

Of the Divine Original Authority

John Owen



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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A masterful **Puritan defense of Scripture's authority** as rooted entirely in its **divine origin** rather than church tradition or human testimony. Owen argues that the Bible is **self-authenticating**—carrying within itself the evidences of its heavenly source—and that the **Holy Spirit** confirms its truth to believers' consciences. The second part vigorously defends the **integrity of the original Hebrew and Greek texts** against claims of corruption, contending that God's providence has preserved his Word whole and uncorrupted. A foundational work of **Reformed bibliology** that remains deeply relevant for understanding Scripture's unique claims upon the human conscience.



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TITLE PAGE



On the Divine Origin, AUTHORITY, Self-Evidencing LIGHT, and POWER of the SCRIPTURES. **With an Answer to the Question,** How Do We Know the Scriptures to Be the Word of God?

Also A Defense of the Purity and Integrity of the **HEBREW** and **GREEK** Texts of the **Old** and **New Testament**; with Some Thoughts on the PROLEGOMENA and **Appendix** to the Recent BIBLIA POLYGLOTTA. To which are added some discussions about the Nature and Perfection of Scripture, the Right of Interpretation, Internal Light, Revelation, and so forth.

By JOHN OWEN: Doctor of Divinity.

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TO MY REVEREND AND WORTHY
FRIENDS, THE PREBENDS OF CHRIST
CHURCH COLLEGE IN OXFORD, WITH
ALL THE STUDENTS IN DIVINITY IN
THAT SOCIETY



The reason I am dedicating the following defense of the authority, purity, and perfection of Scripture against various objections raised in our day to **you**, is that some of you value and study the Scripture as much as anyone I know, and it is my heartfelt desire that all of you would do the same. Two topics present themselves for me to address in this preface: on one hand, a recommendation of Scripture and an encouragement to study it, and on the other, an exposure of the attacks against it and the various methods people use to undermine its authority and excellence. Since the first of these is already being accomplished almost daily by one person or another, I will focus only on the second, which also better reveals my purpose in the discussions that follow. In doing so, I may seem to go beyond what is appropriate for a preface to such brief writings. Yet I know I will still be more brief than such a weighty subject truly demands. Therefore, I will now turn directly to the **subject** before me.

Many people, past and present, have set themselves against the unique excellence of Scripture -- driven by Satan's cunning and the prejudice of their own hearts, controlled by corrupt and self-serving interests. The different kinds of such people are too many to examine one by one. I will only survey them in general, pausing along the way for specific examples that illustrate the points being made.

The first group to be called to account -- whose corruption others have merely parceled out among themselves -- is the synagogue of **Rome**. These people claim to be the only guardians and preservers of God's Word in the world, the only **ground and pillar of truth**. Let us then first consider how they have carried out this trust. It is only fair that people be held to their own standards. Those who claim to hold a trust yet show a treacherous spirit would be no better even if the trust were genuinely theirs.

What then have these men done with their supposed trust? What has that **Synagogue** left untried? What has it left unfinished that would prove its unfaithfulness? This group claims Scripture was entrusted to it alone and would, if it could, strip everyone else of either their Bible or their lives. But what Scripture was this, and when was this trust supposedly given to them? They tell us it was the oracles of God committed to the **Jews** under the Old Testament, along with all the writings of the New, and that this happened from the first founding of the Church by **Peter** onward until the entire canon was complete. What have they not done -- adding, subtracting, corrupting, forging, and slandering those Scriptures -- to betray their supposed trust? They add books never inspired by the Holy Ghost, which are far from being divinely breathed. In doing so, they deny the self-evidencing power

of God's true Word by mixing it with writings of merely human origin, proving that they have lost the spirit of discernment promised to remain with the true Church of God forever along with His Word. Isaiah 59:21. They have taken away from Scripture's fullness, perfection, sufficiency, and excellence through their **Masora**, their **oral law** or unwritten tradition -- their unknown, endless, bottomless, boundless treasury of traditions that serves as a cover for all their abominations. As for the Scripture itself, which they claim was entrusted to them, they argue -- to their everlasting shame -- that in its **Original Languages** it is corrupted, damaged, and altered, so that it is no longer a reliable rule to guide us in knowing God's will. They say the Jews did this while the Church was busy burning Christians. Therefore, in place of the Originals, they have enthroned a translation that was never committed to them -- one that entered the world in a way they cannot explain: they do not know how, when, or by whom it was made. So that one writer says of its author, **Si quis percontetur Gallus fuerit an Sarmata, Judaeus an Christianus, vir an mulier, nihil habituri sint ejus patroni quod expedite respondeant**. All this is done to place themselves on God's throne, making the words of a **Translation** authoritative because of their stamp on it, rather than because of its relationship to and agreement with the words God Himself spoke. And further still, as if all this were not enough to show what kind of trustees they have been, they have cast off all submission to God's authority in His Word unless it can be traced back to their own authority. They deny that anyone in the world can know it to be God's Word unless they say so. Without their approval, they say it is nothing but ink and paper, parchment skin, a dead letter, a nose of wax, a **Lesbian Rule** --

carrying no authority for us at all. O faithful Trustees! Holy mother Church! Infallible chair! Can wickedness go any further than this? Has it ever been heard of since the beginning of the world that people would work so hard, as these men have done, to prove themselves faithless and treacherous with a trust given to them? Is not this the summary of the volumes that have filled the world: 'The Word of God was entrusted to us alone and no one else. Under our care it has become corrupted, damaged, and ruined. The copies given to us we have rejected and adopted one of our own choosing. And let no one complain about us -- it was in our power to do worse.' They say this sacred deposit had no distinguishing marks by which it could be known as God's Word. It passes as authentic in the world and is believed only on their word alone. They have added many books to it based on their own judgment, and yet they still consider it insufficient to guide people in worshiping God and obeying Him. Yet do they blush? Are they ashamed like a thief caught in the act? No -- do they not actually boast in their wrongdoing? Do they not say they are committed to carrying out all these abominations? The time is coming -- yes, it is near -- when they will forever regret that they have risen up against this sacred gift of God's wisdom, care, love, and goodness.

There are many other branches of these men's abominations beyond those already listed, all of which can be traced back to three corrupt and deadly sources.

1. That Scripture, at best -- both as originally given by God and as it has come down to us -- was and is only a partial revelation of God's will. The other part, whose vast extent no one can measure (for the Jews have given us their version in their **Mishna** and

Gemara; Rome kept theirs locked away in the heart or chair of their **holy Father**), has been stored in their treasury of Traditions.

2. That Scripture cannot prove or demonstrate itself to be God's Word, and therefore cannot rightfully exercise any authority in His name over the souls and consciences of people, without additional testimony from that alliance of politically-minded, worldly men who call themselves the Church of **Rome**.

3. That the original manuscripts of the Old and New Testament are so corrupted (**ex ore tuo, serve nequam** -- 'out of your own mouth, wicked servant') that they are no longer a reliable standard for all doctrines or the touchstone for all translations.

You will find some discussion of these matters in the treatises that follow. In them, I hope to lay down such clear principles of truth -- without much argument or dispute -- that their false ideas will be found cast to the ground before the sacred Ark of God's Word, exposed as having neither wisdom nor power.

For now, I will share my thoughts with you only on the last of these three points, because we have a new reason to be concerned about it, which I will explain shortly. Of all Satan's schemes to turn people's minds away from God's Word, this attack on the **authority of the Originals** seems to me the most destructive. At the beginning of the Reformation, before the **Council of Trent**, the Roman Catholics only weakly -- and with some embarrassment -- defended their **Vulgar Latin Translation**. Some openly preferred the Original over it, such as **Cajetan, Erasmus, Vives**, and others. Indeed, even after the Council, the same position was held by **Andradius, Serarius, Arias Montanus, Masius**, and

others. As for those among them who understood nothing but **Latin** -- and barely that -- whose ignorance the **Council** had made provision for, I suppose no one would think it worthwhile to consider their opinion in this matter. But the situation has now changed. The wickedness that at first worked in secret has now been exposed and throws off its disguise, growing bold; **nihil est audacius istis deprensus** -- nothing is bolder than those caught in the act. At first the campaign was carried out through private writings. **Melchior Canus, Gulielmus Lindanus, Bellarminus, Gregorius de Valentia, Leo Castrius, Huntlaeus, Hanstelius**, and countless others -- some on one basis, some on another -- have argued that the **Originals** were corrupted. Some did so with more shamelessness than others. **Leo Castrius**, as **Pineda** observes, rages almost uncontrollably whenever he touches on the **Hebrew text. Sed is est Author** (says Pineda) **dum in hujusmodi Ebraizationes incidit, vix sui compos; & bono licet zelo, tamen vel ignorance rerum quarundam, vel vehementiori aliqua affectione, extra fines veritatis & modestiae rapitur: & si ex hujusmodi tantum unguibus Leonem illum estimarem, non etiam ex aliis praeclaris conatibus, aut murem aut vulpem censerem, aut canem aut quiddam aliud ignobilis.** Even **Morinus**, who seems to be ashamed of nothing, flinches a little at this man's shamelessness and folly. **Apologetici libros** (he says) **sex bene longos scripsit, quibus nihil quam Judaeorum voluntarias & malignas depravationes demonstrate nititur; zelo sane pio scripsit Castrius, sed libris Hebraicis ad tantum opus quod moliebatur parum erat instructus.** Following in the footsteps of **Castrius** is

Huntley, a **subtle Jesuit**, who in the treatise just mentioned attributes the corruption of the **Hebrew Bible** to God's good providence for the honor of the **Vulgar Latin**. But these men and their allies have had their mouths stopped by **Reinolds, Whitaker, Junius, Lubbertus, Rivetus, Chamierus, Gerardus, Amesius, Glassius, Alstedius, Amama**, and others. One would have thought this fire set against God's house had been thoroughly put out. But after all the efforts made so far, in our own day it breaks out in an even greater flame. They now print the **Original** itself and defame it, gathering up translations of every kind and setting them up as rivals to it. When **Ximenius** published the **Complutensian Bibles**, **Vatablus** his, and **Arias Montanus** those of the King of Spain, this venomous creature had not yet hatched -- but its offspring is now growing into a flying fiery serpent. Now all they need to say is: **the ancient Hebrew letters were changed from the Samaritan to the Chaldean; the vowel points and accents were recently invented and carry no authority; without their guidance nothing in the language is certain; everything we know of it comes from the translation of the Seventy; the Jews have corrupted the Old Testament; there are countless variant readings in both the Old and New Testaments; there are other manuscripts differing from the ones we now have that are completely lost.** So that in the end, people are left with no choice but to become either Papists or Atheists.

Here that most astonishing work ever produced by ink and paper -- rightly called by a learned man magnificientissimum illud (quod post homines natos in lucem prodiit unquam) opus biblicum; I mean the Parisian Bibles, is intro-

duced by a preface from its creator Michael de Jay, in which he denies the Hebrew text, prefers the Vulgar Latin over it, and concludes that we are not left to the Word for our rule, but to the Spirit that rules in their Church: pro certo igitur atque indubitato apud nos esse debet, vulgatam editionem, quae communi catholicae Ecclesiae lingua circumfertur verum esse & genuinum sacrae Scripturae fontem; hanc consulendam ubique, inde fidei dogmata repetenda; ex quo insuper consentaneum est, vera ac certissima fidei Christianae autographa in Spiritu Ecclesiae residere, neque ab ejus hostium manibus repetenda.

Et certe quamcunque pietatis speciem praetexunt, non religione quapiam, aut sincera in Scripturam sacram veneratione aguntur dum eam unicam, quasi ineluctabilem salutis regulam, usurpant; neque spiritus Evangelici veritatem investigare decreverunt; dum ad autographa curiosius recurrentes, ex quibus, praeter perplexa quaedam vestigia, vix aliquid superest, vel capitales fidei hostes, vel eos qui Ecclesiae minus faverint, de contextuum interpretatione a germano sacrorum codicum sensu consulunt. Scilicet non alia est opportunior via a regio illius itinere secedendi, neque in privatarum opinionum placitis blandius possunt acquiescere, quas velut unicas doctrinae suae regulas sectari plerumque censuerunt.

Apage caecam animorum libidinem, non jam in institutionem nostram subsistit litera, sed Ecclesiae spiritus; neque e sacris codicibus hauriendum quidquam, nisi quod illa communicatum esse nobiscum voluerit. So he writes -- or **Morinus** in his name. And if this is truly the state of things, I think he will find it very hard to convince anyone that his

great work and undertaking has the slightest usefulness. To introduce those **bibles** to the world, **Morinus** published his **Exercitations**, titled on the **sincerity of the Hebrew and Greek Text** -- though their real purpose was to prove the texts corrupt and useless. He is now their champion who takes on the defense of this cause. Whether there is more of the boastful soldier **Pyrgopolynices** or the blasphemous **Rabshekah** in his writings is hard to say. But dogs that bark loudly seldom bite deeply. I do not think many generations have produced a man of more **confidence** and **less judgment**. A thoughtful reader cannot help but grow weary at every page, and the man has been thoroughly exposed by a **learned person** from his own side. On a side note, I cannot help but observe that at the height of his boasting, he attacks his own **mother Church** and embraces her to death. Exercitation 1, chapter 1, page 11. In order to boast that he alone first discovered the corruptions in the **original** Old Testament and their causes, he stumbles into a deep reflection on his Church's guidance. His Church, being unaware of any such reason for rejecting the **originals** as he has now supplied, nonetheless continued to reject them and prefer the **Vulgar Latin** over them. **Hec admirare lector (he says) Dei spiritum ecclesiae praesentissimum, illam per obscura, perplexa, et in via quaeque, inoffenso pede agentem: quanquam incognita esset Rabbitorum supina negligentia, portentosa ignorantia, foedaque librorum Judaicorum corruptela, et Haeretici contraria his magna verborum pompa audacter jactarent; adduci tamen non potuit Ecclesia, ut versio, qua sola per mille fere et centum annos usa fuerit, ad normam et amussim Hebraei textus iterum recuderetur.**

But is this really the case -- that their Church receives its guidance in a mindless, **brutish** way, stubbornly clinging to conclusions without the slightest familiarity with the reasoning behind them? It seems she did not love the **Originals**, but she did not know why. Her only certainty was her stubborn refusal to love them. If this is the condition of their Church -- that when it has neither Scripture, nor Tradition, nor Reason, nor New Revelation, it is guided by something it cannot explain, the way **Socrates** was led by his Daemon, or by secret and indescribable impulses of **stubbornness** and **obstinacy** acting on its imagination -- then I suppose it is pointless to argue with her any longer. For my own part, I must confess that I would just as soon believe a poor deluded **fanatical Quaker** claiming to be guided by an infallible Spirit, as their **Pope** with his whole assembly of **Cardinals**, on the terms laid down here by **Morinus**.

But setting these men aside for now -- if this disease had stayed within the house already thoroughly infected, it would have been less serious. It would simply be further preparation of that house for the fire. But it has now broken out among **Protestants** as well. With what motive or purpose, I do not know. God knows, and the **day will reveal it**. To explain at length how this came about would take too long -- **longa esset Historia** -- for me to dwell on. I will only briefly touch on the main points. Everyone knows that the Reformation of religion and the restoration of genuine learning began and advanced at the same time, and mostly through the same people. There was indeed a **Triumvirate** among the Roman Catholics of men with outstanding skill in **Rabbinical** learning before the Reformation. **Raymundus Martinus**, **Porchetus de sylvaticis**, and **Petrus Galatinus**

are these men. The last of them dedicated his book to **Maximilian** the Emperor after **Zuinglius** and **Luther** had begun to preach. In substance, these three are really just one. There is great debate over whether **Galatinus** stole his book from **Raymundus** or **Porchetus**. From **Porchetus**, says **Morinus**, calling his work **plagium portentosum, cui vix simile unquam factum est** (Exercitation 1, Chapter 2). From **Raymundus**, says **Scaliger** (Epistle 241), mistaking **Raymundus Martinus** for **Raymundus Sebon** but giving the world its first notice of that book. From **Raymundus** also, says **Josephus de Voysin** in his prolegomena to the **Pugio fidei**, and from him **Hornebeck** in his Prolegomena ad Judae. I will not take sides in this dispute. The structure and **style** of **Galatinus** are distinctly his own, but the overlap of his quotations is too extensive to attribute to mere coincidence. That **Porchetus** drew his **Victoria adversus impios Judaeos** mostly from **Raymundus** he himself admits in his preface. In any case, **Galatinus** clearly had a high opinion of his own expertise. Following the common pattern of men who believe they have reached some excellence in a particular field of learning, he placed more weight on it than it could bear. He boldly declared that the **Original** of Scripture was corrupted and could only be restored through the **Talmud**. In this one concession he does more damage to the cause he argues against the Jews than all his other books combined contribute to its defense. Of his supposed work by **Rabbena Haskadosh**, nothing more is known in the world than what he himself chooses to tell us. At the same time, **Erasmus**, **Reuchlin**, **Vives**, **Xantes**, **Pagninus**, and others worked effectively for the restoration of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages. But the work

prospered most in the hands of the early Reformers. They were all generally skilled in **Hebrew**, and some of them -- such as **Capito**, **Bibliander**, **Fagius**, and **Munster** -- reached such heights of usefulness that they may rightly be considered the founding fathers and **Patriarchs** of that field of learning. Living at that time was **Elias Levita**, the most learned Jew of his generation, whose **Grammatical** writings were enormously important for studying the Hebrew language. This man was acquainted with many of the early Reformers and lived in particular with **Paulus Fagius**, as I have explained elsewhere. Now in one book he published in those days, called **Massorech Hammasoreth**, he introduced a new opinion that had scarcely been heard of before, and was certainly not accepted among the Jews or, as far as we can tell, ever mentioned by Christians. His claim was that the vowel points and accents used in the Hebrew Bible were invented by some scholarly Jew or **Masorete** living at **Tiberias** about five or six hundred years after Christ. The man's aim was no doubt to make the entire Christian world dependent on the ancient **Rabbis** for the whole meaning of Scripture. **Hinc prima mali labes** -- Here is where the first crack in this matter appeared. Because the deception went undetected, and this opinion was introduced and defended by the most prominent -- and nearly the only -- master of the language in that era, even some of the early Reformers embraced his theory. Perhaps **Zuinglius** had addressed it before -- I am not sure. After a while, as the poison of this error began to take effect, the Roman Catholics -- watching the Reformers' words like the servants of **Benhadad** watching **Ahab**, eager to seize on anything said to their advantage -- began to use it for their own purposes. So **Cochlaeus** (book de Autoritate Scripturae, Chapter 5) applauds

Luther for saying **the Jews had corrupted the Bible with points and distinctions** -- and well he might, for nothing could have been said more to the advantage of his cause against Luther. Therefore other learned men began to resist this error. **Munster**, **Junius**, and others did so, as the following discussion will show. Thus the matter rested for a time. The study of the **Hebrew** language and its scholarship continued to advance until it eventually came to the man who has undoubtedly done more real service for its progress than any other single person, whether **Jew** or **Christian**. I mean **Buxtorfius** the Elder. His **Thesaurus Grammaticus**, his **Tiberias** or **Commentarius Massorethicus**, his Lexicons and Concordances, and many other works -- some still unpublished -- prove this to the entire world. Even **Morinus** says that he is the only Christian who ever truly understood the **Masora**. And **Symeon de Muys** acknowledges learning from him and profiting by his work. Other Jews who set themselves up as teachers know nothing beyond what they learn from him. Setting aside the testimonies of all kinds of learned men giving him first place in this field, it is enough that his works speak for themselves. This man, in his **Tiberias** or **Commentarius Massorethicus** -- printed with the great Rabbinical Bible that he himself carefully prepared at **Basil** in 1620 -- examines this entire question of the vowel points at length and exposes the emptiness of **Elias's** claims about the **Tiberian Masorettes**. But we must not stop here, it seems. Within a few years, to pave the way for another project he had conceived, **Ludovicus Capellus** published a treatise defending **Elias's** opinion (at least as far as it concerned the origin of the vowel pointing) under the title **Arcanum punctuationis revelatum**. The book was published by **Erpenius** with-

out the author's name. But the author was well enough known, and **Rivet** soon took notice of him, saying he was his friend but had hidden his name. *Isagoge ad Scripturam* 1, Chapter 8. This new effort immediately appealed to some people. Among others, our learned Professor Doctor **Prideaux** delivered a public lecture at the **Vespers** of our **Comitia** on this subject. Though he prefaced his talk with a warning about how the Roman Catholics exploit the idea that the vowel points are a late invention, and about the danger of this view, in substance he sided entirely with **Capellus**, **though he did not name him**. Among the extensive self-congratulations that **Capellus** printed at the end of his **Critica sacra**, there are two letters from a Mister **Eyre** here in England. In one of them, Eyre tells Capellus that the Doctor undoubtedly delivered his lecture with the help of his book. And indeed Prideaux uses his arguments and cites his treatise under the name **Sud Hanisebhoth Hanaegalah**. But what (**I** say) seems most remarkable to me in the Doctor's lecture is this: although he prefaced it by stressing how serious the controversy was -- noting the advantage the **Papists** gain from the belief in the **novelty** of the **Points** and quoting their words to that effect -- he then proceeds in the body of his presentation to side with them and say the very **things** he seemed to have criticized earlier. And in this way, the opinion that so greatly undermines the authority of the **Originals** has crept in among Protestants as well. I will say more later about how **Buxtorfius the younger** (who alone in this generation seems to match his father's worth in this field of learning) put a stop to its progress with his thorough and scholarly reply to **Capellus** in his treatise **de origine and antiquitate Punctorum**. Still, it has worked out well that the champions of

this new view cannot even agree among themselves. **Capellus** would make it easy to understand the Hebrew text and every word -- if not absolutely by itself, then at least in its context -- even without any vowel points at all. **Morinus** would make the language completely unintelligible without them. One says the points are a late invention of the **Rabbis**; the other says that without them, understanding **Hebrew** is impossible. Yet though they face opposite directions, there is a firebrand between them. But we have this firebrand brought even closer to the Church's bread in the **prolegomena** to the **Biblia Polyglotta** recently printed at **London**. The formal adoption of this opinion about **Hebrew vowel pointing** in that major work was one of the chief reasons for the second treatise, as you will find explained at length in its introduction. I dare not mention the extreme consequences that follow from this theory. I am frightened, among other things, by a short treatise recently sent to me (prompted by a discussion on this subject) by my worthy and learned friend **Doctor Ward**, titled **fides divina**. In it, the author -- whoever he may be -- uses principles of this kind, along with careless statements from some learned men among us, to try to throw out and discard as useless the entire Scripture or Word of God. I would have immediately written a response to that **destructive treatise**, except that upon reflection I found all his objections already addressed or answered in the following **writings**, which were by then completely finished. And this, as I said, was the first way the poison of **undermining** the Originals crept in among Protestants themselves.

Along with knowledge of the original languages, the use of that knowledge in **critical observations** also grew. The tremendous value of this study and its results in explaining various difficulties,

along with many other benefits, can hardly be overstated. But just as the best things are the most likely to be abused, so it has turned out with this particular area of learning and study. Here too, Protestants have led the way. **Beza, Camerarius, Scaliger, Casaubon, Drusius, Gomarus, Usher, Grotius, Hensius, Fuller, Dieu, Mede, Camero, Glasius, Capellus, Amama,** and countless others have excelled in this field. But the human mind is extremely vain, curious, and restless. Once a door to reputation and fame through this kind of learning was opened to the world, ambition quickly pushed past all limits of restraint. I will not dwell now on the many problems -- if not outright dangers -- that have resulted from the boldness and curiosity of some in **criticizing** Scripture. I have often heard the great **Usher** express his fears about what it might lead to. We are getting a solid account of **Grotius's** work in this area through the weekly lectures of our learned Professor, which I hope he will in due time share with the public. But only one or two things are relevant to my present purpose.

Among the various ways people have found to exercise their **critical abilities**, one has been collecting **variant readings** in both the Old and New Testaments. The first and most honest approach used for this purpose was consulting **various manuscripts** and comparing them with one another. Yet even this process had significant flaws, as I will show in the second treatise. This was the work of **Erasmus, Stephen, Beza, Arias Montanus**, and some others. Those who came after them, finding this territory already claimed and no similar world left for them to conquer, settled on a different approach. They adopted a principle as dangerous as any ever embraced by a learned person since the

founding of the Church of Christ -- except for those of **Rome**. This principle is that, on many grounds (which some of them go on at length recounting), various corruptions have crept into the **Originals**. These corruptions are to be detected and corrected through their critical skill, using various tools -- especially the old translations. This view also receives support from the **Prolegomena** to the **Biblia Polyglotta**, as I will later show and discuss. Once this principle is established, and a freedom -- even a necessity -- to **criticize** Scripture is derived from it, the corrections and amendments that spring up under their hands are beyond counting. Let me not be thought tedious if I walk you through some of them.

1. It is well known that Hebrew consonants share two kinds of similarity: some look alike but sound different, and others sound alike but look different. The first kind includes letters like those that are similar in shape, and the second kind includes those that share similar pronunciation. Now one principle of our new **Critics** is that biblical scribes were sometimes misled by the visual similarity of letters and other times by their similar sounds. When remembering what they heard, they often wrote one letter instead of another. So whether they relied on their eyes or their memories, they failed one way or the other -- even though the **Jews** deny that any copy among them was ever written except exactly from a model. They insist it is not lawful for a scribe to write even a single word in a copy from memory, even if he could recite the whole Bible by heart. Now since every word's meaning is determined by its **root**, it often happens that during the formation and modification of words -- because of letters that drop out -- only one letter of the **root** remains, at least that is pronounced. How common this is

in Hebrew, even those with very little knowledge of it can guess simply by looking at **Frobenius's Bible**, where the **root** letters are printed in a different typeface from all the prefixes and suffixes attached to them. So if someone wants to **criticize** and correct the Bible, he simply takes whatever word he chooses and tests what it would become by swapping letters that look or sound alike. He tries what one letter will do in place of another, or the reverse -- letters that either as **root** letters or as **prefixes** would substantially change the meaning. The same applies to all the others mentioned. If this process produces any new meaning that is tolerable and pleases the **Critic**, he simply says the scribe was confused by the **similarity** of the letters or the **closeness** of the sounds. Then it does not matter if every manuscript in the world agrees on the original reading without the slightest variation. Clearly this method has served **Capellus** and **Grotius** very well. And **Symeon de Muys** tells us an amusing story about himself to illustrate this point. **De Hebraica Editione, Antiquitate, et Veritate Sanctae Scripturae**. Indeed, this is the most prominent source of the **criticisms** on the Old Testament that our age has produced. A thousand examples could be given.

2. But in case this approach fails and no help is found this way, the **transposition** of letters offers its assistance. Those who know anything about this language know what dramatic changes in meaning can be made by rearranging letters. Frequently, words with completely opposite meanings consist of the same letters placed in a different order. Any lexicon will supply examples, so there is no need to repeat them here.

3. The vowel points are also brought into the discussion, and here reckless men can truly satisfy their curiosity. **Jerome** gives the example of one three-letter word for this purpose (Homily 9.12): as it may be written, it can yield eight different meanings. One vowel pattern makes it mean 'word,' and another makes it mean 'plague' -- as far apart as life and death. Those letters in that arrangement can be read with various vowel combinations, and the Jews give examples of how, by this method, a person could destroy the world. But

4. Suppose this approach also proves fruitless. Then one simply goes to an old translation -- the Septuagint or the **Vulgar** Latin -- and wherever a word catches one's interest, considers what **Hebrew** word corresponds to it. If it shows any similarity, even in a single letter's shape or sound, to the word in the text, one declares that this is how they read it in that **manuscript**. If that fails too, and the word is as different from what appears in the Bible as can be imagined, one simply asserts that it yields a more fitting meaning -- and a new variant reading is born.

These are the chief sources and methods behind the **criticisms** of the Old Testament that men have boldly thrust upon us in recent times, boasting of great learning all the while. It is impossible to measure how much damage the sacred truth of Scripture -- preserved by the infinite love and care of God -- has already suffered through this. And what it may yet suffer, I tremble even to think about. Simply place these two principles side by side: first, that the **vowel points are a late invention of some Jewish Rabbis** (which gives us no reason to be bound by them), and second, that it is **legitimate to compile variant readings using translations, even where our existing manuscripts show**

no differences. Both of these principles are endorsed in the **Prolegomena** to the **Biblia Polyglotta**. For my part, I cannot help but cry out in alarm, seeing no way to escape complete uncertainty about all sacred truth. Those who have more wisdom and learning, and who can see through all the battles that are likely to erupt from these principles, will I hope take the trouble to instruct me and people like me, rather than be angry or offended that we are not as wise or learned as they are. In the meantime, I encourage those who are unsettled by any of the plausible arguments of **Capellus** and others to consider the example provided in the miscellaneous notes or **Exercitations** of the learned **Mister Pocock** -- a work as useful and scholarly as any in its field, and in so few pages. There the reader will also find the dangerous and groundless attempts of men to correct our present copies of the **Bible** exposed and refuted.

But we are not done yet. **Capellus** has another innovation that is greatly applauded among those who share his views. He tells us (book 6, chapter 10, *Critica Sacra*): **Planum est omnem quae hodie est in terrarum orbe linguae Hebraicae cognitionem servandam tandem esse and ascribendam Graecae 70. Sacrorum Bibliorum translationi.** **Morinus** eagerly seizes on this (since nothing could serve his purpose better) and tells us that the learned **Prefacer** to the **Biblia Polyglotta** holds the same view; **Morinus: Preface to the Hebrew Samaritan works.** On this basis, **Morinus** explains that in translating the **Pentateuch** he went to **Jerome** and the Septuagint translation for the meaning of various words. But these learned men surely know that **Jerome** -- whom one of them treats as his authority -- tells us again and again that, regardless of the

Septuagint translation, he gained his knowledge of the **Hebrew** language from **Hebrew** itself and from the help of **Hebrew** scholars he hired for assistance. And as for **Capellus**, is not this the very point he fights for -- essentially the only foundation of his great project of criticizing Scripture? He claims there was a line of learned **Jewish** men at Tiberias continuing until a hundred years after **Jerome**, who invented the vowel points of the **Hebrew Bible** -- not randomly, but according to the **tradition** they received from those who spoke the language in its purity. Are we to believe these men got their knowledge of the **Hebrew** language from the Septuagint translation? They certainly would not have hated it as much as he tells us they did, if that were the case. But this claim is simply absurd. The language gives us knowledge of itself. Considering the resources that providence has provided in every age and time -- ever since the period when **Capellus** says some people knew the language well enough to invent and apply the current **vowel pointing** -- there has always been an unbroken line of **living** or **written** authorities to further knowledge of it. And this will not seem strange to those who have produced accurate translations of the **Persian** and **Ethiopic** portions of Scripture. In the poetic books, we get little help from the Septuagint. The greatest apparent aid for this language comes from **Arabic**. And so I have given you a brief account of how, through Satan's cunning, principles have crept in even among **Protestants** that undermine the authority of the **Hebrew Verity**, as it was traditionally called. In this, **Jerusalem** has justified **Samaria** and cleared the Roman Catholics in their attacks on God's Word. I will address the New Testament specifically in the second treatise that follows. **Morinus** indeed tells us (**De**

Hebraici et Graeci Textus Sinceritate, Exercitation 1, chapter 1, page 5) that it is a **laughable** thing that the Heretics in their debates acknowledge **corruptions** and variant **readings** in the **Greek** and **Latin** copies of Scripture, but deny this when it comes to the **Hebrew**. But why, I ask, is this so **ridiculous**? It rests on a foundation no less solid than direct experience: we plainly find variant readings in the **Greek** manuscripts we have, and so we acknowledge what visual inspection proves to be true. Yet although men display such bitter and hostile attitudes toward the **Hebrew** Text as **Morinus** does -- calling everyone who defends its purity either **fools** or **frauds** -- not one of them can produce from any manuscripts now in existence, or that they can show ever existed, evidence that there were ever any such **variant readings** in the Originals of the Old Testament. Is there any reason we should be considered **ridiculous** because, trusting our own eyes, we refuse also to trust the testimony of a few men who have no credibility with us, asserting as true what we have abundant reason to believe is completely false? But enough about these men for now.

At the beginning of this discussion, I had also intended to address some other ways that Satan attacks the sacred truth of God's Word in our day -- targeting its authority, purity, integrity, or perfection -- especially through the poor, deceived, **fanatical** souls among us commonly called **Quakers**. For the instruction of younger readers, I have added the **Theses** at the end of the other treatises to address their errors. But I am already aware of how far I have gone beyond the proper boundaries of a **Preface** for such brief works as these. So after giving a short explanation of why I

have taken up this cause on behalf of God and His Word -- defending its authority and integrity -- I will bring this discussion to a close.

Some of you may have heard me say I was unwilling to appear in public again through my writings. I have not always met with a warm enough reception to encourage me to do so. When I have been for peace, others have readied themselves for battle. One person in particular has recently written against me, understanding neither me nor the subjects he writes about, but his appetite for opposition had to be fed. This is how more than a few people handle their **writings**. They measure others by their own **ignorance**, and what they do not know themselves, they assume is hidden from everyone else. So when something strikes them as **new**, as though they were the **first** to discover what they only just learned - - and of which they have only a dim understanding -- they cannot rest until they have published it to win **praise**. Such are this person's arguments: partly trivial, partly already addressed and rendered completely useless for his **purpose** by the very treatise he so feebly attempted to oppose. I wish I could convince those whose **interests** drive them to prefer ignorance over being **taught** by me to simply leave my books alone. Another person, after two or three years of deliberation, responds to a book of nearly 140 pages with a mocking reply to the portion of it that was written in **a quarter of an hour**. I remain determined to avoid such engagements. And I think that if some people wrote less, others would read more -- and to better purpose. Many books full of profound learning lie neglected while people waste their time on trivial things. Many works of great value are held back by their authors while worthless publications pour out one after another. I

have often urged one of your own number to **publish certain Divinity lectures delivered on formal occasions at the University**, which, if I am any judge, are -- to say the least -- worthy of public attention. I still hope the near future will fulfill my desire and expectation. My present work has three parts. The first covers a subject I had preached on, and many people urged me to put my thoughts in writing, believing it would be helpful. I have answered their request. What I have accomplished through Christ's grace in this undertaking is left to the judgment of the godly and learned reader. The second concerns the **Prolegomena** and **Appendix** to the recent **Biblia Polyglotta**. Of this I often said, **ab alio quovis hoc fieri mallet, quam a me, sed a me tamen potius quam a nemine** -- I would rather anyone else had done this than me, but better me than no one. The reasons for my taking up this work are explained at length in its introduction. The **theses** at the end were drawn in by their connection in subject matter to the other treatises. To complete the doctrine of Scripture concerning Scripture, I tried to include in them the whole truth about the Word of God -- both in name and substance -- as it is opposed by the poor fanatical Quakers, and also to uncover the principles they rely on in their confused opposition to that truth.

I have nothing more to add, except to ask for your continued prayers and help in your various roles as we carry on the work of our Lord and Master in this place entrusted to us. May I give my account with joy and not with grief to Him who stands at the door. I commend you to the powerful word of His grace, and remain

Your fellow laborer and brother in our dear Lord Jesus. J. O.
From my study, September 22, 1658.

OF THE DIVINE ORIGINAL
AUTHORITY, PART 1



ON THE DIVINE ORIGIN, WITH THE AUTHORITY,
SELF-EVIDENCING POWER, AND LIGHT OF THE HOLY
SCRIPTURES.

CHAPTER 1



CHAPTER 1.

The divine origin of Scripture as the sole foundation of its authority. The origin of the Old Testament, Hebrews 1:1.

Several ways of immediate revelation. The unique manner of the revelation of the Word. Considerations on this topic. Various expressions of that manner, 2 Peter 1:20-21. The written Word, as written, preserved by the providence of God. Capellus's opinion about variant readings considered. The Scripture not of human origin. The true meaning of that expression. How the Word came in ancient times, and how it was received. Entirely from God down to the smallest detail. On the Scriptures of the New Testament and their special privilege.

Section 1. Everyone who acknowledges the **authority** of Scripture agrees that its entire authority depends solely on its **divine origin**. Since our present goal is to demonstrate and declare that **authority**, we must first establish its **divine source** and origin. Once that foundation is laid, we will be able to draw our following arguments -- where we aim more at **weight** than **number** -- from their own proper principles.

Section 2. Regarding the **origin** of the Old Testament Scripture, we are told that God SPOKE in **old** times, or **formerly**, through the prophets (**Hebrews** 1:1). From the days of **Moses** the **lawgiver** onward, until the establishment and closing of the **canon** given to the **Jewish** Church in the days of **Ezra** and his companions -- the **men of the great Congregation** -- this is how God spoke. Since this was done only among the **Jews**, they as His Church were **entrusted with the oracles of God** (**Romans** 3:2; 9:4). God spoke "in" -- that is, "by" -- the prophets (**Chrysostom, Theophylact**), as in **Luke** 1:70. He spoke **by the mouth of the holy prophets**. But there seems to be something further intended in this expression.

Section 3. In the revealing of the eternal counsel of God's **mind** and will to people, we must consider both His **speaking to** the prophets and His **speaking through** them **to** us. In this expression, it seems to be the audible voice from heaven -- the voice that came to the **prophets** -- that is in view. So God **spoke in the prophets**, and there is a specific reason for the phrase "in the prophets." In the same way, many of the Psalms are said to be given "to" this or that person. A **Golden** Psalm was given "to" **David** -- that is, from the Lord. And from that point their **tongue** became like the **pen of a writer** (**Psalms** 45:1). So God spoke **in** them before He spoke **through** them.

Section 4. The various ways of special revelation -- through **dreams, visions, audible voices, and inspirations**, including the unique form given to the **lawgiver** under the Old Testament called **face to face** (**Exodus** 33:11; **Deuteronomy** 34:10), and the manner described in **Numbers** 12:8, along with what is compared to it and exalted above it in the **New** Testament through the **Son**

(Hebrews 1:1-3) who came **from the bosom of the Father** (John 1:17-18) -- are not my present concern. All of them relate to the **manner** of the revelation, not to the **thing** itself.

Section 5. By the statement that God **spoke in the prophets of old** -- from the beginning to the end of that long period of 1,000 years during which He gave the writings of the Old Testament -- two things are established for us, which form the **foundation** of our present discussion.

Section 6. 1. The **laws** they proclaimed, the **doctrines** they delivered, the **instructions** they gave, the **stories** they recorded, the **promises** of Christ, and the **prophecies** of Gospel times they revealed -- none of these were their own. They were not conceived in their **minds**, formed by their **reasoning**, retained in their **memories** from what they had heard, or in any way previously understood by them (1 **Peter** 1:10-11). Instead, all of these came **immediately** from God. The prophets' rational faculties played only a passive role in receiving them, without any **active contribution** that they might have been required to make by some law. From this it follows:

Section 7. Second, God was so **with** them, and the Holy Ghost so **spoke in them** -- both in their **receiving** the **Word** from Him and in their delivering it to others by **speaking** or writing -- that they were not enabled by any **habitual light**, knowledge, or conviction of truth to declare His mind and will. They only **acted** as they were immediately **moved** by Him. Their **tongue** in what they said, or their hand in what they wrote, was no more under their own control than a **pen** is in the hand of an expert **writer**.

Section 8. Because of this, insofar as their own **personal** concerns as saints and believers were involved, they are said to have made a **diligent search** and investigation into the things that the **Spirit of Christ, who spoke within them, was revealing** (1 Peter 1:10-11). Without **this** personal search, even though their **visions** were vivid -- so that their **eyes** were said to **be open** (Numbers 24:3-4) -- they still did not understand them. For this reason, they also **studied** the **writings** and prophecies of one another (Daniel 9:2). In this way, they gained a **saving**, useful, habitual knowledge of the truths delivered by themselves and others through the **illumination** of the Holy Ghost and the **study** of the Word, just as we do (Psalm 119:104). But when it came to **receiving** the Word from God -- as God **spoke** in them -- they gained nothing by study, meditation, inquiry, or reading (Amos 7:15). Whether we consider the **content** or the **manner** of what they received and delivered, or their receiving and delivering of it, they were like a musical instrument giving a sound according to the hand, intention, and skill of the one who plays it.

Section 9. This is expressed in various ways. Generally it is said the **Word was** to this or that prophet, which we translate as the **Word came** to them. **Ezekiel** 1:3 says it **came expressly** -- it was given a real existence, an effectual indwelling, by the Spirit **entering** into him (verse 14). This **coming** of the Word to them often carried such **greatness** and such an expression of God's majesty that it filled them with **dread** and reverence of Him (Habakkuk 3:16) and also greatly affected their physical bodies (Daniel 8:27). But this dread and terror (which Satan tried to imitate through his foul oracles and frenzied utterances) was unique to the Old Testament and belonged to its instructional purpose

(Hebrews 12:18-21). The Spirit, in revealing the **New Testament**, communicated His mind and will in a way of greater **freedom** and glory. **2 Corinthians 3**. The directness and immediacy of the revelation was the same, but the **manner** of it reflected the glorious freedom of fellowship and communion with the Father, to which believers now had access through Jesus Christ. **Hebrews 9:8; 10:19-20; 12:23-24**. So our Savior tells His apostles: **Matthew 10:20 -- You are not the speakers** of what you deliver, as other people are, whose words flow from the imaginations of their own hearts. And He adds this reason: **The Spirit of the Father is the One who speaks in you**. In this way, the Word that came to them was like a **book** that they took **in** and gave **out** without changing a single detail or syllable. **Ezekiel 2:8-11; 3:3; Revelation 10:9-11**.

Section 10. Furthermore, when the **Word** had come to the prophets and God had spoken in them, they had no power to **conceal** it, because the hand of the Lord was strong upon them. They were not merely called, in a general sense, to speak the truth they had learned and to tell what they had heard and seen -- which was their regular **preaching** work, following the pattern of what they had received. **Acts 4:20**. They were also required to declare the very **specific words** they had received. When the Word had **come** to them, it was like a **fire** inside them that had to be released or it would consume them. **Psalms 39:3; Jeremiah 20:9; Amos 3:8; 7:15-16**. **Jonah** discovered that his attempt to **hide** the Word he had received was completely futile.

Section 11. Because these things are so important and serve as the **foundation** for everything that follows -- namely, the demonstration that the **Word** has come to us from God without the

slightest mixture or interference of any human element subject to **error** (such as the wisdom, truthfulness, integrity, knowledge, and memory of even the best of all people) -- I will examine this further from one full and prominent declaration of it given to us in **2 Peter** 1:20-21. The words of the Holy Ghost are: **Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**

Section 12. What he speaks of here is the prophecy of Scripture, or **written prophecy**.

There were traditions among the **Jews** to whom **Peter** wrote that elevated themselves into **competition** with the written Word. These later gained the title of an **oral law**, claiming to have originated from God. The apostle silently condemns these traditions and also reveals the specific form in which he was considering what he called in **verse 19** the **word of prophecy** -- namely, as WRITTEN. It is the **written Word**, as such, that he is discussing. Over fifty times in the **New Testament**, the term for "writing" or "Scripture" is used absolutely to refer to the Word of God. The same term is used in the **Old Testament** for the Word of prophecy (**2 Chronicles** 21:12). It is the **writing** that is inspired by God, as stated in **2 Timothy** 3:16. The **text** itself, or the doctrine as written, comes from Him. Not only the **doctrine** contained in it, but the written text itself -- the doctrine as written -- is from God.

Section 13. For this reason, God's providence has shown itself no less concerned with preserving the **writings** than the **doctrine** they contain. The **writing** itself is the **product** of His own

eternal counsel for preserving the **doctrine**, after He had sufficiently demonstrated the **inadequacy** of all other means for that purpose. And so **Satan's** hostility has raged no less against the **book** than against the **truth** it contains. The actions of **Antiochus** under the Old Testament and of various persecuting **emperors** under the **New** prove this clearly. In ancient times, it was no less a crime to be a **betrayers of the book** than to be a **denier of the faith**. The insult of calling Scripture mere "paper writings" and "parchment" (**Coster: Enchiridion: Chapter 1**) reflects back on its Author. It is true that we do not have the original manuscripts of **Moses** and the prophets, the **apostles** and evangelists, but the copies we possess contain every **detail** that was in them.

Section 14. There is no doubt that in the copies we now have of the **Old Testament** there are some **different readings** or variant readings. The variant readings of **Ben-Asher** (or **Rabbi Aaron**, the son of **Rabbi Moses** of the tribe of **Asher**) and **Ben Naphtali** (or **Rabbi Moses**, the son of **David** of the **tribe** of **Naphtali**), and of the **Eastern** and **Western** Jews -- which we have collected at the end of the great **Bible** with the **Masora** -- prove this. But we still maintain that the entire Word of God, in every **letter** and **detail**, as given by Him through inspiration, has been preserved without corruption. Wherever there is any **variation**, it is always in things of lesser -- indeed of **no** importance. God, by His providence, preserved the whole intact while allowing this **minor** variation to occur in or among the copies we have, in order to sharpen and exercise our diligence in searching His Word.

Section 15. It was an unfortunate attempt (which must be addressed later) that a **learned man** has recently undertaken: to prove that all the present copies of the **Old Testament** in the **Hebrew language** differ from those used in ancient times, based purely on uncertain **guesswork** and the authority of corrupt **translations**. Whether his **argument** is more unreasonable in itself and **lacking** any **real** basis in truth, or more harmful to God's love and care for His Word and Church, I am not certain. But I am sure it is **both** to a high degree. The **translation** he mainly relies on is that of the Septuagint. That this **translation** -- whether through the mistakes of its original **authors** (if it truly belongs to those whose **name** and **number** it bears), or through the carelessness, ignorance, or worse failings of its **copyists** -- has been corrupted and departed from the original in over 2,000 places, is acknowledged by everyone who knows anything about these matters. It is astonishing that such a corrupt **stream** should be considered a suitable means to purify the fountain. That such a flexible **standard** should be thought a proper tool to correct the **original** by! And yet on this basis, along with some **other** sources no better -- or hardly as good -- we are presented with 1,826 **variant readings**, with frequent hints that an **endless** number more remain to be collected. It would be better if men were content to display their **learning**, research, and diligence in areas where there is less danger in taking risks.

Nor is the **defense** he provides against the charge of creating **uncertainty** in Scripture -- a charge he knew he was exposed to -- any less harmful than the opinion he tries to soften with it, even though it has since been adopted and **endorsed** by others. He

tells us that **the saving doctrine of Scripture, as to its substance, in all matters of importance, is preserved in the copies of the original and the translations that remain.**

Section 17. It is indeed a great **comfort**, against the problem of corrupt **translations**, to realize that although some of them are **bad** enough, if all the errors and mistakes found in **all the rest** were added to the **worst** of them, every necessary saving fundamental truth would still be sufficiently testified to in them. But to drag the sacred **truth** of the originals down to such a level that it needs this kind of **defense** -- and to do so without any basis or excuse from differences in **the manuscripts** themselves that survive, or any reasonable evidence that any others ever existed that differed in the slightest from those we now have -- will eventually be recognized as conduct unworthy of a **Christian Protestant** theologian. Beyond the harm done to God's providence toward His **Church** and His care for His Word, it will not be easy -- once such corruption of the **Originals** is accepted -- to prove beyond question that the **entire saving doctrine** originally given by God still remains **complete** and uncorrupted. The nature of this **doctrine** is such that there is no other **principle** or means for discovering it, no other **rule** or standard for judging or deciding anything about it, except the **writing** from which it comes. It is entirely a matter of divine **revelation**, and that **revelation** is expressed only in that writing. If any corruption is assumed in it, there is no way to correct it. It would be simple to correct a mistake or corruption in the copying of any **problem** or **proof** by **Euclid** or any other ancient **mathematician**, because the things they deal with are always the **same** and are equally open to human knowledge and understanding in every age. In matters of pure **revelation**,

whose knowledge depends entirely on their **being revealed**, this is not the case. Nor is it enough to assure us that the doctrines mentioned are preserved intact. Every **detail** and smallest mark in the Word of God must receive our care and attention as being from God. But we will discuss these things more fully later. Let us now return to the apostle.

Section 17. This **written** prophecy, this Scripture, **is not of any private interpretation.** Some think the Greek word used here is equivalent to another form that, according to **Hesychius**, means **breathing in**, inspiration, or inward conception. **Calvin** takes this view. In this sense, the meaning of the words is the **same** as what I have already described: the prophets did not speak from their own private **ideas** or self-generated **enthusiasms.** **Grotius** agrees with this interpretation. And the alternative reading is listed among the **variant readings** collected from him in the **Appendix** to the **Biblia Polyglotta.** This interpretation represents the **other side** of the usual expression for prophetic utterance. **Camero** argues for keeping the original reading -- and rightly so. We are beginning too late to see where men's **bold** guesses at correcting the original text of the Scriptures are going to lead. There is no **basis** here for a variant reading. One manuscript, it seems, according to **Stephen**, read differently -- without grounds, by an obvious error. Such **mistakes** should not be given the name or status of **variant readings.** But **Camero** says this word refers to such a **resolution** and interpretation as is made by revelation. He adds that in that sense the word is used by the Septuagint in the account of **Joseph's** interpretation of **Pharaoh's** dream (Genesis 40), which was by **revelation.** But in fact, the word is not used in that chapter. Nevertheless, he agrees

with this meaning (as do **Calvin** and **Grotius**): the term is not to be applied to our **interpretation** of the prophets, but to the way and manner in which they received God's counsel and will.

Section 18. And indeed, if we take the word as referring to an **interpretation** of the written word of prophecy, as our **translation** renders it, the expression can scarcely be given any acceptable meaning. The key term here relates to the original **giving out** of the Word, not to our later consideration of its **meaning** and significance. Without this understanding, the verse has no coherent connection with, or contrast to, the sentence that follows. That following sentence, through its **causal** link to this one, clearly provides the reason for what is stated here. In the **first** part it gives a reason, and in the **second** part, turning with the contrasting word "but," it presents an opposition: **for prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.** What **reason** does the first part of this verse give for why Scripture is not of our **private interpretation**? Or what **contrast** does the **latter** part present to that claim? On that assumption, there is no reasonable flow of thought in the whole passage. But take the word as expressing the **coming of the prophecy** to the prophets themselves, and the meaning is full and clear.

Section 19. This, then, is the apostle's point: the **prophecy** that we have in **written** form -- the Scripture -- was not the product of men's imaginary **enthusiasms**. It was not a creation of their own minds and ideas, not a human interpretation of God's will by human understanding -- that is, by the prophets themselves. Neither their rational perceptions, inquiries, fanciful ideas,

nor the imaginations of their hearts had any role in this. No self-generated **inspiration**, no rational thinking freely directed by human understanding and will, played any part in it.

Section 20. Of this, the apostle says: **knowing, judging,** and determining this in the first place. This is a principle to be acknowledged by everyone who wishes to believe anything else. The word used here means not only to **know, perceive, and understand**, but also to **judge**, own, and acknowledge. This, then, in our **faith** is to be **acknowledged**, accepted, and submitted to as a principle, without further dispute. To reveal the grounds for this submission and acknowledgment is the purpose of the discussion that follows.

Section 21. To confirm that this is indeed the case, as stated above, and to give a reason why it should be accepted as a **principle**, he adds in **verse 21**. The passage reads as follows. That word of prophecy which we have in **written** form is not of private origin, **for it came not at any time by the will of man**. The verb used here, in its passive form, means at least to be **brought in** -- something more than simply that it **came**. It was **brought** to them by the will of God. The **affirmative** statement about God's will is contained within the **negative** statement about human will. Or it came like the voice from heaven to our Savior on the mountain (verse 18), where the same word is used. So in **Ezekiel 1:3**, the Word **came into being** within him -- it was **brought** to him, as was shown earlier. God **brought** the Word to them and spoke **in them**, in the order of nature, before He spoke through them. As it was brought to them, it was the **voice** of the Lord (Genesis 3:8), or what the **Jews** call the heavenly voice. As **spoken** by them or written, it was properly the **Word of God** -- which He

communicated to the prophets by His **immediate voice**. Some of them, in visions, first consumed a **written book** and then prophesied, as was mentioned before. This is the **first source** of Scripture -- the beginning of its flow from the counsel and will of God. By the power of the Holy Ghost, it was **brought** into the vessels or instruments He chose to use for revealing and declaring it to others.

Section 22. What remains to complete this process of delivering God's Word to us is added by the apostle. When the Word was **brought to them**, it was not left to their understandings, wisdom, minds, or memories to arrange, organize, and communicate it. Instead, they were **carried, directed**, and moved by the Holy Ghost to speak, deliver, and **write** all of it -- and nothing but it -- down to every detail that was brought to them. They did not **invent** words of their own suited to the things they had learned. They only expressed the **words** they received. Although their minds and understandings were involved in the **selection** of words -- which accounts for all the differences in style and expression (for they did use words of their own **choosing**) -- they were so guided that their words were not ultimately their own but were immediately supplied to them. And so they produced what is called the **writing of uprightness** and **words of truth** itself. **Ecclesiastes 12:10.** Not only was the **doctrine** they taught the **Word of truth** -- truth itself (John 17:17) -- but the **words** by which they taught it were **words of truth** from God Himself. Allowing for the contribution of **passive instruments** in receiving and expressing words -- which corresponds to the **minds** and **tongues** of the prophets when God's voice came to them -- every detail of the **written Word** is equally divine and as **immedi-**

ately from God as the **voice** by which He spoke **to** or **in** the prophets. It therefore carries the same authority, both in itself and for us.

Section 23. What has been said about the Scripture of the **Old Testament** must also be affirmed of the New, with this additional advantage and distinction: **it received its beginning of being spoken** by the Lord Himself (Hebrews 2:3). God spoke in these last days **in the Son**. Hebrews 1:1.

Section 24. God Himself began the **writing** of the Word with His own **finger** (Exodus 31:18), after He had spoken it (Exodus 20). He then appointed or approved the **writing** of the rest that followed (Deuteronomy 31:12; Joshua 23:6; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 14:6; 2 Kings 17:13; 1 Chronicles 22:15; 2 Chronicles 25:4; Ezekiel 2:9-10; Habakkuk 2:2; Luke 16:29; John 5:39; John 20:31; Acts 17:11). Finally, He commands that the close of the immediate revelation of His will be written in a book (Revelation 1:11). In this way He gives us His entire **mind** and counsel in **writing** -- as a merciful and lasting safeguard against all the confusion, darkness, and uncertainty that the foolishness, weakness, and instability of human minds, magnified by the countless changes that occur among people, would otherwise inevitably produce.

Section 25. We have now established the **origin** of the Scriptures from the Scripture itself, and this **origin** is the **basis** and foundation of all its authority. This is how it comes from God - - **entirely** from Him. Both the doctrine it contains and the **words** in which that doctrine is delivered are wholly **His**. What **it** speaks, **He** speaks Himself. He speaks **in** it and **through** it, and so it is clothed with all the **moral authority** of God over His creatures.

CHAPTER 2



CHAPTER 2.

The main question proposed for consideration. How we may know with certainty that the Scripture is the Word of God. Scripture is to be received by divine faith. The ground and foundation of that faith examined. The answer in the general thesis of this discussion. The authority of God as that foundation. The way that authority is demonstrated or made known. What is meant by the authority of the Scriptures. Authority exists in relation to others. The first general evidence given for the thesis laid down. The various ways God reveals Himself and His mind. 1. By His works; 2. By the light of nature; 3. By His Word. Each of these proves itself to be from Him. His Word especially.

Section 1. Having laid the **foundation** in the previous chapter that we are to build and proceed on, I now come to set out the **question** whose **answer** must be drawn from it. What we are seeking to know is this: How can we -- and all other people in the world who, through God's merciful arrangement, have the book or books in which the Scripture given by Him (as described above) is contained or said to be contained, and who live so many ages after the last person to receive any part of it directly from God, and who

have not received it directly ourselves -- how can we become certain, for every purpose we may be concerned with, that the whole and entire written Word in that book or those books has the origin, and therefore the authority, that it claims? That is, how do we know it is from God in the way and manner described, and not a human invention or a collection of cunningly devised fables (2 Peter 1:16)?

Section 2. Since God Himself expects and **requires** us -- under the threat of His **eternal displeasure** if we fail (2 Thessalonians 1:8-10) -- to receive Scripture not as we receive other **books** in relation to their authors (with a firm **opinion** built on persuasive probable arguments that outweigh any actual objections), but with divine and **supernatural faith**, setting aside all those **arguments** that merely produce a conviction not easily dislodged by contrary reasoning or objections, it is especially important to ask: what is the foundation and **formal** reason for our doing so, if we do? Whatever that foundation is, it answers this crucial question: **why, or on what basis, do you believe the Scriptures or books of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God?** Since the **formal reason** of things is only **one**, whatever other inducements or arguments may help produce in us a conviction that **Scripture** is the Word of God, those arguments have no **influence** on the divine faith with which we are bound to believe it. They may indeed be useful for answering the **objections** that are or may be raised against the truth we believe, and so indirectly support and **strengthen faith** itself. But they cannot contribute to the foundation or **formal reason** of our believing.

Section 3. Having established the divine origin of the **Scriptures** and explained how the Word came from God, I will now offer an **answer** to the **question** posed above, built solely on that foundation. I will do this in the following proposition.

The authority of God -- the supreme Lord of all, the first and only absolute Truth whose Word is Truth -- speaking in and through the writers of Scripture, demonstrated solely in and by Scripture itself, is the only basis and foundation, or formal reason, for our accepting those Scriptures as His Word and for our submitting our hearts and consciences to them, **with that faith and obedience which morally relates to Him and is due to Him alone.**

Section 4. When God **spoke** to the **writers** of Scripture (Hebrews 1:1), His **voice** to them was accompanied by its own **evidence**, which gave them assurance. And when God speaks through them, or their **writings**, to us, His **Word** is accompanied by its own evidence and gives assurance to us. His **authority** and **truthfulness** did and do, in both cases, sufficiently show themselves, so that people may safely rest their souls upon them in believing and obeying. In this way we are **built** on the **foundation of the prophets and apostles** in our believing (Ephesians 2:20).

Section 5. What I will work to prove and demonstrate, for the strengthening of **believers' souls**, is simply this: the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament abundantly and undeniably **show** themselves to be the Word of the living God. By their very **presentation** of themselves to us in the name and majesty of God -- without any help or assistance from **tradition, the Church**, or anything else outside themselves -- we are obligated, on pain of eter-

nal damnation (as is everyone to whom they come by any means), to receive them with the **submission** of soul that is due to God's Word. The authority of God shining in them, they provide us with all the divine **evidence** of themselves that God is **willing** to grant us, **can** grant us, or is in any way **necessary** for us. So then, the authority of the **written Word**, both in itself and toward us, comes **from** itself as the Word of God, and the proof of that authority to us is accomplished **by** itself.

Section 6. When we ask about the **authority** of Scripture, we strictly mean its **power to command** and require **obedience in God's name**. To ask where it gets its authority is to ask where it gets its power to command in God's name. Surely no one would say that Scripture gets its **power to command in God's name** from anything other than itself. It is actually a contradiction for people to say they give **authority** to the Scriptures. Why do they do so? Why do they give this authority to that **book** rather than another? They must say: because it is the Word of God. So the reason they give authority to it is the **formal** reason for all its authority, which it already possessed before their **endorsement** and granting of power. **John 17:17. Your Word is truth.**

Section 7. Some say that Scripture has its authority in itself and from itself, or from its own divine origin, but not **as far as we are concerned**. They claim that for it to **reach** us, for us to **know**, understand, and submit to its **authority**, it must be testified to from outside -- from some other person or thing appointed for that purpose. I answer:

1. But could not the same thing be said about **God** Himself, just as about His Word? If God reveals Himself to us, He must do so through **means**. And if those **means** cannot be understood to

reveal Him unless they are **confirmed** by something else, then God cannot reveal Himself to us. **Si Deus hominibus non placuerit, utique Deus non erit.** If God and His Word keep themselves within themselves and to themselves, they may still be **God** and His **Word** and keep their authority. But if they choose to deal with us and issue their commands to us, they had better get the Church's **endorsement** first -- or, on this principle, they may safely be rejected. But --

Section 8. Authority is something that no person or thing can possess in himself or itself without also possessing it in relation to others. By its very nature, authority relates to others who are subject to it. All authority arises from relationship and corresponds to it throughout. God's authority over His **creatures** comes from their relationship to Him as their **Creator**. A king's authority exists in relation to his subjects. A king who has no subjects has no **royal** authority in himself -- he is only a **pretend king**. The authority of a **minister** relates to his **flock**. A minister who has no flock has no **ministerial authority**. If he does not have ministerial authority in reference to a flock, a people, a **Church**, he **has** none and **can** have none in himself. The same is true here: if Scripture has no authority from itself **in relation to us**, it has none in itself, nor can it have any. If it has authority **in itself**, it has it **in relation to us**. Such a **relation** -- that is, a right to command and require obedience -- is as inseparable from authority, or **moral** power, as heat is from fire. It is true that a person may have a lawful authority **by right** over those whom **in practice** he cannot force or compel to obey. But lack of force does not diminish authority. God does not lose His authority over people even though He may not exercise toward them **the greatness of**

His power or the working of His mighty strength to make them obey. It is foolish, then, to imagine that a person or thing could have authority **in himself** or **itself** yet not have that authority in relation to those who should be subject to it. Something that is not a **law** to anyone is not properly a **law** at all. Furthermore, all the evil of **disobedience** relates to the authority of the one who requires obedience. **James 2:10-11**. No action counts as **disobedience** unless the one performing it is **subject** to the one requiring obedience. Therefore, if Scripture does not have **authority** in itself toward us, there is no evil in our **disobedience** to its commands. Our failure to do what it commands and our doing what it forbids would not be disobedience, because it has no authority over us -- I am speaking of it as considered in itself, before the addition of the external testimony supposedly **necessary** to give it authority over us. So we have pushed this objection to its conclusion: **to disobey the commands of Scripture before some human testimony is attached to it is no sin**. Let the gullible believe that.

Section 9. The meaning of our position is therefore clear and plain, and our **answer** to the question has been given. Scripture has all its **authority** from its Author, both **in itself** and in relation to us. That it has the **Author** and origin claimed for it, it declares **by itself**, without any other assistance, through the **ways** and **means** that will be discussed below. I will now confirm the truth of this: first, by one **general argument**; second, by testimonies; and third, by specific arguments demonstrating the ways and means of Scripture's **self-revelation**.

Section 10. There are three **ways** by which God, in varying **degrees**, reveals Himself -- His character, His mind, and His will -- to humankind.

1. **He does it through His works, both of creation and providence.** All Your works praise You. **Psalm 145:10, and so forth.** The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they reveal knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world. **Psalm 19:1-4, and so forth. The same is found in Job chapters 37, 38, and 39, throughout.** God, who made heaven and earth and the sea and everything in them, allowed all nations in past times to walk in their own ways. Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, because He did good, giving rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. **Acts 14:15-17. And,** God who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Neither is He served by human hands as though He needed anything, since He gives to all people life and breath and all things. He made from one blood every nation of humanity to live on the face of the earth, and determined the appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwelling places, so that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him. **Acts 17:24-27. All of these passages, God willing, will be explained more fully in another treatise. The sum of them amounts to what was stated above: namely, that God reveals and declares Himself to us through the works of His hands.**

Section 11. God declares Himself -- His sovereign power and authority, His righteousness and holiness -- through the inborn **light of nature** and the principles of human conscience. The non-negotiable **moral obedience** He requires of us as His **creatures** subject to His law is, in general, made known to us in this way. For **the Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature the things required by the law; they, not having the law, are a law to themselves, showing the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts either accusing or defending them.** Romans 2:14-15. Through the **light** God has permanently planted in people's minds -- accompanied by a **moral sense** of good and evil, backed up by the **self-judgment** He has placed **in us** in relation to His own judgment **over us** -- He reveals Himself to humankind. Third, God reveals Himself through His Word, as everyone agrees. It remains, then, for us to ask: how can we know and be **certain** that these things are not deceptive claims, but that God truly reveals Himself through them?

Section 12. First, the works of God -- as far as what He intends to teach and reveal about Himself through them -- carry such an **expression** of God upon them, such a stamp and **mark** of His eternal power and Godhead, such evidence that they are **His**, that wherever they are seen and considered, they undeniably prove themselves to be so. What they teach about Him, they teach in His name and with His authority. There is no need of **traditions**, no need of miracles, no need of the authority of any churches to convince a **rational creature** that God's works are **His** and **His** alone, and that He who made them is eternal and infinite in power. They carry their own authority with them. By being

what they are, they declare **whose** they are. For God to reveal Himself through His works, nothing is needed except that those works be presented to the consideration of rational creatures.

Section 13. The **voice** of God in nature is equally effective. It declares itself to be from God by its own **light** and authority. There is no need to convince a person through outside **witnesses** that what their conscience speaks, it speaks from God. Whether conscience testifies to the being, righteousness, **power**, omniscience, or holiness of God Himself, or whether it calls for the **moral obedience** that is eternally and absolutely due to Him -- thus showing the **work of the law in the heart** -- it speaks and declares itself **so** clearly that, without further evidence or **reasoning**, without any advantage beyond what it supplies itself, it makes known its **Author** -- the one from whom it comes and in whose name it speaks. Those common **ideas** and general **assumptions** about God and His authority that are **built into** the nature of **rational creatures** by God's own hand, for the purpose of revealing Him in the ways mentioned, are able to prove their own divine **origin** without the slightest help or support from outside.

Section 14. This is how things stand with those lesser means of revelation. But the psalmist says to God: **You have magnified Your Word above all Your name** -- above everything by which You make Yourself known. The **name** of God is everything by which He makes Himself known. Above all **this**, God magnifies His **Word**. Everything else serves in support of it. The **name of God** here is not God Himself, but everything by which God makes Himself known. Now it would be very **strange** if those dim, limited, and obscure **principles** and means of God's revelation that we have mentioned could prove themselves to be **from Him** with-

out any external help, assistance, **testimony**, or authority, while the Word that God Himself has **exalted above them** -- which is far more noble and excellent **in itself** and in its purpose and design, and which bears far more divinely striking and glorious marks of His goodness, holiness, power, grace, and truth than all creation -- should lie lifeless, hidden, and have nothing **in itself** to reveal its Author, until this or that added **testimony** is called in to help it. We consider those who, among their countless other bold **denials**, have also insisted that there is no **natural knowledge** of God arising from the **inborn principles** of reason and God's **works** presenting themselves for consideration, to have done no service to the truth. Now let the path to **supernatural revelation** also be blocked by denying that it can prove itself to be from God, and we will quickly see what barriers are being removed to let a **flood of atheism** sweep across the **face** of the earth.

Section 15. Let us consider where this general **argument** leads. Just as God, in creating the world and everything in it, has **so** made and **shaped** them, leaving such **marks** of His eternal power and wisdom in them and upon them, filled with such evidence of their **Author** and suited to the understanding of rational creatures, that without any other **testimony** from Himself or anyone else, simply by being considered and observed for **what** they are, they reveal their **Creator** so clearly that those who refuse to **learn** and **know** Him from them are left completely **without excuse** -- so also, in giving out His Word as the foundation of that **world** He has established within **this world** (like a **wheel within a wheel** -- His **Church**), He has by His Spirit implanted in it and impressed on it such marks of His goodness, power, wisdom, holiness, love for humanity, truth, faithfulness, and all the

rest of His glorious perfections, that at all times and in all places where its **reach** is extended over people by His providence, without any other witness or testimony, it declares itself to be His and proves its authority from Him. The refusal of it based on its own **evidence** brings unavoidable condemnation on people's souls. The psalmist pursues this comparison in **Psalm** 19, where he attributes a **voice** and a **line** to the created world and ascribes the same and more to the Word. Light, power, stability, and permanence like that of the heavens and the sun are given to the Word by this exchange of qualities, with an indescribable **exaltation** of the Word above them. The **light** of **one** day of this **Sun** is immeasurably greater than that of **seven** others in revealing the glory of God.

Section 16. This, then, is established as a principle of truth: whatever God has appointed to reveal Himself through, whether for a specific or general purpose -- so that those He intends to make Himself known to may either be effectively taught His mind and will (according to the measure, degree, and means of the revelation given) or be left without excuse for not accepting the testimony He gives of Himself, with no valid plea of insufficient, unclear, or hidden revelation -- **that** thing, whatever it may be, carries such an imprint of His authority upon it as to undeniably prove it is from Him. **And this point, concerning His Word, will now be further confirmed by testimonies and arguments.**

CHAPTER 3



CHAPTER 3.

Arguments of two kinds. Non-logical arguments by way of testimony to the truth. To whom these arguments are valid. Isaiah 8:20. 2 Timothy 3:16 on divine inspiration. The self-evidencing power that accompanies the voice of God. Jeremiah 23:26-29. The rejection of the claim of divine inspiration, and what it involves. Luke 16:31 on miracles, their effectiveness in producing faith compared with the Word. 2 Peter 1:16, 19-20.

Section 1. Having explained the **divine origin** and **authority** of Scripture and set forth the foundational position for our discussion, we are now prepared to consider the **self-evident proofs** of its divine origin and resulting authority -- the proofs on the basis of which we receive it **as** (believing it to be) the Word of God.

Section 2. Arguments used to confirm anything are of two kinds: **non-logical** (by way of **testimony**) and **logical** (by way of deductions and inferences). Whatever can contribute **evidence** for truth falls under one of these two categories. We use both kinds of **proof** in the matter at hand. Some people claim they accept the **authority** of Scripture and urge others to do the same, but they debate the grounds and reasons for doing so. With these people,

we may use the **first approach** -- testimony from the Scriptures themselves -- which on their own **principles** they cannot refuse. When they decide to inform us that they have abandoned those **principles** and no longer accept Scripture as the **Word of God**, we will withdraw the **witnesses** they object to, whom we currently rely on. Testimonies that are built into and woven throughout the **Word** itself, used only as foundations for **logical** arguments to be drawn from them (which belong to the second category), may be employed with those who do not currently accept Scripture's authority on any grounds whatsoever, or who wish to adopt the role of such people in order to test their **skill** and **ability** in mounting an argument against God's Word.

Section 3. In both of these cases, the **testimony** of Scripture is presented and should be accepted -- or at least cannot be refused with any reasonable basis. In the **first** case, it should be accepted because of the acknowledged authority and **truthfulness** of the witness, even though speaking in its own case. In the **second** case, it should be accepted because of the **self-evident quality** that accompanies the testimony, demonstrated by such **reasoning** and arguments that even those who do not accept its authority cannot dismiss them on principle. In **human** affairs, if a person of known **integrity** and spotless reputation testifies in any case, and provides undeniable evidence for their testimony from the very **nature** and **order** of the things they describe, then those who know and accept their **integrity** and **reputation** are expected to trust their **claim**. At the same time, even those who are **strangers** to them and are not moved by their personal authority will still be

persuaded to agree with what they testify, because of the nature of the things asserted -- especially if all the **circumstances** needed to give evidence to the matter are present.

Section 4. This is how it works in the case before us. For those who profess to believe the **Scriptures** to be the Word of God, and so accept the credibility and faithfulness of the **witness**, it is reasonable -- indeed, strictly required of them -- that they stand by the testimony Scripture gives about **itself** and its own divine origin. By saying that **Scripture** is the Word of God, and then **demanding** that we prove it to be so, they make themselves subject to every **testimony** we bring from it proving that it is -- and that it should be received on its **own** testimony. They cannot dismiss this witness without denying their own professed **principles**, and without those **principles** they have no basis for imposing this task on us.

Section 5. As for those who have not given us the advantage of their own **acknowledgment**, it is not reasonable to press them with the bare **testimony** of a witness whose very worthiness of **acceptance** is the question under debate. But arguments drawn from the Scripture -- from what **it is** and **does**, its **nature** and **effects**, by which the sources of all things are revealed -- cannot reasonably be refused.

Section 6. But it is neither of these groups that I chiefly intend to address. My present discussion concerns the satisfaction of our own **consciences** more than the answering of others' **objections**. Yet we must satisfy our **consciences** on such principles as will stand against all people's **objections**. What is chiefly being asked is this: what gives such **assurance** that the Scriptures are the Word of God, that by relying on it we have a sure foundation

for receiving them as such? And why are those who do not receive them **in that way** left **without excuse** in their damnable unbelief? We say this assurance is in and from the Scripture itself, so that no further **witness** or **testimony** is needed, nor should any other be admitted in the same category.

Section 7. It is not at all my intention to go into this subject at **great** length, so I will content myself with offering a **few** testimonies and arguments, beginning with one or two of the first kind. **Isaiah 8:20. To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this Word, there is no light in them.** Whatever anyone says -- no matter **what** or **who** it is, whether Church or individual -- if it concerns the things of God, His will or worship, or our obedience to Him, it must be tested by the law and testimony. This is where we are directed. This is declared to be the rule, standard, and touchstone for all **claims** whatsoever. Now that which must test the **claims** of all others -- and even its own -- must speak for itself alone.

Section 8. But what does this **law and testimony** -- that is, this **written** Word -- claim as the reason it should receive such attention? What does it present as grounds for its **acceptance**? Tradition? The authority of the Church? Miracles? The agreement of people? Or does it stand solely on its own sovereign claim? The apostle gives us his **answer** to this question in 2 **Timothy** 3:16. Its **claim** for acceptance -- set against and above all other ways of coming to know God, His mind and will -- the foundation on which it demands **attention** and submission with supreme, unchallengeable authority, is its divine **inspiration**. It remains only to

ask whether, when divine inspiration **is claimed**, there is any **middle ground** -- or must it either be received with **divine faith** or rejected as **false**?

Section 9. Suppose a man were **divinely inspired** and **professed** himself to be so in the name of the Lord, as the prophets of old did (Amos 7). Suppose, I say, he truly **were** so. No one would deny that his **message** should be received and submitted to on that basis. To deny this would **justify** those who **rejected** and killed **the ones God sent to speak to them in His name**. In plain terms, it would be saying: we may **reject** those whom God sends. Though **miracles** were given only in connection with **persons**, not **things**, most of the prophets -- who performed no miracles -- insisted on this: that being **divinely inspired**, their doctrine was to be received as from God. When they **did so**, it was **sin** -- specifically unbelief and rebellion against God -- not to submit to what they spoke in His name. And it always **turned out** this way -- to fix our faith on the right foundation -- that **hardly** any prophet who spoke in God's **name** received any approval from the **Church** in whose day he spoke. **Matthew 5:12; 23:29; Luke 11:47-48; Acts 7:52; Matthew 21:33-38**. It is true that there were **false prophets** who spoke in the Lord's name when He had not **sent** them (2 **Peter** 2:1; **Jeremiah** 23:22). Yet those whom He **did send** were to be received on pain of damnation; and on the same **penalty**, the false ones were to be refused. **Jeremiah** 23:28-29. The foundation of this duty lies in the self-evidencing power that accompanied the Word that was divinely inspired -- which we will discuss later. Without this assumption, it could not be consistent with God's goodness and righteousness to

require people, under threat of His **eternal** displeasure, to make such a distinction when He had not given them sure, infallible signs to enable them to do so.

Section 10. But that He had and has given such signs, He declares in **Jeremiah 23: How long will this go on in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy lies? They are prophets of the deceit of their own hearts, who think to make My people forget My name by their dreams which they tell one another, just as their fathers forgot My name because of Baal. The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream, and he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? says the Lord. Is not My word like a fire? says the Lord, and like a hammer that shatters rock?** In the final days of that community, when the people were most severely troubled by **false** prophets -- both in **number** and cunning -- God still placed their **eternal** and **temporal** well-being or ruin on their ability to correctly distinguish His **Word** from what was merely **pretending** to be His Word. And so that they could not complain about this requirement, He assured them that it would be **easy** to carry out. Speaking of His **own Word by comparison** to everything that is not His Word, He says it is like wheat compared to chaff -- something that can infallibly be told apart from the other simply by being what it is. Then, speaking **absolutely**, He says it has such **qualities** that it will make itself known: namely, **light** and **heat** and **power**. A person who was truly divinely inspired was therefore to be listened to, because he **was** truly inspired.

Section 11. If that was the case with an inspired person, is not the situation the same with the **Scriptures**, which are likewise divinely inspired? Is there anything in the **writing** of them by God's command that should diminish their authority? On the contrary, are they not freed from the countless **objections** that attended their original spoken delivery by human beings -- objections arising from the personal **weaknesses** and supposed self-interest of those who delivered them? **Jeremiah 43:3; John 9:29; Acts 24:5.**

Section 12. When this claim of divine inspiration is made and insisted on, it is either **received** or it is not. If it is **received** on this basis, then in it, we say, is the proper **foundation** of faith on which it rests and has its stability. If it is **rejected**, the rejection must include not only a refusal of its **testimony** but also a **strong condemnation** of its claim to be from God. What grounds anyone has or could have for such a refusal and condemnation will be considered later. If it is a sin to refuse it, then it would have been a duty to receive it. If it was a duty to receive it as the Word of God, then it was sufficiently shown to be so. We have already addressed the objection arising from those who **falsely** claim divine inspiration. And we are still dealing with those who **accept** the book we are discussing as the Word of God and are only questioning the grounds on which they do so, or on which others should do so. For these people, it is enough that, on the strength of all the authority and truth they profess to **acknowledge** in Scripture, it declares the foundation of its acceptance to be nothing other than its own **divine inspiration**. From this it follows:

Section 13. Again, in the dispute between **Abraham** and the **rich man** in Luke 16:31, about the best and most effective way to bring people to **repentance**: The **rich man** in hell, speaking from his own reasoning, settles on **miracles**. If someone **ris**es **from the dead and preaches**, the job will be done. **Abraham** disagrees -- or rather, **Christ** did, since He was the author of that parable. He tells them to pay attention to **Moses** and the **prophets** -- the **written Word** -- as the foundation on which all faith and repentance was to be directly built. Since the question was how people could best be assured that a **message** is from God, this **direction** would not have been appropriate if the Word did not **demonstrate** itself to be from Him.

Section 14. The basis for the request that someone **rise from the dead** is rooted in the common assumption of people who do not know the **power** of God in the Scriptures. They think that if an **obvious miracle** were performed, all excuses and arguments for **unbelief** would be eliminated. Who does not think so? Our **Savior** exposes that mistake and shows that those who will not **acknowledge** or submit to God's authority in the Word would not be **moved** by even the most remarkable miracles imaginable. If a holy person whom we knew for certain had been **dead** for several years were to rise from his **grave** and come to us with a **message** from God -- could anyone doubt whether he was sent to us by God? I would think not. The **rising of people from the dead** was the greatest miracle connected with our Savior's resurrection (Matthew 27:52-53). It was even greater than His **own** resurrection, if the **Socinians** are to be believed -- namely, in that **He did not raise Himself** by His own power. Yet the evidence of such a person's mission, and the **authority** of God speaking through

him, is not -- by our Savior's own judgment -- more effective in producing belief than what is found in the **written Word**, nor a surer foundation for faith to rest upon.

Section 15. If we could hear a **voice** from heaven, accompanied by such divine power as to prove itself to be from God, would we not **rest** in it as such? I think most people believe they would. Can we imagine anyone would **withhold** their agreement and say, 'But I need some additional testimony that this is from **God**'? All such evasions are ruled out by the very premise, which grants a **self-evidencing power**. What greater miracles did Christ's apostles ever **see** or hear than that voice that came from the most **excellent glory: This is My beloved Son**? Yet **Peter**, who heard that voice, tells us that **comparatively** we have greater security from the written Word than they had from that miraculous voice. We have, he says, **a more sure word of prophecy** to attend to. More sure! Not more sure **in itself**, but in the way it gives out its **evidence** to us. And how does it prove to be so? The reason he gives was discussed earlier (2 **Peter** 1:18-20).

Section 16. Suppose God were to speak to us from heaven, as He spoke to **Moses**, or as He spoke to **Christ**, or from a specific place (Numbers 7:8-9). How would we be able to know it was the voice of God? Could **Satan** not cause a voice to be heard in the air and deceive us? Or might not some other **method** be found by which people could impose their delusions on us? **Pope Celestine** thought he heard a voice from heaven when it was really just the **trick** of his successor. Must we not ultimately rest in the self-evidencing power that accompanies the true voice of God - - the power that **proves** itself and assures the soul beyond any possibility of mistake? Did this self-evidencing power not accom-

pany the **written** Word when it was first given? If it did not, then as we said, how could anyone be required to distinguish it from **counterfeits**? If it did, how did it come to lose that power? Did God command His Word to be **written** in order to destroy its authority? If the question is whether the doctrines proposed for belief are truths from God or **cunningly devised fables**, we are directed to the Scripture itself, and to it alone, for the answer.

CHAPTER 4



CHAPTER 4.

Built-in arguments in Scripture for its divine origin and authority. These are the formal reason for our believing. Its self-evidencing effectiveness. All light reveals itself. The Scripture is light. What kind of light it is. Spiritual light as evidence. Why people fail to see this light. Conclusions drawn from the points laid down. What the self-evidencing light of Scripture specifically is. The presentation of Scripture as an object of faith comes from and through this light. Power as self-evidencing. The Scripture is the power of God. And is powerful. How this power exerts itself. The entire question resolved.

Section 1. Having given a **few** examples of the **many** testimonies that Scripture explicitly bears about **itself** -- about the source, origin, and fountain of all the **authority** it claims among and over humankind, which all who claim on any grounds to acknowledge its **divinity** are bound by and obligated to -- the second proposed topic now comes into view: the **built-in** arguments that the Word of God is equipped with for its own demonstration, by which God's **authority** is revealed for **faith** to rest upon. These arguments contain the full and **formal** grounds of our answer to

the **question** laid out earlier: **why and on what basis we receive and believe the Scripture to be the Word of God.** Since what is being asked for is the **formal** reason of our faith -- **what** it is **built** on and **resolved** into -- we answer as we said before: we **receive**, embrace, believe, and submit to it because of the **authority** of God who speaks it, or who gave it as His mind and will, demonstrating itself by the Spirit in and with that Word to our minds and consciences. Or, to put it another way, because the Scripture -- having been brought to us through God's good providence by the means He appointed and preserved -- **infallibly** proves itself to our consciences to be the Word of the living God.

Section 2. The **self-evidencing** effectiveness of Scripture, and the grounds for it -- which consist in **common principles** broad enough to engage the reasoning of all people, whether or not they already accept it as God's Word -- is what I will attempt to clarify and defend in the rest of this discussion. I only want to note in advance that although some grounds of this **effectiveness** seem to lie in the **things** themselves contained in Scripture, I will not consider them **separately** as mere content, but under the specific character of their being the Scripture or **written** Word of God. Without this framework, the **things** mentioned would be left **bare** and completely stripped of the authority and effectiveness being claimed for them, and would be no different in **nature** or importance from the same things found in other books. It is the **writing** itself that now takes the place of the **persons** through whom God originally spoke to people. What the **persons** who spoke in ancient times were, the **writings** now are. It was the

spoken Word that was to be believed, yet as **spoken** by them from God. And it is now the **written Word** that is to be believed, yet **as written** by God's command and appointment.

Section 3. There are two things that carry a self-evidencing excellence, and everything else possesses it only to the degree that it shares in their nature. These are: 1. **Light**. 2. Power in action.

Section 4. 1. **Light** reveals itself. Whatever is **light** does this: it does everything necessary **on its own part** for its revelation and discovery. We are not yet speaking of the defects that exist or may exist in those to whom this disclosure is made. And whatever reveals itself is **light**. **Ephesians 5:13**. **Light** requires neither **proof** nor testimony to be evident. Let the **sun** rise in the sky, and there is no need for **witnesses** to prove to a **person who can see** that it is day. Even a small **candle** will do this. Let the smallest child bring a **candle** into a room that was dark before, and it would be insane to try to prove through **reliable witnesses** -- respected and authoritative people -- that light has been brought in. Does it not **prove** itself with an assurance greater than any that could be obtained by any testimony whatsoever? Whatever is **light** -- whether naturally or morally -- is revealed by the simple fact of **being** so. What does not reveal itself is not light.

Section 5. We will see shortly that Scripture is a **light**. That it **is** so, or **can** be called so, without having this nature and property of light -- the ability to **reveal** itself as well as to **give light** to others -- cannot be accepted in any reasonable use of language. Whether spiritual and intellectual light (relating to the mind) or **natural** light (relating to physical sight) is first and properly **light** -- the other being called so by comparison -- I do not need to investigate now. Both have the same properties in their respective

domains. True light shines. 1 **John** 1:5 -- **God** Himself is **light**, and He dwells in unapproachable light (1 **Timothy** 6:16) -- not a shining, glittering brightness, as some **crudely** imagine, but the glorious, unsearchable **majesty** of His own being, which our understandings cannot reach. So **Isaiah** 57:15 says He inhabits eternity. The psalmist says: You clothe Yourself with light. And **Daniel** 2:22 says **light dwells with Him**. God is **light** in His essence, and is therefore known by the shining forth of His eternal attributes in all that outwardly belongs to Him. **Light** abides with Him as its fountain; He communicates **light** to all others. Since God is the **fountain** of all **light**, the more anything shares in the nature of the fountain, the more it is **light** -- and the more properly so, as its qualities are considered. It is therefore spiritual, moral, intellectual **light**, with all its expressions, that holds the highest place in sharing the **nature** and **properties** of light.

Section 6. The Scripture, the Word of God, is light. Those who reject it are called **rebels against light** -- people resisting the authority they cannot help but be convinced of. **Psalms** 19:9; 43:3; 119:105, 130. **Proverbs** 6:23; **Isaiah** 9:2; **Hosea** 6:5; **Matthew** 4:16; 5:14. **John** 3:20-21 -- It is a light **shining** so brightly with the majesty of its Author that it shows itself to be His. 2 **Peter** 1:19 -- **A light shining in a dark place**, with a clear advantage for its own discovery as well as for the benefit of others.

Section 7. No matter how small or **unimpressive** a light may be, if it **shines** and casts out beams and **rays** in a dark place, it will prove itself. If other things are **lacking** in the observer's ability to see, the light should not be blamed for any deficiency in its own **glory** and beauty. But the Word is a glorious **shining** light, as has been shown -- an **illuminating** light, compared to and pre-

ferred above the light of the sun. **Psalm 19:5-7; Romans 10:18.** Let no one cast a reproach on the most **glorious light** in the world -- the most outstanding reflection of **uncreated** light and perfection -- a reproach that would not be applied to anything else that is in any way called light. **Matthew 5:19.**

Section 8. Since Scripture is a **light**, we acknowledge it is the duty of the Church -- of any Church, of every Church -- to **hold** it up so it becomes more visible. The Church is a **ground** and pillar to set this light upon. 1 **Timothy 3:15.** The phrase may refer to the **mystery of godliness** in the words that follow, with good coherence of speech, just as well as to the **Church.** But granting the usual **reading**, nothing more is stated than that the **light** and truth of Scripture is held **up** and held **out** by the Church. It is the **duty** of every Church to do this -- and it is almost the whole of its duty. This duty it performs in a **serving** capacity, not an **authoritative** one. A Church may **hold up** the light, but it **is not the light.** It **bears witness** to it but does not **kindle** a single divine beam to further its discovery. All the preaching in any Church, its administration of ordinances, and all its walking in the truth hold up this light.

Section 9. Nor does it in the least diminish this **self-evidencing effectiveness** of Scripture that it is a **moral** and spiritual light rather than a **natural** one. The principle is **universal** to all kinds of light -- indeed more applicable to spiritual light than to natural. I admit that light by itself will not fix a **defect** in the ability to **see.** It was not given for that purpose. Light is not **eyes.** It is enough that nothing is lacking **on its own part** for its discovery and revelation. To argue that the **sun** cannot be known as the **sun,** or as the primary means of providing **external light** to the

world, because **blind people** cannot see it and know nothing of it beyond what they are **told**, will scarcely be accepted. Nor does it in the least undermine the effectiveness of the light we are arguing for, that people who are completely blind cannot **grasp it**. John 1:5.

Section 10. I am not claiming from this that **wherever** Scripture is brought, by whatever **means** (which really makes no difference), everyone who **reads** it or to whom it is read must instantly and necessarily agree to its divine origin. Many people (who are **not completely** blind) may have so **damaged** their eyes that when a **light** is brought into a dark place, they cannot see it. People may be so filled with countless **prejudices**, principles received through strong traditions, and corrupt desires that make them **hate the light**, that they may not perceive the glory of the Word when it is presented to them. But it has no bearing on our present discussion whether any living person is able by and of **themselves** to see this light, as long as the **deficiency** can rightly be blamed on their own blindness. **2 Corinthians 4:2-4. By making the truth known, we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God; but if our Gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing, in whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe, so that the light of the Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine on them.** In the communication of the Word there is an evidence of truth that commends itself to people's consciences. Some do not receive this evidence. Is it because the truth itself lacks **light**? No! It is a glorious **light** that shines into people's hearts. Is it because

of a lack of **testimony** to establish this light? No! It is simply because the **god of this world** has blinded people's eyes so they cannot see it.

Section 11. From what has been laid down, two things may be concluded.

1. Just as the **authority** of God -- the first and only absolute truth -- in Scripture is all that divine faith rests on and is the **formal object** of that faith, so wherever the Word **comes**, by whatever means, it has in itself a **sufficiency** of light to demonstrate to all (and will eventually do so to all who are not blinded by the god of this world) the **authority** of God, its Author. The **only reason** it is not received by many in the world to whom it has come is the advantage **Satan** has in keeping them in ignorance and blindness through the lusts, corruption, **prejudices**, and hardness of their own hearts.

Section 12. The Word, then, makes a **sufficient presentation** of itself wherever it is. The person to whom it **comes** who rejects it because it is not accompanied by this or that **endorsement** will answer for their **atheism** and **unbelief**. Whoever has the **witness** of God does not need to wait for human witness, for the **witness** of God is greater.

Section 13. Wherever the Word is **received** as it requires itself to be received, and is **genuinely** accepted as the Word of God, it is **received** on the basis of the light it has in itself, which clearly declares itself to be so. It makes no difference by what means, by whose hand -- whether of a **child** or a **Church**, by **accident** or **tradition**, by common **agreement** among people or by special **providence** -- the Scripture comes to us. However it comes, it has

its authority in itself and toward us because it is the Word of God, and it has its power to **demonstrate** itself as such from its own **built-in** light.

Section 14. The **light** in Scripture that we are contending for is nothing other than the shining forth of God's majesty, truth, holiness, and authority, given to it and left upon it by its Author, the Holy Ghost. It carries an imprint of God's excellence, distinguishing it by **infallible** marks from the product of any creature. Through this light, it penetrates people's consciences and reaches into all the secret **depths** of their hearts -- guiding, teaching, directing, deciding, and judging in them and over them, in the **name**, majesty, and authority of God. If people who are **blinded by the god of this world** still deny this light because they do not perceive it, their denial will not harm those who do perceive it. By this **self-evidencing** light, I say, the Scripture presents itself as the Word of God in such a way that whoever rejects it does so at the risk of his eternal destruction. Through it, a foundation is offered for the **faith** Scripture requires to rest upon.

Section 15. For **proving** the divine authority of Scripture to anyone who does not yet **acknowledge** it on any grounds, I will only assume that through God's providence the book itself has been brought to them in a way that engages them to **consider** it, or that they attend to **reading** it. This is the work of God's **providence** in governing the world. Given this condition, I leave the **Word** with them. If it does not prove itself to their conscience, it is because they are **blinded by the god** of this world -- which will be no valid defense for rejecting it at the last day. And those who do not receive it on **this basis** will never receive it on any other, as they should.

Section 16. The **second kind** of thing that **proves** itself is anything that operates with effective **power**. **Fire** proves itself by heat, **wind** by its noise and force, salt by its taste and flavor, the **sun** by its light and heat. The same is true of **moral principles** that are effectively at work. **Romans** 2:14-15. People in whom they operate **demonstrate the work** of those principles -- or rather, demonstrate **the principles** through their work and effectiveness. Whatever has an **innate power** in itself that will effectively **operate** on a proper subject is able to prove itself and its own nature and character.

Section 17. To show that Scripture belongs among things of this nature -- indeed, that under God Himself (who is known by His great power and its effects), it has the **preeminence** -- I will note only **one** or two things about it. A full development of these points would take more time and space than I have set aside for this discussion.

Section 18. Scripture is directly called the **power of God**, and that for its proper purpose, which is the direction of its effective operation. **Romans** 1:16 -- It is the **power of God**. The **message about the cross** -- that is, the Gospel -- is the **power of God**. **1 Corinthians** 1:18. And the faith built on that Word, without other helps or advantages, is said to stand in the **power of God**. **1 Corinthians** 2:5. That is, it works effectively in and through the **Word**. It works in **the demonstration of the Spirit and of power**. Its spiritual **power** provides the demonstration. So it comes not as a **bare word** (**1 Thessalonians** 1:5) but in **power and in the Holy Ghost**, giving every kind of assurance and full persuasion of itself -- even through its power and effectiveness. For this reason it is called the **rod of power** or

strength. Psalm 110:2 -- indicating both authority and effectiveness. Surely what is the power and authority of God in this way is able to make itself known as such.

Section 19. It is not only said to be **power** -- the power of God in itself -- but also **capable** and **powerful** in relation to us. **You have known**, Paul says to **Timothy**, **the sacred letters** (the written Word) **which are able to make you wise for salvation**. They are powerful and effective for that purpose. **James 1:21** calls it the Word **that has power in it** to save. So **Acts 20:32** says, **I commend you** to the **powerful** Word. And so that we may know what kind of power it has, the **apostle** tells us that it is **living** and **effective** (**Hebrews 4:12**), **sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart**. It is designed by God to display the **effective working of His power**. See **John 6:68-69**; **2 Corinthians 6:4**; **1 Corinthians 15:58**; **Galatians 2:8**. By virtue of this **power**, it produced **fruit** in all the world. **Colossians 1:6**. Without **military force**, without (for the most part) **miracles**, without human **wisdom** or **eloquence**, without any inducements or motives except those drawn solely from itself - - consisting in things that **eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor could enter into the heart of man to conceive** -- it has exerted this **power and effectiveness** to conquer the world. It caused all kinds of people, in all times and places, to **bow** before its divine authority, immediately **renouncing** everything dear to them in the world and willingly enduring whatever was **dreadful**, terrible, and destructive to human nature in all its dearest concerns.

Section 20. Many have devoted themselves to laying out the **specifics** of how this **power** exerts itself, so I will not expand on them here. In general, these effects have this advantage: they are all **spiritual**, and they have their **seat**, dwelling, and home in the **hearts** and consciences of people. This makes them not **susceptible** to the objection that they are fabricated. People cannot harden themselves in rejecting the **testimony** these effects give by calling in **magicians** to reproduce them, or by claiming that what happens to those on whom the Word exercises its power is a **common** occurrence. The location of these effects is **safeguarded** against every power and authority except God's. The Word's penetration into the **hearts, consciences**, and hidden depths of people's minds; its judging and passing sentence on them within themselves; its conviction, terror, conquest, and slaying of people; its **converting**, building up, and making people wise, holy, and obedient; its providing **comfort** in every situation -- these and similar effects of its power are what is usually discussed.

Section 21. These are briefly the foundations of the **answer** returned to the **question** posed earlier, which could be greatly expanded. How do we know that **Scripture** is the Word of God? How can others come to be **assured** of this? Scripture, we say, bears **testimony** to itself that it is the Word of God. That testimony is the witness of God Himself, and whoever does not accept and believe it does what they can to make God a liar. To give us infallible assurance that in receiving this testimony we are not being deceived by **cunningly devised fables**, the Scriptures have a **glory of light** and power accompanying them that completely distinguishes them by **infallible** signs and evidences from all words and **writings** that are not divine, conveying their truth and

power into the souls and consciences of people with **infallible** certainty. On this basis they are received by everyone who receives them as from God -- everyone who has any real distinguishing foundation for their faith. Without these grounds, their faith would be equally effective as a reason for accepting the **Quran**.

CHAPTER 5



CHAPTER 5.

On the testimony of the Spirit. Traditions. Miracles.

Section 1. Before I move on to consider the **other** testimonies that serve as arguments drawn from the **built-in** excellencies and properties of the Word that I have discussed, some **other** matters -- whose correct understanding is very important to the issue at hand -- must be laid down and clarified. Some of these relate to the **testimony of the Spirit**, which is **commonly** and rightly cited as the great assuring principle -- the reason why we accept the Scriptures as the Word of God. To show in what sense this is usually taught by our **theologians**, and how far it aligns with what we have argued, I will explain **what that testimony** is, what it consists of, and how much weight we place on it.

Section 2. For Scripture to be received as God's Word, a twofold **work** of the Spirit is required. The first concerns the **subject** -- the mind of the person who assents to Scripture's authority. Regarding this act or work of the Spirit by which we are **enabled** to believe Scripture, on account of which we may say we receive it as God's Word or upon the **testimony** of the Spirit, I will briefly examine **what** it is and what it consists of.

Section 3. First, it is not an outward or inward **audible** testimony about the Word, as the **Roman Catholics** would have us believe. We do not claim that the Spirit directly, by Himself, says to every **individual** believer, 'This book **is** or **contains** the Word of God.' We do not say that the Spirit ever spoke to **us** about the Word, but rather **through** the Word. The kind of **ecstatic revelation** they imagine we mean is rarely claimed, and where it is, it is usually quickly exposed as a delusion. We do not argue for the **usefulness**, much less the **necessity**, of any such testimony. In fact, the principles we have laid down -- resolving all faith into the public **testimony** of the Scriptures themselves -- render all such **private testimonies** entirely unnecessary.

Section 4. Second, This testimony of the Spirit does not consist in a **conviction** that a person holds without clearly knowing how or why -- knowing only that he will not **abandon** it even if it costs him his life. That would be like what **Morinus** attributes to the Church of **Rome**, which, though it knew no reason to prefer the **Vulgar Latin** translation over the **original**, nonetheless by the **guidance** of the Spirit chose to do so -- that is, unreasonably. But if a person says he is **convinced** that Scripture is God's Word and that he would **die** a thousand times to testify to that belief, yet cannot identify any real basis for his **conviction** to support such a testimony and attributes it to the **Spirit** of God, his conviction is not what concerns us here. This kind of thing can happen to people simply through the influence of **traditions**, which people are usually **zealous** about and stubborn in defending. Education in certain settings can produce stubbornness in the most empty and false convictions. So the resolution and **conviction** we have in mind -- when we attribute our reception of Scripture as God's

Word to the effective work and witness of the Holy Ghost -- is not one introduced into our minds without our knowing how, built on foundations we cannot identify.

Section 5. Two things, then, we mean by this work of the Spirit on the **mind** of a person. 1. His **communication** of spiritual light -- an act of His power enabling the mind to discern the saving truth, majesty, and authority of the Word. There is a blindness, a darkness on people's minds that not only prevents them from recognizing the things of God in their certainty, evidence, necessity, and beauty, but also causes them to **misjudge** those things as **weak** and **foolish**, obscure, unintelligible, and not answering to any principle of wisdom by which they are guided (1 **Corinthians 2**). As long as this blindness remains on people's minds, it is impossible for them to agree to the Word of God on any true, lasting foundation. They may have a **biased opinion** about it, but they have no faith concerning it. This darkness must therefore be removed through the **communication** of light by the Holy Ghost -- a work of illumination that is commonly discussed by others and by me elsewhere.

Section 6. 2. The Holy Ghost, along **with** and through His work of **illumination**, also removes the twisted attitude of mind that we have by nature -- our hostility toward and aversion from the things of God -- and effectively persuades the mind to receive and accept the truth, wisdom, and authority of the Word. Because this **twisted attitude**, taking hold of the mind, also influences the **will** into an aversion and dislike of the **goodness** found in the truth presented to it, the Holy Ghost removes it through a double action.

Section 7. 1. He gives us wisdom, understanding, and a spiritual judgment by which we can compare **spiritual things** with **spiritual** in a **spiritual** manner, and so come to a clear and full awareness of the heavenly excellence and majesty of the Word. He enables us to **recognize whether the teaching is from God**. With the benefit of this help, all the parts of Scripture in their harmony and correspondence, and all its truths in their power and necessity, come together to give evidence to one another and collectively to the whole -- I mean as the **mind** is enabled to make a **spiritual** judgment of them.

Section 8. 2. He gives a spiritual **awareness**, a taste of the things themselves upon the **mind**, heart, and conscience -- when we have our **senses trained** to discern such things. These matters deserve fuller treatment and specific **illustration** from Scripture, if the scope of our present work allowed for it.

Section 9. In our **natural** condition regarding the things of God, the mind is full of emptiness, darkness, and blindness -- indeed it is **darkness** itself -- so that there is no correspondence between the faculty and the object. And the **will** lies in utter **unfamiliarity** with -- and indeed an impossibility of knowing -- the life, power, richness, sweetness, appeal, and goodness in the things presented for understanding, hidden under the **dark shadows** of a blind mind. To remedy both of these, the Holy Ghost communicates light to the **understanding**, enabling it to see and judge the truth as it is in Jesus. And the **will**, being delivered from the **prison** it was in and brought to new life, performs its proper function in embracing what is **fitting** and suited to it in the object presented. The Spirit indeed **reveals** to each person according to the

counsel of His will, yet He does so in the same general way that the **sun** gives out its **light** and **heat** -- the former making way for the latter. But these matters must not be pursued further now.

Section 10. Through these works of the **Spirit**, He does, I say, **convince** the mind of the truth and authority of Scripture, and in doing so leaves an impression of an effective testimony within us. This testimony of His, as it is authoritative and infallible in itself, is also incomparably more effective, powerful, and certain for those who receive it than any voice or **internal** word that some boast of could ever be. But this is not the work of the Spirit we are currently asking about.

Section 11. Second, there is a **testimony** of the Spirit that concerns the **object** -- the Word itself. This is a **public** testimony which, while it satisfies our own souls **individually**, is also something that can be cited for the satisfaction of all others to whom God's Word comes. The Holy Ghost, speaking **in** and **through** the Word and giving it virtue, power, effectiveness, majesty, and authority, provides us the **witness** that our faith is ultimately based on. Since there are only two categories to which all grounds of agreement belong -- namely, the **authority** of testimony and the **self-evidence of truth** -- they both converge here as one. In the same Word we have both the authority of the Spirit's testimony and the **self-evidence** of the truth He speaks. Indeed these two are **materially** one and the same, though distinguished in their **formal** conceptions. I have been deeply moved by these verses of DANTES the **Italian poet**, which someone has translated word for word into **Latin**.

-- larga pluvia Spiritus sancti quae est diffusa Super veteres, et super novas membranas, Est syllogismus qui eam mihi conclusit Acute adeo ut prae illa Omnis demonstratio mihi videatur obtusa.

The Spirit's communication of His own **light** and **authority** to the Scripture, as evidence of its origin, is the testimony we are arguing for.

Section 12. When we trace our **faith** back to the **testimony** of the Holy Ghost, it is not some private **whisper**, word, or voice given to individual persons. It is not the secret and effective persuasion of Scripture's truth that settles on some people's minds from various intertwined influences of **upbringing**, tradition, and the like, which they cannot give any clear account of. It is not the **effective work** of the Holy Ghost on people's minds and wills that enables them to believe **savingly**. The **Roman Catholics**, who argue mostly about these things, only display their **ignorance** and hostility. Rather, it is the public testimony of the Holy Ghost given to all, about the Word, through and in the **Word** and its own divine light, **effectiveness**, and power.

Section 13. This, then, is how far we have come. The Scripture, the **written Word**, has its infallible **truth** in itself (John 17:17). From the same source as its **truth** comes its authority, for its entire authority is founded on its truth. Its authority **in itself** is its authority in relation to us. It has no more authority in itself than it has, by right, toward and over all those to whom it comes. That some people **in practice** do not submit to it is their sin and rebellion. This **truth** and consequently this **authority** is demonstrated and made known to us by the public testimony given to it by the Holy Ghost speaking in it, with **divine light** and power, to the minds, souls, and consciences of people. When it is

presented to us **by itself**, and we are enlightened by the Holy Ghost (which in our present **condition** is necessary for grasping any spiritual thing or truth in a spiritual way), we receive it and **devoutly** submit our souls to it as the Word and will of the ever-living, sovereign God and judge of all. And if this is not a **foundation** for faith, I publicly declare that, as far as I know, I have no faith at all.

Section 14. Having laid this **firm** foundation, I will now consider as briefly as possible some claims and arguments for confirming Scripture's authority that have been **devised** and used by some to divert us from the **foundation** that alone can bring peace to our souls in this matter. This chapter will, as it were, lay in the balance and compare the **testimony of the Spirit** described and explained above with the **other claims** and arguments that will now be examined.

Section 15. 1. Some say -- when other considerations compel them to say it -- that we **have received the Scripture from the Church of Rome, which received it by tradition, and this gives it credibility**. I will discuss **tradition** in general later, without this limiting reference to **the Church of Rome** that actually undermines the argument. **Credibility** either stays within the bounds of **probability** (which may be elevated to an overwhelming level while still not going beyond that sphere) -- in which **sense** it is entirely irrelevant to our present discussion -- or it includes a firm, adequate foundation for supernatural and divine faith. Have we in this latter sense **received** Scripture from that **Church**, as it is called? Is that Church able to give such **credibility** to anything? Does Scripture need such **credibility** to be given to it by that Church? Are not the first two claims clearly false, and

the last one blasphemous? To receive a **thing** from a **Church** as a Church is to receive it on the authority of that Church. If we receive anything on the **authority** of a Church, we do so not because the thing itself is **worthy of acceptance** but because of the authority cited. If, then, we receive the Scriptures from the **Church of Rome** in this way, why do we not also receive the **Apocryphal** books, which she accepts? How did the Church of Rome receive the Scriptures? Shall we say she is **authorized** to declare whatever seems good to her to be the Word of God? No -- she claims to have received them by **tradition**. She also claims to have received the **Apocryphal** books in the same way. So we receive the **Scriptures** from **Rome**; Rome received them by **tradition**; and we make ourselves judges of that **tradition**. Yet **Rome** says this is one thing she has by the same **tradition** -- namely, that she alone is the judge of what she has by tradition. But the common fate of liars has overtaken that **institution**: she has so **long**, so constantly, so desperately **lied** about many -- indeed most -- of the things she professes, claiming **tradition** for them, that she truly does not deserve to be believed even when she tells the truth. Besides, she claims she received the Scriptures from the **beginning**, when it was agreed that the copies of the **Hebrew** Old Testament and the Greek New Testament were the only authentic texts. These she now claims have become badly **corrupted** under her **care**, and yet she is offended that we do not believe her **tradition**.

Section 16. Some add that we **receive** Scripture as God's Word on the basis of the **miracles** performed at the giving of the **law** and the **New** Testament, which **miracles** we have received through universal **tradition**. But first I want to know: since our

Savior Jesus Christ performed many other **miracles** besides those that are **recorded** (John 20:30; 21:25), and the apostles did the same, why is it that with all their **traditions** they cannot help us to so much as a **faint report** of even one miracle that is not **written** down? (I am not speaking of legends.) Yet these unrecorded miracles were no less well known at the time they occurred than the recorded ones, and were no less useful for the purpose of **miracles** than those that were. More on tradition in general later. But is it not obvious that the miracles they speak of are preserved in Scripture and nowhere else? If so, can these miracles have any effect on anyone's understanding or judgment unless they **first** accept Scripture as the Word of God? I mean for the producing of a divine faith in them -- faith that any such miracles ever occurred. Suppose these **miracles**, offered as the basis for believing the Word, had **not been written down** but like the **Sibyl's** pages had been blown around by the worst and fiercest wind in this world -- the **breath** of human beings. Those who would preserve them by tradition -- that is, **people** -- are by nature so **vain**, foolish, malicious, such **liars**, embellishers, and detractors. They have spirits and minds so **ill-suited** to spiritual things, so prone to change in themselves and to contradicting one another, so given to **deception** and so easily deceived, so **scattered** and driven around the world in every generation, and have for the most part so completely lost track of what they **are**, where they came from, and where they are going, that I can put very little confidence in anything for which I have nothing but their **word** to rely on, with no evidence from the nature of the thing itself.

Section 17. Setting aside, then, the testimony given in Scripture to the **miracles** performed by those who originally revealed God's mind and will in the Word, no **adequate** assurance - - where a foundation for faith is needed -- can be given that any such miracles ever occurred. If sheer numbers of people are allowed to speak, we could have a **traditional testimony** supporting the blasphemous fictions of the **Quran** under the name of true miracles. But the consistent **tradition** of more than a thousand years, passed down by countless multitudes of people -- great, wise, and sensible -- from one generation to the next does nothing but open the gates of hell for the **Muslims**. Yet setting aside the **authority of God** in His Word and everything resolved into it, I do not see why they could not match **traditions** with the rest of the world. The world is indeed full of traditions **derived from the Word** -- that is, a knowledge of the **doctrines** of the Word in people's minds. But a tradition of the Word that is not ultimately traced back to the **Word** itself -- a tradition rooted in a **source** of sensory experience in **seeing** and hearing, preserved as an **oral law** in a separate channel and stream by itself -- when such a tradition is **demonstrated** either by a specific **example** of something preserved in it, or by a **reasonable case** for its transmission through the generations by comparison with similar effects in things of a like kind, I will be ready to accept it.

Section 18. Give me, then, as I said before, even the faintest **report** of any one of those **many miracles** performed by our Savior and the apostles that are not recorded in Scripture, and I will value the **supposed traditions** more than I can presently bring myself to do. Besides, many writers of Scripture **performed no miracles**, and by this reasoning their writings are left to fend

for themselves. Miracles were certainly necessary to remove all **prejudices** against the persons who brought any new doctrine from God, but the doctrine always proved itself. The apostles converted many people where they performed no miracles. **Acts** 16:17-18. And where they did perform miracles, **they** were received on the strength of their **doctrine**, not the doctrine on their account. And Scripture now has no less **evidence** and demonstration of its divinity in itself than it had when the apostles preached it.

Section 19. But because this **tradition** is claimed with great **confidence** as a sure foundation for receiving the Scriptures, I will examine it a little further. What is meant by tradition in this case is a report from people, which those who are present have received from those who came before them. This could be a report from **all** people in the world, or only from **some** of them. If from all, their **votes** must be gathered either in some **assembly** or collected from **individuals** as we are able and have the opportunity. If the **first** method were even **possible** -- which represents the highest level that **imagination** can give to the authority in question -- yet since every **individual** person is a liar, the whole assembly would have the same **character** and therefore could not provide a sufficient **basis** for building a faith that cannot possibly be deceived. Much less can such a basis be found in the kind of report that emerges from the assertions of individual people.

Section 21. But if this tradition is said to be preserved by only **some** in the world -- not even **half** of **rational** beings -- I want to know what reason I have to believe **those** who have that tradition, or claim to have it, over and **against** those who say their ancestors passed down no such report to them. Is the reason that I **live**

among **these** people who have the tradition, and they are my **neighbors** whom I know? By the same rule, those who live among the other **groups** of people would be bound to accept what they pass down by tradition. And so people could be obligated to **believe** the **Quran** is the Word of God.

Section 22. It is more likely the answer will be that their **testimony** should be accepted because they are the **Church of God**. But as far as I can see, there is no other way I can know them to be so, or know of any **authority** that any group of people -- large or small -- can have in this case under that name or idea, except through **Scripture** itself. If that is the case, it will quickly become clear what place their **testimony** should hold, since they cannot be admitted as **witnesses** unless Scripture itself is first acknowledged and accepted -- because their only **claim** or right to be admitted as witnesses comes from **Scripture**. If they declare that they **claim this honor** for themselves and that, apart from any reference to Scripture, they have a right to give authoritative witness in this matter, then I say again: on the general grounds of **natural** reason and fairness, I have no more reason to believe **their claims** than I would to believe an equal number of people holding a **tradition** completely opposite to what they assert.

Section 23. But suppose even **this** were granted, and people were allowed to speak on their own name and authority, giving **testimony** about themselves -- which, under the current theory, God Himself is not allowed to do. I would like to know whether, when the **Church** declares Scripture to be God's Word to us, it perceives **anything** in Scripture as the basis for that judgment and declaration, or not. If it says no, but that the declaration rests on **its sole authority**, then surely -- if we think it wise to **accept**

this resolution of our question -- it is high time for us to set aside all our **studies** and inquiries into the **mind** of God and simply ask what that **man** or **those men** say who are entrusted with this authority (as they claim, and as they want us to believe, though we have no idea how or by what means they obtained it, since they dare not appeal to **Scripture** lest they point us to **that** first).

Section 24. If it is said that they **judge** and believe Scripture to be **true** and to be God's Word on other grounds, I assume it will not be thought **unreasonable** for us to investigate those grounds, seeing they are of such great concern to us. All truths in their relationships consist in their **agreement** and correspondence with the **nature** of the things they describe. I would like to know how they came to judge the agreement between the **nature** of the things described in Scripture and **Scripture's** description of them. Since the things we are talking about are heavenly, **spiritual**, mysterious, and supernatural, no **knowledge** of them can be obtained except through the Word itself. How, then, can they make any judgment about the truth of Scripture's account of these things, when many of them are **known** nowhere else, not even in the smallest degree, except from Scripture itself?

Section 25. If they say they base their judgment and declaration on some **evidence** that Scripture presents about itself to them, they are affirming the very **same** thing we argue for. They would just like to claim for themselves the exclusive privilege of being **able** to recognize that **evidence** as it is displayed in Scripture. To make good this claim, they must appeal either to something from **themselves** or from the Scriptures. If from **themselves**, it can only be that they **see** -- like the people of

China -- while everyone else is blind or has only **one eye** at best, being **wiser** and more able to **perceive** than anyone else. Though I will readily grant them to be very **clever** and **cunning**, I would not want to be thought to **admit** that they are **so much wiser** than everyone else in the world that they are fit to **impose** on others' belief things that those others neither **do** nor **can** discern or know -- not until I can believe that I and all others outside their society or alliance are **beasts** of the field, and they are the **serpent** among us.

Section 26. If they base their claim on **Scripture**, then -- since we compel them to stop right **there**, which is all we aim at -- their argument must come from a **promise** of some special help granted to them for that purpose. If the help they claim is that of the **Spirit**, it is either the **Spirit** promised to believers, working in them as described and explained above, or it is some **private** testimony they claim is given to them. If the **former** is asserted, we are in a position where the **necessity** of turning everything back to Scripture itself -- to decide and judge who are **believers** -- is plain for everyone to see. If the **latter**, who will give me **assurance** that when they claim to have that witness and testimony, they are not **lying** and deceiving? We must here certainly go either to **Scripture** or to some **fortune teller** for our answer. **Isaiah 8:19-20.**

Section 27. I admit that the argument which has recently been singled out and **skillfully** developed by an **able** and learned writer -- namely, proving the truth of Scripture's **doctrine** from the truth of its **history**, and the truth of the history from the certainty that the writers of the books of the **Bible** were the very persons whose names and titles they bear, thus tracing the evidence

that what they wrote was **true** and **known** by them to be so, covering every requirement that could possibly be **demanded** to strengthen such evidence -- is of **great force** and effectiveness. It is, I say, of great **force and effectiveness** for the purpose it is intended for: satisfying people's **rational inquiries**. But as a foundation for faith, it has the same **inadequacy** as all other arguments of its kind. Though I should grant that the apostles and **writers** of Scripture were persons of the greatest **diligence, honesty, integrity, faithfulness, and holiness** who ever lived -- as they were -- and that they **wrote** nothing that they did not have as strong assurance of as any person could gain through their senses of sight and hearing, yet such knowledge and assurance is not a **sufficient foundation** for the faith of God's Church. If they did not receive every word by **inspiration**, and if that inspiration does not **prove** itself to us in some way beyond the authority of **their personal integrity**, it cannot be a foundation for us to build our faith upon.

Section 28. Before Scripture was committed to writing, God had given the world an experiment in how well people guard **revelation** through tradition. Within a few hundred years after the **flood**, all knowledge of God -- through the **cunning** of **Satan** and the indescribable **emptiness** of human minds -- was so completely lost that nothing short of what amounted to the **creation of a new world** or the establishment of a new Church through new revelations could restore it. After that great **test**, what more can be said on behalf of **tradition**, I do not know.

Section 29. The sum of all this is: God's merciful and good providence, having by various **means** -- using among other things the **ministry** of people and **churches** -- preserved the writings of

the **Old** and **New** Testament in the world, and by the same gracious arrangement brought them to us, they are received and submitted to by us on the **grounds** and evidences of their divine **origin** already discussed.

Section 30. Taking everything into account, then, I would like to know: if the Scriptures were **brought** to someone in a time or place where they could not possibly have them attested as the Word of God by any **public** or **private** authority of **any person** or **Church**, by **tradition** or otherwise, would that person be bound to believe them or not? Would they **obey** God in believing, or **sin** in rejecting them? Suppose they simply consider them, give them a reading or hearing. Since everywhere Scripture declares itself to be God's Word, they must necessarily either accept it or reject it. To remain undecided -- which arises from the incomplete workings of the soul's faculties -- is in itself a **weakness**, and in this case, being counted on the worst side, amounts to a rejection. If you say it would be the duty of such a person to **believe** it, you acknowledge that Scripture has in itself **sufficient evidence** of its own original authority -- without which it could be no one's duty to believe it. If you say it would not be a **sin** for them to reject and refuse it, to disbelieve everything it speaks in God's name, then this is what you are saying: God may **truly** and **really** speak to a person (as He does through Scripture) and yet that person is not **obligated** to believe Him. We do not even treat each other that way.

Section 31. To wrap up the argument presented in the previous chapter about the **self-evidencing** light and power of Scripture, from which we have digressed, and to make way for

some **additional considerations** that support their **divine origin**, I will close this discussion with the two general reflections that follow.

Section 32. 1. Setting aside these **inadequate arguments**, there seems to be a **moral impossibility** that the Word of God should fail to demonstrate its own **origin** and its authority derived from that origin. **Quaelibet herba deum** -- even every plant reveals God. There is no **work** of God, as was shown, that does not reveal its Author. A skilled **craftsman** gives such **form**, shape, proportion, and beauty to the product of his **creativity** and the work of his **hands** that everyone who sees it must conclude it comes from **skill** and ability. A person expressing their thoughts in a **book** will give it such an impression of reason that, even if you cannot determine that this or that specific person wrote it, you must conclude that it was the product of a rational being. Indeed, some **individual** people of exceptional skill in a field are instantly recognized by those who can judge that art or skill, simply from the results of their work. 'This is the **piece**, this is the **hand**, the work of that person.' How easy it is for those who are familiar with **ancient authors** to identify an author by the spirit and **style** of their writings. Now surely it is **strange** beyond all belief that almost every **maker** should leave an imprint on their work by which it can be traced to them, and yet the **Word** -- in which the great and Holy God designed to give us a portrait, as it were, of His wisdom, holiness, and goodness, as far as we are capable of knowing Him in this life -- is somehow unable to declare and prove its origin. That God, who is the first and sovereign truth, infinitely separated and distinguished from all creatures in every respect, should **write** a book (or at least directly dictate it), commanding us to re-

ceive it as **His** under the **penalty** of His eternal displeasure, and yet that **book** should fail to make a sufficient demonstration of itself as His, as coming from Him -- this is beyond all belief. Let those who live on **things** received by **tradition** from their fathers -- who perhaps never experienced any **real** encounter between God and their souls, who scarcely ever read the Word **seriously** in their lives or brought their **consciences** to it -- please themselves with their own **delusions!** The sure **anchor** for a soul that would draw near to God in and through His Word lies in the truths we have laid down.

Section 33. I assume no one will deny that it was God's mind and will that those to whom His Word should **come** should **acknowledge** it and receive it as His. If not, it would be **no sin** for them to reject it. But if it was His will, then either He has given it those **marks** and left upon it that impression of His **majesty** by which it might be known as His, or He has not done so. And if He has not, it is either because He **would** not or because He **could** not. To say the **latter** is to make Him more **feeble** than a human being or any other creature of the earth -- more feeble than any naturally effective cause. Whoever says the **former** must know that they are responsible for giving a satisfactory explanation of why God **would** not do this, or else they will be thought to **blasphemously** attribute to God a lack of the goodness and love for humanity that He has shown through infinite grace to be part of His nature. That no one is able to offer any such **reason**, I will firmly believe until I find someone attempting to do so -- and as yet no one has reached such a height of **shamelessness** and wickedness as to try.

Section 34. Second. How terrible it is to the mind of any **saint** of God to think that **Scripture** should not have its authority from itself. **Tertullian** raises this objection against the Gentiles in his **Apology, Chapter 5: Facit et hoc ad causam nostram, quod apud vos de humano arbitratu divinitas pensitatur; nisi homini Deus placuerit, Deus non erit; homo jam Deo propitius esse debet.** Would it be any different in this case if Scripture had to depend on the **good will** of human beings for the reputation of its **divinity**? Indeed, for its very **truthfulness** -- since from the same source as its authority comes its truthfulness, as was noted before. And much more could be said along these lines.

CHAPTER 6



CHAPTER 6.

Additional considerations that confirm the divine Authority of Scripture.

Section 1. In the previous chapter, I said that I would not deliberately try to weaken any of the reasons or arguments commonly used to prove the **divine Authority** of Scripture. I admit that I do not like to pile up arguments that only lead to **probability** and are designed to produce a **firm opinion** at best, when the principle being proven is **de fide** and must be believed with divine and supernatural faith. Yet because some people may be held to a certain **adherence** to the Scriptures by weaker grounds that will not stand on their own until they find firmer footing in stronger ones, I will not try to drive them from their current position before I have persuaded them with something better.

Section 2. In fact, since the evidence already presented gives great usefulness to certain **consequential considerations** and arguments at various times, I will focus on **two** of that kind. To me, having the **advantage** of receiving the Word on the basis already described, these arguments seem not only to **persuade** and

largely convince toward undeniable **probability**, but also to press irresistibly on the understanding of unprejudiced people, compelling them to embrace the divine truth of Scripture.

Section 3. The first of these arguments comes from the **nature** of the doctrine contained in Scripture itself. The second comes from the **management** of the whole design within it. The first is **innate**, while the other involves more **external** and **rational** consideration.

Section 4. Regarding the first argument, there are **two** things worth considering in the **doctrine** of Scripture that are **powerful** and, if I may say so, irresistibly **prevalent** for this purpose.

Section 5. First is Scripture's **universal suitableness**. When it is first clearly revealed, it speaks to all the **entanglements** and perplexities of the human soul regarding our relationship to and dependence on God. If **all** of humanity has certain **entanglements** weighing on their hearts and spirits in relation to God, which **none** of them (except those who are completely **brutish**) fail to wrestle with, and which **all** of them are completely unable to resolve on their own, then certainly the **doctrine** that universally satisfies all their perplexities, calms and quiets their troubled spirits, and breaks in on them with glorious power for that very purpose in its revelation, must come from the **God** with whom **we have to do**, and no one else. Who else could it come from? He who can give out such a Word, **ille mihi semper erit Deus**.

Section 6. Now there are three general **heads** of things that every person who is not **naturally** brutish is perplexed about, regarding their dependence on God and their relationship to Him.

1. How they may worship Him **as they ought**.

2. **How they may be reconciled** and at peace with Him, or have an **atonement** for the guilt they naturally feel.

3. **What is the nature of true blessedness**, how they may attain it, and how they may come to the enjoyment of God.

Section 7. That all of humanity is perplexed and entangled with these considerations, that all people ever were so without exception (more or less), and continue to be so to this day, that on their own they miserably **grope** around in the dark and can never reach any satisfaction about either **present** or **future** things — I could prove this from the condition and role of **conscience**, the permanent concepts and **presumptions** about these matters that are in **all** hearts by nature. The whole history of all religion in the world, together with the aim of **all** ancient and present philosophy, along with countless other undeniable proofs (which, God helping me, I will lay out in another **treatise**), make this truth clear.

Section 8. Surely, then, whatever can provide **equal** and universal satisfaction to every one of these concerns, quieting and **calming** their spirits, cutting off all need for further searching, giving them **that** in which they must rest and be satisfied — unless they choose to throw off the **relationship** and **dependence** on God that they seek to confirm and settle — surely this must **be** from the **all-seeing**, all-satisfying Truth and Being, and from no one else. This is exactly what the **doctrine** of Scripture does, with such a glorious and irresistible conviction that everyone to whom it is revealed, whose **eyes** of understanding are not **blinded by**

the God of this world, must cry out **Eureka** — I have **found** what I searched for in vain elsewhere, **growing foolish** in my own reasonings.

Section 9. It would take too long to cover each point in detail. Take one example: the matter of atonement, reconciliation, and acceptance with God. What strange and horrible **fruits** and effects have human schemes on this subject produced? What have people not invented? What have they not **done**? What have they not **suffered**? And yet they remained in dread and bondage all their days. Now with what a glorious, soul-satisfying **light** does the doctrine of satisfaction and atonement, **by the blood of Christ the Son of God**, break in upon such people! This first **astonishes**, then **conquers**, then **ravishes** and satisfies the soul. This is what they were looking for. This is what they were **sick** for, and did not know it. This is the purpose of the Apostle's argument in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the **Romans**. Let anyone read that passage from **verse 18** of chapter 1 onward, and he will see with what glory and beauty, with what full and ample satisfaction this doctrine breaks out in Romans 3:22-26.

Section 10. It is the same regarding the details of **present** worship and **future** blessedness. This doctrine meets people in all their wanderings, stops them in their searching, and convinces them of the darkness, folly, uncertainty, and falsehood of all their reasoning about these things. It does so with such evidence and light that it immediately subdues them, captivates their understanding, and quiets their souls. This is how the old **Roman** world was conquered by it, and this is how the **Mohammedan** world will be conquered in God's good and appointed time.

Section 11. Here is the summary of what has been said. All of humanity who acknowledge their **dependence** on God and their relationship to Him are **naturally** (and cannot be otherwise) deeply involved and perplexed in their hearts, thoughts, and reasoning about the worship of God, acceptance with Him after having sinned, and the future enjoyment of Him. Some have clearer and more distinct awareness of these things, while others wrestle with them under more **dark** and general impressions. To untangle themselves and come to some resolution about these questions has been the great **design** of their lives — the goal behind everything they thought they did **well** and **admirably** in this world. Despite all of this, they were never able to free themselves — not **one** of them — or find satisfaction for their souls. Instead, they became empty in their reasonings, and their **foolish hearts were more and more darkened**. In this condition, the doctrine of Scripture comes in with full, unquestionable **satisfaction** for all these needs, suited to the searching of every **individual** soul, with a depth of wisdom and goodness beyond measure. It must therefore come from the God with whom we have to do. Those who are not persuaded by this, who will not drop anchor in this harbor, should put out to sea once more if they dare. Let them turn themselves over to other considerations and see if all the **perplexities** mentioned above do not inevitably return.

Section 12. Another consideration of the **doctrine** of Scripture for this purpose relates to some of its specific teachings. There are certain **doctrines** of Scripture, certain revelations in it, so **sublimely** glorious and of such profound and mysterious **excellency** that when they are first presented, human nature startles, shrinks back, and is struck with awe, encountering something

above it — too great and too **excellent** for it — which it would gladly avoid and turn away from. Yet when nature gathers itself together to face them, it yields and discovers that unless these teachings are **accepted** and submitted to, though they are unsearchable, not only must everything else that has been received be rejected, but the whole **dependence** of the **creature** on God must either be dissolved or made only **dreadful**, terrible, and destructive to nature itself. Such are the doctrines of the Trinity, the **Incarnation** of the Son of God, the resurrection of the dead, the **new birth**, and others like them. At the first revelation of these things, human nature is **amazed** and cries, how can these things be? Or it gathers itself up in **opposition** — this is babbling, said the **Athenians**; **folly**, said all the **wise** Greeks. But when the **eyes** of reason are somewhat strengthened, though they can never fully see the **glory** of this sun, they confess that there is a glory in it beyond anything they can grasp. I could show in **detail** that the doctrines mentioned above, and several others, carry this same weight — namely, though they are great and beyond the reach of reason, upon examination they prove to be such that without **submission** to them, the whole comfortable relationship between God and man must be dissolved.

Section 13. Let us look at **one** of these examples. What is there in the whole Bible that human nature recoils from more at first sight than the **doctrine** of the **Trinity**? How many people still **stumble** and fall over it? I admit the doctrine is only **sparingly** presented, yet it is **clearly** and distinctly given to us in Scripture. The summary of it is this: God is **one**. His nature, His being, is **one**. All the **properties** and infinite essential excellencies of God as God belong to that **one nature** and being. This God

is infinitely good, holy, just, and powerful. He is eternal, **omnipotent, omnipresent**. These things belong to none but Him who is that **one** God. This God is the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost — which are not **diverse names** for the **same** person, nor **distinct** attributes or properties of the same **nature** or being, but **one, another**, and a **third**, all **equally** that one God, yet **really** distinguished from each other by such incommunicable properties as make the **one** to be that **one**, the **other** to be that other, and the **third** to be that third. Thus the **Trinity** is not the union or **unity** of three, but a Trinity **in** unity — the **threefold** number of **persons** in the same essence. The **Trinity** in its formal meaning does not refer to the **essence**, as if the essence were contained in the Trinity (which is in each person). Rather, it refers only to the **distinction** of the persons comprised in that number.

Section 14. This, I say, is the summary of this **doctrine** as it is given to us in Scripture. Here reason becomes entangled, yet after a while it **clearly** discovers that unless this is embraced, everything else it has to do with **God** will be of no **value** to the soul. This will quickly become apparent. Of all the communion between God and man that exists **here**, founded on the revelation of His mind and will, which leads to enjoyment of Him in **glory**, there are two parts. 1. God's gracious **communication** of His love, goodness, and their fruits to us. 2. The **obedience** of man to God in a spirit of **gratitude** for that love, according to the mind and will of God revealed to him. These two make up the **whole** of the relationship between God and man. Now when the human mind wrestles with these things, it **eventually** finds that they are so

bound up in the doctrine of the **Trinity** that without believing, receiving, and accepting it, it is absolutely impossible to obtain or preserve any **interest** in them.

Section 15. As for the first part — God's **communication** to us in a way of love and goodness — it is entirely **founded** on and wrapped up in this truth, both in its **eternal** source and its **actual** execution. A few examples will prove this point. The eternal fountain of all grace, flowing from love and goodness, lies in God's **election** or predestination. Since this is an act of God's **will**, it cannot be understood apart from being also an eternal act of His **wisdom** or Word. All the eternal plans for carrying it out lie in the **covenant** between the **Father** and the **Son**, regarding the Son's undertaking to execute that purpose. I have explained this at length elsewhere.

Take away the doctrine of the **Trinity**, and both of these are gone. There can be no **purpose** of grace from the Father in the Son, and no **covenant** for carrying that purpose into action. And so the foundation of all the **fruits** of love and goodness is lost to the soul.

Section 16. As for the execution of this **purpose** and the actual giving out of the fruits of grace and goodness to us, it lies entirely in the unspeakable **condescension** of the Son in His **Incarnation** and everything that followed from it. The **Incarnation** of the eternal Word, by the power of the Holy Ghost, is the **foundation** of our participation in grace. Without it, it was absolutely **impossible** for humanity to share in the favor of God. Now this **wraps** the whole doctrine of the **Trinity** within itself, and it cannot even be **understood** without acknowledging the Trinity. Deny the Trinity, and the entire means of the **communi-**

cation of grace, together with the whole of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, **falls** to the ground. Every detail of it declares this truth. Those who deny the one reject the other.

Section 17. Our actual **participation** in the fruits of this grace is through the Holy Ghost. We cannot **seize** on them ourselves or bring them home to our own souls. I cannot stop now to demonstrate the **impossibility** of doing so. But where does this Holy Ghost come from? Is He not **sent** from the Father, by the Son? Can we entertain any thought of His effective **working** in us and upon us without it including this whole doctrine? Those who deny the **Trinity** therefore deny the effectiveness of His work as well.

Section 18. The same is true regarding our **obedience** to God, by which the communion between God and man is completed. Although the **formal object** of divine worship is the **nature** of God, and the persons are not worshipped as distinct persons but as each of them is God, yet as God they are each one of them to be worshipped distinctly. This applies to our faith, our love, our thanksgiving, and all our obedience, as I have thoroughly **demonstrated** in my treatise on distinct communion with the Father in **love**, the Son in **grace**, and the Holy Ghost in the privileges of the Gospel. Thus without the **acknowledgment** of this truth, none of the **obedience** that God requires of us can be properly performed.

Section 19. This is why Scripture never speaks of anything **between God and us** that is not founded on this reality. The Father **works**, the Son **works**, and the Holy Ghost **works**. The Father **works** only through the **Son** and His Spirit. The Son and Spirit work only from the Father. The Father **glorifies** the Son. The Son

glorifies the Father. And the Holy Ghost glorifies them both. Before the foundation of the world, the Son was **with** the Father and **rejoiced** in His special work of **redemption** for mankind. At **creation**, the Father **made** all things through the Son and by the power of the Spirit. In redemption, the Father sends the Son. The Son by His own willing condescension undertakes the work and is **incarnate** by the Holy Ghost. As was said, the Father **communicates** His love and all its fruits to us through the Son, just as the Holy Ghost communicates the merits and **fruits** of the mediation of the Son. The Father is not known or worshipped except through and in the Son. Neither the Father nor the Son is known except through the Holy Ghost, and so on.

Section 20. With this discovery, the soul that was previously startled at the **doctrine** as a mere idea becomes fully convinced that all the **satisfaction** it has sought in seeking God is utterly lost if this doctrine is not accepted. There is no foundation left for the **communication** of love to that soul, nor any means of returning obedience to God. Beyond this, all the things the soul has been searching for now appear in their **glory**, beauty, and reality. So the very thing that most **staggered** the soul at first in **receiving** the truth, because of its deep and mysterious glory, now most confirms it in **embracing** it, because of its **necessity, power**, and heavenly excellency.

Section 21. This is one argument, among the many belonging to the **things** of Scripture, that upon the **grounds** already mentioned carries, in my judgment and understanding, a weight of conviction that cannot be resisted.

Section 22. Another consideration of similar power can be drawn from a brief **overview** of the whole of Scripture and its design. The **harmony** of Scripture within itself — every part agreeing with each other and with the whole — is commonly **used** as evidence of its divine origin. This much it certainly proves beyond all **possible** contradiction: that the whole proceeds from **one** and the same source, has the **same** author, and that author is wise, **discerning**, and able to grasp the full scope of what He intended to reveal. Otherwise, that **oneness** of spirit, design, and aim — in unspeakable variety and diversity of methods of delivery — and that absolute agreement with itself and distance from anything else, could not have been achieved by **any** other means. Now it is certain that this **source** must be the highest in its kind: either the highest **good** or the highest **evil**. If the Scripture is what it **reveals** and declares itself to be, it is then unquestionably the **Word of the living God, truth** itself. For that is what it professes about itself from beginning to end, and everything it **reveals** answers that profession absolutely and unmistakably, pointing to His glory alone. If it is not what it claims, then we must admit that its **author** had a **blasphemous** design to present himself as God when he is not, a **malicious** design to deceive humanity into thinking they worship, honor, and obey God when they do not, and so to drag them into everlasting destruction. To accomplish these ends of blasphemy, atheism, and malice, this author must have spent a **long course** of time pouring out all the skill and wisdom that any creature could possess. Now the one who would do this must be the **Devil** and no one else. No other creature could possibly reach that **height** of stubbornness in evil. Certainly, as long as God continues to give us anything that distinguishes us from the **beasts**

that perish, and as long as there is a **sense** of the difference between good and evil among people, it cannot enter anyone's mind that a doctrine so **holy** and **pure**, so completely designed to improve everything that is good, just, commendable, and praiseworthy, so consistent with all the light of God and of **good** and evil that remains in us, could come from someone eternally hardened in evil, pursuing the wickedest possible design — namely, to enthrone himself and maliciously cheat, deceive, and ruin the souls of men. Therefore, by necessity, Scripture can acknowledge no author but the one to whom it belongs: the **living God**.

While these considerations are far from being the **foundation** of our faith or the basis of our assent to the authority of God in His Word, they do have great **usefulness** — given the evidence already presented — for providing support in trials, temptations, and other seasons of difficulty. But enough has been said on these things.

OF THE DIVINE ORIGINAL
AUTHORITY, PART 2



Of the **Integrity** and **Purity** of the Hebrew and Greek **Text** of the **Scripture**, with considerations on the **Prolegomena** and Appendix to the recent **Biblia Polyglotta**.

Oxford, Printed by H. H. for Thomas Robinson. 1659.

CHAPTER 1



CHAPTER 1.

1. The occasion of this discourse. 2. The danger of assuming corruptions exist in the originals of Scripture. 3. The great usefulness of the *Biblia Polyglotta*. 4. The grounds of the following observations. 5. The assertions proposed to be defended are laid out. 6. Their weight and importance. 7. Several principles in the *Prolegomena* that are harmful to the truth being contended for are laid out. 8. Those principles were previously asserted by others. Reasons for the opposition made against them.

Section 1. When the entire preceding **treatise** was finished and ready to be given to the **publisher**, the **Prolegomena** and **Appendix** to the recently published **Biblia Polyglotta** came into my hands. When I first saw that **volume**, I was somewhat startled by the **bulky** collection of **variant readings** that the **Appendix** presents to anyone who even glances at it. Before long, I found that other men of learning and judgment had similar concerns about that work, not unlike the thoughts my own mind had suggested to me. Afterward, considering what I had written about **God's providence in preserving** the original copies of Scripture in the preceding discourse, I feared that from the large number of variations

in the original copies and in all the translations published with such care and diligence, some overwhelming objections might be raised against the truth of what I had asserted. So I decided it was necessary to pause until I could take the time to work through the **Appendix** and the **variant readings** presented in that great **volume**, along with the grounds and reasons for them in the **Prolegomena**. Having now completed that **task** and (given the circumstances) **duty**, I will take the liberty to share my thoughts on certain things contained in them. People with twisted minds may possibly twist these things to undermine my earlier assertions and to challenge the certainty of divine truth as it has been preserved for us through God's providence in the **originals** of Scripture.

Section 2. I do not need to explain what use has been made, and is still being made in the world, of this assumption that corruptions have crept into the **originals** of Scripture — which those **variant readings** at first glance seem to suggest. In **short**, it is the foundation of **Islam** (**Alcoran Azoar** 5). It is the chief and main support of **Popery**, the only claim of fanatical opponents of Scripture, and the root of much hidden **atheism** in the world. At present, a very **learned person** has sent me a treatise in **English** with the Latin title **Fides Divina**, in which its unnamed author labors on this very foundation to overturn and completely render useless the whole of Scripture. How far people like him may be strengthened in their unbelief by considering these things, time will tell.

If there had not been a pressing need for me either to completely **abandon** any thought of publishing the **preceding treatise** or else to respond to certain things contained in the

Prolegomena and **Appendix**, I would have stayed away from this task for many reasons. But the truth is, not only what I had written in the **first chapter** about God's providence in preserving Scripture, but also the main arguments I relied on concerning the **self-evidencing power and light of Scripture**, would in my judgment be greatly weakened by the things I am about to address, if they are accepted and received as presented. Therefore I could not excuse myself from taking the risk of sharing my thoughts on them.

Section 3. The wise man tells us that he considered **all labor and every skillful work, and that for this a man is envied by his neighbor**, which he says is **vanity and vexation of spirit** (Ecclesiastes 4:4). It cannot be denied that this often happens because of the corruption of human hearts: when **works — right works** — are brought forth into the world through the hardest labor, their authors are repaid with envy for their effort. This mixes all the results of people's best endeavors with **vanity and vexation of spirit**. **Jerome** in ancient times and **Erasmus** more recently are the usual examples of this. I can, with careful consideration, completely deny that I bear any particular guilt of this kind toward the work of publishing the **Biblia Polyglotta**, which I highly value, or toward its **authors** and editors, whom I do not know personally. The searcher of all hearts knows I am not lying. What could possibly infect me with that attitude? I neither claim any deep **expertise** in the learning used in that work, nor am I ever **likely** to be involved in anything that would compete with it. I did not even know that the chief author of this **edition of the Bibles** existed until I saw the work itself. I will therefore never fail, on any fair occasion, to praise the usefulness of this

work and the learning, diligence, and effort of the worthy people who produced it. I would offer their full commendation here, except that beginning this discussion with their praises might be misunderstood. But since we have been given not only the **Bible** itself but also the **private opinions** of men (along with collections of **variant readings**, whether genuine or merely claimed to be so, as we will see later), some of which I believe work against the great and important truth I have been defending — I hope it will not offend anyone if I use the same freedom that **they** or **any** of them whose hands have been most prominent in this work have used. With (I trust) Christian **honesty** and **moderation** of spirit, I will briefly share my thoughts on **some things** they have proposed.

Section 4. The famously learned **prefacer** to the **Arabic** translation in this edition tells us that the **work** of translating the **Pentateuch** into that language was done by a **Jew** who took care to give support to his own private opinions and make them look authoritative by working them into the **text** of his translation.

I have no cause to make any such complaint about the **Prolegomena** and **Appendix**, nor will I do so. I only wish (with all due respect to wiser judgments) that in publishing the **Bible**, the sacred text with its translations and whatever plain historical accounts of their origins and preservation were necessary to lay them fairly and openly before the reader's judgment, had not been burdened with **disputes** and arguments for particular **private** opinions. Such opinions are imposed too easily on readers' minds by their constant closeness to **canonical** truth.

Section 5. **But my present discussion will not extend beyond the concern for the truth that I have argued for in the preceding discourse. I will first present a brief summary of it, focusing on the part that seems most directly affected, and then lay out what appears to me to work against it in the volumes now under consideration. I have no doubt that a fuller account of the whole will soon be offered by someone to the learned and impartial readers of them. The essence of what I am arguing for, regarding the specific point to be defended, is this: just as the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament were given directly and entirely by God Himself, His mind being represented in them to us without the slightest involvement of any means or methods that could alter even the smallest letter or detail, so by His good and merciful providence, out of His love for His Word and His Church, His entire Word as originally given has been preserved for us in the original languages. There, shining in its own beauty and brilliance (and also in all translations, insofar as they faithfully represent the originals), it demonstrates and proves to the consciences of people, without any other **outside** help or assistance, its divine origin and authority.**

Section 6. The various assertions or propositions contained in this position are, to me, such important truths that I will not be faulted by my own **conscience** — nor, I hope, by anyone else — for contending for them. I consider them **fundamental** parts of the **faith** once delivered to the saints. Although some of them may seem less weighty than others, they are so **linked together** that removing or destroying any one of them takes away our **interest** in the others entirely. It will certainly be granted that the convic-

tion that the Word came directly from God, in the way I have argued, is the foundation of all faith, hope, and obedience. But what good does it do us that God once **delivered** His Word in this way, if we are not also assured that the Word so delivered has been preserved whole and uncorrupted through His special **care** and **providence**, and that it still demonstrates itself to be His Word even as it has been preserved? We might say: blessed were the **ages past** who received God's Word in its unquestionable power and purity, when it shone brightly in its own glorious native light and was free from the **defects** and corruptions that human **failure** has introduced over a long period of time. But for us, we can hardly find a sure foundation for believing that **this book** rather than any other contains what remains of His Word, and it is nearly impossible for us to reach certainty about any **individual word** or expression — whether it is from God or not. Far be it from any good person to think that God, whose **covenant** with His Church is that His Word and Spirit shall never depart from it (Isaiah 59:21; Matthew 5:18; 1 Peter 1:25; 1 Corinthians 11; Matthew 28:20), has left us in uncertainty about the very things that are the foundation of all the **faith** and **obedience** He requires of us.

As I have in the preceding treatise demonstrated (I hope) the **self-evidencing light and power** of Scripture, let us now deal honestly and in pursuit of truth, with minds free from bias and unsettling emotions — save only the trouble that comes from the necessity of disagreeing with the **authors** of so useful a work — and turn our attention to what seems in these **Prolegomena** and **Appendix** to undermine the truth of the other assertions about the complete preservation of the Word as given by God in the

copies that remain with us. I will do this trusting that the people involved will **fairly** accept and weigh what is **conscientiously** offered.

Section 7. While I do gratefully acknowledge that many things are said very honorably about the **originals** in these **Prolegomena**, and that they are **absolutely** preferred above any **translation** whatsoever and affirmed in general as the **authoritative standard** for all versions — contrary to the views of the **publisher** of the great **Parisian** Bibles and his notorious defender **Morinus** — nevertheless, as they stand in relation to the **Appendix of variant readings**, there are both **opinions** and principles confirmed by corresponding practices that carry the nature and significance described above.

1. After a lengthy argument on the subject, it is concluded that the **Hebrew points** (vowels and accents) are a **recent invention** of certain **Jewish rabbis**, created about five or six hundred years after the giving of the Gospel. From this it follows:

1. An antiquity is attributed to some **translations** — two or three at least — that predates the **invention of these points**. Their agreement with the original therefore cannot fairly be tested by the present text as it is now **pointed** and **accented**.

2. The entire credibility of our reading and interpretation of Scripture, as far as it is governed by the current **punctuation**, depends solely on the faithfulness and skill of those **Jews** whose invention this system is claimed to be.

2. The marks of which there are over 800 in the **Hebrew Bibles** are variant readings, partly gathered by certain **Jewish rabbis** from ancient copies and partly their critical corrections.

And therefore:

After these **variant readings** (as they are considered) are presented to us in the order in which they appear in the **great Bibles** — not merely to increase the bulk of **diverse readings** or to present an appearance of new variety to a casual observer, but to demonstrate that they are indeed the kind of variant readings described above — they are given to us a second time, arranged in the **system** devised by **Capellus**, the great **patriarch** of these studies.

3. There have been such alterations to the **original** that in many places they may be corrected by the **translations** that were made long ago.

And therefore:

Variant readings may be identified and gathered from those translations by examining how they read in their **copies** and where they differed from those we now have.

4. It is also stated that where any **serious faults** or corruptions have affected the **originals**, scholars may use their skill in **critical** conjecture to correct them and restore the **original readings** that were lost — though in general, this is not to be allowed without the authority of manuscript copies.

And therefore:

A collection of **variant readings** from **Grotius**, consisting mostly of such conjectures, is presented to us in the **Appendix**.

5. The **massive bulk** of **variant readings**, as they are plainly displayed, seems sufficient to raise doubts and concerns in people's minds about the truth of what has previously been

claimed by many regarding the preservation of Scripture through the care and providence of God.

Section 8. Everyone familiar with matters of this kind knows that none of these are **new opinions** invented or promoted by the **learned prefacer** to these Bibles. The individual points mentioned have been asserted and defended by various learned men. If these **opinions** had remained within the ordinary scope of people's private ideas in their own private writings, standing or falling by their own merits and their authors' reputation, I would not have felt compelled by my earlier discourse to respond to them. Every one of us must give an account of himself to God. It will be well for us if we are found holding the foundation. If we build **hay and stubble** on it, though our **work perishes**, we will be **saved**. Let every person in these matters be fully persuaded in his own mind. That will cause me no offense. What concerns me is that these opinions are laid as the foundation of the **usefulness** of the **Biblia Polyglotta**, with an effort to make them **widely accepted** — not on their own strength, but through their connection to the authority that is rightly expected from this work. That is what calls for careful examination. All who encounter these opinions stated in the **Prolegomena** may not have had the **time**, and may not have the **ability**, to know what conclusions most of these issues have already been driven to in the writings of individual scholars.

Section 9. While I freely grant that some of these matters may be **honestly** debated among **learned** people without great harm to the truth, taken altogether and placed in the advantageous position they now hold, I cannot help but see them as a **weapon** designed to destroy the important truth I have been arguing for —

and as a fitting tool placed in the hands of people with **atheistic** minds and **principles**, of which this age has no shortage, to attack the whole evidence of truth revealed in Scripture. I fear that for some, either the supposed **infallible judge** or the depths of **atheism** will be found lurking behind these considerations. **Hoc Ithacus vellet**. But the debate over the advantage that either **Romanists** or **atheists** might gain from this belongs to another place and time. Nor is the guilt of any such consequences charged against the authors, though they may rightly be feared from the work itself.

CHAPTER 2



CHAPTER 2.

1. Of the purity of the originals. 2. The original manuscripts of Scripture are lost. 3. That of Moses: how and how long it was preserved; of the book found by Hilkiah. 4. Of the original manuscripts of the New Testament. 5. Of the first copies of the originals: the scribes of those copies were not infallible. What is attributed to them. 9. The great and incomparable care of the scribes. 7. The whole Word of God, in every detail of it, preserved entirely in the copies of the original still in existence. 8. Lines of argument to that purpose. 9. What variant readings are acknowledged in the original of the Old and New Testament. Various considerations about them, showing them to be of no importance. 10. 11. 12. 13. That the Jews have not corrupted the text; the most probable examples considered.

Section 1. Having given an account of the **occasion** for this discussion and mentioned the specific matters that are, **all** or some of them, to be examined further, before I proceed to discuss them I will, by way of **addition** and **explanation** to what was presented in the earlier treatise, give a brief account of my **understanding** concerning the purity of the present original copies of

Scripture — or rather, **copies** in the **original** languages — which the Church of God now possesses and has enjoyed for many ages as her greatest treasure. This will make it clearer what it is we are arguing for and defending against the **insinuations** and claims described above.

Section 2. First, it is granted that the **individual** original manuscripts of **Moses**, the **prophets**, and the apostles have, in all probability and as far as we know, completely perished and been lost from the world. The same is true of the copies of **Ezra**. Reports to the contrary are obvious fabrications. The actual **ink** and **parchment** — the rolls or books they wrote — could not have been preserved from **crumbling** to dust by now without a miracle. It does not seem unlikely that God was willing, by their **loss**, to draw us to a closer appreciation of His care and providence in preserving every detail contained in them. Had those **individual writings** been preserved, people would have been ready to worship them, just as the **Jews** worship their own Torah scrolls in their **synagogues**.

Section 3. **Moses** indeed delivered his **original copy** of the **Pentateuch** in a public assembly to the **Levites** (that is, the sons of **Korah**) to be placed beside the **Ark** and kept there as a permanent record. Deuteronomy 31:25-26. I have no doubt that **individual book** was preserved until the destruction of the Temple. There is indeed no specific mention of the Book of the Law when the Ark was solemnly carried into the **Holy Place** after the building of **Solomon's Temple** (2 Chronicles 5:4-5). But the **Tabernacle of the congregation** continued until then. **That**, along with everything in it, is said to have been brought up (verse 5). Since the placing of the **book** beside the **Ark** was such a

solemn ordinance, it was no doubt observed. There is no evidence to the contrary. Some think the book found by **Hilkiah** in the days of **Josiah** was this original manuscript of **Moses** that had been placed beside the Ark. It more likely seems to have been some ancient **sacred copy** used in the Temple services and stored there — just as there was one in the second Temple, which was carried in triumph to **Rome**. For besides the fact that he speaks of **finding it** generally in the **house of the Lord** during the **work** being done at that time (2 Chronicles 34:15), which was not in or around the **Holy Place** where he, as **High Priest**, knew full well the book was kept, it does not appear that it was **lawful** for him to remove that **sacred deposit** from its designated **archives** and send it out, as he did with the book he found. In fact, it was certainly unlawful for him to have done so, since it had been placed there by a specific ordinance for a specific purpose. After the destruction of the **Temple**, all searching for that book is pointless. The author of the **second Book of Maccabees** does not mention its being hidden at **Nebo** by **Jeremiah** along with the Ark and Altar, or by **Josiah** as some of the Talmudists say. Even if they had mentioned it, it would be of no importance. Of the Scripture preserved in the Temple at its last destruction, **Josephus** gives us a full account: **de bello Juda: lib. 7. cap. 24.**

Section 4. As for the Scriptures of the New Testament, it does not appear that the original manuscripts of the various writers were ever gathered into one volume, since there was no longer one central church to keep them for the rest. The **epistles**, though immediately copied for the use of other **churches** (Colossians 4:16), were no doubt kept in the individual churches to which they were

directed. From those originals, certified transcribed copies were quickly given out to **faithful men** while the infallible Spirit still continued His guidance in an **extraordinary** manner.

Section 5. As for the first **transcribers** of the original copies and those who in later ages did the same work from them — by which those copies have been passed down to us under the providence and promise of God — we do not say, as **Morinus** and **Capellus** falsely charge, that they were all or any of them **infallible** and divinely inspired, so that it was impossible for them to make any mistake. It is known and granted that failures have occurred among them, and that **variant readings** have arisen from this, which I will discuss later. All we attribute to them is religious care and diligence in their work, with a proper reverence for Him with whom they had to do. To refuse to acknowledge this freely in them without clear and unquestionable **evidence** to the contrary is extreme uncharitableness, impiety, and ingratitude. This care and diligence, we say, working under the **promise** and **providence** of God, has produced the result we are contending for. Nothing more is needed. On this basis, to argue (as some do) from the mistakes and errors of **men** — their **carelessness** and negligence in copying the old pagan authors **Homer, Aristotle, Cicero** — we consider intolerable for any Christian, or anyone who has the least understanding of the nature and importance of the Word, or of God's care for His Church. Should we think that people who copied books in which they and others had no deeper stake than it is possible for people to have in the writings of the persons mentioned and others like them, had as much reason to be careful and diligent as those who knew and considered that every letter and **detail** they were copying was part of the Word of the

great God, on which the **eternal** destiny of their own souls and the souls of others depended? Whatever may be expected from the religious care and diligence of people living under the **loving** and watchful protection of God's promise and providence may justly be expected from those who undertook this work. However, we are ready to acknowledge all their failures that can be proved. To assert failures in this case without proof is unjust.

Section 6. The Jews have a common **saying** among them that to **alter one letter of the Law is no less a sin than to set the whole world on fire**. Should we think that in copying it, they took no more care than a person would take in copying **Aristotle** or **Plato** — someone who, for a very small portion of the world, would gladly have tried to destroy both **their works**? Considering that the Word to be copied was, in every **detail** and letter of it, the Word of the great God; that **what** was written and **as** it was written was presented as His, as coming from Him; that if any mistakes were made, countless eyes of people who staked their eternal destiny on that Word were watching to catch them; and that **thousands of copies** were available to check it against — all of which was known to and admitted by everyone who undertook this work — it is not hard to prove that their care and diligence surpassed that of ordinary **scribes** copying pagan authors. The truth is, the accounts of the exact diligence and **reverent** care of the ancient **Jews** in this work are astonishing, especially when they entrusted a copy to serve as a standard for testing other private copies. **Maimonides** in his work, **chapter 8**, sections 3-4, tells us that **Ben Asher** spent **many years** in the careful, exact copying of the **Bible**. Let anyone consider the twenty things they say will profane a book or copy, and this will become even clearer. They are listed

by **Rabbi Moses** in his **Treatise on the Book of the Law**, **chapter 10**. One of them is if even one letter is missing, and another is if even one letter is added. More will be said about this if the occasion arises.

Even among the **pagans**, we would hardly think that the **Roman Pontifices**, going solemnly to copy out the **Sibyl's verses**, would have done it either **negligently** or **dishonestly**, or would have changed one **detail** from what they found written. Should we hold such thoughts about those who knew they were dealing with the **living God**, and doing so in and about what is dearer to Him than all the **world** besides? Let people complain as they wish and call everyone **ignorant** and **stupid** who will not grant the corruptions of the Old Testament that they argue for (which is the approach of **Morinus**), or let them propose their own guesses about how the mistakes they claim have crept into the original copies supposedly got there, along with their **remedies** (which is the approach of **Capellus**). We will acknowledge nothing of this kind except what they can prove by undeniable and irrefutable examples — which, as far as anything yet done by them or those who follow in their footsteps, turns out to be **nothing** at all. To this end, take our position in the words of a very learned man: **Ut in iis libris qui sine vocalibus conscripti sunt, certum constantemque exemplarium omnium, tum excusarum scripturam 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 Hebraicae exemplaria ab iis quae circumferuntur, vidisse se asserat, modo Grammaticam rationem obser-**

vatam dicat. Et quidem Dei consilio ac voluntate factum putamus, ut cum magna Graecorum Latinorumque fere omnium ejusdem auctoris exemplarium, ac praesertim manuscriptorum pluribus in locis varietas deprehendatur, magna tamen in omnibus Hebraicis quaecunque nostro saeculo inveniuntur, Bibliis, scriptionis aequalitas, similitudo atque constantia servetur quocunque modo scripta illa sint, sive solis consonantibus constant, sive punctis etiam instructa visantur; Arias Montan. Praefat. ad Biblia Interlin. de varia Hebraicorum librorum scriptione & lectione.

It cannot then be asserted with any appearance of probability (which I find some learned men too freely granting) that the same **fate** has befallen **Scripture** in its **copying** as has befallen other books. Let me say without offense: this idea, asserted after careful thought, seems to me to border on **atheism**. Surely the promise of God for the preservation of His Word, together with His love and care for His Church (of whose faith and obedience that Word is the only rule), demands better thinking from us.

Section 7. Thirdly, we add that the **whole Scripture**, complete as given by God without any **loss**, is preserved in the **copies** of the **originals** still in existence. What variations there are among the **copies** themselves will be discussed later. In them **all**, we say, every **letter and detail** of the Word is found. These copies, we say, are the rule, **standard**, and **touchstone** of all **translations**, ancient or modern. By these copies all translations are to be examined, tested, corrected, and amended — and the originals themselves are only to be judged by themselves. Translations **contain** the Word of God and are the Word of God,

perfectly or imperfectly, according to how well they express the **words**, sense, and meaning of the originals. To elevate **any** or all translations together to equality with the originals — to set them **alongside** it so as to place them **on the same level with it**, and even more to **use** them as tools for correcting, amending, or altering anything in the originals or for gathering variant readings from them — is to set up an **altar** of our own beside 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**, based on some words of **Epiphanius**, that **Origen** in his **Octapla** placed the translation of the Seventy in the **middle** to be the standard for all the rest — even of the **Hebrew itself**, which was supposedly to be corrected and amended by it. (*media igitur omnium catholica editio collocata erat, ut ad eam Hebraea caeteraeque editiones exigenterentur et emendarentur*; Exercitationes book 1, chapter 3, page 15.) The truth is, he placed the **Hebrew** in **Hebrew characters** in the first position as the **rule** and standard of all the rest; the same in **Greek characters** in the second position; then that of **Aquila**; then that of **Symmachus**; after which, in the fifth place, followed that of the Seventy mixed with that of **Theodotion**.

Section 8. The various arguments giving evidence to this truth that could be produced are too many for me to cover now. They would take up more room than is allotted for this entire discourse if I were to handle them at **length** and as the importance of this cause deserves. 1. The **providence** of God in taking care of His Word, which **He has exalted above all His name**, as the most glorious product of His **wisdom** and goodness — His great con-

cern in this world — answering His promise to this purpose. Secondly, the **religious care** of the Church (I am not speaking of the **Roman synagogue**) to whom these oracles of God were entrusted. Thirdly, the care of the original writers in distributing **authentic** copies of what they had received from God to many people, which could serve as **standards** for the first copyists. Fourthly, the **multiplication** of copies to such a number that it was impossible for anyone to corrupt them all, whether deliberately or through negligence. Fifthly, the preservation of **authentic copies**: first in the **Jewish synagogues**, then in Christian assemblies, with reverence and diligence. Sixthly, the daily reading and studying of the Word by all kinds of people ever since it was first **written**, making every alteration subject to immediate detection and discovery throughout the whole world. Along with this, seventhly: The consideration of the many **millions** who regarded every **detail** and letter in this book as their inheritance, which they would not be deprived of for the whole world. And specifically for the Old Testament (now **most questioned**), eighthly: The care of **Ezra** and his companions, the **men of the Great Synagogue**, in restoring Scripture to its purity when it had faced the greatest trial it has ever undergone in this world, considering how few copies existed at that time. Ninthly, the care of the **Masoretes** from his days onward, to keep a perfect account of every **syllable** in Scripture (on this, see **Buxtorfius: Commentary on the Masora**). Along with, tenthly: The constant agreement of all **copies** in the **world**, so that, as various learned men have observed, there is not a single passage of Scripture found in the entire **Mishnah, Gemara**, or either **Talmud** that is read differently than it is in our copies today. 11.

The assurance we have that no mistakes were deliberately or carelessly introduced into the **text** before the coming of our Savior, who was to **declare** all things, given that He never once rebukes the Jews on that account — even though He does not spare them for their **false interpretations** of the Word. 12. Afterward, the vigilance that the two communities of **Jews** and **Christians** have always kept over one another, along with various other considerations of similar importance, could be pressed into service for this purpose. But I will speak of these things again if the occasion arises.

Section 9. Despite what has been said, we grant that there are and have been **variant readings** in both the Old Testament and the New. For the Old Testament, the **Qere** and **Ketiv**, the variant readings of **Ben Asher** and **Ben Naphtali**, and those of the **Eastern** and **Western** Jews prove this. I will speak specifically about the Qere and Ketiv later. They present themselves to the view of anyone who merely glances at the **Hebrew Bible**. At the end of the great **Rabbinical Bibles** (as they are called) printed by **Bomberg** in Venice, and also in the edition of **Buxtorfius** at **Basel**, there is a collection of the variant readings of **Ben Asher** and **Ben Naphtali**, and of the **Eastern** and **Western** Jews. We have them also in this **Appendix**. Regarding the first two mentioned, they are known among the Jews as: one of them, **Rabbi Aaron the son of Rabbi Moses of the tribe of Asher**, and the other, **Rabbi Moses the son of David of the tribe of Naphtali**. They flourished, as is probable among the Jews, around the year 1030 AD, and were teachers of great reputation — the former in the **West, or Palestine**, the latter in the **East, or Babylon**. In their exact examination of every letter, point, and ac-

cent of the Bible, in which they spent their lives, it seems they discovered some variations. Let anyone look through them as they are presented in this **Appendix**, and he will find them to be so small — consisting for the most part of unnecessary **accents** with no bearing on the meaning of any word — that they do not deserve to be noticed. As for the variant readings of the **Oriental** (or **Babylonian**) and **Occidental** (or **Palestinian**) Jews, all I know about them (and I wish that those who know more would inform me better) is that they first **appeared** in the edition of the Bible by **Bomberg** under the supervision of **Felix Pratensis**, gathered by **Rabbi Jacob Ben Hayyim** who corrected that printing. But they give us no account of their **origin**. Nor (to confess my ignorance) do I know anyone who does. Perhaps some scholars do, but in my present haste I cannot track them down. But the thing itself declares their lack of importance, and **Cappel** — the most skillful and determined exploiter of every opportunity to undermine the authority of the Hebrew text, in order to support his **Critica Sacra** — admits that they are all **trivial** and do not concern matters of any significance. Besides these, there are no other variant readings of the Old Testament. The guesses of people who are confident in their own ability to correct the Word of God are not to be given that title. If any others can be gathered, or are gathered in the future, from **ancient copies** of credit and reputation, where no scribal mistake can be identified as their cause, they deserve to be considered. People must deal here with actual examples, not guesses. Everything that has appeared so far does not weaken in the least our assertion that every detail and letter of the Word of God remains in the copies preserved by His merciful providence for the use of His Church.

Section 10. As for the **Jews**, besides the reckless and senseless **accusations** in general about them **corrupting the Scriptures**, three things are objected against them with the most appearance of reason. 1. The **Tikkun Sopherim**, or **correction of the scribes**, by which means it is claimed by **Elias** that eighteen places were corrected. But everything here is uncertain: uncertain whether any such **things** were ever done; uncertain who is meant by their **Sopherim** (most probably **Ezra** and his companions). Nor do the specific passages listed reveal any such correction. They are all individually examined by **Glassius** (book 1, Tract 1), but the whole matter is satisfactorily settled by **Buxtorfius** in his letters to **Glassius** (printed by him, and repeated again by **Amama, Antibarbari Biblici book 1, pages 30-31**). Because **Galatinus** insists heavily on this point to prove the Jews' corruption of the text, it may be worth quoting the words of that great master of all Jewish learning.

Section 11. Ad tertium quaesitum tuum, de Tikkun Sopherim, 18 voces hanc censuram subiisse Masora passim notat. Recensio locorum in vestibulo libri Numerorum, et **Psalm** 106. Utrobique non nisi 16 recensentur, sed in Numeri 12:12 duo exempla occurrunt, ut notat Rabbi Solomon. Deest ergo unus locus mihi, quem ex nullo Judaeo hactenus expiscari potui, nec magnus ille Mercerus eum invenit. Galatinus hoc thema non intellexit, et aliena exempla admiscet Sic et alii qui corruptions ista esse putant. Nec ullum hactenus ex nostris sive Evangelicis sive Catholicis vidi, qui explicarit, quae fuerint Scribae isti, et quales ipsorum. Quam antiquae hae notae de Tikkun sint, liquido mihi nondum constat. Antiquior ipsarum memoria est in libro qui ante Talmud Babilonicum fertur conscriptus. Dissentiunt tamen

Hebraei; de ejus autore et tempore. In Talmud neutro ulla plane istius Tikkun mentio fit, cum alias 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 Hebraeis adscribit, nullam scilicet unquam literam mutatam fuisse in lege ab Hebraeis popularibus suis, book 1. contra Appionem. Talmudistae in Leviticus 27 versu ultimo diversis locis notant, nec Prophetae ulli licitum fuisse vel minimum in Lege mutare vel innovare. Quomodo ergo Scribae 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 Hebraeorum nasutiores, animadvertentes inconuenientiam quandam in istis locis, scripserunt, aliter istos autores loqui debuisse, et secundum cohaerentiam propositi textus, sic vel sic scribere, sed pro eo maluisse sic scribere, et id sic efferre, ut illud hodie in textu est. Veluti Genesis 18:22 lectum scriptum, et Abraham adhuc stabat coram Domino. Itane? ubi legitur, inquit sapientes, quod Abraham venerit ad Dominum, et steterit coram eo; Contrarium dicitur in praecedentibus, DEUS scilicet venit ad Abraham, et dixit ad eum: Num ego celo ab Abrahamo et cetera. Clamor Sodomae et Gomorrhae magnus est et cetera. Ideoque Moses scribere debuit. Et Dominus adhuc stabat coram Abrahamo. At ita serviliter de DEO loqui non decuit Mosen, unde correxit et mutavit stylum sermonis, honoris majoris causa, et dixit: Et Abraham adhuc stabat et cetera. Hinc Rabbi Salamo adjicit scribendum ipsi (Mosi) erat, (Seu) scribere debebat, Et Dominus stabat; non quod aliter sic scripserit antea, et postea id ab aliis

Scribis correctum sit, aut corruptum. Hinc Rabbi Aben Ezra. ad aliquot loca irridet nasutos, inquiring, nullo Tikkun opus fuisse, id est, nihil esse, quod nasuti isti sapientes putarint, autorem debuisse aliter ibi loqui vel scribere. Vide et eum Job 32:3. Habes Mysterium prolixè explicatum, in quo et multi Hebraeorum impegerunt. Thus far Buxtorfius.

Section 12. The same **Galatinus** also insists on certain other marks, but these concern only the use of a single Hebrew letter four or five times, and they seem to originate in the same way as the ones discussed above.

Section 13. But the issue that raises the greatest outcry at present is the corruption of **Psalm 22:17**, where instead of the reading that the Seventy translated as "they dug" or "pierced" — that is, my **hands** and **feet** — the present **Jewish copies**, as well as the **Antwerp Bibles**, read "**as a lion**," thus corrupting the prophecy of our Savior's suffering ("they dug or pierced my hands and my feet") and leaving it with no sense at all: "**as a lion** my hands and my feet." **Simeon de Mues**, commenting on the passage, argues that the substitution was a late corruption by the Jews — or at least that the correct reading was the **Qere** and was left out by them. **Johannes Isaak** (book 2, to **Lindanus**) testifies that when he was a **Jew**, he saw the reading "pierced" in a book belonging to his **grandfather**. **Buxtorf** affirms that one reading was the **Kethib** and the other the **Qere**, and proves it from the **Masora**. He blames the **Antwerp Bibles** for printing the wrong reading in the main text. With him agree **Genebrard**, **Pagninus**, **Vatablus**, **Mercer**, **Rivet**, and others. Others argue that the reading "as a lion" should be kept, supplying the verb "they surrounded me" from earlier in the verse, and also claiming that the

word can mean to tear, rend, and strike, so that the sense would be: "they **tore my hands and feet as a lion.**" So argues **Voetius** in his work on the difficult passages of Scripture. But most scholars demonstrate that the word cannot be rendered **as a lion** here, partly from the **unusual form** of the Hebrew prefix with a certain vowel, and chiefly from the **Masora**, which states that this word is used in a different sense than it has in **Isaiah 38:13**, where it expressly means **as a lion**. The simpler conclusion is that from the Hebrew root, through certain well-known letter additions and changes that occur regularly in the third person plural of the past tense, the resulting word means "**they pierced**" or "they dug through" my hands and my feet. But what use is this gleaned after the harvest of Mr. **Pococke's** treatment of the subject in his excellent **Miscellanies**?

Section 14. The passage long cited by **Justin Martyr** — Psalm 96:10 — where he accuses the Jews of having removed the words "from the wood," making the sense "**the Lord reigned from the wood**" or the **tree**, thus pointing to the death of Christ on the cross, is rejected by everyone. For besides the fact that he is speaking of the Seventy, not of the Hebrew text, it is clear that those words were inserted into a few copies of that translation and were never generally accepted, as is demonstrated by **Fuller** in his **Miscellanies** (book 3, chapter 13). And it is an interesting story that **Arias Montanus** tells us about a learned man (I assume he means **Lindanus**) who claimed that those words were found in a **Hebrew copy** of the Psalms of ancient and unquestionable authority here in **England**. But when this copy later came into his hands, he found it to be a fake, corrupt, recent transcript in which the supposed words were not even to be found (**Arias**

Montanus, Apparatus de variis lectionibus Hebraicis and Massora). I have no doubt that if we had the opportunity to search and examine some of the **copies** that people set up against the standard reading in various places of the New Testament, we would find them not one bit better or more valuable than he found that copy of the Psalms.

CHAPTER 3



CHAPTER 3.

Of variant readings in the Greek copies of the New Testament.

Section 1. We know with what diligence and effort **variant readings** in the Greek copies of the **New Testament** have been **collected** by some, and what use has been made of those **collections** by others. **Protestants** have for the most part been the chief collectors of them. **Stephanus, Camerarius, Beza, Camero, Grotius, Drusius, Heinsius, D'Dieu, Capellus** — all following **Erasmus** — have played the primary role in that work. **Papists** have used their research to discredit the original and promote the **Vulgar Latin**. A sample of their efforts can be found in the recent hostile **Exercitations** of **Morinus**. At first, very **few** variant readings were noticed. But look at what a **heap** or **bulk** they have now swelled into in this **Appendix**. The collection of them makes up a book **bigger** than the New Testament itself. Among those who came before, most gave us only what they **found** in certain particular copies that they themselves possessed. Some gave us only those readings they judged important or that might have some claim to being considered legitimate.

Here, however, we have everything that could by any means be **brought** together, whether they are adequately **supported** as **variant readings** or not. As for any contribution to better understanding of Scripture from them, no such claim can be made. And whether this work may continue to grow, I do not know.

Section 2. It is acknowledged that in some **copies** of the New Testament — and some of them of respectable antiquity — there are **diverse readings** in things or words of lesser importance. The proof of this is within the reach of most people, in the **copies** we already have. I will not question the reputation of those who have provided us with others from their own private collections. That these readings have all been needlessly heaped together, if not to a point of **serious scandal**, is equally obvious. Let us then take a brief look at their origin and significance.

Section 3. It is well known that **Greek** was once essentially the **common** language of the entire Christian world. The **writing** of the New Testament in that language partly **found** it so and partly **made** it so. How many **thousands** — indeed, how many **millions** — of copies of the **New Testament** were then in the world, with all people reading and studying Scripture without restriction, cannot be counted. That so many transcriptions, most of them made by private individuals for private use (with a standard of correction available in their **public assemblies** to correct their mistakes), should have been made without some variation is simply impossible. From the copies of the first ages, others in the ages that followed were transcribed as opportunity allowed. From those that have come down to the hands of **learned** people in this later age — of which very few, if any at all, are of any considerable antiquity — scholars have made it their business to collect the **variant**

readings we are discussing. How useful and beneficial this has been to the churches of God, others who look on must be allowed their freedom to judge. We know the **vanity**, curiosity, pride, and wickedness of the human heart: how ready we are to please ourselves with things that seem **unusual** and beyond the notice of most people, and how eager to publish them as proof of our learning and diligence, whatever the outcome may be. The result of all this is that — without questioning the honesty of anyone reporting on his **manuscripts** (which is simply taken for granted in this **Appendix**) — whatever varying **word, syllable**, or detail could be found by anyone, in any book (even one from yesterday), differing from the commonly received **copy** — even if it is clearly a mistake, superfluous, deficient, inconsistent with the sense of the passage, or even ungrammatical — is immediately presented to us as a **variant reading**.

Section 4. While I will say nothing to diminish the value of the labor of those who have gathered all these **variant readings** into one volume, I presume I may freely say without causing offense that I would value even more the work of those who would endeavor to search out and trace these pretenders to their various origins. By rejecting the **illegitimate** brood that has now spread itself across so many pages — readings that by no means should be brought into competition with the accepted text — they could reduce them to a manageable number whose examination might serve some purpose other than simply **creating a temptation** for the reader to think that nothing remains sound and complete in the Word of God.

However, now that **Satan** seems to have exerted the full extent of his **malice**, men of earlier ages the full extent of their **negligence**, and men of later ages the full extent of their **diligence** — the result of all **of which** we have in the present collection in this **Appendix** — for those who carefully weigh things, nothing at all arises to undermine our assertion. This may perhaps, God helping, be further demonstrated in the future through a detailed examination of some or all of the **diverse readings** presented to us there. Those readings that are of real importance have already been considered by others, especially **Glassius** (Tract 1, book 1).

Section 5. It is clear that the purpose of this **Appendix** was to gather together everything of this kind that could possibly be found. For the present, so that the **reader** may not be too alarmed by the fruit of the diligence of those whose work and labor it was, I will only note a few things about it that occur to me from a general overview.

Section 6. 1. First, no **selection** was made here, and no judgment was used in **discerning** which entries may truly be called **variant readings**. Instead, all differences of any kind that could be found in any **copies**, whether printed or handwritten, are equally presented. As a result, many differences that had previously been rejected by learned men as obvious corruptions are offered to us once again. The very first observation in the **treatise** printed right after this collection in the **Appendix** itself rejects one of the variants as a corruption. Some others have been similarly rejected by **Arias Montanus**, **Camero**, and many more. Not every variation or difference in a copy should immediately be proclaimed a **variant reading**. A person might just as plausibly take every **printed copy** available from various editions, collect

all the **typographical errors**, and publish them as variant readings, as present many — I would say most — of the entries in this **Appendix** under that name. It may be said, of course, that the **compilers** of this **Appendix** did not consider it their responsibility to evaluate the **readings** they actually found in the copies they examined, but merely to report what they found, leaving the evaluation to others. I agree that this may be the case. Therefore, just as I do not criticize them or their diligence, I hope neither they nor others will be offended that I give this notice about the evaluation that still needs to be done concerning these readings.

Section 7. 2. Whereas **Beza**, who is commonly criticized by people of all sides and parties for being too bold with **variant readings**, deliberately labeled his own **manuscript** (which he sent to **Cambridge**) as so corrupt in the **Gospel of Luke** that he did not dare publish its **variant readings** for fear of causing offense and scandal — although he thought it had not fallen into the hands of **heretics** who had deliberately corrupted it — we have here, if I am not mistaken, all the **corruptions** of that copy presented to us as variant **readings**. For though I have not seen the copy itself, the swelling of the **variant readings** in that Gospel into a **bulk** as large as or larger than the collection for the entire New Testament apart from the Gospels and Acts (in which that copy is cited 1,440 times) puts it beyond all question that this is what has been done. Now if this approach is taken, and every **discredited** copy may be searched for differences that are then immediately **printed** as **variant readings**, there is no doubt we may have enough of them to frighten poor **unstable souls** into the arms of the supposedly infallible guide — I mean regarding the use that people like **Morinus** will make of this work.

Section 8. 3. I suspect that sleepiness crept in during this long work, and that while the learned **collectors** had their hands and minds occupied with other things, some **mistakes** found their way into this work of gathering **variant readings**. I encounter some things in it that I frankly cannot bring into any good consistency with each other. Setting aside particular examples, I will focus on just one of more general and prominent importance. At the beginning of this collection, an account is given of the **ancient copies** from which these observations were made. Among the rest, one is described as an ancient copy in the **library of Emanuel College in Cambridge**, noted throughout the entire collection by the letters **Em.** Now, while the **preliminary notes** and instructions tell us that it contains only **Paul's Epistles**, I wonder how it happened that so many variant **readings** in the **Gospels** and **Acts** — as appear in the main collection itself — attributed to that book could have been gathered from a copy of **Paul's Epistles**. There must certainly be some mistake here, either by the **learned authors** of the preliminary directions or by those employed to gather the variants that follow. And it may be assumed that this mistake does not stand alone, so that upon further examination of specifics, we may not find them as clearly supported as they first appear to be. It would indeed be a miracle if in a work of such **scope** many things did not escape the eye of even the most diligent observer.

Section 9. I am therefore not without hope that upon a careful **review** of all these **variant readings**, they may be reduced to a less **troublesome** and less alarming number. Let it be remembered that the **standard text** we use was the public **possession** of many generations, and that when printing was invented, it held

actual **authority** throughout the world among those who used and understood that language, as far as any evidence indicates. Let **that** text, then, stand as the standard — which is clearly its right and due — and we will, God helping, quickly see how little reason there is to claim such **varieties** of **readings** as we are now confronted with. For first, let those readings be **separated out** that are not adequately supported to qualify as **variant readings**. It is against all reason that every mistake in every obscure private copy, perhaps only two or three hundred years old (or even if older), should be accepted as a variant reading against the unanimous agreement of perhaps all the other copies in existence — and this without any logical fit to the sense of the passage where it occurs. People may, if they wish, take the trouble to inform the world where certain **copies** are corrupted or mistaken, but to impose their known errors on us as variant readings is a practice that cannot be approved.

2. Let the same judgment, and rightly so, apply to all those **variant passages** that are entirely trivial, consisting of **accents** or the change of a **letter** that does not in the least touch the meaning of the passage or give the slightest hint of any other sense than what is in the approved reading. Why should people's minds be troubled with or about them, since they are obvious scribal mistakes of no importance at all?

3. Let those readings also be removed from consideration that carry their own proof of being **fraudulent**: either (1) by their **excess** or **redundancy** of unnecessary words; or (2) their **deficiency** in words clearly necessary to the sense of their passages; or (3) their **incoherence** with the text in their respective places; or (4) **evidence** that they were intended as explanations of difficult

passages, having been raised and resolved by some of the ancient scholars on those passages, with their solutions being incorporated; or (5) readings taken from the Septuagint, just as many passages from the **New** Testament have been inserted into that copy of the Old; or (6) readings taken from one **passage** in the same **author** and applied to another; or (7) readings obviously taken from **one Gospel** and supplied in another to fill out the meaning; or (8) readings that have been corrected by the Vulgar Latin, which has often happened in some copies, as **Lucas Brugensis** shows us on **Matthew 17:2**, **Mark 1:38**, and 7:4, and various other places; or (9) readings arising from copies that are obviously corrupt, like **Beza's** copy of **Luke** and the one in the **Vatican** boasted of by **Huntly** the Jesuit, which **Lucas Brugensis** says was altered to match the Vulgar Latin, and which was written and corrected (as **Erasmus** says) around the time of the Council of **Florence**, when an agreement was patched together between the **Greeks** and **Latins**; or (10) readings that were notoriously corrupted by ancient **heretics**, such as 1 **John 5:7**. To these categories, many — indeed most — of the **variant readings** collected in this **Appendix** may be assigned. I say that if this work were done with care and diligence (and I earnestly urge some in this University who have both the ability and the time for it to undertake it), it would quickly become apparent how small the number is of those variations in the **Greek copies** of the New Testament that can legitimately claim any consideration under the title of **variant readings**, and how very little importance they have for weakening in any way my earlier assertion about the care and providence of God in preserving His Word. But this is a work requiring more **time** and leisure than I currently possess. What is to

come, God knows. In the meantime, I have no doubt that we will hear from **Rome** about this collection of variants, since no such collection has ever been made in the world before.

CHAPTER 4



CHAPTER 4.

1. General premises. 2. Opinions in the Prolegomena that are harmful to the authority of the originals, listed. 4. The fair consequences of those premises. 5. Others involved in these opinions: of Capellus. 6. Of Origen, Ximenes, and Arias Montanus's editions of the Bible.

Section 1. Having now explained in what sense and with what **allowance** for **variant readings** I maintain the assertion laid down in the preceding treatise — concerning the providential preservation of the **whole book of God**, so that we may have full assurance that we possess the complete revelation of His will in the copies among us — I will now proceed to weigh what further objections (beyond those already addressed) may be raised against this truth from the **Prolegomena** and **Appendix** to the **Biblia Polyglotta**, which were proposed for examination at the beginning of our discussion.

Section 2. 1. To speak generally about them, I must ask permission to say — and since this is simply a report of people's openly stated views, I hope I may say it without offense — that alongside many high and honorable **expressions** about the origi-

nals, setting aside the **unbelievable fiction** of the Jews corrupting the Bible out of hatred for Christians (which was first proposed by **Justin Martyr**, though he spoke only of the **Septuagint**, and has scarcely found one or two supporters since, being rejected by the overwhelming consensus of learned men, ancient and modern, except for a few Papists obsessed with their idols), and setting aside the general **claim** that this or that translation is superior to the original — there is no opinion I know of that has ever been circulated among Christians tending to diminish the value or undermine the **esteem** of the Hebrew copies, that is not **directly** or by fair inference endorsed in these **Prolegomena**. From them it is argued that the present **Hebrew character** is not the one used by God Himself and in the ancient Church before the **Babylonian** captivity, but is the **Chaldean** script, the original having been left to the **Samaritans**. It is argued that the **points** (vowels and **accents**) are a late invention of the **Tiberian Masoretes**, created long after several translations were already in existence. It is argued that the **Qere and Ketiv** are **critical** notes consisting partly of **variant readings** gathered by the later **Masoretes** and rabbis. It is argued that considering how the **translators** likely read the text before the invention of **points** and **accents**, the present reading may be corrected and amended by their translations, and that ancient translators had different **copies** from those we now possess. It is argued that where **serious errors** have crept into the **Hebrew text**, scholars may by their own **conjectures** discover **variant readings** to correct them — and to this end a sample of such **variant readings**, or rather **corrections of the original**, is presented in the **Appendix** from **Grotius**. It is argued that the books of Scripture have shared the fate of other

books: by passing through the hands of many copyists, they bear upon them the marks of their **negligence**, ignorance, and carelessness.

Section 3. I truly wish that some other way had been found to give reputation and value to this **noble collection** of translations than by adopting these opinions, so **damaging** to the truth and authority of the originals. It may justly be feared that where one person tries to reassure himself against the **uncertainty** of the originals by considering the **various translations** presented here — which, upon examination, will prove to be what they are — many others will be ready to question the foundation of everything.

Section 4. It is true that the learned **prefacer** does not embrace those terrible consequences that some have labored to draw from these **premises**. Yet it must also be acknowledged that he provides no adequate safeguard against the **legitimate** drawing of those consequences from these premises. He does not say that because this is the state of the **Hebrew language** and Bible, therefore everything in it is **doubtful** and **uncertain**, easy to be twisted into various meanings, and unfit to serve as a standard for evaluating other translations — though he knows full well who considers this a fair consequence of the opinion that the vowels are a recent invention. He himself acknowledges that all our knowledge of **Hebrew** comes from the translation of the Seventy, as **Morinus** quotes him to this effect (Preface to the Hebrew Samaritan work). He does not conclude that on these grounds we must rely on an **infallible living judge** and the translation that **he** commends to us — though he knows full well who does draw this conclusion. He himself offers it as a **rule** that in **correcting**

the original, we should have the agreement of the **leaders of the Church**. I could wish, then, that adequate protection against these inferences be offered to us before the premises are **accepted**, since **great** and **wise** men, as we will further see shortly, consider these consequences to flow naturally and necessarily from them.

Section 5. It is admitted that some learned men, even among the **Protestants**, have previously put forward these or some of these **paradoxes** — especially **Capellus** in his **Arcanum Punctuationis Revelatum, Critica Sacra**, and other treatises. In defending **these**, as I hear, he still labors, being unwilling to **lose** the fruit of so much effort. What will become of his reply to **Buxtorfius** in defense of his **Critica**, I do not know. Reports say it is **finished**. And it is thought he must once again turn to the **Papists**, with the help of his **son** (a great **zealot** among them), as he did with his **Critica** to get it published. The majority of learned men among **Protestants** are not yet infected with this influence. Nor do I find his boldness in **conjecturing** endorsed in these **Prolegomena**. But let people be **free** to make their views known on the various points mentioned. It has been so, and may it remain so. If this great and **useful work** had not been **prefaced** with the **presentation** of these opinions, it would not have been a **public** concern (as it now seems to be) to take notice of them.

Section 6. Besides, it is unknown how far this problem will grow. **Origen** in his **Octapla**, as was mentioned, established the **Hebrew original** as the rule and measure of all translations. In the revival of that kind of work by **Ximenes** in the **Complutensian Bibles**, the original's position was maintained. **Arias Montanus**, who followed in their footsteps (concerning

whose achievements under his master the **King of Spain**, I may say for their many excellencies that nothing like it has arisen before or since: **nil oriturum alias, nil ortum tale**) was religiously careful to maintain the purity of the originals, publishing the **Hebrew truth** (as it is called by **Jerome, Augustine**, and other ancients) as the standard for testing all translations against it. For this he was later accused of **ignorance** by an **impudent Jesuit** who never deserved to carry his books for him. **Michael le Jay** gave a new direction to this **progress** and in plain terms exalts a **corrupt translation** above the originals — and he does so on the **principle** now under discussion, as is abundantly clear from **Morinus**. And if this change of **thinking**, which has long been creeping in through the curiosity and boldness of **critics**, should also break into the **Protestant** world and be endorsed in **public works**, it is easy to imagine what the outcome will be. We left **Rome** under the guidance of the **purity** of the originals. I hope no one has a mind to return there under the pretense of their corruption.

CHAPTER 4



CHAPTER 4.

1. The origin of the points, proposed for particular consideration. 2. The importance of the points for the right understanding of Scripture; the testimony of Morinus, Junius, Johannes Isaac, Cevallerius, and others. 3. The use made by the Papists of the opinion that the points are a recent invention. 4. The importance of the points further demonstrated. The extreme danger of making the Hebrew punctuation arbitrary. 5. That danger proven by example. 6. No relief against that danger, on the grounds of the opinion considered. 7. The authors of the Hebrew punctuation according to the Prolegomena: who and what. Morinus's folly. The improbability of this claim. 8. The state of the Jews, the supposed inventors of the points, after the destruction of the Temple. 9. Two attempts made by them to restore their religion. The former under Bar Kokhba, with its outcome. 10. The second under Rabbi Juda, with its outcome. 11. The rise and foundation of the Talmuds. 12. The state of the Jews during and after the writing of the Talmuds. 13. Their hostility against Christ. 14. Who the Tiberian Masoretes were, the supposed authors of the Hebrew punctuation: their description. 15. That fiction rejected. 16. The re-

cent testimony of Doctor Lightfoot on this subject. 17. The origin of the opinion that the points are a recent invention. Of Elias Levita. The value of his testimony in this case. 18. Of the validity of the testimony of the Jewish rabbis. 19. Some considerations about the antiquity of the points; the first from the nature of the punctuation itself, in relation to grammatical rules. 20. From the Chaldee Paraphrase and the integrity of Scripture as now pointed.

Since this is how things stand among us, as I understand it, I hope I may proceed without offense to examine the **specific matters** mentioned above, from which it is feared that objections may arise against the **purity** and **self-evidencing power** of the Scriptures argued for in the preceding treatise. The first point mentioned is the claim that the **points** (the **vowels** and **accents**) are a **recent invention** of certain **rabbis** of **Tiberias in Palestine**. The learned author of the **Prolegomena** defends this claim with **Capellus's** arguments, along with whatever additions he chose to use. To clarify the bearing of this issue on our truth, it will be necessary to consider two things. First, what **influence** these **points** have and necessarily must have on the correct understanding of the text. Second, what is their **origin**, or to whom their invention is attributed in these **Prolegomena**. As for the **positive** side of this **controversy** — that is, the defense of their true sacred **origin** — some other occasion may call for additions to what is now briefly touched on. While I will not oppose those who maintain that the points are **as old as** the **letters** themselves (and many of the most learned **Jews** and **Christians** hold this view), I have no doubt that as we now have them, it can be shown

that they were completed by the men of the Great **Synagogue** — **Ezra** and his companions — guided in this by the infallible direction of the Spirit of God.

Section 2. **So that we do not appear to be arguing over nothing, the importance of these points for the correct understanding of the Word of God must first be considered, both from testimony and from 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 drawn from the Scriptures in that language, since everything may be read in different ways, resulting in greater confusion in that one language than there was among 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 linguae, quam illa Babylonis). Morinus **plainly states that this is indeed the case, giving the example of a certain Hebrew word which, depending on how it is pointed, has at least eight different meanings, some of them as far apart from one another as heaven is from earth. And to make the uncertainty of the language on this account clear, he gives a similar example using c. r. s. in Latin.** Junius, **at the close of his Animadversions on Bellarmine de verbo Dei book 2 chapter 2, commends the saying of Johannes Isaac against Lindanus: the person who reads the Scriptures without points is like a man riding a horse without a bridle; he may be carried he knows not where. Radulphus Cevallerius goes even further** (Rudiments of the Hebrew Language, chapter 4). Quod superest de vocalium and Accentuum antiquitate, eorum sententiae subscribo, qui linguam Hebraeam tanquam omnium aliarum absolutissimum

plane ab initio scriptam confirmant: quandoquidem qui contra sentiunt, non modo auctoritatem sacrae scripturae dubiam efficiunt, sed radicitus (meo quidem iudicio) convellunt, quod absque vocalibus and distinctionum notis, nihil certi firmique habeat. As for the antiquity of the vowels and accents (**he says**), I hold the view of those who maintain that the Hebrew language, as the exact pattern of all others, was plainly written (**with them**) from the beginning. For those who think otherwise not only make the authority of Scripture doubtful, but in my judgment completely uproot it. For without those vowels and marks of distinction, it has nothing firm and certain.

In this man's judgment (which is also my own), it is clear to all how vulnerable to the opinion I am opposing is the truth I am contending for.

To these may also be added the great Buxtorfs, father and son. Gerard Glassius, Voetius. Flacius Illyricus, Polanus, Whitaker, Hassret, Wolthius.

Section 3. **It is well known what use the Papists make of this idea.** Bellarmine **argues that errors have crept into the original through this** addition of the points. De Verbo Dei book 2 chapter 2. Hisce duabus sententiis refutatis restat tertia quam ego verissimam puto, quae est, scripturas Hebraicas non esse in univ-ersum depravatas opera and malitia Judaeorum, nec tamen omnino esse integras and puras, sed habere suos errores quosdam, qui partim irrepererint negligentia and ignorantia librariorum, etc: partim ignorantia Rabbiorum qui puncta addiderunt: itaque possumus si volumus puncta detrahere, and aliter legere. These two opinions being refuted, the third remains which I consider most true: that the Hebrew Scriptures are not universally corrupted by

the deliberate work of the Jews, nor yet are they entirely pure or complete, but they have certain errors which have crept in partly through the negligence and ignorance of the copyists, and partly through the ignorance of the rabbis who added the points. Therefore we may, if we choose, reject the points and read differently.

In all the extensive opposition to the truth made by that **learned man**, I know nothing more dangerously said. Nor do I yet see how his conclusion can be avoided on the **hypothesis** in question. The purpose behind his argument is well known, and his allies in this cause make it perfectly clear. That the **Hebrew text** should be corrected by the **Vulgar Latin** is the explicit desire of **Gregory de Valentia** (Volume 1, disputation 5, question 3), and this because the **Church** has approved that translation, it having been corrected (says **Huntly**) by **Jerome** before the **invention of points**. But this is put beyond doubt by **Morinus**, who argues from this that the **Hebrew language** is a mere **piece of wax** to be shaped by people however they please, and that God deliberately made it so, in order that people might submit their consciences to their infallible Church (**Exercitationes book 1, exercitation 1, chapter 2**). Great has been the effort of this type of people, who have left no stone unturned to discredit the **originals**. Some of them insist that the Old Testament was corrupted by the Jews, such as: (1) **Leo Castrius**, (2) **Gordonius Huntlaeus**, (3) **Melchior Canus**, (4) **Petrus Galatinus**, **Morinus**, **Salmeron**, **Pintus**, **Mersennus** (Animadversions in Problemata Georgii Venet, etc., page 233). Others claim that many corruptions have crept in through negligence and carelessness of scribes: (7) **Bellarmino**, (8) **Genebrard**, (9) **Sixtus Sinensis**,

along with most of the rest. In this, indeed, they have been opposed by the most learned scholars on their own side, such as (10) **Arias Montanus**, (11) **Johannes Isaac**, (12) **Pineda**, (13) **Masius**, (14) **Ferrarius**, (15) **Andradius**, and various others who speak honorably of the **originals**. But in nothing do they take more pride than in this idea of the recent origin of the **Hebrew punctuation**, by which they hope, like **Abimelech's** servants, to completely block the **wells** or fountains from which we should draw refreshment for our souls.

Section 4. This may serve as a brief overview of the opinions of the **parties** in conflict and their various interests in these opinions. The importance of the **points** is acknowledged on all sides, whether the goal is the **honor** or the **discredit** of the originals. **Vowels** are the life of words. **Consonants** without them are **dead** and immovable. By vowels, consonants are **carried to any** meaning, and may be carried to several different meanings. It is true that people who have come to an **understanding** of the Scriptures through the help of the **vowels** and **accents** — already possessing a habitual grasp of the **meaning** that arises from them — may think it would be an **easy** thing to find and settle on the same meaning using only the **matres lectionis** and the consideration of context and similar helps. But let all of those aids be taken away (as I will show they should be, if the points have the origin assigned to them by the **Prolegomena**), and let people set aside the advantage they have gained from them, and it will quickly become clear what confused directions all kinds of such people will wander off into. Hardly a **chapter** — perhaps not even a **verse** or a **word** — would long remain free from perplexing, contradictory guesses. The words whose meanings can be **changed** by an **arbi-**

trary supplying of the points are entirely countless. And when the regulation of the punctuation is left to every individual's guesses based on **context** (for who would set a standard for everyone else?), where will the endless, fruitless debates end? What varied, what **destructive** interpretations will we have to argue about? Suppose that people who are sober, modest, humble, and pious could be preserved from such errors and brought to some agreement about these things (which in these days, for many reasons, is not to be expected — indeed, from the nature of the thing itself, it seems impossible). Even then, this gives us only a human, fallible confidence that the **readings** they settle on are in line with the mind of God. But to expect such an agreement is naive and foolish. Besides, who will protect us against the **reckless, atheistic** minds and spirits of these days, who are bold in seizing every advantage and ready to trample on everything holy and sacred? Who will guarantee that they will not, by their meddling, utterly corrupt the Word of God? How easy it is to foresee the dangerous consequences of people stubbornly clinging to their own guesses and arguing for **variant readings**, even ones that are not false or destructive! The Word of God, as to its literal sense and the reading of its **words**, has until now been an undisputed standard and the acknowledged **touchstone** of all interpretations. Make it now a matter of debate, and what do we have left that is firm and unshaken?

Section 5. Let people, with all their confidence about the **meaning** and sense of the Scriptures that they have already received through the helps and tools that are all ultimately rooted in the present **punctuation** of the Bible (for all grammars, all lexicons, the whole **Masora**, and every aid to this language, old and

new in the world, are built on this foundation) — let them reduce themselves to the kind of **blank-slate objectivity** that some have recently imagined as a proper starting point for knowledge. Let them seriously begin reading some of the **prophets** whose content is **lofty** and mystical, and whose style is **compressed** and obscure, without the help of **points** and **accents**. Let them assign vowels or any **symbols** to represent their sounds **at will**, relying solely on their judgment of the language and their guesses at the meaning of the passage, without any advantage from what they have been taught. And let us see whether they will agree, as they fabulously report the Seventy translators did. Whatever the result of their efforts, we need not wait long to find scholars **equally learned** who would tear their work to the ground. I confess that considering the days we live in — when the bold and inquisitive minds of people, under the pretense of **critical observations** that attract and entice with a show of **learning**, have dared to question almost **every word** in Scripture — I cannot help but tremble at what would come from this assumption that the **points, vowels, and accents** are no better guides than can be expected from those who are claimed to be their authors. I trust the Lord will protect His **own** from the poison of such attempts. The least of its harm has not yet been fully considered. So while I reserve to myself the freedom of my own judgment on various specific matters both in the **printed text** itself and in several translations, I acknowledge the great usefulness of this work and am thankful for it — which I here publicly declare. Yet I must say plainly that I would rather **it** and all works of similar kind were **removed from the world** than that this one opinion should be accepted along with the consequences that inevitably follow from it.

Section 6. But this trial need not be feared. Granted that the original texts have the credentials claimed for them, they still deserve full respect and are of singular value for understanding Scripture correctly. It is not lawful to depart from them without pressing necessity and clear evidence that a better reading should be substituted in place of the one rejected. But this offers us no relief — it still leaves us within the realm of rational conjecture. Whether this can honestly be pleaded in the present case depends on who the supposed authors of this invention actually were — and that is what we must now examine.

Section 7. The founders of this story about the invention of the Hebrew points tell us that it was the work of certain rabbis living at Tiberias, a city in Galilee, around the year AD 500, or in the following century, after the death of Jerome and the completion of the Babylonian Talmud. I will not pause here to dwell on how improbable this story is. Morinus makes the lie even louder. He tells us that the Babylonian Talmud was completed just before the year 700 (Exercise 2, Chapter 3, latter part), and that the Masorettes — to whom he attributes the invention of the points — wrote long after the Talmud was finished, well past the year 700 (page 5, chapter 3). This "long time" must mean at least several hundred years. And yet the same man, in his preface to his *Samaritica Opuscula*, boasts of discovering Rabbi Juda Chiug and shows that this rabbi was familiar with the present system of punctuation and wrote about it. Now this rabbi was a grammarian, and among the Jews, grammatical learning came after the work of the Masorettes. He lived around the year 1030, so there seems to be no room at all for this theory. It is granted that there was once a school of Jews and learned men of some reputation at Tiberias. Jerome tells us that he

hired a learned Jew from there to assist him (Epistle to Chromatius). Among others, Dr. Lightfoot has carefully traced the shadow of their Sanhedrin, with its presidents, in some kind of succession to that place. But that they continued there in any significant number, esteem, or reputation down to the time our authors have designated for this work — that is not established by any historical record, Jewish or Christian. In fact, it is certain that around the time mentioned, the leading Jewish scholars were flourishing at Babylon and several other cities in the East, where they had just completed their Talmud, the great compendium of Jewish laws and institutions, as they themselves everywhere testify. That any notably learned people were then at Tiberias is a mere conjecture. It is especially improbable given the destruction that had fallen on the Jewish community at Diocaesarea and Tiberias around AD 352, carried out by Gallus at the command of Constantius. That there should then have been such a gathering of learned and authorized men — capable of inventing this system and imposing it on the entire world, with no one ever noticing that such people existed — is beyond all belief. Despite all the entanglements that conjectures may create around the belief in the antiquity of the points, I could sooner believe the most unbelievable fable in the entire Talmud than believe this legend. But this is not my main concern here. Let it be granted that such persons existed. Working within the assumption under consideration, I am only asking: what is the present condition of the Hebrew pointing, and what weight should be given to it? So that the reader may consider what kind of men are assigned in these Prolegomena as the inven-

tors of this art of punctuation, I will take a brief look at the state of the Jews from the destruction of the Temple down to the period in question.

Section 8. I have elsewhere discussed at length how the Jewish church-state continued — not only in practice but by God's merciful forbearance — such that the many thousands of believers who steadfastly followed the Mosaic worship were accepted by God until the destruction of the Temple. I argued there that this destruction was the end of the world that then was by fire, and the beginning of the solemn establishment of the new heaven and new earth wherein righteousness dwells. I hope, God willing, to develop these thoughts further in my work on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews. The period from the beginning of Christ's preaching to the utter desolation of the city and Temple was the time of an open and visible rejection of that church as such. From that point, a complete separation of the true Israel from it followed, and the hardened remnant became a people no longer in covenant or in God's favor, but under curse and indignation. Many have described what their condition was for a time afterward, both civil and religious. I will only touch on the main points. In general, they were utterly unwilling to accept the punishment for their sin or to acknowledge that God was visiting on them the full penalty of breaking His covenant — having broken both His staves, Beauty and Bands. So far were they from owning their sin in handing their Messiah over to death that, seeing an end put to all their former worship, the record shows only two things to which they gave themselves over in direct opposition to God. First, they grew in rage and madness against all followers of Christ, stirring up persecution against them throughout the world. They were provoked to this by a large number of

apostates who, when they could no longer hold their Mosaic rites alongside a profession of Christ and were rejected by the churches, fell back into Judaism or semi-Judaism. Second, there was a corrupt longing for their former worship, which had now become an abomination and a mark of unbelief — so that their table might become a snare to them, and what had once been for their safety might now become the means of their utter ruin and hardening. Of the first — their stirring up of persecution — all historical records are full of examples and instances. The latter — their desire and attempts to restore their worship — must be examined further, as it is relevant to the matter at hand.

Section 9. In their effort to restore their old religion or to furnish themselves with a new one, the Jews made two desperate attempts. The first was by force of arms under their false Messiah Bar Kokhba, in the days of Hadrian. Under the leadership and influence of this man — whose armor-bearer was one of the chief rabbis, Akiva — they pursued a plan to restore their Temple and worship and launched a rebellion against the Romans throughout the entire world. In this campaign, after committing unheard-of outrages, massacres, unparalleled murders, plundering, and cruelties, and having shaken the whole empire, they were themselves destroyed in every part of the world — especially at the city of Betar, where the heart of their rebellion was — with a destruction that seemed to equal what had befallen them at Jerusalem in the days of Vespasian and Titus.

That this war arose from the two causes mentioned — their desire to retain their former worship and to destroy Christians — is evident. For the first, it is stated by Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, book 69, in the life of Hadrian. It was the defilement of the soil on

which the Temple had stood — which God permitted deliberately to demonstrate their utter rejection and that the time had come when He would no longer be worshipped there in the old manner — that drove them to arms, as that author explains at length. As for the latter cause, Justin Martyr, who lived at that time, informs us of it in Apology 2, to Antoninus Pius. Bar Kokhba's fury was directed especially against the Christians, whom he commanded to be tortured and killed unless they would deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ. See Eusebius, Chronicle, at the year of Christ 136. They waged this war with such fury, and for a time with success, that after Hadrian had assembled against them the most experienced soldiers in the world — including Julius Severus, brought from Britain — and had slain five hundred and eighty thousand of them in battle, with an infinite number more consumed by famine, sickness, and fire as the historian reports, Hadrian found that he had sustained such great losses that he could not begin his letter to the Senate in the customary manner: he could not assure them that it was well with him and his army.

By this second desolation they were brought very low — weakened, made contemptible, and driven into obscurity throughout the world. In this condition they wandered for a time in complete uncertainty. They had not only lost the place of their solemn worship, seeing it wholly defiled, the name of Jerusalem changed to Aelia, and themselves forbidden on pain of death even to look toward it — but also, now so dramatically reduced in number, all hope of organizing themselves so as to observe their old rites and worship was utterly gone.

Section 10. They sat down in stunned bewilderment for a season, as the curse had threatened they would. But they would not remain still. Recognizing that their old religion could not continue without a Jerusalem and a Temple, they began a wicked attempt against God — comparable to the ancient world's building of Babel — namely, to establish a new religion that could survive wherever they were, and that would give them cover in their unbelief and opposition to the Gospel to the very end. The head of this new apostasy was one Rabbi Jehuda, whom we may aptly call the Mahomet of the Jews. They call him Hannasi, meaning the Prince, and Hakkadosh, meaning the Holy. The full account of him and his companions, as reported by the Jews, is well collected by Joseph de Voisin, *Observations in the Proem to Pugio Fidei*, pages 26 and 27. A summary of his entire work is laid out by Maimonides in his preface to *Seder Zeraiim*, pages 36 and 37 of Mr. Pococke's edition, which also gives a sufficient account of the whole Mishnah, with the names of the rabbis either employed in it or occasionally mentioned. This man, around the year AD 190 or 200 — when the Temple had now lain waste almost three times as long as it had during the Babylonian captivity — being encouraged by Antoninus Pius as some of their own writers report, compiled the Jewish Alcoran, that is the Mishnah, as a rule of worship and conduct for the future. Only whereas Mahomet afterwards claimed to have received his inventions by revelation — though in truth he drew much of his abominations from the Talmud — this man claimed to receive his by tradition: the two chief weapons that have been set up against the Word of God. Out of such Pharisaical traditions as were genuinely preserved among them, out of practices they had learned and adopted from apostate Christians such as Aquila and

others, and out of fictions invented by himself and his predecessors since the time of their public rejection and cursing by God, this man compiled the Mishnaioth — which is the text of their Talmud and the foundation of their present religion — under the title of the ancient oral law. That a number of Christian ceremonies and institutions, vilely corrupted, were taken up by the Jews of those days — many of whom were apostates, as were also some of Mahomet's assistants in compiling the Alcoran — I shall endeavor, God willing, to demonstrate elsewhere. That any Gospel observances were borrowed from the Jews as having been practiced among them before their institution by Christ will prove, in the end, to be a bold and groundless idea.

Section 11. With that foundation laid — a collection of traditions and new inventions of abominations passed off as ancient traditions by this rabbi — the Talmuds that followed represent an escalation of the same attempt: to set up a religion under the curse and against the mind and will of God. Having been rejected by Him and left without king, without prince, without sacrifice, without image, without an ephod, without a teraphim, and without any kind of worship whether true or false, they wanted something to give them cover in their unbelief. The Talmud of Jerusalem — so called because it was compiled in the land of Canaan, whose chief city was Jerusalem, though it is actually the product of many commentaries on the Mishnah produced in the city of Tiberias, where Rabbi Juda lived — was published around AD 230, as is commonly received. Though I find that Dr. Lightfoot, in a later work, assigned it a later date based on what he believed to be a mention of the Emperor Diocletian in it. But I confess I see no good reason for departing from the judgment he expressed in an earlier treatise on

the subject. The Doclet mentioned by the rabbis was beaten by the sons of Rabbi Jehuda Princeps — as Lightfoot himself observes — who lived in the days of one of the Antonines, a hundred years before Diocletian. Nor was Diocletian ever in a lowly position in the East: he was born in Sarmatia and lived in the Western parts, going only with Numerianus on the expedition into Persia, in the course of which he was made emperor on his return. But this is beside my point. See Lightfoot, *Chronographia*, chapter 81, page 144. The Babylonian Talmud — so called because it was compiled in Babylon, in the cities of Nahardea, Sora, and Pumbeditha, where the Jews had their synagogues and schools — was completed around the year 506 or 510. In this greater work, the mystery of their iniquity was fully developed, and the instrument of their own invention for their further hardening was perfectly completed. These works now serve as the rule of their faith, the measure of their interpretation of Scripture, the guide of their worship, and the ground of their hope and expectation.

Section 12. All this while the Jews had the text of Scripture in their hands, as they do to this day — and at times they receive it with the honor and reverence due to God alone. God preserved it among them for our present use, for their further condemnation, and as a means of their future conversion. But after the destruction of the Temple and the rejection of their entire church-state, the Word was no longer committed to them by God, nor were they entrusted with it, nor are they to this day. They do not possess it by promise or covenant, as they once did. Isaiah 59:21. Their possession of it is not accompanied by the ministry of the Spirit — and without the Spirit, as their own example shows, the Word is a dead

letter with no power for the good of souls. They have the letter among them as they once had the ark in the battle against the Philistines — to their greater ruin.

Section 13. In this condition they everywhere display their hatred and malice against Christ, calling Him by a contemptuous Hebrew title and relating monstrous fables about Him and His treatment 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 argued Galatinus, *Arcanum Religionis Catholicae*, book 1, chapter 7, and Reuchlin's *Cabala*, book 1, page 636. Gulielmus Schickard, in *Proem Tarich*, page 83, held the same. The contrary is asserted by Reynoldus, *Praelectiones* in the book of Revelation, *praelectiones* 103, pages 405 and 406. Buxtorfius, in his *Lexicon Rabbinicum*, and also Vorstius, in his *Notes to Tzemach David*, page 264, argue against it. And in truth, the argument Galatinus and others use to prove that they did not intend our Savior actually proves the opposite upon careful reflection. They say the Jesus mentioned in the Talmud lived in the days of the Maccabees, being killed in the time of Hyrcanus or Aristobulus, a hundred years before the death of the true Messiah — and therefore it cannot be Him who is intended. But this has been invented by these wretched men so that it should not appear that their Temple was destroyed so soon after their wicked rejection of God by killing His Son. This is most clearly shown by what is cited by Genebrard from Abraham Levita in his *Cabala Historiae*, where Abraham says that Christians invented the story that Jesus was crucified during the life of Herod the Tetrarch, in order to make it appear that the Temple was destroyed immediately afterward — whereas, he claims, it is evident

from the Mishnah and Talmud that Jesus lived in the time of Alexander and was crucified in the days of Aristobulus. This reveals the true reason they distorted the whole chronology of His life: to prevent the world from seeing how closely their sin and their punishment stood together. It is fortunate, then, that the time of our Savior's suffering and death was affirmed even by the pagans, before either their Mishnah or Talmud were born or thought of. To quash the rumor — he speaks of Nero and his burning of Rome — he produced guilty parties and punished with the most exquisite tortures those who were hated for their crimes and called Christians by the people. The author of that name was Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius was executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate. Tacitus, *Annales*, book 15. To return to the Jews: in all their ancient writings they have systematically worked to undermine Him and His Gospel. We need none of their testimony — nor anything beyond Scripture — for their conviction. To be honest, the places cited from their Talmuds and Gemara, from the Kabbalists and other rabbis, by Martinus Raymundus, Porchetus, Galatinus, Reuchlinus, and others — setting aside Galatinus's *Gale Rezeia*, which must be set aside — seem for the most part to be forced beyond their original intent, as is easy to do with things written obscurely, metaphorically, and mystically. Their debates about the Messiah, when they address the subject directly as in the tractate Sanhedrin, are foolish, contradictory triflings that leave everything as uncertain as if they were squabbling in their customary manner over trifles. For my part, I am not far from the opinion of Hulsius (book 1, part 2, discussion on the time of the Messiah) that Aesop's fables are as useful for the Christian religion as the Jewish Talmud. As long as they keep the Scripture, we will never

lack weapons from their own armory to use against them. Like the Philistine, they carry the very weapon that will serve to cut off their own heads. Now the Tiberian Masorettes, the supposed inventors of the points, vowels, and accents we now use, were men who lived after the completion of the last Talmud — men whose entire religion was built upon it.

Section 14. Let us then, without prejudice or passion, consider who or what these men actually were — the supposed authors of this work. First, they were men (if any such existed) to whom the Word of God had not been entrusted in any special way, as it had been to their forefathers of old. They were no part of God's church or people, but merely outward possessors of the text without any rightful claim to it. They had no share whatsoever in the promise of the communication of the Spirit, which is the great charter of the church's preservation of truth: Isaiah 59:21. Second, they were men so far removed from a right understanding of the Word, or of the mind and will of God in it, that they were desperately committed to opposing His truth in the very books they possessed — in everything that mattered for the glory of God or the good of their own souls, from beginning to end. The foundation of their religion was unbelief, and one of their chief principles was opposition to the Gospel. Third, they were men under the special curse of God and His judgment, on account of the blood of His dear Son. Fourth, they were men who spent their days feeding on empty fables and wicked schemes against the Gospel, laboring to establish a new religion under the name of the old — striving to wrestle it out against God's curse to the very end. Fifth, they were men of profound ignorance in all learning and knowledge except what concerned their own dunghill traditions — as appears in their writ-

ings, where they make Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, an ally of Nebuchadnezzar against Jerusalem, along with countless other such absurdities. Sixth, they were men so given over to the monstrous fictions found in their Talmuds that their own successors in later ages were ashamed of them and tried to cover them up as best they could — and were, for the most part, idolaters and sorcerers, as I shall demonstrate. Now I dare leave it to the judgment of any godly and prudent person — one not captivated by parties and famous names — who is at all acquainted with the importance of the Hebrew vowels and accents for understanding Scripture rightly, and with how much the present system bears on the literal sense we embrace: does such a person not require very clear evidence and testimony — indeed undeniable and unquestionable proof — before assigning the origin and authorship of these vowels and accents to men of this sort?

Section 15. Of all the fables in the Talmud, I know none more incredible than this one: that men who cannot be shown from any historical record ever to have actually existed — men of the kind we have just described, obscure and unnoticed, overlooked by every learned Jew and Christian — should in a time of deep ignorance, in the place where they lived, among a people wholly given over to monstrous fables and themselves blinded under the curse of God, have discovered so great and excellent a work, of such unspeakable usefulness. And all this without consulting the men of their own faith and religion, who were then flourishing in great numbers at Babylon and the surrounding regions. They then supposedly imposed this work on the entire world — on all who receive the Scriptures — and had every detail of their work accepted without opposition or question from any person of any persuasion

whatsoever. And so thoroughly accepted, that their invention became the fixed rule for all subsequent expositions, commentaries, and interpretations. Let a fool believe it.

To draw toward the close of this discussion, I must request the liberty to state plainly that if I could be fully convinced that the present Hebrew punctuation were the fiction and invention of these men, I would labor to the utmost to have it entirely removed from the Bible and would myself make no more use of it in its present form. What use such an invention might have under general grammatical rules I will not debate; 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 have not yet come to that pass. I will only add that among those most eminently learned in Jewish learning and antiquity that recent ages have produced, several have come forward to refute the notion that the points were invented by some post-Talmudic Masoretes. I am sorry that their respect for the rabbis has kept them from pressing the argument I have been developing here, which seems to me of the greatest importance.

Section 16. To what I have spoken, I will add the words of the learned Dr. Lightfoot in his recent *Centuria Chorographia*, which came to my hands after this discourse was finished, chapter 81, page 146. He writes: "There are those who believe the Bible was pointed by the wise men of Tiberias" — he means Elias alone, for there are no other Jews of this opinion — "I do not marvel at the impudence of the Jews who invented this fable; I marvel at the credulity of Christians who applaud it. Recount, I pray, the names of the Tiberians from the founding of the first academy there to its expiration: and what do you find but a sort of men raving beyond the Pharisees, bewitching and bewitched with traditions, blind,

crafty, raging — pardon me if I say magical and monstrous? What fools, what dunces, for so divine a work! Read through the Talmud of Jerusalem and observe how Rabbi Juda, Rabbi Chanina, Rabbi Hoshai, Rabbi Chaija Rubba, Rabbi Chaija Bar Ba, Rabbi Jochanan, and the rest of the great doctors among the Tiberians conduct themselves — how seriously they do nothing, how childishly they treat serious things, how much deceit, froth, venom, smoke, and emptiness is in their disputations. And if you can believe the pointing of the Bible to have come from such a school, believe also everything in the Talmud. The pointing of the Bible bears the marks of the work of the Holy Spirit, not the work of wicked, blinded, and deluded men." In the words of this learned man is the sum of what I have been arguing for.

Section 17. The Jews generally believe these points to have existed from Mount Sinai and downward, through Moses and the Prophets — or at least from Ezra and his companions, the men of the great synagogue — while acknowledging that their use and knowledge received a great revival by the Gemarists and Masorettes after they had fallen into disuse. So Rabbi Azarias argues at length in Imre Binah, chapter 59.

Had it been otherwise, men so extraordinarily devoted to inquiring after the traditions of their fathers would surely have found some trace of how the points arose and developed. It is true that there is not only the opinion but also the arguments of one man to the contrary — namely Elias Levita. This Elias lived in Germany around the beginning of the Reformation and was the most learned grammarian among the Jews of that age. Several of the first Reformers were acquainted with him. Since the task of both reforming religion and restoring good learning fell to them,

they made use of whatever assistance was available for that purpose. This man — as Thuanus notes — lived with Paulus Fagius and assisted him in his distinguished promotion of the Hebrew language. This may explain why some of those worthies unwarily embraced his novel opinion, being either overawed by his authority or lacking the leisure to search more carefully after the truth. That the testimony of this one man, Elias, should outweigh the consistent attestation of all other learned Jews to the contrary — as Capellus affirms and argues, and as is suggested in our Prolegomena — is foolish to imagine. Moreover, the premises of that learned man argue against his own conclusion. He himself says it is well known that the Jews are inclined to champion everything that honors their people and language — and therefore their testimony in favor of the divine origin of the present punctuation, being testimony in their own cause, ought not to be admitted. Only Elias, who in this matter speaks against the common interest of his people, is presumed to speak from conviction of truth. But the whole weight of evidence is on the other side. Let us grant that all Jews are zealous for the honor and reputation of their nation and language, as they are. Let us grant that they eagerly embrace everything that seems to tend in that direction. What then follows from these premises? Just as nothing could be spoken more honorably of the Jews while they were the church and people of God than what Paul says — that to them were committed the oracles of God — so nothing can be imagined or fixed upon more to their honor, since their divorce from God, than that their doctors and masters should have made such an addition to Scripture, one so universally acknowledged to be of unspeakable value. And to that point, Elias — who was the father of this opinion — was far from

drawing the same conclusions from it as some do today, namely that it is lawful for us to change the vowels and accents at will. Rather, he binds all men as strictly to them as if they had been the work of Ezra. It is Elias, then, who speaks in his own interest — and his testimony is therefore not to be admitted. What was done in ancient times and in the days of Ezra belongs to us, who have inherited the privileges of that church. What has been done since the destruction of the Temple belongs properly and peculiarly to the Jews.

Section 18. It may perhaps be thought that my account of the rabbis — their historical state and condition, both ancient and recent — might have weakened one of the great arguments learned men use to confirm the sacred antiquity of the present Hebrew punctuation, namely the universal consent and testimony of Jewish scholars, ancient and modern, with only this one Elias as the exception. One might ask: who can think such people are to be believed in anything? But in fact the case is quite the opposite. Though we regard them as entirely unfit for the work attributed to them, and say that if it were their work it would need to undergo a more rigorous examination than its generally received antiquity has so far shielded it from — yet they were still men, fully capable of reporting what they found to be the case, and what they found to be otherwise. It cannot reasonably be supposed that so many men living in so many different ages, at such great distances from one another — some of whom may never have heard each other's names — should conspire to deceive themselves and all the rest of the world in a plain matter of fact that was not to their advantage at all. However that may be, I will willingly admit whatever can be

proved against them. But to be driven out of so rich a possession as the present Hebrew punctuation on the basis of mere surmises and conjectures — that I cannot willingly grant.

Section 19. It is not my purpose to present arguments for the divine origin of the present Hebrew punctuation. Nor do I think it necessary for anyone to do so while the learned Buxtorfius's discourse on the origin and antiquity of the points remains unanswered. I will therefore only add one or two considerations that carry weight with me and that I do not recall being mentioned by him, or by his father in his *Tiberias*, or by any other writer I know of in their debates on this subject.

First consideration: if the points — that is, the vowels and accents — are as old as the rest of the letters, or have an origin prior to all grammar of the language (for languages are not made by grammars; grammars are made by languages), then the grammar of both must be gathered from observing how they were found in all their variety before any such art was invented or used. Rules must be derived from that observation. The task of grammar was to draw into rules all the uniform instances that would fall under such rules, and to separately record the anomalous words — either individually or grouped under exception headings — that could not be so reduced. On the other hand, if the vowels and accents were invented independently and added to the letters, then the rules and art for placing, transposing, and changing them must have been established before they were actually placed, since they were positioned according to pre-existing rules. There is no middle position I can see. Either they are original to the writing of the language and rules were derived from how they stood in it, or they were supplied to it according to the rules of art. These things do

not happen by chance, any more than this world was created by a random collision of atoms. Now if grammar or art was the foundation rather than the product of the vowels' use — and I am confident no tolerable answer will ever be given to the inquiry of Buxtorfius the elder in his *Tiberias*: why did the inventors leave so many words anomalously pointed, differently from the regular course of the language, carefully counting them up when they did so and recording how often they occur (for example, certain vowel substitutions of this and that kind), when they could, had they chosen, have made all the words regular, to their own great ease, to the advantage of the language, and to the benefit of all future learners — that being precisely what they seemed to aim at — then neither can I be satisfied why, in the long and painstaking work of the Masoretes, wherein they counted every word in Scripture and noted every irregularity of every letter and tittle, they never once attempted to set out for us the general rules by which they or their masters proceeded in affixing the points. Nor why no learned Jew for hundreds of years afterward was able to tell us what those rules were, but in all their grammatical instructions merely collected individual observations and repeated them a hundred times over, drawing on particular instances as they came up. Surely if this wonderful art of pointing — which for the most part can be reduced to general rules, and could have been reduced entirely to such rules if it had been an arbitrary invention unconstrained by any pre-existing text — had been devised first and established as the standard for affixing vowels, some trace of it would have remained in the Masora or among some of those Jews who spent their entire lives in study of it.

Section 20. Second consideration: in the days of the Chaldee Paraphrast, the prophecies of the humiliation and death of the Messiah were not understood by them. And yet we see how many different directions and senses the Paraphrast twists them to, in order to extract some tolerable meaning from them. Take as an example Isaiah 53. Jonathan there acknowledges that the whole prophecy is intended of Christ, knowing it to be the common faith of the church. But not understanding the state of humiliation the Messiah was to undergo, he twists the words into every possible form to make what is said passively of Christ — or spoken of what others do to Him in His suffering — appear to mean what He does actively in judging and exercising authority over others. But now more than five hundred years later, when these points are supposed to have been invented, the rabbis were wide awake and knew full well what use was being made of those passages against them. They also knew that the Prophets — especially Isaiah — are the most obscure part of all Scripture as regards the grammatical sense of the words in their context, when read without points and accents. They knew how easy it would be to invert the whole sense of many passages by small alterations in how the text is read. And yet as the text stands pointed, it makes the Christian faith incomparably clearer than any ancient translation of those passages whatever. Johannes Isaac, a converted Jew, tells us in book 1 to Lindanus that over two hundred testimonies about Christ can be drawn from the original Hebrew that do not appear in the Latin Vulgate or any other translation. And Raymundus Martinus writes: "Let those who blamed me for translating directly from the Hebrew instead of following the Vulgate know that in a great many places in sacred Scripture, the truth in support of the Christian

faith is held far more plainly and perfectly in the Hebrew text than in our translation" (Proem to *Pugio Fidei*, section 14). Let any man consider those two great challenges to the rabbis — those weapons against Jewish unbelief — Isaiah 53 and Daniel 9, as they are now pointed and accented in our Bibles, and compare them with the translation of the Seventy. This will quickly become evident to him. This has been demonstrated with particular force since the Socinians, as well as the Jews, have pressed the debate about the satisfaction of Christ to the utmost scrutiny and examination of every word in Isaiah 53. And yet as the text now stands, pointed and accented, neither Jews nor Socinians — despite the assistance given to them by Grotius, who twisted that entire blessed prophecy to apply it to Jeremiah, thinking thereby to outdo the modern Jews such as Abarbanel and others who applied it to Josiah, to the whole Jewish people, to Messiah Ben Joseph, and to I know not whom — have been able, nor ever shall be able, to free themselves from the sword of the truth therein. Were such exercises upon the Word of God permissible, I could easily show how, by changing the distinctive accents and vowels, much darkness and confusion might be cast over the structure of that glorious prophecy. It is also well known that the Jews commonly argue that one reason they keep the copy of the Law in their synagogues without points is so that the text will not be restricted to one certain sense, giving them freedom to draw out various — and as they say, more elevated — senses.

CHAPTER 5



CHAPTER 5.

1. Arguments for the novelty of the Hebrew points, proposed for consideration. 2. The argument from the Samaritan letters considered and answered. 3. Of the copy of the Law preserved in the synagogues without points. 4. The testimony of Elias Levita and Aben Ezra considered. 5. Of the silence of the Mishnah, Talmud, and Gemara about the points. 6. Of the Keri and Kethib. 7. Of the number of the points. 8. Of the ancient translations — Greek, Chaldee, Syriac. 9. Of Jerome. 10. The new argument of Morinus in this cause: the conclusion about the necessity of the points.

Section 1. Because this appears to be a matter of great importance — one on which the truth I have been defending seems closely bound up — I will very briefly consider the arguments commonly urged (as in these Prolegomena) to prove that the points are a modern invention, that is, the work of the men and at the time before mentioned. I will not go into particular instances, nor is it necessary that I do so — that has already been done. The main

lines of argument, which still contain their full force, can be dispatched briefly. I will address them in the order in which the Prolegomena presents them: Prolegomena 3, sections 38, 39, 40.

Section 2. The first argument runs as follows: since the ancient Hebrew letters were the same as the present Samaritan letters, and since the Samaritan letters have always been without points — as they remain today — it is evident that the invention of the points must be later than the change of the letters, which occurred in the days of Ezra, and therefore must be the work of the post-Talmudic Masoretes. A painter's scaffold — that is, a flimsy structure supporting a false picture! This entire objection rests on highly uncertain conjectures. This is not the place to speak at length about the Samaritans, their Pentateuch, and its translation. The origin of that nation is known from Scripture, as is their worship of God: 2 Kings 17. Their solemn excommunication and exclusion from any share among the people of God is also recorded: Ezra 9, Nehemiah 6, and Nehemiah 13. Their continued abominations after the closing of the canon of Scripture are reported by Josephus, Antiquities, book 11, chapter 8. In the days of the Maccabees they were conquered by Hyrcanus and brought into subjection by the Jews: Josephus, Antiquities, book 13, chapter 17. Yet their self-chosen worship, based on the tradition of their fathers, continued to the days of our Savior, along with their hostility toward the people of God: John 4. When, by whom, and in what script they first received the Pentateuch is highly uncertain. It was probably not through the priest sent to them, since despite his instructions they continued in open idolatry — which suggests they had never even seen the book of the Law. The most likely time was when they were conquered by Hyrcanus and their temple was razed after it had

stood two hundred years. The same happened with the Edomites. What care they took in preserving it — since it was never committed to them by God — we shall see afterward. That any of them remain to this day, or have for the past thousand years, is unknown. That the letters of their Pentateuch were the ancient Hebrew letters, as Eusebius, Jerome, and some of the rabbis report, seems to me — after the best inquiry I have been able to make — a groundless tradition and mere fable. The evidence offered to prove it is far too weak to bear the weight of such a claim. Eusebius speaks only on hearsay — "it is affirmed" — without indicating on what grounds. Jerome is more positive, but allow me to say that if this point is false, there are sufficient examples of similar mistakes in his writings. As for the testimony of the Talmud, I have repeatedly stated that it carries no weight with me unless supported by very good independent evidence. And indeed the entire foundation of the story is very weak. The Jews are thought to have forgotten their own script during the captivity and to have learned the Chaldean, and are said to have clung to it after their return. But the same people were alive both at the burning of one Temple and the building of the next — men of one and the same generation could not have forgotten the use of letters they had practiced all their lives. Besides, they always had their Bibles with them, in their own script alone. Whether they had any other book is unknown. How, then, the forgetting of one script and the learning of another would have come about does not appear. Nor will I place much weight on such an improbable fiction on the basis of testimonies, the most ancient of which is six hundred years later than the alleged event.

Section 3. The weightiest proof in this case is drawn from ancient Jewish coins bearing Samaritan characters. We are now in the well-worn road of forgeries and fables — no area has produced more frauds. But grant that the coins in question are genuinely ancient: does it necessarily follow that because these letters were then known and in use, they alone were in use, or that the Bible was written in them and those now in use were unknown? To preserve the credibility of the coins, I will answer this conjecture with another. The Samaritan letters are plainly unusual — if I may put it that way — a studied invention. Their shapes and forms are suited to ornamentation when enlarged by engraving or embossing onto surfaces or when cut into coin dies. Why might we not think they were invented precisely for that purpose — to engrave on vessels and stamp on coins — and from there came to have some use in writing as well? Their shapes suggest something of the kind. This is made more plausible by the practice of the Egyptians, who, as Clement of Alexandria tells us, had three kinds of letters: one used for everyday writing, another used by the priests in sacred writings, and a third of two kinds — simple and symbolic. Since it was not unusual to have several kinds of letters for different purposes, it is not improbable that the same was true among the Jews. Not that they wrote the sacred texts in a special character to conceal them — which would be rightly condemned — but simply that another character may have been used for certain purposes, which is not unusual. I cannot think, for instance, that the Greeks of old used only the large block letters, though we know some did — unlike the man who wrote Homer's Iliad in no larger a volume than would fit in a nutshell.

Section 4. But even if what cannot be proved were granted — namely that such a change of letters took place — it would not in the least harm those who hold that Ezra and the men of the great congregation were the authors of the points. The proponents of this rumor placed the time at which the old Hebrew letters were, so to speak, cast out of the church, alongside the Samaritans themselves. In fact, it lends a certain plausibility to the opposite view: that Ezra, setting aside the old letters because of their difficulty, along with the new letters also introduced the points to facilitate their use. Nor can it be shown that the Samaritan letters never had any vowels affixed to them. Postellus affirms that the Samaritans had points in the days of Jerome, and that the loss of them accounts for their now corrupt reading. He writes: "They now lack the points they had in the time of Jerome, and they read without points in a thoroughly corrupted manner" (Postellus, *Alphabet of 12 Languages*). There were always some copies written without vowels, which might have been preserved while the others were lost. That people — if we have anything from them at all — being wicked, ignorant, dull, superstitious, idolatrous, and rejectors of most of Scripture, corrupting what they had received, might well have neglected the painstaking task of copying out pointed texts correctly. Nor is it improbable — whatever may be claimed to the contrary — that, persisting in their separation from the people of God, they might have obtained a copy of the Law written in a script of their own choosing out of hatred for the Jews. Now let anyone judge whether from this heap of uncertainties anything can emerge with the appearance of a credible witness to give testimony in the matter at hand. Anyone who would surrender his possession on such easy terms never found much benefit in it.

Section 5. The second argument: the constant practice of the Jews in preserving in their synagogues one book — which they almost worship — written without points, is brought forward for the same purpose. What do they do by this, it is asked, but tacitly acknowledge that the points have a human origin? Answer: it is certain they do not acknowledge this, either by that practice or by any other means. It is the consistent opinion and conviction of all of them — Elias alone excepted — that the points are of divine extraction. And if their authority is to be urged, it must be submitted to in one thing as well as another. The Jews give a threefold account of this practice. First, the difficulty of transcribing copies without any error — since the slightest error renders the whole book unfit for use in their synagogues. Second, the freedom it gives them to draw out various senses — more elevated, they claim, though in reality more fanciful and arbitrary than they can achieve when the reading is fixed to one certain sense by the vowels and accents. Third, it keeps all learners dependent on their teachers, since without the points they cannot know the mind of God apart from their teachers' interpretation: Rabbi Azarias, Imre Binah, chapter 59. If these reasons do not satisfy anyone as to the ground of that practice, they may ask the Jews for others — those who intend to be bound by the Jews' authority. As for Jesuit stories out of China — I give them about the same credit as the Jews give their Talmud. Anyone who can believe all the miracles they perform, where people are not warned of their tricks, may well credit them in other matters. 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 Masoretes — when in fact they never read or chant from it except according to

every point and accent in ordinary use. Indeed, the whole deep mystery of this practice seems to be this: that no one is permitted to read or chant the Law in their synagogues until he has it so perfectly memorized that he can observe exactly all the points and accents — in a book that has none of them written in it.

Section 6. The third argument uses the testimony of Elias Levita — not only his own judgment but also what he reports from Aben Ezra and others. They affirm, says Elias, that we received the whole system of punctuation from the Tiberian Masorettes. Answer: It is quite true that Elias held that view, and it is fair to suppose that had this opinion not entered his mind, the world would have heard little of it to this day. That by "receiving the punctuation from the Tiberians" Aben Ezra means its continuation and transmission through their school — not its invention — is demonstrated beyond all reasonable objection by Buxtorfius, *De Punctorum Antiquitate*, part 1, chapter 3. Nor could anything speak more directly against the intended argument than what the *Prolegomena* cites from Aben Ezra's comment on Exodus 25:31, where he affirms that he saw certain books examined in all their letters and in the whole punctuation by the wise men of Tiberias — that is, examined to verify whether it had been done exactly according to the patterns they held. Moreover, all of Elias's arguments are notably answered by Rabbi Azarias, whose answers are repeated by Joseph de Voisin in his most learned observations on the proem of the *Pugio Fidei*, pages 91 and 92. The same Azarias also shows the consistency of the various opinions held among the Jews about the vowels: attributing their virtue and force to Moses, or to God at Mount Sinai; their physical form and character to Ezra; and the restoration of their use to the Masorettes.

Section 7. The fourth argument: the silence of the Mishnah, Gemara, and the whole Talmud concerning the points is pressed further. This argument is also discussed at length by Buxtorfius, and the instances cited in it are answered fully. No one need add anything further until what he has written on this subject is refuted. See Part 1, chapter 6. See also Glassius, book 1, Tractate 1, on the Hebrew pointed text, who provides instances to the contrary. Indeed, the Talmud itself, in Nedarim (the tractate on vows), chapter 4, on Nehemiah 8:8, plainly mentions the points. Treatises even more ancient than the Talmud, cited by Rabbi Azarias in *Imre Binah*, speak of them explicitly. To me, a sufficient proof that the Talmudists both knew and were governed in their readings by the points now in use is this: as many learned men have observed, there is not a single text of Scripture cited in the Talmud in any other sense — as regards the literal reading and meaning of the word — than what the present punctuation restricts it to. This is significant because the advocates of the view under consideration regularly offer this as one reason why the Seventy Translators read words and sentences differently from how we now read them in our Bibles: namely, that the manuscripts they used were not pointed, and they were therefore free to guess at this or that sense of the word before them. This is one of the main pillars of Capellus's entire structure in his *Critica Sacra*. And I cannot understand how, on the assumption that the Talmudists did not know the use of points, there could be no variation at all between our present reading and theirs — when by the same principle, there are supposedly so many variations in the readings of the Seventy and the Chaldean Paraphrast.

Section 9. Regarding the Keri and Kethib, which are brought forward next for the same purpose, I will speak of them afterward. The differences in them are in the consonants, not in the vowels — though this does not prove there were no vowels present when they were collected or arranged as we now find them. It may well be true that the manuscripts from which they were collected — if they were collected from manuscripts — had no vowels. But that this collection was made any later than the days of Ezra, for the most part, does not appear. Whatever was done concerning Scripture in the Jewish church before the time of our Savior is evident to have been done with divine authority, since He nowhere reprov'd it — but rather confirmed the integrity of every single word. But these matters we will address distinctly by themselves afterward.

Section 10. A sixth argument for the novelty of the points is drawn from their number. Since it is said that all kinds of sounds can be expressed by five vowels, yet the present Hebrew punctuation supplies us with fourteen or fifteen, it is argued that this abundantly proves the points are not original to the language itself, but are the arbitrary artificial invention of men who failed to assign sufficiently distinct sounds to them to differentiate them in pronunciation. But this objection carries little weight. Its basis is the assumption that we still possess the exact true pronunciation of the Hebrew tongue — which is evidently false. It has been nearly two thousand years since that language was spoken in its purity as a common tongue by any people. To imagine that the true, precise, and distinct pronunciation of every letter and syllable, as used by those for whom it was a native language, has been handed down to us or is attainable by us — that is a pleasant dream indulged while

wide awake. Aben Ezra considers it no small thing that men of old knew correctly how to pronounce Camets Gadol. He says: "The men of Tiberias, along with the wise men of Egypt and Africa, knew how to read Camets Gadol." Even the distinct force of a single consonant — and one that is always a root letter — has been entirely lost, so that modern Jews know nothing of its pronunciation. Nor can we now distinguish certain consonant pairs that the Jews tell us the wise men of Tiberias could distinguish twelve hundred years ago. The variety of consonants among many nations, and their ability to distinguish them in pronunciation, makes this objection of little consequence. The whole German nation does not distinguish between the force and sound of T and D, whereas the Arabic letters Dal, Dhsal, Dad, Ta, and Da show how those sounds can be distinguished. Nor are certain Hebrew letters answered distinctly by any other language — to distinguish some of which, Jerome had his teeth filed at the direction of his Hebrew teacher Nicodemus. Sixth point. In truth, the Hebrews have only ten vowels — five long and five short — or five great and five lesser. Sheva is merely a servant to all the rest, and its addition to Segol and Pathach creates no new vowels. There is no real basis for distinguishing between Camets Chatuph and Chatuph Camets. Only seven of them, as Morinus has demonstrated from Rabbi Jehuda Chiug, one of the first grammarians among the Jews, were anciently called Kings — that is, the chief rulers of all the movements of the letters. So in practice they have no more figures to distinguish sounds by, with all their vowels, than the Greeks have. Beyond the seven vowels they have twelve diphthongs, three of which are as silent as Sheva in terms of any distinct sound. It is true that Pliny tells us that Simonides Melicus discovered two vow-

els and two consonants — but surely he did so because he found them necessary to represent sounds already in use in that language; otherwise his invention would have merited little thanks. Speaking recently with a worthy and learned friend about a universal character — a project mentioned by many, attempted by several, and by him brought to such perfection as will doubtless give great, if not universal, satisfaction to learned and prudent men when he chooses to share his thoughts with the world — we happened upon the question of the number of distinct vowel sounds. When I heard him argue with good reason that there are eight or nine, I recalled this debate about the Hebrew points and asked him to write down his thoughts briefly the next day, which he did. Because his account seems clearly to expose the weakness of the claim that the Hebrew vowels are an arbitrary invention based on their number, I have included it here.

- Open sounds are either simple (vowels) or double (diphthongs). - 1. Simple open sounds are distinguishable formally and accidentally. - 1. The formal difference is what constitutes distinct letters and depends on the various degrees of mouth opening needed to produce them, together with the gravity or acuteness of the tone they produce. According to this, there are at least eight simple vowels that are easily distinguishable, namely: - 1. - 2. E more acute, as in He, me, she, ye, etc.; less acute, as in the English "the," the Latin me, te, se, etc. - 3. I or Y, which are both of one force and sound: Shi, di; Thy, my. - 4. - 5. A more open, as in All, tall, gall, wall; less open, as in Ale, tale, gale, wale. - 6. - 7. O round, less grave, as the English Go, so, no, the Latin De; more grave and full, as the English Do, to, who. - 8. U, as in Tu, use, us, etc.

- There are evidently that many distinguishable simple open sounds; I would not say there are no more, nor could be — for who knows how many other subtle differences of mouth opening and tone may now be in use or may be discovered by others, which custom and practice may make as easy for them as these are for us. - 2. But beyond this formal difference, some of them are accidentally distinguishable from one another with respect to the length of time required for their utterance, whereby the same vowel becomes sometimes long, sometimes short. - So E minor, acute: Long — meet, steam; Short — met, stem.

- I: Long — alive, give, drive, title, thine; Short — live, give, driven, tittle, thin. - A: Long — bate, hate, cate, same, dame; Short — bat, hat, cat, Sam, dam. - O round: Long — one, none, note, etc.; Short — one (non-Latin), not. - U: Long — use, tune, pule, acute; Short — us, tun, pull, cut.

The other remaining vowels — E more acute, A more open, and O more grave — do not change their quantity but are always long. 2. Diphthongs are formed by the combination of two vowels in one syllable, where the sounds of both are heard. These are: - 1. Ei, Ey — Hei (Latin); They. - 2. Ea — eat, meat, seat, teat, yea, plea. - 3. Eu, ew — Few, Dew; Heu (Latin). - 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 — Buy, juice. - 9. Eo — Yeoman, People. - How other diphthongs that have been in use may serve to represent long vowels, see the note above.

There is therefore very little weight to be placed on the strength of this objection.

Prolegomena 8, section 46. Section 11. Seventh argument: it is further argued that the ancient translations — Greek, Chaldean, and Syriac — demonstrate that the points had not yet been invented at the time of their composition, because in numerous places it is clear that those translators read certain words differently from how we now read them with the points currently affixed — that is, differently in terms of the force and sound, not the written form, of those vowels. For this purpose a great many instances are given from the Septuagint especially, by Capellus; Grotius follows the same course. But this objection is not sufficient to tip the scale in the matter under consideration. Something will be said about those translations at the close of this discussion. The differences that can be observed in them — especially in the former — would prove just as well that those translators had different consonants in their copies, that is, that the copies they used had different letters and words than ours, not just different vowels. Indeed, if wherever they differ from our present reading we must suppose they had other and better copies, we are necessarily committed to saying our text is very corrupt. That would please certain critics — but the inference cannot be avoided, as I hope, God willing, to demonstrate further if the occasion arises. The truth is, the copies of the Septuagint we now have differ in so many places from the original that it is beyond all conjecture what caused it. I wish someone would try their skill on some portion of Job, the Psalms, or the Prophets, to see whether, with all their inquiry into variant readings, they can determine how those translators read in their copies, if they translated as they read and we have what they translated. Symeon de Muys tells us a revealing story about himself on this point in his *Assertion of Hebrew Vindication*, section 1 — and

also how ludicrous his own attempt turned out to be. But I will withdraw that suggestion. The Scripture is not to be handled in such a way; we have already had far too much of that kind of work. The Rabbinical method of finding hidden meanings is not to be compared with some of our critics' methods of transposing and re-arranging letters. Of the Chaldean Paraphrase I will speak afterward. It seems not to be as ancient as it is claimed. It is not mentioned by Josephus, Origen, or Jerome — though this alone does not necessarily impugn its antiquity. But since it is most certain that it was held in high esteem and reverence among all Jews before the time assigned for the punctuation of the points, it is strange that those who fixed the points should voluntarily differ from it in so many places.

Second point. Besides, even if these translators — or any of them — used copies without vowels (as it is acknowledged that such copies always existed, as they do still), it does not follow at all that the points had not been devised or were not in use. But more on this when we come to speak about these translations in detail.

Section 12. Eighth argument: of similar force is the argument made last, drawn from the silence of Jerome and other ancient writers concerning the use of points among the Hebrews. But Jerome did not see everything — he was not aware of the Chaldean Paraphrase, which our authors suppose to have been extant at least four hundred years before him. So it cannot be established that he mentioned everything he did see. He had no occasion to speak expressly about the vowels — there was no controversy about them in his day. Nor were they then known by the distinct names they now carry. The whole current of his translation argues that he had the Bible as we now have it pointed. Indeed, learned

men have shown by examples that seem to provide irrefutable evidence that he did use them. Or it may be that he could not obtain a pointed copy but was taught the correct pronunciation of words by his Jewish teacher. Copies were then scarce, and the Jews were full of jealousy. All of this is uncertain. See Munster, *Praefatio ad Biblia*. The truth is, either I cannot understand Jerome's words, or he positively affirms that the Hebrews had the use of vowels. In his *Epistle to Evagrius*, *Epistle 126*, he writes: "It matters not whether Salem or Salim be named, since the Hebrews very rarely use vowel letters in the middle of words." If they did it rarely, they did it — and therefore they had them. Although in those days, to preserve their reputation as teachers, they did not make much use of them. Nor can this be said of the sound of the vowels, but only of their written figures. Surely they did not rarely use the sounds of vowels, given that they spoke constantly. And many other testimonies from Jerome may be produced to the same effect.

Section 13. Morinus, in his recent *Opuscula Hebraea Samaritica*, in his digression against the Hebrew points and accents, part 1, page 209, introduces a new argument to prove that the vowel points were invented by the Jewish grammarians — though he allows that the distinction of sections may be older. He bases this argument on a passage in Aben Ezra concerning the successive means by which Scripture was preserved: first by the men of the great synagogue, then by the Masoretes, then by the grammarians. As Aben Ezra assigns distinct tasks to each group, so he assigns to the grammarians the knowledge of the progress of the holy tongue, the origin of the chief points, and of Sheva — all as Morinus cites him at length. Morinus then labors to prove by several instances that by "chief points" Aben Ezra means the vowels,

not the accents as they are now called. And in his addenda, prefixed to the book, he triumphs over the discovery that the vowels are so called by Rabbi Jehuda Chiug, the most ancient of the Jewish grammarians. The business now seems to him completely settled, and he cries out: "We need no longer the eyes of others — now we see for ourselves." A great sacrifice is surely owed to this crowning net of Morinus. But what would be worthy of such a thing?

Section 14. The passage Morinus relies on from Aben Ezra was produced, weighed, and explained by Buxtorf several years earlier, from his work on the standard of the holy tongue, *De Punctorum Origine*, part 1, pages 13 and 14, chapter 3. It is not unlikely, given how Morinus handles it in his preface — noting that he fixed on it some years ago — that he actually encountered it in Buxtorfius. This suspicion is reinforced by the way Morinus preemptively guards against that accusation. And Simeon de Muys suggests that Morinus dealt with the father as he now deals with the son. *Censura in Exercitationes* 4, chapter 7, page 17, where de Muys himself acknowledges with great and rare candor what he received from Buxtorf. *Assertio Textus Hebraici Veritas*, chapter 5: "Will you say I borrowed all of this from Buxtorfius? Why not indeed borrow it, if necessity requires?" But what is the great discovery here? That the vowel points are called by some of them "kings" — the accents have now acquired that title, some being called kings and some servants — so that the present arrangement of vowels and accents is supposedly novel. Second point: that the grammarians invented these royal points, as Aben Ezra says.

Section 15. But what cause for triumph or boasting is there in any of this great discovery? Was it ever denied by anyone that the naming of the vowels and accents with their titles was the work of the grammarians? Had it not long since been observed by many that the five long vowels, along with certain others, were anciently called kings? And that the distinction of vowels into long and short was an invention of the Christian rather than the Jewish grammarians — the Jews themselves calling some absolutely kings, others great and small, others mothers and daughters? But then says Morinus: the grammarians were the inventors of these points — why so? Aben Ezra assigns to the work of the grammarians the task of knowing the progress of the holy tongue, the origin of those things, etc. But could anything be more clearly 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 root and servant letters? By that logic they invented the language itself, for it consists of root and servant letters, of points and accents — and yet this too is attributed to them by Aben Ezra. But it is good that Morinus has at last lighted upon Rabbi Jehuda Chiug. His opinion before was gathered from Kimchi, Ephodius, Muscatus, and others. But what does Chiug himself say? From what Morinus quotes, he seems likely to prove a notable witness to the antiquity of the points. It may well be supposed that Morinus, writing explicitly against their antiquity, would produce whichever testimony in his whole author best served his purpose. And yet the testimony he fixes on is from this ancient grammarian — who lived around the year AD 1150 or 1200 — and gives an account of the points with their names without the slightest hint of anything that would impugn their divine origin. Similarly, Aben Ezra himself, on

Psalm 9:7, tells us of one Adonim Ben-Lafrad who, long before Rabbi Jehuda, found a certain vowel reading in an ancient copy. So when Morinus comes to draw the conclusion of his argument — apparently discovering in the process the absurdity of claiming the points were invented by the grammarians, the last group mentioned by Aben Ezra — he says: "It is beyond all doubt, and clearer than the midday sun, that Aben Ezra believed the origin of all vowel pointing to derive from the Tiberian Masorettes and the grammarians who followed them." But of these Masorettes there is not a word in the premises, nor does Aben Ezra assign any such work to them. He assigns them a quite different task — making a protective hedge around the Law by their observations on all its words. Had he envisioned them as inventors of the points, he would surely have assigned that work to them. And as for the grammarians, his own testimony stands squarely against that conclusion.

Section 16. These are the main arguments pressed by Capellus and others, and by these Prolegomena, to prove that the Hebrew punctuation is an invention of the Jews of Tiberias, five hundred or more years after the incarnation of Christ. A short song, but a long refrain. I have not set out here to answer them at length with the various instances produced to lend them credibility — nor is it necessary for anyone to do so until the answers already given are refuted. But from the sample given of their nature and character, the sober and godly reader may easily judge whether they carry any force sufficient to overturn the persuasion they oppose. That persuasion rests on the universal tradition and consent of the Jews; on the utterly uncontested reception of the points by all the world — Jews and Christians — without the least opposition; on

the very nature of the punctuation itself, which follows the genius of the language and does not arise from artificial rules; on the impossibility of assigning any author to it since the days of Ezra except by the kind of loose conjectures and guesswork that ought not to be admitted in a matter of such weight. All of this is attended by the great uncertainty we would be left in, in all translations and expositions of Scripture, if we were to deny that these points have a divine original. It is true that while the Hebrew language was the common tongue of the nation, spoken uniformly by everyone everywhere, it would have been possible, on the assumption that there were no points, for men without infallible guidance to affix marks and figures that might with some accuracy represent the common pronunciation of the language, and so yield the true and proper sense of the words themselves. But when there had been an interruption of a thousand years in the everyday use of the language — preserved pure only in one book — to suppose that the exact pronunciation of every letter, tittle, and syllable was kept alive by oral tradition, nowhere written and not spoken by anyone as a common tongue, is to build towns and castles of imagination that can be as easily demolished as they are erected. Unless this is supposed — which cannot be supposed with any plausibility at all, yet is so supposed by Capellus and the learned author of the *Prolegomena* — we must grant that the great rule of all present translations, expositions, and commentaries that have been made in the church of God for several hundred years is the arbitrary invention of a handful of Jews living in an obscure corner of the world under the curse of God, in their unbelief and blindness. The only relief offered in the *Prolegomena* against this troubling conclusion is, as I said, that the Masoretes did not affix the present

punctuation arbitrarily — so Capellus also says — but according to the tradition they had received. What weight should be placed on such a tradition preserved for nearly a thousand years — indeed, more than a thousand according to Morinus — is easy to imagine. Nor should men comfort themselves with the supposed ease of learning the Hebrew language without points and accents, and of reading not just the language but the true and precise text of the Bible rightly. Let the points and accents be entirely removed — along with all understanding of the sense that arises from the restraint and distinction the words receive by being pointed as they are — and then turn the whole crowd of learned critics of this age loose upon the bare consonants, and we shall quickly see what dreadful havoc will be made of sacred truth. Were they shut up in separate rooms, I would scarcely expect the harmony and agreement among them that is fabulously reported of the Seventy. The Jews say truly: "No man can lift up his tongue to read without punctuation." And: "If we grant reason mastery in these and similar matters, the whole of the books will be changed — in letters, words, and sentences — and so the thing itself will be changed" (book Cosri, part 3, page 28). And so I have, with all possible brevity, defended the position I earlier maintained against this major objection — one that might rightly have been feared from the principles laid down in the Prolegomena.

CHAPTER 6



CHAPTER 6.

1. Of the Keri and Kethib. 2. Their nature and origin. The difference is in the consonants. 3. Morinus's vain charge against Arias Montanus. 4. The senses of both consistent. 5. Of the great congregation. The source and origin of these variant readings. 6. The judgment of the Prolegomena about them, their array presented twice over in the Appendix. 7. The origin assigned to them. 8. Considered. 9. Of Capellus's opinion and the danger of it.

Section 1. We have not yet reached a close. There is another matter raised in these Prolegomena and presented in the Appendix that may appear to undermine the universality of my argument concerning the complete preservation of the original copies of Scripture. The Keri and Kethib — the written and the read, or what is written in the text and what is to be read in its place — is what I have in mind. The general nature of these is known to all who have looked into the Bible. One word is placed in the text, and another in the margin. The word in the text does not have its own vowel points affixed to it, but instead carries the vowels belonging to the word in the margin. There are about 840 such instances in the

Bible — some of the later printed editions differ slightly in the exact count due to oversight or error. All who have written on the Hebrew text have discussed their general nature, as has the author of these Prolegomena. As for our present concern — to show that no argument for the corruption of the original can be drawn from them — the following observation will suffice.

Section 2. All the difference in these words is in the consonants, not at all in the vowels. The word in the margin claims the vowels in the text as properly belonging to it. The vowels in the text appear to be placed with a word to which they do not belong because there is no other suitable place for them in the line, where they must be retained as belonging to the integrity of the Scripture.

Section 3. Morinus, to display his hostility toward the Hebrew text, uses this as an occasion to quarrel with Arias Montanus and accuse him of ignorance and dishonesty. *De Hebraeo Textu Sinceritate*, Exercitation 1, chapter 4, page 40.

The pretended basis of his quarrel is that Arias affirms that the greatest part of these variant readings consists in certain differences of the points. For this purpose he cites Arias's words from his preface to his collection of variant readings: "The greatest part of the variety in these readings consists in such discrepancies of the points, as is demonstrated throughout this whole volume of the Massorah or variant readings." To which Morinus subjoins: "A remarkable claim — not one of them lies in the points." He then adds: "He himself attached a catalogue of several at the end of his preface. And all the variants are in the letters, none in the points. I write with confidence that none of all the variant readings which the Jews call Keri and Kethib — which is what Arias is discussing — belongs in the slightest to the points. Again with confidence,"

etc. Would not any man think that he had here made some great discovery — both regarding the nature of the Keri and Kethib and the ignorance of Arias, whom he goes on to reproach as a person unacquainted with the Massora and with the variant readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, of the Eastern and Western Jews, found at the end of the Venetian Bibles — which were the Bibles Arias chiefly used in printing his own? And yet men acquainted with the ability and great accomplishment of Arias will be hard pressed to believe that he was so blind and ignorant as to affirm that the greatest part of the variety he spoke of consisted in the changing of vowels, while at the same time providing examples where all the variants consist in changes of consonants only. But what if all this should prove to expose the ignorance and prejudice of Morinus himself? First, as to his repeated assertion that the difference in the Keri and Kethib lies in the consonants only — which he presents as though he were revealing a new and remarkable discovery — this has been commonly known since the days of Elias Levita. What, then, did Arias Montanus intend by saying otherwise? This is pure malice and groundless accusation. He speaks not at all of the Keri and Kethib, but entirely of the anomalous pointing of words — where words are pointed in ways that deviate from the genius of the language — as observed and catalogued in the Massorah. Of other variants he speaks afterward, giving a particular account of the Keri and Kethib, which whether he regarded as variant readings in the proper sense I do not know. You cannot match someone who does not compete on equal terms. But in the eyes of an ambitious Jesuit, all are ignorant who do not share his conclusions.

Section 4. Taking the whole context into account, the difference in sense between the word in the text and the word in the margin is in practice very little or none at all. Indeed, each word — both the one in the text and the one in the margin — yields a sense agreeable to the analogy of faith.

Of all the variants of this kind, the most significant involves two words that sound the same but have very different meanings: the word meaning "not" written in the text, with the margin noting a word meaning "to him" or "his" to be read in its place — this occurs fourteen or fifteen times. Yet even though these appear contrary to one another, wherever this occurs, a sense agreeable to the analogy of faith arises clearly from either word. To give one or two examples: Psalm 100:3. The text reads: "He has made us, and not we ourselves." The Keri in the margin gives: "his," yielding the sense: "He has made us, and His we are" — the verb "to be" being implied in the pronoun. So also Isaiah 63:9. The text reads: "In their afflictions or straits, no straitness" — meaning God was not constrained from relieving them. The Keri gives: "the affliction or straitening was to Him" — or He was afflicted with them, He shared in their suffering. In the first reading, God signifies that when they were outwardly pressed, He was not constrained from coming to their relief; in the other, that He had compassion for them and was afflicted along with them — which in substance amounts to the same thing. The same may be shown for the rest.

Section 5. I confess I cannot fully satisfy myself as to the original and source of all this variety, being unwilling simply to rely on the testimony of the Jews, and much less on the conjectures of modern innovators. To give a full account of this matter, to the utmost of my understanding, is no small difficulty. Their venerable

antiquity and their unquestioned reception by all translators protects them from being dismissed from their established place by anyone's bare conjecture. What seems to me most significant is that most of them appear to have been in the Bibles at the time when the oracles of God were committed to the Jews — during which period the Jews are nowhere found to have been blamed for adding or altering so much as one word or tittle. For this reason, the Chaldean Paraphrast often follows the word in the margin, which was never in the line of the text in any copy — whatever some may boastingly conjecture to the contrary — and sometimes follows the word in the text. What seems most probable to me is that most of them were collected by the men of the great congregation. Some in recent times — I hope not with any design to bring all things into further confusion regarding the origin of these readings — have begun to question whether there ever was any such thing as the great congregation. Morinus calls it a Jewish fiction. Our Prolegomena question it, Prolegomena 8, section 22. But to question the great congregation is simply to question whether Ezra, Nehemiah, Joshua, Zechariah, Haggai, and the rest of the leaders of the people in their return from captivity set up a council according to God's institution and labored to reform the church and all corruptions that had crept into the Word or worship of God. I do not see how this can reasonably be called into question — even apart from the universal tradition of Jews and Christians that confirms it. Nor is it called the great congregation because of its size, but because of the eminence of its members. On this assumption, it may be granted that the Keri and Kethib found in the books of Ezra and the rest were collected by the churches that followed them. Unless we are to suppose with Ainsworth that the

Word was so given by God as to make both readings necessary. And if we cannot identify the exact reason it was so given, we have nothing to blame but our own ignorance — this not being the only case where such a conclusion is warranted. Our most recent English translation generally renders the word in the margin while also noting the word in the text where there is any significant difference. Those with the time for such a study may observe the choice made in this matter by translators old and modern. And if those translators had not believed these readings to have an authoritative origin beyond any man's power today to challenge, they could not fairly and honestly have used both text and margin as they have done.

Section 6. What then does our Prolegomena say, together with the Appendix, concerning these things?

First, in the Appendix we have them presented in their natural order, as they occur through the books of Scripture — and then a second time, reorganized under the headings that Capellus has arranged and forced them into. This is a task that learned man undertook so that, in performing it, he might lend some support to his opinion that these readings are for the most part critical emendations of the text made by some late Masoretes who came from no one knows where, lived no one knows when or where. Thus, while the Keri and Kethib are the only readings in the Old Testament that have even the appearance of genuine variant readings — for the Jews' collections of the variant readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, of the Eastern and Western Jews, are of no value, never had a place in the Bible, and may be set aside — the unsuspecting reader of the Appendix is presented with a great bulk of them, their whole army mustered twice over in this service.

Section 7. But this inconvenience can be easily remedied, and I am not directly concerned with it. Therefore, on the question of their origin, the Prolegomena says that some of them are corrections made by the Masoretes or rabbis, and others are variant readings drawn from different manuscripts. That they are all, or mostly, critical emendations by the rabbis is not accepted. For the latter part of that determination we thank the learned author. As for the former, we are not satisfied — Prolegomena 8, sections 23, 24, 25. The arguments produced to prove that they came not from Ezra but mostly from post-Talmudic rabbis are capable of a very easy answer, which another occasion may bring out. For now I have already gone far beyond my original intention, and I cannot allow myself any further digression.

Section 8. To answer briefly. Ezra and his companions might have been the collectors of all those found throughout the Bible except in their own books, with those in their own books added by the church that followed them. The Eastern and Western Jews differ about other matters besides the Keri and Kethib. The Jewish rule that the Keri is always to be followed is a later development, and so the ancient translators could rightly read either, or both, as they saw fit. There was no occasion at all for these things to be mentioned by Josephus, Philo, or Origen. Jerome does say, on Isaiah 49:5, that Aquila rendered a certain word as "to him" — which is written with one set of letters — rather than with another set. But Jerome does not show that Aquila read the text differently than he translated it, that is, following the Keri. And as for what is argued from the Chaldean Paraphrase and the Septuagint making use of the Keri and Kethib — the point is not that they knew the distinction by those names, but that these differences existed in

their day. That the word now in the margin was in the text until the time of the supposed Masoretes — this is not merely to be asserted but proved, if such a novel theory expects any credibility in the world. That the Jewish rabbis have made some alterations in the text on their own authority, or at least placed words in the margin while supplying the vowels in the text where those vowels ought not to be; and that there were variant readings in manuscripts after the Talmud which have been gathered by some obscure Jews — no mention being made of these collections in the Masorah or in any of their grammarians — that is the substance of the discussion under consideration. When any of this, or all of it, is proved by testimony or clear reasoning, we will give it further attention.

Section 9. In the meantime I cannot but rejoice that Capellus's theory about these matters — than which I know nothing more harmful to the truth of God — has been rejected. If these hundreds of words were the critical conjectures and emendations of the Jews, what security would we have that the mind of God is truly represented to us? For it is also supposed that some of the words now in the margin were formerly in the text. And if it is supposed, as it is, that there are countless other places of a similar kind still in need of such emendations, any man can see what a door that would open for clever, meddling minds to overturn all certainty in sacred truth. Once this liberty is given to the audacious curiosity of men who pride themselves on their critical abilities, we shall quickly discover in what a dreadful state the truth of Scripture will be left. If the Jews have already made such amendments and corrections of the text — and to such good purpose — and if so much

further work of that kind yet remains to be done, can any man better employ himself than by putting his hand eagerly to this plow? But the one who tears down a hedge — a serpent shall bite him.

CHAPTER 7



CHAPTER 7.

1. Of gathering variant readings by the help of translations. 2. The proper use and benefit of translations. Their new proposed use. 3. The state of the originals on this new proposal. 4. Of the remedy offered to address that state. 5. No copies of old differing in the least from those we now enjoy, from the testimony of our Savior. 6. No testimony, new or old, to that purpose. 7. Requisites for good translations. 8. Of the translations in the *Biblia Polyglotta*: of the Arabic. 9. Of the Syriac. 10. Of the Samaritan Pentateuch. 11. Of the Chaldean Paraphrase. 12. Of the Vulgar Latin. 13. Of the Seventy. 14. Of the translation of the New Testament: of the Persian. 15. Of the Ethiopian. 16. The value of these translations as to the work in hand. 17. Of the supposition of gross corruption in the originals. 18. Of variant readings from Grotius. 19. Of the Appendix in general.

Section 5. Because some judge that further objections may be raised against the thesis I have defended — drawn from what the Prolegomena affirm about gathering variant readings by the help of translations, and from the examples of that work given in the Appendix — I will close this discourse by considering that claim.

Section 2. The great and recognized use of various translations, for which we have always valued them, was the help they provide for the exposition of Scripture. To have before us in a single view the several judgments and understandings of so many worthy and learned men — the authors of these translations — regarding the original words of Scripture is a significant help and advantage to those who seek the mind and will of God in His Word. That translations were of any other use than this was formerly not supposed. They are now presented to us under a new function: as means and tools for correcting the original text and identifying corruptions in our present copies — showing that the manuscripts their authors used actually differed from those we now possess and use. For this remarkable invention we are chiefly indebted — as for the former — to the learned and most diligent Capellus, who is followed, as he himself declares in several instances, by the no less learned Grotius. The scheme is laid out like this. It is supposed that in ancient times there were several copies of the Old Testament differing in many words and sentences from those we now have. Some of the ancient translations were made from these copies. In translating, those translators expressed the sense and meaning of the copies they used. Therefore, by examining what they say where they differ from our present copies, we may discover — that is, learned men skilled at conjecture may discover — how those translators read in their manuscripts. In this way we may come to a further identification of the various corruptions that have crept into the Hebrew text, and by the help of those translations, correct them. So Capellus. The learned author of our Prolegomena handles this matter in Prolegomena 6. I do not recall that he anywhere expressly affirms that the ancient translators had other copies than

those we now enjoy. But he holds that, in addition to the Keri and Kethib, the variant readings of Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali, and of the Eastern and Western Jews, there are — through the neglect, carelessness, and frailty of copyists — many things in the text that are not errors occurring in one copy and easily corrected by others, nor proper variant readings collectable from any ancient copies, but faults or mistakes present in all the copies we have or have ever known. By the help of translations — conjecturing how those translators read in their manuscripts, whether with other words, letters, consonants, or points — we may collect variant readings, as it were from the original. I do not see how this opinion differs in substance from that of Capellus, since Capellus assigns the differences between our copies and ancient ones to no other cause. Nor does Capellus say the Jews deliberately corrupted the text — only that alterations have befallen it through the means and channels described in the Prolegomena. To make this evident by examples, we have a great number of such variant readings gathered by Grotius in the Appendix. How that volume came to bear that title I was at first much puzzled to understand. The greatest part of it gives us not variant readings of the Hebrew text as is claimed, but only the variant interpretations of others from the Hebrew. But the Prolegomena account for that apparent difficulty. The specifics listed as variant readings are not differing readings collected from any copies that now exist or are ever known to have existed, but are critical conjectures of Grotius's own for amending the text, or at most conjectures about how the translators — especially the Seventy and the Vulgar Latin — read the words.

Section 3. Let us now consider the disease being identified and the remedy prescribed, along with the improbability of the one and the inadequacy of the other — assuming the disease to be real. The condition claimed is dreadful — such as might prove fatal to the sacred truth of Scripture. In short, as stated before: there were in ancient times several copies differing in many things from those we now have, according to which the ancient translations were made. Hence it has come to pass that in so many places those translations differ from our present Bibles — all the copies extant in the world. So Capellus. Or there are corruptions present in the text — variants from the original — that may be identified by the help of translations, as our Prolegomena argues.

Section 4. Now since the Septuagint is claimed to be the first translation ever made, and since it differs from our Bible more than all others combined — as may be demonstrated by some thousands of instances — we cannot but be exceedingly uncertain in determining where the copies supposedly used by those translators differed from ours, or where ours are corrupted. We are left to endless uncertain conjectures. What sense others make of this supposed problem I do not know. For my own part I am solicitous for the ark — for the sacred truth of the original. This is because I am fully persuaded that the remedy and relief of this supposed evil, supposedly found in the translations, is ill-suited to the cure, and in fact suited to increase the disease. Some other course must be taken. And since the remedy is plainly insufficient to effect the cure, let us examine whether the whole supposed disease is not a mere fantasy — and so do what we can to prevent the horrible and

outrageous violence that will undoubtedly be done to the sacred Hebrew text if every learned charlatan is permitted to meddle with it using his conjectures drawn from translations.

Section 5. It is well known that the translation of the Seventy — if it has the origin claimed for it, which alone gives it weight — was made and completed about three hundred years before the incarnation of our Savior. This was during the time when the oracles of God were committed to the Jews, when that church and people were the only people of God, accepted by Him, appointed by Him as custodians of His Word for the use of the whole church of Christ to come — as the great and blessed foundation of truth. At that time there was an authoritative copy of the whole Scripture, serving as the standard for all others, kept in the Temple. Can it be imagined that at such a time there should have been such notorious variations in the copies of Scripture through that church's negligence, and yet afterward neither our Savior nor His apostles took the least notice of it? Our Savior Himself affirms of the word then among the Jews that not the smallest letter or the least stroke of a pen would pass away or perish — and whether the points or the consonants themselves with their details are intended or referred to in that expression, yet of the word that was translated by the Seventy, according to this theory, not only letters and titles but words — and many of them — are concluded to be lost. But that no Jew believes the fiction we are examining, I could say with certainty — let a fool believe it.

Section 6. Second point: setting aside our recourse in such cases — namely the good providence and care of God in preserving His Word — let the authors of this suggestion prove their assertion. Namely, that there ever existed in the world any other copy of

the Bible differing in so much as one word from those we now have. Let them produce one testimony, one credible author — Jew or Christian — who speaks even a single word to this purpose. Let them point us to any relic, any monument, any kind of remembrance of such copies, and not put us off with weak conjectures based on the meaning of one or two words, and it shall carry weight with us. Is it proper that a matter of such enormous importance — questioned by no one but themselves — should be decided by their conjectures? Do they think men will give up the possession of truth on such easy terms? That they will be dispossessed of their inheritance by guesswork? But they will say: is it not evident that the ancient translators used other copies, since we can see that in so many places they have translated words and passages in ways that would have been impossible had they been rendering from our copy as we now read it? But will that really be pleaded? May it not be extended to all places as well as to any particular one? May not men use the same argument for every variation the Seventy make from the original — that they had other and better copies than any now extant? Better that all ancient translations be consumed from the earth than that such a fiction be admitted. There are countless other reasons to account for the translators' variations from the original: their own inattentiveness, negligence, ignorance — for even the wisest do not see everything — their desire to expound and clarify the sense, and as is likely, their inclination to alter and vary many things from the original. Add to this the innumerable corruptions and interpolations that have befallen that translation over time — amply witnessed by the variant readings exhibited in the Appendix. It would be easy to demonstrate these things. Since therefore neither the care of God over His truth, nor

the faithfulness of the Jewish church while the oracles of God were committed to it, will permit us to entertain the least suspicion that there ever existed in the world any copy of the Bible differing in the least from what we now enjoy — or that our copies are corrupted as is claimed — and since the authors of that insinuation cannot produce the least testimony to make it good — we rest, through the mercy and goodness of God, in the complete and unquestioned possession of His oracles, once committed to the Jews, and of the faith once delivered to the saints.

But now suppose — what has been supposed — that the holy Bible in its original texts is in the condition that some have claimed. Let us consider whether any relief in that case is to be expected from the translations provided to us with much labor, care, and diligence in these recent editions of the *Biblia Polyglotta*. Let us also settle the question whether correcting the originals by translations — be they ever so ancient — is any proper use of translations at all, leaving further discussion of various other matters concerning them to other occasions.

Section 7. First: that any translation — all or any — may be considered useful for this purpose, I suppose the following qualifications will readily be agreed upon. First, we must be certain that the translation was made directly from the original itself, and not from a prior interpretation of it. For if that appears to be the case, all its authority for the purpose in question vanishes entirely, or at best depends on that prior translation from which it derives — if it agrees with it; otherwise it is worthless. This one consideration will be found to apply to one half of these translations.

Second, the translation must be of venerable antiquity — made at a time when other copies of the original existed in the world besides the one we now possess.

Third: the translation must be known to have been made by men of ability and integrity, sound in the faith, and conscientiously careful not to add or subtract from the originals from which they translated. If all these qualifications — at minimum — do not meet in a given translation, it is most obviously evident that it can serve no useful purpose in helping to identify what corruptions have befallen our copies or what the true reading is in any contested place. Let us then, without prejudice on our own part and I hope without giving offense to others, very briefly consider the state and condition of the translations presented in the *Biblia Polyglotta* with respect to the qualifications laid down.

Section 8. Let us take a look at some of the chief translations without following any particular order, since there is no more reason for the order adopted in the Appendix than for any other. I will begin with the Arabic, out of respect for its renowned and learned publisher and for his account of the various readings from several of its manuscripts. I do so the more readily because he has dealt in this matter with his characteristic candor, giving a clear and learned account of the origin and nature of that translation. I had already received the substance of it from him in a personal conversation, in which he also gave me a satisfactory account of certain other translations, which I will not now need to mention. I will only say that his judgment in such matters is to be esteemed at least equal to that of any man now living.

He tells us in substance that this translation is a patchwork assembled from many ill-matched pieces, there being no single complete translation of the Old Testament extant in that language. Second, as to its antiquity: the most ancient portion was made around the year 4700 by the Jewish reckoning, that is, around AD 950. Third, the Pentateuch was translated by Rabbi Saadiah Haggai. Fourth, it was altered and changed in several places by some other person. Fifth, that person appears to have made his changes in order to serve a particular opinion of his own, of which several examples are given. Sixth, he appears to have been a Muslim, or at least strongly sympathetic to them, as is evident from other indications — including his inscribing his work with the solemn motto taken from the Quran: "In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful." Sixth, it is also possible that another person — a Jew or a Samaritan — had a hand in corrupting the translation. Seventh, this person aimed to stamp divine authority on his own particular opinions. Eighth, the foundation of the Arabic translation now printed being that of Saadiah, it is notable that Saadiah himself professes to have both added and subtracted as he saw fit, in order to bring out what he considered the hidden, mystical sense of Scripture. Ninth, the other Arabic translations that are extant were translated from the Septuagint — either directly, or through the Syriac, which itself was translated from the Septuagint. On these and similar points that oracle of Eastern learning — who has not merely picked up a few words of these languages, as some do, but has searched with great diligence and judgment into the nature of the learning preserved in them and the importance of the books we have — discourses in that preface. It is the way of superficial scholars, when they have acquired a little

skill in any language or field, to persuade the world that all wisdom lies therein. Men of thorough learning, whose learning is governed by sound judgment, know that the true use of their abilities consists in bringing men to a clear acquaintance with truth. In that regard, not only in this particular, we are indebted to this worthy and learned person. I suppose little argument is needed to prove that this translation — though very useful in its proper place and function — is not in the least a fit remedy against any supposed corruption in the original, nor a suitable source for gathering variant readings different from our present text. It may indeed exercise the ability of learned men to consider where and how often it departs from the rule of faith. But as a rule in itself and on its own authority — falling short of all the necessary qualifications laid down above — it is none.

Were I now to go and collect examples of the open and glaring failures of this translation and proceed likewise with the rest, I think I could compile a volume nearly as large as the one of variant readings now offered to us. But I have better uses for my hours than that.

Section 9. Whether the Syriac translation is any more suitable for this purpose, anyone who takes the trouble to consider and weigh it will easily discover. It does appear to have been made from the original, at least in part — or else the translation of the Seventy has been considerably altered since this was made, which I am more inclined to suppose. But when, where, and by whom it was made does not appear. Nor in many places does it seem to have any regard at all to the Hebrew. The note at the close of the Prophets I take to come from the scribe of that individual copy rather than from the translator. But so that the reader may see

through what hands it has passed, he may take it as rendered by the learned author of the annotations on that translation: "Here ends Malachi, or the book of the twelve Prophets, whose speech may continually be with us, amen; and by their prayers, and by the prayers of all the saints, their fellows, especially the virgin who bore God, mother of all the saints, who intercedes for the race of Adam, may God be merciful to the reader and the sinful scribe, and to all who share in this work by word or deed." But this devout conclusion is, I believe, from the scribe — whose habitual carelessness in his work is repeatedly noted in the collection of variant readings, as on page 8 and elsewhere.

Though I acknowledge this translation to be very useful in many respects and to follow the original for the most part, yet since it was made at a time still unknown and by unknown hands, since it evidently follows another corrupt translation in several places, and since it has passed through the hands of persons ignorant and untrustworthy — against whose errors and corruption we have no relief due to the scarcity of copies — I question whether it can be regarded as of any great importance for the end we are inquiring after.

Section 10. Of the Samaritan Pentateuch — both the original text and the translation — we need not say much. What the people from whom it takes its name were is well known; and the inquiries of Scaliger or Morinus have added nothing to what is commonly known about them from Scripture and Josephus. In brief: they were an idolatrous, superstitious, and wicked people before they were subdued by Hyrcanus. Afterward they continued in separation from the true church of God, and by our Savior's own testimony, salvation was not among them. When they received their

Pentateuch is uncertain. It is likewise uncertain how long they kept it. That they corrupted it while they had it is not uncertain — they are charged with this by the Jews in the Talmud, and the instance they give survives to this day in Deuteronomy 11:30. They have also added Shechem to the text to lend support to their abominations. And openly in Deuteronomy 27:4, where God commands that an altar be built on Mount Ebal, they have wickedly and nefariously corrupted the text by substituting Mount Gerizim. One such deliberate corruption, made on purpose to justify a sin and false worship, is enough to destroy the authority of any copy whatever. The copy printed here was brought out of the East, from Damascus, not long ago. It appears to have been two hundred and thirty years old at the time, according to Morinus in his account of it (*Opuscula Samaritana*, preface to the Samaritan Translation). As I said before, whether any Samaritans remain to this day is uncertain — there are a few families of Jews who walk in that way here and there. Now that this Pentateuch — which was never as such committed to the church of God, whose origin is traceable by no one and whose preservation is explicable by no one, known to few, used by none of the ancient Christians, and deliberately corrupted by men of corrupt minds to justify their folly — should on its own account carry any authority for any purpose, let alone to rival the Hebrew text, is something no person without a concealed agenda will seriously contend for. The instances Morinus uses to argue that it has greater integrity than the Hebrew copy — in Genesis 11:29, 31, and Exodus 12:40 — actually prove it corrupt. Anyone who examines them will find the alterations were deliberately made to avoid the difficulties in those passages, which is one of the clearest evidences of corruption. In Genesis 11:31, sixty years have

been cut from the life of Terah to make the chronology work. And in Exodus 12:40, "the sojourning of the children of Israel, and of their fathers, when they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years," is a plain comment or explanation inserted into the text. Nor would Jerome, who had access to this copy, make any use of it when dealing with those very difficulties. If I were to go through the rest of Morinus's instances by which he seeks to credit this Samaritan copy — now found in the *Biblia Polyglotta* — I could show that there is scarcely one of them that does not furnish a clear argument of corruption in it, on some of the best grounds we have for judging the integrity or corruption of any copy. And if this Pentateuch had carried any credit in earlier times, it would not have been omitted — or rather, as it seems, entirely rejected as a thing of no value — by Origen in his diligent collection of the original text and its versions.

We are, however, in a field where everything is carried about by conjectures, and it would be no hard task to show the complete uncertainty of what the author of the *Prolegomena* has fixed upon as the origin of this Pentateuch, or to reinforce the conjectures he opposes. But that is not my present work, and I do not know whether it ever will be. But I must say for now that I could have wished he had refrained from the close of his discussion, section 2, where — from a passing mention of the Samaritan liturgy and its claimed antiquity — he turns, with some bitterness, against those who have set aside the English service book. It would seem, in some men's judgment, to be no act of imprudence to reserve a triumph over the so-called sectaries for some more considerable victory than any that can be hoped for from the example of the Samaritans. Even if all those who set aside the service book were

barbers, porters, and innkeepers, they might easily perceive that the example and precedent of a wicked people forsaken by God and forsaking Him — to whom the promise of the Spirit of supplication was never made nor given — carries no compelling force for the people of Christ under the New Testament, who have that promise fulfilled in them. And much more to the same effect will some of them be found to say when men of wisdom and learning who are able to instruct them condescend personally to do so. But I will leave unsaid what more might be spoken.

The Chaldean Paraphrase is also a patchwork. The Targum of Jonathan is ancient, and so is that of Onkelos. They are supposed to have been made before or around the time of our Savior. Some Jews would have Jonathan to have lived not long after Ezra. Others say he was the chief disciple of Hillel, about a hundred years before Christ's incarnation. Others hold a different view and will not allow it to be much older than the Talmud. But I see no sufficient grounds as yet to overturn the received opinion. The other portions of Scripture were paraphrased at various times — some more than five hundred years after our Savior — and are full of Talmudic fancies, if not outright fables, as is the one on the Song of Solomon. That all these Targums are of excellent use is readily granted, and we are indebted to the *Biblia Polyglotta* for presenting them in so convenient an arrangement alongside the original, so that they may be easily compared with it. But as to the end we are inquiring after, how little advantage is to be gained from them the following few observations will show. First: it was never the aim of those paraphrasts to render the original text exactly, word for word, but to represent the sense of the text as it appeared to their own judgment. For this reason it is impossible to give any re-

liable account of how they read any given passage in which they differ from our present copies, since their aim was to give the sense as they understood it rather than the bare meaning of the words themselves. Hence Elias says of them: "Behold, the Targumists did not always observe the way of grammar." Second: it is evident that all the Targums aimed to give mystical senses, especially the later ones, and so were inevitably driven to depart from the literal text. Third: it is evident that they have often added whole sentences to Scripture from their own understanding or corrupt traditions — even the best of them — sentences for which there is not one tittle or syllable in Scripture and never was. Fourth: what careful hands it has passed through, the bulky collection of variant readings given in this Appendix abundantly shows. And since it has not lain under any special care and merciful providence of God, who can tell how many other faults and errors — undiscoverable from any variety of copies, as has happened with the Septuagint — may not have crept into it? A fuller account of these matters will be available when the work of Buxtorfius the father on the Babylonian Talmud — promised some time ago by the son to be published (*Vindiciae Veritatis Hebraicae*, page 2, chapter 10, page 337) — and, as we are informed by the learned annotator on this paraphrase in his preface in the Appendix, recently sent to the publishers of this Bible, shall be published. So we have not yet arrived at the remedy provided for the supposed disease.

Section 12. Of the Vulgar Latin — its uncertain origin, its corruptions and barbarisms, and its abuse — so much has already been said by so many that it would be pointless to repeat it. For my part I regard it as by far the best in the whole collection presented

to us, excepting the interlinear of Arias Montanus. But it cannot be compared to several modern translations and is wholly unfit to provide the relief that is sought.

Section 13. The Septuagint is what must bear the weight of the entire case. And it is right indeed that it should answer for most of the rest, since they are evidently derived from it — and while they are often worse than it, they are sometimes made to appear better than it now is. But here again everything is exceedingly uncertain. Almost nothing is clearly established about the Septuagint except that it is woefully corrupt. Its origin is uncertain. Some scholars call the whole story of that translation into question, as though those seventy-two men never existed at all. The circumstances reported about them and their work are certainly fabulous: that they were summoned at the advice of Demetrius Phalereus, who was already dead by that time; that they were placed in seventy-two separate cells; that there were twelve men from each tribe ready for the work — all of these are incredible. See Scaliger ad Eusebium, folio 123; Wouwer, *Syntagma*, chapter 11.

Some Jews say they translated from a corrupt Chaldean Paraphrase, which to me does not seem unlikely. Josephus, Augustine, Philo, Jerome, and Zonaras all affirm that they translated only the Law or Pentateuch — Josephus states this explicitly in his Proem to the Antiquities. This is the received opinion. Where the rest of the translation comes from is unknown. Take for this purpose the following chapter from Drusius, *Observationes*, book 6, chapter 9.

The common Greek translation is not the work of the Seventy Interpreters, contrary to what was formerly supposed.

"That the translation commonly received among the Greeks is not the work of the Seventy Interpreters is, I believe, doubted by no one today. For, to say nothing else, there are countless places in it that betray a profound ignorance of the Hebrew language, along with a remarkable carelessness in reading and a negligence unworthy of such men. Anyone who does not see this sees nothing, even though Eusebius and Jerome repeatedly appear in their monuments to attribute it to the Seventy Interpreters. We too, when we cite something from it, use the customary name rather than the accurate one — following the example of Jerome, whom we suspect, even if he believed that translation had not been produced by those men, nonetheless chose always to use the received name rather than give offense to the Greeks. Certainly we have no doubt that he doubted its authorship, for among other things this confirms us in that opinion: he writes that Josephus, and indeed the entire Jewish school, asserts that only the five books of Moses were translated by the Seventy Interpreters — and he writes this not once but repeatedly. See his works at Ezekiel 5, page 343, and page 301 and 372, and at Micah 2, page 150. Books published at Antwerp." Drusius, *Observationes*, book 6, chapter 9.

Granted that such a translation was made and of the whole Bible by some Alexandrian Jews, as is most probable — yet it is certain that the original copy, if left in the Library of Alexandria, was consumed to ashes in Caesar's wars. Though Chrysostom tells us that the Prophets were placed in the Temple of Serapis and says they remain there to this day — how unlikely this is, any man may judge by what Jerome, who inquired into these matters far more rigorously than Chrysostom, affirms concerning the incurably variant copies of that translation, which had no one to adjudicate be-

tween their differences. We also know how little precision men in those days — before the study of grammar had brought a sound knowledge of languages — had in their understanding of one language in relation to another. And some learned men have seriously questioned the very skill of those interpreters. So Munster writes in his Preface to the Bible: "Jerome, a devout and learned man, saw that the Latins were deprived of the true and genuine reading of the Law and the Prophets. For the edition of the Seventy Interpreters, which was then most commonly received among Greeks and Latins, was not only incorrectly translated in many places but also greatly corrupted by copyists and scribes, as is readily apparent today when that edition is compared against the Hebrew truth. Meanwhile I will acknowledge that those translators were not very proficient in the Hebrew language — a fact we are compelled to admit despite ourselves, for otherwise they would not have stumbled so disgracefully in so many places."

If moreover their ability be granted, what assurance do we have of their principles and honesty? Cardinal Ximenes, in his preface to the Complutensian Bible, tells us — and this is most true if the translation we have is actually theirs — that on various grounds they took liberty in translating according to their own judgment. He concludes from this: "Hence the translation of the Seventy-Two is sometimes superfluous and sometimes deficient." But suppose all these uncertainties could be overlooked: the intolerable corruptions that — as is acknowledged on all sides — have crept into the translation make it entirely useless for the purpose we are examining. Jerome declares this at length in his Epistle to Chromatius and uses it as grounds for the necessity of a new translation. Indeed, Bellarmine himself says that although he believes

the translation of the Septuagint is still extant, it is so corrupt and adulterated that it plainly appears to be another book entirely: book 2, *De Verbo Dei*, chapter 6.

Anyone who reads and carefully considers what Jerome wrote about this translation — even when he was doing his utmost to excuse himself and soften the offense caused by his new translation — in the second book of his *Apology* against Ruffinus, chapters 8 and 9, repeating and moderating what he had said of it elsewhere, will be in some position to judge what regard ought to be given to it. In brief, he tells us it is corrupt and interpolated; mingled by Origen with the translation of Theodotion, marked with asterisks and obeli; that there were so many copies of it, and they so varied from one another, that no one knew what to follow. He tells of a learned man who on that account accepted all the errors he could find as Scripture. He notes that in the Book of Job, if what Origen added or marked is removed, little will remain. His full discussion is too long to transcribe here. See also his *Epistle to Chromatius* at length on this matter. The reader should also consult the learned Masius in his Preface to his most learned commentary on Joshua.

Section 14. Regarding the translations of the New Testament offered here, little need be said. Of the antiquity, usefulness, and means by which the Syriac was brought to Europe, many have given accounts, and we willingly accept them. The Ethiopian and Persian are recent productions of little value or use. Indeed, I believe it may safely be said they are the worst and most corrupt translations extant in the world. The Persian was not translated from the Greek, as the learned annotator on it acknowledges: "The present passage sufficiently shows that the Persian translator did not consult the Greek text" (on Luke 10:41). In how many places it

departs from the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic — and goes directly contrary to the truth — is both acknowledged by its publisher and plain from the text itself. I know no use for it except to show that such a useless thing exists in the world.

Section 15. Nor is the Ethiopian one bit better. It is a recent effort by an uneducated person. This translator tells us that when John wrote the Revelation he was Archbishop of Constantinople, and so forth. It is pointless to go through similar observations that could be made about these translations. If anyone wishes to be led astray, he would do well to follow them. Whether some of them are still in use anywhere in the world I do not know; I am sure it would be better if they were not. Had I not seen them, I could not have imagined any translations could be so bad. Were I to make it my business to catalogue the mistakes, ignorance, falsifications, errors, and corruptions of these translators — whoever they were, whether Jews or Christians, for I have some grounds for suspecting that Jews had a hand in them for money — my discussion, as I said before, would swell into a volume. Unless I am compelled, I shall avoid it.

Section 16. From what has been said it is abundantly clear that if there are indeed such corruptions, mistakes, and errors that have crept into the original text as some have claimed, no relief in the slightest has been provided for the security of truth by any of the translations presented in these recent editions of the Bible. These translations themselves are of uncertain origin, corrupt, and in fact carry no authority on their own — only in relation to the text whose credibility is being called into question. For my own part, as I have said before, I grant them their proper use and place, and I am grateful to those through whose care and labor we have

been made partakers of them. But to attempt to correct Scripture by them, or to gather variant readings from the original by their means — as others say — I abhor the thought of it. Let others do as seems good to them. And if I am ever compelled to speak in particular about these translations, there are further discoveries yet in readiness to be made about them.

Section 17. There remains, as regards my purpose, only that some brief account be given of what is further suggested about the liberty of observing variant readings in the Bible on the assumption of gross corruptions that may have crept into it, and also of the specimen of variant readings gathered from Grotius's annotations — and something about the whole bulk of them as presented to us in the Appendix.

Regarding the supposed corruptions, I could sincerely wish that learned men would abstain from such suggestions unless they are able to support them with specific examples. The issue is not about this or that individual copy, which through the errors of scribes or printers may contain significant mistakes. There is no need for men's critical abilities to fix such mistakes — other copies are available for that purpose. The suggestion is made about the text as a whole, apart from such copying errors. To cast doubts into men's minds about the integrity and purity of the text, without sufficient grounds or warrant, is surely not allowable. It is wrong to deal so with men and their writings; how much more wrong with the Word of God. If a man were to write that in the case of some theft or murder supposedly committed by a person of spotless reputation, it would be wise to take such and such precautions — and were to publish this to the world — would their stirring of such rumors be viewed as an honest, Christian, and fair course of action?

And is it safe to deal so with the Scripture? I speak of Protestants. As for Roman Catholics, who have grown bold in their opposition to the original Scriptures, I must say that I regard them as effectively carrying out a scheme of Satan to draw men into atheism. Nor in particular do I regard Morinus's Exercitations as any better than this. It is readily acknowledged that there are many difficult passages in Scripture, especially in the historical books of the Old Testament. Some of these have been regarded by some as unintelligible. The industry of learned men, ancient and modern — Jewish and Christian — has been well exercised in interpreting and reconciling them. By one means or another, a fair and plausible account has been given of all of them. Where we cannot reach the deepest truth, it has been thought fitting that poor creatures should bow their understanding to the truth and authority of God in His Word. If once this liberty is given — that difficult passages may be regarded as corruptions and amended at the pleasure of men — I do not know how we shall be able to stop before we arrive at questioning the whole of Scripture. What we therefore insist upon is this: that according to all rules of fair procedure, men must first prove such corruptions before entertaining us with their provision of remedies.

Section 18. As for the specimen of variant readings gathered from Grotius's Annotations, I will not concern myself greatly with it. They are nothing more than that learned man's own personal observations. Set aside, first, the variant readings of the Septuagint and Vulgar Latin, of Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotion — which do not concern us. Set aside, second, the Keri and Kethib, which appear over and over again throughout this volume. Set aside, third, the variant readings of the Eastern and Western Jews, which

we also have elsewhere. Set aside, fourth, conjectures about how the Septuagint or Vulgar Latin read, formed by altering letters only. Set aside, fifth, Grotius's own conjectures about how the text might be improved — and very little room will be left for what remains. From the cursory survey I have made of them, I see not one word that can claim to be a genuine variant reading, unless it belongs to the Keri and Kethib or to the difference between the Eastern and Western Jews. So as I said before, as regards my present purpose I am not at all concerned in that collection; those who are may examine it further.

Section 19. An equally brief account will do for a general consideration of the whole bulky collection of variant readings presented to us here. As for those belonging to the various translations, they do not concern us at all: where any or all of them fail or are corrupt, we have a rule — blessed be God — preserved by which to correct them. As for those from the originals, I have already addressed them specifically. I will only add that we have some of them from both the Old and New Testament presented at least three times over. Many of the Keri and Kethib, after having already done double service, are given us a third time by Grotius. The same is true of those from the New Testament, similarly repeated by Grotius and Lucas Brugensis.

THE END.

THANKS FOR READING



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