this to be wondered at, nor are they to be blamed for it. It lies 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; not before the coming of Christ, for then they could have no disposition nor temptation to it; and to

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<sup>a</sup> See a good Defence of the *Jews* by F. Simon against Leo Castrius, Morinus and Vossius in his *Disquisit. Critic.* c. ix. and x.

attempt it would have been to have risked the credit of the prophecies in it; nor could they be sure of any advantage by it: and after the coming of Christ, it was not in their power to do it without detection. There were the twelve apostles of Christ, who were with him from the beginning of his ministry, and the seventy disciples preachers of his gospel, besides many thousands of *Jews* in *Jerusalem*, who in a short time believed in him; and can it be supposed that all these were without an *Hebrew* Bible? and particularly that learned man, the apostle *Paul*, brought up at the feet of a learned *Rabbi, Gamaliel*; and who out of those writings convinced so many that Jesus was the Christ, and who speaks of the *Jews* as having the privilege of the oracles of God committed to them *Rom. iii. 1, 2.* nor does he charge them, nor does he give the least intimation of their being chargeable, with the corruption of them; nor does  
Christ,

Christ, nor do any of the apostles ever charge them with any thing of this kind. And besides, there were multitudes of the *Jews* in all parts of the world at this time, where the apostles met with them and converted many of them to Christ, who, they and their fathers, had lived in a state of dispersion many years; and can it be thought, they should be without copies of the *Hebrew* Bible, whatever use they may be supposed to have made of the *Greek* version? so that it does not seem credible, that the *Jews* should have it in their power, had they an inclination to it, to corrupt the text without detection. And here I cannot forbear transcribing a passage from *Jerom*<sup>b</sup>, who observes, in answer to those who say the *Hebrew* books were corrupted by the *Jews*, what *Origin* said, “ that  
 “ Christ and his apostles, who re-  
 “ proved the *Jews* for other crimes,  
 “ are quite silent about this, the  
 a 3 “ great-

<sup>b</sup> Comment. in *Esaiam*, c. 6. fol. 14. G.

“ greatest of all.” *Jerom* adds “ if  
 “ they should say, that they were cor-  
 “ rupted after the coming of the Lord,  
 “ the Saviour, and the preaching of  
 “ the apostles; I cannot forbear laugh-  
 “ ing, that the Saviour, the evange-  
 “ lists and apostles should so produce  
 “ testimonies that the *Jews* afterwards  
 “ should corrupt.” To all which may  
 be added, that the *Jews* are a people  
 always tenacious of their own writ-  
 ings, and of preserving them pure and  
 incorrupt: an instance of this we  
 have in their *Targums* or paraphrases,  
 which they had in their own hands  
 hundreds of years, before it appears  
 they were known by Christians; in  
 which interval, it lay in their power to  
 make what alterations in them they  
 pleased; and had they been addicted  
 to such practices, it is marvellous they  
 did not; since they could not but ob-  
 serve, there were many things in them,  
 that Christians were capable of improv-  
 ing against them, should they come  
 into

into their hands, as in fact they have done; and yet they never dared to make any alterations in them: and had they done any thing of this kind, it is most reasonable to believe, they would have altered the passages relating to the Messiah; and yet those, and which are many, stand full against them. Indeed, according to *Origen*<sup>c</sup>, as some think, the *Targums* were known very early, and improved against the *Jews* in favour of Jesus being the true Messiah, agreeable to the sense of the prophets; since he makes mention of a dispute between *Jason*, an *Hebrew-Christian*, supposed to be the same as in *Acts* xvii. 5. and *Papiscus*, a *Jew*; in which, he says, the Christian shewed from *Jewish* writings, that the prophecies concerning Christ agreed with Jesus; and what else, says Dr. *Allix*<sup>d</sup>, could he mean by *Jewish* writings, but the *Targums*?

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though

<sup>c</sup> Contra Celsum, l. 4. p. 199.  
the ancient Jewish Church, &c. p. 376.

<sup>d</sup> Judgment of



though it is possible the writings of the Old Testameant may be meant, by which 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.

IT may be said, perhaps, that the *Jews* are self-condemned, and that it may be proved out of their own mouths and writings, that they have in some places wilfully corrupted the *Hebrew* text; as the *thirteen* places they own they changed, on the account of *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt*; and also what they call *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the scribes, and *Ittur Sopherim*, the ablation of the scribes: as to the first of these, it is true, that they say<sup>e</sup>, when *Ptolemy* king of *Egypt* desired to have their law, and seventy men sent to translate it, that  
they

<sup>e</sup> T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 4. T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 9. 1. Massechet Sopherim, c. 1. f. 8. fol. 8. 1.

they made alterations in the copy they sent ; but then it should be observed, that they do not say they made any alteration in their own copies, only in that they sent to him ; and which appears also to be a mere fable of the *Talmudists*, and that in fact no such alterations were made : but the story was invented, partly to bring into disgrace the *Greek* version of the *Seventy*, as if it was made after a corrupt copy ; and partly to make the minds of their own people easy, who disapproved of that work, and kept a fast on occasion of it †. My reason for this is, because the *Greek* version does not correspond with the pretended alterations. There are but two places out of the thirteen, which agree with them ; the one is in *Gen. ii. 2.* which the *Seventy* translate, *and on the sixth day God ended his work* ; the other is in *Numb. xvi. 15.* which they render *I have not taken the desire of any one of them*, instead of *one*  
*as*

† Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. f. 3.

*as from them*; neither of which 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*; and the latter plainly arises from the similarity of the letters *Daleth* and *Resh*. There is a third, *Exod. xii. 40.* in which there is some agreement, but not exact. Besides, neither *Philo the Jew*, nor *Josephus*, though they wrote very particularly of this affair of *Ptolemy*, yet make not the least mention of these alterations, in the copy sent to him, nor in the translation of it. They observe, there never was any change made in the sacred writings, from the time of the writing of them to the age in which they lived. *Philo* says<sup>s</sup>, the *Jews*,  
 “ for the space of more than two  
 “ thousand years, never changed one  
 “ word of what was written by *Moses*,  
 “ but would rather die a thousand  
 “ times,

<sup>s</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.

“ times, than receive any thing con-  
 “ trary to his laws and customs.”  
*Josephus*<sup>b</sup> observes, “ it is plain, in  
 “ fact, what credit we give to our  
 “ writings, for that so long a space of  
 “ time has run out, yet no one ever  
 “ dared, neither to add, nor to take  
 “ away, nor to change any thing.”  
 And *Walton*<sup>i</sup> himself, I observe, reck-  
 ons this story about the alterations for  
 the sake of King *Ptolemy*, to be a  
*Rabbinical* fable; and, as such, *Je-*  
*rom*<sup>k</sup> had got a hint of it from one of  
 his *Rabbins*.

THE *Tikkun Sopherim*, or ordination  
 of the scribes, is supposed to be the  
 order of *Exra*, as it is said in the *Ma-*  
*sorah* on *Exod.* xxxiv. 11. and on  
*Numb.* xii. 12. and of his colleagues;  
 though some think<sup>l</sup> it is no other than  
 the order or instruction of the inspired  
 writers themselves. It respects eigh-  
 teen passages in the Bible, so expres-  
 sed,

<sup>b</sup> Contra Apion, l. 1. c. 8.    <sup>i</sup> Prolegom. Polyglott. 9.  
 f. 16.    <sup>k</sup> Præfat. ad Quæst. Heb. Tom. 3. fol. 65. c.  
<sup>l</sup> Buxtorf. Epist. Glæssio in Philolog. Sacr. p. 40.

fed, as that some smatterers in knowledge might gather from the context, that something else is intended than what is written; and so suspect a corruption in the text, and take upon them to alter it. Now this ordination of the scribes, as it is called, is so far from implying a corruption itself, and 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 no otherwise than it is; and would have it remarked, that the words so read, and which are the words of the inspired writer, contain an *Euphemy* in them, what is decent and becoming the majesty of God; when, if they were read, as the context might be thought to require they should be read, they would express what is derogatory to the glory of the Divine Being. Thus, in the first of the places, this ordination respects, *Gen. xviii. 22. Abraham stood yet before the Lord; it might*

might seem to some from the context, that the Lord descended to stand before *Abraham*; but as this might be thought derogatory to the glory of God, the inspired writer chose to express it as he has done,; and 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<sup>m</sup>; and so it was to prevent an alteration, and not to make one; they made no change at all, far be it from them, as *Elias Levita* says<sup>n</sup>. As for the *Ittur Sopberim*, or ablation of the scribes, that is only the removal of a superfluous *Vau* in five places<sup>o</sup>; not that it was in the text, and removed from it by them, but what the common people pronounced in reading, as if it was there; which reading the scribes forbid, to secure and preserve the integrity of the text; and which

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<sup>m</sup> Halichot Olam, p. 47, 48. Præfat. Ben Chayim ad Bibl. Heb. Buxtorf. fol. 2. Buxtorf. Talmud. Lexic. Col. 2631. <sup>n</sup> In Tifbi, p. 270. <sup>o</sup> Baal Aruch, in voce וָו Præfat. Ben Chayim ut supra. Buxtorf. ut supra. Col. 1597, 1598.

prohibition of it to the common people, is called a taking it away; though in reality it never was in the text, only pronounced by the vulgar.

THERE is a passage in the *Talmud*<sup>p</sup>, produced by some<sup>q</sup>, as a proof that the *Jews* studiously corrupted the scriptures, and allowed of it, when an end was to be answered by it; which is this, “it is better that one letter be  
“rooted out of the law, than that the  
“name of God should be prophaned  
“openly;” but their sense is not that any letter should be taken, or that it was lawful to take any letter out of any word in the law, to alter the sense of it, in order to serve that, or any other purpose; but that a lesser command should give way to a greater: as for instance, that the law concerning not putting children to death for the sins of their parents, and of not suffering bodies hanged on a tree to remain

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Yevamot, fol. 79. 1.  
de Sincer. Heb. 1. 1. Exercitat. 1. c. 2.

<sup>q</sup> Vid. Morin.



remain so in the night, should give way to a greater command concerning sanctifying the name of God publicly ; as in the case of *Saul's* sons being given to the *Gibeonites* to be put to death, and whose bodies continued hanging a considerable time, which is the case under consideration in the *Talmudic* passage referred to ; and the sense is, that it was better that the law in *Deut.* xxiv. 16. should be violated, rather than the name of God should be prophaned ; which 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 upon the *Jews* by *Justin* and *Origen* respect not the *Hebrew* text, but the *Septuagint* version ; and even, with respect to that, *Trypho*, the *Jew*, rejects the charge brought by *Justin* as incredible ; whether,

ther, says he<sup>r</sup>, 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, neither in the *Misnab* nor in the *Talmud*: and this is said by some learned men, who, one would think, were capable of looking into those writings themselves, and not take things upon trust, and write after other authors, without seeing with their own eyes, and examining for themselves, whether these things be so or no; in this they are very culpable, and their mistakes are quite inexcusable. But to hear some men prate about the *Talmud*, a book, perhaps, which they never saw; and about the *Masorah* and *Masoretic* notes, one of which, as short as they be, they could never read, is quite intolerable. These men are like such the apostle speaks of, on  
another

<sup>r</sup> Justin. Dialog. cum Tryphone, p. 297. 299.

another account, who *understand*, *neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm*. What is this *Masorah*? who are these *Masorettes*? and 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, have done no hurt. Did they invent the vowel-points, and add them to the text, against which there is so much wrath and fury vented? to assert this is the height of folly<sup>t</sup>; for if they were the authors of the points, the inventors of the art of pointing, and reduced it to certain rules agreeable to the nature of the language, and were expert in that art, as, no doubt, they were, why did not they point the Bible regularly, and according to the art of pointing at once? why did they

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leave

<sup>s</sup> Plane divina res est Hebræorum Critica, quam ipsi Massoram vocant. If. Casaubon. Epist. ep. 390. Porthæio, p. 467. <sup>t</sup> Punctationem Hebraicam non esse Massora, neque dici, norunt qui nondum ære lavantur. Owen. Theologoumen. par. 4. Digress. 1. p. 293.

leave so many anomalies or irregular punctuations? and if, upon a survey of their work, they observed the irregularities they had committed, why did not they mend their work, by casting out the irregular points and putting regular ones in the text itself, and not point to them in the margin? or there direct to the true reading? is it usual for authors to animadvert on their own work in such a manner? if they make mistakes in their work at first, is it usual in an after edition, and following editions, to continue such mistakes in the body of the work, and put the corrections of them in the margin? The *Masorettes*, had they been the inventors of the vowel-points, would never have put them to a word in the text, to which they were not proper, but what better agree with a word placed by them in the margin; had they invented them, they would have put proper ones to the word in the text;

or

or have removed that, and put the word in the margin in its room, with which they agree, see *Gen.* viii. 17. and xiv. 3. and it may be observed, 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; which would not have become them, had they been the inventors of them; see an instance of each in *Jer.* xxxi. 38. and li. 3. The truth of the matter, with respect to the *Masoretes*, is, that the pointing of the Bible was not their work; they considered it as of a divine original, and therefore dared not to make any alteration in it; but only observed, where there was an unusual punctuation, that it might be taken notice of; and that so they found it, and so they left it; and that those who came after them might not dare to attempt an alteration. Punctuation

work itself shews ; and *Walton*<sup>n</sup>, an opposer of the antiquity of the points, has this observation ; “ The *Masoretic* notes about words irregularly pointed, and the numbers of them, necessarily suppose that pointing was made long before.” Have these *Masorettes* employed their time and study, in counting the verses and letters of the Bible, and how many verses and letters there are in such a book ; and where exactly is the middle of it ; where a word is deficient or lacks a letter ; or where it is full and has them all ; or where one is redundant and has too many ; where one letter is larger and another lesser than usual, and another suspended ; suppose now this is all trifling, and of no manner of importance, yet who or what are injured by it ? the mispending of their time in such trifles, is a loss not to others, but to themselves ; and, as a learned man<sup>w</sup> remarks,

<sup>n</sup> Prolegom. 8. f. 12.  
 mentary on *Job* ix. 34.

<sup>w</sup> *Chappelow's* Com-

See also on ch. xi. 14.

remarks, “ how trifling soever this  
 “ scrupulous exactness of the *Maso-*  
 “ *retes* (with respect to the letters in  
 “ the *Hebrew* text) may appear, yet it  
 “ suggests to us one observation, that  
 “ the *Jews* were religiously careful to  
 “ preserve the true literal text of  
 “ scripture; and consequently, not-  
 “ withstanding their enmity and ob-  
 “ stinate aversion to christianity, they  
 “ are not to be charged with this ad-  
 “ ditional crime of having corrupted  
 “ the Bible :” and after all, have not  
 the Christians had their *Masorettes* al-  
 so\*, who, with like diligence and  
 faithfulness, have numbered all the  
 verses, both of the *Greek* version of  
 the Old Testament and of the books  
 of the New? and have they been  
 blamed for it? *Jerom*’ numbered the  
 verses of the book of *Proverbs*, and  
 says they were 915, exactly as the  
*Masorah*. Some words, through length

b 3 of

\* Vid. Croii Observ. in Nov. Test. c. 1. & c. 10.

† Quæst. seu Trad. Heb. lib. Reg. 3. fol. 80. I. Tom. 3.



of time, became obscene and offensive to chaste ears, at least were thought so<sup>z</sup>; hence the *Masorettes* placed other words in the margin, which, perhaps, is the boldest thing they ever did, and of which the *Karaite Jews* complain; but then they never attempted to remove the other words from the text, and put in theirs in their room; they only placed them where they did, that, when the passages were read in public, or in families, the reader might be supplied with words that signified the same, only more pure and chaste, and less offensive; at least which were thought so; and which were left to their own option to read them or not. The passages are *Deut.* xxviii. 27, 30. *1 Sam.* v. 6. 9. *Is.* xiii. 16. *Zech.* xiv. 2. *2 Kings* vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. *Is.* xxxvi. 12. and it would not be improper, if, in the margin of our Bibles over-against the last, and others that have the same word, another

\* Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 8.

other *English* word or words were put to be read 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 *Masorettes*. For this part of their work must be done, whilst the *Hebrew* language was a living language, when only the difference of words offensive or not offensive to the ear could be discerned, and a change of them necessary: and certain it is, these notes were made before the *Talmud*, for mention is made of them in it<sup>a</sup>: yea, these variations are followed by the ancient *Targums*, by *Onkelos*, and the *Jerusalem* on *Deut.* xxviii. 27. 30. and not only by *Pseudo-Jonathan* on *1 Sam.* v. 6. 9. *2 Kings* vi. 25. x. 27. and xviii. 27. but by the true *Jonathan* on *Is.* xiii. 16. and xxxvi. 12. and *Zech.* xiv. 2. who and *Onkelos* are supposed to live in the first century. As for the word *Sebirim*,

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<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 25. 2.

sometimes used by the *Masorettes* in their notes; this only respects the conjectures of some persons, who thought a word should be otherwise read or pointed; but it is what the *Masorettes* object to, and say of such persons, that they are mistaken: and this they observe, that no one may presume to make any alteration upon such conjectures: and are they to be blamed for this? and, besides these things, what have they done, except transmitting, from age to age, the marginal or various readings, which had been observed by collating copies, or which arose from their own observations, by comparing different copies that lay before them; and from delivering them down to posterity, they obtained the name of *Masorettes*; and can this be thought to be culpable in them? they left the text as they found it; nor did they offer of themselves to insert a various reading, different from the commonly received copy, but placed such  
 readings

readings in the margin, that others might make what use of them they pleased ; or rather they took this method, to prevent the insertion of them into the text, suggesting, that so they found them, and there it was proper to continue them : and is a Bible with such readings the worse for them ? is a *Greek* Testament to be dis-esteemed, for having the various readings in it collected from different copies ? or are our *English* Bibles with the marginal readings in them, placed by the translators themselves, with references to other scriptures, the less valuable on that account ? nay, are they not the more valued for them ? and it may be observed, that these *Keries* or marginal readings of the *Hebrew* text, are followed in many places, by some of the best translators of the Bible, both ancient and modern. *Aquila* and *Symmachus*, the best of the antient *Greek* interpreters, almost always follow them<sup>b</sup>.

*Jerom*

<sup>b</sup> Montfaucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 549.

*Jerom* had knowledge of them, and testifies to *Aquila's* following them, in a particular instance. His words are<sup>c</sup>, “ *Afferemoth* in *Jer.* (xxx. 40.) for which, in a *Hebrew* copy it is written *Sedemoth*, which *Aquila* interprets *suburbana*.” And which reading is preferred by *Jerom*<sup>d</sup>, as is the marginal reading of v. 38. And if he was the author of the *Vulgate Latin* version, that agrees with the marginal readings of the *Masoretes* in several places; see *Josh.* iii. 16. and xv. 47. *2 Sam.* viii. 3. *2 Kings* xix. 31. all which shew the antiquity of these readings. So modern interpreters, *Junius* and *Tremellius*, our own translators, and the *Dutch*<sup>e</sup>, often follow them, as do various interpreters, both *Papists* and *Protestants*. Nay, some of these readings and notes are confirmed by the inspired writers of the New Testament. Thus, for instance, in

*Pf.*

<sup>c</sup> De loc. Heb. fol. 89. B.  
 Hieremiam, c. 31. 40. fol. 161. F.  
 Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert. 10. f. 9. p. 84.

<sup>d</sup> Comment. in  
<sup>e</sup> Leusden.

*Pf.* xvi. 10. the word rendered *holy one*, is written with a *yod*, as if it was plural; but the *Masoretic* note on it is, that the *yod* is redundant, and so the word is to be considered as of the singular number; and this is confirmed by two inspired writers, the apostles *Peter* and *Paul*, *Acts* ii. 27. and xiii. 35. Again, in *Prov.* iii. 34. the *Cetib* or textual writing is, לעניים *the poor*; but the *Keri* or marginal reading לעני *the humble* or *lowly*, which is followed by our translators of the text, and is confirmed by two apostles, *James* and *Peter*, *Jam.* iv. 6. 1 *Pet.* v. 5. And what have the *Masoretetes* done in this respect, but what the learned *Dr. Kennicott* is now doing, or getting done in the several libraries in *Europe*; that is, collating the several copies, and collecting from them the various readings; and which, if I understand his design aright, is not to form, upon his own judgment, a new copy of the *Hebrew* text; but to do

do with the present copy in common use, what others have done with the New Testament; let it stand as it is, with the various readings thrown into the margin as they may be collected, and leave them to every one's judgment, with some critical rules to form it, to make use of them as they please: and when this learned gentleman has finished his large *Masoretic* work, he will be the greatest *Masorete* that ever any age produced; since not only eight hundred and forty-eight various readings, as *Elias*<sup>f</sup> has reckoned those of the *Masoretas* to be, but as many thousands, and more will now appear. I say not this, to depreciate his laborious undertaking, far be it from me; he has my good wishes for the finishing of it, and what little assistance otherwise I can give him in it. For I am not so great an enthusiast, for the integrity of the present printed *Hebrew* copy, as to imagine, that it is entirely

<sup>f</sup> Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.



tirely clear of the mistakes of transcribers in all places : to imagine this, is to suppose a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence attending the copiers of it, and that constant and universal ; and if but one copier was under such an influence, it would be very extraordinary indeed, if his copy should be lighted on at the first printing of the *Hebrew* Bible ; and besides the first *Hebrew* Bible that was printed, was not printed from one copy, but from various copies collated ; nor is there more reason to believe, that the *Hebrew* text of the Old Testament, which is more antient, should be preserved from the escapes of librarians, than the *Greek* of the New Testament, which it is too notorious are many : nor is suffering such escapes any contradiction to the Promise and Providence of God, respecting the preservation of the Sacred Writings, since all of any moment is preserved in the several copies ; so that what is omitted,

or

or stands wrong in one copy, may be supplied and set right by another, which is a sufficient vindication of Divine Providence ; and this may serve to excite the diligence and industry of learned men, in collating the several copies for such a purpose ; and besides, the Providence of God remarkably appears, in that the escapes suffered to be made do not affect any doctrine of *faith*, or any moral *practice*, as has been observed and owned by many<sup>s</sup> : and after all, if from the present collation of manuscripts, there should be published, what may be thought a more correct and perfect copy of the *Hebrew* text, we shall be beholden to the *Jews* for it, against whom the clamour rises so high : for by whom were the manuscripts written, now collating, but by *Jews* ? for the  
truth

<sup>s</sup> Amamæ Antibarb. Bibl. l. i. p. 20. 22. Bochart. Phaleg, l. 2. c. 13. col. 91, 92. Walton. Prolegom. 6. f. 1. 3. and 7. f. 12. 15 and Considerator considered, p. 127. 162. Capellus de Critica. Epist ad Usser. p. 116. Dr. Kennicott, Dissert. 1. p. 11. 301.

truth of this, I appeal to the learned collator himself; and who, if I mistake not, in his printed *Dissertations* always represents the several *Hebrew* copies, whether more or less perfect, as the work of *Jewish* transcribers; and indeed the thing speaks for itself: for from the times of *Jerom* to the age of printing, there were scarce any, if any at all among Christians, capable of transcribing an *Hebrew* copy; that interval was a time of barbarous ignorance, as with respect to arts and sciences, so with respect to languages, especially the *Hebrew*. To know a little *Greek*, in those barbarous times, was enough to make a man suspected of heresy; and to study *Hebrew*, was almost sufficient to proclaim him an heretic at once: the study of which lay much neglected, until it was revived by *Reuchlin* and others, a little before, and about the time of the Reformation. There might, in the above space of time, rise up now and then

one,

one, who had some knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, as *Raymund* in the thirteenth century, the author of *Pugio Fidei*; and friar *Bacon*, who wrote an *Hebrew* grammar in the latter end of the same century, and which perhaps was the first, at least one of the first *Hebrew* grammars written by a Christian; though since, we have had a multitude of them: for almost every smatterer 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, but all by *Jews*, I mean such as were written before the age of printing; for what have been written since, can be of no account.

I OBSERVE there is much talk about the *Masoretic* Bible, and about *Masoretic* authority. As to the *Masoretic* Bible, I could never learn there ever was such an one, either in manuscript,  
or

or in print, that could with any propriety be so called. Is a Bible with points to be called *Masoretic*? it must be with great impropriety, since the *Masorettes*, as has been observed, were not the authors of pointing: are any called so, because they have various readings, and other notes in the margin? as well may a *Greek Testament*, with various readings and notes in the margin have such a name. Let it be shewn, if it can, that there ever was in manuscript, or in print, a copy of the *Hebrew* text, in all things conformable to the *Masoretic* notes and readings in the margin, or in which these are inserted in the body of the text, call them corrections, emendations, various readings, or what you please; but if these cannot be shewn, then whatsoever Bible, that does not conform in the text to the *Masorah* in the margin, with much greater propriety may be called *Anti-masoretic* than *Masoretic*. As to authority, the

*Masorettes* never claimed any; their *Keri* is no command to read so or so, nor even a direction how to read, and much less a correction of the text, as if it was faulty; it is only a suggestion, that so it is read in some copies; for the word for which ק stands in the margin of some Bibles, is not the imperative קרי *Kere* read, but is קרי; and is either the same with קרי something read, or with קרי a reading, *i. e.* a various reading. And if the *Masorettes* ever pretended to any authority, as they have not, it is not regarded; for notwithstanding their antiquity, their readings, and what is agreeable to their notes and observations, are not admitted into the text, but are obliged to keep their place in the margin; and where then is their authority? thus, for instance, in defiance of *Masoretic* authority, as it is called, and notwithstanding the *Masoretic* note in the margin, the second *yod* is continued in קריה *Psf. xvi. 10.* and in defiance

of the punctuation of the word, which is different from all other places, where the word is manifestly plural, as in *Pf.* lii. 9. lxxix. 2. cxxxii. 9. and cxlv. 10. 2 *Chron.* vi. 41. in all which places *Segol* is put under *Daleth*; but here *Sheva*, as it is in other words, in which the *yod* is redundant also, and the word to be read singular, as *Debareca*, 1 *Kings* viii. 26. and xviii. 36. *Dameca*, 2 *Sam.* i. 16. *Yadeca*, 1 *Kings* xxii. 34. *Prov.* iii. 27. *Abdeca*, 1 *Kings* i. 27. *Ragleca*, *Eccl.* v. 1. with others: and in defiance of the *Talmud* also. There are but two places <sup>h</sup> I have met with in the *Talmud*, where the text is quoted; and in both of them the word is without the *yod*; so that if these, especially the first, had any authority, the *yod* would not continue in that word.

THE different schemes men have formed, for reading *Hebrew* without the antient points, shew the necessity

\* T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1. et Yoma, fol. 87. 1.

of them, and the puzzle they are at without them ; but what need men rack their brains to find out a scheme of reading that language, when there is one so suitable, ready at hand for them, consisting of vowel-points, which for their figure and position cannot be equalled by any ; which are so contrived, that they take up scarce any, or very little more room, than the words do without them ; which neither increase the number of letters in a word, nor make it longer, nor give it any unfightly appearance ? whereas, for instance, *Mascler's* scheme, besides the augmentation of letters, makes the word look very aukward : and if it was thought the present vowel-points were too numerous, and too great an incumbrance to words, one would think, men might content themselves with reducing their number, and not throw them all away : but the great offence taken at them is, that they tie down to a certain determinate sense of



the word, and that they cannot bear, but chuse to be at liberty to fix what sense upon it they please.

GREAT complaint is made of the ignorance of the *Masorettes* in pointing; and an instance is given of it, in their pointing the word *Cyrus*, as to be read *Coresh* or *Choresh*, though indeed they had no hand in it; but admitting they had, and whoever had, there does not appear to be any just blame for it. It is true, it may be thought so, if the *Greek* pronunciation of the word must be the rule of punctuation: but the original name is not *Greek*, but *Persic*; and which, in that language, signifies the sun. So *Ctesias*<sup>i</sup> and *Plutarch*<sup>k</sup> 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 slipt from him; and which, according to the *Ma-*  
*gi,*

<sup>i</sup> In *Persicis ad Calcem* Herodot. Ed. Gronov. p. 687.

<sup>k</sup> In *Artaxerxe*, p. 1012.

*gi*, portended a reign of thirty years<sup>t</sup>, is not certain: now the word for the sun, in the *Persic* language, is *Chor* or *Cor*, the same with *Or*, *Job* xxxi. 26. and it is now called *Corshad*<sup>m</sup>: hence, the god of the *Persians* is called *Oromazes*, and sometimes *Oromasdes*<sup>n</sup>; *Hormusd*, and *Ormusd*; this shews the propriety of the first point put to the word, a *Cholem* and not a *Sburek*; and it may be observed, there is a similar word used for the sun in other eastern languages, and is pronounced *Cheres*, *Job* ix. 6. to which may be added, that 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*, *Esth.* i. 14. and *Orsines* in *Curtius*<sup>o</sup>: as for the

<sup>t</sup> Cicero de divinatione, l. i. Vid. Hiller. Onomastic. sacr. p. 615. 617.      <sup>m</sup> Vid. Bochart. Phaleg. l. i. c. 15. col. 61.      <sup>n</sup> Plutarch. ut supra, p. 1026. et in Vita Alexandri, p. 682.      <sup>o</sup> Hist. l. 10. c. 1.

the *Greek* pronunciation of the word, it is not unusual with the *Greeks* to pronounce a *Cholem* by an *Ypsilon*, as *Tzor*, *Lod*, *Beerot*, by *Tyrus*, *Lydda*, *Berytus*. In like manner may the punctuation of *Darius* be vindicated, which is *Darjavesch*, *Dan.* v. 31. in much agreement with which, this name is *Δαρείαιος Dareiaios* with *Ctesias*<sup>p</sup>, and is a word consisting of four parts, and signifies a great, vast, vehement fire<sup>q</sup>; and *Esch*, fire, is well known to be the deity of the *Persians*, which was taken into the names of their kings and great personages, as was usual in the eastern nations. So *Vasthi*, the wife of *Abasuerus*, or *Va-eshti*, a great fire, *Esth.* i. 9. *Zeresh*, or *Zehar-esch*, the wife of *Haman*, *ch.* v. 10. the brightness of fire; and it appears in *Astyages*, a king of the *Medes*. *Strabo* says<sup>r</sup>, some people called *Darius*, *Darieces*. *Cāsaubon*<sup>s</sup> thinks,

<sup>p</sup> In *Perfcis*, ut *supra*, p. 641. 643.      <sup>q</sup> *Hiller.* ut *supra*, p. 635.      <sup>r</sup> *Geograph.* l. 16. p. 540.      <sup>s</sup> *Comment.* in *ib.* p. 217.

thinks, that *Strabo* wrote *Δαριαουης*, *Dariaoues*, which is near the *Hebrew* punctuation.

I HAVE sent the following Dissertation into the world, not to revive the controversy about the things treated on in it, nor with any expectation of putting an end to it; no doubt, but some will be nibbling at it: and tho' I may be very unfit to engage further in this controversy, through weight of years upon me, and through the duties of my office, and other work upon my hands, some third person may perhaps arise, to defend what may be thought defensible in it. Should any truly learned gentleman do me the honour, to animadvert upon what I have written, I am sure of being treated with candour and decency; but should I be attacked by sciolists, I expect nothing but petulance, supercilious airs, silly sneers and opprobrious language; and who will be righteously treated with neglect and contempt.

To

To conclude; if what I have written should merit the attention of men of learning, and cause them to think again, though ever so little; and be a means of directing such, who are enquiring after these things; and of engaging such who may hereafter write on these subjects, to think more closely, to write with more care, caution and candour, and with less virulence, haughtiness and arrogance, than have appeared in some writings of late upon them, my end will be in a great measure answered.

A

E R R A T A.

Page 23. l. 23. for *Eber*, r. *Elam* his first-born. P. 62. l. 11. r. through the near likeness. P. 65. l. 3. r. *Gen.* xiv. 14. P. 92. l. 11. r. said. P. 113. l. 14. r. *חדתא*. P. 128. l. ult. put a comma instead of a full stop. P. 155. l. 11. r. *Bameh*. l. 15. r. *If*. liv. 13. P. 244. l. 22. r. *מירדי*. l. 24. r. *מירדי*. P. 266. l. 16. r. *לבנה*. P. 267. l. 22. for when, r. where.

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A

DISSERTATION

CONCERNING THE

HEBREW LANGUAGE,

LETTERS, VOWEL-POINTS, and ACCENTS.

---

C H A P. I.

*Of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language.*

**A**CCORDING to the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, on *Gen. ii. 7.* when GOD breathed into man the breath of life, that became in man רוח ממללא a *speaking spirit*, or soul; or, as *Jonathan* paraphrases it, the soul in the body of man became a *speaking spirit*; that is, man was endued with a natural faculty of speech; so that he may be defined as well *ab oratione*, a speaking animal, as *a ratione*,

B

a rea-

a reasonable one ; for 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 ; but with 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 as are totally deaf from their birth, are always dumb, and can never speak any language. *Adam* first heard the LORD GOD speaking, before he uttered a word himself, as it seems from the sacred history. The language *Adam* spake, and which, perhaps, he received not the whole instantaneously, but gradually ; in which he improved, as circumstances, and the necessity of things required, and which was continued in his posterity : this very probably is that which remained to the confusion of the tongues at *Babel*, and the dispersion of the people from thence. But of this more hereafter.

SOME



SOME have fancied, that if children, as soon as born, were 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 and primitive language that was spoken in the world. *Psammitichus*, king of *Egypt*, made trial of this by putting two children, newly born, under the care of a shepherd; charging him, that not a word should be uttered in their presence; and that they should be brought up in a cottage by themselves; and that goats should be had to them at proper times to suckle them; and commanded him to observe the first word spoken by them, when they left off their inarticulate sounds. Accordingly, at two years end, the shepherd opening the door of the cottage, both the children with their hands stretched out cried *bec, bec*. This he took no notice of at first, but it being frequently repeated, he told his lord of it, who ordered the children to be brought to him; and when *Psammitichus* heard them pronounce the word, he enquired what people used it, and upon enquiry found that the *Pbrygians*

B 2

called

called bread by that name; upon this it was allowed 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*<sup>a</sup>; but the *Scholiast* of *Aristophanes*<sup>b</sup> says, that it was at three year's end the king ordered a man to go in filently to them, when he heard them pronounce the above word. And so *Suidas*<sup>c</sup> relates, that at the same term of time, the king ordered one of his friends to go in filently, who heard and reported the same; and all of them observe, that the story is differently related by others; as that the children were delivered to a nurse or nurses, who had their tongues cut out, that they might not speak before them; and so says *Tertullian*<sup>d</sup>: yet they all agree in the word spoken by the children. But, as *Suidas* observes, if the former account is true, as it seems most probable, that they were nourished by goats, and not women; it is no wonder, that often hearing the bleating of the goats, *be-ec, be-ec*, they should imitate

<sup>a</sup> Euterpe five, l. 2. c. 2, 3.

150.

l. 1. c. 8.

<sup>c</sup> Voce ΒΕΚΚΕΣΙΛΜΕ-

<sup>b</sup> In *Nubes*, p.

<sup>d</sup> *Ad Nationes*,

imitate the sound, and say after them *bec*, which in the *Phrygian* language signified *bread*; and so food is expressed in *Hebrew* by a word of a similar sound בֶּג *beg*, *Ezek.* xxv. 7. *Dan.* i. 8. and xi. 26. and might as well be urged in favour of the antiquity of that language; but this proves nothing.

It may seem needless to enquire what was the first language that was spoken, and indeed it must be so, if what some say is true, that it is not now in being, but was blended with other languages, and lost in the confusion at *Babel*; and also if the *Oriental* languages, the *Hebrew*, *Samaritan*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, and *Ethiopic*, are but one language; which is more probable, as *Ravius* \* thinks, and so may go under the general name of the *Eastern* language; and it must be acknowledged there is a very great similarity between them, as not only appears from *Ravius*, but from the *Pentaglot* Lexicon of *Schindler*, and especially from the *Harmonic Grammars* and *Lexicons* of *Hottinger* and *Castell*; and yet I cannot but be of opinion, that the *Hebrew* language stands di-

B 3

istinguished

\* A Discourse of the Oriental Tongues, p. 38, 39.

tinguished by its simplicity and dignity. The celebrated *Albert Schultens*<sup>f</sup> reckons the *Hebrew*, *Chaldee*, *Syriac*, and *Arabic* languages, as sister-dialects of the primæval language; which I am content they should be accounted, allowing the *Hebrew* to be the pure dialect, which the others are a deviation from, and not so pure: though I should rather chuse to call them daughters, than sisters of the *Hebrew* tongue; since, as *Jerom* says<sup>g</sup>, the *Hebrew* tongue is the mother of all languages, at least of the oriental ones. And these daughters are very helpful and assisting to her their mother in her declining state, and now reduced as to purity to the narrow limits of the sacred scriptures; for I cannot prevail upon myself to agree that she should be stripped of her maternal title, dignity, and honour; since she has the best claim to be the primitive language, as will be seen hereafter. Dr. *Hunt*<sup>h</sup>, though he is of the same mind with *Schultens*, that the above languages are sisters, having

<sup>f</sup> Præfat. ad Comment. in Job. & in Prov. & Orat. de Ling. Arab. Franeker. 1729 & altera Lugd. Batav. 1732.  
<sup>g</sup> Comment. in Soph. c. 3. fol. 100. A. <sup>h</sup> Orat. de Antiqu. &c. Ling. Arabic. p. 3. 49. 53. Oxon. 1738. & Orat. de usu Dialect. Orient. p. 2. Oxon. 1748.

having the same parent, the *Eastern* language, yet seems to allow the *Hebrew* to be the elder sister. And *Schultens*<sup>i</sup> himself asserts, that the primæval language, which was from the beginning of the world spoken by our first parents, and the antediluvian patriarchs, and after the flood to the dispersion, is the same which was afterwards called *Hebrew*, from *Heber*; from whom it passed through *Peleg* and *Abraham* to the nation of the *Hebrews*, and so the mother-language; but how it could be both mother and sister, is not easy to say.

THAT there was but one language spoken by men, from *Adam* to the flood in the times of *Noah*, and from thence to the confusion and dispersion at *Babel*, seems manifest from *Gen. xi. 1. and the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech*; and which is confirmed by the testimonies of several heathen writers, as by *Sibylla* in *Josephus*<sup>k</sup>, by *Abydenus*<sup>l</sup>, and others; and which continued in that interval without any, or little variation: the longevity of the  
patriarchs

<sup>i</sup> Vid. Orationes supradictas, p. 6, 41.

l. 1. c. 4. §. 3.

l. 9. c. 14. p. 416.

<sup>k</sup> Antiqu.

<sup>l</sup> Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar.

patriarchs much contributed to this, for *Adam* himself lived to the 10th century, and the flood was in the 17th. *Methuselah*, who died a little before the flood, lived upwards of two hundred years in the days of *Adam*, and 600 years cotemporary with *Noah*, and who doubtless spoke the same language that *Adam* did; yea *Lamech*, the father of *Noah*, was born 50 years or more before the death of *Adam*; so that the language of *Adam* to the days of *Noah* is easily accounted for as the same: if any variation, it must be in the offspring of those of the patriarchs who removed from them, and settled in different parts of the world, but of this 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; but the same language was spoken by one as another, as is evident by the names of persons in the line of *Cain*, and of places inhabited by them to the time of the flood; when, no doubt, the same language was spoken by *Noah*, from whom his sons received it, and was continued unto the dispersion, which before that was but one; and it is the

the opinion of the *Persian* priests or *Magi*, that the time will come when the earth will be of one language again §; and if so, it is probable it will be the primitive one, but what that was, is the thing to be enquired into. The *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* on the place, 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, and of many Christians. But most nations have put in a claim for the superior antiquity of their nation and language, the *Europeans* not excepted. *Goropius Becanus* pleaded for the *Teutonic* language, or that which is spoken in lower *Germany* and *Brabant*, to be the original one, and attempted to derive the *Hebrew* from it; but it has been thought he was not serious in it, only did it to shew his *acumen*, and the luxuriancy of his fancy and imagination; the eastern nations have a much better pretext to antiquity, and most, if not all of them, have put

§ Plutarch. de *Iside & Osir.* p. 370.

put in their claim for it. There was a long contest between the *Egyptians* and *Phrygians* about this matter, as before observed. The *Armenians* have urged in their favour, that the ark rested on one of the mountains in their country, where *Noah* and his posterity continued some time, and left their language there. The *Arabs* pretend, that their language was spoken by *Adam* before his fall, and then changed into *Syriac*, and was restored upon his repentance, but again degenerated, and was in danger of being lost, but was preserved by the elder *Jorham*, who escaped with *Noah* in the ark, and propagated it among his posterity. The *Chinese* make great pretensions to the primitive language, and many things are urged in their favour, as the antiquity of their nation, their early acquaintance with arts and sciences, the singularity, simplicity, and modesty of their tongue. A countryman of ours, in the last century, published a treatise, called "An historical essay, endeavouring a probability that the language of *China* is the primitive language, by *J. Webb*, Esq; *London*, 1669, 8vo."

\* See the *Universal History*, Vol. 1. p. 346, 347.



8vo." But as when many candidates put up for a place, they are generally reduced to a few, and, if possible to two; the same method must be taken here; for the contest lies between the *Syriac* or *Chaldee*, and the *Hebrew*.

The *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language has its patrons for the antiquity of it; not only *Theodoret*, who was by birth a *Syrian*, and *Amyra* the *Maronite*, who are not to be wondered at, and others who have made it their favourite study; but even the *Arabic* writers, the more judicious of them, give it not only the preference to their own language in point of antiquity, but even make it as early as *Adam*. *Elmacinus* says<sup>1</sup>, there are historians (*Arabic* ones) who affirm, that *Adam* and his posterity spoke the *Syriac* language until the confusion of tongues; and so *Abulpharagius* says<sup>2</sup>, "of our doctors, *Basilius* and *Ephraim* assert, that unto *Eber* the language of men was one, and that that was *Syriac*, and in which God spoke to *Adam*;" and it must be allowed, that there are many things plausibly said

<sup>1</sup> Apud Hottinger. Smegma l. 1. c. 8. p. 228.    <sup>2</sup> Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 1. p. 16.

said in favour of this language being primitive: it must be owned that the *Chaldean* nation was a very antient one, *Jen.* v. 15. and that the *Syriac* language was spoken very early, as by *Laban*; but not 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-sabadutha* in the *Syro-Chaldean* language, and the other *Galeed* in *Hebrew*, which both signify the same thing: what is commonly urged is as follows:

I. THAT 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*, *Gen.* ii. 23. But neither in the *Chaldee* of *Onkelos*, nor in the *Syriac* version of that place, is it *Gabretha*, but *Ittetha* in the one, and *Antetha* in the other. *Theodoret* \* instances in the names *Adam*, *Cain*, *Abel*, *Noah*, as proper to the *Syriac* language; but the derivation

\* In *Gen.* quest. 59.

riuation of them from the *Hebrew* tongue is more clear and manifest.

2. THAT it is rather agreeable to truth, that the primæval and common language before the confusion should remain in the country where the tower was built and the confusion made, which was in *Chaldea*, and therefore the *Chaldee* language, must be that language<sup>o</sup>; but rather the contrary seems more natural, that the language, confounded and corrupted, should continue in the place where the confusion was made, and that those possessed of the pure and primitive language should depart from thence, as in fact they afterwards did.

3. IT is observed<sup>p</sup>, that both *Eber* and *Abraham* were originally *Chaldeans*, and were brought up in *Chaldea*, and so must speak the language of that country, which therefore must be prior to the *Hebrew*; but 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<sup>q</sup>, *Abraham*,

<sup>o</sup> Myricæi Præfat. ad Gram. Syro-Chald.

<sup>p</sup> Ibid.

<sup>q</sup> So. R. Jose in Seder Olam Rabba c. 1. p. 1. Abarbinel in Pentateuch. fol. 51, 3. Juchasin, fol. 8. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala; fol. 1. 2.

*brahim*, according to the *Jewish* chronology, must be 48 years of age †, and consequently possessed of the pure and primitive language, be it what it may; and since it does not appear that either he or any of his posterity, as *Isaac* and *Jacob*, used the *Chaldee* language, but the *Hebrew* only, it seems to follow, that not the *Chaldee*, but the *Hebrew*, must be the language spoken by him, and so the primitive one.

4. IT is said †, the *Hebrews* sprung from the *Chaldeans*, *Judith* v. 5. and so their language must be later than theirs; this is founded on *Abraham's* being of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, from whence he came; but 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; and it appears that he spoke not the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* language, but the *Hebrew*, as before observed.

5. IT is urged †, as highly probable, that the language the second *Adam* spake, the  
first

† Seder Olam, ib.

‡ Myricæus, ut supra.

§ Ibid.

first *Adam* did ; now *Christ* and his *Apo-*  
*stles*, and the people of the *Jews* in their  
 times, spoke in the *Syriac* language, as ap-  
 pears from *Matt.* xxvii. 46. *Mark* v. 41. and  
 vii. 34. but according to some learned men,  
 as *Mafus*<sup>t</sup>, and *Fabricius Boderianus*<sup>v</sup>, this  
 was not the ancient language of the *Syrians*  
 and *Chaldeans*, but a new language, which  
 had its first rise in the *Babylonish* captivity, and  
 was a mixture of *Chaldee* and *Hebrew*; tho'  
 rather the mixture began in the times of  
 the *Seleucidee*, the *Syrian* kings, who  
 entered into and distressed *Judea*; and  
 therefore no argument can be taken from  
 it in favour of the *Syriac* being the primi-  
 tive language. I proceed now to propose  
 the arguments that are, or may be used in  
 favour of the *Hebrew* language being the  
 primitive one; and 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*, *Phœnician* or *Sama-*  
*ritan*, have their alphabets manifestly from  
 it; the names, the number, and order of  
 their letters, and even the form and ducts of  
 them

<sup>t</sup> Præfat. ad Gram. Syr.    <sup>v</sup> Præfat. ad Diction. Syro-Chald.

them seem to be taken from thence, and to be corrupt deviations from it; and the *Arabic* language, tho' the order of its alphabet is somewhat disturbed, yet the names of most of the letters are plainly from the *Hebrew*; and so indeed is the greater part of the names of letters in the *Greek* alphabet, from whence the *Romans* have taken theirs, and other *European* nations. *Hermannus Hugo*<sup>u</sup> observes, that it is agreed among all, that from the names of the *Hebrew* characters, the letters of all nations have their names; now that language, whose alphabet appears to be the first, and to give rise to the alphabets of other tongues, bids fairest to be the first and primitive language: let it be observed that the *Hebrew* alphabet, as it now is, is exactly the same as it was in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, so early it can be traced; for it is to be seen in the 119th *Psalms*, and in others, and in the last chapter of the book of *Proverbs*, as well as in the book of *Lamentations*, written before or at the beginning of the *Babylonish* captivity.

Secondly,

<sup>u</sup> De prima scribendi orig. c. 7. p. 65.

Secondly, Another argument for the antiquity of the *Hebrew* language, may be formed from the perfection and purity of it. *Abraham de Balmis* <sup>w</sup> says of it, that  
 “ it is perfect in its letters and in its points.  
 “ Our language, says he, 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 ’em ; its roots, which are of a certain number, are, for the most part, 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 ’em ; and that the *Chaldee* is derived from the *Hebrew*, and is later than that ; for as *Scaliger* long ago observed \* *מלך Melech* must be before *מלכא Malca*, the latter being derived from the former ; and the same may be observed in a multitude of other instances : now that

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which

<sup>w</sup> *Mikneh Abraham*, p. 39. lin. 13, 14, 15.  
 ad *Thompson*. Ep. 242.

\* *Epist.*

which is perfect, pure, and underived, must be before that which is imperfect, corrupt, and derived; or, as the philosopher<sup>v</sup> expresses 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, Gen. ii. 23.* which *paronomasia* does not appear neither in the *Syriac* version, nor in the *Chaldee* paraphrases of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, in which tho' *Gabra* is used of a man, yet never *Gabretha* of a woman, not even in places where men and women are spoken of together; see the *Syriac* version and *Chaldee* paraphrase of *Exod. xxxv. 22. Deut. ii. 34.* and many other places; and the reason for it is plain, the word is expressive of power and might, and so not so proper to be used of the weaker sex. The *Syriac* or *Chaldee* language will not admit of such an allusion

as

<sup>v</sup> Aristot. de Republica, l. 3. c. 1.



as is in the text; for on the one hand, as *Gabra* is used for a man, and not *Gabretha* for a woman, so on the other hand, *Itta*, *Ittetha*, and *Intetha* or *Antetha*, are used for a woman, but never *Itt* for a man. Now as we prove that the additions to the book of *Daniel* were written in *Greek*, from the *paronomasia* in ch. xiii. 55. 59. so this seems to prove that the language *Adam* spoke in to his wife must be the *Hebrew* language, and consequently is the primitive one.<sup>2</sup>

*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; as *Adam* from אָדָמָה *Adamah*, earth, out of which he was formed, as is generally thought. *Eve*, from חַיָּה *Chayah*, to live, because the mother of all living; *Cain* from קָנָה to get, obtain, possess, being gotten from the Lord; *Abel*, from הֶבֶל *Hebel*, vanity, as his life was; and *Seth*, from שָׂתָה *Seth*, put, appointed, because put, set, or appointed another seed in the room of *Abel*<sup>a</sup>: and so all the names of the *Antediluvian* patri-

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archs

<sup>2</sup> Vid. *Berehit Rabba* f. 18. fol. 15. 2.  
 spher *Cofri*, par. 1. c. 68.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. *Se-*

archs down to *Noah* and his sons, and their names also, with all those before the confusion and dispersion at *Babel*; and likewise the names of places, as of the garden of *Eden*, from נַחַד delight, pleasure, it being a very pleasant place; and the land of *Nod* from נָדַד to wander about; *Cain* being an exile and wanderer in it: now these being the names of persons and places before the confusion of tongues, clearly shew what language was spoken before that time, namely, the *Hebrew*, which therefore seems to be the primitive one.

*Fifthly*, It is notorious 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. Now it is reasonable to conclude, that the same language God wrote and inspired the prophets to write in, he himself spoke in to *Adam*, and inspired him with it, or however gave him a faculty of speaking it, and which he did speak, and therefore may be concluded to be 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<sup>b</sup>; and which opinion has been most generally received. Others think it has its name from עבר *Abar*, to pass over, from *Abraham's* passing over the river *Euphrates* into the land of *Canaan*; this notion *Aben Ezra* makes mention of on *Exod.* xxi. 2. and has been espoused by *Theodoret*<sup>c</sup> among the ancients, and indeed according to *Origen*† the word *Hebrew* signifies *passer over*, and so *Jerom*; and by *Scaliger*<sup>d</sup> and *Arias Montanus*<sup>e</sup> among the moderns, 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 the former; for as *Austin*<sup>f</sup> observes, before the confusion language was one, and common to all, and needed no name to distinguish it; it was enough to call it the speech of man, or the human language; but when there

was

<sup>b</sup> Suidas in voce Εβραϊστος.      <sup>c</sup> Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 60.      † Comment. in Matth. p. 239. Ed. Huet. et in Num. Homil. fol. 19. 129. E. Reuchlin. de verbo mirific. l. 3. c. 13.      <sup>d</sup> Epist. ad Thompson. et ad Ubertum.      <sup>e</sup> Canaan c. 9. 10.      <sup>f</sup> De Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 11.

was a confusion of tongues, and so more than one, it became necessary to distinguish them by names; and what name more proper for the first language than that of *Hebrew*, from *Eber*, the last man in whose days it was alone and common to all? for in his son's days the earth was divided into different nations, speaking different languages. Moreover, *Shem* is said to be *the Father of all the children of Eber*, Gen. iv. 21. or as *Jonathan* paraphrases it, of all the children of the *Hebrews*, or of *Hebrew* children: respect is had, as the learned *Rivet*<sup>f</sup> observes, to the blessing of *Shem*, in opposition to the curse of *Ham*, Gen. ix. 25. 26. Now as *Canaan* sprung from *Ham*, and was the father of the *Canaanites*, so *Eber* sprung from *Shem* and was the father of the *Hebrews*; and as afterwards they were called the children of *Israel*, and *Israelites* from *Israel*, and the children of *Judah* and *Jews* from *Judah*; so the children of *Eber* or *Hebrews* from him, and with equal propriety the language they spoke may be called *Hebrew* from him; and their country likewise, as in Gen. xl. 25. for it does not seem probable that the  
land

<sup>f</sup> In Gen. Exercitat. 66. p. 319.

land of *Canaan* should be called the land of the *Hebrews*, as it is there, so early as in the youth of *Joseph*, from a single family being passengers, travellers, and strangers in it, which are characters not very respectful and honourable, nor distinguishing; but rather from *Eber*, who, and his immediate offspring, might inhabit it, it being that part assigned and divided to 'em at the division of the earth, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. out of which they might be driven by the *Canaanites*, see *Gen.* xiii. 7. and xiv. 1, 4. therefore it was an act of justice to dispossess them and replace the children of *Eber* in it: and this may also serve to account for the names of places in pure *Hebrew* in old *Canaan*, by which they were called, 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 *Melchizedeck* was *Shem*, as the *Jews* in general believe, he was king of a city in it, and *Eber* his first born had a right unto it, claim'd by *Chedarlaomer*, a descendant of his, who attempted the rescue of it from the *Canaanites*, who had usurped a power over it, at least over  
some

§ See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 327.

some part of it; and it is easy to observe, that in the prophecy of *Balaam*, *Numb.* xxiv. 24. as the *Assyrians* are called *Ashur*, from their original progenitor, so the *Hebrews* have the name of *Eber* from him; and so the word *Eber* there is rendered *Hebrews* by the *Septuagint* and other translators; and as they, so their language, may be called from him. As to what is objected<sup>h</sup>, that *Eber* and *Abraham* were *Chaldeans*, and spoke the *Chaldee* language, this has been reply'd to already; and whereas it is observed, that from the time of *Eber* to *Abraham*, no one is ever called an *Hebrew* from him; it is not to be wondered at, since *Eber* lived to the time of *Abraham*, and even to the time of *Jacob*, according to both the Jewish and Scripture-chronology.

THE foundation 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 *Gen.* xiv. 13. which instead of *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, reads τῷ περᾶτη the transitor or passer over; tho'

<sup>h</sup> Erpen. Orat. de Ling. Heb. c. 2. p. 4.

<sup>i</sup> Seder Olam Rabbah.

tho' perhaps no more is meant by that version, than that he was, as *Juvenal*<sup>k</sup> expresses it, *natus ad Euphratem*, born near the river *Perat*, for that is its name in *Hebrew*; but whatever may be said for *Abraham's* being called an *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 passed not over the same river; besides there were multitudes who passed over the *Euphrates* besides *Abraham*, who yet never were so called; as *Canaan* and his posterity must pass over it, when they removed from *Shinar* to the land afterwards called by their name; and indeed *Erpenius*<sup>l</sup> is of opinion that the *Canaanites* were first called *Hebrews*, or passers over, by the *Chaldeans*, because they passed over the river *Jordan* into the country which lay between that and the *Mediterranean* sea, afterwards called from them the land of *Canaan*; and that *Abraham* had not his name 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

<sup>k</sup> Satyr. I. v. 104.

<sup>l</sup> Ut supra.

guage of *Canaan*, *Is.* xix. 18. and 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* in the time of *Joseph* as they were: but to all this it may be reply'd, that the *Canaanites* were ever called *Hebrews*, does not appear from any writers, sacred or prophane; nor is it probable that the pure and primitive language, that is the *Hebrew*, as has been shewn, should be left with and continued in the race of *Canaan*; and still more improbable, that *Abraham* should learn it of them, who was possessed of the first and primitive language before the confusion of tongues, as has been observed, and before he came into the land of *Canaan*; besides he seems to be called *Abraham* the *Hebrew*, *Gen.* xiv. 13. to distinguish him from *Mamre*, *Eshcol*, and *Aner*, who were *Canaanites*, confederates with him; nor is the *Hebrew* language called the language of *Canaan*, because first spoken by the *Canaanites*, but because the people of *Israel* spoke it, who for a long time had inhabited the land<sup>m</sup> which

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Glos. in T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 109. 2. & Abarbanel. in *Is.* xix. 18.



which bore that name; nor need it seem strange, that the name of *Hebrew* should be so well known in *Potiphar's* family, and to the *Egyptians* in *Joseph's* time, when he himself told them, no doubt, that he was an *Hebrew*, as he told the chief butler, *Gen.* xxxix. 17. and xli. 12. and especially if what has been before observed concerning the land of the *Hebrews*, can be established, *Gen.* xl. 15. as being 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 scarce deserve any notice; as that they have their name from *Abraham*; so *Artapanus*<sup>n</sup>, an heathen writer, says the *Jews* are called *Hebrews* from *Abraham*, but there are but few that have embraced this notion; others say, they are so called from *Eber-banaar*, which signifies beyond or the *other side* of the river, that is, of the *Euphrates*, where *Abraham* and his father *Terah* dwelt, and from whence *Abraham* is said to be taken; but there were many besides them, even whole nations who dwelt beyond that river, who were never called *Hebrews*,  
nor

<sup>n</sup> Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 18.

nor can any good reason be given, why these and their posterity and their language should be called *Hebrew* from thence, tho' many, both *Jews* and *Christians*, have imbibed this notion\*: *Eusebius*†, tho' he thinks the *Hebrews* had their name from *Eber*, yet as the word signifies a passer over, not from one country to the other, but from the vanity of the things of this present world, to the study of divine things, and in which they rested not, but passed on in search of more recondite knowledge: perhaps, after all, the true original of the name may be taken from the place of *Abraham's* birth, who is first called עֵבֶרִי the *Hebrew*, or rather the *Ibrite*, *Gen.* xiv. 13. the place of his birth was *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, as *Aben Ezra*‡ rightly judges, since it is expressly said to be the land of his brother *Haran's* nativity, and therefore most probably his also; now *Ur* of the *Chaldees* is called עִבְרָא וְעִירָא *Ibra Zeira*§ and so *Abraham* might have this epithet from the place of his nativity, the *Ibrite*, to distinguish him, as before observed, from  
the

\* Vid. Buxtorf de Ling. Heb. Conservat. f. 32. 33.  
 † Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 6. p. 520.      ‡ Comment.  
 in Gen. xi. 28.      § T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. &  
 Gloss. in lb.

the *Amorites*, among whom he then dwelt, and whence his posterity frequently afterwards have the name of עִבְרִים or *Ibrites*, *Gen.* xxxix. 14. 17. and xl. 15. and xliii. 32.

ONE thing more I would just observe, that whether the *Hebrews* and their language are so called either from *Eber*, the father of *Peleg*, or from *Abar*, to pass over, or from *Eber*, beyond, or the other side of the river, or from *Ibra* the native place of *Abraham*; tho' custom has prevailed to write the word with an aspiration, *Hebrew* and *Hebrews*, it should be written without one, *Ebrew* and *Ebrews*, as words beginning with *y* usually are, as *Amminadib*, *Immanuel*, &c.

## C H A P. II.

*Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Letters.*

**I**T has been a controversy among learned men, for a century or two past, 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, and it has been affirmed, that the original letters of the *Hebrews*, and in which the books of the Old Testament before the times of *Ezra* were written, were what are called *Samaritan*; and that *Ezra*, after the return of the *Jews* from the captivity in *Babylon*, changed these letters for the *Merubbah*, or square ones since in use; and in them wrote all the sacred books then in being, and gave the ancient letters to the *Samaritans*; and this notion has been embraced upon the testimonies of *Eusebius* and *Jerom*; 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  
chro-

chronicle at A. M. 4740, writes, 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 *Sa-*  
 “ *maritans*, changed the *Jewish* letters:”  
 now this passage of *Eusebius*, as *Marckius*<sup>r</sup>  
 observes, is not to be found in *Scaliger*'s  
 editions of his chronicle, neither in the  
 original *Greek*, nor in the *Latin* version;  
 and the illustrious *Spanheim*<sup>o</sup> has fully pro-  
 ved, that it is spurious, and added to the  
 text by some modern hand; and admitting  
 it to be genuine, it smells rank of a *Jewish*  
 tale, particularly that *Ezra* compiled the  
 scriptures *memoriter*; and it is no difficult  
 thing to account for it, from whence *Eu-*  
*sebius* had it, if he had it at all; for since  
 he was bishop of *Cæsarea*, where both *Jews*  
 and *Samaritans* lived, he might receive this  
 notion from the one or from the other;  
 from the *Samaritans*, as *Buxtorff*<sup>t</sup> conjec-  
 tures, who 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 *Phinebas*  
 the

<sup>r</sup> Exercitat. in Matt. v. 18. f. 6. p. 67.  
 Carpov. Critic. par. 1. p. 240.  
 f. 61.

<sup>o</sup> Apud  
 De Literis Heb.

the son of *Eleazar*; or rather he might have this account from the *Jews* that resided there. *Jerom*, who lived a little after *Eusebius*, and who might take what he writes from him, or rather from some of the *Jewish Rabbins* he had for his preceptors and instructors, for he had four of them at different times, is more confident, and says, “ *certumque est, &c.* it is certain “ that *Exra* 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 *Samari-* “ *tans* and *Hebrews* were the same;” but how could *Jerom* be certain of this, who lived near a thousand years after the supposed fact? do *Exra* or *Nebemiah* give the least hint of such a change of letters; tho’ they relate things of much less consequence than this? or do any of the other prophets suggest any thing of this kind? not the least syllable. Do *Josephus* or *Philo* the *Jew* say any thing about it? not one word, but the reverse, as will be seen hereafter: from whence and from whom then could *Jerom* be assured of it? from  
no

\* Præfat. in lib. Reg. Tom. 3. fol. 5. L.

no other than his *Jews* and their traditions; from whom it is certain he received many things, as his treatise called *Quæstiones seu Traditiones Hebraicæ*, on various parts of scripture shew; which are all or most of them to be found in the *Talmud*, and other writings of the *Jews*, and particularly this. The *Jerusalem Talmud* was printed about the year 230, long enough before *Jerom*, for him to have knowledge of it at least from his instructors. The *Babylonian Talmud* was compiling in his time, tho' not finished before the year 500; but the traditions it consists of were well known before, being handed down from one to another, and with which *Jerom's Jews* could furnish him, and did. But what puts this matter out of all question, is a fragment of *Origen's*, published by *Montfaucon*<sup>w</sup>, who also speaks of letters used by *Ezra* after the captivity, different from the more antient ones, and plainly declares from whom he had it, and opens to us the true source of this notion: “ in some accurate copies, “ he says, it (the word *Jehovah*) is written in antient *Hebrew* letters, but not “ in those now in use, *φασι γαρ*, for they say, D “ (that

<sup>w</sup> Præliminar. in *Hexapla Origen.* p. 86.

“ (that is, the *Jews*) that *Ezra* used others  
 “ after the captivity:” so that it clearly ap-  
 pears to be a *Jewish* tradition; and it is  
 not improbable, that *Jerom* had what he  
 calls *certain*, from this passage of *Origen*,  
 as well as from *Eusebius*, supposing the  
 passage in him to be genuine; and in which  
 he might be confirmed by his *Rabbins*; so  
 that all that has been said about this mat-  
 ter comes from the same fountain, a *Jewish*  
 tradition. And the tradition respecting it  
 in the *Jerusalem Talmud* \* 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;  
 “ yet tho’ it was not given by his hand,  
 “ the writing and the language were;  
 “ the writing was written in the *Syriac*  
 “ tongue and interpreted in the *Syriac*  
 “ tongue, *Ezra* iv. 7. and they could not  
 “ read the writing, *Dan*. v. 8. from hence  
 “ it is learnt, 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*) and agrees with *R. Jose*;  
 “ but *Rabbi* (i. e. *Judab Hakkodesh*) says  
 “ the

\* T. Hierof. Megillah, fol. 71. 2, 3.



“ the law was given in the *Affyrian* cha-  
 “ racter (the square letter) and when they  
 “ sinned, it was turned into breaking,  
 “ (into a rough, and broken character) and  
 “ when they were worthy, in the days of  
 “ *Ezra*, it was turned to them again in  
 “ the *Affyrian* character, according to *Zach.*  
 “ ix. 12. It is a Tradition; *R. Simeon ben*  
 “ *Eleazer* says; on the account of *R. Ele-*  
 “ *azer Ben Parta*, who also says, on the  
 “ account of *Eliezer Hammodai*, the law  
 “ was written in the *Affyrian* character.”

As it stands in the *Babylonian Talmud* †, it  
 is thus expressed: “ *Mar Zutra*, or as  
 “ others *Mar Ukba*, says, at first the law  
 “ was given to *Israel* in the writing beyond  
 “ the river, (or the *Samaritan*) and the  
 “ holy tongue; and again it was given to  
 “ them, in the days of *Ezra*, in the *Affy-*  
 “ *rian* writing, and *Syriac* tongue; they  
 “ chose for the *Israelites* the *Affyrian* wri-  
 “ ting and the holy tongue, and left to the  
 “ *Ideots* the writing beyond the river, and  
 “ the *Syriac* tongue. Who are the *Ideots*? *R.*  
 “ *Chajda* says, the *Cuthites* (i. e. the *Sama-*  
 “ *ritans*): what is the writing beyond the

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“ river ?

† T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2. and 22. 1. and Zeba-  
 chim, fol. 62. 1. and Glos. in ib.

“ river ? *R. Chafda* fays, the *Libonæan* writing ;” which the *Glofs* explains of great letters, fuch as are written in amulets and on door-pofts. Now tho’ this account is far from being clear and plain, as to what is the fenfe of thefe *Rabbins* ; yet admit it to be the fenfe of *R. Jofe*, and of *Mar Zutra* or *Ukba*, that the law was written in *Samaritan* characters ; to which if you add *R. Nathan*, as agreeing with them, there are but three on that fide of the queftion ; whereas there are four who affirm it to be written in the *Affyrian*, or fquare character, namely, *R. Judab* the faint, *R. Simeon*, and the two *Eleazers* ; and as for *R. Judab*, he was of fo much account with the *Jews*, as to weigh down all others ; the decision of any matter in debate was, for the moft part, according to him ; and it is to the latter fentiment that the *Jews* now univerfally agree. There is but one, *R. Jofeph Albo*, on the other fide of the queftion, unlefs *Nachmanides* can be thought to be, which yet is doubtful<sup>z</sup>. now this feems to be the whole and fole foundation of the above notion, which has prevailed fo long among christian writers.

<sup>z</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. de literis Heb. f. 20. 52, 53, 54.

ters. I cannot but remark 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; but if it accords with a favourite hypothesis, how greedily is it caught at? how tenaciously is it held? It is amazing that so many learned men should 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 *Phœnician* characters, which belonged to the race of *Canaan*; and if they were, that the people of the *Jews* could be prevailed upon to part with them, in which their holy books were written; and if they were written in them, as then, besides 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 character; and if so, it is strange that not one copy of either of these should be heard of, seen, or known; nor is it probable that the books of the *Old Testament* should 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 not to be believed, that *Ezra* would attempt such a change of himself without an order from God, which no where appears, when such a charge against innovations stands in *Deut.* iv. 2. nor does it seem possible that he should be able effectually to do it; it could never be in his power to call in all the copies of the sacred books, which the *Israelites* had carried into the several parts of the world, thro' their captivities; nor is it probable 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; nor was it in the power of *Ezra* to oblige them to it: to which may be added, that surely it can't be thought that those ugly and ill-shaped letters were formed by the finger of God, and the law written by him in them, the contrary to which is now universally affirmed by the *Jews*; and yet with what confidence has this been asserted, and those of a different sentiment treated with  
 most

most abusive language, unbecoming men of learning, by such as *Scaliger*, *Drusius*, and *Vossius*, as if they were men but half learned, half divines, mere fools, sceptics, &c. but of late I observe this confidence abates, and learned men begin to think that it is far from being a determined point, what were the original characters of the *Hebrews*. The learned authors of the *Universal History* <sup>a</sup> have taken the side of those who are against the *Samaritan* characters, and are for the square letters being the original *Hebrew*, and have given their reasons for it; and I hope to make it appear, at least probable, that the *Jews* always had and retained their letters and characters, and also the *Samaritans* theirs; and that there has been no commutation of letters between them: and 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; and this is all I shall attempt to shew.

IT has been observed that the *Hebrew* alphabet is the first of the *oriental* languages,

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<sup>a</sup> Vol. xvii. p. 302, 304.

guages, from whence the rest have received theirs; but in name only, not in signification; for the signification 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, Psal. xxv, xxxvii, cxi, cxii, cxix. eight times, cxiv. Prov. xxxi. *Lamentations* six times, yet not the name of one letter is given; but 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, not only before the writing of the New Testament, in which mention is made of some of them, as of *Iota*, *Alpha*, and *Omega*; and in *Josephus* \* of *Beta*, and *Tau*; but *Herodotus* <sup>b</sup>, who wrote his history between four and five hundred years before the birth of Christ, observes, that the *Persian* names end in a letter which in the *Doric* dialect is called *San*, and in the *Ionic* dialect *Sigma*. *Plato* †, as early, makes

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\* *Antiqu.* l. i. c. 6.      <sup>b</sup> *Clio*, five l. i. c. 139.† in *Cratylus*, p. 271, 284, 285, 289, 292, 297, *Ed. Ficin.*

mention of the names of several of the letters of the *Greek* alphabet; and *Homer*, some hundreds of years before them, has the names of the whole *Greek* alphabet; for his works, both his *Iliad* and his *Odyssey*, the several books of them, have their titles from thence, and are called by their names; unless it should be thought, as it is by some, that the titles are added by some ancient *Grammarians*; which names are chiefly taken from an *Eastern* alphabet: and as the *Greeks* are generally supposed to have their letters, at least most of them, from the *Phœnicians*, they doubtless had the names of them along with them; and *Diodorus Siculus* † expressly says, that as *Cadmus* brought the letters from *Phœnicia* into *Greece*, so he gave to every one their names, as well as formed their characters; and as the *Phœnician*, 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 thence, as the language is but a dialect of the *Hebrew*, with a little variation and deflexion from it; so that the *Hebrews* had these  
names

† Bibliothec. lib. 3. p. 200.

names originally; and it cannot be thought otherwise but that when their letters were first invented, and marks made for them, but names were given unto them; and *Cappellus* <sup>a</sup> himself is quite clear and expresses in this matter: “before the age of *Cadmus* the *Phœnician*, 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* ;” and a little after he says, the same names of *Hebrew* letters are as they were three thousand years ago: now the names of the letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet, though adopted by others, only correspond in their signification with the figure of the square letters now in use: thus according to various writers <sup>b</sup>, א *Aleph* the first letter, signifies an ox, and its figure resembles the head and horns of one, and as that, gives the lead to the rest; ב *Beth*, an house, and it represents one, its foundation, wall,

<sup>a</sup> Arcanum punctat. Revelat. l. 1. c. 12. <sup>b</sup> Vid. Schindler. Lexicon Pentaglott. Herman. Hugonem de prima Scribend. Orig. c. 7. p. 69. &c. Wasmuth Vindiciæ Heb. par. 1. 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.



wall, and roof, which with the *Hebrews* was flat; ג *Gimel* a camel, and it has the figure of its long neck and bunch on its back; ד *Daleth* a door, and it describes the lintel and post of one; ה what it signifies and represents is not easy to say: ו *Vau*, an hook, and it resembles one; ז *Zajin*, signifies armour, and has the figure of a dart, spear, or club; ח *Cheth* a beast, and its position is like that of a quadruped; ט *Teth*, folding or involving, as is the form of it; י *Jod*, an hand, the small part of it the finger, it represents; כ *Caph*, the hollow of the hand, or a curvature, as its figure is; ל *Lamed*, a goad, and it is like one; מ *Mem*, a spot as is impressed on the hollow of the hand; נ *Nun*, a son, child, or infant, and it is thought to resemble one sitting; ס *Samech*, a support, the pedestal of a column, to which it is not unlike; ע *Ain*, an eye, and it is the figure of one open; פ *Pe*, a mouth, an open one; צ *Tzadde*, a fork, and such is its figure; ק *Koph*, a revolution, a semicircle, with a descending line, or a monkey, having the tail of one; ר *Resh*, the head, the hinder part of one it resembles; ש *Schin*, a tooth, and is the figure of three teeth;

ת *Thau*

א *Tbau*, a mark, sign, or border, being the boundary of the alphabet. Now 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 the *Hebrew* language was the first and primitive language, and was spoken by *Adam*, as has been shewn, it is probable the letters were first invented by him, as some have thought<sup>c</sup>; 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; nor could arts and sciences, which no doubt were found out in his time, be well cultivated without the use of letters. It is certain some of the arts and sciences were in use before the flood, Gen. iv. 21. and very probably astronomy, as it must be, if there

<sup>c</sup> *Stidas* in voce *Adam*. *Hermannus Hugo*, ut supra c. 3. p. 47. *Bibliander* & alii in ib. The Jews ascribe several writings to *Adam*, *Wolfii Biblioth. Heb.* p. 110, 111. In the *Targum* 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 Cœlum Orient.* p. 103, 123.

there is any truth in the history of the pillars erected by the posterity of *Setb*; which must make writing necessary, as *Huygens*<sup>d</sup> observes : besides, it is not reasonable to suppose that *Adam* himself should be without the knowledge of the sciences, since the very first sight of the heavenly luminaries would lead him into a contemplation of them, and to make future observations upon them ; and by observing their motions, appearance, and disappearance, their revolutions, and the distinctions they made of days, months, and years, and of the seasons, of summer and winter ; he must obtain by degrees a considerable knowledge of this science. Some have thought<sup>e</sup> that the knowledge of all things natural, both terrestrial, as plants, &c. and celestial, was of God infused into him, and implanted in his nature ; and in whatsoever way he had it, it may be reasonably concluded that he would communicate it to his posterity, which seems to require the use of letters ; and *Scaliger*<sup>f</sup> made no doubt of it that the art of printing was known by him ;  
though

<sup>d</sup> Cosmotheorof. fol. 10. p. 56.      <sup>e</sup> Vid. Lydiat. defens. tract. de ann. form. c. 8. p. 26.      <sup>f</sup> Apud Lydiat. ib. p. 125.

though that is not very probable, yet he might have the knowledge of letters, and of the use of them; indeed the *Indian Brachmans* <sup>g</sup>, and the ancient *Druids* <sup>h</sup> and *Pythagoras* <sup>i</sup> taught their doctrines without the use of letters; but it was not through want of them, nor through mere neglect of them, but because they had some peculiar ends to answer thereby: now if letters were invented by *Adam*, it seems most reasonable that as his language, so his letters were continued to the times of *Noah*, and were communicated in the times of *Shem* through the families of *Eber* and *Abraham* to the people of *Israel*; and 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 him of God; as the author of the book of *Cofri* <sup>k</sup>, and his commentator *R. Judah Muscatus* <sup>l</sup>.

If the pillars set up by the sons of *Seth* could

<sup>g</sup> Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. dier. l. 2. c. 30. <sup>h</sup> Cæsar. Comment. l. 6. c. 13. <sup>i</sup> Alex. ab. Alex. ut supra. <sup>k</sup> Cofri par. 4. f. 25. <sup>l</sup> Comment. in ib. fol. 229. 1.

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; and to *Setb* himself the invention of letters has been ascribed<sup>m</sup>; *Josephus*<sup>n</sup> says, the pillars erected by his posterity continued to his time: but it is not likely that these pillars, the one of brick, the other of stone, should survive the flood; and the account he has given of the place where they stood, is very dark and intricate; he calls it the land of *Syriad*, but whether he means *Syria*, or a place in the land of *Egypt*, or *Seirath* near *Gilgal*, *Judg.* iii. 26. each of which is guessed at<sup>o</sup>, cannot be determined; nor does he give us the least hint what kind of characters were upon them; and indeed had the pillars been really in being, it can scarcely be thought that the characters could be legible, or that even conjectures could be made of what they were. In *Syria* and *Mesopotamia* are said to be some ancient books of the *Zabians*, which they pretend to be the patriarch *Setb's*<sup>p</sup>; and the *Arabic* writers

<sup>m</sup> Vid. Suidam in voce Σηθ.    <sup>n</sup> Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2.

<sup>o</sup> Vid. Marsham Canon. secul. 1. p. 3.    † Prideaux. Præfat. ad Marmor. Arundel. & Vossium de ætate mundi, c. 10. p. 37.    <sup>p</sup> Præfat. Hyde ad Hist. Relig. Perf.

writers say<sup>9</sup>, that *Seth* was the inventor of writing letters, and shewed them in the *Hebrew* tongue. If the account that is given of *Cainan*, the grandson of *Seth*, could be credited, it would not only prove the use of letters in those early times, but that the *Hebrew* letters were then used; the account is what is said to be sent by *Alexander* the Great, when in *India*, to his master *Aristotle*, and is as follows:

“ When I came to such a place in *India*,  
 “ says he, the natives told me that they  
 “ had with them the sepulchre of an an-  
 “ cient 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.”

ENOCH, the seventh from *Adam*, delivered out the prophecy referred to by the apostle *Jude*, ver. 14, 15. but whether it was written is not certain; it is not improbable it might be: the Jews make mention of a writing of his in their ancient  
 book

<sup>9</sup> Elmacinus apud Hottinger. Smegma, p, 228.    <sup>r</sup> Ju-  
 chafin, fol. 3. 2. fo Ben Gorion, l. 2. c. 18. p. 131.

book of *Zobar* <sup>t</sup>, and in the *Targum* of *Jonathan* on Gen. v. 24, he is called the great scribe; and several of the christian fathers speak of a book of his as authentic, as *Tertullian* <sup>u</sup> and others; and the *Arabic* writers <sup>v</sup> tell us of pyramids and pillars erected by him, on which he engraved the arts and the instruments of them; and some writers <sup>w</sup> ascribe the invention of letters and writing of books to him; but what characters he wrote and engraved in are not said: others <sup>x</sup> have pretended to give the alphabets of *Adam*, *Seth*, *Enoch*, and *Noah*; but the characters they give neither agree with the *Hebrew* nor with the *Samaritan*, and 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 <sup>y</sup>. If *Abraham* the ancestor of the Jewish nation was the inventor of letters, as some say, the *Hebrew* characters might

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<sup>s</sup> In Gen. fol. 53. 2. and 74. 1. <sup>t</sup> De Cultu fæmin. l. 1. c. 3. vid. Bangi Cœlum Orient. Exercitat. 1. 24. Qu. 5.  
<sup>u</sup> Abulpharag. Hist. dynast. dyn. 1 p. 9. <sup>w</sup> Vid. Hugo. de orig. scribendi, c. 3. p. 41. Shalshalet Hakabala fol. 94, 2.  
<sup>x</sup> Vid. Bangi ut supra, Exercitat. 2. Qu. 1. p. 100, 101. 104.  
<sup>y</sup> Vid. Clem. Ale. Stromat. l. 6. F. 642.

bid fair to be the first; nay, *Suidas* says <sup>z</sup> they were the sacred letters he invented; and to him is sometimes ascribed the *cabalistick* book of the *Jews* called *Jetzirah* <sup>a</sup>.

SOME of the Jewish *Rabbins* say, that the grains of manna which fell from heaven about the tents of the *Israelites* in the wilderness were figured with the character of the *Hebrew* letter *Vau* very perfectly expressed; and that that is the principal reason why the wondering *Israelites* said one to another מן הוּא מן *Man hu*, which according to them is to say, what means this *vau*? the reason of which figure they suppose to be, because the manna was only to be gathered on the *six* days of the week, which that letter numerically signifies: this is to be, treated as a mere fable, nor have I met with it in any writer but *Gaffarellus* <sup>b</sup>; all the 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; and indeed if the *Israelites* did not understand

<sup>z</sup> In voce *Αεραου*, vid. *Herman Hugo*. ut supra, p. 41.

<sup>a</sup> *Cosri* par 4. c. 27. *Juchasin* fol. 52. 2. <sup>b</sup> Unheard of *Curiosities*, par. 4. c. 12. p. 352.



stand letters before the giving of the law, of what use could the writing of it be unto them? and to what purpose was it written and brought unto them.

It is not only the opinion of some Christian writers <sup>e</sup> that the *Hebrews* received their letters first from *Moses* thro' the giving of the law unto them, but even *Eupolemus*, an heathen writer, as quoted both by *Clement of Alexandria* <sup>d</sup>, and *Eusebius* <sup>e</sup>, affirms that *Moses* first delivered letters to the *Jews*, which is received by many <sup>f</sup>; however this be, it is certain, the law was written in letters engraved by God himself, and given to *Moses* for the *Israelites*; and it is most probable, as has been already observed, that those letters were not the ill-shaped letters of the *Samaritans*, the same with those of the old *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites*, but the noble, majestic square letters, in which the books of the law and prophets are now extant.

E 2

*Philo*

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 39. Isidor. Origin. l. 1. c. 3. and chronic. p. 263. <sup>d</sup> Stromat. l. 1. p. 343.

<sup>e</sup> Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 26. <sup>f</sup> So Clemens Roman. Cornelius Agrippa, Crinitus, Textor, Gyraldus apud Herman. Hugo. ut supra, MS. in Vatican. Biblioth. apud Wafer. de Numis Heb. l. 2. c. 3. vid. Owen. Theologoumena l. 4. Digress. 1. p. 301.

*Philo* the Jew<sup>e</sup>, says, the law was anciently written in the *Chaldee* language, that is, in the *Hebrew* language, properly so called; for, as *Jerom*<sup>h</sup> observes, *Philo* thought the *Hebrew* and *Chaldee* were the same language; and nothing is more common with the *Jews*<sup>i</sup>, than to say 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*, as appears by what has been quoted out of the *Talmud*, and which they expressly say<sup>k</sup> 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; or because they had it from their ancestor *Abraham*, who came out of *Assyria*; and as they carried it into *Assyria*, when led captive thither, so it came out of *Assyria* with them, when they came from thence<sup>l</sup>; and that the tables of the law were written in it, is generally agreed on, by them,

<sup>e</sup> De vita Mosis. l. 1. p. 657, 658.      <sup>h</sup> Comment. in Dan. i. 4.      <sup>i</sup> Balmesii inikneh Abraham, p. 2. lin. 26.  
<sup>k</sup> Gloss. in T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 8 2 Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 74. 2.      <sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedri . fol. 21. 1. and Balmes. ut supra, lin. 24, 25. and p. 6. lin. 13. 14.

them. *R. Jacob* says <sup>m</sup>, the whole world acknowledge 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; that is, the whole *Jewish* nation, a few, only excepted, not more than two or three <sup>n</sup>. If the mediums of proof made use of by the *Jews* could be admitted as valid, as they cannot, it would put the matter out of all doubt, that the square letters were as early as the law: they observe, that the hooks of the pillars in *Exod.* xxvii. 10. are called *Vaus*, and as the pillars were not changed, so the *Vaus* were not changed; from whence they conclude the *Vaus* were made like hooks, and that in the days of *Moses* the *Vaus* were like those now in use <sup>o</sup>; and what is true of one letter is true of the rest; and that their letters were never changed, and which they also conclude from *Esth.* viii. 9. 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,

E 3

where-

<sup>m</sup> In *En Israel Megillah*, c. 1. fol. 415. 1. <sup>n</sup> Vid. *Buxtorf. de lit. Heb.* f. 20. 23. <sup>o</sup> *T. Hierof. Megillah*, fol. 71. 3. *T. Bab. Sanhedrin*, fol. 22. 1. and *Gloss. in ib.*

wherefore they observe  $\square$  *Mem clausum* and  $\square$  *Samech* which were in the tables, stood miraculously <sup>p</sup>; for they being near or like to a circle or an O, they had nothing to adhere to, or subsist by, but must fall, unless supported by a miracle. Now though these notions cannot be allowed of, they serve to shew 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; nay, they say that the forms of letters, vowels and accents were written by God on the tables, as we now have them <sup>q</sup>.

IT was usual in ancient time to inscribe things on rocks and mountains, in order to perpetuate them to posterity, to which *Job* may allude, ch. xix. 24. thus *Semiramis* engraved her image and an hundred shield-bearers by her at the bottom of a rock, and wrote upon the rock in *Syriac* letters, as *Diodorus Siculus* relates <sup>r</sup>; so the *Arabians*, *Phœnicians*, and *Egyptians*, and others, before the use of paper, engraved their sentiments on rocks and stones <sup>s</sup>.

The-

<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol 104.      <sup>q</sup> Tipheret Israel in Broughton's works, p. 506. 670. 684. 703.      <sup>r</sup> Biblioth. l. 2. p 100 101.      <sup>s</sup> Plii. l. 6. c. 28. vid. Huet. Demon-  
strat. Evangel. c. 2. f. 15.

*Themistocles* cut letters upon stones which the *Ionians*, coming the day after to *Artemisium*, read, as *Herodotus* reports †; and it was usual 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 \*. In a journal made about forty years ago, from grand *Cairo* to mount *Sinai*, a translation of which is published by Dr. *Clayton*, late bishop of *Clogher*, it is related †, that those who made it came to some hills near mount *Sinai*, called the written mountains; on which with others they passed for an hour together, were engraved ancient unknown characters, cut into the hard marble rock, twelve or fourteen feet distant from the ground; and 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* having learned to write after the giving of the law on mount *Sinai*, di-

E 4

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† *Urania*, five, l. 8. c. 22. vide *Melpomene*, five l. 4. c. 87.

‡ *Salmuth*. in *Pancirol*. par. 2. p. 256.      † *Journal* &c. p. 45, 46. Ed. 2.

verted themselves with practising it during their forty years abode in the wilderness; and he was of opinion that the ancient *Hebrew* characters might be recovered by them; wherefore he proposed to the Society of *Antiquarians* in *London*, to send a proper person thither for that end, and offered to bear a proportion in the expence of it; and could those characters be recovered, and an alphabet formed out of them, it would doubtless determine what was the ancient figure of the *Hebrew* letters. About an hundred years before the above journal was begun, *Petrus a Valle* and *Thomas a Novaria* transcribed several of them, which the former had in his possession, and shewed 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; but the sense of them none could understand<sup>p</sup>. Now these letters were no doubt of one and the same alphabet, form and figure originally, and if many of them are of the square form, or like those *Hebrew* letters now in use, and those the greater part of them, as it should

<sup>p</sup> *Antiq. Eccl. oriental.* p. 147.

should seem by their being mentioned first ; I should think they were all when first written of the same form ; and that such of them as are now broken and disjointed, are those said to be like to the *Samaritan* letters, which are rough and deformed ; hence the Jews call them פרוץ, a fracture, broken, and uneven ; and such that agreed with neither, those that are greatly effaced by time ; and I am the more strengthened in this supposition by the relation of *Cosmas Ægyptius*, who travelled into those parts in the sixth century, more than twelve hundred years ago ; who testifies, that he himself saw many stones in the wilderness engraved by the *Hebrews* in *Hebrew* letters, in memory of their journey in it<sup>9</sup> ; his account, as *Montfaucon*<sup>r</sup> relates it is, that in the wilderness of *Sinai*, and in all the mansions of the *Hebrews*, you may see stones fallen from the mountains, all engraved with *Hebrew* letters, as, says he, I testify, who 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

<sup>9</sup> Vid. *Fabritii Bibliothec. Græc. Tom. 2. p. 615.* <sup>r</sup> in *Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 2. p. 147. 148.*

with the *Jews*; and he adds, some *Jews* who read these 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. Now 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, than the *Samaritan*, which it is not reasonable to suppose they would give themselves the trouble of learning, having nothing to do with the *Samaritans*, but at enmity with them.

THE plate of gold on the forehead of the high-priest, on which was engraven *holiness to the Lord*, the *Jews*<sup>t</sup> dispute about it, whether this was in more lines than one, and what letters were in a line, but it was never a question with them in what character it was written. *Jerom* says<sup>t</sup> indeed, that the word *Jehovah* was in his time found written in antient letters, in some *Greek* volumes; but it should be observed, that *Jerom* speaks not of *Jewish* or *Hebrew* copies, but of *Greek* volumes,  
meaning

<sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 63. 2. & Succah, fol. 5. 1. <sup>t</sup> Præfat. in lib. Reg. fol. 5. L.



meaning the *Greek* versions of *Aquila* and *Theodotion* in *Origen's Hexapla*, and of ancient *Hebrew* letters in the said *Greek* versions, where the word *Jehovah* was written in *Hebrew* characters thus, ΠΙΠΙ, which the *Greeks* not understanding, and being deceived with the similarity of the characters to some of theirs, read it from the left to the right, as they were wont to do, *Pipi*; whereas the word was to be read no other than *Jehovah*, and was written neither in *Greek* nor in *Samaritan* characters, but in *Hebrew* letters, as sometimes figur'd, or however as formed by some *Greek* writers not expert in the *Hebrew* letters, as may be seen in a specimen of such letters, given by *Montfaucon*<sup>a</sup>, which seem to have been written by some *Grecian* who had but little knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue and its characters, in which the *Hebrew* letter *He*, tho' *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 *Is.* lix. 13. observes, that in his margin were written A. Th.

EY

<sup>a</sup> Præliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. c. 2. p. 22.

עַו מַּיִם, that is *Aquila*, and *Theodotion* so read; and he further observes, that so formerly they wrote the letters of the name tetragrammaton or *Jehovah*, which they read *Pipi*, because of the similitude of the letters<sup>w</sup>; and *Jerom*<sup>x</sup> himself is as express for it as can be, he says the name of four letters is written with these, *Jod* י, *He* ה, *Vau* ו, *He* ה, which some not understanding, because of the likeness of the characters, when they found it in *Greek* copies, used to read it *Pipi*; and elsewhere<sup>y</sup> he says, the name of God, on the plate of gold, was written in *Hebrew* letters, those above-mentioned; hence, because as *R. Asariab*<sup>z</sup> understands him, he affirmed that these were engraved in the *Assyrian* character, he conjectures that *Jerom* had seen the plate of gold at *Rome*, which *R. Eliezer ben Jose*, saw there, and that *Jerom* was of the mind that the present *Hebrew* letters, were then used by the *Jews*; and indeed it is not probable that this plate should be engraved in the *Samaritan*, that is in the letters

<sup>w</sup> Vid. etiam Drusium de voce Elohim & Tetragram. c. 20. & Grotium in Matt. xxii. 44. Montfaucon. præliminar. ad Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 90. 184. Lexicon col. 430.  
<sup>x</sup> Epist. ad Marcellam Tom. 3. fol. 31. B.      <sup>y</sup> Ad Fabio-  
 lam fol. 20. B.      <sup>z</sup> Meor Enayim, c. 58. fol. 178. 2.

ters of the old *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites*, the race of *Canaan*, whom the *Jews*, when this order about the plate was given to *Moses*, were going to drive out of their land. It must be owned that *Origen* has the following words in a fragment<sup>a</sup> of his; “ with  
 “ the *Jews* the name of the four letters  
 “ (*Jehovah*) is ineffable, which was en-  
 “ graved on the golden plate of the high-  
 “ priest, and with the *Greeks* is pro-  
 “ nounced Lord (*κυριος*); but in correct *He-*  
 “ *brew* copies it is written (that is, with  
 “ its four letters *Jehovah*, which may be  
 “ believed; but when he adds, it was writ-  
 “ ten) in antient letters, but not in those  
 “ now in use.” If he means the *Samaritan* letters, as it is supposed he does; this depends on a *Jewish* tale he next relates, which has been already considered.

THAT the *Pentateuch* written by *Moses* was written in the square characters or letters now in use with the *Jews*, seems clear by comparing *Gen.* x. 3, 4. with 1 *Chron.* i. 6. where the persons called *Riphat* and *Dodanim* by *Moses*, are by the author of the book of *Chronicles* in some copies called *Diphath* and *Rodanim*; and who is called *Hemdan* in  
*Gen.*

<sup>a</sup> Apud Montfaucon. ut supra, p. 86.

Gen. xxxvi. 26. is *Hemram* in 1. *Chron.* i. 41. and *Hadar* in Gen. xxxvi. 39. is *Hadad* in 1 *Chron.* i. 50. The author of the book of *Cbronicles*, thro' the similarity of the letters  $\daleth$  and  $\daleth$  *Resh* and *Daleth*, puts one for another, and still signify the same persons; so *Riblab* in *Numb.* xxxiv. 11. and as it is read in the 2d book of *Kings*, and prophecy of *Jeremiah*, is in *Ezek.* vi. 14. called *Diblab*; on which *Jerom* remarks, that the near likeness of the *Hebrew* letters  $\daleth$  and  $\daleth$  *Daleth* and *Resh*, which are distinguished by a small *apex*, it may be called *Deblatha*, or *Reblatha*; and so *Theodotion* reads it *Deblatha* in *Jer.* xxxix. 5. and this will account for the same man being called *Deuel* and *Reuel*, *Numb.* i. 14. and ii. 14. Now this can't be owing to the mistakes of late transcribers, since the same difference is observed in the *Septuagint* version of these places, at least in most of them, and were so from the beginning, from the writers themselves; and those letters being much more similar in the *Hebrew* than in the *Samaritan* alphabet, the *Samaritan Daleth* having a hook at the back of it thus  $\daleth$  which strikes the eye at once, and easily distinguishes it from  $\daleth$  *Resh*, shews that *Moses*,

*ses*, in all probability, wrote in the former and not in the latter; so likewise differences of names in the same books plainly arise from the similarity of the letters ' and ך *Jod* and *Vau* in the *Hebrew* square characters, when there is no such similarity in the *Samaritan* character ם and ף, as to occasion such differences, thus *Alvan* in *Gen.* xxxvi. 23. is *Alian* 1 *Chron.* i. 40. *Vaakan* *Gen.* xxxvi. 27. is *Jaakan* 1. *Chron.* i. 42. *Zepbo* *Gen.* xxxvi. 11. is *Zephi* 1 *Chron.* i. 36. *Shepbo* in *Gen.* xxxvi. 23. is *Shephi* 1 *Chron.* i. 40. *Alvak* *Gen.* xxxvi. 40. is *Aliab* 1 *Chron.* i. 51. *Pau* *Gen.* xxxvi. 39. is *Pai* 1 *Chron.* i. 50. *Heman* *Gen.* 22. is *Homam* 1 *Chron.* i. 39. *Kimchi* on 1 *Chron.* i. 6, 7. takes notice of the difference of these several words, as read in *Genesis* and *Chronicles*, and attributes it to the similarity of letters; and observes, that let them be read as they may, they are the same names, and so *Ben Melech* after him.

*Aben Ezra* has helped us to another proof of the *Pentateuch* being written in the square character; he observes, "that the word ךׁוּה in *Exod.* i. 10. is irregular according to the grammar, and should be ךׁוּהׁ for *He* radical is changed into *Tau*, according

ding to usual construction, as in *Gen. i. 30.* but so it is, because these letters are near 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*; and this is a sign or proof that the writing we now use is *Hebrew*:\* and as the *Pentateuch* was originally written in this character, so it continued until the *Samaritan Pentateuch* was written, which plainly appears to be copied from it, by its having the interpolations of *Ezra's* copy in it, which it would not have had, had it been more antient than that; and if it was first brought to the *Samaritans*, as is probable, by *Manasseh*, when he fled to them, it was in the square character first introduced among them, as *Dr. Prideaux* owns<sup>b</sup>, who otherwise is an advocate for the *Samaritan* letter being the antient *Hebrew* character. That this was the case, appears from the difference between the *Hebrew* and *Samaritan Pentateuch*, occasioned by the similitude of the letters in the square character, the same with that now in use with the  
*Jews,*

<sup>b</sup> Connection, part 1. p. 426, 417.

*Jews*, as has been observed by many learned men<sup>c</sup>, particularly in *Resh* and *Daleth*, see *Gen.* x. 4. and xlix. 10. which shews 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; and 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 *Jerom* frequently observes; for that was made out of the *Chaldee* tongue, as *Philo* the *Jew*<sup>d</sup> affirms, that is the *Hebrew* according to him; and *Justin Martyr*<sup>e</sup> asserts, that *Moses*, under a divine inspiration, wrote his history in *Hebrew* letters, (he does not say in *Samaritan*, tho' he himself was a *Samaritan*) and that out of their antient books written in *Hebrew* letters, the *Septuagint* or 70 elders made their translation, which 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 him; but not being able to

F read

<sup>c</sup> Hottinger. Antimorin. p. 50. Carpzov. Critic. sacr. p. 229. 604. 610. Universal History, vol 17. p. 305. <sup>d</sup> De vita Josephi, l. 1. p. 658. <sup>e</sup> Ad Græcos, p. 13.

read and understand it, he sent for men out of *Judea* to translate it into *Greek*<sup>f</sup>; and *Tertullian*<sup>g</sup> 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; and certain it is, as the authors of the *Universal History*<sup>h</sup> 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 eldest of which did not precede the settlement of the high-priesthood in the *Asmonean* family, that is not much above 150 years before *Christ*; and yet this is the main argument advanced in defence of the *Samaritan* letters being the antient *Hebrew* characters; of the validity of which, and the genuineness of the *Samaritan* shekels, more hereafter.

THE argument in favour of the *Pentateuch* being written in the square character, taken from the similarity of *Dalet* and *Resh*, occasioning different readings of words, may be used with respect to the second book of *Samuel*, as written in the same character,

<sup>f</sup> Epiphan. de ponder. supra, p. 301, 304, 305.

<sup>g</sup> Apologet. c. 18.

<sup>h</sup> Ut



racter, the penmen of which seem to be *Gad* and *Nathan*, see 1 *Chron.* xxix. 19. in which the king of *Zobab* is called *Hadadezer*, 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. but the writer of the book of *Chronicles*, generally supposed to be *Ezra*, putting *Resb* for *Daleth*, thro' the likeness of the letters, calls him *Hadarazer*, 1 *Chron.* xviii. 3. and so one of *David's* worthies is called *Shammab* the *Harodite*, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 25. but in 1 *Chron.* xi. 27. *Shammoth* the *Harorite*; where may be observed another difference, arising from the same cause, the likeness of the letters  $\eta$  and  $\eta$  the same man being called *Shammab* in one place, and *Shammoth* in the other; and that 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 there is another difference in the name. *Harodite* in *Sam.* is written with a  $\eta$  *Cheth*, and the *Harorite* in *Chronicles* with an  $\eta$  *He*, which two letters are also very similar in the square character; whereas, neither the  $\alpha$  *He* and  $\alpha$  *Tau*, nor the  $\alpha$  *Cheth* and  $\alpha$  *He* are at all alike in the *Samaritan* character. So that the same that is called *Hiddai* 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 30. is *Hurai* or *Churai*, 1 *Chron.*

xi. 32. and another is called the *Gadite* 2 *Sam.* 23. 36. and *Haggeri*, or the *Haggerite*, 1 *Chron.* xi. 38. so thro' the likeness of *Jod* and *Vau* in the square character, which have none in the *Samaritan*, as before observed, the king of *Tyre* is called *Hiram*, 1 *Kings.* v. 1, 2. and *Huram* 2 *Chron.* ii. 3. 11.

*Aben Chabib* or *R. Moses Schem Tob*, a Jew, who lived about the year 1480, was shewn in the kingdom of *Valentia* in *Spain*, a sepulchral monument of a general of *Amaziab* king of *Judah*, on the top of a mountain; which, tho' much effaced, he was just able to read a verse or two in rhyme and metre, at the end of which was לֵאמֹנִיָּה<sup>i</sup>; from whence he concluded that such kind of verse was in use with his ancestors, when in their own land: and he might have concluded also the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, as *Buxtorff*<sup>k</sup> observes, could this inscription be thought genuine; but it is hard to conceive how a general of *Amaziab*, king of *Judah*, should be buried in *Spain*: and of like credit must be accounted the grave of *Adoniram*, the tax-gatherer

<sup>i</sup> R. Azariah, *Imre Binah*, c. 60. fol. 182.      <sup>k</sup> De liter. Heb. f. 27. & de profod. metric. ad calc. Heb. Gram.

gatherer for *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, in the same country, and found at the same time<sup>1</sup>; and could the account 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 which are written “this is the grave of *Abraham*,” and so on the grave of *Isaac*, and on the rest, it would prove the very early antiquity of such letters; but 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; and these are *Mem*, *Nun*, *Tzade*, *Pe*, and *Caph*, commonly called מנצפך *Manatzpach*; these must be of very antient use, they are mentioned in *Bereschith Rabba*<sup>n</sup>, and in both the *Talmuds*; in the one<sup>o</sup> they are said to be used by the seers or prophets, and in the other<sup>p</sup> to be an *Halacah* or tradition of *Moses* from *Sinai*; yea, by an antient writer<sup>q</sup> they are said to be known by *Abra-*

F 3 ham,

<sup>1</sup> Vid. Hottinger. præfat. ad Cipp. Heb. p. 4. <sup>m</sup> Itinerar. p. 28, 49.  
<sup>n</sup> Parash. 1. fol. 1, 4. <sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 104. 1.  
<sup>p</sup> T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 71. 4. <sup>q</sup> Pirke Eliezer c. 48.

*ham*; and indeed they seem to be as early as the other letters in the alphabet. Hence *Abraham de Balmis*<sup>r</sup> makes the *Hebrew* alphabet consist of twenty-seven letters; and *Jerom*<sup>t</sup> speaks of these five final letters as of as early, and equal use with the twenty-two letters, and so *Epiphanius*<sup>t</sup>; and *Irenæus*<sup>†</sup>, before them, is thought, by Dr. *Grabe* to refer to a final *Hebrew* letter, when he says, “that God, in *Hebrew*, is called *Baruch* (blessed) which consists of two letters and a half;” Dr. *Grabe*’s note upon it is, that ך is taken for half of the letter ן; but in that he is mistaken, for the word has not that letter, nor has that letter a final, but ך, and the final of that does not shorten, but lengthen the letter. Now if these final letters were of *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, for the *Samaritans* have no final letters; and particularly the book of the prophet *Isaiab*, which was written 200 years or more before the supposed change of letters by *Ezra*, must be written not in the *Samaritan*

<sup>r</sup> Mikneh Abraham, pag. 2. lin. 12, 13.  
 lib. Reg. fol. 5. M.    <sup>t</sup> De mensur. & ponder.  
 Hæres. l. 2 c. 41.

<sup>†</sup> Præfat. ad  
 Adv.

*ritan* 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 לִסְרֵבָה *Is. ix. 6.* which has occasioned much speculation and enquiry, both among the Jews and christians, which could not appear if written in the *Samaritan* character; in which, as before observed, are no final letters; and that it was so read in the antient *Hebrew* copies, is clear from both *Talmuds*<sup>u</sup>, where it is written and reasoned upon, and the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished A. D. 230. *Jerom*<sup>w</sup> owns the reading of it, and offers a reason for it, and observes that the *Mem clausum*, in the middle of the word לִסְרֵבָה is so written for the sake of a mystery, to shew the exclusion of the Jews from the kingdom of Christ; even that same *Jerom* makes this remark, who says, *it is certain that Ezra* changed the Jewish letters; but if *Isaiab* wrote in the *Samaritan* character, as that change supposes, it would spoil the remark he has made; in this he contradicts himself. This is an observation of *Wasmuth's*; but I suspect that *Waf-*

<sup>u</sup> T. Hierof. Sanhedrin, fol. 27. 4. T. Bab. ib. fol. 94. 1.

<sup>w</sup> Apud Wasmuth. Vindic. Heb. par. 1. p. 44.

*mutb* has mistaken *Hieronimus de sancta fide*, a later writer, who wrote a book against the Jews, for *Hieronimus* the antient father; since I can find no such treatise as is referred to by him in *Jerom's* works, either genuine or ascribed to him.

THE book of *Daniel*, if written by himself, as it seems plainly to be, must be written before the pretended change of letters by *Ezra*; the Jews in the *Talmud*<sup>\*</sup> indeed say it was written by the men of the great synagogue, that is the synagogue of *Ezra*; but the reason given for it is frivolous, as in the *Gloss* upon the place, that prophecy was not suffered to be written without the land (of *Israel*); for did not *Moses* write the *Pentateuch* without the land? and was not *Ezekiel* ordered by God to write among the captives at the river *Chebar*, *Ezek.* i. 3. and xxiv. 2.? *Josephus*<sup>†</sup> is exprefs for it, that *Daniel* wrote his own prophecies, and left them to be read, and this is clear from the book itself, ch. xii. 4. and from the words of Christ in *Matt.* xxiv. 15. now since this book was written partly in *Hebrew*, and partly in  
*Chaldee*,

<sup>\*</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1.  
c. 11. f. 7.

<sup>†</sup> Antiqu. l. 10.

*Chaldee*, I ask, in what letter it is most probable it was written, whether in two different characters? which seems not at all probable, and whether in one character; what most probably that was, whether the *Samaritan* or the square letter? it should seem more probable to be the latter, according to the hypothesis of those who are for the change of letters by *Ezra*, who suppose that was the character used in *Chaldea* and *Babylon*, where *Daniel* lived; and I should think it more probable for another reason, because it was better known to the *Jews*, for whose use chiefly that book was written: and particularly it deserves consideration, in what letter or character the hand-writing *Belsazzar* saw on the wall was written, which the *Chaldeans* could not read, only *Daniel* the *Jew*. It is certain the words in *Daniel* v. 25. are *Chaldee*, and had they been written in their own characters, which were the same since called *Samaritan*, as will be shewn in the following chapter; the *Chaldeans*, no doubt, could have read them, though they might not have understood the meaning of them: now tho' we can't be certain of the character, yet it is probable it was the square character

character then and now in use with the *Jews*, to which *Daniel* was accustomed before he came to *Babylon*, and therefore could easily read the hand-writing, tho' without doubt it was by divine inspiration that he gave the interpretation of it. *Josephus ben Gorion*<sup>a</sup> is quite clear in this; the letters, he says, were the holy tongue, that is, *Hebrew*, but the writing or words were the *Syriac* tongue, or the *Chaldee*; and 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*<sup>a</sup>, the last that wrote on the antiquity of the *Hebrew* letters, is of opinion that the *Chaldeans* used the same characters with the *Hebrews*. He supposes their language to be the same, which he argues from the relation of *Abraham* and *Nabor* being brethren, and from the *Hebrews* descending from the one, and from the other the *Chaldeans*; hence *Josephus*<sup>b</sup> calls the *Chaldeans* their kindred; tho' perhaps the latter rather sprung from *Arphacsd*;  
he

<sup>a</sup> Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 5. p. 25.  
ter. Heb. p. 6. Bononiæ 1748.  
l. 1. f. 13.

<sup>a</sup> De Antiq. li-  
<sup>b</sup> Contr. Apion.



he urges the conversation which passed between *Abraham's* servant and *Nabor's* family, when he was sent thither to take a wife for *Isaac*, and what passed between the men of *Haran*, *Nabor's* city, and *Jacob*, and between him and *Rachel* and *Laban*, in which there appear'd to be no difficulty of understanding one another. All which is true, and yet the language might not be exactly the same; the *Chaldee* being a dialect of the *Hebrew*, might be understood by the *Hebrews*, especially in those earlier and purer times, when the deviation from the *Hebrew* might not be so great as afterwards; and yet 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, tho' to the same sense. This learned writer indeed thinks that the *Chaldean* name of it was given by anticipation, and that it was called so by *Laban's* sons afterwards, which being known to *Moses*, he inserted it: but be it so, that will prove the difference of that language in the times of *Moses* at least, and which, in the times of *Hezekiah*, appears to be still more different from the *Hebrew*,

since the common people among the *Jews* understood it not, 2 *Kings* xviii. 26. and in the times of the captivity, some of the *Hebrews*, carried captive, were taught the *Chaldean* tongue, *Dan.* i. 4. and the difference between that and the *Hebrew* may be seen in the books of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, yea, it is called a language not known nor understood by the *Jews*, *Jer.* v. 15. now from the sameness of language, as this writer supposes, he proceeds to argue the sameness of character, which however probable it may be thought to be, it is not conclusive. The *Syriac* and *Chaldee* are nearer to each other, than either 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 upon, and what he thinks to be greatly to his purpose is, the instance of *Cyrus* being able to read the prophecies in *Isaiab*, concerning himself, according to *Josephus*<sup>c</sup>; which he imagines he could not have done, if the *Chaldee* and *Hebrew* characters were not the same. He supposes he understood the *Chaldee* language, and could read that, having been some time in the court of *Darius*; but

<sup>c</sup> Antiq. l. 11. c. 1. f. 2.

but 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; for he then gave orders, according to *Xenophon*<sup>d</sup>, to those who understood the *Syrian* or *Chaldee* language to proclaim that such of the inhabitants that were found in the streets, should be slain, but those that kept within doors should be safe; and 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 *Isaiab* concerning himself; and besides, why may he not be thought to know the *Hebrew* character also as well as the *Chaldee*, supposing them different? he was a very enterprising prince and had conquered many nations, and might be master of many languages, as *Mitbridates* king of *Pontus* was, and especially of the *Hebrew*, if what is said by an *Arabic* writer<sup>e</sup> is true, that he married the sister of *Zerubbabel*, and his mother also is said † to be a *Jewess*; and after all, the whole depends upon the testimony of *Josephus*,

<sup>d</sup> *Cyropædia*, l. 7. c. 23.  
*Dynast. dyn. 5. p. 82.*

<sup>e</sup> *Abulpharag. Hist.*

† *Hottinger. apud Pfeiffer. Theolog. Jud. Exercitat. 7. c. 1. th. 1.*

*Josephus*, that he did read the prophecy of *Isaiab*, who produces no authority for it; and if he did read it, it might be through an interpreter, or as translated for him, supposing him ignorant of the *Hebrew* language and its character: and it can hardly be thought that when the same *Josephus* says <sup>f</sup> that *Alexander* was shewn 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 confess in *Josephus* <sup>a</sup>; which makes the *Hebrew* and *Syriac* character very similar; for according to him, *Demetrius* the librarian of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* told the king when he acquainted him with the Jewish writings, that their character was very much like to the *Syriac* letters, and were pronounced like to them; but according to *Aristæus* <sup>b</sup>, and whose words are also preserved in *Eusebius* <sup>c</sup>, *Demetrius* said very much the contrary; that the *Jews*, as the *Egyptians*, had a peculiar character, and a peculiar pronunciation; some think they used the *Syriac*, but it is  
not

<sup>f</sup> Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. f. 5.      <sup>a</sup> Antiqu. l. 12. c. 2. f. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Hist. 72. Interpr. p. 4. 5.      <sup>c</sup> Præpar. Evangel.  
b. 8. c. 2. p. 350.

not so, says he, it is 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 shew 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; and 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 on sepulchral monuments; but I think it is probable, that as the first language men spoke and was after the confusion of tongues 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; and whereas the alphabet of the *Hebrew* language appears

pears to be the first of the *oriental* languages, from whence the rest have the names, order, and number of their letters, it is probable, yea it seems more than 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 commands, was written and given in those 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 there, 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 now in use, and that *Moses* wrote his *Pentateuch*, in the same character; that *Isaiab* also wrote his prophecies in the same; and that the book of *Daniel*, and particularly the hand-writing that terrified *Belshazzar*, were written in the same; nor is there any just reason to believe that the *Jews* ever had any other sort of letters, nor that *Ezra* changed their ancient ones for those; for, as has been already

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observed,

observed, he never would have done it without a divine command, which it does not appear he had; and if he would have done it, and had had ever such an inclination to it, he never could have done it; nor is it credible that the Jews in *Babylon* so forgot their language, and their letters, as to make such a change necessary, which is suggested\*. Can it be thought that the men who remembered the first temple in its glory, and wept at laying the foundation of the second, *Ezra* iii. 12. should forget their language and the *alphabet* of it, when the greater part were only fifty-two years there? for the seventy years are to be reckoned from the fourth of *Jeboiakim*, eighteen years before the destruction of the city and temple by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and their being carried captive by him into *Babylon*; where they lived together in bodies, did not mix with the *Chaldaeans*, nor intermarry with them, and conversed together in their own language, had their sacred books in it to read, held a correspondence with *Jeremiah* by letters, at the first of the captivity, and had the ministry and sermons of *Ezekiel* to attend upon in it *Ezek.* i. 1, and iii. 15, and xxx. 30, 33.

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*Jer.*\* *Eliæ Præfat. Methurgeman.*

*Jer.* xxix. 1, 25, 31. nor is it 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, who spoke half in the language of those people, for which *Nebemiah* reprov'd them; and this shews it was not a general thing: and certain it is 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 *Nebemiah's* time; nor had he forgot it, nor disused it, for walking before *Susa*, the chief city of *Persia*, as *Josephus* \* relates, he overheard some strangers lately come from *Jerusalem* discoursing together in the *Hebrew* tongue, and understanding them, he asked

\* *Antiqu.* l. xi. c. 5. f. 6.



asked the questions as in *Neb.* i. 2. he himself wrote in *Hebrew*, as did *Ezra*, not only his own book, but the books of *Chronicles*, as is supposed; yea, some of the *Psalms* were written after the return from the captivity, as *Pf.* cxxvi. cxxxvii. and even as late as the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and all in pure *Hebrew*. *Daniel* in the captivity wrote in *Hebrew*, excepting what concerned the *Chaldæans*; and so did *Ezekiel*. The book of *Esther*, supposed to be written by *Mordecai*, was written in pure *Hebrew*; and if *Abasuerus* was *Xerxes*, it must be written many years after the captivity; and in his time, *Pf.* lxxxviii. is by some thought to be 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* \* says, “ it is manifest in fact in what  
 “ veneration and credit we have our let-  
 “ ters 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

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“ from

\* Cont. Apion. l. 1. f 8.

“ from them, nor to change them :” it is plain from hence, that this historian knew nothing of the change of the letters of the sacred writings made by *Exra*, which must be an innovation in them. *Philo the Jew*<sup>h</sup>, says “ 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 runs thus : \* “ I believe with a perfect faith, i. e. “ 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 ;” but 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 *Matt. v. 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 ;*

<sup>h</sup> De vita Mosis l. 2. 656. \* Seder Tephillah, fol. 86. 2. Abarbinel. Parfat. in Jer.

*fulfilled*; which though it is not to be understood of the bare letter *Yod*, which as it is sometimes redundant, so in some places wanting, as in 1 *Sam.* xxi. 2. 2 *Sam.* xvi. 23. and xxi. 8. *Nehemiah* xii. 46. and 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; not to any copy of it in any language whatever; but to the original writing of it, and its letters, in which it had continued unto his time, and in which the *Iota* or *Yod* is the least of the letters; and therefore 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; which has besides the stroke above, three large prongs, descending from it, each of which is as large again as the *Hebrew Yod*; which is so small, that *Irenæus*<sup>1</sup> calls it half a letter; and to which our Lord manifestly refers: and this makes it at least highly probable, that the law was originally written not in the *Samaritan*, but in the square *Hebrew*

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letters,

<sup>1</sup> Adv. Hæref. l. 2. c. 41.

letters, which had unalterably remained unto the times of *Christ*; all which make 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*<sup>k</sup>, the learned writer before-mentioned, is quite clear in it, that the *Hebrew* letters were never changed by *Ezra*, nor by any public authority; and which he judges improbable, since neither he nor *Josephus* make mention of any such change; and from the great numbers of Jews left in the land at the captivity, and the return of multitudes from it; and from *Ezra's* coming to them with a large number also, and that sixty or eighty years after the return of the first; and from the prophecies of *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, and 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; and from the unlikelihood of a conquered people taking the characters of an enemy's language, and quitting their own, and that after they had been many years delivered from them.

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<sup>k</sup> De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 18.—22, 25, 26,

He supposes, that the *Hebrews*, *Chaldæans*, *Phœnicians*, and *Samaritans*, had all the same characters originally, and that there was a change made among the Jews long after the times of *Exra*, from the ancient character to the square one; and that it began in the shekels, in the time of the *Maccabees*, in which he observed a mixture of the ancient and modern characters, and supposes, that by little and little the change was made, from frequent transcribing the Bible, and daily writing; and that the modern letters were gradually formed from use, and the swift manner of writing, and for the convenience of it: but 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; but rather that the ill-shaped, ragged, rough, and deformed *Samaritan* character, should spring from thence; and which 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*; so *Gaffarellus* \* ob-

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serves,

\* Unheard-of Curiosities, c. 13. f. 6. p. 40 5.

serves, that the *Samaritan* characters are corrupted from the *Hebrew*; and he adds, this is so certain a truth, as that it is a point of infinite perverseness to offer to doubt of 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; but this seems to depend much on fancy and imagination; and I am inclined to think, that all are deducible from the *Hebrew* square character, the *Assyrian* first, then the *Phœnician*, from that the *Greek*, and so on; according to *Hermannus Hugo*<sup>1</sup>, the *Hebrew* letters (the present ones) were the first; next sprung from them the *Chaldean* letters, which he says are scarce extant; then the *Assyrian*, or *Babylonian*, and the *Syriac*, or *Aramaean*, and from the *Syriac*, the *Samaritan*.

THE principal argument by which the hypothesis opposed, is supported, is taken from some coins or shekels, said to be dug up in *Judea*, with these words on them, *Jerusalem the holy*, and *the shekel of Israel*, the letters of which, it is asserted,

<sup>1</sup> De prima Scribendi orig. p. 54.

ferted, agree, in form, with the *Samaritan*. Now as the *Samaritans*, because of their aversion to the *Jews*, and the ten tribes after their separation from the other two, had nothing to do with *Jerusalem*, nor any esteem for it, neither of them can be thought to strike these pieces; and it is inferred from hence, that they must have belonged to the *Jews* before the captivity, and to the *Israelites* before the separation of the ten tribes; and 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; and this argument is thought to be unanswerable: but 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*; and besides the oldest of them do not precede the settlement of the high-priesthood in the *Asmonæan* family, and were not much above one hundred and fifty years before the æra of Christ, and some of them are  
later;

later <sup>m</sup>; to which may be added, 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. *Azariab* says <sup>n</sup>, 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*; and *Hottinger* <sup>o</sup> affirms, he saw one of the same sort in the collection of the *Electeur Palatine*. The Jews in their *Talmud* <sup>p</sup>, speak of a *Jerusalem* coin, which had *David* and *Solomon* on one side, and the words, *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*; and the learned *Christopher Wagenfeil*

<sup>m</sup> See the *Universal History*, vol. xvii. p. 302, 303, 304. <sup>n</sup> *Meor Enayim*, c. 58. fol. 174, 2. See fol. 54.

<sup>o</sup> *Præfat. ad Cippi Heb.* p. 41. <sup>p</sup> *T. Bab. Bava Kama*, fol. 97, 2. vid. *Waser. de Num. antiqu.* l. 2. c. 5.



*Wagenfeil* <sup>9</sup> 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 \* 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, an unicorn. See *Deut.* xxxiii. 17. that of *David*'s had a staff and scrip on one side, and a tower on the other ; that of *Mordecai*'s had sackcloth and ashes on one side, and a crown of glory on the other ; elsewhere † it is said, it had *Mordecai* on one side, and *Esther* on the other : there was also a coin of *Moses* ; I myself have seen a coin of his †, having on one side, his face, with his ears horned, like rams horns, and underneath is the word משה, in square characters, and on the other side, the first commandment, in the same character, לא יהיה לך and *thou shalt have no other God before me* ; and which exactly agrees with one *Mr. Selden* <sup>†</sup> had in his possession, found among some rubbish at *Shene* in *Surry*.

<sup>9</sup> Sotah, p. 574, 575.      \* Bereshit Rabba, Parash. 39. fol. 34, 4.      † Midrash Esther, fol. 95, 4.      † Penes *Mr. Richard Hall* in Southwark.      † De Jure Naturæ, l. 2. c. 6. p. 187.

*Surry*. It will be said, these coins are spurious; the same may be, and is said of those that have the *Samaritan* characters on them; nor is there any reason to believe that those shekels or coins which have on them, *Jerusalem the holy*, and *the shekel of Israel*, are any of them indisputably genuine. *Ottius* and *Reland*, who have applied themselves closely to the study of those coins, have as good as confessed it; and *Spanheim*, by what he has said, appears to be in a very great doubt about it<sup>t</sup>. The celebrated *Charles Patin*, so famous for his skill in coins and medals, and who had free access to the cabinets of all the princes in *Europe*, declared many years ago to the learned *Christopher Wagenfeil*<sup>u</sup> with great assurance, that he never found in those collections, an *Hebrew* coin, but what was manifestly spurious: wherefore 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 *Cutbites* or *Samaritans*, and left

<sup>t</sup> Universal History, ut supra, p. 303.

<sup>u</sup> Ut supra,

p. 576.

left with them out of hatred to them, and that the square letters in the times of *Ezra* were chosen, taken, and retained by the *Jews* for their use; but then how comes it to pass that the *Samaritan* characters were re-assumed and inscribed on the coins three hundred years after, namely, on those of *Simon* the high priest, of *Jonathan* his brother, and of *John Hyrcanus*, his son, as the coins published by Mr. *Swinton* shew <sup>w</sup>? and by *John Hyrcanus*, the last of these, *Samaria* was destroyed, the temple in *Gerizzim* demolished, after it had stood two hundred years, and the *Samaritans* made tributary to the *Jews*; and it is observable, that upon the coin of *Hyrcanus*, on one side are *Samaritan* letters, and on the other *Greek* letters, and which was usual with the *Carthaginians*, *Syrians*, and *Sidonians*; and there is an instance of it in a coin of *Demetrius*: <sup>x</sup> and by the way, this furnishes us with an answer to a question of *Bianconi* <sup>y</sup>, who asks, why the *Maccabees* did not put *Greek* letters on their money, a well known custom in  
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<sup>w</sup> Differt. de Num. Samar. p. 46, 49, 61. <sup>x</sup> Montfaucon. Diar. Italic. p. 355. <sup>y</sup> De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 23, 24.

that age, and common to all the east, for it seems he never saw any ; and adds, that *Jewish* coins with two sorts of letters were never seen. But to proceed ; from the different letters on the coin of *Hyrchanus*, from the one, it can no more be inferred, that *Samaritan* letters were in use among the *Jews*, than that from the other, *Greek* letters were ; and though I profess no skill in coins, I should think that the reason of those different characters were designed by *Hyrchanus* as an insult on both people, and as a triumph over them, and to perpetuate the fame of his conquests both 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* ; and indeed it is entirely inconsistent with it ; for how does it appear that those letters were left to the *Samaritans*, and others taken by the *Jews* ? and it is also clear that there is no necessity to give into the notion of a twofold character in use with the *Jews*, the one sacred, in which their holy books were written, namely,

the square character ; and the other common, used in coins and civil affairs, as the *Samaritan*; to which some Jews<sup>z</sup> and christians<sup>a</sup> seem to have been led by the above coins ; for though the *Egyptians*<sup>b</sup> had their sacred characters and their common ones, and so had the *Greeks*<sup>c</sup> yet not the *Jews*, whose priests had no juggling tricks to play, as the priests of *Egypt* and *Greece* had ; and 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, as if they had one for the sanctuary and sacred uses, and another for common use ; the only place I have met with, that seems to favour it, is the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, on Gen. xxxii. 2. “ and he called the name of the “ place in the language of the holy house, “ *Mabanaim*,” which is not to be rendered the language of the house of the sanctuary, or the temple, as by some, since that is usually called, *בית מקדש* or *מוקדשא*, as in Gen. xxviii. 17, 22. and not *בית קודשא* as here ;

<sup>z</sup> Maimon. & Bartenora in *Misn. Yadaim*, c. 4. f. 5. <sup>a</sup> Vid. Buxtorf, de Lit. Heb. f. 45. <sup>b</sup> Herodot. *Euterpe*, five, l. 2. c. 36. Diodor. *Sicul.* l. 1. p. 72. & l. 3. p. 144. Clement. *Alex. Stromat.* l. 5. p. 555. <sup>c</sup> Theodoret. in Gen. *Quæst.* 60.

here ; but the language of the holy house, or family, the people of God, that is, the *Hebrew* tongue ; to which may be added, an ancient writer among the christians, *Irenæus*\*, who says, that “ the ancient and first letters of the *Hebrews*, and called *sacerdotal*, are ten in number ;” but that he means to distinguish them from any other letters or characters, used by the *Hebrews*, does not appear ; 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 does with that of the square character.

\* Adv. Hæres. l. 2. c. 41.

## C H A P. III.

*Concerning the Original of the Samaritans,  
their Language and Letters.*

HAVING, in the preceding Chapter, shewn 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: and in order to set this in as clear a light as I can, 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 hinted, and so before the confusion of tongues, which, as the first language they belonged to, were pure and uncorrupt, and the original of others; which first letters were the *Hebrew*, that

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being the first tongue, as *Hermannus Hugo* <sup>d</sup> observes ; nor, as he adds, did the figures of letters begin to differ before the diversity of languages at *Babel*. But 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 *Phœnicians*, and others of the *Chaldæans* <sup>e</sup>. Many ascribe the invention of letters to the *Egyptians*, to the *Thoth*, *Taautus*, the *Mercury* of the *Egyptians*, as *Sanchoniatbo* <sup>f</sup>, *Gellius* <sup>g</sup>, and others, as some in *Plato* <sup>\*</sup> ; but *Pliny* says <sup>h</sup> the *Phœnicians* bear away the glory of it ; and if fame is to be credited, as *Lucan* <sup>i</sup> expresses it, they were the first that dared to mark words by figures. *Suidas* <sup>†</sup> ascribes the invention of letters to them, and so does *Mela* <sup>k</sup> ; but *Vossius*, in his observations on him, is of opinion, that by letters he means numbers, and that *Arithmetic* and *Astronomy* were the invention of the *Phœnicians*,

<sup>d</sup> De prima Scribendi Orig. c. 3. p. 42, 43. <sup>e</sup> Theophilus ad Autolyc. l. 3. prope finem. <sup>f</sup> Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 31. <sup>g</sup> Apud Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56. <sup>\*</sup> In Philebo, p. 374. & in Phædro, p. 1240. <sup>h</sup> Plin. l. 5. c. 12. <sup>i</sup> Phœnices primi, &c. Phar. fal. l. 3. v. 220. So Critias, apud Athenæum, l. 1. c. 22. p. 28. <sup>†</sup> In voce γραμματα, and in Καδμος. <sup>k</sup> De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.



*nicians*, which need the assistance of numbers; and perhaps the true reason why letters have been thought to be found out by them is, because they first brought them into *Greece*; but as Dr. *Cumberland*<sup>1</sup> remarks, 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 *Phœnicia*, nor in *Egypt*; and *Pliny*<sup>m</sup> is of opinion, that the *Assyrian* letters were always, or that the *Assyrians* always had letters; which he confirms by the testimonies of *Epigenes*, *Berosus* and *Critodemus*, who say, they had observations of the stars inscribed on bricks, for a long course of years past; as they might have from the beginning of their nation, or nearly, and which was very early: it was in their country the confusion of tongues was made; and their language comes near to the *Hebrew*, the first and pure language, from which theirs is a deviation; and so their letters might be taken from theirs, though greatly corrupted. *Elias* \* observes that the *Syrian* language is nearest to the holy, or *Hebrew* language, of all languages; and quotes

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*Aben*

<sup>1</sup> Sanchoniatho, p. 191.    <sup>m</sup> Ut supra, l. 7. c. 56.    \* Præ-  
fat. ad Methurgeman.

*Aben Ezra* as of opinion that the *Syrian* language is no other than the holy tongue corrupted; which corruption *Elias* thinks took place after *Abraham* departed from *Chaldea*, though perhaps it might be sooner; so *Ephrem Syrus*, who well understood that language, says \*, that the *Syrian* language has an affinity with the *Hebrew*, and in some respects nearer reaches the sense of the scriptures; and R. *David Ganz* † observes, that those who were nearest to the place where the confusion was made, were purer and nearer to the holy tongue, as the *Syrians* and *Arabians*; the *Assyrian*, *Chaldee*, and *Syrian* language and letters were the same; and they are of great affinity, if not the same, with the old *Phœnician*, now called the *Samaritan*, as will be seen hereafter; and the ducts of their letters may well be thought to be had from the *Hebrew*; but as the *Assyrians* are the first the heathen writers had knowledge of, to them they impute the original of letters, as many do †. *Diodorus Siculus* ° relates, that some say the *Syrians* (that is, the *Assyrians*)

\* Apud Basil. in Hexaëmeron, Homil. 2. † Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 4. 1. ° Vide Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30. ° Bibliothéc. l. 5. p. 340.

*Syrians*) were the inventors of letters; and *Eusebius* also observes<sup>p</sup> the same, that some say, the *Syrians* first devised letters; and he seems willing to allow it, provided that by *Syrians* are meant *Hebrews*; but no doubt those writers intended the *Syrians* or *Assyrians*, commonly so called: some, in *Clemens* of *Alexandria*<sup>q</sup>, join the *Assyrians* and *Phœnicians* together, as the inventors of letters; but the real fact seems to be as follows:

THE *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Assyrians* or *Syrians*, and not from the *Hebrews*, as some have thought; not from *Abraham* the ancestor of them, who, according to *Suidas*<sup>r</sup>, invented the holy letters and language, the knowledge of which he says, the *Hebrews* had, as being his disciples and posterity: that he invented the letters and language, may be doubted; but that he spoke it is not be questioned, since he was forty-eight years of age, when the confusion of tongues was made, as before observed, and therefore spoke the pure language; yea, *Elias Levita*<sup>s</sup> says, it was clear to him that language was confounded immediately after he went

H 3

from

<sup>p</sup> Præpar. Evangel. ut supra.      <sup>q</sup> Stromat. l. 1. p. 307.

<sup>r</sup> In voce Αβρααμ.      <sup>s</sup> Præfat. ad Methurgeman.

from *Chaldea*, and that he and his ancestors spoke the holy tongue as received from *Adam*, to *Noah*, which may be admitted; but it cannot by any means be admitted, that when he came among the *Canaanites*, that he either learned the primitive or *Hebrew* language from them, as some have fancied, which they neither had, nor he needed, since he spoke it before; or that he taught it them. *Eupolemus* and *Artapanus*, who say<sup>t</sup>, that *Abraham* taught the *Phœnicians Astronomy*, yet don't pretend that he taught them letters; nor is there any foundation for the one or the other, since he chose not to have such a free conversation and society with them as these required, who would not so much as bury his dead with them, nor suffer his son to intermarry with them; and the like precaution *Isaac* his son took with respect to *Jacob*, who for some years was out of the land, and when he returned, was but a sojourner in it, as his fathers had been; and after a while went down with his posterity into *Egypt*, where they abode at least two hundred years; and when they came  
from

<sup>t</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 17, 18.

from thence, and after forty years travel in the wilderness, and entered the land of *Canaan*, the inhabitants were either destroyed by them, or they fled before them, and even at the report of their coming\*; and so had no time to learn a language of them, or receive letters from them. *Cadmus*, the *Phœnician*, whom *Isocrates* † calls the *Sidonian*, is generally supposed to go from *Phœnicia* to *Greece*, in the times of *Joshua*, whither he carried letters, and therefore must be possessed of them before *Joshua* entered *Canaan*; he is said to come to *Rhodes* in *Greece*, and at *Lindus* to offer to *Lindia Minerva* a brass pot with *Phœnician* letters on it; and the huge serpents, who, upon his coming thither, are said ‡ to waste that country, seem to be no other than the *Hivites*, the same with the *Cadmonites*, Gen. xv. 19. which the word *Hivites* signifies, whom *Cadmus* brought with him thither. Others of the *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites* fled into *Africa* †, particularly the *Girgasites*, as is asserted in the *Jerusalem*

H 4

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\* Targum. in Cant. 3. 5. † *Helenaë Laudat.* in fine.  
 ‡ *Diodor. Sic. l. 5 p. 329.* † *T. Bab. Sanhedrin,*  
 fol. 91. 1. 2

*Talmud* <sup>u</sup>, and is confirmed by *Procopius* <sup>v</sup>, who says they came into *Numidia*, where they had a garrison in the place where in his time was the city of *Tingis* (now called *Tangier*), where they erected two pillars of white stone, then in being, A. D. 540, which he himself saw and read, on which in *Phœnician* letters were written, “we  
 “ are they that fled from the face of *Jesus*,  
 “ (or *Joshua*) the robber, the son of *Nave*  
 “ (or *Nun*).” *Suidas* \* says, it was written, we are the *Canaanites*; which is a full proof they had letters before the times of *Joshua*, and did not learn them of the *Israelites* when they came into *Canaan*; besides, it is clear from the scriptures also, that they had letters before that time, as appears from the names of some cities among them, particularly *Debir*, which in the *Persian* language, as *Kimchi* <sup>z</sup> from the *Rabbins* says, signifies a book; and which place was also called *Kirjath-sannab*, and *Kirjath-sepher*, which signify, that it was a city where either there was an academy for the instruction

<sup>u</sup> T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3. <sup>v</sup> Vandalic. l. 2. p. 135. apud Prideaux. Not. ad Marmor. Arundel. Tingit. p. 139, 140. Evagrii Ecclef. Hist. l. 4. c. 18. \* In voce *χαρακτ*, so Athanasius, contr. Gentes, p. 16. <sup>z</sup> Comment. in Jud. 1, 1. T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 2.

struction of persons, or a library of books, or where the archives of the country were kept, a city of Archives, as the *Targum*, which supposes letters; and the *Septuagint* render it a city of letters, *Josh.* xv. 49. from all which it seems plain, that the *Phœnicians* or *Canaanites* did not receive letters from the *Hebrews*, but rather from the *Assyrians* or *Syrians*.

THE *Assyrians* or *Syrians*, though they may be distinguished, the one having their name from *Ashur*, a son of *Shem*, and the other from *Aram*, a younger son of his, *Gen.* x. 22. hence they are called in *Strabo* <sup>v</sup> *Aramæans* or *Arimei*; and in the times of *Abaz* king of *Judah* there were both a king of *Assyria*, and a king of *Syria*, yet these two names are often confounded, and indifferently used by the ancients, as if the same people, *Syria* being commonly thought to be a contraction of *Assyria* <sup>z</sup>; so *Lucian* of *Samosata* in *Syria*, calls himself an *Assyrian* <sup>a</sup>, and on the other hand, *Tatian* the *Assyrian*, is called by *Clemens* of *Alexandria* <sup>b</sup>, a *Syrian*; these countries being contiguous, yea, the one a part of the other,

<sup>v</sup> *Geograph.* l. 16. p. 540.      <sup>z</sup> *Universal History*, vol. 2: p. 255.      <sup>a</sup> *De Dea Syriæ*, p. 1.      <sup>b</sup> *Stromat.* l. 3. p. 460.

other, they may very well be called the one and the other; the *Syrians*, according to *Suidas* \*, have their name from the *Affyrians*; hence *Isidore* <sup>c</sup> says, whom the ancients called *Affyrians* we call *Syrians*; so *Justin* <sup>d</sup> remarks, that the *Affyrians*, who were afterwards called *Syrians*, held the empire three hundred years; and the same people who, according to *Herodotus* <sup>e</sup>, were by the *Greeks* called *Syrians*, are by the *Barbarians* called *Affyrians*, among whom were the *Chaldeans*; and *Strabo* observes <sup>f</sup>, that *Semiramis* and *Ninus* were called *Syrians*, by the one *Babylon* the royal city was built, and by the other *Nineveh*, the metropolis of *Affyria*; and that the same language was used both without and within the *Euphrates*, that is, by the *Syrians* strictly so called, and by the *Babylonians* or *Chaldæans*: and it need not seem strange that the *Phœnicians* should receive their letters from these people, since they were their neighbours, and lived so near them. *Herodotus* <sup>g</sup> speaks of them as springing out of *Syria*, and dwelling in *Syria*, and of

*Phœ-*

\* In voce *Assυριοι*.      <sup>c</sup> Orig. l. 9. c. 2.      <sup>d</sup> A Trogo  
 l. 1. c. 2.      <sup>e</sup> Polymnia, five, l. 7. c. 63.      <sup>f</sup> Geograph.  
 l. 2. p. 58.      <sup>g</sup> Clio, five, l. 1. c. 105. & Euterpe, five, l. 2.  
 c. 116.



*Phœnicians* and *Syrians* as together in *Palestine* <sup>h</sup>. *Phœnicia* is often described as included in *Syria*, and as a part of it; so *Diodorus Siculus* <sup>i</sup>, speaking of *Cœle-Syria*, adds, in which *Phœnicia* is comprehended; and *Strabo* <sup>k</sup> says, some divide all *Syria* into *Cœle-Syrians* and *Phœnicians*; and *Clemens* of *Alexandria* <sup>l</sup> calls *Phœnicia*, *Phœnicia* of the *Syrians*; and *Isidore* <sup>m</sup> observes, that *Syria* has in it, the provinces *Comagene*, *Phœnicia*, and *Palestine*; so *Pliny* <sup>n</sup>: *Philo* \* the Jew asserts, that *Phœnicia*, *Cœle-Syria*, and *Palestine*, went by the common name of *Canaan* in the times of *Moses*; and the *Phœnicians* and *Assyrians* are reckoned as one by *Macrobius* <sup>o</sup>; with all which agree some passages of scripture; the woman of *Canaan*, in *Mat.* xv. 22. is called a *Syro-Phœnician* in *Mark* vii. 26. so the disciples are said to sail into *Syria*, and land at *Tyre* the chief city in *Phœnicia*, *Acts* xxi. 3. and as their country was much the same, so their manners; hence the proverb <sup>p</sup>, “ the *Syrians* against the

<sup>h</sup> Euterpe, five, l. 2. c. 104. & l. 4. c. 89. <sup>i</sup> Bibliothec. l. 18. p. 591. <sup>k</sup> Geograph. l. 16. p. 515. <sup>l</sup> Admon. ad Græc. p. 25. <sup>m</sup> Orig. l. 14. c. 3. <sup>n</sup> Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 12. \* De vita Mosis l. 1. p. 627. <sup>o</sup> Saturnal. l. 1. c. 21. <sup>p</sup> Vid. Suidam in voce συγοί, & Reines. de Ling. Punic. p. 11.

the *Phœnicians*," signifying, their being alike as to temper and behaviour; their religion and deities were the same; the rites of *Adonis* were common to them both; *Adad*, the god of the *Assyrians*<sup>a</sup>, is the same with the *Adodus* of the *Phœnicians*\*; so that, all things considered, it may well be thought they had the same language and letters, or nearly the same. *Annius* of *Viterbo* affirms<sup>a</sup>, that the ancient *Assyrian* and *Phœnician* letters were the same, who certainly was a man of learning, for the times he lived in, and very inquisitive, however culpable he might be in publishing some fragments as genuine, thought to be spurious; on which account perhaps he has been a little too severely treated by critics, as *Dr. Clayton* late bishop of *Clogher* has observed<sup>b</sup>; and who is of opinion, that his fragment of *Berosus*, so much complained of, ought not to be entirely rejected as spurious; and the same writer says<sup>c</sup>, that the first *Phœnix*, from whom the *Phœnicians* had their name, and the first *Cadmus* from whom the

<sup>a</sup> Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 24.    \* Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 2. p. 38.    <sup>a</sup> Comment. in Xenophon. de Æquivocis, p. 118.    <sup>b</sup> Introduct. Chronolog. Heb. Bible, p. 19—22.    <sup>c</sup> Annii Comment. in Manethon. Supplement. p. 97.

the *Greeks* had their letters, sprung from *Syria*; which *Phœnix*, who is said by him to reign in *Sidon*, according to *Sanboni-atbo*<sup>d</sup>, was no other than *Canaan* the son of *Ham*; for he says, that “one of these (the *Phœnicians*) *Isiris* was the inventor of three letters, the brother of *Cbna* (or *Canaan*) who was first called *Phœnix*.”

THE old *Canaanitish* or *Phœnician* language, and also the *Punic*, were the same; hence *Austin*<sup>e</sup> says, that the country-people living near him, who were a colony of the *Phœnicians*, when asked who they were, used to answer, in the *Punic* language, *Chanani*, *Candanites*. Now, though this language was near the *Hebrew* language, so that the *Hebrews* and *Canaanites* could converse together as to understand one another, which appears from *Abraham's* conversation with them, *Gen.* xiv. 18.—24. and xxiii. 3.—16. and from the conversation of the *Hebrew* spies with *Rahab* the *Canaanite*, *Josh.* ii. 9—21. and from the names the *Canaanites* imposed on their cities before they came into the hands  
of

<sup>d</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 2. c. 10. p. 39. <sup>e</sup> Exposit. Rom. Tom. 7. p. 363.

of the *Hebrews*, as is evident from the books of *Joshua* and *Judges*, unless those names were given them by *Eber* and his sons, who dwelt here before the *Canaanites*, as Dr. *Lightfoot* \* suggests; yet the language was not altogether the same, it differed much, and especially in after-times, and particularly in their colonies, where it had the name of the *Punic*. *Austin* † having remarked, that the *Hebrews* call *Christ* *Messiah*, observes, that “ the word agrees “ with the *Punic* language, as very many “ *Hebrew* words, and almost all do ;” which may be true of proper names in particular, but not of words in general. *St. Jerom*, who understood the *Hebrew* language better than *Austin*, affirms, that the *Canaanitish* or *Punic* language was bordering near unto the *Hebrew* \*, and in a great part near unto it † ; he does not say, as *Fuller* ‡ observes, in the greatest part, nor almost in every part, and still less in every part, but in a great part; and so *Origen* § asserts, that the

\* Works, vol. 2. p. 327. † Contr. Petil. l. 2. p. 123. Tom. 7. vid. Reinel. de Ling. Punic. c. 4. f. 4. p. 20.  
 \* Trad. Heb. in Gen. fol. 71, M. † Comment. in Isaiam; c. 19. fol. 42. C. & in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 51. B. Tom. 5. ‡ Miscellan. Sacr. l. 4. c. 4. § Contr. Celsum, l. 3. p. 115.

the *Hebrew* language differs both from the *Syrian* and the *Phœnician*. *Jerom* in one place <sup>y</sup> says, that the *Canaanitish* or *Punic* language is a middle language between the *Egyptian* and the *Hebrew*. *Salmasius* <sup>a</sup> suggests as if some thought that the *Punic* and *Egyptian* languages were the same; which can by no means be admitted.

It seems most probable what *Jerom* elsewhere <sup>a</sup> observes, that the *Canaanitish* or *Phœnician* language is the *Syrian*, or nearly that; and *Austin* <sup>b</sup> affirms, that the *Hebrew*, *Punic*, and *Syrian* languages are very near a-kin; and most of the words which he makes mention of as *Punic*, are plainly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*; so *mammon*, he says <sup>c</sup>, is the word for gain, in the *Punic* language, and is the *Syriac* word used for riches in the time of Christ, *Luke* xvi. 9. hence with the *Phœnicians* is the name of a man *Abdamamon* <sup>d</sup>, which signifies a servant of *mammon*, riches wealth, or gain. see *Mat.* vi. 24. so he says <sup>e</sup> blood, in the *Punic* language is called *Edom*; now in  
the

<sup>y</sup> In *Isaiam*, ut supra.      <sup>a</sup> Not. in pallium *Tertull.* p. 205.      <sup>b</sup> In *Ioannem*, Tr. 15. p. 58. Tom. 9.      <sup>c</sup> De *Sermon.* Dom. l. 2. p. 352. Tom. 4.      <sup>d</sup> Vid. *Swinton.* *Inscript.* Cit. p. 21.      <sup>e</sup> *E-narrat.* in Pf. 136. p. 646. B.

the *Hebrew* tongue it is *Dam*; but in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* tongue, it is,  $\text{דַּמ}$ , or  $\text{דַּמָּ}$ , which are frequently used in the *Chaldee* paraphrases: he also observes<sup>f</sup> *Baal* in the *Punic* tongue, signifies Lord, and *Samen* heaven, and both together, Lord of heaven, which with *Santhoniatho*<sup>g</sup> a *Phœnician* writer, is a deity of the *Phœnicians*; and so *Balsamen* in the *Pœnulus* of *Plautus*<sup>h</sup>, is manifestly of a *Chaldee* or *Syriac* termination: the above *Phœnician* writer<sup>i</sup> speaks of a sort of intelligible animals, whom he calls *Zophasemin*, and which *Philo Byblius*, who translated his work out of the *Phœnician* language into *Greek*, interprets seers, or contemplators of the heavens, which word also, is plainly in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect; and *Kircher*<sup>k</sup> affirms, that he had in his possession a fragment of *Santhoniatho*, written in the *Aramœan* or *Syrian* language. The *Maltese*, or the inhabitants of the island called *Melita*, *Acts* xxviii. 1. a colony of the *Phœnicians* as *Diodorus Siculus*<sup>l</sup> affirms,

<sup>f</sup> Quæst. super Jud. l. 7. p. 130. B. Tom. 4.      <sup>g</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. l. 2. p. 34.      <sup>h</sup> Act. 5. sc. 2. v. 67.  
<sup>i</sup> Apud Euseb. l. 2. p. 33.      <sup>k</sup> Obelisc Pamphil. p. 111. apud Fabricii Biblioth. Gr. Tom 1. p. 164.      <sup>l</sup> Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 294.      2

firms, have in their language a great deal of the old *Phœnician* or *Punic* unto this day; and it is observable, that their numerals from two to eleven, end in *a*, and from twenty to an hundred, in *in<sup>m</sup>*; which are exactly the terminations of the same numbers in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* dialect. The *Carthaginians* were another colony of the *Phœnicians*, and the old name of the city of *Carthage* was *Cartheda*; which, as *Solinus*<sup>n</sup> says, in the *Phœnician* language, signifies the *new city*, being composed of קרתא *Kartba* a city, and חרתא *new*, which are both *Chaldee* words. There was a city in *Canaan*, or old *Phœnicia*, called *Hadattab*, or *Hazor-Hadattab*, *New Hazor*, *Josh.* xv. 25. and another city there is called *Kerioth*: another name of *Carthage* we meet with in *Plautus*<sup>o</sup>, appears to be of *Phœnician* original, *Ghadreanac*, the chambers, lodging, or seat of *Anak*, that is, the *Anakim*, such as were in old *Canaan*; though, according to *Dr. Hyde*<sup>p</sup>, the word signifies, as he conjectures, the *new city* also: and *Bochart*<sup>q</sup> has

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observed

<sup>m</sup> See *Universal History*, vol. 17. p. 299.    <sup>n</sup> *Polyhist.* c. 40. So *Isidor. Orig.* l. 14. c. 14.    <sup>o</sup> *Pœnulus, Act.* 5. sc. 2. v. 35.    <sup>p</sup> *Not. in Peritzol. Itinerar. Mundi*, p. 44.    <sup>q</sup> *Canaan.* 1. 2. c. 6.

observed many words in the *Punic* of *Plautus*, which are in the *Syrian* dialect; and there are several words in different authors said to be *Punic* or *Phœnician*, which are manifestly *Chaldee* or *Syriac*. *Plutarch* says †, the *Phœnicians* call an ox *Tbor*, which is the word used in *Chaldee* for it. *Jonah's* gourd, according to *Jerom* ‡, was called *Elkeroa* in the *Syriac* and *Punic* language, as if they were the same. *Sanctius* § observes, that in *Spain* a garden is called by a *Punic* name *Carmen*, which signifies a vineyard, though set with other trees; which *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*; and *Charmis* \* is the name of a city given by the *Phœnicians*, because of the multitude of vines about it. *Isidore* ¶, says the *Phœnicians* call a new village *Magar*; the word is used by *Plautus* in his *Pœnulus* ††, where it signifies a place in *Carthage*, some public building there.

† Opera, vol. 1. Vit. Syllæ, p. 463.    § Comment. in Ionam, c. 4. fol. 59. B.    † Comment. in Cantic. 1. 6. p. 58.    \* Stephan. de urb.    ¶ Orig. l. 15. c. 12. so Servius in Virgil. Æneid. lib. 1. v. 369.    †† Prolog. v. 86. vid. Philip. Pareum in Ib. & Lexic. Plautin.



there, and it is the same with the *Syriac* word *Magar*, which signifies an habitation ; so *Anna* in *Virgil* <sup>x</sup>, the sister of *Dido*, or *Elisa*, who were both *Phœnicians*, and daughters of *Pygmalion* king of *Tyre*, is the *Syriac* name for *Hannah*. See *Luke* ii. 36. *Gades* or *Cadix*, corruptly called *Cales*, which belongs to *Spain*, the *Phœnicians* called *Gadir* or *Gadira*, which in the *Punic* language signifies an hedge, as is observed by many <sup>y</sup>, and so it does in *Chaldee*; the reason of which 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, *Mark* vii. 11. is said by *Theophrastus* <sup>z</sup> to signify the same in the *Punic* language ; and *Lachman* is used by *Athenæus* <sup>a</sup> for bread, which the *Syrians* so call, and which in *Syria* is the best bread ; and by the *Syrians* and *Syria*, he means *Phœnicians* and *Phœnicia*, where it seems it was so called, and is manifestly a *Chaldee* word ; as is the word *Nabla*, the name of a musical in-

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strument,

<sup>x</sup> *Æneid*. l. 4. v. 9. & passim.    <sup>y</sup> *Festus Avienus* in *Ora Maritim*. l. 1. *Solinus*, c. 36. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 4. c. 22. *Isidor. Orig.* l. 14. c. 6.    <sup>z</sup> *Apud Joseph. contr. Apion.* l. 1. f. 22.    <sup>a</sup> *Deipnosophist.* l. 3. c. 29. p. 113.

strument, said by him \* to be an invention of the *Phœnicians*; as *Sambuca* is of the *Syrians*, called the *Phœnician lyre*, the same with the *Chaldee Sabbeca*, *Dan.* iii. 5. there rendered *sackbut*. *Pausanias* † uses this as a proof that *Cadmus* was not an *Egyptian*, but a *Phœnician*; because *Minerva* is not called by the *Egyptian* word *Sais*, but by the *Phœnician* word *Siga*, which comes from the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* word  $\aleph \aleph$  to increase or be increased; from all which it appears, that the *Chaldee* or *Syrian* language and the *Phœnician* are nearly the same, and so the letters may be supposed to be.

LET it be further observed, that the *Greeks* had their letters from the *Phœnicians*, at least sixteen or seventeen of them, <sup>b</sup> which *Cadmus*, some say *Linus* ‡, brought out of *Phœnicia* into *Greece*; which, without mentioning their number, is asserted by *Herodotus* <sup>c</sup>, who says, they were called *Cadmeian* and *Phœnician* letters, and that he saw some of them at *Thebes* in *Bœotia*, engraved on some *Tripods* there, and that they were

\* *Ib.* l. 4. c. 23. p. 175. † *Bœotica*, five, l. 9. p. 560.

<sup>b</sup> *Plin.* l. 7. c. 7. c. 56. *Irenæus* adv. *Hæres.* l. 1. c. 12. *Isidor.* *Orig.* l. 1. c. 3. † *Suidas* in voce  $\Delta\theta\omicron\varsigma$ . <sup>c</sup> *Terpsichore*, five, l. 5. c. 58. 59.

were greatly like the *Ionic* letters; the same says *Diodorus Siculus* of the original and names of those letters, and relates <sup>d</sup>, that the brass pot *Cadmus* offered to *Minerva Lindia*, had an inscription of *Phœnician* letters on it: the *Greeks* therefore, themselves, acknowledge, that they had their letters from the *Phœnicians*, as the above writers affirm, and so *Euphorus* <sup>e</sup>, *Zenodotus* <sup>f</sup>, and others; hence *Josephus* <sup>g</sup> observes, that they glory in it, that they received them from them; so that this is a matter out of question: and *Bianconi* <sup>h</sup> is of opinion, that the ancient *Greeks* used the very letters of the *Phœnicians*; and indeed this seems to be the meaning of *Herodotus*, in the place before referred to; and *Diçtys Cretensis* is said <sup>i</sup> to have written his history of the *Trojan* wars, in the *Greek* language, but in *Phœnician* letters; and so *Linus* and *Orpheus* wrote in the letters of the *Pelasgi*, the same with the *Phœnician*, as says \* *Diodorus*; and the *Greeks* formerly wrote as the *Phœnicians* did, from

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the

<sup>d</sup> Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 328, 329, 340.    <sup>e</sup> Apud Clem. Alex. Stromat. l. 1. p. 306.    <sup>f</sup> In Laert. vit. Philosoph. l. 7. p. 455.    <sup>g</sup> Contr. Apion. l. 1. f. 2.    <sup>h</sup> De Antiqu. Liter. Heb. p. 59.    <sup>i</sup> Vid. Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. l. 1. c. 5. f. 10. p. 33    \* Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 200, 201.

the right to the left, for in this form was the name of *Agamemnon* written, on his statue at *Olympia*<sup>b</sup>; and thus wrote the *Etrusci*, who had their letters from the *Greeks* †, whose ancient language was the *Aramæan* or *Syrian* ‡; which way of writing by the *Greeks*, was gradually by little and little disused, and issued in a form like that of the ploughing of oxen, called *Εεσροφηδον*, in which manner the laws of *Solon* were written, as appears from *Suidas*<sup>c</sup> and *Harpocratian*<sup>d</sup>; that is alternately, from the right to the left. Now as the *Greeks* received their letters from the *Phœnicians*, and there is a similarity of the letters of the one to those of the other, as it is reasonable to suppose there should, and as *Herodotus*, upon his own sight, affirms there was, as before observed, nay, were the same; so there is a great likeness between the *Greek* and the present *Samaritan* letters; as the *Samaritans* wrote from the right hand towards the left, if the position of the *Samaritan* letters be inverted for that pur-

<sup>b</sup> Pausan. Eliac. 1. five l. 5. p. 338. † Vid. Dickinson. Delphi Phœnic. c. 10. & Reinesium de lingua, Punicæ, c. 12. f. 30. ‡ Reines. lb. c. 2. f. 16. <sup>c</sup> In voce νομος. <sup>d</sup> In Οκαωδεν.

purpose, as Mr. *Bedford* remarks <sup>k</sup>, the letters will appear to be the same ; or, however, very much alike : the use to be made of this will soon and easily be perceived ; for, as *Bochart* <sup>l</sup> reasons, this being the case, it follows that the *Samaritan* characters are the very same which were used in *Phœnicia* in the times of *Cadmus* ; and it is acknowledged by many learned men, that the letters or characters of the ancient *Canaanites*, that is, the *Phœnicians*, were either the same with, or very like to the *Samaritan* characters <sup>m</sup>, or that the old *Phœnician* letters, and the *Samaritan* are very similar, and nearly the same, so that they may be reckoned the same <sup>n</sup>; and whereas the *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Assyrians*, or *Chaldeans*, it follows that the *Samaritan* letters being so like the *Phœnician*, must be the same, or near the same, with the old *Assyrian* and *Chaldean* characters ; and that the people who are properly called *Samaritans*, had both their language and their letters from the *Chaldeans* or *Syrians*, will

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<sup>k</sup> Chronology, p. 479.

<sup>l</sup> Ep. Vossio col. 859.

<sup>m</sup> Universal History, vol. 2. p. 347.

<sup>n</sup> Bochart. Canaan l. 1. c. 20. col. 451. Dr. Kennicott. Dissert. 2. p. 151. 156.

appear probable from the original of them, next to be considered.

IT is amazing to me, that some learned men should make the ten tribes of *Israel* that revolted under *Jeroboam*, the original of the *Samaritans*. *Samaria* indeed was built in the times of *Omri*, a successor of his, and not before, and by him, between whom and *Jeroboam*, reigned *Nadab*, *Bascha*, *Elab* and *Zimri*, and this city also became the metropolis of the ten tribes, and was inhabited only by *Israelites*, tho' never from hence were called *Samaritans*, but *Israel* or *Ephraim*; nor had they any more connexion with the people after called *Samaritans* than with the *Scythians* and *Tartars*; for it was not till after the *Israelites* were carried captive into *Affyria*, that those, after called *Samaritans*, were sent as a colony from thence to re-people *Samaria*, which was entirely stripped of its inhabitants by the king of *Affyria*; nor does it appear that those who were left in the land of *Israel* had any society with this new colony, or mixed with 'em, either in civil or religious things, but returned, at least, many of them, to the pure worship of God, and joined with the  
tribe

tribe of *Judab*, and put themselves under the government of the kings of it, and went with that tribe captive into *Babylon*. Nor is it clear that either those 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*, nor they with them; even until they were joined by some renegado *Jews* in the times of *Manasseh* the priest, for whom a temple was built in *Gerrizzim* by *Sanballat*; the only instance is of the priest sent from *Affyria* to teach them the worship of the God of the land, which they very coolly and hypocritically received, still continuing in the idolatry they brought with them, and in which they continued to the times of *Ezra*, 2 *Kings*, xvii. 27, 28, 29, 33, 44. on which account the *Israelites* that were left in the land were obliged to keep at a distance from them, even when they first came among them, for had they joined them, it may reasonably be thought, there would have been a priest, who, though of *Jero-boam's* religion, could have instructed them as well as the priest sent from among the captives in *Affyria*, who also must have

been

been of the same sort: now, either there were no priests left in the land, or, if there were, they had not joined the *Samaritans*, and though they had officiated in *Jeroboam's* idolatry, did not chuse to join them in theirs; and certain it is, that in the times of *Ezra* and *Nebemiah*, the *Jews* would have nothing to do with the *Samaritans*, especially in religious things, *Ezra* iv. 1, 2, 3. *Nebemiah* ii. 20. and though under the influence of *Sanballat* their governor, they received the renegado *Jews* with his son-in-law *Manasseh* at the head of them, it does not appear that they cordially embraced them, since in any time of trouble the *Jews* were in, [they did not care to own they had any connexion with them; so in the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, by whom the *Jews* were greatly distressed, they wrote unto him, and desired they might not be considered as of the same religion with the *Jews*, and be involved with them in the same distress; since, though their ancestors had been forced into a compliance with some parts of their worship, yet they assured him they were different from them, both in their manners or customs, and in their original;



original; and, whereas they had built an altar on mount *Gerizzim*, not dedicated to any deity, they desired it might, for the future be called the temple of the *Grecian Jupiter*<sup>n</sup>; though, at other times, when the circumstances of the *Jews* were more favourable, then they claimed kindred with them, and derived their descent from *Joseph*, and his sons *Manasseh*, and *Ephraim*<sup>o</sup>, as they did from *Jacob* in the times of *Christ*; and yet then the *Jews* had no dealings with them, *John* iv. 9, 12, and they are manifestly distinguished by our Lord himself from the *Jews*, and from the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, *Matt.* x. 5, 6. *John* iv. 22. What is said in favour of the *Samaritans* by Jewish writers, as by *Maimonides* \*, and by *Obadiab Bartenora* †, must be understood as expressing the opinion their ancestors had of them, after they embraced the *Jewish* religion; in which they thought they were hearty and sincere, and so gave credit to them, until the wise men of *Israel*, as they say, made a strict enquiry about 'em, and

<sup>n</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 12. c. 5. f. 5.      <sup>o</sup> Ibid. l. 11. c. 8. f. 6.      \* Comment. in Mifn. Beracot, c. 8. 8.      † Comment. in. Ib. c. 7. 1.

and found that they worshipped the image of a dove; after which they reckoned them as other idolatrous heathens, and 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\*.

A LATE writer<sup>p</sup> suggests, that *Jeroboam* not only coined a new religion by the help of his priests, but a new language and letters, to keep the people close unto him, which language he supposes to be the *Samaritan*; but this is said without any proof, or shadow of probability; and with equal probability is what *Genebrard*<sup>q</sup>, from a *Jewish* writer, asserts, and which perhaps may better suit the hypothesis of a change of letters, than where it is commonly placed; that “ the *Jews* in *Rebobo-*  
 “ *am*’s time, that they might not join with  
 “ the schismatic *Israelites*, in any use of fa-  
 “ cred things, contrived the form of letters  
 “ which are now used, i. e. the square  
 “ letters, changing their former figures,  
 “ and

\* Vide Guisium in Ib.  
 Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 72.  
 3203. e Mose Gerundense.

<sup>p</sup> Kalf. Dissert. Philolog. de  
<sup>q</sup> Chronolog. ad A. M.

“ and left those which have been since  
 “ called the *Samaritan* letters ;” but, the  
*Samaritans* had their original language  
 and letters elsewhere ; and from whence  
 they had them, may be concluded from  
 the account given of them in 2 *Kings* xvii.  
 24, 30, 31. where the places from whence  
 they came are expressly named, and the ido-  
 latry they brought with them fully de-  
 scribed, and in which they continued ; and  
 by considering which, it will appear, that  
 they were originally *Chaldeans* or *Phæni-  
 cians*, and had the same religion, language,  
 and letters they had ; some of them were  
 brought from *Babylon*, the metropolis of  
 the *Chaldean* empire, and perhaps the  
 greater part, since they are first mentioned ;  
 and who, no doubt, brought with them  
 their language and letters, the *Chaldean*, as  
 they did their idolatry ; for they made *succoth  
 benoth*, or *the tabernacles of the daughters*,  
 or *booths of Venus*, as *Selden* <sup>r</sup>thinks it may  
 be rendered ; and which may have respect to  
 the apartments in the temple of *Mylitta*,  
 or *Venus* in *Babylon*, the like to which  
 those

<sup>r</sup> De Dif. Syr. Syntagm. 2. c. 7. p. 713.

those people made in *Samaria*, in which women, once in their lives, prostituted themselves to whomsoever asked them, in honour of *Venus*; of which filthy practice, *Herodotus*<sup>s</sup> makes mention; and from the *Babylonians* the *Phœnicians* had the same custom, their women prostituted themselves before their idols, and dedicated their gain to them, being strongly persuaded they would be propitious to them, and they should enjoy prosperity, as *Athanasius*<sup>t</sup> affirms; and *Valerius Maximus*<sup>u</sup> relates, that they had a temple called the temple of *Sicca Venus*, which is near in sound to *Succoth Benoth*, where their matrons before marriage prostituted their bodies for gain; and there was a *Phœnician* colony, three days journey from *Carthage*, called *Sicca Veneria*<sup>w</sup>; to which may be added, that it was a custom with the *Cyprians*, another colony of the *Phœnicians*, for virgins before marriage to prostitute themselves, and give their gain to *Venus*<sup>x</sup>; by all which, it is plain from whom these *Samaritans* received their impiety and impurity: others of these  
people

<sup>s</sup> Clio, five l. 1. c. 199. <sup>t</sup> Contr. Gentes, p. 21. <sup>u</sup> Dict. & Faët. Memorab. l. 2. c. 6. f. 15. <sup>w</sup> Ptolem. Geograph. l. 4. c. 3. vid. Reines. de Ling. Punic. c. 8. f. 28. & Rivin. de Majumis, c. 7. f. 26. <sup>x</sup> Justin. e ! rogo l. 18. c. 5.

people were brought from *Cuthab*, or *Cutha*, a city in *Erec*, a province of *Babylon*<sup>y</sup>, where it is said *Abraham* lived; the *Samaritans* are commonly called *Cuthim*, or *Cuthites* in Jewish writings<sup>z</sup>; and so these were of the same country with the former, and had the same language and letters in all probability; the idol they made for themselves was *Nergal*, which is part of the name of two of the princes of *Babylon*, it being usual with great personages in the east, to take their idols into their names, See *Jer.* xxxix. 3. this name according to *Hillerus*, 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* the same with *Iva*, *Is.* xxxvii. 17. and perhaps the same with the *Avim*, *Deut.* ii. 23. a people that formerly dwelt in *Phœnicia*, or on the borders of it, from whence might be a colony of them in the country of *Assyria* or *Babylon*; in the *Septuagint* version of v. 31. they are called *Hivites*, which were one of the seven nations of  
*Canaan*,

<sup>y</sup> Hyde Hist. Relig. Vet. Perf. c. 2. p. 39, 40. <sup>z</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 26. fol. 26. 2. and c. 38. fol. 44. 2.

*Canaan*, or of old *Phœnicia*, the remains of which had settled in those parts; these had for their idols, *Nibbaz* and *Tartak*, which according to *Hillerus*<sup>b</sup>, signify 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, worshipped by the *Chaldeans* and *Affyrians*: the next came from *Hamath*, a city in *Syria*, on the northern borders of the land of *Canaan*, *Numb.* xxxiv. 8. their idol is called *Ashima*, which, as *Hillerus*<sup>c</sup> says, was with the *Arabs*, the name of a lion, the symbol of the sun; which might be worshipped by these men, under this name, as the sun was the chief object of the worship of the *Affyrians* and *Phœnicians*, as *Macrobius*<sup>d</sup> observes: the last of this colony of the *Samaritans*, were men that came from *Sepharvaim*, which was either the *Sipharah* of *Ptolemy*<sup>e</sup>, in *Mesopotamia*, or that which was near *Babylon*. *Abydenus*<sup>f</sup> makes mention

<sup>b</sup> Onomastic. sacr. p. 605.      <sup>c</sup> Ib. p. 609.      <sup>d</sup> Saturnal. l. 4. c. 21, 42.      <sup>e</sup> Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.      <sup>f</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 41. p. 457.

tion of, or rather, as *Vitringa* thinks<sup>§</sup>, a city in *Syro-Phœnicia*, or a province in which *Abydenus*<sup>h</sup> places *Heliopolis*, namely *Cœle-Syria*; and it is certain the idolatry these men were guilty of, is the same with that of the old *Canaanites* or *Phœnicians*, who burnt their children in the fire to *Molech*, *Lev. xviii. 21.* as these did to *Anammelech* and *Adrammelech*, the same with *Molech*, as the word *Melech* with which they end, shews, which signifies king, as *Molech* does: that the *Phœnicians* sacrificed their children to *Saturn* or *Molech*, is observed by *Pliny*<sup>i</sup>, *Eusebius*<sup>k</sup>, and *Athanasius*<sup>l</sup>; hence those words of *Ennius*, “ poeni sunt soliti, suos sacrificare “ puellos,” as did the *Carthaginians*, a colony of the *Phœnicians*, which is affirmed by *Porphyry*<sup>m</sup>, *Justin*<sup>n</sup>, *Curtius*<sup>o</sup>, *Pescennius Festus*<sup>p</sup>, *Diodorus Siculus*<sup>q</sup>, and others; from all which it clearly appears, that the *Samaritans* sprung from the *Assyrians* or *Chaldeans*, and the *Phœnicians*; and sometimes they would call themselves *Sidoni-  
K nians,*

<sup>§</sup> Comment. in *Isaiam*, c. 36, 19. <sup>h</sup> Apud *Euseb.* ut supra c. 12. <sup>i</sup> *Nat. Hist.* l. 36. c. 5. <sup>k</sup> *De Laud. Constantin.* p. 646. <sup>l</sup> *Contr. Gent.* p. 21. <sup>m</sup> *De Ab- finentia*, l. 2. c. 27. <sup>n</sup> *E Trogo*, l. 18. c. 6, and l. 19. c. 1. <sup>o</sup> *Hist.* l. 4. c. 3. <sup>p</sup> Apud *Lactant. Institut.* l. 1. c. 21. <sup>q</sup> *Bibliothec.* l. 20. p. 756. 789.

nians<sup>r</sup>, from *Sidon*, a chief city in *Phœnicia*; so that they may well be thought to bring with them to *Samaria*, the language and letters of the *Assyrians* and *Phœnicians*: and certain it is, that the *Samaritans* used the *Syrian* tongue and letters, *Ezra* iv. 7. the same with the *Chaldee*, *Dan.* i. 4, and 2. 4. more than two hundred years after they came to *Samaria*; for their epistle to the king of *Persia* was written, in that language and letters; and according to *Josephus*<sup>\*</sup>, the *Syrians*, *Phœnicians*, *Ammonites*, and *Moabites*, joined the *Samaritans* in it; and with great propriety did they use 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*<sup>s</sup> asserts. *Jerom*<sup>t</sup> is clear in it, that the old *Canaanitish* or old *Phœnician* language is the same with the *Syrian*; and that the *Samaritan* language approaches nearer to the *Chaldee* or *Syriac*, than to the *Hebrew*, is affirmed by *Bochart*<sup>u</sup>; and whoever has but dipped into

<sup>r</sup> Joseph. Antiqu. l. 11. c. 8. f. 6, & l. 12. c. 5. f. 5.

<sup>\*</sup> Antiqu. l. 11. c. 2. f. 1.      <sup>s</sup> Contr. Hæref. l. 2. hæref. 66.      <sup>t</sup> Comment. in Is. xix. fol. 29. l.      <sup>u</sup> Epist. Vossio, col. 860.



into the *Samaritan* version of the *Pentateuch*, will easily perceive it is in the *Chaldee* dialect, here and there an *Hebrew* word; and it is not to be wondered at, that they should get into their language, when some of the *Jews* had mixed themselves with them; and *Walton*<sup>w</sup> owns the same, that the dialect of the *Samaritan* version is of the same kindred with the *Chaldee* language, though it has some few words proper and peculiar to itself; and so *F. Simon*<sup>x</sup> says, that the *Samaritan* version is written in the *Syro-Chaldean* language, not impure, which shews the antiquity of it. There are three dialects of the *Syriac* language, as *Abulpharagius*<sup>y</sup>, an *Arabic* writer relates; the *Aramæan*, the most elegant of all, which the inhabitants of *Roba*, *Harran*, and outer *Syria* used; that of *Palestine*, which was spoken by the inhabitants of *Damascus*, mount *Libanus*, and interior *Syria*; and the *Chaldee Nabatbean* dialect, the most unpolished of all, used by those who dwelt on the mountains of the *Assyrians*, and in the villages of *Erac* or *Babylonia*; which latter very probably, was spoken by the *Samaritans*.

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tans.

<sup>w</sup> Præfat. ad Introduc. Ling. Oriental. f. 25.      <sup>x</sup> Disqu. Critic. c. 11. p. 88.      <sup>y</sup> Hist. Dynast. p. 16, 17.

*tans*. What were the antient *Syrian* or *Assyrian* letters can only be concluded from the old *Phœnician*, which appears to be the same with the modern *Samaritan*; for since the *Phœnicians* received their letters from the *Syrians*, or *Assyrians*, they must be 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, being introduced by the christians of *Antioch*; who, in imitation of *Daniel* and *Ezra*, had used the *Hebrew* character, but changed it for those now in use, because they would have nothing in common with the *Nazarenes* or *Ebionites*<sup>1</sup>: 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 *Phœnician* or *Samaritan*; and Mr. *Castell*<sup>2</sup> is express for it, that the *Estrangelo* is the *Chaldee* character; for that the *Assyrians* and *Chaldeans* ever used the square character of the *Hebrews* cannot be proved,

<sup>1</sup> Boderian. Præfat. ad Lex Syro-Chald. Walton Præfat. ut supra, f. 35.      <sup>2</sup> Lexic. Heptoglott. col. 178. vid. Pfefferi Critica sacra, f. 2. problem. Quest. 1.

proved, since we have no writings of theirs extant; for what *Chaldee* books we have, were written by *Jews*, either in, or after the *Babylonish* captivity; as by *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, who wrote *Chaldee* in the square character, because it was what their sacred books were written in, they had been used to, and the people also, for whose use they wrote; and in after times, the *Chaldee* paraphrases were written by *Jews*; and so both *Talmuds*, though less pure; and it seems this character was used by the *Syrian* christians, in imitation of the *Jews*, before their change of characters already mentioned; but 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*. *Theophilus* of *Antioch*<sup>a</sup> indeed says, that *Berosus* shewed the *Greeks* *Chaldee* letters; but whether by them he means their learning, laws, and history, or the characters of their letters, is not certain; if the letters, it does not appear what they were: hence *Hottinger*<sup>b</sup> con-

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<sup>a</sup> Ad Auto'yc. l. 3. p. 129.    <sup>b</sup> Smegma oriental. par. 1. p. 35. Gram. Chald. Syr. p. 4.

cluded that the ancient character of the *Assyrians* and *Chaldeans* is unseen, and unknown, and that nothing certain is had concerning it; some, he says, think it is the *Samaritan*, which is right, others, the *Ethiopic*; but he himself was in suspense, and hoped, that in some time would be published by *Golius*, some *Chaldee* writings, in the ancient tongue and character; but whether any ever were published, I never heard. The *Jews* say<sup>c</sup>, 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; but this seems to be said without any good foundation.

Now, since both the *Samaritan* language and letters differ from the *Hebrew*, being the old *Phœnician* and *Assyrian*; it was necessary that, when the *Pentateuch* of *Moses* was brought among them, it should be copied, and put into *Samaritan* letters, that they might read it, as it was, and that from a copy in the square character, as  
the

<sup>c</sup> Buxtorf, de Lit. Heb. Addit.

the variations shew, before observed ; and it was necessary also, that there should be a version of it in their own language, that they might the better understand it, and which also has been done ; and upon the whole, I think it plainly appears, that they always retained their own language and letters, which were the *Assyrian* and old *Phœnician*, to the times of *Manasseh* their high priest, and ages after, as the *Hebrews* retained their language and letters also, the square ones ; so that there seems to be no foundation for any such change of letters being made by *Ezra*, as has been contended for.

C H A P.

## C H A P. IV.

*Of the Antiquity of the Vowel-Points,  
and Accents.*

**I** Put the vowel-points and accents together, because, according to the doctrine of them, they have a dependence on each other; the points are often changed according to the position of the accents, and therefore the one must be as early as the other; and as *Elias Levita*<sup>b</sup> himself observes, “there is no syllable without a point, and there is no word without an accent.” About the antiquity of these there has been a controversy for a century or two past, and which is not yet decided; nor do I expect it will be by this essay of mine; all that I propose is, to try how far back, or how high, in point of antiquity, these things can be traced and carried.

THERE have been divers opinions concerning them. Some think they are of a divine original; and others, that they are of human invention. Some suppose that they were

<sup>a</sup> Sepher Tob Taam, five, de accent. c. 4.

were first invented by *Ben Apher* and *Ben Naphtali*, about the year 1037<sup>e</sup>; others, that they were devised by the Jews of *Tiberias*, 500 years after Christ at least, or however were invented after the *Talmud* was finished<sup>f</sup>; others ascribe them to *Ezra* and the men of the great synagogue<sup>g</sup>; who they suppose, at least revived and restored them, and fixed them to the consonants, which before were only delivered and used in a traditionary way; and others are of opinion, they were given to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, as to the power of them in pronouncing and reading, though not as to the make and figures of them in writing, but were propagated by tradition to the times of *Ezra*; whilst others believe they were *ab origine*<sup>h</sup>, and were invented by *Adam* together with the letters, or however that they were coeval with the letters, and in use as soon as they were: which account is most probable, may appear by tracing them step by step, from one period of

<sup>e</sup> So Morinus de Sinceritate Heb. & Gr. Text. l. 2. Exercitat. 14. c. 1. Genebrard. chronolog. p. 181. Calmet. &c. <sup>f</sup> Elias Levita, præfat. 3. <sup>g</sup> Ben Chayim præfat. Bibl. in principio & multi script. Jud. <sup>h</sup> Cosri par. 4. f. 25. Muscatus in ib. fol. 229. 1. Meor Enayim. c. 59.

of time to another ; and to begin with the lowest of them,

A. D. 1037.

IN this year, according to *R. Gedaliah*<sup>e</sup> and *David Ganz*<sup>f</sup>, flourished two famous Jews, *Ben Asher*, and *Ben Naphtali*, to whom some have ascribed the invention of the vowel-points; and so early, however, it is owned that they existed, even 700 years ago and more: but that these were the inventors of them is not probable, since in the following century lived many eminent Jewish doctors, *Yarchi*, *Kimchi*, and *Aben Ezra*, who often make mention of the points, but never as a novel invention; which, had these been the authors of, it can hardly be thought, but that they would have made mention of them as such, and commended them for it. *Kimchi*<sup>g</sup> observes against those that read *Adonai* lord, and *im-mecha* with thee, in *Pf.* cx. 1, 3. 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

<sup>e</sup> Shalfhalat Hakabala fol. 28. 2.  
vid. par. 1. fol. 37, 1.  
miscell. not. p. 58.

<sup>f</sup> Tzemach David.  
<sup>g</sup> Apud Pocok. Porta Mosis



“ you will find, in all copies, *Nun* with “ *chirek*, and *Ain* with *patbach* :” so that in his time pointed bibles were in common and general use. Besides, he charges *Jerom* with an error on account of the points, and therefore must believe they were in his time. The author of the book of *Cofri*,<sup>h</sup> even if *R. Judah Hallevi* was the author of it, lived about 1140, or as others, 1089; and he speaks of punctuation as a divine thing, as the effect of divine wisdom, and does not appear to have the least notion of its being of human invention, and much less the invention of the present age or preceding century; nay *R. Judah Chijug*, said<sup>i</sup> to be the first grammarian and the chief of them, he found the Bible pointed and accented, as *Elias Levita*<sup>k</sup> says; and he was coeval with *Ben Asber*, and wrote a book of the double letters, and another of pointing,<sup>l</sup> as if it was of long time and generally received, and was become an art; he makes not the least mention of *Ben Asber* being concerned in it; and so *R. Jonab*, another grammarian, a little after him, is silent concerning this matter<sup>m</sup>; and

<sup>h</sup> Par. 3. c. 32.      <sup>i</sup> Balmefii Mikneh Abraham p. 24. lin. 10. Eliæ præfat. Methurgeman, fol. 2. 1.      <sup>k</sup> Ib.  
<sup>l</sup> Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 338. 424.      <sup>m</sup> Vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 329.

and *Aben Ezra* speaks<sup>a</sup> of *Ben Labrat*, who was before 'em both, as having found  $\text{תַּרְבּוּת}$  with *pathach* in *Pf.* ix. 6. in an antient pointed copy; so that there was an *antient pointed* Bible before these men were in being: and what puts it out of all doubt that these men could not be the inventors of the points is, as *Elias Levita* observes,<sup>o</sup> that their dissentions and disputes were about the points and accents, and about words before pointed, and not then pointed; wherefore it is not reasonable to suppose that they would disagree and dispute about what they themselves had invented; so that it most evidently appears, that the points must be in use before their time.

A. D. 927.

ABOUT this time lived *Saadiab Gaon*, who wrote a book concerning pointing, which *Jarchi*, on *Pf.* xlv. 9. makes mention of, and says he saw it; the points therefore must be before his time; for it cannot be thought that he should write a book concerning an art, and the rules of it, which did not exist: the accents also must then be in use, since, as *Gaon* was for dividing

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<sup>a</sup> Comment. in *Pf.* 9. 6.

<sup>o</sup> Præfat. 3.

*Jehovah* from *righteousness* in *Jer.* xxiii. 6. making the latter to be the name of the Messiah, and the former the name of God, who called him so. *Aben Ezra*<sup>p</sup> replies 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 יקרא; and again, whereas the word *Jehovah* is repeated in *Exod.* xxxiv. 6. *Gaon* observes that the first name is to be connected with ויקרא, *proclaimed*; but *Aben Ezra*<sup>q</sup> replies, if it should be so, why did not the author of the accents connect it? but says he, it is right to repeat the name, as *Abraham Abraham, Jacob Jacob, Moses Moses*. Now it would have been absurd in *Aben Ezra* to have charged *Gaon* with a mistake or perversion of the accents, if they were not in being in the times of *Gaon*: he lived many years before *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*; this proves that they were not the inventors of them; and *Aben Ezra* himself lived in the next century to them, and he speaks of the accents not as a novel invention, but of as early use as the men of *Ezra's* great synagogue; and

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<sup>p</sup> Comment. in *Exod.* 18. 3.

<sup>q</sup> *Ib.* in *Exod.* 34. 6.

expresses such an high opinion of them, that he advises not to acquiesce in any exposition that is not according to them, nor hearken to it.

A. D. 900.

IN the church of St. *Dominic* in *Bononia*, a copy of the *Hebrew* scriptures is kept with great care, which is pretended to be the original copy written by *Exra* himself, and is valued at a high rate; so that sometimes the *Bononians* have borrowed large sums of money upon it, and repaid them for the redemption of it. It is written in a very fair character, on calf-skin dress'd, the letters retaining their blackness, and it is made up in a roll, according to the antient manner. This copy was presented by the Jews to *Aymericus*, the then master of the order of St. *Dominic*, who exercised that office about the year 1308, as *Montfaucon*<sup>r</sup> relates, who saw it; and who further observes, that besides a *Latin* inscription sewed to it in the middle of the volume, which he gives, there is also one in *Hebrew*, “ this is the book of the law of *Moses*,  
“ *ses*,

<sup>r</sup> *Diar. Italic.* p. 399. 400. vid. ejusdem *Præliminar.* in *Hexapla Origen.* p. 22.

“ *ses*, which *Ezra* the scribe wrote, and  
 “ read before the congregation, both men  
 “ and women; and he stood in a wooden  
 “ pulpit.” *Montfaucon* says not whether it  
 is pointed or no, but dean *Prideaux*<sup>t</sup> says,  
 it has the vowel-points; and *Franciscus*  
*Tissardus Ambaceus* asserts<sup>t</sup> the same, who  
 says he often saw it; as did also *Arias Mon-*  
*tanus*,<sup>u</sup> and who affirms that it has the *Ma-*  
*sorah*, the same as in the *Venetian* and  
*Bombergian* editions. Now though there is  
 no reason to believe it to be the autograph  
 of *Ezra*, nor near so early, yet, according  
 to the account of it, it must be antient;  
 for it is near 460 years ago since it was pre-  
 sented by the Jews to the monastery, and  
 as they presented it as a very antient copy,  
 even as the autograph of *Ezra*, it must  
 have had then marks of antiquity on it,  
 and must have been written some ages be-  
 fore; and as Dr. *Kennicott*<sup>w</sup> observes, it  
 is a moderate supposition to imagine it was  
 written as long before it was presented, as  
 it has been since, and so must be of as  
 early a date as where I have placed it.

A. D.

<sup>t</sup> Connection, par. 1. p. 362.  
 Hottinger. Thesaur. Philolog. p. 512, 513.  
 fat. de ver. Lect. in Heb. Lib.

<sup>t</sup> Gram. Heb. apud  
<sup>u</sup> Præ-  
<sup>w</sup> Dissertation, vol.  
 1. p. 310.

A. D. 740.

IF the book of *Cofri*, before-mentioned, was not only compiled from loose sheets and put together by *R. Judah Hallevi*, as some think; but that the dialogue itself was had between a Jew, whose name, some say, was *Isaac Sangari*, and a *Persian* king, whose name was *Chosroes*, and which *R. Judah* says, was 400 years before his time, so he suggests in the beginning of the book; and whereas he flourished about the year 1140, this book must be composed, or this dialogue held, about the year 740. Now in 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; gives many of the names of both, and declares the usefulness of them; asserts that they were received by tradition from *Moses*; that they are the production of admirable wisdom, and would never have been received had they not come from a prophet, or one divinely assisted<sup>\*</sup>; and he does not give the least hint of their being of an human, and much less of a modern  
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<sup>\*</sup> *Cofri*, par. 2. f. 8c. & par. 3. f. 31, 32.

invention ; yea, exprefly afcribes the feven kings or vowel-points, as *Aben Ezra* alfo calls them, to *Ezra* and the men of his fynagogue, and which he fupposes they received by tradition from *Mofes*.

A. D. 600.

THOSE who afcribe the invention of the points to the Jews of *Tiberias*, fuppose that this was after the year 500, when the *Babylonian Talmud* was finished. Their reafon for it is, becaufe, as they affirm, no mention is made of them in that work, and therefore the invention of them muft be later than that ; but of this more hereafter. However, according to this hypothefis, one would think they muft have been invented and in ufe by the time above given ; though indeed thofe who efpoufe this hypothefis, are at a very great uncertainty about the exact time of this invention. The firft perfon that broached this notion was *Elias Levita*, a *German Jew*, who lived in the 16th century, contrary to the fentiments and belief of his whole nation ; who either fuppose the points were from *Ezra*, and the men of the great fynagogue, or from *Mofes* at mount *Sinai*, or from *Adam* who had

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them from God himself. This man asserted,<sup>y</sup> that after the finishing of the *Talmud*, which he places in the year 436, after the desolation of the second temple, arose the men of *Tiberias*; wise and great men, expert in the scripture, and in purity and in eloquence of language excelled all the *Jews* in those times; and after them did not arise any like them, and that these were the authors of the points: this is said without offering the least proof of it, and by one that lived near a thousand years after; it is strange that he only should be in this secret; that no history, Jewish nor Christian, should make mention of it for such a course of years: it is not probable that there were such a sett of men at *Tiberias* about the time suggested, since a great destruction of the *Jews* was made at it, in the year 352, by *Gallus*, at the command of *Constantius*; and since promotion to doctorship ceased in the land of *Israel* with *Hillel* the prince, who flourished about the year 340, as the *Jewish* chronologers<sup>z</sup> observe: and since the flourishing university of the *Jews* was at *Babylon* at the

<sup>y</sup> Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.      <sup>z</sup> Shalshalet Hakabala  
fol. 25. 2. Gan 2. Tz. mach David, fol. 33. 1.



the time of this pretended invention, very unlikely it is, that it should be done without their knowledge, advice, and assistance, and without either approbation of it, or opposition to it by any of them, for ought appears; and that it should be universally received by the *Jews* at once every where, and not one *Momus* to find fault, this is very extraordinary; yea, that it should be received by the *Karaites* themselves, enemies to tradition and innovation, as will be seen hereafter. It is strange that, according to this scheme, as many persons must be employed in this work, that there should be but one sort of pointing; that they should all take the same method, throughout the whole Bible, without any variation, except some anomalies, and which are to be observed in letters as well as in points; and that this should be always continued with the *Jews*, and never any other scheme proposed and attempted; and that it should not be known who began it and when. And indeed we are left at a very great uncertainty about the place where this wonderful affair was transacted; *Elias*, the relator of it, should he be pressed

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hard, seems to have found a subterfuge to retreat unto, and therefore he tells us that *Tiberias* is *Moësia*\*; but where that is he says not, but leaves us to seek for it where we can, and take a wild goat's chace into *Asia Minor*, to *Pontus*, or *Bithynia*, or *Paphlagonia*, where *Moësia* or *Mysia* is said to be; but never famous for *Jewish* doctors, nor have any 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*, situate on the lake of *Genesaret*; famous in their writings for the last sitting of the *Sanhedrim* in it, for 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 2d and 3d centuries; and where it is certain the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished, in the 3d century; after which the university in it began to decrease, and we hear but now and then of a doctor in that place, the universities in *Babylon* bearing away all the glory; there-

\* Præfat. 3. ad Masoret. he seems to have taken this name of *Tiberias* from Ben Chavim in Masor. Mag. Lit. ¶ fol. 31. 2. or from David Kimchi, in Miclol. fol. 108. 2.

therefore it is not probable, that this business of pointing the Bible was done by the men of *Tiberias* in later times: and if it was, it is strange that none of them should declare themselves the authors of the points, or that they had an hand in the invention of them, or were assisting in that work, since it would have gained them immortal honour, it being allowed to be an ingenious and useful work; and especially since the *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; nor any time fixed when it was done by them, whether 100 years after the finishing of the *Talmud*, or 200, or 300 or 400; neither of which it seems the espousers of this notion chuse to fix upon, neither on particular men, nor on 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 *Possévinus* the jesuit, <sup>a</sup> who in his great wisdom has pitched on the year 478, when the points began to be in use; and so some

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<sup>a</sup> Apud Herman. Hugonem de prima scribendi orig. c. 27. p. 168.

years before the finishing of the *Talmud*, according to the most early account of it; whereby 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; that they should hit on such an invention, and publish it, so subversive of their own religion, and so serviceable to christianity and its doctrines, and which in no one instance opposes it; and that after they had seen, as they must in the age they are supposed to invent them, what use the christians had made of various passages of scripture against *Judaism*, and in favour of christianity; and yet should point and accentuate those very passages against themselves, and for the christians: take one instance in the room of many as to accents. in *Gen.* xlix. 10. how gladly now would they have the *Athnach* removed from רגליו to ער and then read the words, as they have attempted to do<sup>b</sup>, *the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between*

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Menasseh. ben Israel. Conciliat. in Gen. Quæst. 65. f. 3.

*between his feet for ever ; for Shiloh shall come :* but the accents are against them, and forbid this reading ; of what use they are in *Jer. xxiii. 6.* has been already observed : nor is it credible, 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, and that the use of accents should in prose and verse be different, as they be in metrical and prose-writings of the Bible, when at the time supposed, metre was disused, 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 lye and notorious fable, to be met with in the whole *Talmud* ; a greater I know not ; a louder lye I believe was never told by a *Jew*, nor by any other, that ever met with the least degree of credit in the world ; it is amazing it should be believed by any : some *Protestants* at first received it, through their too great credulity, and through their high esteem for the above-mentioned *Elias*, by whom they were taught the *Hebrew* language, of the usefulness of which they were sensible. Many of the *Papists* greedily caught at it,

and commended the *Protestants* for receiving it; who might hope, in the issue, to avail themselves of it, since it would appear from hence, 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; and they might hope 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<sup>c</sup>, highly commended by some *Protestant* writers, speaks out plainly; he says, “ the reason  
 “ why God would have the scriptures writ-  
 “ ten in the ambiguous manner they are,  
 “ (i. e. without points) is, because it was  
 “ his will that every man should be sub-  
 “ ject to the *judgment of the church*, and  
 “ not interpret the scriptures in his own  
 “ way; for seeing the reading of the scrip-  
 “ tures is so difficult, and so liable to va-  
 “ rious ambiguities, (i. e. a mere nose of  
 “ wax,

<sup>c</sup> De Heb. & Græc. Text. Sinceritate, l. 1. Exercitat. 6. c. 2. f. 8. p. 198, 199.

“ wax, to be turned any way) ; from the  
 “ very nature of the thing, he observes, it  
 “ is plain, that it was not the will of God,  
 “ that every one should rashly and irreve-  
 “ rently 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 de-  
 “ pend upon *the priests.*”

A. D. 500.

ABOUT this time the *Babylonian Talmud* was finished; according to *Scaliger*\*, in 508; in which it is said no mention is made of the points and accents: but, upon enquiry, it will be found to be otherwise; for though the *Talmudists* do not mention the names, nor express the figures of the vowel-points, they manifestly suppose them; which shew they were in being in their times; as 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 to the difference of the vowel-  
 points,

\* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. p. 323.

points, the doctrine of which is the foundation of their remarks, and therefore must be known by them : so the *Karaites* charge 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; for having said that the copies of theirs and the *Rabbins*, with respect to punctuation were the same; they observe, that otherwise in the places where they change the vowels and accents, and say, do not read so, but so, they would not have said, do not read, but absolutely would have pointed according to their pleasure; but that it is suggested they dared not do; which, the *Karaites* add, is a proof, that before the finishing of the *Talmud*, from the days of old, the law was pointed and accented<sup>b</sup>; thus when they say<sup>c</sup>, with respect to *Pf.* 1. 23. do not read ושמ but ושמ, they mean do not read *Shin* with a point on the right hand, but with a point on the left; so quoting *Prov.* xix. 23. they direct<sup>d</sup>, do not read שבע but שבע that is, do not read the word with the point on the left hand

<sup>b</sup> Dod Mordecai, c. 11. p. 137. c. 12. p. 152. 153. <sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 5. 2. Moed Katon, fol. 5. 1. <sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 14. 1.



hand of *Shin*, when it would signify *satisfied*, as the common punctuation reads; but with the point on the right hand of it, and then it signifies *seven*; and so proves what it is quoted for, as they think, that that man that lies seven nights without a dream, is an evil man, and so read what follows; *he shall not be visited, he is an evil man*: and so in *Is.ii. 22. Ula* says<sup>e</sup>, don't read במה but במה, that is, to serve his own purpose, don't read as if it was *Bamah*, (i. e. pointed with a *Patach* and *Segol*) which would signify *wherein*, but *Bamah*, (i. e. with two *Kametz*s) and so signifies an high place; likewise in *Is. liv. 3. 1.* it is said<sup>f</sup>, don't read בניך (i. e. with a *Kametz*) thy children, but בוניך, (i. e. with a *vau*, and *cholem*) thy builders; so quoting *Ezekiel, xlvi. 25.* it is observed<sup>g</sup>, don't read שמה, *Shammah* there (i. e. with two *Kametz*s) but שמה, *Shemah*, his name, (as if with *Shevah*, and *Kametz*) and this form does not suppose any corruption of the text, nor even a various reading; but is a kind of allegorical sport of these *Rabbins* among themselves as *F. Simon* \* calls it; when to shew their *acumen*,  
observe,

<sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Sotah fol. 4. 2.

<sup>f</sup> T. Bab. Beracot.

fol. 64. 1.    <sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Bathra, fol. 75. 2.

\* *Disquis.*

*Crit. c. 3. p. 17.*

observe, what different senses may be put upon a word by its being differently pointed, which they propose to consideration, as if it was thus, or thus pointed; but then this supposes the points to have been in being or they could not divert themselves after this manner: and it should be observed, that this phrase is used chiefly in giving allegorical expositions, and is not by way of authority and command, as enjoining such a reading; but by way of concession; or supposing it was read so, it would yield a commodious sense, especially if allegorical<sup>c</sup>: nor can I see how this phrase could be used in writing by giving instances as above, without expressing the very marks and figures of the points as put to the words in debate; or otherwise they must act like delirious men indeed: nor can I see how the ridiculous story, concerning *Joab's* slaying of his master for teaching him to read wrong could be related in the *Talmud*<sup>d</sup> without the vowel-points being put to the word in it, which is told thus; after *Joab* had cut off every male in *Edom*,

1 *Kings*

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim. par. 3. c. 43. Hotsinger. Thesaur. philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 214. Buxtorf. de Punctuat. par. 1. p. 97, 98. Surenhuf. Biblos Kattalages, p. 4 59. 60. <sup>d</sup> T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 21. l. 2.

1 *Kings* xi. 15, 16. when he came before *David* he said to him, what is the reason that thou hast so done? (i. e. that thou hast not destroyed the females, as the gloss is) he replied, because it is written (*Deut.* xxv. 19.) thou shalt blot out זכר of *Ama-leck*; *David* said unto him, but behold we read זכר; *Joab* answered, I was taught to read it זכר: he went and asked his master, saying, how didst thou teach me to read, he told him זכר; 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; as said to be read by *Joab*, it was *zacar*, male, with two *Ka-metztes*; as by *David* and *Joab's* master, it was *zecer*, remembrance, with two *Se-gols*; and so in other cases, of a similar kind, the points were put, though in process of time left out, through the carelessness or sloth of transcribers; and two instances of this I have met with where the very figures

figures of the vowel-points are used; thus having quoted *Numb. xiii. 31.* it is directed<sup>h</sup> dont read *ממנו than us* (with a *Sbureck*) but *ממנו than him* (with a *Cholem*); and in another place<sup>i</sup>, with respect to the passage in *Deut. xxiii. 18.* they say, do not read *זונה* (with a *Kametz*) but *זונה* (with a *Segol*); the first word, pointed as directed, signifies a *whore*, being feminine, the other, differently pointed, is masculine, and signifies a *fornicator*<sup>k</sup>. 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 they are not added to the words in the other instances? no doubt the reason is, because they were originally so in the *Talmud*, and so I found them; and I make no question of their being put in all other instances, though omitted by copiers. To these observations I would add, the prick or point on the *Vau* in the word for *arose*, in *Gen. xix. 33.* is taken notice of in the *Talmud*<sup>l</sup>; and so are the 15 pricks on

<sup>h</sup> T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 1.  
fol. 29. 2.  
col. 495.  
fol 21. 1.

<sup>i</sup> T. Bab. Temurah,

<sup>k</sup> Vid. Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott.

<sup>l</sup> T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 10. 2, & Nazir,

on several words in the bible, among which this is one<sup>m</sup> and on the word for *unless*, in *Pf.* xxvii. 13.<sup>n</sup> and on *Deut.* xxix. 29.<sup>o</sup> Now if these pricks and points were so early, which are of so little use, much more the vowel-points; and as for the accents, they are expressly mentioned: thus those words in *Nehem.* viii. 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* on that place in the *Talmud* interprets it, *and caused them to understand the reading*, these are פִּסְקֵי טַעְמִים *the distinctions of the accents*<sup>p</sup>; and so in other places mention is made of the distinctions of the accents<sup>q</sup>, and of the accents of the law<sup>r</sup>, which might be shewn and pointed at by the hand, and therefore must be visible marks or figures; and which are to be understood both of vowel-points, and of accents; and so the *gloss* on that place interprets it, both of pointing and the elevation of the voice in singing according to

<sup>m</sup> Aboth. R. Nathan, c. 34. fol. 18. Sopherim. c. 1. f. 3.  
<sup>n</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 4. 1.  
<sup>o</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 43. 2.  
<sup>p</sup> T. Bab. Megilah, fol. 3. 1. & Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.  
<sup>q</sup> T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 6. 2.  
<sup>r</sup> T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 62. 1. & Gloss in lb. Pefachim, fol. 119. 1.

to the accents. And the marks and figures of them, they say in the *Talmud*, *Solomon*<sup>e</sup> instructed the people in; for so those words are paraphrased in it, *he taught the people knowledge*, for he instructed them טעמים בס'מני in the signs, marks, figures, or characters of the accents: and on the phrase, *his locks are bushy*, it is observed; from hence we learn that he (*Solomon*) sought out and explained every tittle, prick, or point (in the law) heaps of heaps of the constitutions or decisions of it<sup>f</sup>: and in one of the above places<sup>g</sup> referred to, they dispute about giving a reward to such who taught the accents; which surely could never be thought of, if the accents were not yet invented; to which may be added, that in the *Talmud*\* mention is made of some words in the Bible, “written but not read,” and of others, “read but not written;” those that are written but not read are alone without the vowel-points, as in *Jer.* li. 3. &c. Those that are read but not written, are those whose

<sup>e</sup> T. B. Eruvim, fol. 21. 2.      <sup>f</sup> Ibid.      <sup>g</sup> Nedarim, fol. 37. 1.      \* T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.   
 -Massechet. Sopherim. c. 6. f. 7, 8.

whose vowel-points stand alone in the text, and the consonants in the margin, of which there are ten, *Jud.* xx. 13. *Ruth* iii. 5. 17. 2 *Sam.* viii. 3. and xvi. 23. and xviii. 20. 2 *Kings* xix. 31. 37. *Jer.* xxxi. 38. and l. 29. This shews that the state of the *Hebrew* text, with respect to these *Keries* and *Cetibs*, was the same at the composition of the *Talmud* as now; and that the *Talmudists* must have been acquainted with pointed Bibles, and consequently points must have been in use before the finishing of the *Talmud*; and so before the pretended men of *Tiberias*: the ablation of the scribes is spoken of in the same *tract*, which forbids the reading the superfluous *Vau* in five places; and also the reading of the scribes, which shews 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* observes\*; and *Shamaim* sometimes with *Kametz* and *Patach*, and sometimes with a double *Kametz*, because of the pause; and so *Mitzraim*. The note of R. *Nissim* on

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the

\* *Tiberias*, c. 8. p. 11.

the place is, because of the *Atbnach*, *Arets* is read with a *Kametz*, and *Sbamaim* and *Mitzraim*, though they have no *Aleph* in them, are read as if they had.

A. D. 400.

THE *Masorab*, 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, nor of a sett of men, and living in one age or place, who were jointly concerned in it, but of various persons, in several ages: it might be begun by the men of the great synagogue of *Exra*, to whom the *Jewish* writers generally ascribe it; and be carried on by scribes and copiers in after ages, and 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 pretended, but by those who lived in the 2d and 3d centuries, and in the beginning of the 4th; men of fame and note among the *Jews*, and whose names are given, and an account of them in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, of whom more hereafter; though in



later times, some things have crept into this work, and additions made to it, in which the names of *Jarchi* and *Ben Gersom* are mentioned, and even some are the notes of *Ben Chayim* himself, the first editor of it in printed Bibles; who with much pains brought it into some form and order, and disposed of it in the manner it is in some printed copies: however, it is certain the work was in being before the *Babylonian Talmud*; for the just now mentioned editor of the *Masorah*, in his preface which stands before *Bomberg's* Bible, and which *Buxtorff* also has placed before his, asserts, that in many places the *Talmud* contradicts the *Masorah*; and besides it is expressly mentioned in it. Such phrases are sometimes\* to be met with in it as *אם למקרא*, and *אם למסורת*; the meaning of which is, that such an exposition of a word or passage, has its foundation in the Scripture, or is according to that, and is the literal sense of it, as it is commonly read; and that such an exposition or interpretation of a word or passage, has its foundation in the

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\* T. Bab. Pefachim, fol. 86. 2. Succah, fol. 6. 2. Kidushin, fol. 18. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 4. 1.

*Masorab*, or is according to that §; and is the traditionary sense of it, as it may be read and pronounced by other vowels: yea, 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 ראשונים the *antients*; who had lived long ago, and with whom the compilers of the *Talmud* were not to be named\*; and are thought by the learned bishop *Usher* † to be the men of the great synagogue of *Ezra*; false therefore it is what *F. Simon* says ‡, from *Elias Levita*, that the *Masorab* is later than the *Talmud*: yea, Christ himself, in his time, speaks of a traditionary sett of men, who, he says, were of old time, and are called by him, αρχαιοι, the *antients*; who delivered down peculiar senses of the law from age to age, and may be truly said to be a sort of *Masorettes*, *Matt. v. 28.* the same who elsewhere are called *elders*, and to whom traditions are ascribed, *Matt. xv. 2. Mark vii. 3, 5.* though perhaps the *mis-*  
*nic*

§ Vid. *Halicot Olam*, par. 4. c. 3. p. 187. \* *T. Bab. Kiddushin*, fol. 30. 1. & *Sabbat*, fol. 112. 2. † *Epist. ad Capell.* in calce de sept. interpr. p. 211. ‡ *Disquis. Critic.* c. 4. p. 23.

*nic* doctors are rather more peculiarly intended: and certain it is, that the several parts of the work of the *Masorettes* ascribed to them, are made mention of in the *Talmud*; as not only the numbering of the letters and verses in the law before asserted; but the distinction of verses themselves is spoken of in it, and is ascribed to *Moses*, though by *Elias Levita*\* made to be the work of the *Masorettes*; in the *Talmud* † it is said, “ whatever verse *Moses* did not “ distinguish, we do not distinguish:” yea, we read of the distinction of verses in the *Mishnah* ‡, which was compiled some hundreds of years before the *Talmud*. The various readings which the *Masorettes* are said to be the authors of, even divers sorts of them are mentioned in the *Talmud* §; and their concern with the points and accents will be presently observed: but not only these parts of the work assigned them, but the forms of letters, greater, lesser, or suspended, marked by the *Masorettes* in the Bible, are observed in the *Talmud*;

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mud;

\* Sopher Tob Taam, c. 2.  
Megillah, fol. 22, 1.  
c. 4. f. 4.

† T. Bab.  
‡ Misn. Megillah,  
§ T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2.

*mud* ||; yea, the *Masorah* itself is mentioned in it. In the interpretation of *Neb.* viii. 8. taken notice of in the preceding section, that part of it, *and caused them to understand the reading*, as some interpret it of the distinction of accents; others say; these are the *Masorah*<sup>s</sup>, or *Masoretic* notes, or as R. *Nissim*, on the place, explains it, what is delivered in the *Masorah*; yea, not only in the *Jerusalem Talmud*\* mention is made of it, but in the *Mishnah*<sup>t</sup> itself, finished in the year 150, as a saying of R. *Akiba*, who died in the beginning of the second century; “the *Masorah* is an hedge “to the law;” the note of *Bartenora* on it is, the *Masoreth*, which the wisemen 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 be in being so early at least, and much earlier; and *Walton*, an opposer of the points, acknowledges<sup>u</sup> that some part of the

|| *Massech. Sopherim*, c. 9. f. 5. 7. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2. & Gloss in Ib. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30. 1. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. <sup>s</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37. 2. Megillah, fol. 3. 1. <sup>\*</sup> Megillah, fol. 74. 4. <sup>t</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 3. f. 13. <sup>u</sup> Prolegom. 8. f. 12.

the *Masoretic* notes were collected before the *Talmud* was finished; and thinks it probable, that though not immediately after *Ezra*, yet about the time of the *Maccabees*, when the sect of the *Pharisees* rose, some might begin to make those observations; and Dr. *Prideaux*† supposes that they began a little after the time of *Ezra*: now the observations of the *Masorettes* were not only about entire words, nor about letters or consonants, but also about the points and accents: take a few instances, instead of many which might be produced, on *Gen.* i. 5. the note of the *Masorah* is, לאור is written several times with a *Kametz*; on *Gen.* xiv. 5. *Chedarlaomer*, one word with two *Shevaks*; and on *Exod.* xxxii. 6. it is observed the word לִצְחָק is no more found with *Segol* and *Silluk*; on *Job* xix. 7. אַענָה is no more written with *Segol* and *Kametz*; and on *Psf.* lxxxiv. 11. it is remarked, that אלהי is twice with a *Patach* and *Atbnach*. See also on *Gen.* xvi. 13. and xix. 2. *Exod.* xxvi. 5. *Lev.* x. 4. 19. *Numb.* ix. 2. *Deut.* xviii. 17. *Josh.* vi. 14. 1 *Sam.* x. 21. *Psf.* xxvii. 4. *Jer.* xvii. 17. and iii. 32. *Dan.*

M 4 i. 3.

† *Connect.* par. 1. B. 5 p. 353.

i. 3. and iii. 21. *Ezra* viii. 16. and other places; wherefore the points and accents must be before the *Masoretes*, and not invented by them.

A. D. 385.

JEROM died in 420, being upwards of 90 years of age, and therefore must flourish about this time. He was the best versed in *Jewish* literature of any of the antient writers, having had no fewer than four *Jews*, at different times for his instructors; and that he had knowledge of the points and accents, which therefore must be in his time, I think 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; though I confess, I cannot persuade myself that so sensible and learned a man as *Jerom* was, would ever say what he does, unless not only he saw the *Hebrew* words he mentions, with the vowel-points to them, but put them to them himself, when he wrote them; though in length of time they might be disused in the copies transcribed from him; for how

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otherwise could he say, of such and such a word, it is not written so, but so, in the *Hebrew* text, and yet gives the word either way with the same consonants exactly; so he gives the word *במה*, in *Is.* ii. 21. and others, as will be presently observed: what is there then to distinguish them? or how could he expect to be believed, or to convince any by such a method? this was to make him appear very ridiculous; but supposing the vowels put to the words by him, these would distinguish one word from another, and make him act like himself, and like a true critic; and this being the case, it is easy to account for it, why the vowel-points and accents are not mentioned by him, there being no need of it; since 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 take for granted were done by himself, and this I think is owned by *Walton* \*. I have indeed no other edition of his works, than that of *Erasmus*, nor an opportunity of consulting any other; now the words, as thus read, greatly agree with, and very rarely differ from

\* *Bibl. Polyglott. prolegom.* 3. s. 47.

from the modern punctuation, and where they do, it may be owing to inadvertency, or to too great confidence in his memory, or to copiers; but be this as it may, it is certain he often speaks of the *Hebrew* points and accents, and of the variety of them, and that the same words are pronounced by different sounds and accents, and that *Hebrew* names are variously interpreted, according to the diversity of accents, and change of the vowel-letters<sup>w</sup>; now, besides the notice he takes<sup>x</sup> of the prick or point on the word *Kumab*, in *Gen.* xix. 34. which he calls pointing; he makes many observations on divers words, which manifestly shew his knowledge of the *Hebrew* points, without which he could never have made them: thus he observes<sup>y</sup>, that in *Pf.* xc. 8. in the *Hebrew* it is written עלמנו, *alumenu*, which he translates *our neglects*, and wonders at the *Septuagint* interpreters, that they should translate it *our age*, as if it was *olamenu*; and now how could he say it was written in the *Hebrew*, *alumenu* and not

<sup>w</sup> 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.      <sup>x</sup> Quæst. Heb. in Gen. fol. 68. 1.      <sup>y</sup> Epist. ad Cyprian. fol. 33. B. Tom. 3.



not *olamenu*, since the word without points may be read either way, if he had not seen it himself, nor had been told that it was so pointed? nor could he say<sup>a</sup> that in *Exod.* xiii. 18. he found it written in the *Hebrew* volume, carefully examining its characters, *Hamusim*, and not *Hamijim*; if the *Hebrew* volume he examined had no points; for this he had not from tradition, nor from use and custom of reading, but found it so written: he also observes<sup>a</sup>, that the word שְׁעָרִים, written with the same letters, has a different signification, as it may be differently read; if *Searim* (i. e. with a *Kametz*) then it signifies *estimations*, but if *Seorim*, (i. e. with a *Cholem*) then it signifies *barley*; again<sup>b</sup> he remarks, that רַעֵה, written with the same letters, if read *Re*, (i. e. with a *Shevab*) then it is a *friend*, if *Ro*, (i. e. with a *Cholem*) then it is a *Shepherd*; a like remark<sup>c</sup> he makes on the word בָּמָה, in *If.* ii. 22. that if it is rendered *wherein*, then it must be בָּמָה, *bameb*, but if an *high place* or *high*, then it must be read בָּמָה *bamab*; so the three letters זָכַר, when we say they signify *memorial*,

or

<sup>a</sup> Ep. Damafo. 2 qu. fol. 12. A. B.      <sup>a</sup> Quæst. Heb.  
in Gen. fol. 70. 4.      <sup>b</sup> Ib. fol. 72. C.      <sup>c</sup> Com-  
ment. in Is. c. 2. fol. 7. D. T. 5.

or *remembrance*, then he says<sup>d</sup> the word is read *zecer*, (i. e. with two *Segols*) but if a *male*, then it is read *zacar*, (i. e. with two *Kametzes*) ; again<sup>e</sup>, these three letters דבר signify according to the quality of the places, if read *dabar* (i. e. with two *Kametzes*) it signifies a *word*, but if *deber*, (i. e. with two *Segols*) then it signifies the *plague* ; so the word שקר, he observes<sup>f</sup>, that if the accent is varied, that is the point, 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. And whereas in the *Septuagint* version of *Jonah* iii. 4. it is three days instead of forty ; *Jerom* wonders<sup>g</sup> how they should so translate, 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*, that is vowels ; and again he observes<sup>h</sup>, the ambiguity of the *Hebrew* word שני, which is written with three letters, ם and ן and ן ; if, says he, it is read *Shene* (i. e. with a *Shevah* and a *Tzere*)  
it

<sup>d</sup> Ib. in c. 26. fol. 50. H.      <sup>e</sup> Ib. in c. 9. fol. 19. H. & in Habac. c. 3. fol. 87. H. Tom. 6.      <sup>f</sup> Comment. in Ecclef. fol. 43. G. Tom. 7. & in Jerem. fol. 133. C.      <sup>g</sup> Comment. in Jon. c. 3. fol. 57. M.      <sup>h</sup> Comment. in Ezek. 15. fol. 194. C.

it signifies *two*, but if *Shane*, (i. e. with a *Kametz* and a *Tzere*) then it signifies *years*, and so in many other places. *Ferom* must have knowledge of the point placed sometimes on the right hand of the letter *ש*, and then called *Yamin*, and sometimes on the left hand of it, and then called *Smol*, which gives it a different pronounciation, and the words a different sense: he observes<sup>i</sup>, that from *Isb*, a woman is rightly called *Isba*, but *Theodotion*, he says, suggests another etymology, saying, she shall be called *assumption*, because taken from man; and, adds he, *Issa* may be interpreted *assumption*, according to the variety of the *accents*, that is, the points; his meaning is, that if the word is derived from *נשא*, with the point on the left hand, then it may signify *assumption*, since the word, so pointed, signifies to assume: again, *Bersabee*, he says<sup>k</sup>, as differently *accentuated*, that is pointed, may be translated the *well of the oath*, or the *well of satiety*, or of the *seventh*; the reason of which is, because *שבע* with a point on the right of *ש*, signifies *seven*, and to *swear*; but with the same point on the left  
of

<sup>i</sup> Quæst. Heb. ad Gen. fol. 65. I.  
in Amos, c. 8. fol. 99. B.

<sup>k</sup> Comment.

of the letter, it signifies *fulness* and *satiety*; the same is observed by him in another place<sup>1</sup>, that it has different senses according to the variety of the accents. Now could *Jerom* possibly make such observations as these without the knowledge of the points? for though from some of these passages it may be gathered, that unpointed books had been used, and so some were deceived thro' the ambiguity of words without points; yet how came it to pass that he himself was not deceived? and 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 such and such places? to suppose otherwise is quite incredible. And it appears also, that the punctuation in his time was the same with the modern punctuation; which he follows and scarce ever departs from; take, for instance, his reading the title of the 45<sup>th</sup> *Psalms*, “ Lamanazeah al  
 “ Sofannim, libne Corah, Maschil fir je-  
 “ didoth<sup>m</sup>”; there is but one point missing, and that is the *Shevah* in the first word, and which is sometimes not pronounced,  
 and

<sup>1</sup> Comment. in Is. c. 65. fol. 115. C.  
 Comment. in Is. c. 65. fol. 115. C.

<sup>m</sup> Ad Prin-

cipiam, fol. 34. F. Tom. 3.

and had no certain pronounciation with the antients; sometimes by *a*, sometimes by *i*, sometimes by an *e*, as now usually; according to the *Hebrew* grammarians, it has the nature of all the rest of the vowels, and is equal to them, and pronounced like them, at certain times under certain conditions §. Three whole verses in *Gen.* xvi. 18, 19, 20. are exactly pronounced according to the modern punctuation<sup>a</sup>; his version of the *Psalms* agrees with the *Hebrew* text, as it now is, and as it is with the points: besides what can he mean by saying<sup>o</sup>, that he then in his old age could not read the *Hebrew* text by candle-light, since the letters were so small, that they were enough to blind a man's eyes at noon-day? for the *Hebrew* letters, let them be wrote as small as they well can be, can not be lesser than the common *Roman* character; he must be understood surely of the small pricks or points which belonged to the *Hebrew* letters. How came he to put *Adonai* instead of *Jehovah*, in *Exod.* vi. 3. if he is the author

§ Vid. Balmes. Heb. Gram. five Mikneh Abraham, p. 28. Sepher Cosri, par. 2. f. 80. & Muscatum, in Ib. fol. 128. 1. & R. Judah Chijug, & Aben Ezra, in Muscat.  
<sup>a</sup> Ad Evagrium, fol. 13. 6. Ib.      <sup>o</sup> Proem. in Sept. Comment. in Ezek. c. 20. fol. 208. G.

thor of the *vulgate Latin* version, unless he knew that the *Jews* put the points of *Adonai* to *Jehovah*? There is a passage in *Jerom*\* which is produced by some to disprove the knowledge and use of vowel-points in his time; when speaking of *Enon* near *Salim*, “ it matters not, he says, whether it be called *Salem* or *Salim*, since the  
 “ *Hebrews* very seldom make use of vowel-  
 “ letters in the middle; and according to  
 “ the pleasure of readers and the variety  
 “ of countries, the same words are pro-  
 “ nounced with different sounds and ac-  
 “ cents.” Now *Jerom* is here to be understood either of the *Matres Lectionis* ויָא; and it, is very true that these are seldom used in the sacred books of the *Hebrews*, and which makes the use of vowel-points the more necessary; and if the *Matres Lectionis* were expunged upon the introduction of the points, as is suggested by some, then the points must have been before *Jerom*'s time, and consequently not the invention of the men of *Tiberias*; since it seems the above letters were rarely used in his time as placed between consonants, as *Dabar*, and  
 other

\* Epist. Evagrio, tom. 3. fol. 13. F.

other words observed by him shew: or else he is to be understood of vowel-points going along with letters; and these he might truly say, were *very rarely* used, because pointed Bibles in his time were very rare: but then he supposes such were used, tho' but seldom, and this Dr. *Owen* ° took to be his sense; “ either, says he, I cannot understand him, or he does positively affirm, that the *Hebrew*, had the use of vowels, in his epistle to *Evagrius* ;” upon which he observes, “ if they did it *per-raro*, they did it, and then they had them; though, in these days to keep up their credit in teaching, they did not much use them; nor can this be spoken of the sound of vowels, for surely, they did not *seldom* use the sounds of vowels, if they spoke often.” And to this sense, the words of *Jerom* are quoted by R. *Azariab* \*; and from whence he concludes, that the points were really in being before his time, and so they are understood by others †; to say no more, as not only the vowel-points and accents are said to be the

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° Of the Divine Original of the Scriptures, p. 285.

\* *Imre Binah*, c. 59. fol. 181. 1. † *Simeon de Mus*, *Joseph. de Voyfin. apud Owen. Theologoumen.* p. 412.

invention of the men of *Tiberias*, after the finishing of the *Talmud*, but the distinction of verses also; it is certain, that *Jerom*, who lived a century or two before these pretended *Tiberians* are said to live, frequently § speaks of verses in the *Hebrew* books, and distinguished by him into colons and commas which the accents make; and of which mention is made before him in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, and even in the *Misnab*, as will be seen hereafter; yea, in the New Testament, *Luke* iv. 17. *Act.* viii. 32.

A. D. 370.

ABOUT this time lived *Epiphanius*, bishop of *Cyprus*; he flourished in the times of *Valens*, *Gratian*, and *Theodosius*, and wrote a book against various heresies; and among them takes notice of those of the *Nicolaitans*, and their followers the *Gnosticks*, &c. who had a sort of deities they paid honour to, and which they called by barbarous names; and one of them was called *Caulaucauch*, a word taken from *Is.* xxviii. 13. as he observes; upon which he gives<sup>p</sup> the text in *Hebrew*, thus, “ *Saulafau Saulafau*,  
“ *lafau*,

§ Præfat. in *Josua*, *Paralipomen.* *Esaïam* & *Ezekiel.*  
<sup>p</sup> *Epiphani.* contr. *Hæres.* l. 1. hæres. 25.



“*lafau, Caulaucauch, Caulaucauch, Zier-*  
 “*lam, Zierlam,*” exactly agreeing with  
 the present punctuation, only the *Sheva*  
 in the last word is pronounced as an *i*;  
 which may be owing to the copier, and is  
 sometimes not pronounced at all, as before  
 observed, and when it is, it is differently:  
 and very nearly to the same manner of poin-  
 ting, is his quotation of *Pf. cx. 3*, accord-  
 ing to the *Hebrew text*, “*Merem messaar*  
 “*Laatal jeledeth<sup>9</sup>*”; and so of *If. xxvi. 2,*  
 3. the likeness is very great and much the  
 same<sup>r</sup>. I suppose *Epiphanius* took these *He-*  
*brew* passages from *Origen’s Hexapla*, a work  
 in being in his time; and if so, this carries  
 the punctuation still higher; of which more  
 hereafter. Moreover, the first word ob-  
 served, was so pronounced by some here-  
 ticks, if not in the first, yet in the second  
 century.

A. D. 360.

ABOUT this time lived *R. Ase*, the head  
 of a school or academy at *Sura* in *Babylon*<sup>s</sup>;  
 he is said to write a large book concerning

N 2

point-

<sup>9</sup> *Ib. l. 2. hæ. 65.*      <sup>r</sup> *Ib. l. 3. hæ. 76. vid. Mont-*  
*faucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 130*      <sup>s</sup> *Vid.*  
*Ganz, Pzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. l. 2.*

pointing, and the *cabalistic* secrets in it, which book R. *Nachman*<sup>t</sup>, who lived about the year 1200, says, was then in their academy. Now if this *Rabbi* so early wrote a book about the points, they must then, and before that time be in use, and must have been some time before in use, to be reduced to an art, and brought under certain rules, and treated on at large.

A. D. 340.

ABOUT this time lived R. *Hillell*, the prince, the last of those who was promoted to doctorship in the land of *Israel*, as before observed. Now R. *Zacuth*<sup>u</sup> speaks of a copy of the book of 24, called the Bible, written by R. *Hillell*, by which all books were corrected in the year 956 or 984, (according to the *Jewish* account) and that he saw a part of it sold in *Africa*, and that it had been written in his time 900 years, and observes that *Kimchi* says in his *grammar*, that the *Pentateuch* was at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*. Some, as *Schickard*<sup>v</sup> and *Cunæus*<sup>x</sup>, are of opinion, that this *Hillell*, was the famous

<sup>t</sup> Apud Buxtorff. de Punct. Antiq. par. 1. p. 55.    <sup>u</sup> *Juchasin*, fol. 132. 1.    <sup>v</sup> *Bechinat haperuthim*, p. 51. & *Jus Reg. Heb. c. 2. theor. 5. f. 4.*    <sup>x</sup> *De Republic. Heb. l. 1. c. 18.*

famous *Hillell* that lived before the times of *Christ*, and flourished 100 years before the destruction of the second temple; and if so, since his copy was pointed, as will presently be seen, it would prove the points to be as early; but he is more generally thought to be *Hillell* the prince, before-mentioned; for that he should be a *Spanish Jew*, who lived about 600 years ago, as *Morinus*<sup>y</sup> suggests, is not credible; since it can't be thought he was an obscure person, but of some note, from whom, for the sake of honour, the copy had its name, and especially as by it all copies were corrected; besides, the above *Jewish* chronologer, who gives the account of it, says, the copy he saw had been written 900 years before his time, and he lived about the year 1500. Now this copy had the points, as is certain from what *Kimchi* says, who lived in the 12th century; he observes<sup>z</sup>, that the word *ררשו*, in *Psf.* cix. 10. is written with a broad *Kamets*, and in the copy of *Hillell*, at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*, it is written concerning it in the *Masorah*, that it is no where else with *Chateph*, i. e. with

N 3

Ka-

<sup>y</sup> Exercitat. E. bl. l. 1. c. 2. p. 29.  
in *Pfal.* 109. 10.

<sup>z</sup> Comment.

*Kamets Chateph*; and in another work<sup>a</sup> of his, he says of the word תְּשׁוּמָה, in 2 *Sam.* xiii. *Mem* is with *Segol*, which is not usual, and is in the room of *Patbach*; and in the book of *Hillell*, which is at *Toletolo* or *Toldeo*, it is with *Patbach*; and the learned *Mercer*<sup>b</sup> observes, that the word רָעָה, in *Prov.* xxiv. 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*. Wherefore the points must be annexed to the Bible as early as the times of *Hillell*, and before.

IN the library at *Berlin* 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; which, if what is said of it could be established, it would be full as antient as *Hillell's* copy: at the end of it 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; and *Andrew Mullerus*, sometime provost at *Berlin*, wrote at the beginning of it,

<sup>a</sup> *Sepher Shorash.* rad. שׁוּמָה.  
*Prov.* xxiv. 14.

<sup>b</sup> *Comment.* in

it, that this copy was written by *Elias* in the island of *Rhodes*, A. C. 334; but *La Croze*\* the late librarian, says, that at the end of the book there are manifest traces of letters blotted out, and others put in, and that the colour of the ink, and form of the parchment clearly shewed, that it could not then be written scarce 400 years.

THERE are several antient copies of the Bible pointed, but the precise age of them cannot be ascertained. The *Jews* in *China*, have a very antient *Hebrew* Bible in *Pekin*, said to be not at all differing from ours<sup>c</sup>; by which it should seem that it is pointed, or otherwise it would differ. A copy called *Sinai*, a correct copy of the *Pentateuch*, has the accents, as *Elias Levita* acknowledges<sup>d</sup>, who observes that the first word in *Exod.* xviii. 1. is with *Gera-shim*, but in *Sinai* with a *Rebiab*; and he also gives another instance of a different accentuation, but adds, that he knew not who was the composer of it. *R. Nachman*<sup>e</sup>, who lived about the year 1200, says, he searched most diligently in all the *Baby-*

N 4

lo iian

\* Apud Wolf. Biblioth. Heb. p. 166. 167. <sup>c</sup> Semedo's History of China, par. 1. c. 30. <sup>d</sup> Sepher Shibre Luchot. <sup>e</sup> Apud Buxtorff. ut supra.

*Ionian* and *Jerusalem* copies, and in *Hillell's*, and could not find any where a *Dagesh* in those three guttural letters, ם ן, ם, but found it in ם, in three places, *Lev.* xxiii. 17. *Gen.* xliii. 26. and *Exra* viii. 18. by which it appears, that not only *Hillell's* copy, but the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem* copies were pointed. *Ben Melech*, on *Ezek.* xxiv. 10. observes, that *R. Jonab* writes, 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; *Muscatus*<sup>f</sup> says, that the word ךחח, in *Deut.* vi. 4. is pointed with *Segol* and *Kamets*, as it is found in the correct *Jerusalem* copy; and so *Kimchi* affirms<sup>g</sup>, that in the correct *Jerusalem* copy, the word ךחח, in *Job* xxix. 18. was with a *Shurek* for those of *Nabardea*, and with a *Cholem* for the western *Jews*; and seems to be the copy *R. Jonab* the grammarian, and *Maimonides*, who both lived in the 12th century, trusted to and depended on; and which the latter<sup>h</sup> calls the famous *Egyptian* copy, which was

<sup>f</sup> Comment. in *Cofri*, par. 4. fol. 230. 4.  
*Shorah. rad.* ךחח.

<sup>g</sup> *Sepher Hilchot Torah*, c. 8 f. 4.

was many years at *Jerusalem*, and which *Ben Asher* spent much time in correcting, who lived there a long time, as *Elias* says<sup>i</sup>, and by which other copies were corrected; and this *Azariab*<sup>k</sup> consulted, and says, it was in *Jerusalem* from the times of the *misnic* doctors, and had in it the *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the scribes, and the Bible-sections open and shut.

A. D. 300.

THE *Rabbot* are commentaries on the five books of *Moses*, written by *Rabbi Bar Nachmoni*, who flourished, according to *Buxtorff*<sup>l</sup>, about this year. There are fifteen words which have unusual pricks or points upon them, observed by the *Masorab* and in the *Talmud*; ten of them in the law, four of them in the prophets, and one in the *Hagiographa*; those in the law, most, if not all of them, are taken notice of in these commentaries<sup>m</sup>; in one\*  
of

<sup>i</sup> Shibre Luchot & Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.

<sup>k</sup> Meor

Enayim. c. 9. fol. 52. 2.

<sup>l</sup> Biblioth. Heb. p. 326.

<sup>m</sup> Bereshit Rabba, f. 48. fol. 43. 1. & f. 51. fol. 46. 1. & f. 78. fol. 68. 3. & f. 84. fol. 73. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, f. 3. fol. 182. 2.

\* Bemidbar Rabba f. 3. fol. 182. 2.

Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. vid. Aruch in voce [ך] & Maariv Philip. Aquin. fol. 343. 2. who from hence concludes that *Exra* put the points and accents.

of which are these words concerning them, “ said *Ezra*, if *Elijab* (another copy has “ *Moses*) should come and say, why hast “ thou written them? I will say to him, “ now have I pointed them; if he should “ say, thou hast written well, I will im- “ immediately remove the points from “ them.” In another of them, “ express “ mention is made of the accents, *Neb.* “ viii. 8. is thus paraphrased, *they read in “ the book of the law of God*, this is the scrip- “ ture; *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.”

## A. D. 230.

IN this year the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished, as is generally owned, though *Scaliger*\* places it in 370, and *Whiston* § in 369, in which the accents are made mention of<sup>a</sup>. The passage in *Neb.* is explained much in the same manner, as in the *Babylonian Talmud*, and in the *Rabbot* just now quoted; the distinction of the verses is observed in it ||, which is made by the accent *Silluk*.

\* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. P. 323.  
 § Chronological Tables, cent. 19.

§ Chronological Tables, cent. 19.  
 n T.

Hierof. Megillah, fol. 74. 2. 4. . . . || Ib. fol. 75. 1. 2.



*Silluk*. In this *Talmud*† the double reading of a word in *Hag.* i. 8. is observed, which in the text is written וּאִכְבֵּר, but in the margin it is read וּאִכְבְּרָה; the one is according to the letters without the ה paragogic, the other according to the points with it, which, as *Schindler* says<sup>a</sup>, is the true reading; for because the point *Kametz* is under the last letter, the quiescent letter ה is to be assumed, and so the word is to be read with ה paragogic; but if the word had no points at the time this *Talmud* was compiled, nor written with ה 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; and if the *Roman* emperor of that name is meant, it must be written in or after his time; though it appears from the *Talmud*<sup>o</sup> itself, that the *Doclet* or *Dioclesian* spoken of was, according to that, some petty king, that lived in the times of R. *Judab Hakkodesh*, the compiler of the *Misnab*, by whose  
 chil-

† T. Hierof. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. & Taaniot, fol. 65. 1.  
<sup>a</sup> Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 830 <sup>o</sup> T. Hierof. Trumot, 46. 2, 3.

children he had been beaten, as pretended, and when he became a king, complained of it; which can not so well agree 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 it is observed.

About this time flourished that indefatigable writer *Origen*, who had knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, and is almost the only one of the antients that had, excepting *Jerom*. This writer, in one of his commentaries\*, quotes the *Hebrew* reading of *Pf. cxviii. 25, 26.* and agreeable to the present punctuation; in which 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*<sup>p</sup> has given

\* Comment. in Matth. p. 438, 439. Ed. Huet.

<sup>p</sup> Bibliothec. Græc. tom. 2. p. 346.

given a specimen of it in the whole first chapter of *Genesis*, collected out of the fragments of the antient *Greek* interpreters; and so has *Montfaucon*<sup>9</sup> after him; which I have compared with our pointed Bibles, and find it exactly agrees with our modern punctuation, with scarce any variation at all; take as a proof the first two or three verses.

<p>1. בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ</p>	<p>Βρεσιθ Βαρα Ελωιμ Εθ ασαμουιμ δεθ ααρες</p>
<p>2. וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם</p>	<p>κααρες αιεθα θωα εβωα αχωσεκ αλ φνε θεωμ αρεαχ Ελωιμ μεραχεφεδ αλ φνε αμαιμ</p>
<p>3. וַיִּמְצָא אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֹרֶךְ יָמָיו</p>	<p>ειωμερ Ελωιμ ιει ωρ ειει ωρ</p>

THE rest of the specimen, throughout the whole chapter, is agreeable to this; both *Fabricius* and *Montfaucon* have given another specimen of the *Hexapla*, on *Hos.* xi. 1. the same which *Walton*<sup>r</sup> has transcribed from a copy of cardinal *Barberini*, from whom they seem to have taken it, which does not so exactly agree with the modern pointing as the other does; but *Montfaucon*<sup>s</sup> has given two more specimens,

one

<sup>9</sup> Hexapla Origen. Tom. 1. p. 2. &c.

<sup>r</sup> Biblia Poly-

glott. Tom. 6. 72. Interpr. Ed. Roman. p. 133.

<sup>s</sup> Prae-

liminar. ad Hexapla. c. 1. p. 16.

one out of the *Octapla* of *Pf.* ii. 6. and another out of the *Enneapla* of *Hab.* ii. 4. which perfectly agree with the present punctuation; and it is surprising they should, when it is considered, that particularly the specimen of the whole first chapter of *Genesis* is collected from fragments preserved in various writers, and those but little skilled in the *Hebrew* language, and who sometimes wrote differently one from another; and that these have passed through the hands of various copiers, entirely unacquainted with that language; and yet *Fabricius* complains not of any difficulty in collecting it; *Montfaucon* indeed does<sup>t</sup>, and it is pretty much he should, since he wrote after *Fabricius*; this shews that he did not consult him, and that he had not his specimen from him; and therefore it is the more surprising that they should so nearly agree, the difference between them being chiefly not in the vowel-points, but in the powers of some few of the consonant letters. With what precision and exactness, agreeable to the modern punctuation, may it reasonably be supposed were the *Hexapla* of *Origen*, as first published by him, and

<sup>t</sup> *Hexapla Gen.* p. 14.

and as it would have appeared had it been preserved; and who must have had a pointed Bible before him when he composed it; and 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 regular pronunciation. Though I must confess, that since *Origen* was but indifferently skilled in the *Hebrew* language, as *Huetius*\* has observed, and so father *Simon*\*; I greatly suspect he had, by some means or other obtained a copy of the *Hebrew* Bible, written in *Greek* characters, perhaps from a *Jew* with whom he was acquainted, well versed in the *Hebrew* language, both letters and points; for it was allowed by the *Jews*† to write the *Hebrew* text in the characters of any language, though not to read it so written in their synagogues; and especially they allowed of writing it in *Greek* characters, it may be for the use of the *Hellenistic Jews*; nay they allowed the sacred books to be written in *Greek* characters

‡ Origenian. l. 2. c. 1. f. 2. p. 26.      \* Disquisit. Critic. c. 9. p. 61.      \* T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 115. 1. & Megillah, fol. 9. 1. & Debarim Rabba, f. 1. fol. 233. 1.

characters only, for so it is said in the *Misnab*\*,  
 “ there is no difference between the (sa-  
 “ cred) books, the Phylacteries, and *Me-*  
 “ *zuzab* (the parchments on the door-  
 “ posts) only that the books may be writ-  
 “ ten in every tongue, but the Phylacteries  
 “ and *Mezuzab* may not be written but in  
 “ the *Assyrian* (i. e. in *Hebrew* characters).  
 “ *Rabbi Simeon Ben Gamaliel* says, they  
 “ don’t allow the books to be written but in  
 “ *Greek* ;” and the decision was, according  
 to *Simeon*, as *Maimonides*\* observes; and who  
 agreeable to this says, “ they may not  
 “ write the Phylacteries and *Mezuzab* but  
 “ in *Assyrian* characters, but they allow  
 “ the (sacred) books to be written also in  
 “ *Greek*, and in that only.” I suspect  
 therefore, I say, that *Origen* lighted on one  
 of those copies, and what serves to strength-  
 en the suspicion is, that in his *Hexapla*, *A-*  
*donai* is put for *Jehovah*, as the *Rabbins*  
 read it §. Now what he did in compiling  
 his *Hexapla*, was placing the several copies,  
 as he found them, in order, in distinct co-  
 lumns as follows; first, the *Hebrew* text in  
*Hebrew* letters, as then in use with the  
*Jews,*

\* Megillah, c. 1. f. 8. T. Hierof. Sabbat, fol. 15. 3.  
 \* Tephillin, c. 1. s. 19. § Vid. Epiphani. contr.  
 Hæres. 3. hæres. 76.

*Jews*, as *Eusebius* assures<sup>x</sup>, who doubtless saw the work itself; and next a copy of the same in *Greek* characters, he had somewhere met with; then followed the *Greek* versions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, the *Septuagint*, and *Theodotion*: but be it in which way it may, whether the composition of the *Hebrew* copy in *Greek* characters, was *Origen's*, or another's, it seems a clear case that a pointed Bible must then be in being, and was made use of; and that there was a regular punctuation, and that by the specimen the present punctuation agrees with it; which observation sufficiently confutes and destroys those notions and vulgar mistakes so generally received, of the invention of the points by the men of *Tiberias*, and of their being invented after the writing of the *Talmud*, and of their being unknown in the times of *Jerom*; all which must now be retracted.

A. D. 200.

IN this century, and the preceding, lived the Rabbins of *Tiberias*, so frequently mentioned in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, finished in the year 230, as before observed; at this

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time

<sup>x</sup> Ecclesiast. Hist. 1. 6. c. 16.

time as there were many synagogues of the *Jews* at *Tiberias*, so there was a famous academy; and now lived the true men of *Tiberias*, spoken of in *Jewish* writings, and at this time only, as to any number of them; for in the following century, universities and promotions ceased in the land of *Israel*. These men, so famous in *Jewish* writings for their knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, and the purity and elegance of it, and the right manner of reading and pronouncing it, lived before the times of *Jerom*, and so not after the finishing of the *Talmud*, as *Elias* says; for *Jerom* manifestly refers to them, and to the sentiments the *Jews* had of them, for their knowledge of the law, and the beauty and elegance of their language\*. But though these men studied the *Hebrew* language, and were very expert in it, and in the affair of pointing, yet they were not the inventors of the points; which may be concluded from what *Aben Ezra* says<sup>y</sup> of them; “ I have seen, says he, the books  
 “ which the wise men of *Tiberias* examin-  
 “ ed, and fifteen of their elders gave it  
 “ upon

\* Quæst. seu Trad. Heb. in Gen. T. 3. fol. 73. I. K.  
<sup>y</sup> Comment. in Exod. 25. 31.



“ upon oath, that three times they dili-  
 “ gently considered every word and every  
 “ *point*, every full and deficient word, and  
 “ behold, *Yod* was written in the word  
 “ תיעשה”, i. e. in *Exod.* xxv. 31. by which  
 it appears that the Bible was not pointed  
 by them, but pointed Bibles, which they  
 had, were examined by them; so that  
 pointed Bibles were in being before their  
 time; they were pointed to their hands;  
 they only searched into them, and studied  
 them, and became very expert and accu-  
 rate in their knowledge of the points:  
 hence the same writer, in another work <sup>2</sup> of  
 his says, that from them, the men of *Tibe-*  
*rias* were the *Masorettes*; from them  
 we have the whole pointing; not that they  
 were the authors and inventors of the  
 points; but that by them they were  
 handed down to them with great accuracy  
 and exactness; for he expressly says in an-  
 other work of his \*, that “ the men of the  
 great synagogue taught the people the  
 sense of the scriptures by the *accents*, and  
 by the *kings* and *ministers*; so he calls the

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vowel-

<sup>2</sup> Tzachut fol. 138, 2. apud Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu.  
 p. 11.      \* Mozne Leshon Hakodesh apud Buxtorf. ib.  
 p. 13, 14.

vowel-points, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, &c. and were instead of eyes to the blind; therefore in their foot-steps we go forth, them we follow, and on them we lean in all expositions of the scripture." But whatsoever skill the men of *Tiberias* might attain to in the study of the points, they appear to be very unfit for, and unequal to such a work as the invention of them. Hear what Dr. *Lightfoot* \* has observed of them, who was thoroughly acquainted with their characters, as to be learned from the above *Talmud*. " There are some who  
 " believe the holy Bible to be pointed by  
 " the men of *Tiberias*; I do not wonder  
 " at the impudence of the *Jews* who in-  
 " vented this story; but I wonder at the  
 " credulity of Christians who applaud it.  
 " Recollect, I beseech you, the names of  
 " the *Rabbins* of *Tiberias*, from the first si-  
 " tuation of the university to the time  
 " that it expired; and what at length do  
 " you find, but a kind of men mad with  
 " *Pharisaism*, bewitching with traditions  
 " and bewitched, blind, guileful, doting,  
 " they must pardon me, if I say magical  
 " and monstrous? men how unfit, how  
 unable,

\* Works vol. ii. Chorograph. Cent. c. 81. p. 73. 74.

“ unable, how foolish, for the undertak-  
 “ ing so divine a work ?” Then he gives  
 the names of many of them, and observes  
 their childishness, sophistry, froth, and  
 poison, and adds, “ if you can believe the  
 “ Bible was pointed in such a school, be-  
 “ lieve also all that the *Talmudists* write.  
 “ The pointing of the Bible favours of  
 “ the work of the Holy Spirit, not the  
 “ work of lost, blinded, and besotted  
 “ men ;” and elsewhere he says, “ it is  
 “ above the skill of a mere man to point  
 “ the Bible ; nay, scarcely a verse as it is.  
 “ The ten commandments may puzzle all  
 “ the world for that skill.”

As about this time, the universities both  
 of *Tiberias* and *Babylon* were the most flour-  
 ishing, it may be reasonably supposed,  
 that as they had each of them copies of  
 the Bible, which they carefully examined,  
 and preserved for the use of the *Jews* in  
*Palestine* and *Babylon*, that now were made  
 the various readings called *western* and *east-*  
*ern*, published at the end of some printed  
 Bibles ; the one for the *Jews* in their own  
 land, called *western*, and the other for the  
*Jews* in *Babylon*, called *eastern*. The dif-

• Erubhim, or Miscellanies, c. 31. vol. i. p. 1014.

ference in number are 216, and none of them in the law; and they are mostly very trivial, and chiefly about letters and words, but not altogether, for in two places, *Jer.* vi. 6. *Amos* iii. 6. they make mention of the point *Mappick*, in which the one copy differs from the other; so that *Elias*<sup>b</sup> is wrong, in saying that the differences are about words and letters only, but not about points and accents, and therefore he supposes they were made before the invention of the vowel-points and accents; but he is mistaken, these were then in being. In *Lam.* v. 21. the *western Jews* have the Tetragrammaton, *Jehovah*, but the *eastern* have *Adonai*; the former word, as it should seem, having in their copy the points of the latter, as it sometimes has, they put *Adonai* instead of it; which shews that the points then were.

A. D. 190.

CLEMENS of *Alexandria* lived and wrote about this time, and is thought to make mention of the *Hebrew* points and accents, where he says<sup>c</sup>, there are some, who in reading,

<sup>b</sup> Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.

<sup>c</sup> Stromat. l. 3. p. 442.

reading, by the tone of the voice pervert the Scriptures to their own pleasure, and by a transposition *τινων προσωδιων και σιγμων* (which *Sylburgius* his interpreter renders) of certain accents and points, what are wisely and profitably commanded, force to their own liking ;” in which he has respect to a text in *Mal.* iii. 15. and which he vindicates against some heretics of his time ; but not to the *Greek* version of it, and the accents of that ; for those in the opposition say, there were no accents in the *Greek* tongue for ages after<sup>d</sup> ; but to the *Hebrew* text, and the points and accents in that ; and the rather this may be supposed, seeing it appears in several parts of his writings, that he had some knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue.

A little before *Clemens, Irenæus* wrote, who, tho’ he had but a small degree of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, yet something of it he

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<sup>d</sup> Some say they began in the 7th century, vid. *Velasti Dissert. de Lit. Græc. Pronunciat.* par 4. c. 2 p. 95. *Romæ, 1751.* It is said the ancients the MSS. are, the fewer are the accents, and that those which exceed a thousand years have none at all, *Mirtisb. Sarpedon* (alias *Frideric Reiffenberg*). *Dissert. de Vera Attic. Pronunciat.* par. 3. c. 1. p. 48. *Romæ, 1750* ; but *Gregorius Placentinus* makes them much more ancient. See his *Epitome Græc. Paleograph.* c. 11. p. 88 *Romæ, 1735.* The controversy about the *Greek* accents has been of late years revived at *Rome.*

endeavoured to get, that he might answer the heretics of his time, who were fond of introducing foreign words and their significations into their schemes. The first and ancient *Hebrew* letters, he says<sup>e</sup>, were but ten; which *Feuardentius* his annotator explains of the ten from *Aleph* to *Yod* inclusive, because these were the first and chief from whence all the rest were formed; and indeed the *cabalistic Jews*<sup>f</sup> say the *Yod* is the beginning of all letters; and *Hermannus Hugo*<sup>g</sup> observes, that all the *Hebrew* characters are composed from the single letter *Yod* variously joined together; but *Irenæus* adds, “that every one of the letters are written by fifteen, the last letter coupled to the first.” “Now what he means by *fifteen* *Dr. Grabe* says he could not devise. I suspect he means the fifteen vowel-points, as some *grammarians*<sup>h</sup> reckon them, and call them five long, five short, and five most short, which *Irenæus* might have some knowledge of from those who taught him the little *Hebrew* he had; for that he consulted the *Rabbins* of his time

<sup>e</sup> Adv. hæref. l. 2. c. 41.  
 zirah p. 58. Ed. Rittangel.

<sup>f</sup> R. Abraham Dior. in Jet-  
 c. p. 64. <sup>g</sup> De prima Scribendi Orig.  
<sup>h</sup> Vid. Balmesii Mikneh Abraham p. 25. lin.  
 3. & 26. lin. 6.

time is clear from what he before says of the *Hebrews* and their language, “ Sicut “ periti eorum dicunt :” and it is observable that in his time *Hebrew* words were read and pronounced according to the modern pointing ; as for instance, לקו קו is read not *Culacu* nor *Coloco*, as most natural, without points ; but *Caulacau* <sup>1</sup>, as it is in our pointed Bibles in *Jf.* xxviii. 13. and was read so before his time by the heretics he opposes. There are other words in *Irenæus* <sup>k</sup> which agree with our modern punctuation, as *Sabaoth*, *Eloa*, *Adonai* : and here I cannot forbear observing, that *Philo Byblius* <sup>l</sup>, who lived half a century at least before *Irenæus*, in translating *Sanchoniatho*’s history out of the *Phœnician* language, reads אלהים, his author’s word no doubt, in *Greek* Ελωειμ, as *Jerom* <sup>m</sup>, *Basil* <sup>n</sup>, and *Ephraïmus* <sup>o</sup>, in the fourth century read it *Eloim*; and *Origen* before them, as the specimen of his *Hexapla* given above shews. This very antient way of reading and pronouncing *Elohim*, as it agrees with  
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<sup>1</sup> Adv. hæref. l. 1. c. 23.    <sup>k</sup> Ib. l. 2. c. 66.    <sup>l</sup> Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 1. p. 37.    <sup>m</sup> Epist. Marcellæ fol. 31. A. Tom. 3. Quæst. Heb. in Gen. fol. 66. E.  
<sup>n</sup> Adv. Eunom. l. 1.    <sup>o</sup> Contr. Hæref. l. 1. Hæref. 40.

the modern punctuation, so it may be observed against the *Hutchinsonians*, who sometimes write and pronounce it *Elabim* and sometimes *Aleim*, as *Masclef* also does.

A. D. 150.

In this year, or about this time, the *Misnab* or book of Traditions was finished, which *R. Judab Hakkodesb* collected together, that they might not be lost; and it must be written so early, since by the unanimous consent of *Jewish* writers, it was compiled by this *Rabbi*, who flourished in the times of *Antoninus Pius*, with whom he was very familiar. Some Christian writers indeed place it at the beginning of the sixth century, or at the end of the fifth, and others at the end of the fourth; but no good reason can be given why the *Jews* should antedate this book, for whose use only it was written. There is not one *Rabbi* mentioned in it but lived before *R. Judab*, the supposed compiler of it; nor is there any chronological character in it that brings it lower than the times of *Adrian* the predecessor of *Antoninus*,



*ninus*, whose name is once mentioned in it<sup>p</sup>; therefore *Maimonides* \* thinks the *Misnah* was composed about his time. Now the *Jews* had been very much harassed in the times of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, but obtained some favour and ease in the times of *Antoninus*; and having more ease and leisure, it was the fittest opportunity of setting about this work of collecting their traditions from several parts; which were put together by the above *Rabbi*, that they might not be lost: according to the author of *Cofri*<sup>a</sup>, this year 150 is the year 150 from the destruction of the second temple, which brings it to the year of *Christ* 220; but *R. Abraham Ben David*,<sup>b</sup> and *R. Menachem*<sup>c</sup> place the *Misnah* in 120 from the destruction, which is A. D. 190; but *Morinus*<sup>d</sup> himself owns that *Rabbenū Hakados* compiled the *Misnaiot* or traditions almost two hundred years before the council of *Nice*, and that council was but little more than three hundred years after

<sup>p</sup> *Avodah Zarah*, c. 3. f. 3.

\* *Comment. in Ib.*

<sup>a</sup> *Par* 3. c. 67. so *R. Serira* in *Juchasin* fol. 115. and *R. Azariah Meor Enayim* c. 24. fol. 95, 1.

<sup>b</sup> *Sepher Cabala*.

<sup>c</sup> *Apud Ganz Tzemach David*, par 1. fol. 30, 2.

<sup>d</sup> *De sinceritate Heb. Text.* l. 1. *Exercit.* 1. c. 2. p. 17.

after the birth of *Christ*. The general regard paid to the *Misnab* by the *Jews* in all parts, in *Palestine* and in *Babylon*, the puzzle the *Gemarists* are at in many places to understand it, many of the traditions in it being the same that are observed or referred to in the New Testament, are proofs of the antiquity of it; and though it is denied, yet it is most clear that *Jerom* had knowledge of it as a written book; his words are, that<sup>9</sup> “ the traditions of the  
 “ *Pharisees* are what to this day are called  
 “ δευτερωσεις (secondary laws or the *Mis-*  
 “ *nab*, and are such old wives fables, that  
 “ I cannot bear *evolvere* to turn them over;  
 “ for neither will the bigness of the book  
 “ admit of it, and most of the things in  
 “ it are so filthy that I am ashamed to speak  
 “ of them;” in which he not only gives the work its proper name, a secondary law or *Misnab*, but speaks of it as a *book*, and of a considerable bulk, it being bigger than our New Testament, and there are things in it which agree with the character he gives of it, and such as well deserved his censure, as *Dr. Wotton* \* thinks; though

<sup>9</sup> *Epist. Algasæ Qu. 10. fol. 55. I. Tom. 3.*

\* *Miscellaneous Discourses, &c. p. 94.*

though I must confess in this I am of a different mind; but chuse rather to subscribe to what the learned *Wagenfeil* says \*, that in the *Misnab* as abstracted from the *Gemara*, "there is no fable nor apologue in it, nor any thing very foolish, nor very remote from reason; it contains mere laws and traditions." *Jerom* therefore says this upon hearsay, and it is plain by his own words he had not read it; or, it may be, rather he refers to the *Jerusalem-Talmud*, which consists both of the *Misnab* and *Gemara*; and not only the matter but the bulk of the book *Jerom* speaks of better agrees with that, which is a large folio; and being finished in the year 230, as before observed, there was time enough for *Jerom* to have knowledge of it; however, I think it is beyond all doubt, that there was a collection of the *Jewish* traditions called in his time *Misnab* or *Misnaiot*, and that this was a written book, in some form or another, either by itself or with the *Gemara*, of which *Jerom* had knowledge; and that *Jerom* saw the *Misnab* itself is the opinion of the learned *Dr. Bernard* in his letter to the bishop of *Fern*, prefixed to the

\* Præfat ad Tela Ignea, p. 57, 58.

the *Misnab* of *Surenbusius* †; and *Jerom* in the same epistle makes mention of the *Misnic* doctors by name, as *Rab*, *Akiba*, *Simeon*, and *Hillell*, who delivered to the *Jews* the tradition of walking 2000 feet on a sabbath day; and a little after he says, “on certain days when they (the *Jewish* doctors) explain their traditions they usually say to their disciples, *οι σοφοι δευτερωσω*, that is, the wise men teach the traditions,” than which no words can more fully and fitly express or give a better translation of the phrases *תנו רבנו* *Our Rabbins teach*, that is, in the *Misnab*, and *תני רבי* such a *Rabbi teaches*, that is, in the *Misnic* way; phrases to be met with in innumerable places in *Talmudic* writings; which shews the knowledge *Jerom* had of them, and that they were in being before his time; and hence it is, that the wise men are called *Tanaim*, *Misnic* doctors, and the *Misnab* itself *Matbnitha*, tradition, instruction, doctrine. The *Misnic* doctors are frequently called *wise men* in  
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† *Videret equidem aliquando opus illud Misnicum Rector Bethleemiticus, &c.* Vid. *Triglandium de festa Karæorum* c. 9. p. 123, who is of the same opinion. See the meaning of these phrases in *Halicot Olam*, p. 35, 39. Ed. L'Empereur.

in it. The most famous of them for their doctrines, debates, and decisions in the *Misnab* were well known to *Jerom*, and their names and the order of time in which they lived, are given by him :  
 “ The *Nazarites*, says he, \* interpret the  
 “ two houses (*Is.* viii.) of the two fami-  
 “ lies of *Sammai* and *Hillell*, from whom  
 “ sprung the Scribes and Pharisees, in  
 “ whose school *Akiba* succeeded, thought  
 “ to be the master of *Aquila* the prose-  
 “ lyte, and after him *Meir*, succeeded by  
 “ *Jobanan* the son of *Zaccai*, after him  
 “ *Eliezer* and then *Delphon* (*Tarphon* I  
 “ suppose is meant) and again *Joseph* the  
 “ *Galilean*, and *Joshua* unto the captivity  
 “ of *Jerusalem*. *Sammai* and *Hillell*  
 “ therefore did not arise in *Judea* much be-  
 “ fore the Lord was born ; the first of  
 “ which signifies a *dissipator*, and the other  
 “ *prophane*; because that by their traditions  
 “ and secondary laws (or *Misnic* doctrines)  
 “ they dissipated and despised the precepts  
 “ of the law ; and these are the two houses  
 “ which did not receive the Saviour.” It  
 is observable in this passage, that *Jerom*  
 calls

\* Comment. in *Esaïam*, c. 8. fol. 17. I. Tom. 5.

calls the schools of *Hillell* and *Shammai*, which make so considerable a figure in the *Misnab*, houses and families, which is the very name they go by in the *Misnab* hundreds of times, as בית *Hillell* and בית *Shammai*. So *Jerom* elsewhere † calls the *Jewish* fables and traditions, δευτερωσεις secondary laws, as is also before observed, and answers to *Misnaiot*, the very name by which their book of traditions is called: and *Eusebius* †, who lived before *Jerom*, makes mention of the *Deuterotæ* or *Misnic* doctors among the *Jews*, by which name *Jerom* \* often calls the Pharisees, who were traditionary men, retailers of traditions, and the authors of the *Misnab*; and by the same name he calls one of the *Rabbins*, that instructed him in the *Hebrew* tongue †, and from whom, with others, he became acquainted with many things now to be met with in the *Misnab* and *Talmud*; and this accounts for *Jerom's* knowledge of the *Misnab*, which might not be known by those who were his cotemporaries; and which

† Comment. in Eſaiam c. 59. fol. 103. in Ezek. c. 36. fol. 235. H. & in Matt. 22. fol. 30. M. Epist. ad Damafum, T. 3. fol. 40. A. † Præpar. Evangel. l. 11. c. 5. \* In Eſaiam, c. 3. fol. 9. C. & c. 10. fol. 20. D. & c. 29. fol. 57. C. Tom. 5. † In Habacuc. c. 2. fol. 85. D. Tom. 6.

which need not be wondered at, since the book was written purely for the use of the *Jews*, and was not designed to be made public to others; and it was only thro' *Jerom's* acquaintance with some *Jewish Rabbins* his preceptors, that he came to have any notion of it; wherefore *Austin* not knowing it was committed to writing\*, is no objection to it, since it might be written, and he be ignorant of it, he having no correspondence with the *Jews*, as *Jerom* had: and it may be further observed, that of the *Misnic* doctors some lived before the birth of *Christ*, and some after, yet before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and others after that, but all before R. *Judab Hakkodesh*, the last of them, and who compiled the *Misnab* about the date given; and it may also be observed, that whereas some of these men lived before this date some considerable time, in course, their debates and decisions about any matter must be reckoned as early; so that the discourse between two *Rabbins* I shall presently produce, founded upon punctuation, who lived about, or a little

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\* Opera T. 6. contr. Adversar. L. g. & Proph. l. 2. c. 1. p. 256.

after, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, carries the affair of punctuation higher than the date fixed <sup>w</sup>, even into the first century.

THE *Misnab*, according to the *Jews*, was pointed. *Ephodeus* <sup>x</sup> says, you will find all the ancient copies of the *Misnab* written with points and accents; and R. *Azariab* <sup>y</sup> affirms, that he saw two copies of the *Misnab* more than 500 years old, with points and distinguishing accents; and in the *Misnab* not only mention is made of verses in the Bible, and how many to be read at a time <sup>z</sup>, by which it appears that the sacred books were distinguished into verses so early, but the points are manifestly referred unto. Two doctors are introduced <sup>a</sup> as disputing about the reading of the text in *Cant.* i. 2. Says R. *Joshua*, brother *Ishmael* how dost thou read the words, דודיק or דודיק? that is, whether he read the word with a masculine or feminine affix; and so, whether it was the congregation or church that spoke to God,  
or

<sup>w</sup> Vid. *Halicot Olam*, c. 2. p. 19, 26, 228. & *Pocock. Port. Mosis*, p. 120. <sup>x</sup> *Apud Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu.* p. 78. <sup>y</sup> *Meor Enayim*, c. 59. fol. 180, 2. <sup>z</sup> *Megillah*, c. 4. f. 4. <sup>a</sup> *Avcdah zarah*, c. 2. f. 5.



or whether it was God that spoke to the church? now 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. Ismael* it was to be read feminine יְיָ as if spoken by God to the church; but this *R. Joshua* denied; Not so, says he, but יְיָ masculine, and so spoken by the church to God. Now though these two *Rabbins* might have an unpointed bible before them, yet the foundation of their reasoning lay in the points; for their dispute was not barely how the word was pronounced, but how it was read; and it is observable, that it is the modern punctuation of this word that is by this instance established; to which may be added, that the *Masoreth* is expressly made mention of in the *Misnah*<sup>b</sup> as the hedge of the law, one branch of which is concerned with the points and accents, and to the authors of it those that oppose the points ascribe them. Now *R. Akiba*, whose saying this is, flourished about eighty years after Christ, and died in the year 120, in the

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war

<sup>b</sup> Pirke Abot, c. 3. f. 13. vid. Leusden in ib.

war of *Adrian* against the *Jews*; in whom the glory of the law is said to cease, because he gave his mind to search out the meaning of every *apex*, tittle, and point in it, as it was foretold of him that he should\* : the extraordinary point in the letter ה in רחוקה, *Numb.* ix. 10. is observed in the *Misnab* †.

A. D. 120.

About this time, according to the *Jewish* chronology<sup>c</sup>, lived *Simeon Ben Jochai* a disciple of R. *Akiba* author of the book of *Zohar*; the authority and antiquity of which book is not called in question by any of the *Jews*, no not by *Elias Levita* himself, who first asserted the points to be the invention of the men of *Tiberias*; yet declared<sup>d</sup>, if any one could convince him that his opinion was contrary to the book of *Zohar*, he should be content to have it rejected. What may be urged in favour of the antiquity of that book, is not only, that the persons introduced speaking in it, and whose

\* *Misn. Sotah*, c. 9. f. 15. *Bartenora* in *ib. T. Bab. Menachot* fol. 29, 2. † *Pesachim*, c. 9. f. 2. <sup>c</sup> *Ganz Tzemach David*, par. 1. fol. 30, B. <sup>d</sup> *Præfat.* 3. ad *Maforet*.

whose sayings are recorded, were as early or earlier than the time to which it is placed; but the neatness of the language in which it is written, which far exceeds any thing written after this time; as also there being no mention made of the *Talmud* in it, though there<sup>e</sup> is of the *Targums* of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*. Some things objected to its antiquity may be only interpolations. R. *Azariah* says\*, it was written before the *Misnah* was compiled. According to *Mafius* † it was written a little after the destruction of *Jerusalem*. Now in this book it is said, “the letters are the body, and the points are the spirit or soul;” and the text in *Dan. xii. 3.* is thus paraphrased, *they that be wise shall shine*, the letters and points; *as the brightness*, the modulation of the accents; *they that turn many to righteousness*, these are the pauses of the accents<sup>f</sup>; so *Nehemiah viii. 8.* is interpreted in it, of the pauses of the accents, and of the *Masoreth*<sup>g</sup>; and in another place<sup>h</sup> “*Jehovah* is called “*Elohim*, because he is the river of mercies;

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cies;

<sup>e</sup> Zohar in Gen. fol. 61, 1.      \* Imre Binah, c. 59.  
 fol. 179, 2.      † Comment. in Josh. 1, 3.      <sup>f</sup> Zohar  
 in Gen. fol. 1, 3.      <sup>g</sup> In Exod. fol. 82, 4.      <sup>h</sup> Ib.  
 in Lev. fol. 4, 3. Ed. Sultzbach.

cies ; and it is written mercy, and pointed “ by *Elohim* ;” yea, the very names of the points and accents are mentioned in it in various places<sup>1</sup>, as *Cholem*, *Schurek*, *Chirek*, *Pathach*, *Segol*, *Sheva*, *Kametz*, *Tzere*, *Zarkâ*, *Segolta*, *Shalshelet*, &c. and elsewhere mention is made of the seven vowels, which are by grammarians called *Kametz*, *Tzere*, *Chirek*, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, *Pathach*, *Segol* ; so some of the extraordinary points or pricks, on certain words are observed in it, as that on the word for *he kissed him*, *Gen. xxxiii. 4.* and on the word for *afar off*, in *Numbers ix. 10.*<sup>1</sup> ; the double letters in the *Hebrew* tongue, the pronounciation of which depends upon the points, are made mention of in this book<sup>m</sup>.

## A. D. 100.

In the time before this date, or in the first century, the *Targums* of *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* were written ; the one is upon the

<sup>1</sup> *Ib.* in *Gen.* fol. 1, 2. & 26, 3. & 38. 1. 2. & 71. 2. *Tikkune zohar præfat.* fol. 6, 2. & 7, 1. <sup>1</sup> *Ib.* in *Gen.* fol. 98, 4. <sup>m</sup> In *Gen.* fol. 38, 1.

the prophets, and the other upon the Pentateuch, and are by *Buxtorf*\* said to be the most ancient books of all the *Hebrews*, *Jonathan* flourishing a little before Christ, and *Onkelos* a little after; though some write that they knew one another; however, they were in this century: it is certain also there was a *Targum* on *Job*, as ancient † as *R. Gamaliel*, the master of the Apostle *Paul*; and *Onkelos* must be cotemporary with him, if what is said ‡ is true, that he burnt at *Gamaliel's* funeral as much as was worth seventy *Tyrian* pounds. The *Targums* are now in our printed bibles pointed; but whether they were so when first written cannot be said. *Elias Levita* <sup>n</sup> is very positive and says, without doubt the *Targumists* wrote their paraphrases without points; and affirms also, that they were not pointed by the *Masoretes*, but by men of note long after their time; but this is all said to serve an hypothesis of his own, that there was no pointing before the men of *Tiberias*;

P 4

that

\* Biblioth. Rabbin. p. 293. † T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15, 3.

‡ T. Bab Avodah zarah fol. 11, 1.

<sup>n</sup> Præfat. ad Methurgeman, fol. 2, 1.

that the points of them were then in a corrupt state, and very irregular; and so indeed *Buxtorf*<sup>a</sup> found them, and took great pains to restore them; and which not only supposes their being, but it may be that such a state was owing to their great antiquity and the long neglect of them. With some *Jewish* commentators *Jonathan* is observed in some places to translate and paraphrase according to the points. *Kimchi* on 2 *Sam.* xix. 14. observes, that instead of *he bowed*, *Jonathan* renders it passively, *was bowed*, by which it seems, he says, that he read וי with a *Tzere* under *Yod*, but the *Masorab* testifies of it that it is with a *Patach* under the *Yod*; and on *Hof.* v. 15. he remarks, that in the word אשמו the *Aleph* and *Skin* are with a *Sbeva*, agreeable to which is the *Targum* of *Jonathan*; and *Jarchi* on *Ezek.* xxvii. 16. observes, that as to the point *Dagesh*, *Jonathan* explains the word that has it sometimes literally, and sometimes allegorically; for in that way he sometimes paraphrased otherwise than in the copy before him; so the *Jerusalem Targumist* on *Gen.* xiv. 5. what *Onkelos* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* take for the proper name

<sup>a</sup> Praefat. ad Bibl. Heb.

name of a place, he instead of *Zuzim* in *Ham*, has it, the *illustrious ones among them*; and so it is quoted in *Beresbit Rabba*<sup>a</sup>, on which the commentator<sup>b</sup> observes, that *Zuzim* is allegorically explained, as if it had the signification of splendor and lustre, and *Bebam*, which is with a *Kametz*, as if it was written with a *Segol*; but if the points were not then known, there could be no foundation for such an allegorical interpretation. *Capellus*<sup>c</sup> himself owns, that *Jonathan* and *Onkelos* made use of an *Hebrew* copy different from what the *Septuagint* did, and almost the same we now have from the *Masorettes*; and indeed *Onkelos* scarce ever departs from the modern punctuation, and it will be difficult to produce a single instance proving that he used an unpointed Bible.

## A. D. 70.

*Josephus*, the famous *Jewish* historian, flourished about this time. Scarce any thing can be expected from him concerning the *Hebrew* Points, who wrote in *Greek*, and conformed *Hebrew* words to the

<sup>a</sup> Parash. 42 fol. 37, 2.  
<sup>c</sup> Critica, p. 324.

<sup>b</sup> In Mattanot Cehunnah in

the genius of that language, and who read and pronounced consonants, as well as vowels, different from the *Hebrew* words. There is a passage of his which is thought to militate against the antiquity and necessity of the vowel-points, when he says<sup>d</sup>, that the sacred letters engraven on the mitre of the high priest, meaning the word *Jehovah*, are *four vowels*; which are supposed to be a sufficient number of vowels for the *Hebrew* language, at least, if another or two are added to them: but, to take off the force of this objection, if there is any in it, let it be observed, 1st. *Josephus's* want of skill in the *Hebrew* tongue, with which he is charged by some learned men; the *Syro-Chaldean* language being commonly spoken by the *Jews* in his time, and which, perhaps, may serve also to account for his different pronunciation of *Hebrew* words in some places. 2dly, What he calls vowels, and which some think may be used instead of vowels, are allowed by the same to have also the power of consonants; and it is certain, that the *Vau*, was used as a consonant before, and in the times of *Josephus*; so *David*

<sup>d</sup> De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 5. f. 2.



*vid* is read Δαεῖδ, in *Matt.* i. 1. 6. & *passim*, and in the very name *Jehovah* he speaks of; for the *Samaritans*<sup>e</sup> pronounced it *Jabe*; and י and ך are sometimes changed for one another in the *Hebrew* language, as in *Bathshua* for *Bathsheba*, 1 *Chron.* iii. 5. and *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, and in other words, and even in his own name. 3dly, If the sacred name *Jehovah* consisted of vowels only, it could not be pronounced; for as consonants cannot be pronounced without vowels, so neither can vowels without consonants; and though the word is by the *Jews* said to be ineffable, yet not because it could not be pronounced, for it was pronounced by the blasphemer in the times of *Moses*, by *Hiram*, by the former wise men to their children once a week \*, and by the high priest in the sanctuary, as they allow<sup>f</sup>; but because as they thought it was not lawful to pronounce it, at least in common, as say  
both

<sup>e</sup> Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 15. vid. Epiphan. contra Hæref. l. 1. hæf. 40.    \* T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 71, 1.

<sup>f</sup> Misn. Sotah, c. 7. f. 6. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 39, 2.

both *Philo*<sup>z</sup> and *Josephus*<sup>h</sup>; and so in the *Misnab*<sup>i</sup>, 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 say it is unutterable, as the author of *Delphi Phœnicizantes* observes<sup>k</sup>, it is only as written by the *Greeks*, who scarce admit of *v* as a consonant, and cannot express aspirates in the middle and end of a word, as this word requires; but then he adds, not because it cannot be pronounced, for it may be pronounced according to the *Hebrew* letters, with which it is written. 4thly, The three letters in the name *Jehovah*, for there are no more in it of a different kind, can at most be only considered as *matres lectionis*, as they are called, and so used in the room of vowels; but then these are often wanting in the *Hebrew* text, and in places where they might be expected, and where their presence would be necessary, if this were their use, and there were no other vowels or vowel-points, and therefore are insufficient to supply the place of them.

5thly

<sup>z</sup> De vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670.      <sup>h</sup> Antiqu. l. 2. c. 12.  
<sup>i</sup> f. 4.      <sup>l</sup> Sanhedrin, c. 11. f. 1.      <sup>k</sup> Dickinson, c. 6.  
P. 57.

5thly, After all, γραμματα and φωνηεντα are the same in *Josephus* as in the *Greek* epigram in *Eusebius*<sup>1</sup>, and they the same with φωνη the human and articulate voice, which, as *Capellus*<sup>m</sup> observes, consists not of vowels only, but of consonants also; and both in the one as in the other, the tetragrammaton, or the name of four letters, *Jehovah* is thought to be meant; or of seven letters, four consonants and three vowel-points; hence *Scaliger*<sup>n</sup> says, “ there is no necessity “ by φωνηεντα to understand vowels, in “ the above *Greek* epigram, since *Josephus* “ expressly calls the four letters of the te- “ tragrammaton φωνηεντα, whence it appears “ that any letters may be so called;” and *Josephus*’s view in the observation he makes was not to tell us what sort of letters they were that 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, and which continues in use to this day; wherefore both *Selden*<sup>o</sup> and *Braunius*<sup>p</sup> render the passage in *Josephus* thus, “ about “ it

<sup>1</sup> Præpar. Evangel. l. xi. c. 6.      <sup>m</sup> Orat. de Nom. Tetragram. p. 172.      <sup>n</sup> In Fragm. ad Calcem lib. de Eminent. Temp. p. 34.      <sup>o</sup> De Succes. in Pontif. Ebr. l. 2. c. 7.      <sup>p</sup> De Vestitu Sacerd. Heb. l. 2. c. 22. f. 18. p. 811.

“ it (the mitre) was another golden crown  
 “ bearing sacred letters, that is, the name  
 “ tetragrammaton.” *Philo* calls them  
 the four engravings of the name, and the  
 engravings of the four letters, and this,  
 says he, divines call tetragrammaton †.  
 Moreover, though *Josephus* does not make  
 express mention of the *Masorah* in his  
 writings, yet *Arias Montanus* † thinks, he  
 never could have so confidently said what  
 he said without the help of it; as when  
 he says †, in such a space of time that was  
 past, meaning from *Moses*, “ no man dared  
 “ to add, nor to take away, nor to  
 “ change *anything* in the scriptures, chusing  
 “ rather to die;” and the same says *Philo*  
 the *Jew* †, who lived in the same age, and  
 a little before him, that the *Jews* in the  
 space of more than 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;” and that there  
 was a *Masorah* before their times is ac-  
 knowledged by some who have been op-  
 posers

† De vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 670, 673.    † De Varia Heb.  
 Lib. Script. & Lect.    † Contr. Apion l. 1. c. 8.    † A-  
 pud. Euseb. Evangel. præpar. l. 8. c. 6. p. 357.

posers of the points, as before observed. The silence of *Philo* and *Josephus* about the points, is only a proof that they were not a matter of controversy, but no proof of their not being in use.

## A. D. 31.

THAT the points were in use in the times of Christ may be concluded from *Mat. v. 18. till heaven and earth pass away one jot (or one Yod, as the Syriac version) or one tittle (or one Chirek, as Elias Hutter in his Hebrew version) shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled*; and so as the least letter in the *Hebrew* alphabet *Yod* is referred to, the least of the points in use, *Chirek*, is also; between which and the *Greek* word *κεραία*, used by the Evangelist, is great nearness of sound, and seems to be no other than that point made *Greek*. So *Dr. Lightfoot* ° observes that our Saviour in his words of one *Iota*, and one *Keraia*, not perishing from the law, seems to allude to the least of the letters, *Yod*, and to the least vowel and accent. The argument from hence cannot well be put more strongly

° Works, vol. 1. p. 1014.

strongly than it is by Dr. *John Prideaux*<sup>a</sup>, who yet was an opposer of the points; “ if the points, says he, were not at this “ time, why does the Saviour make men- “ tion of them? if they were the same “ with the consonants or only cornicular “ eminencies of them, why are they rec- “ koned here as distinct things?” and to which he makes a very feeble answer, and indeed the argument seems unanswerable: nor can the pricks on certain letters called תג׳י, be designed, though very ancient, being mentioned in the *Talmud*<sup>a</sup>, and the same letters on which they are put, and on them only and not on all; and as *Broughton*<sup>b</sup> observes, “ these, and likewise accents, are “ no part of the word, therefore vowel- “ pricks (or points) must be meant;” and it may be concluded with *Piscator* on the place, that Christ “ so calls, i. e. tittles, what now “ go by the name of points, which in *He- “ brew* 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

<sup>a</sup> *Viginti duæ Lectiones, Lect. 12. p. 182.*  
*Menachot, fol. 29, 2.*

<sup>b</sup> *Works, p. 204.*

<sup>a</sup> *T. Bab.*

“ time of Christ was pointed, and that  
 “ that punctuation was approved of by  
 “ him ;” so *Pasor* in his *Lexicon* says, “ 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 Evan-  
 gelists, and in *Heb. xi.* 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, as in *Immanuel*,  
*Mat. i. 23. Matthew, Lebbæus, Thaddæus,*  
*Matt. x. 3. Hosanna, Matt. xxi. 9. Eph-*  
*phatha, Mark vii. 34. Anna, Luke ii. 36.*  
*Matthbat, Matthathias, Luke iii. 24, 25.*  
*Matthias, Acts i. 23. Abaddon, Rev. ix. 11.*  
*Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 16. Sabbaton, Matt.*  
*xii. 5. Lamma, Mark xv. 34.* with others, and  
 the *Dagesh lene* in *Capernaum; Sarepta,* and  
 others ; and even the use of the *Pathäch*  
*Genubâb* appears in the pronunciation of  
*Messias* and *Siloam* as well as the other  
 points, *John i. 41.* and *ix. 7, 11.*

## A. 30. Ante Christum.

ABOUT this time lived two famous doctors among the *Jews*, *Hillell* and *Shammai*, heads of two schools and of two sects, so different, that it is said<sup>c</sup> the law was as two laws, and a fast was appointed on account of the division between them<sup>d</sup>; the former was followed by the *Rabbanite Jews*, and the latter by the *Karaite Jews*: and it may be observed, that *Josephus*<sup>e</sup> calls *Pollio*, the same with *Hillell*, a Pharisee, but not *Sammeas* or *Shammai*, he mentions with him; through whom the *Karaites* derive the genealogy and succession of their doctors, and from whom they say they received the doctrine and copy of the law<sup>f</sup>; which *Shammai* had from *Semmaiab*, and he from *Judah ben Tabbai*, in whose days the separation was made, 120 years before *Christ*, as will be seen hereafter. Now the *Karaites* with one consent declare, that the copy of the law<sup>g</sup> they had, had the points and accents, and that such  
copies

<sup>c</sup> T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 88, 2.      <sup>d</sup> Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580.      <sup>e</sup> Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. f. 1.  
<sup>f</sup> Dod. Mordecai, five Comment. de Karæis, c. 9. p. 97. Edit. a Wolfio.      <sup>g</sup> Ibid, c. 12. p. 150.



copies they always had and used ; as the *Hillellian* copy is also a pointed one. I have observed under A. D. 340. that some learned men take that copy to be this *Hillell's*, and I am pretty much inclined to the same opinion ; for, as *Shammai* had a copy for him and his party, so *Hillell* had, no doubt, one for him and his ; and as the *Karaites* boast of their copy, and of the antiquity of it, so the *Rabbanites* boast of *Hillell's* copy ; which must be the copy of some eminent person of that name, by which all copies were corrected ; and who so eminent as this *Hillell* ? It is indeed most generally ascribed to a *Hillell*, who lived in the fourth century, not so famous as this ; and as for the copy which *R. Zacuth* saw, and which had been written 900 years before he saw it, which, from 1500, in which he lived, carries it up to the year 600, it falls short of that *Hillell*, and still more of this. I suppose, therefore, that 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 ; so that if this was the case, there were two pointed Bibles as early as the

date given. *Hillel* 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*<sup>h</sup>, with which *Josephus*<sup>i</sup> agrees, who calls him *Pollio*, as before observed.

#### A. 40. Ante Christum.

ABOUT this time lived R. *Nechuniab Ben Kanah*, as the *Jewish* chronologers<sup>a</sup> generally place him. I suspect him to be the same whom *Grotius*<sup>r</sup> calls R. *Nebumias*, who, according to him, was fifty years before Christ, and who then 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*: Could the authenticity and antiquity of it be established, it would furnish out a very early proof of the points; for R. *Bechai*<sup>s</sup>, a celebrated writer with the *Jews*, has a quotation out of it to this pur-

<sup>a</sup> T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 15, 1. Juchafin, fol. 19, 2. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2. <sup>r</sup> Antiqu. l. 15. c. 1. f. 1. & c. 10. f. 4. & Josipp. Heb. l. 5. c. 13. <sup>s</sup> Juchafin, fol. 20, 1. Ganz Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 24, 2. <sup>r</sup> De Ver. Relig. Christ. l. 5. f. 14. <sup>s</sup> Apud Buxtorf. Tiberiad. c. 9.

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 *Babir* ;” but seeing such  
 antiquity of this book is doubtful as as-  
 cribed to it, I lay no stress upon it; though  
*Buxtorf*<sup>t</sup> says, it is the most ancient of all  
 the *Rabbinical* books, and if so, it must  
 be as ancient as it is said to be ; since *Jo-*  
*nathan Ben Uzziel*, who wrote on the  
 prophets, was cotemporary with the sup-  
 posed author of it.

#### A. 120. Ante Christum.

IN the times of *John Hyrcanus*, and *Ale-*  
*xander Jannæus* his son, sprung up the sect  
 of the *Karaites*<sup>u</sup> in opposition to the Pha-  
 risees, who had introduced traditions, and  
 set up the oral law, which these men re-  
 jected. In the times of the said princes  
 lived *Simeon Ben Sbetach*, and *Judab Ben*  
*Tabbai*, who flourished A. M. 3621. these  
 two separated, the latter from the former,  
 because he could not embrace his inven-  
 tions

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<sup>t</sup> Bibliothec. Rab. p. 319. so Groddeck de Script. Rabbin.  
 f. 74. p. 26.      <sup>u</sup> Cosri, par. 3. f. 65. Maimon. in Pirke  
 Abot, c. 1. f. 3. Juchasin, fol. 51. 1.

tions which he formed out of his own brain; and from him the *Karaites* sprung, who were first called the society or congregation of *Judab Ben Tabbai*<sup>k</sup>, which was afterwards changed into the name of *Karaites*: for that they had their rise from *Anan* and *Saul*, who lived in the eighth century after Christ, and so after the *Talmud* was finished, as say *Morinus*<sup>l</sup> and others, is very false; for mention is made of them in the *Misnah*<sup>m</sup> compiled in the 2d century; they were only the restorers not the authors of *Karaism*, which must be near as early as *Pharisaism*; and that, according to *Josephus*<sup>n</sup>, was as early as the times of *Jonathan the Macçabee*. Now these men, the *Karaites*, adhered to the scriptures only, whence they had their name, which signifies *Scripturarians*, the same, as some think, with the *Scribes*, γραμματεῖς, *letter-men*, and these the same with the lawyers in the New Testament, who kept to the letter of the scriptures, *Matt.* xxiii. 13. compared with *Luke* ii.

52.

<sup>k</sup> Dod Mordecai, c. 2. p. 12, 13, 14. <sup>l</sup> De Sincer. Heb. Text. l. 2. Exercit. 7. c. 1 f. 6. <sup>m</sup> Megillah c. 2. fol. 24. 2. Amstelod. Ed. vid. Houting. in Misn. Rosshashnah, c. 2. f. 1. & Trigland. de Sect. Karæorum, p. 20, 21. <sup>n</sup> Antiq. l. 13. c. 5. f. 9.

52. and *Matt.* xxii. 35. with *Mark* xii. 28. but the Scribes and Pharisees are not only put together, but as agreeing with each other, and so they might in some things agree against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, See *Acts*, xxiii. 9. and might differ in other things; but what makes most against the Scribes being the same with the *Karaites*, is their joining with the Pharisees in the point of traditions, *Mat.* xv. 1. 2. *Mark* vii. 1—5. and 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 *Luke* xi. 45. and certain it is, that Christ does speak more favourably of the Scribes than of others, *Matt.* xiii. 52. and xvii. 10, 11. *Mark* xii. 28, 34. and he is sometimes compared with them, though with some difference, *Matt.* vii. 29; and *Orobio*, a *Jew*, of the last century, said ° our *Jesus* was a *Karaites*; and a *Rabbinical Jew*, out of ill-will to the *Karaites*, feigned a letter † from them to the other *Jews*, asserting that *Jesus* of *Nazareth* agreed with them, and exhorted his followers to re-

Q4

ceive

° Apud Trigland. ut supra, c. 6. p. 66.    † Apud Huldric. Not. ad Ioldos Jeschu, p. 82, 83.

ceive their rites, and not those of the *Rabbanites*; and that their ancestors had no hand in his death, and that they were the *Rabbanites* that slew him, and were only answerable for it; but it is evident that the Scribes were concerned in the death of Christ, *Matt.* xvi. 21. and xx. 18. xxvi. 3. xxvii. 42. though after all, it may be reasonably thought that the *Karaites*, some of them, were among the Scribes, of which scribes there were some in every sect, and included in them<sup>9</sup>; for as there were Scribes on the side of the Pharisees, *Acts* xxiii. 9. so mention is made in *Jewish* writings, of the Scribes of the *Sadducees*<sup>r</sup>, and of the *Samaritans*. Now the sentiments of these men, the *Karaites*, were from the beginning of them, constant and uniform; they made the scripture their only rule, would not admit of any innovation in it, nor addition to it, nor that the inventions and traditions of men should be made equal to it, and much less set up above it. The testimony therefore of such men for the points, must be very considerable.

Bux-

<sup>9</sup> Vid. Drusium de Sect. Jud. l. 2. c. 13. Alting. Shilo, l. 4. c. 8. Trigland. ut supra, c. 6. <sup>r</sup> G. Ursin. Antiqu. Heb. Academ. c. 9. p. 227.

*Buxtorf*<sup>w</sup>, the younger, indeed, does say of the *Karaites*, that they rejected punctuation as a species of the oral law, and of tradition; greatly mistaking the author of the book of *Cofri*, who from the *Karaites* admitting the points, urges their admission of tradition; since he, and other *Jews*, thought punctuation, from the times of *Moses* to *Ezra*, was delivered by tradition, and therefore, says he<sup>x</sup>, ‘if so it is, both we and the *Karaites*, are bound to admit tradition;’ to which king *Chofroes* is made to answer, ‘so the *Karaites* indeed will say (i. e. with respect to the necessity of the tradition of the points and accents to read the book of the law); but when they have found or got a perfect law (a copy with points and accents) they will deny that they have any further use of tradition, i. e. for the explanation of it.’ Now though this writer may go too far in ascribing traditions to the *Karaites*, though they did allow it in some sense; yet it is plain he took it for granted, that they were for using, and did make use of pointed copies of the law; and so *Morinus*<sup>\*</sup> himself understood it, and owns it;

<sup>w</sup> De Punct. Antiqu. par. 1. p. 300.      <sup>x</sup> *Cofri*, par. 3. f. 33, 34.      <sup>\*</sup> Epist. Buxtorf. ep. 70. in Antiqu. Eccl. Orient. p. 362.

it; but this is still more clear and manifest from their own writings: in a book <sup>y</sup> of theirs, in great repute with them, it is observed, that the patrons of tradition explain *boughs of thick trees*, used in the feast of tabernacles, *Lev. xxiii. 40.* of a tree whose leaves are treble, according to *Exod. xxviii. 14.* but, says the *Karaites* writer, this is contrary to the nature of the language, for this ע (in עבת) is with a *Kametz*, but that is with a *Sheva*; so in another work <sup>z</sup> they say, the *Rabbanites* affirm, that what is written in the law needs explanation by tradition, but we don't believe so; but that what is written, its explanation goes *along with it*, meaning in the vowel-points; and a little after some pointed words are used. The *Karaites* own, 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 *Exra*, who lived before the schism; and as to the various readings of *Ben Asher* and *Ben Naphtali*, many of which are about the points and

ac-

<sup>z</sup> Addareth Eliahu apud Trigland. de Sect. Kar. p. 32.

<sup>y</sup> R. Caleb, Afarah Mâamarot, MS. apud Trigland. Ib. p. 117.



accents, they rather agree with the latter; but it greatly displeases them that in some places the points are changed and others put in their room for modesty-sake<sup>a</sup>, as in 1 *Sam.* v. 6. 9. 12. and vi. 4. 2 *Kings* vi. 25. by which it appears they are very tenacious of the points, and are not for altering them on any account; which they would never be sticklers for, could they 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 for the antiquity and coevity of the points with the letters; his words in answer to some questions sent him by *Triglandius* are these\*,

“ 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:”

how false then is it what *Morinus* † says, that “ all the *Jews*, the *Karaites* also, tho’  
 “ enemies of the traditions, and the *Kabala*,  
 “ believe, as a most certain tradition, that  
 “ the book of the law which *Moses* deli-  
 “ vered

<sup>a</sup> Chillouk MS. apud Trigland. Ib. p. 189, 190.

\* Dod *Mordecai*, c. 12. p. 150—157. † *Epist. Buxtorfio in Antiqu. Eccles. Orient. Ep. 70. p. 394.*

“ vered to the *Israelites*, was without points  
 “ and accents;” but F. *Simon* \* is against  
 him, and affirms, that the *Karaites* readily  
 receive the Bible with the vowel-points, ac-  
 cents, and *Masorab*. The above *Karaite*  
 goes on and says, “ far be it that the in-  
 “ vention of points and accents was made  
 “ after the finishing of the *Talmud*, for  
 “ this is largely to be confuted; for the  
 “ division of the *Rabbans* and *Karaites*  
 “ was long before the finishing of the  
 “ *Talmud*, as has been proved; and if  
 “ there were no points nor accents in  
 “ the time of the division, but were found  
 “ out only after the finishing of the *Tal-*  
 “ *mud*, then there would be different co-  
 “ pies of the law and of the prophets in  
 “ our hands; that is, copies in the hands  
 “ of the *Karaites*, pointed different from  
 “ the pointing of the copies in the hand  
 “ 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  
 “ and sense;” of which he gives instances  
 in

\* *Disquisit. Critic.* c. 4. p. 25. & c. 12. p. 93, 95.

in which they might have so done ; and observes, that many of the *Rabbans* assert, that the points and accents were equally as ancient as the letters ; as R. *Azariab* in *Meor Enayim*, and R. *Samuel Arkevolti* in *Arugat Habboshem* : and he goes on and says, that “ the copy of the scriptures which we have is the same that the *Rabbans* have ; in this there is no division, no difference between us ; for the disposition or order of the scriptures was from the men of the great synagogue, those good figs, on whom be peace, at which time there was no division between them ; wherefore with us there is nothing full and deficient, neither first and last, no *Keri* and *Cebetib*, but what are in the order of the scriptures which is now in the hands of the *Rabbans* ; and the most correct books are the most in esteem with us, and we follow, or depend upon the reading of *Ben Naphtali* :” and it is certain their Bibles had the same *Masoretic* notes and observations in common with the *Rabbanites* ; so it is observed by them \*, that  
the

\* Menachem in Dod Mordecai, c. 10 p. 130. that Menachem was a Karaite, vid. Trigland. de sect. Karæorum, c. 11. p. 187.

the letter ן in twenty places is written at the end of a word, but not read, which agrees with the present *Masorab*. R. *Aaron*, a *Karaite*, published a *Hebrew* grammar in 1581, in which he never deserts, as can be observed, the modern punctuation of the Bible, and consults the *Masorab* in words written defectively, or in any other irregular way, and is full of *Masoretic* observations, such as the *Rabbanites* produce \*; and a *Karaite* †, of the same name, who wrote a commentary on the law in 1294, frequently refers to the points, and makes mention of the names of them, as, *Tzere*, *Pathach*, *Sheva*, *Hataph-camets*, *Cholem*, *Shurek*, *Dagesh*. This sect, the *Karaites*, would never have admitted the present punctuation, if they had not believed it obtained in the Bible of old, and came from God himself; and as others relate<sup>c</sup>, they strongly affirm, that the vowel-points of the *Hebrew* Bible are from *Moses* and the prophets. The sense of the *Karaites* about the points is with me an invincible

\* Vid. Wolfii Access. ad Notitiam Karæorum, p. 37. & Biblioth. Heb. p. 119. † Vid. Simon. Disqu. Critic. c. 12. p. 95, 96. vid. Maffchet Sopherim, c. 6. f. 4. <sup>c</sup> Le-geri Epist. Hottinger. in Thesaur. Philolog. p. 54.

ble proof of the great antiquity, and against the novelty of them; for from the time that this sect rose up, it was not possible for the *Pharisees*, *Rabbanites*, *Masoretic*, or traditional *Jews* call them by what names you will, to have introduced such an invention as the vowel-points, in any period of time whatever, but these men would have objected to them as such, and would never have received them; it is to me a demonstration that the vowel-points were in being before the schism was, which was about the time before given, and were universally regarded by the *Jews* so early, as of a divine original.

#### A. 164. Ante Christum.

The *Keries* and *Cetibs*, of which *Elias* says<sup>d</sup> there are 848, are various readings, or differences of the marginal reading from the written text. That these are of great antiquity is certain; since they are not only mentioned in the *Babylonian Talmud*<sup>e</sup>, but in the *Jerusalem Talmud*<sup>\*</sup>, particularly the various reading of *Hagg. i. 8.* and in the

<sup>d</sup> Præfat. 3. ad Masoret.    <sup>e</sup> T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 37, 2. Sopherim, c. 6. f. 5. 8. & c. 7. f. 1, 2, 3, 4. & c. 9. f. 8.    \* Maccot, fol. 32, 1.

the book of *Zobar*<sup>f</sup>; though when these marginal readings were first made or began to be made, is not certain: the *Jews* say<sup>g</sup>, they are a tradition of *Moses* from mount *Sinai*; but that cannot be, since his books were not then written, and much less the books of the prophets; some Christians indeed are of opinion, as *Broughton*, *Ainsworth*, and *Wasmuth*, that both the text and marginal reading are of divine inspiration; and it must be owned, that in many places they may be both taken into the sense of the passage, and much enrich it, and both are taken in by our translators in *Prov.* xix. 7. and in the margin of 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 13. and in other versions; but they are by others supposed to be put by *Ezra* and the men of the synagogue, on the return from the captivity; who, upon revising the books of scripture, and several copies of it, observed various readings; so *Kimchi*, on 1 *Kings* xvii. 14. says, the copies were perplexed or disturbed in the captivity<sup>h</sup>; they found one copy so, and another so; and some they did not understand,

<sup>f</sup> In Deut. fol. 119, 3. & 226, 3. <sup>g</sup> T. Bab. Nedar. ut supra, Schulchan Aruch. par. c. 141. f. 8. <sup>h</sup> Vid. Bér Chayim Præfat. ad Bibl. Heb. col. 1.

stand, and some of which they did not chuse to put into the text, nor to cast away, and therefore put one within in the text, and the other without in the margin, to be used at discretion ; and in his preface to the former prophets he observes 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 ; and the  
 “ men of the great synagogue, who re-  
 “ stored the law to its former state, found  
 “ variations in the copies, and they went  
 “ after the greater number (of copies) ac-  
 “ cording to their judgment ; and 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* <sup>a</sup> “ they  
 “ found three copies in the court, (not with  
 “ *Ezra*, as *Morinus* <sup>b</sup> renders it,) in one  
 “ they found it written *מעון*, *Deut.* xxxiii.  
 “ 27. in two *מעונה* ; they confirmed the  
 “ two (as the true reading) and rejected

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“ the

<sup>a</sup> Taanioth, fol. 68, 1. <sup>b</sup> Exercit. l. 2. exerc. 12. c. 3.

“ the one ; in one they found it written,  
 “ זעטוטי, *Exod.* xxiv. 5. in two נערי, they  
 “ confirmed the two, and rejected the  
 “ other ; in one they found it written תשע,  
 “ *Gen.* xxxii. 22. in two אהת עשרה, they  
 “ confirmed the two and rejected the one.”

Some think <sup>b</sup> these three copies were what belonged to the three bodies of the *Jews* in *Judea*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*; and conjecture, that from the collation of these copies arose the *Keri* and *Cetib*; though this refers to times 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 *Psf.* xxii. 16. which is a proof of the antiquity of them : there is a various reading in *Is.* xlv. 5. *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, and so *Aquila*, an ancient *Greek* interpreter, translate according to the margin ; and *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, two other ancient ones, translate according to the textual writing, which is observed by *Jerom* <sup>i</sup>; so that these various readings were known by him, though it has been denied,

<sup>b</sup> Lightfoot, *Hor.* Heb in *Matt.* 5. 18. p. 140. *Othon.* *Lexic. Rabbin.* p. 315. <sup>i</sup> *Vid.* *Comment.* in *Is.* c. 49. 5. in *Hierem.* c. 31, 40. fol. 160. *Vide Loc. Heb.* fol. 89. B.



nied, and were in being before the pretended *Masorettes* of *Tiberias*. Nay, the forms and figures of letters unusual, or of an unusual position, marked by the *Masorettes* are observed in the *Talmud*\*; so that these *Masoretic* remarks were before those men were, said to be after the finishing of that. These readings seem to be designed not as corrections and emendations of the text, but only some as various readings, and others as euphemisms, to be regarded by readers as may seem good to them, and others as observing anomalous punctuations; but in none was it intended that alterations should be made in the text, but that that should stand as it is, and was found: but it seems better with *Carpzovius*<sup>k</sup> to suppose that these marginal readings were made after the times of *Antiochus*, when the temple was purified and worship in it restored; and the autograph of *Ezra*, perhaps, and many copies of it being destroyed, though not all, (see *Maccab.* i. 59, 66. and iii. 49, and xii. 9.) it was thought proper to revise the

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\* T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30, 1. & 66. 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109, 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 103, 2. Massech. Sopherim c. 9. f. 7.      <sup>k</sup> Critic. Sacr. p. 342.

books of the scripture ; and observing different readings in the copies they found, they placed them in the margin for the said uses ; and therefore I have put the date of the original of them as above : now though these greatly respect words and letters, yet in some instances the change of consonants appears to be in the margin for the sake of vowels found in the text not so suitable to the consonants in it ; and therefore the vowels must be in the text when the *Keri* was put in the margin, as the learned *Pocock*<sup>1</sup> has observed in the *Keri* and *Cetib* of *Pf.* xxx. 4. “ for, says he, unless the *Masorettes*, or whoever put the *Keri* in the margin had found *מִיֹרְדִי*, so as it is now pointed, with vowels agreeing to the word *מִיֹרְדִי*, what need had they to substitute it ? since the sense as well, if not better, flows by reading it *מִיֹרְדִי* ; but if in other copies they had found it *מִיֹרְדִי*, and without vowel-points, why did they not dash out the *Vau*, and read it so ? and if they had found *מִיֹרְדִי*, with its own vowels, in which they read it, they would never have dared to have cast them away without necessity, and put those in their

<sup>1</sup> Miscellan. Not. in Port. Mos. p. 64, 65.

their room, proper to an infinitive; as it is said, the same commonly is the reason of others, in which *Vau* is postponed to *Kametz*, 1. *Sam.* xxvii. 11. *Josh.* xv. 63. *Pf.* ci. 5. and to *Pathach*, *Pf.* v. 9." so that it appears to be the doctrine of the points, and the anomalous ones observed, that is sometimes the cause of the marginal *Keri*, See *If.* xxxvi. 12. where the points under the word in the text better agree with that in the margin, and seems to be the reason of the marginal reading. Some of those *Keries* may not be so ancient as the date above; but additions may be made by some in later times; yet they seem chiefly to be of great antiquity, as appears by what has been observed of the *Targums* and ancient *Greek* copies; and *Buxtorf*<sup>m</sup> has given some rules to discern the one from the other.

#### A. 277. Ante Christum.

IN this year, according to bishop *Usher*<sup>a</sup>, *Ptolemy Philadelphus* king of *Egypt*, being desirous of erecting a library in *Alexandria*,

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<sup>m</sup> *Anticritica*, par. 2. c. 4. p. 501.  
Telt. p. 480.

<sup>a</sup> *Annal. Vet.*

employed *Demetrius* his librarian to collect books for that purpose, who in a letter to the king preserved by *Eusebius* °, tells him that he had diligently executed his orders; but that with some few other books, there remained the books of the law of the *Jews* to be got, which he says were contained in *Hebrew* letters and vowels; for what else can be meant by *φωνη*, as distinguished from letters? not 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, and are annexed to them for that purpose; so that it seems 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 †, which were different both from the *Egyptian* and *Syrian*, as he affirms; and which deserves to be remarked, as what may be of some service to shew what were the *Hebrew* characters then in use: and though it is commonly supposed that the seventy interpreters used an unpointed copy from which they translated, whence  
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° *Præpar. Evangel.* l. 8. c. 3. p. 351. † *Apud Euseb.* p. 350. *Vid. Aristæ Hist.* 70. p. 4, 5. *Ed. Oxon.* 1692.

came so many mistakes to be made in their version ; yet *Hottinger*<sup>9</sup> has observed near fifty places in which for *Kametz* they read *Tzere* or *Segol* ; so *Leusden*\* observes, that they read words with wrong vowels, as *Tzere* for *Kametz*, *Pf.* xl. 5. *Patach* for *Tzere*, *Pf.* vii. 12. *Chirek* for *Patach*, *Pf.* vii. 7. *Patach* for *Segol*, *Pf.* xci. 3. and which 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, put one point for another ; though *Dr. Lightfoot*<sup>r</sup> suggests they purposely “ used an unpricked Bible, in which  
 “ the words written without vowels might  
 “ be bended divers ways, and into di-  
 “ vers senses, and different from the mean-  
 “ ing of the original ; and yet if the trans-  
 “ lation was questioned they might prick  
 “ 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* to-  
 “ gether, but hath observed ;” though he adds, “ their differences from the ori-  
 R 4 “ ginal,

<sup>9</sup> *Thefaur. Philolog.* 1. 1. c. 3. p. 354, &c.      \* *Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert.* 4. p. 31.      <sup>r</sup> *Works*, vol. 1. p. 490.

“ ginal, which were innumerable, were  
 “ partly of ignorance, they themselves not  
 “ being able to read the text always true,  
 “ in a copy unvowelled; but this ignorance  
 “ was also voluntary in them; they not  
 “ caring to mistake, so that they might do  
 “ it with their own security;” and so Mr.  
*Broughton* \* says, “ that the seventy had  
 “ not the vowelled Bible, both for the rare-  
 “ ness, and because they never meant to  
 “ give the truth;” but be it that they  
 used an unpointed Bible purposely, or a  
 pointed one vitiated, it shews that points  
 were in use in their time, and very neces-  
 sary: and it may be observed, that the  
*Pentateuch*, which some, as *Josephus* and  
 others, think was the only part of scrip-  
 ture translated by them, is almost every  
 where translated in agreement with the  
 modern punctuation; and *Jerom* \* long  
 ago observed this, that the five books of  
*Moses* translated by them more agreed with  
 the *Hebrew* than any other. It is an ob-  
 servation of *Capellus* † himself, that the  
 seventy interpreters, who lived about 300  
 years

\* Works, p. 60, (81.  
 Gen. fol 65. D. Tom. 3.  
 p. 183, 191, 192.

\* Quæst. seu Trad. Heb. in  
 † Orat. de Nom. Tetragram.

years before *Christ*, instead of the *tetragrammaton* or the word *Jehovah*, always read *Adonai*, and always render it by *κύριος*, a word not expressive of essence, as *Jehovah* is, but of lordship, as *Adonai* is; and that 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; and that from them the *Greek* interpreters of the Old Testament never depart, as *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 unto it as they now are; and *Capellus*\* plainly confesses that this word had the points of *Adonai*, and sometimes of *Elohim* in their time; for he says, the seventy when יהוה has the points of אלהים oftner render it κυριε κυριε, as *Pf.* lxviii. 21. & *passim*, and sometimes κυριος, and θεος, as in *Amos* iii. 7. &c. from whence it is conjectured that for *Adonai Jehovah* they read *Adonai Elohim*.

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\* *Ib.* p. 146.

## A. 454. Ante Christum.

IN this year, according to bishop *Usher*\*, *Ezra* was returned from *Babylon*, and was at *Jerusalem*, and read, and expounded the law to the people of the *Jews* there. It is the generally received notion of the *Jews*, that the vowel-points were annexed to the letters of the sacred Books by *Ezra*; not but that they suppose they were originally from *Moses* and the prophets, and that they are equally of divine authority as the letters; only they imagine they were delivered down from them by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*, and by him affixed to the letters; and *Elias*, who invented the story of the men of *Tiberias*, is of the same mind, only with this difference, that the oral tradition of the points was carried down to those men, and they put them to the letters: as much like a fiction as this oral tradition looks, as it undoubtedly does, yet it is little less, if any, what *Capellus* and *Walton* allow, especially the latter; that the pointing of the *Masorettes* is not arbitrary, and at their pleasure, but according to the  
 found,

\* *Annal. Vet. Test.* p. 197.



found, 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* <sup>u</sup>, an opposer of the antiquity of the points, yet thinks it 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*, and by the succeeding *Masoretes* before the *Talmudists*, and 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*; which 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, as *Buxtorf* and others; and it may be safely concluded that the points and accents were in being in his time, since the *Masorah* which was begun by him, or about his time <sup>v</sup>, at least by the men of  
his

<sup>u</sup> *Viginti & duæ Lectiones*, Lect. 12. p. 196, 197.

<sup>v</sup> *Casaubon. Epist. ep. 390. Porthæsius, p. 468.*

his synagogue, is concerned about the points and accents, as well as other things, as has been observed; and besides, the Scribes, which were assistant to *Ezra* in reading the law, cannot well be thought to read, at least so well, to read it *distinctly*, and cause the people to understand *the reading* of it, even men, women, and children, without the points. Not to take any further notice of the sense the *Talmudists*, both *Jerusalem* and *Babylonian*, give of the text, in *Neb.* viii. 8. I now refer to, which has been quoted already. Dr. *Humphrey Prideaux*, though he took 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, yet 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\*; which is not only an acknowledgement of the great usefulness of the points, but carries the antiquity of them very high; and I see not if they were needful for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text a little after the time of *Ezra*, why they were not as necessary in the  
time

\* Connection, par. 1. b. 5. p. 352, 353.

time of *Ezra*; for was the necessity of them owing to the *Hebrew* language, then ceasing to be vulgarly spoken, so, according to him, it did cease to be in the times of *Ezra*; though I apprehend that is a mistake, for it was some hundreds of years after, ere it ceased to be vulgarly spoken.

THERE is nothing to be observed between the times of *Ezra* and *Moses* relative to the points; for I lay no stress on the different pronunciation of *Shibboleth*, in *Jud.* xii. 6. though *Schindler* \* is of opinion that from hence it appears, that the point on the right and left hand of *ש*, was then in use, and so by consequence the other points also.

*Elias Levita* † roundly asserts, that the copy of the law which was given by *Moses* to the children of *Israel* was without points and accents; but this is said without proof, and is what no man is able to prove. He quotes *Aben Ezra* ‡, who says, the points were delivered at *Sinai*, but the tables of the law were not pointed, which seems to be a flat contradiction, at least it is what is very improbable. Much better  
does

\* *Lex. Pentaglott.* col. 1792. vid. *Balmesii. Gram. Heb.* p. 14. lin. 9. 14. 16. \* *Præfat.* 3. ad *Masoret.* † *Zach Shephataim* in *lb.*

does another writer \* argue, whom he mentions, who in answer to the question, How do we know that the points and accents are of God? says, “ it may be replied, what is written in *Deut. xxvii. 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, he says, can understand them clearly and plainly:*” and whatever may be said for the king’s writing out a copy of the law, and reading in it all the days of his life *Deut. xvii. 18, 19.* and for the priests reading it once a year in the hearing of all *Israel*, which yet is not very easy to account for, without the points, so as to be understood, *Deut. xxxi. 11.* yet how the common people should be able to read it to their children, and teach them the knowledge of it without the points, is still more difficult of belief.

THE common opinion of the *Jews* is, either that the points and accents were delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, yet only as to the power of pronouncing and reading, but not as to their marks and figures

\* R. Levi bar Joseph Semadar, in *ib.*

gures in writing; but that the true manner of reading the scriptures was propagated and preserved by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*; or that they were given to *Moses* at *Sinai*, but were omitted in writing for the most part afterward, and so were forgotten, 'till *Ezra* came and restored them. But it rather seems that they were as early as the *Hebrew* letters; and since it is not improbable that these were before the flood, and before the confusion of tongues, the points were also; and could the sense of *Gen. xi. 1.* given by a late writer<sup>a</sup>, be established, it would be out of all doubt; which is this, *and the whole earth was of one language, i. e. the Hebrew language, as afterwards called, and of one speech, or words*, that is, according to this writer, words distinguished by acute or sharp points; deriving the word used from *חרר* to *sharpen*, whereby he thinks, the tautology in the text is avoided; and to which may be added, that the latter clause of the text is plural: yet 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

<sup>a</sup> Kalf. de Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 33, 37, 38, 39.

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*<sup>b</sup> commonly ascribe it, though sometimes to *Adam*, the points might be traced to his time; for in that book frequent mention is made of the double letters *Begad Cephath*, or *Begad Cephrah*, as there so called<sup>c</sup>, because they have a double pronunciation, which pronunciation depends upon the points, 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*, yet it is an ancient one, and by this instance it carries the antiquity of the points higher than is now commonly allowed unto them; for the book is spoken of in the *Talmud*<sup>d</sup>; and 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; though if *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* wrote a supplement to it, which was as a com-

<sup>b</sup> *Cofri*, par 4. c. 27. *Juchasin*, fol. 52, 2. f. 2, 9, 10, & c. 2. f. 1. & c. 4. f. 1, 2, 3. *Bab. Sanhedrin*, fol. 65, 2.

<sup>c</sup> C. 1.  
<sup>d</sup> T.

commentary on it, as is said<sup>e</sup>, it must be before his time, since *Jonathan* was cotemporary with Christ, or a little after him; and it may be observed, that the double pronounciation of the above letters was in use in the times of Christ, as appears from the words, *Armageddon, Capernaum, Euphrates, Joppa, Pascha, Sarepta*, and others.

IT is not only the opinion of some *Jewish* writers, that the vowel-points, as well as letters, were given by God himself to *Adam*, as the author of *Cofri*<sup>f</sup>, and his commentator *Muscatus*<sup>g</sup>, and of R. *Azariah*<sup>h</sup>, and of others; but some Christian writers<sup>i</sup> also, ascribe them to *Adam*; and indeed, if the *Hebrew* letters were of his invention, as many have thought, and *Walton*<sup>k</sup> himself thinks, there can be no reasonable doubt but the vowels were also; but be this as it may, I am inclined to believe that the vowels were coeval with the letters, and that the penmen of the sacred scriptures, severally annexed, the vowel-

S points

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 28. <sup>f</sup> Par. 4. c. 25.

<sup>g</sup> In Ib. fol. 229, 1. <sup>h</sup> Meor Enayim, c. 59. <sup>i</sup> Alsted. Chronolog. p. 267. vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. par. 2. p. 309, 310. <sup>k</sup> Prolegom. 2. f. 7.

points to letters in their writings. My reasons are these :

I. THE perfection of language requires vowels. No language can be perfect without them ; they are the life and soul of language ; letters without them are indeed dead letters ; the consonants are stubborn and immoveable things, they can't be moved or pronounced without vowels, which are, as *Plato* says<sup>l</sup>, the bond of letters, by which they are joined, and without which they can't be coupled together : can it be thought, therefore, that the *Hebrew* language, the first, and most perfect of all languages, should be without them, which, if this was the case, would be the most imperfect of all the *oriental* languages? for notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, the *Samaritan* had its points, though differing from the *Hebrew*, as *Jerom* observes<sup>m</sup>, and so a later writer<sup>n</sup> has observed it has. The *Syrians*, *Chaldæans*, *Arabs*, and *Persians*, had vowel-points likewise, as *Hottinger* affirms<sup>o</sup>, and so dean *Prideaux*<sup>p</sup>. The invention of the  
*Syriac*

<sup>l</sup> *Sophista* p. 177.      <sup>m</sup> *Præfat ad Reg. T.* 3. fol. 5. L.  
<sup>n</sup> *Petrus a Valle in Antiqu. Eccl. Orient.* p. 184.      <sup>o</sup> *The-*  
*saur. Philolog.* p. 403.      <sup>p</sup> *Connection, par. 1. B.* 5. p.



*Syriac* vowel-points is indeed by some<sup>6</sup> ascribed to *Ephrem Syrus*, who lived in the 4th century; and 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 coeval with them; and even those who are for casting away the vowel-points seem to be sensible of a necessity of substituting something in their room, the *matres lectionis*, as they call them, אַי to which some add ך; but these are not sufficient, being wanting in a great number of words; witness also the various methods of reading *Hebrew*, contrived by men; but why should they be at pains to find out a method of reading and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language, when there is such a plain one at hand, ready prepared for them, and of which *Walton* himself says<sup>7</sup>, that it is a most profitable and useful invention no man can deny?

2. THE nature and genius of the *Hebrew* language require points; without these the difference can't be discerned between nouns and verbs, in some instances, as דבר, with many others; between verbs active,

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and

<sup>6</sup> Vid. *Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. Tom. 5. p. 320.* <sup>7</sup> *Prolegom. 8. f. 10.*

and verbs passive, between some conjugations, moods, tenses, and persons, *Kal*, *Piel*, *Pual*; imperatives and infinitives, are proofs hereof; nor can the *Vau* conversive of tenses be observed †, which yet is used frequently throughout the Bible, and without which, the formation of some of the tenses by letters would be useless. *Morinus* \* himself says, “ that without the “ points a grammar cannot be written, as “ *Elias* rightly observes; for example, de- “ scribe the conjugation *Kal* without “ points, and immediately you’ll be at a “ stand, and much more in *Piel* ;” and *Walton* † also owns the use of them in the investigation of the roots. The pronunciation of some letters depends upon the points as has been observed.

3. THE vowel-points are necessary and useful to the more easy learning, reading, and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language. What men well skilled in the language may be able to do is one thing, and what learners of it, and beginners in it can do is another thing; men well versed in it  
may

† Vid. *Cofri*, par. 2. c. 80.  
tiqu. *Eccl. Oriental.* p. 392.  
P. 5.

\* *Epist. Buxtorfio in An-*  
† *Introduct. Orient. Ling.*

may chuse to read without them ; and so a man that is master of *Brachygraphy* may chuse to read what he has written in short hand, and to which he is used, rather than in long hand ; but this is no proof of the perfection and propriety of his *Brachygraphy*. “ A tongue, as Dr. *Lightfoot* says, “ cannot first be learnt without vowels, “ though at last skill and practice may “ make it to be read without ; grammar “ and not nature makes men to do this :” and a late learned writer has observed <sup>w</sup>, that “ to talk of reading *Hebrew* without points, “ is a *collusive* way of speaking ; we may “ do it when we have learnt the language, “ but not before ; as it is a dead 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 not “ sooner with safety.” Dr. *John Prideaux* <sup>x</sup> an opposer of the antiquity of the points, owns that “ the tongue being tossed “ about by various calamities, the points

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“ were

<sup>u</sup> Works, vol. 1. p. 1014.    <sup>w</sup> Chappelow's Preface to his Comment on Job, p. 18, 19.    <sup>x</sup> *Viginti & duæ Lectiones*, Lect. 12. p. 189.

“ were added, that it might be the more  
 “ accurately preserved, and that by the  
 “ *Jews*, to whom it ceased to be vernacular;  
 “ as also that by others it might the  
 “ more *easily* be understood, and be more  
 “ *exactly* pronounced :” and elsewhere he  
 says <sup>y</sup>, let them be whose additions to the  
 text they may, they are so far from cor-  
 rupting it, that they rather protect it from  
 corruption, and lead to a more *easy* reading  
 and understanding of it ; and so *Walton* <sup>z</sup>,  
 another opposer of the points, says, “ the  
 “ Christian church received their (the *Ma-*  
 “ *sorettes*) punctuation, not upon their au-  
 “ thority, but because it expressed the *true*  
 “ *sense* received *in the church of God*; and  
 “ withal because they saw it conduced  
 “ much to the *more easy* reading of the  
 “ text, and even to the true reading of it,  
 “ as he owns \* :” and their great master  
 and chief leader *Capellus* <sup>a</sup>, having treated  
 of the points and accents devised and added  
 to the sacred *Hebrew* text by the *Masorettes*,  
 as he supposed, frankly owns, “ that up-  
 “ on that account we now certainly owe  
 “ much

<sup>y</sup> Fasciculus Controvers. de Script. qu. 3. p. 21.    <sup>z</sup> The  
 Considerator considered, p. 209.    \* Prolegom. 8. f. 17.  
 Arcan. Punct. l. 1. c. 17. f. 11.

“ much unto them; or rather, should *give*  
 “ *thanks* to God, who stirred up these men  
 “ to it, and put them upon the study of  
 “ it; for in that work they have certainly  
 “ laboured most successfully, so that now  
 “ by the help of those *little marks* we can  
 “ *far more easily*, and even more happily  
 “ be conversant in reading and understand-  
 “ ing the sacred *Hebrew* text, than other-  
 “ wise could have been done by us with-  
 “ out this help.” Why then should it  
 not be attended to? and indeed I cannot  
 see how common people, men, women,  
 and children, could be able to read it with-  
 out points, when it was their mother  
 tongue; it was their duty and interest to  
 read their Bible in it, for whose sake it was  
 written, and who had as great an interest  
 and concern in it as men the most learned  
 have, it being the grand charter of their  
 salvation; the Bible was not written for  
 learned men only, but for these also, and  
 therefore it was written, as it was proper  
 it should be, in the most plain and easy  
 manner.

4. THE vowel-points and accents are  
 useful and necessary, to remove ambiguity  
 and confusion in words and sentences, and

that the true sense of them may be come at with ease, by persons of the lowest capacity and meanest ability, for whose sake, as observed, the Bible was written; and that they are of this use has been owned by the opposers of them: so *Capellus*<sup>b</sup>, speaking of the accents says, “ certainly “ these little marks when fitly and opportunely put, are indeed of this use, that “ sometimes we less hesitate about, and “ more expeditiously take in the mind and “ sense of the writer;” and so *Walton*<sup>c</sup> says of the *Masorettes*, that “ they pointed “ the text, not at their own will and pleasure, but according to the true sense and “ received reading from the sacred writers “ to their times; hence the reading is “ made *more easy*, and the text less obnoxious to *ambiguity* and corruption.” Should it be said, as it often is, that by attending to the connexion of words, and to the context, the sense of a word in question may be soon and easily understood. Let it be observed, that all have not the same natural parts and abilities, and the like acumen of wit, clearness of understanding, and critical judgment, as particularly the  
above

<sup>b</sup> Arcan. Punct. l. 2. c. 25. f. 7.

<sup>c</sup> Prolegom 8. f. 10.

above persons mentioned ; and besides, the words in connexion and in the context being unpointed, some of them may be equally difficult to be understood, and the sense of them must be examined and fixed, ere the sense of the word in question can be determined ; all which will require time, and perhaps after all, entire satisfaction is not obtained : and if men who may be thought to be well versed in the language, and men of parts and abilities, have been led into mistakes, through a neglect or want of the points, much more may persons of mean and ordinary capacities. The authors of the several *Greek* versions of the Bible, the Septuagint interpreters, *Aquila*, *Theodotion*, and *Symmachus*, were all *Jews*, excepting the last, and he was a *Samaritan*, and may be allowed to have a considerable share of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language ; yet these, especially the seventy interpreters, neglecting the points, and translating without them, what gross senses have they put upon the text ? sometimes directly contrary to what is intended ; sometimes what is very absurd, and even wicked and blasphemous, or nearly so ; take an instance of each, *God is angry every*  
*every*

every day, *Pf.* vii. 11. the *Greek* version is, *does not bring on anger, or is not angry every day*, the word לֹא differently pointed, is used for *God*, and for the negative *not*. The passage in *Is.* xxiv. 23. *then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the lord of hosts shall reign, &c.* which with others *Dr. Lowth*<sup>d</sup> represents as so grand and magnificent, and so coloured, that no translation can express, nor any altogether obscure; and yet this is most miserably obscured in the *Greek* version of it, and a sense given extremely low, mean, and absurd; *the brick shall waste, and the wall shall fall, when the Lord reigns, &c.* לִבְנֵה differently pointed signifies the moon, and a brick, and חֲמָה, the sun and a wall, the authors of this version have absurdly taken the latter sense. *Lam.* iii. 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; yet the three letters ענה unpointed signify to *answer* as well as to *afflict*; in *Kal* it signifies the former, in *Piel* the latter; which is the true sense here, and to be distinguished by

<sup>d</sup> De Sac. Poes. Heb. Prælect. 6. p. 69, 70.



by the points; and how have the same interpreters, by changing points and letters, spoiled the famous prophecy of the *Messiah* in *Is.* ix. 6. where, instead of *everlasting Father, the Prince of peace*, they translate *I will bring upon the princes peace?* though the passage is otherwise produced by *Clemens of Alexandria*<sup>e</sup>, more agreeable to the *Hebrew* text; which shews that the *Septuagint* version is not in the same state now it formerly was. The learned *Vitringa*\* has observed, that “ the *Greek* interpreter of *Alexandria*, who came forth under the name “ and number of the *Seventy*, not being “ expert in the *Jerusalem* reading, has “ often in his unhappy and unlearned version, so deformed the prophet (*Isaiab*’s) “ discourse, in the more obscure places, “ that *Isaiab* cannot be known again in “ *Isaiab* :” and through negligence or disuse of, or want of the points, the *Greek* interpreters have made mistakes, when one would think it was almost impossible they should; thus ׀׀ differently pointed, or without any points, may signify *sons* or *builders*.

<sup>e</sup> Pædagog. l. 1. c. 5. See also Euseb. Demonstrat. Evangel. l. 7. c. 1. p. 336, 337. \* Præfat. ad Comment. in *Isaiam*, Vol. 1. p. 5.

*builders.* They have taken the word in the first sense in 1 *King* v. 18. and contrary to the context and plain sense of the words, read, *Solomon's sons and Hiram's sons hewed them,* the stones. The same word, consisting of the same letters, as differently pointed, has two or three senses, and sometimes half a dozen, and even eight or ten, as the word *רבר*. How difficult therefore must it be to attain unto, and settle the true sense, as in such and such a place, at least to common persons; and for these the bible was originally written, as well as for learned men.

5. It will be difficult to assert and maintain the perspicuity of the scripture, laying aside the vowel-points and accents; and make it to comport with the wisdom of God to deliver out his laws, the rule of man's conduct both towards himself and one another, and doctrines designed to make men wise unto salvation, and to instruct them in matters of the greatest moment for time and eternity: to deliver these, I say, in ambiguous words, that admit of various senses, and at best give a sense difficult to attain unto by men of the deepest learning and of the greatest capacity. It is  
 the

the part of a wise law-giver to express his laws, and of a king to publish his edicts, and of a teacher to give forth his doctrines and instructions in the clearest manner, in the plainest terms, in words the most easy to be understood; and not in ambiguous language capable of admitting divers senses, and such as is contrary to what is intended; and can it be thought that God, our law-giver and king, and who by his word proposes to teach men to profit, and to lead them by the way they should go, would act otherwise?

6. NOR shall we be able, I fear, to support the infallibility of the scripture, that part of it the Old Testament, as a sure rule of faith and practice, when by taking away or laying aside the points, it 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; since hereby it will admit of different senses, and so in consequence must be uncertain, and not to be depended on: and, I fear it is this wantonness of spirit that has led many to throw away the points and accents, that they might be under no restraint,

straint, but at full liberty to interpret scriptures as their fancy inclines, and their interest leads; but if the points give the true sense and mind of the Holy Spirit in the sacred writings, which has been owned by such who have opposed the divine original of them, why should they be laid aside, to make way for any sense the fancy of men may impose upon them? *Walton* in so many words affirms<sup>f</sup>, that “ they (the *Masorettes*) “ express in their punctuation the *true sense* “ of the Holy Ghost, which was dictated “ to the holy penmen, and by them com- “ mitted to writing, and preserved both by “ 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; nor is it lawful for any “ one to reject their reading at pleasure, “ but all are tied to it, unless some error “ or better reading can be clearly proved;”<sup>g</sup> and *Capellus* himself says<sup>h</sup>, “ none are to “ be obliged to admit the punctuation of “ the *Masorettes*, because, and as it is from “ them; but all may be bound by this “ punctu-

<sup>f</sup> Prolegom. Polyglott. 3. f. 51.      <sup>g</sup> The Considerator considered, p. 200.

<sup>h</sup> Arcan. Punct. 1. 2. c. 26. f. 2.

“ punctuation, as and because it can be  
 “ demonſtrated, that it almoſt every where  
 “ both agrees with the conſonants to which  
 “ it is added, with the ſeries and ſtructure  
 “ of the words in the paſſage, and that it  
 “ produces a ſenſe commodious, true, co-  
 “ herent, &c. nor can any other punctua-  
 “ tion be produced more apt and more  
 “ commodious<sup>1</sup>.”

7. THE inspiration of ſcripture is affected thereby. If *all ſcripture* or the *whole writing* of the Bible is by *inspiration* of God, then not the matter only, but the words in which it is written, are of divine inspiration; and indeed what elſe are meant by *the words the Holy Ghoſt teacheth*, 1 Cor. ii. 13? and if the words of ſcripture are of divine inspiration, and given by God himſelf, then, ſurely, not half words, as conſonants without vowels are; and if whole words, which is moſt agreeable to the wiſdom and honour of the Divine Being, then both conſonants and vowels were given by inſpiration; and if the latter were not, but of human invention, then, ſo far as they have been and are in uſe, and the ſenſe of ſcripture

ture

<sup>1</sup> Qui puncta vel negligunt, vel proſum rejiciunt, certe carent omni judicio & ratione. Calvin. in Zech. xi. 7.

ture has been and still is taken from them, and made to depend on them, such sense stands not upon divine authority, but upon human authority; and on that of a sett of men, blinded, befotted, and destitute of the Spirit of God, bitter enemies to christianity, and perhaps a sett of men as bad as ever was on earth; and if the points are of their invention and addition, they 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 order, *Deut.* iv. 2. and xii. 32. *Prov.* xxxi. 6. And to which may be further observed,

8. IF the vowel-points were not annexed to the letters by the penmen of the sacred writings, when penned by them, but have had a later and a new beginning, that would have been known; some would have divulged it; it would have been on record somewhere or another, and we should have been informed by some means or another, by whom they were placed, and where and at what time; but nothing of this has ever  
tran-

transpired. The story of *Elias* about the men of *Tiberias* merits no regard; and even that the points were annexed by *Ezra*, or by the men of his congregation, is mere conjecture, without any foundation; and therefore upon the whole it may be concluded, that they were originally put by the sacred penmen, *Moses* and the prophets.

It is often said, in favour of reading the Bible without points, that *Rabbinical* books are written without them, 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 *Bible-Hebrew*; and by such the commentaries of *Kimchi*, *Abarbinel*, and others, may be read with some ease, whose style is plain and clear; and by degrees other writings more rough, crabbed and difficult may be read also; but as *Buxtorf*<sup>1</sup> and others observe, 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 ם, ן, ף, ץ are called, are used to supply the want of vowels; whereas in the Bible they

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are

<sup>1</sup> De Punct. Antiq. par. 3 p. 370.

are most frequently omitted, and even in places where they might be expected, and least of all should be omitted : the style of *Rabbinical* books is for the most part plain, and where it is not, as in the *Talmud* and other writings, it is hard and difficult to read them ; but the style of the Bible is generally short, concise, full of ellipses and other figures, especially in the prophetic writings ; add to which, what is contained in *Rabbinical* writings are things usually before known, or easily understood, and to be read without much stop or hindrance ; but 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 ; and besides, if a mistake is made in *Rabbinical* writings, it is not of that importance, as in reading the Bible ; and therefore we may venture to read with less pain and with more safety, the one without points than the other. *Buxtorf*, the son, upon his own observation asserts<sup>k</sup>, that it is more easy to read *Rabbinical* books unpointed, than any of the books of the Bible pointed ; and that he could venture to say, that

<sup>k</sup> De Punct. Antiq. par. 2. p. 376.



that he could more readily and certainly read any *Rabbinical* books never seen by him before, than any book of the Bible even pointed, and though well known by him, and often read over and over again. Yet, notwithstanding all the advantages on the side of *Rabbinical* writings, how many mistakes have been made by learned men, as by *Scaliger*, *Schickard*, *Kircher*, *Vorstius*, and others? what blunders in translation has *Buxtorf* exposed in *Morinus* and *Capellus*? and even those great masters in *Rabbinical* literature, as the *Buxtorfs* themselves, *Selden*, *Lightfoot*, &c. are not without their errors; nor need it be wondered at, since, in the *Talmuds* especially, there are many places which seem quite unintelligible, and besides are written in the *Chaldee* dialect, and that very impure, and abounding with exotic words.

IT is frequently objected against the Bible being written and read with points, that the copy of the law every where kept in the Jewish synagogues is without points, as answering to the *Mosaic* Archetype. That it is an unpointed copy of the law which is usually kept in the *Jewish* synagogues now,

will be allowed<sup>1</sup>, but that the Archetype or Autograph of *Moses* was without points may be asserted, but not easily proved; nor 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; nor can what they have, be thought to be an ectype of, or to answer to the copy of *Moses*, nor be kept with that view. For had the Autograph of *Moses* the *Keri*, or marginal readings? it will not be said by the opposers of the points that it had; but the present copies of the law in the synagogues of the *Jews* have, if I mistake not, and even the pricks and points which they call *crowns*<sup>m</sup>; are the present copies in the synagogues written in *Samaritan* characters? they are not: and yet, according to the hypothesis of *Morinus*, *Capellus*, and those that follow them, they ought to be so written, to be an ectype of, or to answer to that of *Moses*; since that, according to them, was in that character: but to have a copy in that character now would be contrary to their own rules, one of which runs thus<sup>n</sup>;

“ they

<sup>1</sup> Lyra in Hof. ix. 12. Menasseh ben Israel. Conciliator, in Exod. qu. 50. p. 170. <sup>m</sup> Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 141. f. 8. and par. 2. c. 275. f. 6. Vid. Hackspan, Cabala, p. 309. <sup>n</sup> Massechet Sopherim, c. 1. f. 6.

“ they dont write (the sacred books) nei-  
 “ ther in the language beyond the river  
 “ (or the *Samaritan*), nor in the *Syriac*,  
 “ nor in the *Median*, nor in *Greek*; and in  
 “ whatsoever language or writing they are  
 “ written, they may not be read (*i. e.* pub-  
 “ lically) until they are written in the *As-*  
 “ *syrian*,” or square character. There are  
 other reasons to be given, why unpointed  
 copies are kept and used in the synagogues  
 of the *Jews*, and which may serve to lead  
 to the original of this custom, and the rea-  
 son of its continuance.

I. ONE reason was, that the *Cabalists*,  
 and those who had got into the allegorizing  
 way of interpreting the scriptures, might  
 have the opportunity of framing and esta-  
 blishing their own and even various senses  
 of them, which an unpointed Bible will  
 admit of, when a pointed one will not.  
 Hence that saying of R. *Menachem* °, “ a  
 “ book of the law in which there are many  
 “ faces (or on which many senses may be  
 “ put) is one not pointed;” for, as he says,  
 “ when letters are not pointed, they have  
 “ many faces (or may be differently read);  
 “ but when they are pointed, they have only  
 “ one

° Apud Munster. Præfat. ad Vet. Test.

“ one sense, according to the punctuation:”  
 and this R. *Bechai*<sup>p</sup> plainly suggests, is the  
 original cause and reason of using unpointed  
 copies; “ letters not pointed, he says, admit  
 “ of various senses, and are divided into  
 “ divers sparks; and *because of this we are*  
 “ *commanded* not to point the book of the  
 “ law; for the literal sense of every word  
 “ is according to the punctuation, and  
 “ there is but 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:”  
 and it is for much the same reason, that  
 men may not be tied down to one sense of  
 a word, that points are now so much  
 opposed. Some have drawn an argument  
 for the novelty and against the antiquity of  
 the points, from the *Cabalists* making no  
 use nor mention of them in their writings,  
 but drew their various senses, it is said, from  
 the letters only, and the combination of  
 them, and not from the vowels and accents;  
 but this has been abundantly confuted by  
*Buxtorf*<sup>q</sup>. The commentator on the book  
 of *Cofri*<sup>r</sup> makes mention of R. *Aaron*, a  
 great

<sup>p</sup> Apud Buxtorf. ut supra, p. 45, 46.

<sup>q</sup> Ut supra,

par. i. c. 5. p. 54, &c.

<sup>r</sup> R. Judah Muscatus in *Cofri*,

fol. 230. 4. Vid. Wolf. Bibliothec. Heb. p. 128.

great *Mekubbal* or *Cabbalist*, the head of the university at *Babylon*, as the author of a book of pointing, and which is quoted by *Rittangelius*<sup>s</sup>; and in the *Cabalistic Lexicon*<sup>t</sup>, under the word נִקּוּדִים, mention is made of nine points, and their names are given, *Kametz*, *Pathach*, *Zere*, &c. and the use that is made of them is observed; and *Menasseh ben Israel*<sup>u</sup> describes the *Cabbalists*, as employing themselves in searching out the deep mysteries of the law, which are contained in the letters, *points* and musical *accents*; and a little after, he observes, that “ the law was given without points, “ like the books the *Jews* now have in “ their synagogues; so that when any word “ occurs, whose letters now are not tied to “ certain vowels, men may put what points “ they please to them, and so the words “ may be read one way and another.”

2. ANOTHER reason of 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  
sup-

<sup>s</sup> De Verit. Relig. Christ. p. 27. 40.      <sup>t</sup> Kabela.  
Denudata. par. 1. p. 592.      <sup>u</sup> Conciliat. in Exod.  
qu. 50. p. 169. 172. 174. Vid. Leifden. Philolog. Heb.  
Mixt. Dissert. 13. p. 106. & Philolog. Heb. Dissert. 26.

suppose the points were of *Moses*, but not annexed by him to the *Pentateuch*; but that they were delivered and handed down by oral tradition from one to another until *Ezra*, who added them to it; and 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 writing the law; so as to letters, if any are wanting or not rightly placed, or similar ones put for each other, the copy is profane or rejected; and as it is still more difficult to have the points and accents exactly put, they choose to have none at all: hence they say<sup>w</sup> a pointed copy is profane or to be rejected, even though the punctuation is razed out; partly because it will not admit of various senses, as before observed, and partly because of the difficulty and almost impossibility of a perfect pointed copy; and the rather they are indifferent to one, and like as well to have an unpointed one in their synagogues, since *there*, none but their learned men, as priests, &c. read in them. 3. BUT

<sup>w</sup> Schulchan Aruch, par. 2. c. 274. f. 7.

4. BUT the chief reason of unpointed copies in the fynagogues seems to be, that none but learned men, or such who are well versed in the *Hebrew* language, should be admitted readers there; for if the copy was pointed, as then, any common man might read it, so any such man might be chosen to the office of a reader, though otherwise very illiterate; and to prevent any such being introduced into it, is the principal reason now, why it is unpointed. And though those who are expert in the language, and are able to read without points, and are chosen into the office of reader in the fynagogue, and have exercised that office many years; yet it is their custom, as one of those readers told *Cocceius* \* long ago, to prepare themselves at home by reading out of a pointed copy, for their better, easier and more accurate reading in the fynagogue. And it is their usual method to this day, for the præcentor of the fynagogue, though ever so well versed in reading the scripture, and ever so exact in the knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, the day before the sabbath, to read the passages appointed to be read that day out of a pointed

U copy,

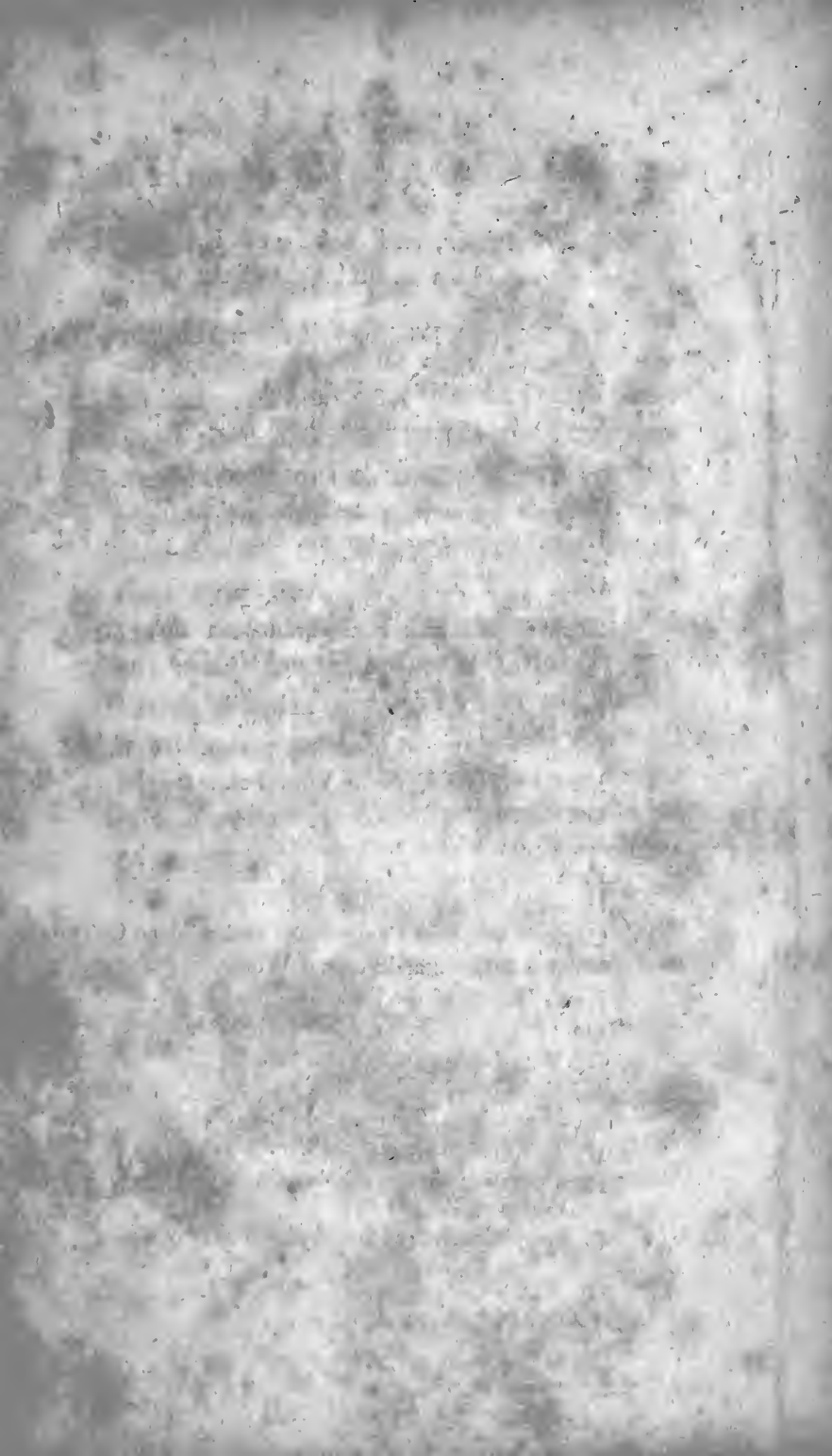
\* Coccei Defens. Cod. Heb. f. 19. p. 22. Tom. 7.

copy, and thereby make himself master of the exact reading of them, that so the day following he may read them without hesitation or stop, and pronounce, as he does, exactly in conformity to the present punctuation<sup>y</sup>: and after all it follows not, because the *Jews* now have, and have had for ages past, unpointed Bibles in their synagogues, which men of learning could read, that they have not, nor had any pointed ones for the common people. It is certain that they had formerly, and have such now; wherefore this is no sufficient objection against the antiquity and use of the points, but an argument in favour of them; since the true reason of having unpointed copies in the synagogue is, that none might be admitted readers in them, but such who are so perfect in the *Hebrew* language as to be able to read exactly in an unpointed copy, agreeable to the points and accents in a pointed one.

<sup>y</sup> Carpz. v. Critic. sac. par. 1. p. 267.

F I N I S.





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