

OF THE  
INTEGRITY AND PURITY  
OF  
THE HEBREW AND GREEK TEXT  
OF  
THE SCRIPTURE:  
WITH CONSIDERATIONS ON  
THE PROLEGOMENA AND APPENDIX  
TO THE LATE  
BIBLIA POLYGLOTTA.



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CHAP. I.

*The occasion of this discourse. The danger of supposing corruptions in the originals of the Scripture. The great usefulness of the Biblia Polyglotta. The grounds of the ensuing animadversions. The assertions proposed to be vindicated laid down. Their weight and importance. Sundry principles in the Prolegomena prejudicial to the truth contended for, laid down. Those principles formerly asserted by others. Reasons of the opposition made to them.*

WHEN this whole little precedent treatise was finished, and ready to be given out unto the stationer, there came to my hands the prolegomena and appendix to the Biblia Polyglotta lately published. Upon the first sight of that volume, I was somewhat startled with that bulky collection of various readings, which the appendix tenders to the view of every one that doth but cast an eye upon it. Within a while after I found that others also, men of learning and judgment, had apprehensions of that work, not unlike those which my own thoughts had suggested unto me. Afterward, considering what I had written, about the providence of God in the preservation of the original copies of the Scripture in the foregoing discourse, fearing lest from that great appearance of variations in the original copies, and those of all the translations published with so great care and diligence, there might some unconquerable objections against the truth of what I had asserted, be educed; I judged it necessary to stop the progress of those thoughts, until I could get time to look through the appendix, and the various lections in that

great volume exhibited unto us, with the grounds and reasons of them in the prolegomena. Having now discharged that task, and (as things were stated) duty, I shall crave leave to deliver my thoughts to some things contained in them, which possibly men of perverse minds may wrest to the prejudice of my former assertions, to the prejudice of the certainty of divine truth, as continued unto us through the providence of God in the originals of the Scripture.

What use hath been made, and is as yet made, in the world, of this supposition, that corruptions have befallen the originals of the Scripture, which those various lections at first view seem to intimate; I need not declare. It is, in brief, the foundation of Mahometism (*Alcor. Azoar. 5.*), the chiefest and principal prop of Popery, the only pretence of fanatical antiscripturists, and the root of much hidden atheism in the world.<sup>a</sup> At present there is sent unto me by a very learned person, upon our discourse on this subject, a treatise in English, with the Latin title of 'Fides Divina,' wherein its nameless author, on this very foundation, labours to evert and utterly render useless the whole Scripture. How far such as he may be strengthened in their infidelity by the consideration of these things, time will manifest.

Had there not been then a necessity incumbent on me, either utterly to desist from pursuing any thoughts of publishing the foregoing treatise, or else of giving an account of some things contained in the prolegomena and appendix, I should for many reasons have abstained from this employment. But the truth is, not only what I had written in the first chapter about the providence of God in the preservation of the Scripture, but also the main of the arguments afterward insisted on by me, concerning the self-evidencing power and light of the Scripture, receiving in my apprehension a great weakening by the things I shall now speak unto, if owned and received as they are proposed unto us, I could not excuse myself from running the hazard of giving my thoughts upon them.

The wise man tells us, that he considered 'all travail, and every right work, and that for this a man is envied of his neighbour,' which, saith he, is 'vanity and vexation of spirit;'

<sup>a</sup> Whitak. Cham. Rivet. de S. S. Molin. nov. Pap. Mestrezat. Cont. Jesuit. Regourd. Vid. Card. Perron. respon. ad Reg. mag. Bullen. l. 5. c. 6.

Eccles. iv. 4. It cannot be denied, but that this often falls out through the corruption of the hearts of men, that when works, right works, are with most sore travail brought forth in the world, their authors are repaid with envy for their labour, which mixes all the issues of the best endeavours of men, with vanity and vexation of spirit. Jerome of old and Erasmus of late, are the usual instances in this kind. That I have any of that guilt in a peculiar manner upon me, in reference to this work of publishing the Biblia Polyglotta, which I much esteem, or the authors and contrivers of it, whom I know not,<sup>b</sup> I can, with due consideration, and do, utterly deny. The searcher of all hearts, knows I lie not. And what should possibly infect me with that leaven? I neither profess any deep skill in the learning used in that work, nor am ever like to be engaged in any thing that should be set up in competition with it; nor did ever know that there was such a person in the world, as the chief author of this edition of the Bibles, but by it. I shall then never fail on all just occasions, to commend the usefulness of this work, and the learning, diligence, and pains of the worthy persons that have brought it forth; nor would be wanting to their full praise in this place, but that an entrance into this discourse with their due commendations, might be liable to misrepresentations. But whereas we have not only the Bible published, but also private opinions of men, and collections of various readings (really or pretendedly so we shall see afterward), tending some of them, as I apprehend, to the disadvantage of the great and important truth that I have been pleading for, tendered unto us; I hope it will not be grievous to any, nor matter of offence, if using the same liberty, that they, or any of them, whose hands have been most eminent in this work, have done, I do with (I hope) Christian candour and moderation of spirit, briefly discover my thoughts upon some things proposed by them.

The renownedly learned preface to the Arabic translation in this edition of it, tells us, that the work of translating the Pentateuch into that language, was performed by a Jew, who took care to give countenance to his own private opi-

<sup>b</sup> Since my writing of this some of the chief overseers of the work, persons of singular worth, are known to me.

nions, and so render them authentic by bringing them into the text of his translation.

It is not of any such attempt, that I have any cause to complain, or shall so do in reference to these prolegomena and appendix ; only I could have wished (with submission to better judgments be it spoken), that in the publishing of the Bible, the sacred text, with the translations, and such naked historical accounts of their originals and preservation, as were necessary to have laid them fair and open to the judgment of the reader, had not been clogged with disputes and pleas for particular private opinions, imposed thereby with too much advantage on the minds of men, by their constant neighbourhood unto canonical truth.

But my present considerations being not to be extended beyond the concernment of the truth which in the foregoing discourse I have pleaded for, I shall first propose a brief abstract thereof, as to that part of it, which seems to be especially concerned, and then lay down what to me appears in its prejudice in the volumes now under debate ; not doubting but a fuller account of the whole, will by some or other be speedily tendered unto the learned and impartial readers of them. The sum of what I am pleading for, as to the particular head to be vindicated, is, that as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, were immediately, and entirely given out by God himself, his mind being in them represented unto us, without the least interveniency of such mediums and ways as were capable of giving change or alteration to the least iota or syllable ; so by his good and merciful providential dispensation, in his love to his word and church, his whole word as first given out by him, is preserved unto us entire in the original languages ; where, shining in its own beauty and lustre (as also in all translations, so far as they faithfully represent the originals), it manifests and evidences unto the consciences of men, without other foreign help or assistance, its divine original and authority.

Now the several assertions or propositions contained in this position, are to me such important truths, that I shall not be blamed in the least by my own spirit, nor I hope by any others, in contending for them, judging them funda-

mental parts of the faith once delivered to the saints ; and though some of them may seem to be less weighty than others, yet they are so concatenated in themselves, that by the removal or destruction of any one of them, our interest in the others is utterly taken away. It will assuredly be granted, that the persuasion of the coming forth of the word immediately from God, in the way pleaded for, is the foundation of all faith, hope, and obedience. But what I pray will it advantage us, that God did so once deliver his word, if we are not assured also, that that word, so delivered, hath been by his special care and providence preserved entire and uncorrupt unto us ; or that it doth not evidence and manifest itself to be his word, being so preserved. Blessed, may we say, were the ages past, who received the word of God in its unquestionable power and purity, when it shone brightly in its own glorious native light, and was free from those defects and corruptions, which through the default of men, in a long tract of time, it hath contracted ; but for us, as we know not well where to lay a sure foundation of believing that this book rather than any other doth contain what is left unto us of that word of his, so it is impossible we should ever come to any certainty almost of any individual word, or expression, whether it be from God or no ; far be it from the thoughts of any good man, that God, whose covenant with his church, is, that his word and Spirit shall never depart from it, Isa. lix. 21. Matt. v. 18. 1 Pet. i. 25. 1 Cor. xi. Matt. xxviii. 20. hath left it in uncertainties, about the things that are the foundation of all that faith and obedience which he requires at our hands.

As then I have in the foregoing treatise, evinced, as I hope, the self-evidencing light and power of the Scripture, so let us now candidly, for the sake and in the pursuit of truth, deal with a mind freed from prejudices and disquieting affections, save only the trouble that arises from the necessity of dissenting from the authors of so useful a work, address ourselves to the consideration of what seems in these prolegomena and appendix to impair the truth of the other assertions, about the entire preservation of the word as given out from God, in the copies which yet remain with us. And this I shall do, not doubting, but that the per-

sons themselves concerned, will fairly accept and weigh what is conscientiously tendered.

As then I do with all thankfulness acknowledge that many things are spoken very honourably of the originals in these prolegomena, and that they are in them absolutely preferred above any translation whatever,<sup>c</sup> and asserted in general as the authentic rule of all versions, contrary to the thoughts of the publisher of the great Parisian Bibles, and his infamous *hyperaspistes* Morinus; so as they stand in their aspect unto the appendix of various lections, there are both opinions and principles confirmed by suitable practices, that are of the nature and importance before mentioned.

1. After a long dispute to that purpose, it is determined, that the Hebrew points or vowels, and accents, are a novel invention of some Judaical rabbins, about five or six hundred years after the giving out of the gospel.<sup>d</sup> Hence,

(1.) An antiquity is ascribed to some translations, two or three at the least, above and before the invention of these points, whose agreement with the original cannot therefore by just consequence be tried by the present text, as now pointed and accented.

(2.) The whole credit of our reading and interpretation of the Scripture, as far as regulated by the present punctuation depends solely on the faithfulness and skill of those Jews, whose invention this work is asserted to be.

2. The קריובות of which sort are above eight hundred in the Hebrew Bibles, are various lections, partly gathered by some Judaical rabbins out of ancient copies, partly their critical amendments.<sup>e</sup>

And, therefore,

After these various lections, as they are esteemed, are presented unto us, in their own proper order wherein they stand in the great Bibles (not surely to increase the bulk of divers readings, or to present a face of new variety to a less attentive observer, but), to evidence, that they are such various lections as above described, they are given us over a second time, in the method whereinto they are cast by Capellus, the great patriarch of these mysteries.<sup>f</sup>

<sup>c</sup> Prolegom. 7. sect. 17.

<sup>d</sup> Ibid. 3. sect. 8, et seq.

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. 8. sect. 23, etc.

<sup>f</sup> Append. p. 5.



3. That there are such alterations befallen the original, as in many places may be rectified by the translations that have been made of old.<sup>g</sup>

And, therefore,

Various lections may be observed and gathered out of those translations, by considering how they read in their copies, and wherein they differed from those which we now enjoy.<sup>h</sup>

4. It is also declared, that where any gross faults or corruptions are befallen the originals, men may by their faculty of critical conjecturing amend them, and restore the native lections that were lost; though in general without the authority of copies, this be not to be allowed.<sup>i</sup>

And, therefore,

A collection of various readings out of Grotius, consisting for the most part in such conjectures, is in the appendix presented unto us.

5. The voluminous bulk of various lections, as nakedly exhibited, seems sufficient to beget scruples and doubts in the minds of men, about the truth of what hath been hitherto by many pretended, concerning the preservation of the Scripture through the care and providence of God.

It is known to all men acquainted with things of this nature, that in all these, there is no new opinion coined or maintained by the learned preface to these Bibles. The severals mentioned, have been asserted and maintained by sundry learned men. Had the opinion about them been kept in the ordinary sphere of men's private conceptions in their own private writings, running the hazard of men's judgments on their own strength and reputation, I should not from my former discourse have esteemed myself concerned in them. Every one of us must give an account of himself unto God. It will be well for us, if we are found holding the foundation. If we build hay and stubble upon it, though our work perish, we shall be saved. Let every man, in these things, be fully persuaded in his own mind, it shall be to me no offence. It is their being laid as the foundation of the usefulness of these *Biblia Polyglotta*, with an endeavour to render them catholic, not in their own strength, but in their appendage to the authority, that on good grounds

<sup>g</sup> Prolegom. 7. sect. 12.

<sup>h</sup> Ibid. 6. sect. 8—10.

<sup>i</sup> Ibid. 6. sect. 12.

is expected to this work, that calls for a due consideration of them. All men who will find them stated in these prolegomena, may not perhaps have had leisure, may not perhaps have the ability, to know what issue the most of these things have been already driven unto, in the writings of private men.

As I willingly grant then, that some of these things may, without any great prejudice to the truth, be candidly debated amongst learned men; so taking them altogether, placed in the advantages they now enjoy, I cannot but look upon them as an engine suited to the destruction of the important truth before pleaded for; and as a fit weapon put into the hands of men of atheistical minds and principles, such as this age abounds withal, to oppose the whole evidence of truth revealed in the Scripture. I fear with some, either the pretended infallible judge, or the depth of atheism, will be found to lie at the door of these considerations. ‘Hoc Ithacus vellet.’ But the debate of the advantage of either Romanists or atheists from hence, belongs to another place and season. Nor is the guilt of any consequences of this nature charged on the workmen, which yet may be feared from the work itself.

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## CHAP. II.

*Of the purity of the originals. The ἀυτόγραφα of the Scripture lost. That of Moses, how, and how long preserved; of the book found by Hilkiab. Of the Αὐτόγραφα of the New Testament. Of the first copies of the originals: the scribes of those copies not Ξεόπνευστοι. What is ascribed to them. The great and incomparable care of the scribes of it. The whole word of God, in every tittle of it, preserved entire in the copies of the original extant. Heads of arguments to that purpose. What various lections are granted in the original of the Old and New Testament. Sundry considerations concerning them, manifesting them to be of no importance. That the Jews have not corrupted the text; the most probable instances considered.*

HAVING given an account of the occasion of this discourse, and mentioned the particulars that are, all, or some of them, to be taken into farther consideration, before I proceed to their discussion, I shall, by way of addition and explanation to what hath been delivered in the former treatise, give a brief

account of my apprehensions concerning the purity of the present original copies of the Scripture, or rather copies of the original languages, which the church of God doth now, and hath for many ages enjoyed, as her chiefest treasure; whereby it may more fully appear, what it is we plead for, and defend against the insinuations and pretences above mentioned.

First, then, it is granted that the individual *αὐτόγραφα* of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, are in all probability, and as to all that we know, utterly perished and lost out of the world. As also the copies of Ezra. The reports mentioned by some to the contrary,<sup>k</sup> are open fictions. The individual ink and parchment, the rolls or books that they wrote, could not without a miracle have been preserved from mouldering into dust before this time. Nor doth it seem improbable, that God was willing by their loss to reduce us to a nearer consideration of his care and providence in the preservation of every tittle contained in them. Had those individual writings been preserved, men would have been ready to adore them, as the Jews do their own *ἀπόγραφα* in their synagogues.

Moses indeed delivered his original copy of the Pentateuch, in a public assembly, unto the Levites (that is, the sons of Korah), to be put into the sides of the ark, and there kept for a perpetual monument; Deut. xxxi. 25, 26. That individual book was, I doubt not, preserved until the destruction of the temple. There is indeed no mention made of the book of the law in particular, when the ark was solemnly carried into the holy place after the building of Solomon's temple; 2 Chron. v. 4, 5. but the tabernacle of the congregation continued until then. That, and all that was in it, is said to be brought up; ver. 5. Now the placing of the book by the sides of the ark being so solemn an ordinance, it was no doubt observed. Nor is there any pretence to the contrary. Some think the book found by Hilkiah, in the days of Josiah, was this *καλὴ παραθήκη*, or *αὐτόγραφον* of Moses, which was placed by the sides of the ark. It rather seems to have been some ancient sacred copy, used in the service of the temple, and laid up there; as there was in the second temple,<sup>l</sup> which was carried in triumph to Rome.

<sup>k</sup> Adrianus Ferrariensis flagellum Judæor. lib. 9. c. 2. Rab. Azarias Meor Henaim. pa. 13. cap. 9.

<sup>l</sup> Joseph. de Bell. Judaic. lib. 7 cap. 24.

For besides that he speaks of his finding it in general in the house of the Lord, upon the occasion of the work which was then done; 2 Chron. xiv. 15. which was not in or about the holy place, where he, who was high-priest, knew full well this book was kept, it doth not appear that it was lawful for him to take that sacred depositum from its peculiar archives to send it abroad, as he dealt with that book which he found. Nay, doubtless it was altogether unlawful for him so to have done, it being placed there by a peculiar ordinance, for a peculiar or special end. After the destruction of the temple, all inquiry after that book is in vain. The author of the Second Book of Maccabees mentions not its hiding in Nebo by Jeremiah, with the ark and altar; or by Josiah, as say some of the Talmudists. Nor were it of any importance if they had. Of the Scripture preserved in the temple at its last destruction, Josephus gives us a full account; de Bello Juda. lib. 7. cap. 24.

Secondly, For the Scriptures of the New Testament, it doth not appear, that the *Ἀυτόγραφα* of the several writers of it were ever gathered into one volume; there being now no one church to keep them for the rest. The epistles, though immediately transcribed for the use of other churches, Col. iv. 16. were doubtless kept in the several churches, whereunto they were directed. From those *πρωτότυπα*, there were quickly *ἐκτυπούμενα*, transcribed copies given out to 'faithful men,'<sup>m</sup> whilst the infallible Spirit yet continued his guidance in an extraordinary manner.

For the first transcribers of the original copies, and those who in succeeding ages, have done the like work from them, whereby they have been propagated and continued down to us, in a subserviency to the providence and promise of God, we say not, as is vainly charged by Morinus and Capellus, that they were all or any of them *ἀναμάρτητοι* and *ξεόπνευστοι*, infallible and divinely inspired, so that it was impossible for them in any thing to mistake. It is known, it is granted, that failings have been amongst them, and that various lections are from thence risen, of which afterward. Religious care and diligence in their work, with a due reverence of him, with whom they had to do, is all we ascribe unto them. Not to acknowledge these freely in them, without clear and un-

<sup>m</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 1.

questionable evidence to the contrary, is high uncharitableness, impiety, and ingratitude. This care and diligence we say, in a subserviency to the promise and providence of God, hath produced the effect contended for. Nor is any thing farther necessary thereunto. On this account to argue (as some do) from the miscarriages and mistakes of men, their oscitancy and negligence in transcribing the old Heathen authors, Homer, Aristotle, Tully, we think it not tolerable in a Christian, or any one that hath the least sense of the nature and importance of the word, or the care of God towards his church. Shall we think that men who wrote out books, wherein themselves and others were no more concerned, than it is possible for men to be in the writings of the persons mentioned, and others like them, had as much reason to be careful and diligent in that they did, as those who knew and considered that every letter and tittle that they were transcribing, was part of the word of the great God, wherein the eternal concernment of their own souls, and the souls of others did lie. Certainly, whatever may be looked for, from the religious care and diligence of men, lying under a loving and careful aspect from the promise and providence of God, may be justly expected from them who undertook that work. However, we are ready to own all their failings that can be proved. To assert in this case without proof is injurious.

The Jews have a common saying among them, that to alter one letter of the law is no less sin, than to set the whole world on fire: and shall we think that in writing it, they took no more care than a man would do in writing out Aristotle or Plato, who for a very little portion of the world, would willingly have done his endeavour to get both their works out of it? Considering that the word to be transcribed, was every tittle and *iōra* of it the word of the great God, that that which was written, and as written, was proposed as his, as from him, that if any failings were made, innumerable eyes of men, owning their eternal concernment to lie in that word, were open upon it to discover it, and that thousands of copies were extant to try it by; and all this known unto, and confessed by, every one that undertook this work; it is no hard matter to prove their care and diligence to have outgone that of other common scribes of Heathen authors.

The truth is, they are prodigious things that are related of the exact diligence, and reverential care of the ancient Jews in this work, especially when they intrusted a copy to be a rule for the trial, and standard of other private copies. Maimonides in הלכות ספר תורה chap. viii. 3, 4. tells us that Ben Asher spent many years in the careful exact writing out of the Bible. Let any man consider the twenty things, which they affirm to profane a book or copy, and this will farther appear. They are repeated by Rabbi Moses; tractat. de libro Legis. cap. 10. one of them is שחסר אפילו אות אחת but one letter be wanting; and another, if but one letter be redundant. Of which more shall be spoken if occasion be offered.

Even among the Heathen, we will scarce think that the Roman pontifices going solemnly to transcribe the Sybils' verses, would do it either negligently or treacherously, or alter one tittle from what they found written; and shall we entertain such thoughts of them, who knew they had to do with the living God, and that in and about that, which is dearer to him than all the world besides. Let men then clamour as they please, and cry out of all men as ignorant and stupid, which will not grant the corruptions of the Old Testament, which they plead for, which is the way of Morinus; or let them propose their own conjectures of the ways of the entrance of the mistakes that they pretend are crept into the original copies, with their remedies, which is the way of Capellus; we shall acknowledge nothing of this nature, but what they can prove by undeniable and irrefragable instances, which as to any thing as yet done by them, or those that follow in their footsteps, appears upon the matter to be nothing at all. To this purpose take our sense in the words of a very learned man. 'Ut in iis libris qui sine vocalibus conscripti sunt, certum constantemque exemplarium omnium, tum excusarum scriptionem similemque omnino comperimus, sic in omnibus etiam iis quibus puncta sunt addita, non aliam cuiquam nec discrepantem aliis punctationem observavimus; nec quisquam est qui ullo in loco diversa lectionis Hebraicæ exemplaria ab iis quæ circumferuntur, vidisse se asserat, modo grammaticam rationem observatam dicat. Et quidem Dei consilio ac voluntate factum putamus, ut cum magna Græcorum Latinorumque fere omnium ejus-

dem auctoris exemplarium, ac præsertim manuum pluribus in locis varietas deprehendatur, magna tamen in omnibus Hebraicis quæcunque, nostro sæculo inveniuntur, Bibliis, scriptiois æqualitas, similitudo atque constantia servetur quocunque modo scripta illa sint, sive solis consonantibus constant, sive punctis etiam instructa visantur; Arias Montan. Præfat. ad Biblia Interlin. de varia Hebraicorum librorum scriptioe et lectione.'

It can then with no colour of probability be asserted<sup>m</sup> (which yet I find some learned men too free in granting), namely, that there hath the same fate attended the Scripture in its transcription, as hath done other books. Let me say without offence, this imagination asserted on deliberation, seems to me to border on atheism. Surely the promise of God for the preservation of his word, with his love and care of his church, of whose faith and obedience that word of his is the only rule, require other thoughts at our hands.

Thirdly, We add that the whole Scripture entire, as given out from God, without any loss, is preserved in the copies of the originals yet remaining; what varieties there are among the copies themselves shall be afterward declared; in them all, we say, is every letter and tittle of the word. These copies we say, are the rule, standard, and touchstone, of all translations, ancient or modern, by which they are in all things to be examined, tried, corrected, amended, and themselves only by themselves. Translations contain the word of God, and are the word of God, perfectly or imperfectly, according as they express the words, sense, and meaning of those originals. To advance any, all translations concurring, into an equality with the originals, so to set them by it, as to set them up with it, on even terms, much more to propose and use them as means of castigating, amending, altering any thing in them, gathering various lections by them, is to set up an altar of our own, by the altar of God, and to make equal the wisdom, care, skill, and diligence of men, with the wisdom, care, and providence of God himself. It is a foolish conjecture of Morinus, from some words of Epiphanius, that Origen in his Octopla placed the translation of the LXX in the midst, to be the rule of all the rest, even of the Hebrew itself, that was to be regulated and

<sup>m</sup> Prolegom. 7. sect. 12.

amended by it. (*Media igitur omnium catholica editio collocata erat, ut ad eam Hebræa cæteræque editiones exigèrentur et emendarentur; Excerpt. lib. 1. cap. 3. pag. 15.*) The truth is, he placed the Hebrew, in Hebrew characters, in the first place, as the rule and standard of all the rest; the same in Greek characters in the next place, then that of Aquila, then that of Symmachus, after which, in the fifth place, followed that of the LXX, mixed with that of Theodotion.

The various arguments giving evidence to this truth that might be produced, are too many for me now to insist upon, and would take up more room than is allotted to the whole discourse, should I handle them at large, and according to the merit of this cause. 1. The providence of God, in taking care of his word, which he hath magnified above all his name, as the most glorious product of his wisdom and goodness, his great concernment in this word, answering his promise to this purpose. 2. The religious care of the church (I speak not of the Romish synagogue) to whom these oracles of God were committed. 3. The care of the first writers in giving out authentic copies of what they had received from God, unto many, which might be rules to the first transcribers. 4. The multiplying copies to such a number, that it was impossible any should corrupt them all, wilfully or by negligence. 5. The preservation of the authentic copies: first in the Jewish synagogues, then in Christian assemblies, with reverence and diligence. 6. The daily reading and studying of the word by all sorts of persons, ever since its first writing, rendering every alteration liable to immediate observation and discovery, and that all over the world: with, 7. The consideration of the many millions, that looked on every tittle and letter in this book as their inheritance,<sup>a</sup> which for the whole world they would not be deprived of; and in particular for the Old Testament (now most questioned). 8. The care of Ezra and his companions, the men of the great synagogue, in restoring the Scripture to its purity, when it had met with the greatest trial that it ever underwent in this world, considering the paucity of the copies then extant. 9. The care of the Massorites from his days

<sup>a</sup> Hierosolymis Babilonica expugnatione delctis, omne instrumentam Judaicæ literaturæ per Esdram constat restauratum. Tertull. lib. de Hab. Mal. c. 3.



and downward, to keep perfect, and give an account of, every syllable in the Scripture, of which see Buxtorfius, Com. Mas. with, 10. The constant consent of all copies in the world, so that as sundry learned men have observed, there is not in the whole Mishna, Gemara, or either Talmud, any one place of Scripture found otherwise read, than as it is now in our copies. 11. The security we have, that no mistakes were voluntarily or negligently brought into the text before the coming of our Saviour, who was to declare all things, in that he not once reproves the Jews on that account, when yet for their false glosses on the word he spares them not.<sup>o</sup> 12. Afterward the watchfulness which the two nations of Jews and Christians, had always one upon another, with sundry things of the like importance, might to this purpose be insisted on. But of these things I shall speak again if occasion be offered.

Notwithstanding what hath been spoken, we grant that there are, and have been, various lections in the Old Testament and the New: for the Old Testament, the Keri and Cethib; the various readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naph-tali; of the eastern and western Jews evince it. Of the קרי וכתוב I shall speak peculiarly afterward: they present themselves to the view of every one that but looks into the Hebrew Bible. At the end of the great Rabbinical Bibles (as they are called), printed by Bombergus at Venice, as also in the edition of Buxtorfius at Basil, there is a collection of the various readings of Ben Asher, and Ben Naph-tali; of the eastern and western Jews: we have them also in this appendix. For the two first mentioned, they are called among the Jews, one of them, R. Aaron, the son of R. Moses, of the tribe of Asher; the other, R. Moses, the son of David, of the tribe of Naphtali. They flourished, as is probable among the Jews, about the year of Christ 1030, or thereabouts; and were teachers of great renown, the former in the west, or Palestina, the latter in the east, or Babylon. In their exact consideration of every letter, point,

<sup>o</sup> Quod si aliquis dixerit Hebræos libros à Judæis esse falsatos audiat Originem, quid in octavo volumine explanationum Esaïæ respondeat quæstiuncula; quod nunquam dominus et apostoli qui cætera crimina arguunt in Scribis et Pharisæis, de hoc ei mine quod erat. Maximum reticissent. Sin autem dixeriat post adventum domini et prædicationem apostolorum libros Hebræos fuisse falsatos cachinnum tenere non patero. Hieron. in c. 6. Esaïæ.

and accent of the Bible, wherein they spent their lives, it seems they found out some varieties; let any one run them through as they are presented in this appendix, he will find them to be so small, consisting for the most part in unnecessary accents of no importance to the sense of any word, that they deserve not to be taken notice of. For the various readings of the oriental or Babylonian, and occidental or Palestine Jews, all that I know of them (and I wish that those that know more of them, would inform me better), is, that they first appeared in the edition of the Bible by Bombergus, under the care of Felix Pratensis, gathered by R. Jacob Ben Cajim, who corrected that impression. But they give us no account of their original. Nor (to profess my ignorance) do I know any that do, it may be some do; but in my present haste I cannot inquire after them. But the thing itself proclaims their no importance, and Capellus, the most skilful and diligent improver of all advantages for impairing the authority of the Hebrew text, so to give countenance to his *Critica Sacra*, confesses that they are all trivial, and not in matters of any moment. Besides these, there are no other various lections of the Old Testament. The conjectures of men, conceited of their own abilities, to correct the word of God, are not to be admitted to that title. If any other can be gathered, or shall be hereafter, out of ancient copies of credit and esteem, where no mistake can be discovered as their cause, they deserve to be considered. Men must here deal by instances, not conjectures. All that yet appears, impairs not in the least, the truth of our assertion, that every tittle and letter of the word of God, remains in the copies preserved by his merciful providence for the use of his church.

As to Jews, besides the mad and senseless clamour in general, for corrupting the Scriptures, three things are with most pretence of reason objected against them. 1. The **תקון סופרים** *Tikkun Sopherim*, or ‘*correctio scribarum*,’ by which means it is confessed by Elias, that eighteen places are corrected. But all things are here uncertain: uncertain that ever any such things were done; uncertain who are intended by their *Sopherim*; Ezra and his companions most probably; nor do the particular places enumerated discover any such correction. They are all in particular considered by Glas-

sus, lib. 1. tract 1. but the whole matter is satisfactorily determined by Buxtorfius, in his letters to Glassius, printed by him, and repeated again by Amama; *Anti. Barb. Bib.* lib. 1. pp. 30, 31. Because this thing is much insisted on by Galatinus, to prove the Jews corrupting of the text, it may not be amiss to set down the words of that great master of all Jewish learning.

‘Ad tertium quæsitum tuum, de Tikkun Sopherim, 18 voces hanc censuram subiisse Massora passim notat. Recensio locorum in vestibulo libri Numerorum, et *Psa. cvi.* Utrobique non nisi 16 recensentur, sed in *Num. xii. 12.* duo exempla occurrunt, ut notat R. Solomon. Deest ergo unus locus mihi, quem ex nullo Judæo hactenus, expiscari potui, nec magnus ille Mercerus eum invenit. Galatinus hoc thema non intellexit, et aliena exempla admiscet. Sic et alii qui corruptiones ista esse putant. Nec ullum hactenus ex nostris sive evangelicis sive catholicis vidi, qui explicarit, quæ fuerint scribæ isti, et quales תיקונים ipsorum. Quam antiquæ hæ notæ de Tikkun sint, liquido mihi nondum constat. Antiquior ipsarum memoria est in libro ספרו qui ante Talmud Babilonicum fertur conscriptus. Dissentiunt tamen Hebræi; de ejus autore et tempore. In Talmud neutro ulla plane istius Tikkun mentio fit, cum alias עיטון סופרים longe minoris negotii in Talmud commemoretur. Si aliter ista loca fuissent aliquando scripta, Onkelos et Jonathan id vel semel expressissent. Nec Josephus reticuisset, qui contrarium Hebræis adscribit, nullam scilicet unquam literam mutatam fuiste in lege ab Hebræis popularibus suis; lib. 1. contra Appionem. Talmudistæ in *Levit. xxvii. vers. ult.* diversis locis notant, nec prophetæ ulli licitum fuisse vel minimum in lege mutare vel innovare. Quomodo ergo scribæ quidam vulgares hanc audaciam sibi arrogassent, textum sacrum in literis et sensu corrigere? In silentio itaque omnium, in aurem tibi dico, Sopherim hosce fuisse ipsos autores sacros, Mosen et prophetas, qui nunquam aliter scripserunt, quam hodie scriptum legitur. At sapientes Hebræorum nasutiores, animadvertentes inconvenientiam quandam in istis locis, scripserunt, aliter istos autores loqui debuisse, et secundum cohærentiam propositi textus, sic vel sic scribere, sed pro eo maluisse sic scribere, et id sic efferre, ut illud hodie in textu est. Veluti *Gen. xviii. 22.* lectum scriptum, et Abra-

ham adhuc stabat coram Domino. Itane? ubi legitur, in-  
 quiunt sapientes, quod Abraham venerit ad Dominum, et  
 steterit coram eo; contrarium dicitur in præcedentibus,  
 Deus scilicet venit ad Abraham, et dixit ad eum: num ego  
 celo ab Abrahamo, etc. Clamor Sodomæ et Gomorrhæ ma-  
 gnus est, etc. Ideoque Moses scribere debuit. Et Dominus  
 adhuc stabat coram Abrahamo. At ita serviliter de Deo  
 loqui non decuit Mosen, unde תיקן correxit et mutavit sty-  
 lum sermonis, honoris majoris causa, et dixit: et Abraham  
 adhuc stabat, etc. Hinc R. Salamo adjicit היה לו לכתוב scri-  
 bendum ipsi (Mosi) erat, (Seu) scribere debebat, et Dominus  
 stabat; nonquod aliter sic scripserit antea, et postea id ab  
 aliis scribis correctum sit, aut corruptum. Hinc R. Aben  
 Ezra, ad aliquot loca irridet nasutos, inquiring, nullo Tikkun  
 opus fuisse, id est, nihil esse, quod nasuti isti sapientes pu-  
 tarint, autorem debuisse aliter ibi loqui vel scribere. Vide  
 et eum Job xxxii. 3. Habes mysterium prolixè explicatum,  
 in quo et multi Hebræorum impegerunt.' Thus far Bux-  
 torfius.

The עיטון סופרים are insisted on by the same Galatinus;  
 but these are only about the use of the letter ן four or five  
 times; which seem to be of the same rise with them fore-  
 going.

But that which makes the greatest cry at present, is the  
 corruption of Psal. xxii. 17. where, instead of כארו which  
 the LXX translated ὤρυξαν, 'they digged or pierced,' that  
 is, my hands and feet, the present Judaical copies, as the  
 Antwerp Bibles also, read כארי 'as a lion,' so depraving the  
 prophecy of our Saviour's suffering, 'they digged or pierced  
 my hands and my feet;' leaving it no sense at all; 'as a  
 lion my hands and my feet.' Simeon de Muys upon the  
 place, pleads the substitution of ך for ן to be a late corrup-  
 tion of the Jews; at least כארו was the Keri, and was left  
 out by them. Johannes Isaac, lib. 2. ad Lindanus professes,  
 that when he was a Jew, he saw כארו in a book of his grand-  
 father's: Buxtorf affirms one to have been the Cethib, the  
 other the Keri, and proves it from the Massora; and blames  
 the Antwerp Bibles for printing כארי in the line. With him  
 agree Genebrard, Pagninus, Vatablus, Mercer, Rivet, &c.  
 Others contend that Cari, 'as a lion,' ought to be retained;  
 repeating ὑπὸ κοινοῦ, the verb הקיפוני 'they compassed me

about;’ affirming also that word to signify to tear, rent, and strike; so that the sense should be, they ‘tear my hands and feet as a lion.’ So Voetius de insolubil. Scripturæ; but that כָּאֲרִי cannot be here rendered ‘sicut leo,’ most evince, partly from the anomalous position of the præfix כ with Camets, but chiefly from the Massora, affirming that that word is taken in another sense than it is used, Isa. xxxviii. 13. where it expressly signifies ‘as a lion:’ the shorter determination is, that from the radix כרה by the epenthesis טוּ א, and the change which is used often of ו into ’ (as in the same manner it is Ezra. x. and the last), in the third person plural, the preterperfect tense of Kal, is כָּאֲרִי ‘perfoderunt,’ ‘they digged,’ or pierced through my hands and my feet; but to what purpose is this gleaning after the vintage of Mr. Pococke to this purpose, in his excellent Miscellanies.

The place of old instanced in by Justin Martyr, Psal. xcvi. 10. where he charges the Jews to have taken out those words, ἀπὸ ξύλου, ‘from the wood;’ making the sense, ‘The Lord reigned from the wood,’ or the tree, so pointing out the death of Christ on the cross, is exploded by all: for besides that he speaks of the LXX, not of the Hebrew text, it is evident that those words were foisted into some few copies of that translation, never being generally received, as is manifested by Fuller, Miscellan. l. 3. cap. 13. And it is a pretty story that Arias Montanus tells us, of a learned man (I suppose he means Lindanus), pretending that those words were found in a Hebrew copy of the Psalms of venerable antiquity, beyond all exception, here in England; which copy coming afterward to his hand, he found to be a spurious, corrupt, novel transcript, wherein yet the pretended words are not to be found: Arias Mont. Appar. de variis lec. Heb. et Mass. And I no way doubt, but that we want opportunity to search and sift some of the copies that men set up against the common reading in sundry places of the New Testament, we should find them, not one whit better, or of more worth than he found that copy of the Psalms.

## CHAP. III.

*Of various lections in the Greek copies of the New Testament.*

FOR various lections in the Greek copies of the New Testament, we know with what diligence and industry they have been collected by some, and what improvement hath been made of those collections by others. Protestants, for the most part, have been the chiefest collectors of them; Stephanus, Camerarius, Beza, Camero, Grotius, Drusius, Hensius, D' Dieu, Capellus, all following Erasmus, have had the prime hand in that work. Papists have ploughed with their heifer to disparage the original, and to cry up the vulgar Latin; a specimen of their endeavours we have in the late virulent exercitations of Morinus. At first very few were observed. What a heap or bulk they are now swelled unto, we see in this appendix. The collection of them makes up a book bigger than the New Testament itself. Of those that went before, most gave us only what they found in some particular copies that themselves were possessors of; some those only which they judged of importance, or that might make some pretence to be considered whether they were proper or no; here we have all, that by any means could be brought to hand, and that whether they are tolerably attested for various lections or no; for as to any contribution unto the better understanding of the Scripture from them, it cannot be pretended. And whither this work may yet grow, I know not.

That there are in some copies of the New Testament, and those some of them of some good antiquity, diverse readings, in things or words of less importance is acknowledged; the proof of it lies within the reach of most, in the copies that we have; and I shall not solicit the reputation of those who have afforded us others, out of their own private furniture. That they have been all needlessly heaped up together, if not to an eminent scandal, is no less evident. Let us then take a little view of their rise and importance.

That the Grecian was once as it were the vulgar language of the whole world of Christians is known. The writing of the New Testament in that language, in part found it so,

and in part made it so. What thousands, yea, what millions, of copies of the New Testament were then in the world, all men promiscuously reading and studying of the Scripture, cannot be reckoned. That so many transcriptions, most of them by private persons, for private use, having a standard of correction in their public assemblies ready to relieve their mistakes, should be made without some variation, is, *ἐκ τῶν ἀδυνάτων*. From the copies of the first ages, others in the succeeding have been transcribed, according as men had opportunity. From those which are come down to the hands of learned men in this latter age whereof very few or none at all, are of any considerable antiquity, have men made it their business to collect the various readings we speak of; with what usefulness and serviceableness to the churches of God, others that look on must be allowed their liberty to judge. We know the vanity, curiosity, pride, and naughtiness of the heart of man: how ready we are to please ourselves, with things that seem singular and remote from the observation of the many, and how ready to publish them as evidences of our learning and diligence, let the fruit and issue be what it will. Hence it is come to pass, not to question the credit of any man speaking of his MSS. (which is wholly swallowed in this appendix), that whatever varying word, syllable, or tittle, could be by any observed, wherein any book, though of yesterday, varieth from the common received copy, though manifestly a mistake, superfluous or deficient, inconsistent with the sense of the place, yea, barbarous, is presently imposed on us as a various lection.

As then I shall not speak any thing to derogate from the worth of their labour, who have gathered all these various readings into one body or volume, so I presume I may take liberty without offence to say, I should more esteem of theirs, who would endeavour to search and trace out these pretenders, to their several originals, and rejecting the spurious brood that hath now spawned itself over the face of so much paper, that ought by no means to be brought into competition with the common reading, would reduce them to such a necessary number, whose consideration might be of some other use than merely to create a temptation to the reader, that nothing is left sound and entire in the word of God.

However, now Satan seems to have exerted the utmost of

his malice, men of former ages the utmost of their negligence, of these latter ages of their diligence, the result of all which, we have in the present collection in this appendix: with them that rightly ponder things there ariseth nothing at all to the prejudice of our assertion, as may possibly, God assisting, be farther manifested hereafter in the particular consideration of some, or all of these divers readings therein exhibited unto us. Those which are of importance, have been already considered by others; especially Glassius; Tract. 1. lib. 1.

It is evident that the design of this appendix was to gather together every thing of this sort, that might by any means be afforded: at the present, that the reader may not be too much startled at the fruit of their diligence, whose work and labour it was, I shall only remark concerning it some few things that on a general view of it occur unto me.

1. Then here is professedly no choice made, nor judgment used, in discerning, which may indeed be called various lections; but all differences whatever that could be found in any copies, printed or written, are equally given out. Hence many differences that had been formerly rejected by learned men for open corruptions, are here tendered us again. The very first observation in the treatise next printed unto this collection, in the appendix itself, rejects one of the varieties, as a corruption. So have some others of them been by Arias Montanus, Camero, and many more. It is not every variety or difference in a copy that should presently be cried up for a various reading. A man might with as good colour and pretence take all the printed copies he could get, of various editions, and gathering out the *errata typographica*, print them for various lections, as give us many, I shall say the most, of these in this appendix, under that name. It may be said, indeed, that the composers of this appendix found it not incumbent on them, to make any judgment of the readings, which, *de facto*, they found in the copies they perused, but merely to represent what they so found, leaving the judgment of them unto others; I say also it may be so; and, therefore, as I do not reflect on them, nor their diligence, so I hope they nor others, will not be offended that I give this notice of what judgment remains yet to be made concerning them.



2. Whereas Beza, who is commonly blamed by men of all sides and parties, for making too bold upon various lections, hath professedly stigmatized his own MS. that he sent unto Cambridge, as so corrupt in the gospel of Luke that he durst not publish the various lections of it, for fear of offence and scandal, however he thought it had not fallen into the hands of heretics, that had designedly depraved it; we have here, if I mistake not, all the corruptions of that copy given us as various readings; for though I have not seen the copy itself, yet the swelling of the various lections in that gospel, into a bulk as big, or bigger, than the collection of all the New Testament, besides the Gospels and Acts, wherein that copy is cited one thousand four hundred and forty times, puts it out of all question that so we are dealt withal: now if this course be taken, and every stigmatized copy may be searched for differences, and these presently printed to be various readings, there is no doubt but we may have enough of them to frighten poor unstable souls into the arms of the pretended infallible guide; I mean as to the use that will be made of this work by such persons as Morinus.

3. I am not without apprehensions that ‘*opere in longo obrepsit somnus,*’ and that whilst the learned collectors had their hands and minds busied about other things, some mistakes did fall into this work of gathering these various lections. Some things I meet withal in it, that I profess, I cannot bring to any good consistency among themselves; to let pass particular instances, and insist on one only of a more general and eminent importance. In the entrance unto this collection an account is given us of the ancient copies, out of which these observations are made; among the rest one of them is said to be an ancient copy in the library of Emanuel college in Cambridge: this is noted by the letters Em. throughout the whole collection. Now whereas it is told us in those preliminary cautions and observations, that it contains only Paul’s Epistles, I wonder how it is come to pass, that so many various lections in the Gospels and Acts, as in the farrago itself are fixed on the credit of that book, could come to be gathered out of a copy of Paul’s Epistles; certainly here must be some mistake, either in the learned authors of the previous directions, or by those employed to gather the varieties following; and it may be supposed that

that mistake goes not alone ; so that upon a farther consideration of particulars, it may be, we shall not find them so clearly attested, as at first view they seem to be. It would indeed be a miracle, if in a work of that variety many things should not escape the eye of the most diligent observer.

I am not then, upon the whole matter, out of hopes, but that upon a diligent review of all these various lections, they may be reduced to a less offensive, and less formidable number ; let it be remembered that the vulgar copy we use, was the public possession of many generations ; that upon the invention of printing, it was in actual authority throughout the world, with them that used and understood that language, as far as any thing appears to the contrary. Let that then pass for the standard which is confessedly its right and due, and we shall, God assisting, quickly see, how little reason there is to pretend such varieties of readings, as we are now surprised withal. For, 1. Let those places be separated, which are not sufficiently attested unto, so as to pretend to be various lections : it being against all pretence of reason, that every mistake of every obscure private copy, perhaps not above two or three hundred years old (or if older), should be admitted as a various lection, against the concurrent consent of, it may be, all others that are extant in the world, and that without any congruity of reason, as to the sense of the text where it is fallen out. Men may, if they please, take pains to inform the world, wherein such and such copies are corrupted or mistaken, but to impose their known failings on us as various lections, is a course not to be approved.

2. Let the same judgment, and that deservedly, pass on all those different places, which are altogether inconsiderable, consisting in accents, or the change of a letter, not in the least intrenching on the sense of the place, or giving the least intimation of any other sense to be possibly gathered out of them, but what is in the approved reading : to what end should the minds of men be troubled with them or about them, being evident mistakes of the scribes, and of no importance at all.

3. Let them also be removed from the pretences which carry their own convictions along with them, that they are spurious ; either, [1.] By their superfluity or redundancy of unnecessary words ; or, [2.] Their deficiency in words, evi-

dently necessary to the sense of their places; or, [3.] Their incoherence with the text in their several stations; or, [4.] Evidence of being intended as expository of difficulties, having been moved and assoiled by some of the ancients upon the places, and their resolutions being intimated; or, [5.] Are foisted out of the LXX, as many places out of the New have been inserted into that copy of the Old; or, [6.] Are taken out of one place in the same penman, and are used in another; or, [7.] Are apparently taken out of one Gospel, and supplied in another, to make out the sense of the place; or, [8.] Have been corrected by the Vulgar Latin, which hath often fallen out in some copies, as Lucas Brugensis shews us, on Matt. xvii. 2. Mark i. 38. vii. 4. and sundry other places; or, [9.] Arise out of copies apparently corrupted, like that of Beza in Luke, and that in the Vatican, boasted of by Huntly the Jesuit, which Lucas Brugensis affirms to have been changed by the Vulgar Latin, and was written and corrected, as Erasmus says, about the council of Florence, when an agreement was patched up between the Greeks and Latins; or, [10.] Are notoriously corrupted by the old heretics, as 1 John v. 7. Unto which heads, many, yea the most of the various lections collected in this appendix may be referred; I say, if this work might be done with care and diligence (whereunto I earnestly exhort some in this university, who have both ability and leisure for it), it would quickly appear, how small the number is of those varieties in the Greek copies of the New Testament, which may pretend unto any consideration under the state and title of various lections; and of how very little importance they are, to weaken in any measure my former assertion concerning the care and providence of God in the preservation of his word. But this is a work of more time and leisure, than at present I am possessor of; what is to come, *Σεοῦ ἐν γούνασι κείται*. In the mean time I doubt not, but to hear tidings from Rome concerning this variety, no such collection having as yet been made in the world.

## CHAP. IV.

*General premises. Opinions prejudicial to the authority of the originals in the Prolegomena, enumerated. The just consequences of those premises. Others engaged in these opinions. Of Capellus. Of Origen, Zimenius, Arias Montanus's editions of the Bible.*

HAVING now declared in what sense, and with what allowance, as to various lections, I maintain the assertion laid down in the foregoing treatise, concerning the providential preservation of the whole book of God, so that we may have full assurance, that we enjoy the whole revelation of his will, in the copies abiding amongst us, I shall now proceed to weigh what may be objected farther (beyond what hath already been insisted on) against the truth of it, from the prolegomena and appendix to the Biblia Polyglotta, at the entrance of our discourse proposed to consideration.

1. To speak somewhat of them in general, I must crave leave to say, and it being but the representation of men's avowed judgments, I hope I may say without offence, that together with many high and honourable expressions concerning the originals, setting aside the incredible figment, of the Jews corrupting the Bible out of hatred to the Christians, which being first supposed by Justin Martyr (though he speak of the Septuagint only), hath scarce found one or two since to own it, but is rejected by the universality of learned men, ancient and modern, unless some few Papists mad upon their idols, and the thesis preferring in general this or that translation above the original, there is no opinion that I know of, that was ever ventilated among Christians, tending to the depression of the worth, or impairing the esteem, of the Hebrew copies, which is not directly, or by just consequence, owned in these prolegomena. Thence it is contended that the present Hebrew character is not that used by God himself, and in the old church before the captivity of Babylon, but it is the Chaldean, the other being left to the Samaritans; that the points or vowels, and accents, are a late invention of the Tiberian Massorites, long after sundry translations were extant in the world; that the Keri Uketif are critical notes, consisting partly of various lections gathered by the late Massorites and Rabbins; that

considering how oft-times in likelihood, translators read the text before the invention of the points and accents, the present reading may be corrected and amended by them; and that, because the old translators had other copies, or differing copies from them which we now enjoy. That where gross faults are crept into the Hebrew text, men may by their own conjectures find out various lections, whereby they may be amended, and to this purpose an instance of such various lections, or rather corrections of the original, is in the appendix exhibited unto us out of Grotius. That the books of the Scriptures have had the fate of other books, by<sup>3</sup> passing through the hands of many transcribers, they have upon them the marks of their negligence, ignorance, and sloth.

Now truly, I cannot but wish that some other way had been found out to give esteem and reputation to this noble collection of translations, than by espousing these opinions, so prejudicial to the truth and authority of the originals. And it may be justly feared, that where one will relieve himself against the uncertainty of the originals, by the considerations of the various translations here exhibited unto us, being such, as upon trial they will be found to be, many will be ready to question the foundation of all.

It is true, the learned preface owns not those wretched consequences, that some have laboured to draw from these premises; yet it must be acknowledged also, that sufficient security against the lawful deriving those consequences from these premises, is not tendered unto us: he says not, that because this is the state of the Hebrew language and Bible, therefore all things in it are dubious and uncertain, easy to be turned unto various senses, not fit to be a rule for the trial of other translations, though he knows full well who thinks this a just consequence from the opinion of the novelty of the vowels; and himself grants that all our knowledge of the Hebrew is taken from the translation of the LXX, as he is quoted to that purpose by Morinus; Præfat. ad opusc. Hebræ. Samarit. He concludes not, that on these accounts we must rely upon an infallible living judge, and the translation that he shall commend unto us; though he knows full well who do so; and himself gives it for a rule, that at the correction of the original, we have the consent of the guides of the church: I could desire then, I say, that

sufficient security may be tendered us against these inferences, before the premises be embraced; seeing great and wise men, as we shall further see anon, do suppose them naturally and necessarily to flow from them.

It is confessed that some learned men, even among the Protestants, have heretofore vented these or some of these paradoxes: especially Capellus in his 'Arcanum punctuationis revelatum,' 'Critica sacra,' and other treatises: in the defence whereof, as I hear, he still laboureth, being unwilling to suffer loss in the fruit of so great pains. What will become of his reply unto Buxtorfius in the defence of his *Critica*, I know not: reports are that it is finished; and it is thought he must once more fly to the Papists by the help of his son, a great zealot amongst them, as he did with his *Critica* to get it published. The generality of learned men among Protestants are not yet infected with this leaven. Nor indeed do I find his boldness in conjecturing approved in these prolegomena. But let it be free for men to make known their judgments in the severals mentioned. It hath been so, and may it abide so still. Had not this great and useful work been prefaced with the stating of them, it had not been of public concernment (as now it seems to be) to have taken notice of them.

Besides it is not known whither this inconvenience will grow. Origen, in his *Octapla*, as was declared, fixed the Hebrew original as the rule and measure of all translations. In the reviving of that kind of work by Zimenius in the Complutensian Bibles, its station is left unto it. Arias Montanus who followed in their steps (concerning whose performances under his master the king of Spain, I may say for sundry excellencies, 'nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale') was religiously careful to maintain the purity of the originals, publishing the Hebrew verity (as it is called by Jerome, Austin, and others of the ancients) as the rule of examining by it all translations whatever; for which he is since accused of ignorance by a petulant Jesuit,<sup>a</sup> that never deserved to carry his books after him. Michael le Jay hath given a turn to this progress, and in plain terms exalts a corrupt translation above the originals; and that upon the principle under consideration, as is abundantly manifest from Morinus. And

<sup>a</sup> Morin. Exercit. de Heb. Text. sinc. lib. 1. ex. 1. cap. 4.

if this change of judgment which hath been long insinuating itself, by the curiosity and boldness of critics, should break in also upon the Protestant world, and be avowed in public works, it is easy to conjecture what the end will be. We went from Rome under the conduct of the purity of the originals, I wish none have a mind to return thither again, under the pretence of their corruption.

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## CHAP. V.

*The original of the points proposed to consideration in particular. The importance of the points to the right understanding of the Scripture; the testimony of Morinus, Junius, Johannes Isaac, Cevalerius, and others. The use made by the Papists of the novelty of the points. The importance of the points farther manifested. The extreme danger of making the Hebrew punctuation arbitrary. That danger evinced by instance. No relief against that danger, on the grounds of the opinion considered. The authors of the Hebrew punctuation according to the Prolegomena: who and what. Morinus's folly. The improbability of this pretence. The state of the Jews, the supposed inventors of the points after the destruction of the temple. Two attempts made by them to restore their religion. The former under Barchochab, with its issue. The second under R. Judah, with its issue. The rise and foundation of the Talmuds. The state of the Jews upon and after the writing of the Talmuds. Their rancour against Christ. Who the Tiberian Massorites were, that are the supposed authors of the Hebrew punctuation: their description. That figure rejected. The late testimony of Dr. Lightfoot to this purpose. The rise of the opinion of the novelty of the points. Of Elias Levita. The value of his testimony in this case. Of the validity of the testimony of the Jewish Rabbins. Some considerations about the antiquity of the points; the first from the nature of the punctuation itself, in reference unto grammatical rules. From the Chaldee paraphrase, and integrity of the Scripture as now pointed.*

THIS being, in my apprehension, the state of things amongst us, I hope I may, without offence, proceed to the consideration of the particulars before mentioned, from whence it is feared that objections may arise against the purity and self-evidencing power of the Scriptures, pleaded for in the foregoing treatise. That which in the first place was mentioned, is the assertion of the points or vowels, and accents, to be a novel invention of some Rabbins of Tiberias, in Palestina. This the learned author of the prolegomena defends with Capellus's arguments, and such other additions as he was

pleased to make use of. To clear up the concernments of our truth in this particular, it will be necessary to consider; 1. What influence into the right understanding of the text these points have, and necessarily must have. 2. What is their original, or who their invention is ascribed unto in these prolegomena. As to the assertive part of this controversy, or the vindication of their true sacred original, some other occasion may call for additions to what is now (by the way) insisted on. And as I shall not oppose them who maintain that they are *coævous* with the letters, which are not a few of the most learned Jews and Christians; so I no ways doubt, but that as we now enjoy them, we shall yet manifest that they were completed by אנשי כנסתה גדולה the men of the great synagogue, Ezra and his companions, guided therein by the infallible direction of the Spirit of God.

That we may not seem ἀροβατεῖν, or to contend *de lana caprina*, the importance of these points as to the right understanding of the word of God, is first to be considered, and that from testimony and the nature of the thing itself. Morinus in his preface to his Hebrew Lexicon, tells us that without the points, no certain truth can be learned from the Scriptures in that language, seeing all things may be read diverse ways, so that there will be more confusion in that one tongue, than was amongst all those at Babylon. ‘Nulla igitur certa doctrina poterit tradi de hac lingua, cum omnia possint diversimodo legi, ut futura sit major confusio unice hujus linguæ, quam illa Babylonis.’ Morinus plainly affirms that it is so indeed: instancing in the word דבר, which as it may be variously pointed, hath at least eight several significations, and some of them as distant from one another, as heaven and earth. And to make evident the uncertainty of the language on this account, he gives the like instance in *c, r, s*, in Latin: Junius, in the close of his animadversions on Bellar. de verbo Dei. lib. 2. cap. 2. commends that saying of Johannes Isaac against Lindanus, he that reads the Scriptures without points, is like a man that rides a horse ἀχάλινος, without a bridle; he may be carried he knows not whither. Radulphus Cevallerius goes farther; ‘Rudiment. ling. Heb. cap. 4. Quod superest de vocalium et accentuum antiquitate, eorum sententiæ subscribo, qui linguam Hebræam tanquam omnium aliarum



ἀρχέτυπον absolutissimum plane ab initio scriptam confirmant: quandoquidem qui contra sentiunt, non modo auctoritatem sacræ Scripturæ dubiam efficiunt, sed radicitus (meo quidem iudicio) convellunt, quod absque, vocalibus et distinctionum notis, nihil certi firmique, habeat.’—‘As for the antiquity of the vowels and accents,’ saith he, ‘I am of their opinion, who maintain the Hebrew language as the exact pattern of all others, to have been plainly written (with them) from the beginning: seeing that they who are otherwise minded, do not only make doubtful the authority of the Scriptures, but in my judgment wholly pluck it up by the roots; for without the vowels and notes of distinction, it hath nothing firm and certain.’

In this man’s judgment (which also is my own), it is evident to all, how obnoxious to the opinion now opposed, the truth is that I am contending for.

To these also may be added the great Buxtorfs, father<sup>a</sup> and son;<sup>b</sup> Gerard,<sup>c</sup> Glassius,<sup>d</sup> Voetius,<sup>e</sup> Flac. Ilyric. Polan. Whitaker,<sup>f</sup> Hassret,<sup>g</sup> Wolthius.<sup>h</sup>

It is well known what use the Papists make of this conceit. Bellarmine maintains that there are errors crept into the original by this addition of the points. ‘De Verb. Dei. lib. 2. cap. 2. Hisce duabus sententiis refutatis restat tertia quam ego verissimam puto, quæ est, Scripturas Hebraicas non esse in universum depravatas opera et malitia Judæorum, nec tamen omnino esse integras et puras, sed habere suos errores quosdam, qui partim irrepserint negligentia et ignorantia librariorum, &c. partim ignorantia Rabbiorum qui puncta addiderunt: itaque possumus si volumus puncta detrahere, et aliter legere.’—‘These two opinions being confuted, the third remaineth, which I suppose to be most true, which is, that the Hebrew Scriptures are not universally corrupted by the malicious work of the Jews, nor yet are wholly pure or entire, but that they have errors, which have crept in partly by the negligence and ignorance of the transcribers, partly by the ignorance of the Rabbins who added the points: whence we may if we please reject the points and read otherwise.’

<sup>a</sup> Buxtorf. Tiberias.

<sup>b</sup> De Antiquitate punct.

<sup>c</sup> Exeg. loc. com. Tom. 1. de Sa. Sc.

<sup>d</sup> De Text. Heb. puri.

<sup>e</sup> Loc. com. quousque se extendat. Author. SSa.

<sup>f</sup> Clav. Sa. p. 2. trac. 6.

<sup>g</sup> De Templ. Ezeec.

<sup>h</sup> Disputat. Jenæ.

In the voluminous opposition to the truth made by that learned man, I know nothing more perniciously spoken: nor do yet know how his inference can be avoided, on the hypothesis in question. To what purpose this insinuation is made by him is well known, and his companions in design exactly declare it. That their Hebrew text be corrected by the Vulgar Latin, is the express desire of Gregory de Valentia; tom. 1. disput. 5. qu. 3. and that because the church hath approved that translation, it being corrected (says Huntly) by Jerome before the invention of points. But this is put out of doubt by Morinus, who from hence argues the Hebrew tongue to be a very nose of wax, to be turned by men which way they please: and to be so given of God on purpose, that men might subject their consciences to their infallible church: Exercit. lib. 1. Exer. 1. c. 2. Great hath been the endeavour of this sort of men, wherein they have left no stone unturned to decry the originals. Some of them cry out that the Old Testament is corrupted by the Jews, as Leo Castrius,<sup>i</sup> Gordonius Huntlaus,<sup>k</sup> Melchior Canus,<sup>l</sup> Petrus Galatinus,<sup>m</sup> Morinus,<sup>n</sup> Salmeron, Pintus, Mersennus; Animad. in Problem. Georgii Venet,<sup>o</sup> &c. pag. 233. that many corruptions have crept into it by negligence, and the carelessness of scribes, so Bellarmine,<sup>p</sup> Genebrard,<sup>q</sup> Sixtus Sinensis,<sup>r</sup> with most of the rest of them; in these things indeed they have been opposed by the most learned of their own side; as Arias Montanus,<sup>s</sup> Johannes Isaac,<sup>t</sup> Pineda,<sup>u</sup> Masius,<sup>x</sup> Ferarius,<sup>y</sup> Andradius, and sundry others, who speak honourably of the originals; but in nothing do they so pride themselves, as in this conceit of the novelty of the Hebrew punctuation; whereby they hope, with Abimelech's servants, utterly to stop the wells or fountains from whence we should draw our soul's refreshment.

This may serve for a short view of the opinions of the parties at variance, and their several interests in these opinions. The importance of the points is on all hands acknowledged, whether aiming at the honour, or dishonour of

<sup>i</sup> De Translat. Scripturæ.

<sup>l</sup> Loc. Theol. lib. 2. cap. 13. 4.

<sup>m</sup> Exercit. de Heb. Text. Sincer.

<sup>n</sup> In Psal. xxi. 19.

<sup>o</sup> Præfat. ad Bib. interlin.

<sup>p</sup> De rebus Solom. cap. 4. sect. 1.

<sup>q</sup> Prolegom. Biblica.

<sup>k</sup> Controversiarum Epitome.

<sup>l</sup> Arcan. Cathol. lib. 1.

<sup>o</sup> Prolegom. <sup>p</sup> De verbo Dei, lib. 2.

<sup>r</sup> Bibliothec. lib. 8. Hæres. 13.

<sup>s</sup> Respons. ad Lindan.

<sup>t</sup> Præfat. ad Josu.

the originals. Vowels are the life of words; consonants without them are dead and immoveable; by them are they carried to any sense, and may be to diverse. It is true that men who have come to acquaintance with the Scriptures, by the help of the vowels and accents, being in possession of an habitual notion and apprehension of that sense and meaning, which ariseth from them, may possibly think that it were a facile thing to find out, and fix upon the same sense, by the help of the *matres lectionis* אִמֵּי הַלֵּוּן, and the consideration of antecedents and consequents with such like assistances. But let them be all taken out of the way (as I shall manifest it is fit they should be, if they have the original assigned to them by the prolegomena), and let men lay aside that advantage they have received from them, and it will quickly appear, into what devious ways all sorts of such persons will run. Scarce a chapter, it may be a verse, or a word, in a short time would be left free from perplexing contradicting conjectures. The words are altogether innumerable whose significations may be varied, by an arbitrary supplying of the points. And when the regulation of the punctuation, shall be left to every single person's conjectures, upon antecedents and consequents (for who shall give a rule to the rest), what end shall we have of fruitless contests? What various, what pernicious senses shall we have to contend about? Suppose that men, sober, modest, humble, pious, might be preserved from such miscarriages, and be brought to some agreement about these things (which yet in these days upon many accounts is not to be looked for; yea, from the nature of the thing itself seems impossible), yet this gives us but a human fallible persuasion, that the readings fixed on by them, is according to the mind of God; but to expect such an agreement is fond and foolish. Besides, who shall secure us against the luxuriant atheistical wits and spirits of these days, who are bold upon all advantages, ἀκίνητα κινεῖν, and to break in upon every thing that is holy and sacred; that they will not by their huckstering, utterly corrupt the word of God? How easy is it to foresee the dangerous consequents of contending for various readings, though not false nor pernicious, by men pertinaciously adhering to their own conjectures? The word of God, as to its literal sense, or reading of the words of it, hath hitherto been

ἱξαγώνιον, and the acknowledged touchstone of all expositions ; render this now à μῆλον ἱριδος, and what have we remaining firm and unshaken ?

Let men with all their confidence, as to the knowledge of the sense and meaning of the Scriptures, which they have already received, by such helps and means as are all of them resolved into the present punctuation of the Bible (for all grammars, all lexicons, the whole Massora, all helps to this language, new and old in the world, are built on this foundation), reduce themselves to such an indifferency, as some of late have fancied as a meet rise for knowledge ; and fall seriously to the reading of some of the prophets, whose matter is sublime and mystical, and their style elliptical and abstruse, without the help of points and accents : let them fix them, or any figures to answer their sounds arbitrarily, merely on their judgment in the language, and conjectures at the sense of the place, without any advantage from what they have been instructed in, and let us see whether they will agree, as they fabulously report of the seventy translators ? Whatever may be the issue of their industry, we need not fear quickly to find as learned as they, that would lay their work level with the ground. I confess, considering the days we live in, wherein the bold and curious wits of men, under pretence of critical observations, alluring and enticing with a show of learning, have ventured to question almost every word in the Scripture, I cannot but tremble to think what would be the issue of this supposition, that the points, vowels, and accents, are no better guides unto us than may be expected from those who are pretended to be their authors. The Lord, I hope, will safe-guard his own from the poison of such attempts ; the least of its evil is not yet thoroughly considered. So that whereas, saving to myself the liberty of my judgment as to sundry particulars, both in the impression itself and in sundry translations, I acknowledge the great usefulness of this work, and am thankful for it, which I here publicly testify ; yet I must needs say, I had rather that it, and all works of the like kind, were out of the world, than that this one opinion should be received, with the consequences that unavoidably attend it.

But this trial needs not be feared. Grant the points to have the original pretended, yet they deserve all regard, and

are of singular use, for the right understanding of the Scripture: so that it is not lawful to depart from them, without urgent necessity, and evidences of a better lection to be substituted in the room of that refused. But as this relieves us not, but still leaves us within the sphere of rational conjectures. So whether it can honestly be pretended and pleaded in this case, comes nextly to be discovered by the consideration of the supposed authors of this invention.

The founders of this story, of the invention of the Hebrew points, tell us, that it was the work of some Rabbins, living at Tiberias, a city in Galilee, about the year of Christ 500, or in the next century, after the death of Hierome, and the finishing of the Babylonian Talmud; the improbability of this story or legend, I am not now to insist upon. Morinus makes the lie lower. He tells us that the Babylonian Talmud was finished but a little before the year 700; Ex. 2. cap. 3. par poster: that the Massorites (to whom he ascribes the invention of the points) wrote a long time after the finishing of the Talmud, and the year 700, p. p. 5. cap. 3; this long time cannot denote less than some hundreds of years. And yet the same man in his preface to his 'Samaritica Opuscula;' boasting of his finding Rab. Juda Chiug, manifests that he was acquainted with the present punctuation, and wrote about it. Now this Rabbi was a grammarian; which kind of learning among the Jews succeeded that of the Massorites. And he lived about the year 1030; so that no room at all seems to be left for this work. That there was formerly a school of the Jews, and learned men famous at Tiberias is granted. Hierome tells us that he hired a learned Jew from thence for his assistance; Epist. ad Chromat. Among others, Dr. Lightfoot<sup>2</sup> hath well traced the shadow of their Sanhedrim with their presidents in it, in some kind of succession to that place. That they continued there in any esteem, number, or reputation, unto the time designed by our authors for this work, is not made to appear from any history or record, of Jews or Christians; yea, it is certain, that about the time mentioned, the chiefest flourishing of the Jewish doctors was at Babylon, with some other cities in the east, where they had newly completed their Talmud, the great pandect of Jewish laws and constitutions, as them-

Lightfoot, Fall of Hierus. sect. 3—5, &c.

selves every where witness and declare. That any persons considerably learned, were then in Tiberias is a mere conjecture. And it is most improbable, considering what destruction had been made of them at Diocæsaria and Tiberias, about the year of Christ 352, by Gallus, at the command of Constantius; that there should be such a collection of them, so learned, so authorized, as to invent this work, and impose it on all the world, no man once taking notice that any such persons ever were, is beyond all belief. Notwithstanding any entanglements that men, by their conjectures, may put upon the persuasion of the antiquity of the points, I can as soon believe the most incredible figment in the whole Talmud, as this fable. But this is not my business; let it be granted that such persons there were; on the supposition under consideration, I am only inquiring what is the state and condition of the present Hebrew pointing, and what weight is to be laid thereon. That the reader then may a little consider what sort of men they were, who are assigned in these prolegomena, as the inventors of this artifice of punctuation, I shall take a brief view of the state of the Jews, after the destruction of the temple, down to the days inquired after.

That the Judaical church state continued not only *de facto*, but in the merciful forbearance of God so far, that the many thousands of believers that constantly adhered to the Mosaical worship were accepted with God until the destruction of the temple; that that destruction was the ending of the world that then was by fire, and the beginning of setting up solemnly the new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, I have at large elsewhere declared, and may, God assisting, yet farther manifest in my thoughts on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews. The time between the beginning of Christ's preaching, to the utter desolation of the city and temple, an open visible rejection of that church, as such, was made. Thereon an utter separation of the true Israel from it ensued; and the hardened residue became *לא עמי* and *לא רחמה* a people not in covenant or delight, but of curse and indignation. What their state was for a season onwards, both civil and religious, many have declared. I shall only insist on the heads of things. In general then, they were most remote from accepting of the punishment of their sin, or considering that God was revenging upon them the quar-

rel of his covenant to the utmost, having broken both his staves, 'beauty and bands.' So far were they from owning their sin in selling of their Messias, that seeing an end put to all their former worship thereupon, there is nothing recorded of them but these two things, which they wholly in direct opposition unto God gave themselves up unto: 1. They increased in rage and madness against all the followers of Christ, stirring up persecution against them all the world over. Hereunto they were provoked by a great number of apostates, who when they could no longer retain their Mosaical rights, with the profession of Christ; being rejected by the churches, fell back again to Judaism or semijudaism. 2. A filthy lusting and desire after their former worship, now become abominable, and a badge of infidelity, that so their table might become a snare unto them, and what had been for their safety, might now become the means of their utter ruin and hardening. Of the former, or their stirring up of persecution, all stories are full of examples and instances. The latter, or their desires and attempts for the restoration of their worship, as conducing to our present business, must be farther considered.

For the accomplishment of a design to restore their old religion, or to furnish themselves with a new, they made two desperate attempts. The first of these was by arms, under their Pseudo-Messias Barchochab, in the days of Hadrian. Under the conduct and influencings of this man, to whom one of the chief Rabbins (Akiba) was armour-bearer; in the pursuit of a design to restore their temple and worship, they fell into rebellion against the Romans all the world over. In this work, after they had committed unheard-of outrages, massacres, unparalleled murders, spoils, and cruelties, and had shaken the whole empire, they were themselves in all parts of the world, especially in the city Bitter, where was the head of their rebellion, ruined with a destruction, seeming equal to that which befel them at Jerusalem, in the days of Vespasian and Titus.

That the rise of this war was upon the twofold cause mentioned, namely, their desire to retain their former worship, and to destroy the Christian is evident. For the first it is expressed by Dio Cassius; Hist. Rom. lib. 69. in vita Had. ἐς δὲ τὰ ἱεροσόλυμα πόλιν αὐτοῦ ἀντι τῆς κατασκαφείσης οἰκίσαντος, ἦν καὶ Αἰλίαν Καπιτωλίαν ὠνόμισε καὶ ἐς τὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τό

πον, ναὸν τῷ Διᾷ ἔτερον ἀναντεγείροντος, πόλεμος οὔτε μικρὸς οὔτ' ὀλιγοχρόνιος ἐκινήθη. Ἰουδαῖοι γὰρ, δεινόν τι ποιούμενοι τοὺς ἀλλοφύλους τινὰς ἐς τὴν πόλιν σφῶν οἰκισθῆναι, καὶ τὰ ἱερά ἀλλότρια ἐν αὐτῇ ἰδρουθῆναι. κλ. It was the defiling of the soil whereon the temple stood, which God suffered on set purpose, to manifest their utter rejection, and that the time was come wherein he would be no more worshipped in that place in the old manner, that put them in arms, as that author declares at large. And for the latter, Justin Martyr, who lived at that time, informs us of it. Apol. 2. ad Anton. Pium. καὶ γὰρ ἐν τῷ νῦν γεγενημένῳ ἰουδαϊκῷ, πολέμῳ Βαρχοχέβου ὁ τῆς ἰουδαίων ἀποστασῶς ἀρχηγέτης χριστιανοὺς μονοῦς εἰς τιμωρίας δεινὰς, εἰ μὴ ἀρνοῖντο ἰησοῦν χριστὸν καὶ βλασφημοῦσιν, ἐκέλευεν ἀπάγεσθαι. His fury was in an especial manner against the Christians, whom he commanded to be tortured and slain, unless they would deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ. See Euseb. chron. ad an. Christi 136. And this war they managed with such fury, and, for a while, success, that after Hadrian had called together against them the most experienced soldiers in the world, particularly Julius Severus out of England, and had slain of them five millions and eighty thousand in battle, with an infinite number besides, as the historian speaks, by famine, sickness, and fire, were consumed, he found himself to have sustained so much loss by them, that he began not his letter to the senate in the wonted manner; εἰ αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ παῖδες ὑμῶν ὑγιαίνετε ἐν ἄν' ἔχοι' ἐγὼ καὶ τὰ στρατευόμενα ὑγιαίνομεν· he could not assure them that it was well with him and his army.

By this second desolation they were very low, made weak and contemptible, and driven into obscurity all the world over. In this state they wandered up and down for some season in all manner of uncertainty. They had not only lost the place of their solemn worship, seeing it wholly defiled, the name of Jerusalem changed into Ælia, and themselves forbid to look towards it upon pain of death,<sup>a</sup> but also being now unspeakably diminished in their number, all hopes of contriving themselves into any condition of observing their old rights and worship was utterly lost.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Euseb. Hist. lib. 4. cap. 6. Orosius. lib. 7. c. 13. Hieron. Com. in Zech. c. 11. vid. Tzemach. David. et Hotting. Hist. ecclesi. nov. Testa.

<sup>b</sup> Dispersi, palabundi et cæli et soli sui extorres, vagantur per orbem sine homine, sine Deo, rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio salutare conceditur. Tertull. Apol.



Here they sat down amazed for a season, being at their wits' end, as was threatened to them in the curse. But they will not rest so. Considering, therefore, that their old religion could not be continued without a Jerusalem and a temple, they began a nefarious attempt against God, equal to that of the old world in building Babel, even to set up a new religion, that might abide with them wherever they were, and give them countenance in their infidelity and opposition to the gospel unto the utmost. The head of this new apostacy was one Rabbi Jehuda, whom we may not unfitly call the Mahomet of the Jews. They term him Hannasi, the 'prince,' and Hakkadosh, the 'holy.' The whole story of him and his companions, as reported by the Jews, is well collected by Joseph de Voisin, observat. in procem. ad pugi. fidei. p. p. 26, 27. The sum of the whole concerning this work is laid down by Maimonides, in his præfatio in Seder Zeraiim, p. p. 36, 37. of the edition of Mr. Pococke, wherein also a sufficient account is given of the whole Mishna, with the name of the Rabbins either employed in it, or occasionally mentioned. This man, about the year of Christ 190 or 200, when the temple had now lain waste almost three times as long as it did in the Babylonish captivity, being countenanced as some of themselves report,<sup>c</sup> by Antoninus Pius, compiled the Jewish Alcoran or the Mishna, as a rule of their worship and ways for the future. Only whereas Mahomet afterward pretended to have received his figments by revelation (though indeed he had much of his abominations from the Talmud), this man pleaded the receiving of his by tradition; the two main engines that have been set up against the word of God. Out of such pharisaical traditions as were indeed preserved amongst them, and such observances as they had learned and taken up from apostate Christians, as Aquila and others, with such figments as were invented by himself, and his predecessors, since the time of their being publicly rejected and cursed by God, this man compiled the ספר משניות *Mishnaioth*, which

<sup>c</sup> Post hæc processu temporis ventum est ad Rabbinu Hakkadosh, cui pax, qui fuit seculi sui phœnix, &c. Ille legem in Israele confirmavit sententiis, dictis, et differentis ore traditis a Mose, usque ad tempora sua collectis, cum et ipse esset ex iis qui ore tradita referebant. Collectis igitur sententiis et dictis istis, manum admovit componendæ Mishnæ, quæ omnium quæ in lege scripta sunt præceptorum explicationem contineret, partim traditionibus a Mose (cui pax), ore acceptis, partim consequentiis argumentatione elicitis, &c. Vid. R. Maimon. præfat. in Zeder. Zeraiim. edit. Pocock. p. p. 36—38.

is the text of their Talmud, and the foundation of their present religion, under the name of the old oral law. That sundry Christian ceremonies and institutions, vilely corrupted, were taken up by the Jews of those days, many of them being apostates, as were also some of Mahomet's assistants in compiling of the Alcoran, I shall (God assisting) elsewhere endeavour to evince and manifest. That any gospel observances were taken from the Jews, as being in practice amongst them before their institution by Christ, will appear in the issue to be a bold and groundless fancy.

The foundation mentioned being laid in a collection of traditions, and new invention of abominations under the name of old traditions, by this Rabbi; the following Talmuds are an improvement of the same attempt, of setting up a religion under the curse, and against the mind and will of God; that being rejected by him, and left without king, without prince, without sacrifice, without image, without an ephod, and without a teraphim, any kind of worship, true or false, they might have something to give them countenance in their unbelief. The Talmud of Jerusalem, so called (for it is the product of many comments on the Mishna, in the city of Tiberias, where Rabbi Juda lived) because it was compiled in the land of Canaan, whose metropolis was Jerusalem, was published about the year of Christ 230, so it is commonly received; though I find Dr. Lightfoot of late, on supposition of finding in it the name of Diocletianus the emperor, to give it a later date. But, I confess, I see no just ground for the alteration of his judgment from what he delivered in another treatise before. The Doctet mentioned by the Rabbins was beaten by the children of Rabbi Jehuda Princeps (as himself observes), who lived in the days of one of the Antoninus's, a hundred years before Diocletian. Neither was ever Diocletian in a low condition in the East, being a Sarmatian born, and living in the western parts; only he went with Numerianus that expedition into Persia, wherein he was made emperor at his return: but this is nothing to my purpose. See Lightfoot, Chorograph. cap. 81. p. 144. The Babylonian Talmud, so called, because compiled in the land of Babylon, in the cities of Nahardea, Sora, and Pumbeditha, where the Jews had their synagogues and schools, was finished about the year 506 or 510. In this greater

work was the mystery of their iniquity finished, and the engine of their own invention for their farther obduration perfectly completed. These are now the rule of their faith, the measure of their exposition of Scriptures, the directory of their worship, the ground of their hope and expectation.

All this while the Jews enjoyed the letter of the Scriptures, as they do to this day, yea, they receive it sometimes with the honour and veneration due to God alone. God preserved it amongst them for our present use, their farther condemnation, and means of their future conversion. But after the destruction of the temple, and rejection of their whole church-state, the word was no longer committed to them of God, nor were they intrusted with it, nor are to this day. They have it not by promise, or covenant, as they had of old; Isa. lix. 21. Their possession of it is not accompanied with the administration of the Spirit, without which, as we see in the instance of themselves, the word is a dead letter, of no efficacy for the good of souls. They have the letter amongst them, as sometimes they had the ark in the battle against the Philistines, for their greater ruin.

In this state and condition they every where discover their rancour and malice against Christ, calling him in contempt and reproach תלוי, who is יהוה צבאות קדוש קדוש קדוש relating monstrous figments concerning him, and their dealing with him, under the name of Jesus, the son of Pandira. Some deny that by Jesus, the son of Pandira and Stada, in the Talmud, the blessed Messiah is intended. So did Galatinus; Arcan. Relig. Cathol. lib. 1. cap. 7. and Reuchlius Cabal. lib. 1. p. 636. Guliel. Schickard. in præm. Tarich. p. 83. The contrary is asserted by Reynoldus prælec. in lib. Apoc. prælec. 103. p. p. 405, 406. Buxtorfius lexic. Rab. voce סטר and also in פנרירא; Vorstius not. ad Tzem. Dau. p. 264. And in truth the reason pleaded by Galatinus and others, to prove that they did not intend our Saviour, doth upon due consideration evince the contrary. The Jesus, say they, who is mentioned in the Talmud, lived in the days of the Maccabees, being slain in the time of Hyrcanus, or of Aristobulus, one hundred years before the death of the true Messiah; so that it cannot be he who is by them intended. But this is invented by the cursed wretches, that it should not appear that their temple was so soon destroyed after their wicked defection from God,

in killing of his Son. This is most manifest from what is cited by Genebrard, from Abraham Levita in his *Cabala historiarum*, where he says, that Christians invented this story, that Jesus was crucified in the life of Herod (that is, the tetrarch), that it might appear that their temple was destroyed immediately thereupon: ‘when,’ saith he, ‘it is evident from the Mishna and Talmud, that he lived in the time of Alexander, and was crucified in the days of Aristobulus.’ So discovering the true ground why they perverted the whole story of his time: namely, lest all the world should see their sin and punishment standing so near together. But it is well, that the time of our Saviour’s suffering and death was affirmed even by the Heathens, before either their Mishna or Talmud were born or thought of. ‘Abolendo rumori (he speaks of Nero, and of his firing Rome) subdidit reos; et quæsitissimis pœnis affecit, quos per flagitia invisos, vulgus Christianos appellabat. Author nominis ejus Christus, qui Tiberio imperitante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio affectus erat.’ Tacit. *Annal.* lib. 15. To return to our Jews: universally in all their old writings, they have carried on a design of impugning him in his gospel. For as we need not their testimony, nor any thing but the Scripture for their conviction and *αὐτοκατακρίσις*, so to acknowledge the truth, the places cited out of their Talmuds and Gemara, from the Cabalists and other Rabbins, by Martinus Raymundus, Porchetus, Galatinus, Reuchlinus, and others (setting aside Galatinus his *Gale Rezeia* which must be set aside), seem to be wrested the most of them besides their intentions, as things obscurely, metaphorically, and mystically written, are easily dealt withal. Their disputes about the Messiah, when they speak of him of set purpose, as in lib. *sanhedrim*, are foolish contradictory triflings, wherein they leave all things as uncertain, as if they were wrangling in their wonted manner, ‘*de lana caprina.*’ So that, for my part, I am not much removed from the opinion of Hulsius (*lib. 1. p. 2. dic. sup. de Temp. Messiarum*), that *Æsop’s Fables* are of as much use in Christian religion, as the Judaical Talmud. Whilst they keep the Scripture, we shall never want weapons out of their own armoury for their destruction. Like the Philistine, they carry the weapon that will serve to cut off their own heads. Now the Tiberian Massorites, the supposed inventors of the points, vowels, and accents, which we now use,

were men living after the finishing the last Talmud, whose whole religion was built thereon.

Let us then a little, without prejudice or passion, consider who or what these men were, who are the supposed authors of this work. 1. Men they were (if any such were), who had not the word of God committed to them in a peculiar manner, as their forefathers had of old, being no part of his church or people, but were only outwardly possessors of the letter, without just right or title to it; utterly uninterested in the promise of the communication of the Spirit, which is the great charter of the church's preservation of truths; Isa. lix. 21. 2. Men so remote from a right understanding of the word, or the mind and will of God therein, that they were desperately engaged to oppose his truth in the books which themselves enjoyed in all matters of importance unto the glory of God, or the good of their own souls, from the beginning to the ending. The foundation of whose religion<sup>e</sup> was infidelity, and one of their chief fundamentals an opposition to the gospel. 3. Men under the special curse of God, and his vengeance, upon the account of the blood of his dear Son. 4. Men all their days feeding themselves with vain fables, and mischievous devices against the gospel, labouring to set up a new religion under the name of the old, in despite of God, so striving to wrestle it out with his curse to the utmost. 5. Men of a profound ignorance in all manner of learning and knowledge, but only what concerned their own dunghill traditions;<sup>f</sup> as appears in their stories, wherein they make Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, help Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem; with innumerable the like fopperies. 6. Men so addicted to such monstrous figments, as appears in their Talmuds, as their successors of after ages are ashamed of, and seek to palliate, what they are able; yea, for the most part idolaters and magicians, as I shall evince. Now I dare leave it to the judgment of any godly prudent person, not addicted to parties and names of men, who is at all acquainted with the importance of the Hebrew vowels and accents, unto the right understanding of the Scripture, with what influence their present fixation hath into the literal sense we embrace, whether we need not very

<sup>e</sup> Fundament. nonum apud Maimon. præfat. ad Perek. Chelek. p. 175. Edit. Poc.

<sup>f</sup> Shobet. Jehuda, p. 40.

clear evidence and testimony, yea, undeniable and unquestionable, to cast the rise and spring of them upon the invention of this sort of men.

Of all the fables that are in the Talmud, I know none more incredible than this story; that men, who cannot by any story or other record, be made to appear, that they ever were in *rerum natura*; such men, as we have described, obscure, unobserved, not taken notice of by any learned man, Jew or Christian, should in a time of deep ignorance in the place where they lived, amongst a people wholly addicted to monstrous fables, themselves blinded under the curse of God, find out so great, so excellent a work, of such unspeakable usefulness, not once advising with the men of their own profession and religion, who then flourished in great abundance at Babylon, and the places adjacent, and impose it on all the world (that receive the Scriptures) and have every tittle of their work received, without any opposition or question, from any person or persons, of any principle whatever; yea, so as to have their invention made the constant rule of all following expositions, comments, and interpretations: *credat Apella*.

To draw then to the close of this discourse; I must crave liberty to profess, that if I could be thoroughly convinced, that the present Hebrew punctuation were the figment and invention of these men, I should labour to the utmost to have it utterly taken away out of the Bible, nor should (in its present station) make use of it any more. What use such an invention might be of, under catholic rules, in a way of grammar, I shall not dispute; but to have it placed in the Bible, as so great a part of the word of God, is not tolerable. But blessed be God, things are not as yet come to that pass. I shall only add, that, whereas some of the most eminently learned and exercised persons in all the learning and antiquity of the Jews, that these latter ages have produced, have appeared in the confutation of this fancy of the invention of the points by some post-talmudical Massorites, I am sorry their respect to the Rabbins, hath kept them from the management of this consideration, which is to me of so great importance.

To what I have spoken, I shall add the words of learned Dr. Lightfoot, in his late *Centuria Chorograph*. which came

to my hands since the finishing of this discourse ; cap. 81. p. 146. ‘Sunt qui punctata Biblia credunt a sapientibus Tiberiensibus ;’ (he means Elias only, for other Jews of this opinion there are none) ‘Ego impudentiam Judæorum, qui fabulam invenerunt non miror : Christianorum credulitatem miror, qui applaudunt. Recognosce (quæso) nomina Tiberiensium, a sita illic primum academia ad eam expirantem : et quidnam tandem invenies, nisi genus hominum, præ Pharisaismo insaniens, traditionibus fascinans et fascinatum, cœcum, vafrum, delirum ; ignoscant, si dicam magicum, et monstrosum ? ad opus tam divinum homines quam ineptos, quam stolidos ! Perlege Talmud Hierosolymitanum, et nota qualiter illic se habeant R. Juda, R. Chamnath, Z. Judan, R. Hoshaiia, R. Chaija Rubba, R. Chaija Bar Ba, R. Jochanan, reliquique inter Tiberienses grandissimi doctores, quam serio nihil agunt, quam pueriliter seria, quanta in ipsorum disputationibus vafrities, spuma, venenum, fumus, nihil : et si punctata fuisse Biblia in istiusmodi schola potes credere, crede et omnia Talmudica. Opus spiritus sancti sapit punctatio Bibliorum, non opus hominum perditorum, excæcatorum, amentium.’ In the words of this learned person there is the sum of what I am pleading for. Saith he, ‘I do not admire the Jews’ impudence, who found out that fable ; I admire Christians’ credulity who applaud it. Recount, I pray, the names of the Tiberians from the first foundation of a university there to the expiring thereof, and what do you find, but a sort of men being mad with (or above) the Pharisees, bewitching and bewitched with traditions, blind, crafty, raging ; pardon me if I say magical and monstrous ? what fools, what sots, as to such a divine work ? Read over the Talmud of Jerusalem, consider how R. Juda, R. Chanina, R. Chaija Bar Ba, R. Jochanan, R. Jonathan, and the rest of the great doctors among the Tiberians, do behave themselves ; how seriously they do of nothing ; how childish they are in serious things ; how much deceitfulness, froth, venom, smoke, nothing, in their disputations : and if you can believe the points of the Bible, to proceed from such a school, believe also their Talmuds ; the pointing of the Bible savours of the work of the Holy Spirit, not of wicked, blind, and mad men.’

The Jews generally believe these points to have been from mount Sinai, and so downward by Moses and the pro-

phets; at least from Ezra, and his companions, the men of the great synagogue, not denying that the use and knowledge of them received a great reviving by the Gemarists, and Massorites, when they had been much disused; so Rabbi Azarias at large; *Jmre Binah*. cap. 59.

Had it been otherwise, surely men stupendously superstitious in inquiring after the traditions of their fathers would have found some footsteps of their rise and progress. It is true, there is not only the opinion, but there are the arguments of one of them to the contrary, namely Elias Levita; this Elias lived in Germany about the beginning of the reformation, and was the most learned grammarian of the Jews in that age. Sundry of the first reformers had acquaintance with him; the task not only of reforming religion, but also of restoring good literature being incumbent on them, they made use of such assistances as were to be obtained then to that purpose. This man (which Thuanus<sup>g</sup> takes notice of) lived with Paulus Fagius, and assisted him in his noble promotion of the Hebrew tongue. Hence happily it is that some of those worthies, unwarily embraced his novel opinion, being either overborne with his authority, or not having leisure to search farther after the truth. That the testimony of this one Elias should be able to outweigh the constant attestation of all other learned Jews to the contrary, as Capellus affirms and pleads, and is insinuated in our prolegomena,<sup>h</sup> is fond to imagine; and the premises of that learned man fight against his own conclusion. ‘It is known,’ saith he, ‘that the Jews are prone to insist on every thing that makes for the honour of their people and language, and therefore, their testimony to the divine original of the present punctuation, being in their own case, is not to be admitted. Only Elias, who in this speaks against the common interest of his people, is presumed to speak upon conviction of truth.’ But the whole evidence in this cause is on the other side.

<sup>g</sup> Eodem fere tempore Palatinus abolita pontificia autoritate doctrinam Lutheri recepit, eaque de causa Paulum Fagium tabernis Rhenanis in Palatinatu natum Heidelbergam evocavit. Is sub Volfango Capitone perfectissimam linguæ sanctæ cognitionem adeptus, cum egestate premeretur, Petri Buseri viri locupletis Isnæ in qua ille docebat senatoris liberalitate sublevatus Heliam illum Judæorum doctissimum accersendum curavit, et instituta typographica officina, maximum ad solidam rerum Hebraicarum cognitionem momentum attulit. Thuanus Hist. lib. 2. ad An. 1564. 546.

<sup>h</sup> Proleg. 3. sect. 42.



Let us grant that all the Jews are zealous of the honour and reputation of their nation and language; as they are: let us grant that they greedily close with every thing, that may seem to have a tendency thereunto? what will be the issue, or natural inference from these premises? Why, as nothing could be spoken more honourably of the Jews, whilst they were the church and people of God, than that of Paul, that to them were committed the oracles of God, so nothing can be imagined or fixed on, more to their honour since their divorce from God, than that their doctors and masters should make such an addition to the Scripture, so generally acknowledged to be unspeakably useful. And to this purpose Elias, who was the father of this opinion, was far from making such deductions thence as some do now-a-days; namely, that it is lawful for us to change the vowels and accents at our pleasure; but ties all men as strictly to them as if they had been the work of Ezra; it is Elias then that speaks in his own case, whose testimony is, therefore, not to be admitted. What was done of old, and in the days of Ezra, is ours, who succeed into the privileges of that church; what hath been done since the destruction of the temple, is properly and peculiarly theirs.

It may perhaps be thought that by the account given of the Rabbins, their state and condition of old and of late, I might have weakened one great argument which learned men make use of, to confirm the sacred antiquity of the present Hebrew punctuation, taken from the universal consent and testimony of the Jewish doctors, ancient and modern, this one Elias excepted. Who can think such persons are in any thing to be believed. But, indeed, the case is quite otherwise. Though we account them wholly unmeet for the work that is ascribed unto them, and on supposition that it is theirs, affirm that it had need undergo another manner of trial, than as yet, out of reverence to its generally received antiquity, it hath met withal; yet they were men still, who were full well able to declare what, *de facto*, they found to be so, and what they found otherwise. It cannot, I think, be reasonably supposed, that so many men, living in so many several ages, at such vast distances from one another, who some of them, it may be, never heard of the names of other some of them, should conspire to cozen themselves, and all the world besides, in

a matter of fact not at all to their advantage. However, for my part, whatever can be proved against them, I shall willingly admit. But to be driven out of such a rich possession, as is the present Hebrew punctuation, upon mere surmises and conjectures, I cannot willingly give way or consent.

It is not my design to give in arguments for the divine original of the present Hebrew punctuation; neither do I judge it necessary for any one so to do, whilst the learned Buxtorfius's discourse, '*De origine et antiquitate punctorum,*' lies unanswered. I shall therefore only add one or two considerations, which to me are of weight, and not as I remember mentioned by him, or his father, in his *Tiberias*, or any other that I know of in their disputes to this purpose.

1. If the points, or vowels, and accents, be coævous with the rest of the letters, or have an original before all grammar of that language (as indeed languages are not made by grammar, but grammars are made by languages), then the grammar of it and them, must be collected from the observation of their use, as they were found in all their variety before any such art was invented or used; and rules must be suited thereunto; the drawing into rules, all the instances that being uniform would fall under such rules, and the distinct observation of anomalous words, either singly or in exceptions, comprehending many under one head that would not be so reduced, was the work of grammar. But on the other side, if the vowels and accents were invented by themselves, and added to the letters, then the rule and art of disposing, transposing, and changing of them, must be constituted and fixed before the disposition of them; for they were placed after the rules made, and according to them. A middle way that I know of, cannot be fixed on. Either they are of the original writing of the language, and have had rules made by their station therein, or they have been supplied unto it according to rules of art. Things are not thus come to pass by chance; nor was this world created by a casual concurrence of these atoms. Now if the grammar or art was the ground and foundation, not the product of their use, as I am confident I shall never see a tolerable answer given to that inquiry of Buxtorfius the elder in his *Tiberias*, why the inventors of them left so many words anomalous and pointed otherwise than according to rule, or the constant course of

the language, precisely reckoning them up when they had so done, and how often they are so used, as " and " for " and " for ַ and the like, when they might, if they had so pleased, have made them all regular, to their own great ease, advantage of their language, and facilitating the learning of it to all posterity, the thing they seem to have aimed at; so I cannot be satisfied why in that long operous and curious work of the Massorites, wherein they have reckoned up every word in the Scripture, and have observed the irregularity of every tittle and letter, that they never once attempt to give us out those catholic rules whereby they or their masters proceeded in affixing the points; or whence it came to pass, that no learned Jew for hundreds of years after, should be able to acquaint us with that way, but in all their grammatical instructions, should merely collect observations, and inculcate them a hundred times over, according as they present themselves to them by particular instances. Assuredly, had this wonderful art of pointing, which for the most part may be reduced to catholic rules, and might have wholly been so, if it were an arbitrary invention limited to no pre-existing writing, been found out first, and established as the *norma* and canon of affixing the vowels, some footsteps of it would have remained in the Massora, or among some of the Jews, who spent all their time and days in the consideration of it.

2. In the days of the Chaldee paraphrast, when the prophecies of the humiliation and death of their Messiah were only not understood by them, yet we see into how many several ways and senses they are wrested by that paraphrast to affix some tolerable meaning to them. Take an instance on Isaiah the liii. Jonathan there acknowledges the whole prophecy to be intended of Christ, as knowing it to be the common faith of the church; but not understanding the state of humiliation which the Messiah was to undergo, he wrests the words into all forms, to make that which is spoken passively of Christ, as to his suffering from others, to signify actively, as to his doing and exercising judgment upon others. But now more than five hundred years after, when these points are supposed to be invented, when the Rabbins were awake, and knew full well what use was made of those

places against them, as also that the prophets (especially Isaiah) are the most obscure part of the whole Scripture, as to the grammatical sense of their words in their coherence without points and accents, and how facile it were, to invert the whole sense of many periods by small alterations, in these rules of reading; yet as they are pointed, they make out incomparably more clearly the Christian faith, than any ancient translations of those places whatever. Johannes Isaac, a converted Jew, lib. 1. ad Lindan. tells us that above two hundred testimonies about Christ may be brought out of the original Hebrew, that appear not in the vulgar Latin, or any other translation. And Raymundus Martinus; ‘*no-verint quæ ejusmodi sunt*’ (that is, who blamed him for translating things immediately out of the Hebrew, not following the vulgar Latin) ‘*in plurimus valde sacræ Scripturæ locis veritatem multo planius atque perfectius pro fide Christiana haberi in litera Hebraica quam in translatione nostra:*’ *Pro-œm. ad pug. fid. sec. 14.* Let any man consider those two racks of the Rabbins, and swords of Judaical unbelief, Isa. liii. and Dan. ix. as they are now pointed and accented in our Bibles, and compare them with the translation of the LXX, and this will quickly appear unto him. Especially hath this been evidenced, since the Socinians<sup>1</sup> as well as the Jews, have driven the dispute about the satisfaction of Christ to the utmost scrutiny, and examination of every word in that fifty-third of Isaiah. But yet as the text stands now pointed and accented, neither Jews nor Socinians (notwithstanding the relief contributed to them by Grotius, wresting that whole blessed prophecy to make application of it unto Jeremiah, thinking therein to outdo the late or modern Jews; Abarbinel, and others, applying it to Josiah, the whole people of the Jews, Messiah Ben Joseph, and I know not whom) have been able, or ever shall be able to relieve themselves, from the sword of the truth therein. Were such exercitations on the word of God allowable, I could easily manifest, how by changing the distinctive accents and vowels, much darkness and perplexity might be cast on the contexture of that glorious prophecy. It is known also, that the Jews commonly plead, that one reason why they keep the copy of

<sup>1</sup> Faustus Socin. de Jesu Christo Servatore. Crellius Cont. Grot. pag. 62.

the law in their synagogues without points is, that the text may not be restrained to one certain sense; but that they may have liberty to draw out various, and as they speak more eminent, senses.

## CHAP. VI.

*Arguments for the novelty of the Hebrew points, proposed to consideration. The argument from the Samaritan letters considered and answered. Of the copy of the law preserved in the synagogues without points. The testimony of Elias Levita and Aben Ezra considered. Of the silence of the Mishna, Talmud, and Gemara, about the points. Of the Keri and Chethib. Of the number of the points. Of the ancient translations, Greek, Chuldee, Syriac. Of Hieromc. The new argument of Morinus, in this cause. The conclusion about the necessity of the points.*

BUT because this seems to be a matter of great importance, wherein the truth formerly pleaded for appears to be nearly concerned, I shall ὡς ἐν παρόδῳ very briefly consider the arguments that are usually insisted on (as in these prolegomena) to prove the points to be a novel invention; I mean of the men, and at the time, before mentioned. Particular instances I shall not insist upon; nor is it necessary I should so do; it hath been done already. The heads of arguments, which yet contain their strength, are capable of a brief dispatch; which shall be given them in the order wherein they are represented by the prolegomena; Proleg. 3. 38—40.

1. It is said then, that whereas the old Hebrew letters, were the present Samaritan, the Samaritan letters having been always without points as they yet continue, it is manifest that the invention of the points must be of a later date than the change of the letters, which was in the days of Ezra, and so consequently be the work of the post-talmudical Massorites. ‘Pergula Pictoris!’ This whole objection is made up of most uncertain conjectures. This is not a place to speak at large of the Samaritans, their Pentateuch and its translation. The original of that nation is known from the Scripture, as also their worship of God; 2 Kings xvii. Their solemn excommunication and casting out from any interest among the people of God, is also recorded, Ezra ix. Nehem. vi. xiii. Their continuance in their abominations after the closing of the canon of the Scripture is reported by Josephus, Antiq. lib. 11. c. 8. In the days of the Maccabees

they were conquered by Hyrcanus, and brought into subjection by the Jews; Joseph. Antiq. lib. 13. cap. 17. Yet their will-worship, upon the credit of the tradition of their fathers, continued to the days of our Saviour, and their hatred to the people of God; John iv. When, by whom, in what character, they first received the Pentateuch, is most uncertain; not likely by the priest sent to them; for notwithstanding his instructions they continued in open idolatry; which evidences that they had not so much as seen the book of the law. Probably this was done when they were conquered by Hyrcanus, and their temple razed after it had stood two hundred years. So also did the Edomites. What diligence they used in the preservation of it, being never committed to them by God, we shall see afterward. That there are any of them remaining at this day, or have been this thousand years past, is unknown. That the letters of their Pentateuch were the ancient Hebrew letters, as Eusebius, Jerome, and some of the Rabbins report, seems to me (on the best inquiry I have been able to make) a groundless tradition and mere fable. The evidences tendered for to prove it, are much too weak to bear the weight of such an assertion. Eusebius speaks only on report; *affirmatur*; it was so affirmed, on what ground he tells us not. Jerome indeed is more positive; but give me leave to say, that supposing this to be false, sufficient instances of the like mistakes may be given in him. For the testimony of the Talmud, I have often declared, that with me it is of no weight, unless seconded by very good evidence. And indeed the foundation of the whole story is very vain. The Jews are thought and said to have forgot their own characters in the captivity, and to have learned the Chaldean, upon the account whereof they adhered unto it after their return; when the same men were alive at the burning of one, and the building of the other temple; that the men of one and the same generation should forget the use of their own letters, which they had been exercised in, is incredible. Besides, they had their Bibles with them always, and that in their own character only; whether they had any one other book, or no, we know not: and whence then this forgetting of one character, and learning of another should arise, doth not appear. Nor shall I in such an improbable fiction lay much weight on testimonies,

the most ancient whereof is six hundred years later than the pretended matter of fact.

The most weighty proof in this case is taken from the ancient Judaical coins, taken up with Samaritan characters upon them. We are now in the high road of forgeries and fables: in nothing hath the world been more cheated. But be it granted that the pretended coins are truly ancient; must it needs follow, that because the letters were then known, and in use, that they only were so: that the Bible was written with them, and those now in use unknown. To salve the credit of the coins, I shall crave leave to answer this conjecture with another. The Samaritan letters are plainly preternatural (if I may so say), a studied invention; in their frame and figure fit to adorn, when extended or greatedened by way of engraving or embossing, any thing they shall be put upon, or cut in. Why may we not think they were invented for that purpose; namely, to engrave on vessels, and to stamp on coin, and so came to be of some use in writing also. Their shape and frame promises some such thing. And this is rendered the more probable from the practice of the Egyptians, who as Clement Alexan.<sup>a</sup> tells us, had three sorts of letters; one which he calls *ἐπιστολογραφικῆ*, with which they wrote things of common use; another termed by him *ιερογραφικῆ*, used by the priests in the sacred writings; and the other *ιερογλυφικῆ*, which also was of two sorts, simple and symbolical. Seeing then it was no unusual thing to have sundry sorts of letters for sundry purposes, it is not improbable that it was so also among the Jews: not that they wrote the sacred writings in a peculiar character, as it were to hide them, which is declaimed against, but only that the other character might be in use for some purposes which is not unusual: I cannot think the Greeks of old used only the *uncial* letters, which yet we know some did; though he did not, who wrote Homer's Iliad in no greater a volume, than would go into a nutshell.

But if that should be granted, that cannot be proved, namely, that such a change was made; yet this prejudices

<sup>a</sup> Αὐτίκα δὲ οἱ παρ' Αἰγυπτίους παιδευόμενοι, πρῶτον μὲν πάντων τὴν Αἰγυπτίαν γραμμάτων μέθοδον ἐκμανθάνουσι, τὴν ἐπιστολογραφικὴν καλουμένην· δευτέραν δὲ, ἱερατικὴν ἢ χρωάνται ἢ ἱερογραμματεῖς. ὑστάτην δὲ καὶ τελευταίαν, τὴν ἱερογλυφικὴν ἧς ἡ μὲν ἐστὶ διὰ τῶν πρῶτων στοιχείων Κυριολογικὴ· ἡ δὲ συμβολικὴ, τῆς δὲ συμβολικῆς ἡ μὲν κυριολογεῖται κατὰ μίμησιν· ἡ δὲ ὡσπερ προσωικῶς γράφεται, ἡ δὲ ἀντικρυς ἀλληγορεῖται κατὰ τινὰς αἰνιγμούς· ἥλιον γὰρ οὖν γράφει βουλόμενοι, κύκλον ποιοῦσι· σελήνην δὲ, σχῆμα μνηοειδές, κατὰ τὸ κυριολογούμενον εἶδος. Clement. Alex. stromat. lib. 5.

not them in the least, who affirm Ezra and the men of the great congregation to have been the authors of the points, seeing the authors of this rumour affixed that as the time wherein the old Hebrew letters were excommunicated out of the church, together with the Samaritans. Nay it casts a probability on the other hand, namely, that Ezra laying aside the old letters because of their difficulty, together with the new, introduced the points to facilitate their use. Nor can it be made to appear that the Samaritan letters had never any vowels affixed to them. Postellus affirms that the Samaritans had points in the days of Jerome, and that their loss of them is the cause of their present corrupt reading. ‘Punctis hodie quæ habebant Hieronimi temporibus carent: leguntque, sine punctis admodum depravatè.’ Postell. Alphab. 12. lingua. There were always some copies written without vowels, which might be preserved, and the other lost. That people (if we have any thing from them) being wicked, ignorant, sottish, superstitious, idolatrous, rejectors of the greatest part of the Scripture, corruptors of what they had received, might neglect the task of transcribing copies with points, because a matter of so great care and diligence to be performed aright. Nor is it improbable, whatever is pretended to the contrary, that continuing in their separation from the people of God, they might get the law written in a character of their own choosing, out of hatred to the Jews. Now let any man judge, whether from this heap of uncertainties any thing can arise with the face of a witness, to be admitted to give testimony in the cause in hand. He that will part with his possession on such easy terms, never found much benefit in it.

2. The constant practice of the Jews in preserving in their synagogues one book which they almost adore, written without points, is alleged to the same purpose; for what do they else hereby but tacitly acknowledge the points to have a human original. *Ans.* But it is certain they do not so acknowledge them, neither by that practice, nor by any other way; it being the constant opinion and persuasion of them all (Elias only excepted) that they are of a divine extract; and if their authority be to be urged, it is to be submitted unto in one thing, as well as in another. 1. The Jews give a threefold account of this practice. First, The



difficulty of transcribing copies without any failing, the least rendering the whole book, as to its use in their synagogues, profane. 2. The liberty they have thereby, to draw out various senses, more eminent as they say, indeed more vain and curious, than they have any advantage to do, when the reading is restrained to one certain sense by the vowels and accents. 3. To keep all learners in dependance on their teachers, seeing they cannot learn the mind of God, but by their exposition; Rab. Azarias, lib. Jmre Bina. cap. 59. If these reasons satisfy not any as to the ground of that practice, they may be pleased to inquire of them for others, who intend to be bound by their authority; that the points were invented by some late Massorites, they will not inform them. For Jesuitical stories out of China, they are with me for the most part of the like credit with those of the Jews in their Talmud; he that can believe all the miracles that they work, where men are not warned of their juggling, may credit them in other things. However, as I said, I do not understand this argument; the Jews keep a book in their synagogues without points, therefore the points and accents were invented by the Tiberian Massorites; when they never read it, or rather sing it, but according to every point and accent in ordinary use. Indeed, the whole profound mystery of this business seems to be this; that none be admitted to read or sing the law in their synagogues, until he be so perfect in it, as to be able to observe exactly all points and accents, in a book wherein there are none of them.

3. The testimony of Elias Levita, not only as to his own judgment, but also as to what he mentions from Aben Ezra and others, is insisted on. They affirm, saith he, that we have received the whole punctuation from the Tiberian Massorites. *Ans.* It is very true, that Elias was of that judgment; and it may well be supposed, that if that opinion had not fallen into his mind, the world had been little acquainted with it at this day. That by receiving of the punctuation from the Tiberians, the continuation of it in their school, not the invention of it, is intended by Aben Ezra, is beyond all exception evinced by Buxtorfius; *De Punct. Antiq.* p. 1. cap. 3. Nor can any thing be spoken more directly to the contrary of what is intended, than that which is urged in the prolegomena from Aben Ezra, comment. in *Exod.*

xxv. 31. where he affirms that he saw some books examined in all the letters, and the whole punctuation by the wise men of Tiberias; namely, to try whether it were done exactly, according to the patterns they had. Besides, all Elias's arguments are notably answered by Rabbi Azarias; whose answers are repeated by Joseph de Voisin in his most learned observations, on the Præmium of the Pugio fidei, pp. 91, 92. And the same Azarias shews the consistency of the various opinions that were among the Jews about the vowels, ascribing them, as to their virtue and force, to Moses, or God on mount Sinai; as to their figure and character to Ezra; as to the restoration of their use, unto the Massorites.

4. The silence of the Mishna Gemara, or whole Talmud, concerning the points is farther urged. This argument is also at large discussed by Buxtorfius, and the instances in it answered to the full: nor is it needful for any man to add any thing farther until what he hath discoursed to this purpose be removed. See part. 1. cap. 6. See also Glassius, lib. 1. tract. 1. de Text. Hebræi puritat. who gives instances to the contrary; yea, and the Talmud itself in Nedarim, or 'of vows,' chap. iv. on Nehem. viii. 8. doth plainly mention them: and treatises more ancient than the Talmud, cited by Rabbi Azarias in *Jmre Binah* expressly speak of them. It is to me a sufficient evidence, able to overbear the conjectures to the contrary, that the Talmudists both knew, and in their readings were regulated by, the points now in use, in that, as many learned men have observed, there is not one text of Scripture to be found cited in the Talmud, in any other sense, as to the literal reading and meaning of the words, than only that which it is restrained unto by the present punctuation: when it is known that the patrons of the opinion under consideration, yield this constantly as one reason of the seventy translators reading words and sentences otherwise than we read them now in our Bibles; namely, because the books they used were not pointed, whereby they were at liberty to conjecture at this or that sense of the word before them. This is one of the main pillars of Capellus's whole fabric in his *Critica Sacra*. And how it can be fancied there should be no variety between our present reading and the Talmudists, upon supposition they knew not the use of points, I know not. Is it possible, on this supposition, there should

be such a coincidence between their and our present punctuation; where, on the same principle, it seems, there are so many variations by the LXX and the Chaldee Paraphrast?

5. Of the קריובתיב which are pleaded, in the next place, to this purpose, I shall speak afterward. The difference in them is in the consonants, not in the vowels, which yet argues not that there were no vowels, when they were collected, or disposed as now we find them. Yea, that there were no vowels in the copies from whence they were collected (if they were so collected) may be true; but that that collection was made any later, for the main of it, than the days of Ezra, doth not appear. Now, whatever was done about the Scripture in the Judaical church, before the times of our Saviour, is manifest to have been done by divine authority, in that it is no where by him reprov'd: but rather the integrity of every word is by him confirmed. But of these things distinctly by themselves afterward we are to speak.

6. A sixth argument for the novelty of the points is taken from their number; for whereas it is said all kinds of sounds may be expressed by five vowels, we are in the present Hebrew punctuation supplied with fourteen or fifteen; which, as it is affirmed, manifests abundantly that they are not coævous or connatural to the language itself, but the arbitrary, artificial invention of men, who have not assigned a sufficient difference in their force and sound to distinguish them in pronunciation. But this objection seems of small importance. The ground of it is an apprehension, that we still retain exactly the true pronunciation of the Hebrew tongue, which is evidently false. It is now near two thousand years since that tongue was vulgarly spoken in its purity by any people or nation. To imagine that the true, exact, distinct pronunciation of every tittle and syllable in it, as it was used by them to whom it was vulgar and natural, is communicated unto us, or is attainable by us, is to dream pleasantly whilst we are awake. Aben Ezra makes it no small matter that men of old knew aright how to pronounce Camets Gadol. Saith he אנשי טבריא גם חבמי מצרים ואפריקא ידעום לקרוא הקמץ גדול 'The men of Tiberias, also the wise men of Egypt and Africa, knew how to read Camets Gadol. 2. Even the distinct force of one consonant, and that always radical *γ* is utterly lost, so that the present Jews know nothing of its pronuncia-

tion. 3. Nor can we distinguish now between  $\aleph$  and  $\beth$  between  $\aleph$  and  $\beth$ . Though the Jews tell us that the wise men of Tiberias could do so twelve hundred years ago; as also between  $\aleph$  and  $\beth$ ,  $\aleph$  and  $\beth$ ,  $\aleph$  and  $\beth$ . Nor is the distinct sound of  $\aleph$  so obvious unto us. The variety of consonants among many nations, and their ability to distinguish them in pronunciation, makes this of little consideration. The whole nation of the Germans distinguish not between the force and sound of T and D, whereas the Arabic Dal and Dhsal, Dad, Ta, and Da manifest how they can distinguish those sounds. Nor are the Jews  $\beth$   $\beth$   $\beth$   $\beth$  answered distinctly in any other language; to distinguish some of which good old Jerome had his teeth filed by the direction of his Nicodemus.<sup>a</sup> 6. The truth is, the Hebrews have but ten vowels, five long and five short, or five great and five less; Sheva is but a servant to all the rest; and its addition to Segol and Patha makes no new vowels. To distinguish between Camets Hataph and Hateph Camets there is no colour. Seven only of them, as Morinus hath manifested out of R. Jehuda Ching, one of the first grammarians among the Jews, namely,  $\aleph$   $\beth$   $\beth$  they called (of old) kings, or the chief rulers of all the motions of the letters. So that indeed they have not so many figures to distinguish sounds by, with all their vowels, as have the Greeks. Besides the seven vowels they have twelve diphthongs, and three of them, as to any peculiar sound, as mute as Sheva. It is true, Pliny<sup>b</sup> tells us that Simonides Melicus found out two of the vowels,  $\eta$  and  $\omega$ , as he did also two consonants,  $\zeta$  and  $\psi$ : but surely he did so, because he found them needful to answer the distinct sounds used in that language, or he had deserved little thanks for his invention. Speaking lately with a worthy learned friend, about a universal character, which hath been mentioned by many, attempted by divers, and by him<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Veni rursus Hierosolyman, et Bethlehem ubi labore pretii Bartemium Judæum nocturnum habui præceptorem timebat enim Judæos, et exhibebat se mihi alium Nicodemum. Hieron. Epist. ad Oceanum.

<sup>b</sup> Literas semper arbitror Assyrias fuisse, sed alii apud Egyptios à Mercurio, ut Gellius; alii apud Tyros repertas voluit: utique in Græciam intulisse è Phœnice Cadmum sexdecem numero, quibus Trojano bello adjecisse quatuor hac figurâ  $\xi$   $\zeta$   $\psi$   $\omega$ . Palimedes totidem, post eum Simonidem Melicum  $\zeta$   $\eta$   $\psi$   $\omega$ , quarum omnium vis in nostris cognoscitur; Plinius Nat. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 56. quæ quis in vita invenit.

<sup>c</sup> Dr. Wilkins, Ward. of Wad. Col.

brought to that perfection, as will doubtless yield much, if not universal, satisfaction unto learned and prudent men, when he shall be pleased to communicate his thoughts upon it to the world; we fell occasionally on the difference of apert sounds or vowels, which when I heard him with good reason affirm to be eight or nine, remembering this argument about the Hebrew points, I desired him to give his thoughts in a few words the next day, which he did accordingly; now because his discourse seems evidently to discover the vanity of this pretence, that the Hebrew vowels are an arbitrary invention from their number, I have here inserted it.

Apert sounds are either  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Simple. Vowels.} \\ \text{Double. Diphthongs.} \end{array} \right.$

1. Apert simple sounds are dis-  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Formally.} \\ \text{tinguishable. . . . .} \end{array} \right. \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Formally.} \\ \text{Accidentally.} \end{array} \right.$
1. The formal difference is that which doth constitute several letters, and must depend upon the various apertion, required to the making of them, together with the gravity or acuteness of the tone which is made by them. According to which, there are at least eight simple vowels, that are by us easily distinguishable; viz.
  1. E  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{magis acutum, as in he, me, she, ye, \&c.} \\ \text{minus acutum, as the English, the: the Latin,} \\ \text{me, te, se, \&c.} \end{array} \right.$
  3. I or Y, which are both to be accounted of one power and sound. Shi, di: thy, my:
  4. A  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{magis apertum. All, tall, gall, wall.} \\ \text{minus apertum. Ale, tale, gale, wale.} \end{array} \right.$
  6. O  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Rotundum, minus grave, as the English, go, so,} \\ \text{no: the Latin, do.} \\ \text{magis grave et pingue, as the English, do, to,} \\ \text{who.} \end{array} \right.$
  7. U, as in tu, use, us, &c.

So many apert simple sounds there are evidently distinguishable, I would be loath to say that there neither are, nor can be any more; for who knows, how many other minute differences of apertion and gravity, may be now used, or hereafter found out by others, which practice and custom, may make as easy to them as these are to us.

2. But besides this formal difference, they are some of them accidentally distinguishable from one another, with

reference to the quantity of time required to their prolation, whereby the same vowel becomes sometimes  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Long} \\ \text{Short} \end{array} \right.$

So E min. acute.  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Long} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{mete, steme.} \\ \text{met, stem.} \end{array} \right. \\ \text{Short} \end{array} \right.$

I  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{L. Alive, give, drive, title, thine.} \\ \text{S. Live, give, driven,} \text{---} \text{---} \text{---} \text{ie, tittle, thin.} \end{array} \right.$

A, min. Apert. A  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{L. Bate, hate, cate, same, dame---ae} \\ \text{S. Bat, hat, cat, sam, dam.} \end{array} \right.$

O Ro-  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{L. One, none, note, \&c.---oe vel oa.} \\ \text{tund.} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{S. One (non Lat.) not.} \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right.$

U  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{L. Use, tune, pule, acute.---ue} \\ \text{S. Us, tun, pull, cut.} \end{array} \right.$

The other remaining vowels, viz. E magis acut. A magis apert. et O magis grave, do not change their quantities but are always long.

2. Diphthongs are made of the complexion of two vowels in one syllable, where the sounds of both are heard. These are,

1. Ei, ey.—Hei, Lat. They.
2. Ea. Eat, meat, seat, teat, yea, plea.
3. Eu, ew. Few, dew. Heu, Lat.
4. Ai, ay. Aid, said, pay, day.
5. Au, aw. Audience, author, law, draw.
6. Oi, oy. Point, soil, boy, toy.
7. Ou, ow. Rout, stout, how, now.
8. Ui, uy. Bui, juice.
9. Eo. Yeoman, people.

How other diphthongs (which have been used) may be significant for the expression of long vowels, see noted above.  $\left\{ \right.$

There is then very little weight to be ventured upon the strength of this objection.

Proleg. 8. 46. 7. It is farther pleaded, that the ancient translations, the Greek, the Chaldee, and the Syriac, do manifest, that at the time of their composing the points were not invented; and that because in sundry places it is evident that they read otherwise, or the words with other points (I mean as to the force and sound, not figure of them) than those now affixed. For this purpose, very many instances are given us out of the LXX, especially by Capellus: Grotius also takes the same course. But neither is the objec-

tion of any force to turn the scale in the matter under consideration. Somewhat will, in the close of this discourse, be spoken of those translations. The differences that may be observed in them, especially the former, would as well prove that they had other consonants, that is, that the copies they used had other letters and words than ours, as other vowels. Yea, if we must suppose where they differ from our present reading, they had other and better copies, it is most certain that we must grant ours to be very corrupt. 'Hoc Ithacus vellet;' nor can this inference be avoided, as shall, God willing, be farther manifested if occasion be administered. The truth is, the present copies that we have of the LXX do in many places so vary from the original, that it is beyond all conjecture what should occasion it. I wish some would try their skill upon some part of Job, the Psalms, and the Prophets, to see if, by all their inquiries of extracting various lections, they can find out how they read in their books, if they rendered as they read; and we enjoy what they rendered. Simeon de Muys tells us a very pretty story of himself to this purpose; *Assert. Heb. Vind. sect. 1.* As also, how ridiculous he was in his attempt. But I shall recall that desire; the Scripture indeed is not so to be dealt withal; we have had too much of that work already. The Rabbinical אל תקרא is not to be compared with some of our critics, Temura and Notaricon. Of the Chaldee paraphrase I shall speak afterward. It seems not to be of the antiquity pretended. It is not mentioned by Josephus, nor Origen, nor Hierome; but this will not impeach its antiquity. But whereas, it is most certain, that it was in high esteem and reverence among all the Jews before the time assigned for the punctuation of the points, it seems strange that they should in disposing of them, differ from it voluntarily in so many places.

Besides, though these translators or any of them, might use copies without vowels, as it is confessed that always some such there were, as still there are, yet it doth not follow at all that therefore the points were not found out nor in use. But more of this when we come to speak distinctly of these translations.

8. Of the same importance is that which is in the last place insisted on, from the silence of Hierome and others of

the ancients, as to the use of the points among the Hebrews. But Hierome saw not all things, not the Chaldee paraphrase, which our authors suppose to have been extant at least four hundred years before him; so it cannot be made evident, that he mentioned all that he saw. To speak expressly of the vowels he had no occasion, there was then no controversy about them. Nor were they then distinctly known by the names whereby they are now called. The whole current of his translation argues that he had the Bible as now pointed. Yea, learned men have manifested by instances that seem of irrefragable evidence, that he had the use of them. Or, it may be, he could not obtain a pointed copy, but was instructed by his Jew in the right pronounciation of words. Copies were then scarce, and the Jews full of envy: all these things are uncertain. See Munster. Prefat. ad Bib. The truth is, either I cannot understand his words, or he doth positively affirm that the Hebrew had the use of vowels; in his epistle to Evagrius, Epist. 126: ‘Nec refert utrum Salem an Salim nominetur, cum vocalibus in medio litteris perraro utantur Hebræi;’ if they did it *perraro*, they did it; and then they had them; though in those days to keep up their credit in teaching, they did not much use them; nor can this be spoken of the sound of the vowels, but of their figures, for surely they did not seldom use the sounds of vowels, if they spake often. And many other testimonies from him may be produced to the same purpose.

Morinus in his late ‘Opuscula Hebræa Samaritica,’ in his digression against the Hebrew points and accents, the first part, page 209, brings in a new argument to prove that the *puncta vocalia* were invented by the Jewish grammarians, however the distinction of sections might be before. This he attempts out of a discourse of Aben Ezra concerning the successive means of the preservation of the Scripture: first, by the men of the great synagogue, then by the Massorites, then by the grammarians. As he assigns all these their several works, so to the grammarians the skill of knowing the progresses of the holy tongue, the generation of the kingly points and of Sheva, as he is by him there cited at large. After he labours to prove by sundry instances, that the *puncta vocalia* are by him called *reges*, and not the accents, as is now the use. And in the *addenda* to his book pre-



fixed to it, he triumphs upon a discovery that the vowels are so called by Rabbi Jehuda Chiug, the most ancient of the Jewish grammarians. The business is now it seems quite finished; and he cries out, 'Oculis aliorum non egemus amplius, ἀνόπται nunc sumus.' A sacrifice is doubtless due to this drag of Morinus. But *quid dignum tanto*.

1. The place insisted on by him out of Aben Ezra, was some years before produced, weighed, and explained by Buxtorf, out of his **לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ** **מֵאַנְיָ** or the standard of the holy tongue; De punct. Orig. part. 1. page 13, 14. cap. 3. and it is not unlikely, from Morinus, his preface to his consideration of that place, that he fixed on it some years ago, that he learned it from Buxtorfius, by the provision that he lays in against such thoughts; for what is it to the reader when Morinus made his observations; the manner of the men of that society in other things gives sufficient grounds for this suspicion. And Simeon de Muys intimates, that he had dealt before with the Father as he now deals with the Son; Censur. in Exercit. 4. cap. 7. pag. 17. himself with great and rare ingenuity acknowledging what he received of him. Ass. Text. Heb. ver. cap. 5. 'Dicesve me hæc omnia mutuatum a Buxtorfio? quidni vero mutuor, si necesse erit.' But what is the great discovery here made? That the *puncta vocalia* are some of them called *reges*; the accents have now got that appellation, some of them are *reges*, and some *ministri*: so that the present state of things, in reference to vowels and accents, is but novel. 2. That the grammarians invented these *regia puncta*, as Aben Ezra says.

But I pray what cause of triumph or boasting is in all this goodly discovery? was it ever denied by any, that the casting of the names of the vowels and accents, with the titles, was the work of the grammarians; was it not long since observed by many, that the five long vowels with  $\bar{\text{~}}$  and  $\acute{\text{~}}$  were called of old, *reges*? And that the distinction of the vowels into long and short was an invention of the Christians rather than Jewish grammarians; the Jews calling them, some absolutely *reges*, some great and small, some *matres et filias*. But then, saith he, the grammarians were the inventors of these points; why so? Aben Ezra refers this unto the work of the grammarians, to know the progresses of the holy tongue, the generation of those kings, &c. but can any

thing be more evident against his design than his own testimony! It was the work of the grammarians to know these things, therefore not to invent them; did they invent the radical and servile letters? Surely they also then invented the tongue; for it consists of letters radical and servile, of points and accents; and yet this is also ascribed to them by Aben Ezra. But it is well that Morinus hath at length lighted upon R. Jehuda Chiug: his opinion before was collected out of Kimchi, Ephodius, Muscatus, and others. But what says he now himself; for aught appears by what we have quoted by Morinus, he is like to prove a notable witness of the antiquity of the points. It may be well supposed that Morinus writing on set purpose against their antiquity would produce that testimony which in his whole author was most to his purpose; and yet he fixes on one, wherein this ancient grammarian, who lived about the years of Christ 1150 or 1200, gives us an account of the points with their names, without the least intimation of any thing to the impeachment of their divine original; so also the same Aben Ezra on Psal. ix. 7. tells us of one Adonim Ben-lafrad, who long before this R. Jehuda, found ם for ן in an ancient copy. And, therefore, when Morinus comes to make the conclusion of his argument, discovering it seems himself the folly of the pretence, that the points were invented by the grammarians, the last sort of men mentioned by Aben Ezra, he says, 'Procul omni dubio est, et luce meridiana clarius Aben Ezram sensisse omnium vocalium punctationem a Massorithis Tiberiensibus, et grammaticis, qui hos sequuti sunt Originem ducere.' But of these Massorites there is not one word in the premises, nor is any such thing assigned unto them by Aben Ezra; but quite another employment, of making a hedge about the law by their observations on all the words of it; and had he dreamed of their inventing the points, he would sure enough have assigned that work to them; and for the grammarians, his own testimony lies full to the contrary.

And these are the heads of the arguments insisted on by Capellus and others, and by these prolegomena, to prove the Hebrew punctuation to be an invention of the Jews of Tiberias five hundred years or more after the incarnation of Christ. 'Brevis Cantilena, sed longum Epiphonema.' As

I have not here designed to answer them at large, with the various instances produced to give countenance unto them (nor is it needful for any so to do, until the answer already given to them be removed), so by the specimen given of their nature and kind, the sober and pious reader may easily judge whether there be any force in them, to evert the persuasion opposed by them; grounded on the catholic tradition and consent of the Jews, the uncontradicted reception of them absolutely, without the least opposition all the world over, by Jews and Christians, the very nature of the punctuation itself following the genius of the language, not arising or flowing from any artificial rules, the impossibility of assigning any author to it since the days of Ezra, but only by such loose conjectures and imaginations as ought not to be admitted to any plea and place in this weighty cause; all attended with that great uncertainty, which without their owning of these points to be of divine original, we shall be left unto, in all translations and expositions of the Scripture. It is true, whilst the Hebrew language was the vulgar tongue of the nation, and was spoken by every one uniformly every where, it had been possible, that upon a supposition that there were no points, men, without infallible guidance and direction, might possibly affix notes and figures, which might, with some exactness, answer the common pronunciation of the language, and so consequently exhibit the true and proper sense and meaning of the words themselves. But when there had been an interruption of a thousand years in the vulgar use of the language, it being preserved pure only in one book, to suppose that the true and exact pronunciation of every letter, tittle, and syllable, was preserved alive by oral tradition, not written any where, not commonly spoken by any, is to build towns and castles of imaginations, which may be as easily cast down as they are erected. Yet unless this be supposed (which with no colour of reason can be supposed, which is yet so by Capellus and the learned author of the prolegomena), it must be granted, that the great rule of all present translations, expositions, and comments, that have been made in the church of God for some hundreds of years, is the arbitrary invention of some few Jews, living in an obscure corner of the world, under the curse of God, in their unbelief and blindness. The only relief in the prole-

gomena, against this amazing inference, is, as was said, that the Massorites affixed not the present punctuation arbitrarily (so also Capellus), but according to the tradition they had received. What weight is to be laid upon such a tradition for near a thousand years (above, according to Morinus), is easily to be imagined. Nor let men please themselves with the pretended facility of learning the Hebrew language without points and accents, and not only the language, but the true and proper reading and distinction of it in the Bible. Let the points and accents be wholly removed, and all apprehensions of the sense arising by the restraint and distinction of the words as now pointed; and then turn in the drove of the learned critics of this age upon the naked consonants, and we shall quickly see what woful work, yea havoc of sacred truth, will be made amongst them. Were they shut up in several cells, I should scarcely expect the harmony and agreement amongst them, which is fabulously reported to have been in the like case among the LXX. The Jews say, and that truly, איש את לשונו על הקהאה בלצרי לא ירימו 'no man can lift up his tongue to read without punctuation.' And, 'si rationi in his et similibus dominium concedamus, toti mutabuntur libri, in literis, vocibus, et sententiis, et sic res ipsa quoque mutabitur;' lib. Cosri. 1. par. 3. p. 28. And thus have I, with all possible brevity, vindicated the position formerly insisted on, from this grand exception, which might be justly feared from the principles laid down in the prolegomena.

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## CHAP. VII.

*Of the קרי וכתבי Their nature and original. The difference is in the consonants. Morinus's vain charge on Arias Montanus. The senses of both consistent. Of the great congregation. The spring and rise of these various readings. The judgment of the Prolegomena about them; their order twice over in the Appendix. The rise assigned to them considered. Of Capellus, his opinion, and the danger of it.*

WE are not as yet come to a close. There is another thing agitated in these prolegomena, and represented in the appendix, that may seem to derogate from the universality of

my assertion, concerning the entire preservation of the original copies of the Scripture. The קרי וכתוב or the *scriptio* and *lectio*, or *scriptum* and *lectum*, is that which I intend. The general nature of these things is known to all them that have looked into the Bible. One word is placed in the line, and another in the margin; the word in the line having not the points or vowels affixed to it that are its own, but those that belong to the word in the margin; of this sort, there are in the Bible eight hundred and forty, or thereabouts; for some of the late editions, by mistake or oversight, do differ in the precise number. All men that have wrote any considerations on the Hebrew text, have spoken of their nature in general; so hath the author of these prolegomena. As to our present concernment, namely, to manifest that from them no argument can arise to the corruption of the original, the ensuing observation concerning them may suffice.

1. All the difference in these words is in the consonants, not at all in the vowels. The word in the margin owns the vowels in the line as proper to it; and the vowels in the line seem to be placed to the word whereunto they do not belong, because there is no other meet place for them in the line where they are to be continued, as belonging to the integrity of the Scripture.

Morinus, to manifest his rage against the Hebrew text, takes from hence occasion to quarrel with Arias Montanus, and to accuse him of ignorance and false dealing; *De Heb. Text. sincer. Excer. 1. cap. 4. p. 40.*

The pretence of his quarrel he makes to be, that Arias affirms the greatest part of these various lections to consist in some differences of the points; for which purpose, he cites his words out of his preface to his collection of various lections. 'Maxima in his lectionibus varietatis pars in hujusmodi punctorum discrepantia consistit, ut toto hujus Mazoreth sive variarum lectionum volumine demonstratur.' Whereunto he subjoins, 'Mira assertio ne una quidem in punctis sita est. Catalogum plurimorum ipse ad finem præfationis adtexuit. Et varietates omnes sunt in literis, nulla in punctis. Confidentius scribo omnium variarum lectionum quas Judæi appellant קרי וכתוב Keri et Ketib de quibus agit Arias nulla prorsus ad puncta pertinet. Iterum confidentius, &c.' Would not any man think but that the man had made

here some great discovery, both as to the nature of the קרי וכתב, as also to the ignorance of Arias, whom he goes on to reproach as a person unacquainted with the Massora, and with the various lections of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, of the east and western Jews, at the end of the Venetian Bibles; which Bibles he chiefly used in the printing of his own. And yet, on the other hand, men acquainted with the ability and great deserving of Arias, will be hardly persuaded, that he was so blind and ignorant, as to affirm the greatest part of the variety he spoke of, consisted in the changing of vowels, and immediately to give instances, wherein all he mentions consists in the change of consonants only. But what if all this should prove the ignorance and prejudice of Morinus? First, to his redoubled assertion about the difference of the Keri and Ketib in the consonants only, wherein he speaks as though he were blessing the world with a new and strange discovery, it is a thing known ‘lippis et tonsoribus,’ and hath been so since the days of Elias Levita; what then intended Arias Montanus to affirm the contrary; ‘hic nigri succus loliginis, hæc est ærugo mera;’ he speaks not at all of the קרי וכתב, but merely of the anomalous pointing of words, in a various way from the genius of the tongue, as they are observed and reckoned up in the Massora: of other varieties he speaks afterward; giving a particular account of the Keri Uketib, which, whether he esteemed various lections or no, I know not. ‘Non si te capuis æques.’ But all are ignorant who are not of the mind of an aspiring Jesuit.

That the difference in the sense, taking in the whole context, is upon the matter very little, or none at all; at least, each word, both that in the line, and that in the margin, yield a sense agreeable to the analogy of faith.

Of all the varieties that are found of this kind, that of two words, the same in sound, but of most distinct significations, seems of the greatest importance; namely לֹא and לוֹ fourteen or fifteen times, where לֹא ‘not,’ is in the text; the margin notes לוֹ ‘to him,’ or ‘his,’ to be read. But yet, though these seem contrary one to the other, yet wherever this falls out, a sense agreeable to the analogy of faith ariseth fairly from either word. As, to give one or two instances: Psal. c. 3. חוּא עֲשֵׂנוּ וְלֹא אֲנַחְנוּ ‘he hath made us, and not we ourselves.’ The Keri in the margin is וְלוֹ ‘his,’ giving this sense; ‘he hath

made us, and his we are;’ the verb substantive being included in the pronoun. So Isa. lxiii. 9. **בְּכָל עֲרָתָם לֹא צָר** ‘in all their afflictions or straits, no straitness;’ so the **כְּתִיב** the **קָרִי** ‘לוֹ קָרִי’ ‘straitness or affliction was to him,’ or ‘he was straitened or afflicted.’ In the first way, God signifieth that when they were in their outward straits, yet he was not straitened from their relief; in the other, that he had compassion for them, was afflicted with them, which, upon the matter, is the same; and the like may be shewed of the rest.

I confess, I am not able fully to satisfy myself in the original and spring of all this variety, being not willing merely to depend on the testimony of the Jews, much less on the conjectures of late innovators. To the uttermost length of my view, to give a full account of this thing is a matter of no small difficulty. Their venerable antiquity and unquestionable reception by all translators, gives them sanctuary from being cast down from the place they hold by any man’s bare conjecture. That which, to me, is of the greatest importance, is, that they appear most of them to have been in the Bibles, then, when the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, during which time we find them not blamed for adding or altering one word or tittle. Hence the Chaldee Paraphrast often follows the **קָרִי** **זֶה** which never was in the line, whatever some boastingly conjecture to the contrary: and sometimes the **כְּתִיב** **זֶה**. That which seems to me most probable is, that they were<sup>1</sup> collected, for the most part of them, by that **אֲנֹשֵׁי כְנֶסֶת גְּדוּלָה** ‘the men of the great congregation.’ Some, indeed, I find of late (I hope not out of a design to bring all things to a farther confusion about the original), to question whether ever there were any such thing as the great congregation. Morinus calls it a Judaical figment. Our prolegomena question it. Prol. 8. sect. 22. But this is only to question, whether Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua, Zachariah, Haggai, and the rest of the leaders of the people in their return from the captivity, did set a Sanhedrim, according to the institution of God, and labour to reform the church and all the corruptions that were crept either into the word or worship of God. I see not how this can reasonably be called into question, if we had not to confirm it the catholic tradition of Jews and Christians. Neither is it

called the great congregation from its number, but eminency of persons. Now on this supposition it may be granted, that the קרי on the books of these men themselves, Ezra and the rest, were collected by the succeeding churches; unless we shall suppose with Ainsworth, that the word was so received from God, as to make both necessary. And if we know not the true cause of its being so given, we have nothing to blame but our own ignorance, this not being the only case wherein we have reason so to do. Our last translation generally rendereth the word in the margin, noting also the word in the line where there is any considerable difference. Those who have leisure for such a work, may observe what choice is used in this case by old and modern translators. And, if they had not believed them to have had an authoritative original beyond the impeachment of any man in these days, they could not fairly and honestly have used both line and margin, as they have done.

What says now our prolegomena, with the appendix unto these things.

1. We have them in the appendix, represented unto us in their own order, according as they are found in the books of the Scriptures; and then over again, in the order and under the heads that they are drawn and driven unto by Capellus; a task that learned man took upon himself, that he might, in the performance of it, give some countenance to his opinion, that they are, for the most part, critical emendations of the text, made by some late Massorites, that came no man knows whence; that live, no man knows where, nor when. Thus, whereas these Keri Uketib have the only face and appearance upon the matter, of various lections upon the Old Testament (for the Jews' collections of the various readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, of the oriental and occidental Jews, are of no value, nor ever had place in their Bible, and may be rejected), the unwary viewer of the appendix is presented with a great bulk of them, their whole army being mustered twice over in this service.

But this inconvenience may be easily amended, nor am I concerned in it. Wherefore, thirdly, for the rise of them it is said, that some of them are the amendments of the Massorites or Rabbins; others, various lections out of divers



copies. That they are all, or the most part of them, critical amendments of the Rabbins is not allowed; for which latter part of his determination we thank the learned author; and take leave to say that in the former we are not satisfied; Prol. 8. 23—25. the arguments that are produced to prove them not to have been from Ezra, but the most part from post-talmudical Rabbins, are capable of a very easy solution, which also another occasion may discover; at present I am gone already too far beyond my intention, so that I cannot allow myself any farther digression.

To answer briefly. Ezra and his companions might be the collectors of all those in the Bible but their own books; and those in their own books might be added by the succeeding church. The oriental and occidental Jews, differ about other things as well as the Keri and Ketib. The rule of the Jews, that the Keri is always to be followed, is novel; and therefore the old translators might read either, or both, as they saw cause. There was no occasion at all why these things should be mentioned by Josephus, Philo, Origen: Hierome says, indeed, on Isa. xlix. 5. that Aquila rendered that word, 'to him,' which is written with ל and א, not ל and ו. But he makes it not appear that Aquila read not as he translated, that is, by the קרי. And for what is urged of the Chaldee and LXX, making use of the Keri and Ketib, it is not intended that they knew the difference under these names, but that these differences were in their days. That the word now in the margin was in the line until the days of the pretended Massorites, is not to be said nakedly but proved, if such a novel fancy expect any credit in the world. That the Judaical Rabbins have made some alterations in the text of their own accord, at least, placed words in the margin, as to their consonants, supplying their vowels in the line where they ought not to have place; that there were various lections in the copies after the Talmud, which have been gathered by some obscure Jews, no mention being made of those collections in the Massora, or any of their grammarians, is the sum of the discourse under consideration. When all this, or any part of it, is proved by testimony, or evident reason, we shall farther attend unto it.

In the mean time I cannot but rejoice, that Capellus's fancy about these things, than which I know nothing more

pernicious to the truth of God, is rejected. If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and amendments of the Jews, what security have we of the mind of God, as truly represented unto us, seeing that it is supposed also, that some of the words in the margin were sometimes in the line; and if it be supposed, as it is, that there are innumerable other places of the like nature, standing in need of such amendments, what a door would be opened to curious pragmatistical wits, to overturn all the certainty of the truth of the Scripture, every one may see. Give once this liberty to the audacious curiosity of men, priding themselves in their critical abilities, and we shall quickly find out what woful state and condition the truth of the Scripture will be brought unto. If the Jews have made such amendments and corrections of the text, and that to so good purpose, and if so much work of the like kind yet remain, can any man possibly better employ himself, than, with his uttermost diligence, to put his hand to this plough. But he that pulleth down a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.

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## CHAP. VIII.

*Of gathering various lections by the help of translations. The proper use and benefit of translations. Their new pretended use. The state of the originals on this new pretence. Of the remedy tendered to the relief of that state. No copies of old differing in the least from those we now enjoy, from the testimony of our Saviour. No testimony, new or old, to that purpose. Requisites unto good translations. Of the translations in the Biblia Polyglotta. Of the Arabic. Of the Syriac. Of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Of the Chaldee paraphrase. Of the vulgar Latin. Of the Seventy. Of the translation of the New Testament. Of the Persian. Of the Ethiopian. The value of these translations as to the work in hand. Of the supposition of gross corruption in the originals. Of various lections out of Grotius. Of the Appendix in general.*

BECAUSE it is the judgment of some, that yet other objections may be raised against the thesis pleaded for, from what is affirmed in the prolegomena about gathering various lections by the help of translations, and the instances of that good work given us in the appendix, I shall close this discourse with the consideration of that pretence.

The great and signal use of various translations, which hitherto we have esteemed them for, was the help afforded by them in expositions of the Scripture. To have represented unto us in one view the several apprehensions and judgments of so many worthy and learned men, as were the authors of these translations, upon the original words of the Scripture, is a signal help and advantage unto men inquiring into the mind and will of God in his word. That translations were of any other use formerly, was not apprehended. They are of late presented unto us under another notion: namely, as means and helps of correcting the original, and finding out the corruptions that are in our present copies, shewing that the copies which their authors used, did really differ from those which we now enjoy and use. For this rare invention we are, as for the former, chiefly beholden to the learned and most diligent Capellus, who is followed, as in sundry instances himself declares, by the no less learned Grotius. To this purpose the scene is thus laid: it is supposed of old there were sundry copies of the Old Testament differing in many things, words, sentences, from those we now enjoy. Out of these copies, some of the ancient translations have been made. In their translations they express the sense and meaning of the copies they made use of. Hence, by considering what they deliver, where they differ from our present copies, we may find out (that is, learned men who are expert at conjectures may do so) how they read in theirs. Thus may we come to a farther discovery of the various corruptions that are crept into the Hebrew text, and by the help of those translations amend them. Thus Capellus. The learned author of our prolegomena handles this business, Prol. 6. I do not remember that he expressly any where affirms that they had other copies than those we now enjoy; but, whereas (besides the Keri and Ketib, the various readings of Ben Asher, and Ben Naphtali, of the east and western Jews), there are, through the neglect, oscitancy, and frailty of the transcribers, many things befallen the text, not such failings as happening in one copy, may be easily rectified by others, which are not to be regarded as various lections, nor such as may be collected out of any ancient copies, but faults, or mistakes, in all the copies we enjoy, or have ever been known, by the help and use of translations,

conjecturing how they read in their books, either with other words or letters, consonants or points, we may collect various lections, as out of the original. What this opinion upon the matter differeth from that of Capellus I see not; for the difference between our copies and those of old, are by him assigned to no other original; nor doth Capellus say that the Jews have voluntarily corrupted the text; but only that alterations are befallen it by the means and ways recounted in the prolegomena. To make this evident by instances, we have a great number of such various lections gathered by Grotius in the appendix. The truth is, how that volume should come under that name, at first view I much wondered. The greatest part of it gives us no various lections of the Hebrew text as is pretended; but various interpretations of others from the Hebrew. But the prolegomena salve that seeming difficulty. The particulars assigned as various lections, are not differing readings collected out of any copies extant, or ever known to have been extant, but critical conjectures of his own for the amendment of the text, or at most conjectures upon the reading of the words by translators, especially the LXX and vulgar Latin.

Let us now consider our disease intimated, and the remedy prescribed; together with the improbability of the one, and the unsuitableness of the other, as to the removal of it, being once supposed. The distemper pretended is dreadful, and such, as it may well prove mortal to the sacred truth of the Scripture. The sum of it, as was declared before, is, that there were of old sundry copies extant, differing in many things from those we now enjoy, according to which the ancient translations were made; whence it is come to pass, that in so many places they differ from our present Bibles, even all that are extant in the world; so Capellus; or that there are corruptions befallen the text (varieties from the *αὐτόγραφα*) that may be found by the help of translations, as our prolegomena.

Now, whereas the first translation that ever was, as is pretended, is that of the LXX, and that of all others, excepting only those which have been translated out of it, doth most vary and differ from our Bible, as may be made good by some thousands of instances, we cannot but be exceedingly uncertain in finding out wherein those copies,

which, as it is said, were used by them, did differ from ours, or wherein ours are corrupted; but are left unto endless uncertain conjectures. What sense others may have of this distemper I know not; for my own part, I am solicitous for the ark; or the sacred truth of the original; and that because I am fully persuaded that the remedy and relief of this evil, provided in the translations, is unfitted to the cure, yea, fitted to increase the disease. Some other course then must be taken. And seeing the remedy is notoriously insufficient to effect the cure, let us try whether the whole distemper be not a mere fancy, and so do what in us lieth to prevent that horrible and outrageous violence, which will undoubtedly be offered to the sacred Hebrew verity, if every learned moun-  
tebank may be allowed to practise upon it, with his conjectures from translations.

It is well known, that the translation of the LXX, if it have the original pretended, and which alone makes it considerable, was made and finished three hundred years, or near thereabout, before the incarnation of our Saviour; it was in that time and season wherein the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, whilst that church and people were the only people of God, accepted with him, designed by him keepers of his word, for the use of the whole church of Christ to come, as the great and blessed foundation of truth. A time when there was an authentic copy of the whole Scripture, as the rule of all others, kept in the temple; now can it be once imagined, that there should be at that time such notorious varieties in the copies of the Scripture, through the negligence of that church, and yet afterward neither our Saviour nor his apostles take the least notice of it; yea, doth not our Saviour himself affirm of the word that then was among the Jews, that not ἴωτα ἕν or μία κεφαλαία of it should pass away or perish, where let not the points, but the consonants themselves with their apices, be intended or alluded unto in that expression; yet of that word, which was translated by the LXX, according to this hypothesis, and which assuredly they then had if ever, not only letters and tittles, but words, and that many, are concluded to be lost. But that no Jew believes the figment we are in the consideration of, I could say, ‘credat Apella.’

2. Waving the consideration of our refuge in these cases,

namely, the good providence and care of God in the preservation of his word, let the authors of this insinuation prove the assertion ; namely, that there was ever in the world any other copy of the Bible, differing in any one word from those that we now enjoy ; let them produce one testimony, one author of credit, Jew or Christian, that can, or doth, or ever did, speak one word to this purpose. Let them direct us to any relic, any monument, any kind of remembrance of them, and not put us off with weak conjectures upon the signification of one or two words, and it shall be of weight with us ? Is it meet, that a matter of so huge importance, called into question by none but themselves, should be cast and determined by their conjectures ? do they think that men will part with the possession of truth upon so easy terms ? that they will be cast from their inheritance by divination ? But they will say, is it not evident that the old translators did make use of other copies, in that we see how they have translated many words and places, so as it was not possible they should have done, had they rendered our copy according to what we now read : but will, indeed, this be pleaded ? May it not be extended to all places, as well as to any ? and may not men plead so for every variation made by the LXX from the original ; they had other copies than any now are extant. Better all old translations should be consumed out of the earth, than such a figment should be admitted. That there are innumerable other reasons to be assigned of the variations from the original, as the translators' own inadvertency, negligence, ignorance (for the wisest see not all), desire to expound and clear the sense, and, as it was likely, of altering and varying many things from the original, with the innumerable corruptions and interpolations that have befallen that translation, indifferently well witnessed unto by the various lections exhibited in the appendix, it were easy to manifest ; seeing then, that neither the care of God over his truth, nor the fidelity of the Judaical church, whilst the oracles of God were committed thereunto, will permit us to entertain the least suspicion, that there was ever in the world any copy of the Bible differing in the least from that which we enjoy, or that those we have are corrupted, as is pretended ; and seeing that the authors of that insinuation, cannot produce the least testimony to make it good μένωμεν

ὡσπερ ἐσμὲν' through the mercy and goodness of God, in the entire unquestionable possession of his oracles once committed to the Jews, and the faith therein once committed to the saints.

But now, to suppose that such indeed hath been the condition of the holy Bible in its originals, as is pretended; let us consider whether any relief in this case be to be expected from the translations, exhibited unto us with much pains, care, and diligence, in these Biblia Polyglotta and so at once determine that question, whether this be any part of the use of translations, be they never so ancient; namely, to correct the originals by leaving farther discussion of sundry things, in and about them, to other exercitations.

1. That all, or any translation, may be esteemed useful for this purpose, I suppose without any contention it will be granted. (1.) That we be certain concerning them, that they are translated out of the originals themselves, and not out of the interpretations of them that went before them; for if that appear, all their authority, as to the business inquired after, falls to the ground, or is at best resolved into that former, whence they are taken, if they are at agreement therewith; otherwise they are a thing of naught: and this one consideration will be found to lay hold of one moiety of these translations.

(2.) That they be of venerable antiquity, so as to be made when there were other copies of the original in the world besides that which we now enjoy.

(3.) That they be known to be made by men of ability and integrity, sound in the faith, and conscientiously careful not to add or detract from the originals they made the translation out of. If all these things, at least, concur not in a translation, it is most undeniably evident that it can be of no use, as to assist in the finding out what corruptions have befallen our copies, and what is the true lection of any place about which any differences do arise. Let us then, as without any prejudice in ourselves, so without (I hope) any offence to others, very briefly consider the state and condition of the translations given us in the Biblia Polyglotta, as to the qualifications laid down.

Let us then take a view of some of the chiefest of them without observing any order; seeing there is no more reason for

that which is laid down in this appendix, than for any other that may be fixed on. I shall begin with the Arabic, for the honour I bear to the renownedly learned publisher of it, and the various lections of the several copies thereof; and the rather, because he hath dealt herein with his wonted candour, giving in a clear and learned account of the original and nature of that translation, which I had, for the substance of it, received from him in a discourse before, wherein also he gave me a satisfactory account concerning some other translations, which I shall not need now to mention; though I shall only say, his judgment in such things is to be esteemed at least equal with any now alive.

1. Then he tells us, upon the matter, that this translation is a cento, made up of many ill-suited pieces, there being no translation in that language extant: I speak of the Old Testament. 2. For the antiquity of the most ancient part of it was made about the year 4700 of the Jews' account, that is, of Christ 950. 3. It was, as to the Pentateuch, translated by R. Saadiah Haggaon. 4. That it is interpreted and changed, in sundry things, by some other person. 5. That he who made these changes, seemed to have so done that he might the better thereby δουλέειν ὑποθέσει, as to some particular opinion of his own, whereof sundry instances are given. 6. That he seems to have been a Mahometan, or at least much to have favoured them, as appears from other evidences, so from the inscription of his work with that solemn motto, taken out of the Alcoran, 'In nomine Dei miseratoris, misericordis.' 6. It may be thought, also, that some other, a Jew, or a Samaritan, had his hand in corrupting the last translation. 7. Who thought to stamp a divine authority upon his particular opinions. 8. That the foundation of this translation, now printed, being that of Saadiah, it is observable that he professeth, that he did both add and detract according as he thought meet, that so he might set out the hidden (cabalistical) understanding of the Scripture. 9. That the other Arabic translations that are extant, are out of the LXX, either immediately, or by the Syriac, which was translated out of it: on these, and the like heads, doth that oracle of the eastern learning, who hath not only (as some) learned the words of some of those languages, but searched with great diligence and judgment into the nature



of the learning extant in them, and the importance of the books we have, discourse in that preface. It is the way of Sciolists, when they have obtained a little skill in any language or science, to persuade the world that all worth and wisdom lies therein: men thoroughly learned, and whose learning is regulated by a sound judgment, know that the true use of their abilities consists in the true suiting of men to a clear acquaintance with truth. In that kind, not only in this particular are we beholden to this worthy learned person. I suppose there will not need much arguing to prove, that this translation, though exceeding useful in its own place and kind, yet is not in the least a fit remedy to relieve us against any pretended corruption in the original, or to gather various lections different from our present copy by. Well may it exercise the ability of learned men, to consider wherein, and how often, it goes off from the rule of faith; but rule in itself, and upon its own account, coming short of all the necessary qualifications laid down before, it is none.

Should I now go to gather instances of the failings of this translation, open and gross, and so proceed with the rest, I think I might make a volume near as big as that of various lections, now afforded us: but I have another manner of account to give of my hours then so to spend them.

Whether the Syriac translation be any fitter for this use, any one, who shall be pleased to consider and weigh it, will easily discover. It seems indeed to have been made out of the original, at least for some part of it; or that the translation of the LXX hath been in many things changed since this was made, which I rather suppose; but when, where, or by whom, it doth not appear; nor doth it in many things seem to have any respect at all unto the Hebrew. The note at the close of the Prophets, I suppose to proceed rather from the scribe of that individual copy, than the translator; but that the reader may see what hands it hath passed through, he may take it as it is rendered by the learned author of the annotations on that translation; ‘Explicit Malachias sive libri 12 Prophetarum, quorum oratio perpetuo nobis adsit, Amen; precibusque ipsorum, precibusque omnium sanctorum, sodalium ipsorum præsertim virginis, quæ Deum peperit, omnium sanctorum matris quæ pro genere Adami in-

tercedit, propitius sit Deus lectori et Scriptori peccatori, et omnibus sive verbo sive opere, ipsis participantibus ;' but this good conclusion is, as I suppose, from the scribe, the usual negligence of whom in his work is frequently taxed in the collection of various readings, as pag. 8. *et alibi*.

Now, though I confess this translation to be very useful in many things, and to follow the original for the most part, yet being made, as yet I know neither when nor by whom, in sundry places evidently following another corrupt translation, having passed through the hands of men ignorant and suspicious, against whose frauds and folly, by the reason of the paucity of copies, we have no relief, I question whether it may be esteemed of any great use of importance, as to the end inquired after.

Of the Samaritan Pentateuch, both original and translation, we shall not need to add much ; what the people from whom it hath its denomination were, is known ; nor have the inquiries of Scaliger, or Morinus, added any thing to what is vulgarly known of them from the Scripture and Josephus : in a word, an idolatrous, superstitious, wicked people they were, before they were subdued by Hyrcanus ; afterward they continued in the separation from the true church of God ; and, upon the testimony of our Saviour, had not salvation among them. When they received their Pentateuch is uncertain ; uncertain also how long they kept it ; that they corrupted it, whilst they had it, is not uncertain ; they are charged to have done so by the Jews in the Talmud, and the instance they give abides to this day ; Deut. xi. 30. They have added Sichem to the text, to give countenance to their abominations. And openly, in Deut. xxvii. 4. where God gives a command that an altar should be set up on mount Ebal, they have wickedly and nefariously corrupted the text, and put in Gerizim. Now, one such voluntary corruption, made on set purpose to countenance a sin, and false worship, is enough to lay low the authority of any copy whatever. The copy here printed was brought out of the east from Damascus not long since. It appears to have been two hundred and thirty years old, saith Morinus in the account of it, ' Opusc. Samar. pæfat : ad Translat. Samarat.' As I said before, that any Samaritans do as yet remain is uncertain ; some few Jews there are that walk in that way, here and there

a few families. Now that this Pentateuch, which was never as such committed to the church of God, that had its rise no man knows by whom, and that hath been preserved no man knows how, known by few, used by none of the ancient Christians, that hath been voluntarily corrupted by men of corrupt minds to countenance them in their folly, should be of any authority upon its own single account to any end or purpose, especially to vie with the Hebrew text, men that have not some design that they publicly own not, will scarce contend. The places instanced in by Morinus<sup>a</sup> to prove its integrity above the Hebrew copy, as to the solution of difficulties by it, in Gen. xi. 29. 31. Exod. xii. 40. do evidently prove it corrupt; any man that will consider them will find the alterations purposely made to avoid the difficulties in those places, which is one common evidence of corruption, in Gen. xi. 31. sixty years are cut off from the life of Terah, to make the chronology agree; and that of Exod. xii. the dwelling of the children of Israel and their fathers, when they dwelt in the land of Canaan, and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years, is a plain comment or exposition on the text, nor would Jerome, who had this copy, make any use of it, in these difficulties. Might I go over the rest of Morinus's instances whereby he seeks to credit his Samaritan copy, which we have in these Biblia Polyglotta, I could manifest that there is scarce one of them, but yields a clear argument of corruption in it, upon some of the best grounds that we have to judge of the sincerity or corruption of any copy; and if this Pentateuch had been of any credit of old, it would not have been omitted, yea, as it seems utterly rejected as a thing of nought, by Origen in his diligent collection of the original and versions.

But we are in a way and business, wherein all things are carried to and fro by conjectures; and it were no hard task to manifest the utter uncertainty of what is fixed on as the original of this Pentateuch, by the author of the prolegomena, or to reinforce those conjectures which he opposeth; but that is not my present work; nor do I know that ever it will be so. But I must for the present say, that I could have been glad, that he had refrained the close of his discourse; Sect. 2. wherein from the occasional mention of the Sama-

<sup>a</sup> Morin. cap. 1. Exercit. 4.

ritan liturgy, and the pretended antiquity of it, he falls not without some bitterness of spirit on those who have laid aside the English service book; it were not (in the judgment of some) imprudently done, to reserve a triumph over the sectaries, to some more considerable victory, than any is to be hoped from the example of the Samaritans: were they all barbers, and porters, and alehouse-keepers, yet they might easily discern, that the example and precedent of a wicked people, forsaken of God, and forsaking of him, to whom the promise of the Spirit of supplications, was never made, nor he bestowed upon them, is not cogent unto the people of Christ under the New Testament; who have the promise made good unto them. And much more unto the same purpose will some of them be found to say, when men of wisdom and learning, who are able to instruct them, shall condescend personally so to do. But I shall forbear, what might farther be spoken.

The Chaldee paraphrase is *a cento* also. The Targum of Jonathan is ancient, so also is that of Onkelos; they are supposed to have been made before or about the time of our Saviour. Some of the Jews would have Jonathan to have lived not long after Ezra. Others, that he was the chief disciple of Hillel, about a hundred years before Christ's incarnation; some are otherwise minded, and will not own it to be much older than the Talmud: but as yet I see no grounds sufficient to overthrow the received opinion. The other parts of the Scripture were paraphrased at several times, some above five hundred years after our Saviour, and are full of Talmudical fancies, if not fables; as that on the Canticles. That all these Targums are of excellent use is confessed, and we are beholden to the Biblia Polyglotta for representing them in so handsome an order and place, that with great facility they may be compared with the original. But as to the end under consideration, how little advantage is from hence to be obtained, these few ensuing observations will evince. 1. It was never the aim of those paraphrasts to render the original text exactly *verbum de verbo*; but to represent the sense of the text, according as it appeared to their judgment; hence it is impossible to give any true account how they read in any place, wherein they dissent from our present copies, since their endeavour was to give

us the sense as they thought, rather than the bare and naked importance of the words themselves; hence Elias saith of them *וְהִנֵּה הַמְתַּרְגְּמוֹם לֹא שָׁמְרוּ לְפַעְמוֹם דְּרֵךְ הַדִּקְרוֹק* 'behold the Targumists observed not sometimes the way of grammar.' 2. It is evident, that all the Targums agreed to give us often mystical senses, especially the latter, and so were necessitated to go off from the letter of the text. 3. It is evident that they have often made additions of whole sentences to the Scripture, even the best of them, from their own apprehensions or corrupt traditions, whereof there is not one tittle or syllable in the Scripture, nor ever was. 4. What careful hands it hath passed through, the bulky collection of various lections given in this appendix doth abundantly manifest; and seeing it hath not lain under any peculiar care and merciful providence of God, whether innumerable other faults and errors, not to be discovered by any variety of copies, as it is happened with the Septuagint, may not be got into it, who can tell. Of these and the like things we shall have a fuller account when the *Babylonia* of Buxtorf the father (promised somewhat since by the son to be published; *Vindic. veritat. Heb.* p. 2. chap. 10. pag. 337. and as we are informed by the learned annotator on this paraphrase, in his preface in the appendix, lately sent to the publishers of this Bible), shall be put out; so that we have not as yet arrived at the remedy provided for the supposed distemper.

Of the vulgar Latin, its uncertain original, its corruptions, and barbarisms, its abuse, so much hath been spoken, and by so many already, that it were to no purpose to repeat it over again: for my part I esteem it much the best in the whole collection exhibited unto us, excepting the interlinary of Arias; but not to be compared to sundry modern translations, and very unfit to yield the relief sought after.

The LXX is that which must bear the weight of the whole. And good reason it is indeed, that it should answer for the most of the rest; they being evidently taken out of it, and so they are oftentimes worse, yet they are now better than that is. But here again all things are exceedingly uncertain, nothing almost is manifest concerning it, but that it is wofully corrupt; its rise is uncertain; some call the

whole story of that translation into question, as though there had never been any such persons in *rerum natura*, the circumstances that are reported about them, and their works, are certainly fabulous; that they should be sent for upon the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, who was dead before, that they should be put into seventy-two cells or private chambers; that there should be twelve of each tribe, fit for that work, are all of them incredible. See Scal. ad Euseb. fol. 123. Wouwer Syntag. cap. 11.

Some of the Jews say that they made the translation out of a corrupt Chaldee paraphrase, and to me this seems not unlikely. Josephus, Austin, Philo, Hierome, Zonaras, affirm that they translated the law or Pentateuch only; Josephus affirms this expressly, οὐδὲ γὰρ (saith he) πᾶσαν ἐκεῖνος εἰσῆλαβεῖν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, ἀλλ' αὐτὰ μόνου τὰ τοῦ νομοῦ παρέδοσαν οἱ πεμφθέντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξήγησιν. Proem. ad Antiquit. and this is a received opinion: whence we have the rest is unknown. Take to this purpose the ensuing chapter out of Drusius, Observat. lib. 6. chap. 9.

‘Vulgatam translationem Græcam non esse LXX interpretum, contra, quam olim existimatum fuit.

‘Translatio ea quæ vulgo apud Græcos habetur, quin LXX interpretum non sit, nemini hodie dubium esse arbitror nam si nihil aliud, innumeri in ea loci sunt, qui arguunt magnam imperitiam sermonis Ebraici; sed et negligentiam singularem in legendo, et oscitantiam tantis viris indignam qui in ea editione non videt, nihil videt; et si Eusebius, Hieronymus passim in monumentis suis eam septuaginta interpretibus attribuere videtur. Nos quoque cum aliquid inde proferimus usitato magis quam vero nomine utimur, exemplo videlicet Hieronymi, quem suspicamur, licet crederet interpretationem eam a viris illis elaboratam minime fuisse, ne offenderet Græcos voluisse tamen recepto nomine semper appellare. Certe quin dubitaverit super iisdem authoribus, nihil dubitamus, nam vel hoc nos in ea opinione confirmat, quod scribit Josephum, omnemque adeo scholam Judæorum quinque tantum libros Mosis a septuaginta interpretibus translatos esse asserere, scribit autem hoc non semel, sed sæpius, ut Ezech. 5. pag. 343. et pag. 301. et 372. et Mich. 2. pag. 150. Libris Antwerpiaë vulgatis. Drus. observat. lib. 6. cap. 9.’

Let it be granted that such a translation was made, and that of the whole Bible, by some Alexandrian Jews, as is most probable; yet it is certain, that the *Αὐτόγραφον* of it, if left in the library of Alexandria, was consumed to ashes in Cæsar's wars; though Chrysostome tells us, that the prophets were placed in the temple of Serapis, *μέχρι νῦν ἐκεῖ τῶν προφητῶν αἱ ἐρμηνευθεῖσαι βίβλοι μενουσιν*: ad Judæos: 'and they abide there,' saith he, 'unto this day;' how unlikely this is, any man may guess, by what Hierome, who made another manner of inquiry after those things, than Chrysostome, affirms concerning the incurable various copies of that translation wanting an umpire of their differences. We know also what little exactness men in those days, before the use of grammar, attained in the knowledge of languages, in their relation to one another; and some learned men do much question, even the skill of those interpreters, so Munster. *Præfat. ad Biblia*; 'Videbat Hieronymus vir pius et doctus, Latinos vera et genuina legis atque prophetarum destitutos lectione, nam LXX interpretum editio, quæ tunc ubique locorum receptissima erat apud Græcos et Latinos nedum perperam plerique in locis versa fuit, verum per Scriptores atque scribas plurimum corrupta, id quod et hodie facile patet conferenti editionem illam juxta Hebraicam, veritatem, ut interim fatear illos non admodum peritos fuisse linguæ Hebraicæ id vel quod inviti cogimur fateri, alioquin in plurimis locis non tam fœde lapsi fuissent.'

If moreover the ability be granted, what security have we of their principles and honesty. Cardinal Ximenius, in his preface to the edition of the Complutensian Bibles, tells us (that which is most true, if the translation we have be theirs), that on sundry accounts, they took liberty in translating according to their own mind; and thence concludes, 'unde translatio septuaginta duum, quandoque est superflua quandoque diminuta;' 'it is sometimes superfluous, sometimes wanting;' but suppose all these uncertainties might be overlooked, yet the intolerable corruptions, that (as it is on all hands confessed) have crept into the translation, makes it altogether useless as to the end we are inquiring after; this Hierome in his epistle to Chromat. at large declares, and shews from thence the necessity of a new translation. Yea, Bellarmine himself says, that though he believes the translation of the

Septuagint to be still extant, yet it is so corrupt and vitiated that it plainly appears to be another; lib. 2. de Verbo Dei, cap. 6.

He that shall read and consider what Hierome hath written of this translation, even then when he was excusing himself, and condescended to the utmost to wave the envy that was coming on him, upon his new translation, in the second book of his Apology against Ruffinus; cap. 8, 9. repeating and mollifying what he had spoken of it in another place, will be enabled in some measure to guess of what account it ought to be with us. In brief he tells us, it is corrupt, interpolated; mingled by Origen with that of Theodotion, marked with asterisks and obelisks; that there were so many copies of it, and they so varying, that no man knew what to follow; tells us of a learned man who, on that account, interpreted all the errors he could light on for Scripture; that in the book of Job, take away what was added to it by Origen, or is marked by him, and little will be left; his discourse is too long to transcribe; see also his Epistle to Chromatius at large to this purpose. Let the reader also consult the learned Masius, in his preface to his most learned comment on Joshua.

For the translations of the New Testament, that are here afforded us, little need be spoken; of the antiquity, usefulness, and means of bringing the Syriac into Europe, an account hath been given by many, and we willingly acquiesce in it: the Ethiopian and Persian are novel things, of little use or value; yea, I suppose it may safely be said, they are the worst and most corrupt that are extant in the world; the Persian was not translated out of the Greek, as is confessed by the learned annotator upon it: 'Præsens locus satis arguit, Persam Græcum codicem haud consuluisse;' in Luc. 10. et 41. Yea, in how many things he goes off from the Greek, Syriac, Arabic, yea goes directly contrary to the truth, is both acknowledged by its publisher, and is manifest from the thing itself; I know no use of it, but only to shew that such a useless thing is in the world.

Nor is the Ethiopian one whit better; a novel endeavour of an illiterate person: he tells us that John when he wrote the Revelation, was archbishop of Constantia, or Constantinople, &c. It is to no purpose to go over the like



observations, that might be made on these translations; if any man hath a mind to be led out of the way, he may do well to attend unto them. Whether some of them be in use now in the world I know not, I am sure it is well if they be not; had I not seen them, I could not have imagined any had been so bad: would I make it my business to give instances of the mistakes, ignorance, falsifications, errors, and corruptions of these translators, whoever they were (Jews or Christians, for I am not without some ground of thinking that Jews have had their hands in them for money), my discourse, as I said before, would swell into a volume, and unless necessitated, I shall avoid it.

From what hath been spoken, it may abundantly appear, that if there are indeed such corruptions, mistakes, and errors, crept into the original, as some have pretended, there is no relief in the least provided for the security of truth, by any of the translations exhibited unto us, in these late editions of the Bible; themselves being of an uncertain original, corrupt, and indeed of no authority from themselves, but merely from their relation to that whose credit is called in question; for my own part, as I said before, I allow them the proper use and place; and am thankful to them by whose care and pains we are made partakers of them; but to endeavour by them to correct the Scripture, to gather various lections out of the original, as say others, for my part I abhor the thoughts of it, let others do as seems good unto them. And if ever I be necessitated to speak in particular of these translations, there are yet in readiness farther discoveries to be made of them.

There remains only, as to my purpose in hand, that some brief account be taken of what is yet farther insinuated, of the liberty to observe various lections in the Bible upon supposition of gross corruptions that may be crept into it; as also of the specimen of various lections gathered out of Grotius's annotations, and somewhat of the whole bulk of them, as presented unto us in the appendix.

For the corruptions supposed, I could heartily wish that learned men would abstain from such insinuations unless they are able to give them some pretence by instances; it is not spoken of this or that copy, which by the error of the scribes or printers may have important mistakes found in it.

There is no need of men's critical abilities to rectify such mistakes, other copies are at hand for their relief. It is of the text without such suppositions, that this insinuation is made; now to cast scruples into the minds of men, about the integrity and sincerity of that, without sufficient ground or warrant, is surely not allowable. It is not good to deal so with men or their writings, much less with the word of God. Should any man write that in case of such a man's theft, or murder, who is a man of unspotted reputation, it were good to take such or such a course with him, and publish it to the world, would their stirring of such rumours be looked on as an honest, Christian, and candid course of proceeding? And is it safe to deal so with the Scripture? I speak of Protestants; for Papists, who are grown bold in the opposition to the originals of the Scripture, I must needs say that I look upon them as effectually managing a design of Satan to draw men into atheism. Nor in particular do I account of Morinus's exertations one whit better. It is readily acknowledged, that there are many difficult places in the Scripture, especially in the historical books of the Old Testament. Some of them have by some been looked at as *ἀλυτα*. The industry of learned men of old, and of late Jews and Christians, have been well exercised in the interpretation and reconciliation of them: by one, or other, a fair and probable account is given of them all. Where we cannot reach the utmost depth of truth, it hath been thought meet, that poor worms should captivate their understandings to the truth and authority of God in his word. If there be this liberty once given that they may be looked on as corruptions, and amended at the pleasure of men, how we shall be able to stay before we come to the bottom of questioning the whole Scripture, I know not. That then which yet we insist upon, is, that according to all rules of equal procedure, men are to prove such corruptions, before they entertain us with their provision of means for remedy.

For the specimen of various lections gathered out of Grotius's annotations, I shall not much concern myself therein; they are nothing less than various lections of that learned man's own observations: set aside; 1. The various lections of the LXX, and vulgar Latin of Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion, wherein we are not concerned. 2. The Keri and Ketib, which we have oftentimes over and over in this

volume. 3. The various readings of the oriental and occidental Jews which we have also elsewhere. 4. Conjectures how the LXX, or vulgar Latin read, by altering letters only. 5. Conjectures of his own how the text may be mended, and a very little room will take up what remains; by that cursory view I have taken of them, I see not one word that can pretend to be a various lection; unless it belong to the Keri and Ketib, or the difference between the oriental and the occidental Jews: so that, as I said before, as to my present design I am not at all concerned in that collection; those that are may farther consider it.

As short an account will seem for the general consideration of the whole bulky collection of various lections that we have here presented unto us; for those of the several translations we are not at all concerned in them: where any or all of them fail, or are corrupted, we have a rule, blessed be God, preserved to rectify them by. For those of the originals I have spoken to them in particular; I shall only add, that we have some of them both from the Old and New Testament given us thrice over at least, many of the Keri and Ketib, after a double service done by them, are given us again the third time by Grotius, so also are those of the New Testament by the same Grotius, and Lucas Brugensis.