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Schools give religious education, School Boards will be bound to give some sort of religious education also. The existence of the Society is a standing protest against any creedless and godless system of education.

EVAN DANIEL.



ART. II.—THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

IN the October number of the *Quarterly Review* for 1885 there is an article upon the Revised Version of the Old Testament, written in a pungent style, and remarkable for the great breadth of its assertion. There is also an abundance of genuine learning, but unfortunately an equally remarkable absence of it upon that subject with which the Reviewer chose to deal, namely, the text of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the relation of the Versions to it.

I do not intend to follow this article step by step, but if its learned writer knows so little of the subject, what must be the case with others? I therefore propose to give some account of the Received, or, as it is commonly called, the Massoretic text; and in a subsequent paper I shall hope to show wherein the value of the ancient Versions consists. But I must venture first gravely to remonstrate against statements of which it is mild merely to say that they are misleading. Thus in p. 292 the Reviewer says, “The Targum on Genesis is an ancient authority, no doubt; but then it is 1,500 years later than the text which the Revisers propose to improve by its means.” What should we think of a scholar who should say, “The manuscripts of the New Testament are ancient, no doubt; but the oldest of them is 400 years later than the text which critics propose to settle by their means”? We believe that Moses wrote 1,500 years before the Christian era; but the Targum is one of the oldest witnesses to what Moses wrote, and it is by the careful use of these ancient authorities that we obtain the conviction that the Massoretic is a most valuable and trustworthy text. But had there been neither Targums nor Versions to bear witness to its accuracy, then the Hebrew text, coming to us as a work centuries later than our era, and with no early and independent authorities to vouch for it, would have been surrounded with uncertainty of the gravest kind; for it would have had only the testimony of the Jewish synagogue on its behalf. As it is, many reject the vowels as

a Rabbinic addition, and without the Versions the consonants would have been exposed to similar treatment.

In p. 314 he makes a similar remark. "Here," he says, "is a book which in its latest part is acknowledged to be at least two centuries—in its earliest part at least twelve centuries—older than the oldest of its Versions. Does not common-sense guide us, as it were, by the hand to see at once that what the Targum, the LXX., etc., exhibit in their actual texts is about as efficacious to determine the *ipsissima verba* of the Old Testament Scriptures as Martin Luther's Version?" Common-sense guides me to the opposite conclusion; for supposing that we had no MSS. that were not a thousand years later than Luther's translation, and a text accepted by the Church, but of which the documents were several centuries later than Luther, we should certainly be justified in attaching very great importance to that or even a very inferior Version, in judging of the correctness of the later text. It is to me a painful thought that so many scholars make so light of these most precious gifts of God's good providence to us. We have in the Targums, the LXX., the Peshito-Syriac, and the Vulgate, aids not merely of incalculable value, but absolutely indispensable for the accurate study of God's holy Word; and all alike are neglected. Thanks to the present Bishop of Salisbury, we may at length look forward to a critical edition of Jerome's great work, the Vulgate. More has been done for the Septuagint, but no one apparently is willing to undertake the thankless task of using the large materials collected, and giving us a standard edition of this work, which did so much to prepare the way for the reception of Christianity, is so often quoted in the New Testament, and for centuries was the Bible of the Christian Church. Of the Peshito-Syriac, MSS. have been collected and stored up in the British Museum; and the late Philip Pusey had collated several of them with a view of giving us at least the New Testament with the authority for its readings carried back to an ancient date. It is Pharaoh-like for the Reviewer to twit the Revisers because we had to make our bricks of the best materials extant, but often of materials not in a scholar-like condition. But while reading the ridicule he casts upon the text of the LXX., I could not help calling to mind that we had in the company Dr. Field, the first English authority on the subject; and it is a pleasure to remember how much we owe to his learning and sound judgment. As for the Hebrew text, we had made at one time arrangements for collating a very ancient Hebrew MS., now at Aleppo. The purpose was frustrated by the breaking out of the Russo-Turkish War, and the work must be left to others. It may perhaps surprise the Reviewer to be told that even of

the Massoretic text there is no absolutely correct edition extant. Baer has revised some books by the help of what he had of the Massorah; but it was left to Dr. Ginsburg, a Reviser, to edit the Massorah in a complete form, and we are looking forward to a really trustworthy edition of all the Hebrew Scriptures by the same able hands. And it will be evident, after reading the following account of the work of the Massorites, that it is possible for him to edit with absolute certainty the result of the labours of the Jewish scholars to whom we are indebted for their "received text."

I pass over the extraordinary remark that the Massoretic text is without vowels (p. 284). I thought that it was the office of the Massorites first to settle what were the traditional vowels belonging to the consonants of the Hebrew text, and then to write them down. And if what he says is true, namely, that the text of the Old Testament underwent a revision somewhere between 300 and 600 A.D., then I think that we cannot value too highly the LXX., which gives us the knowledge of what was the general purport of it two centuries before Christ. The authors of this Revision, he tells us, were the Massorites, and he sees them busy at work with MSS. before them, from which they culled out various readings and marked them as *Kri* and *Ch'tib*. It is a pity that the whole picture is entirely imaginary, or, rather, it is a happy deliverance for us. No company of Revisers could have produced the Massoretic text.

Let me then say what it really is. And first I must distinguish between the Massorah itself and the Massoretic text. Massorah means *tradition*, and the Massoretic text is the traditional, and therefore the authoritative text of the Jewish Church. The Massorites did not form it, but simply guarded what they had received. And as for dates, Ginsburg says that the Massorah began three centuries before our era, and not after, while the committal of it to writing, with vowels and accents, began in 570 A.D., and the transcription and formation of the notes, which guard the text against the errors of copyists, went on until the eleventh or twelfth century of our era. These notes are specifically called the Massorah, as being the embodiment of the old tradition; and the scribes who collected, and arranged, and completed them are called the Massorites, not because they created the text, but because their business was to commit to writing that "fence of the law," which previously had been handed down from teacher to teacher orally.

In so commonplace a book as Zanolini's "Rabbinic Lexicon" I find the following account: "The Massorah takes its name from the Chaldee Targum on Job xv. 18, and is a *Critica Sacra* of the Jews, by which the differences between the written text

(Ch'tib) and that read in the synagogue (Kri) is handed down: it also records how often, where, and in what shape each sentence, verse, and letter in it is found. And the Jews consider that it was contrived by their learned men for the purpose of preserving the true and real text of the Sacred Scriptures free from all corruption and change." It was a very gradual growth, beginning with short technical rules to guard against the blunders of copyists in places liable to misconception, but slowly it extended itself to the text generally. And it was only after it had been handed down orally through many generations of scribes, that at length the troubles and dangers to which the Jews were exposed, led to the committal of this system to writing.

The destruction of Jerusalem crushed Judaism for the time; but it revived again, and on the sea of Gennesaret, at Tiberias and the neighbouring towns, Jewish scribes enjoyed a safe retreat for two centuries, and used their time of peace well; but the Talmud was the chief product of Jewish study, the text of their Holy Book held with them but a secondary place. At Tiberias, Judaism reigned supreme—no Christian, no Samaritan, no heathen might dwell there; it was a holy land where they restored their sanctuary after the model of Jerusalem, and their numbers may be estimated by the fact that they had thirteen synagogues, besides schools and a university. It was here that Rabbi Judah completed the Mishna and Rabbi Johanan the Gemara. But along with the Talmud there was the study of the Bible; the Holy Books never ceased to be an object of care and reverence, though Talmudic studies took the first place. For in the second century of our era we find the Jews busy with their sacred text. Aquila, who translated the Old Testament into Greek in the reign of Hadrian (117-138), and Symmachus, who made another translation during the reign of Severus (193-211), are both said to have been pupils of Rabbi Akiba of Tiberias. Both were converts to Judaism; and a third, Theodotion, said to have been, like Symmachus, both a convert and an Ebionite, made another translation at some period between the two, probably about twenty years before the close of the century. The remains of these Versions have been edited by Dr. Field, in his scholarly work "Origenis Hexapla," published by the Cambridge University Press. They prove to us two things, the first, that the Jews were then actively at work upon the Holy Scriptures; the second, that the text of the second century was much the same as that of the Massorites. But these three men were all perverts, and Tiberias was a place which no Christian might enter. Was this second-century text identical with the text which preceded the uprise of

Christianity? Let us take as an example a matter upon which the Reviewer strongly condemns the Revisers. In Isa. vii. 14, we have kept *virgin* in the text, but have placed *maiden* in the margin. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion all render *young woman* or *girl*. Jerome notices this, and that the Septuagint has *virgin*. He also notices that the Hebrew has not *bethula*, the distinctive word for *virgin*, but *alma*, a word which we have always rendered *maiden*, believing that it refers to age and means a young girl, one possibly who, as Jerome thinks, was still *abscondita*—shut up in the women's apartments. It is the word used of Rebekah in Gen. xxiv. 43, where the LXX. has *virgin*; and of Miriam in Exod. ii. 8, where the LXX. has *young girl*. We might then well ask, Did the LXX. read in their text *bethula*? Have the Jews at Tiberias played falsely with a passage so important to Christians, and substituted *alma* for it? This is but an instance of the numerous doubts and questionings which would arise had we only the Massoretic text, and mere hangers-on to it like Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. And while Christians impugned some texts, sceptics would refuse any credence to a Revision made, as our Reviewer thinks, somewhere between 300 and 600 A.D., but of which no record has been kept. But these doubts disappear at the presence of a number of independent witnesses. The LXX. Version was made in Egypt two centuries before Christ, and by scribes who were uninfluenced by the Palestinian schools. The Peshito was the work of Christians at an early date, in Mesopotamia. The Vulgate was also the work of a Christian, who went to Palestine that he might study the language upon the spot. The Targums are the works of Jews, and so not independent testimonies. But that of Onkelos on the Pentateuch was committed to writing in the second century, and is therefore valuable for its antiquity. Of this, too, we have no good edition, though valuable MSS. exist. These Targums are translations from Hebrew into Aramaean, and while the older are simple and intelligible, those of later date become wild and visionary.

Thus, then, there was first of all a traditional text—that is, the consonants originally having been written without vowels, and probably without distinction into words, there was a method handed down by oral tradition of separating them, of giving them their pronunciation, and of grouping them into sentences and verses. And one most important part of this work was the distinguishing between the conjugations and persons of the verbs, as the same consonants may have very different meanings. But the word *Massorah*, as I have mentioned, has a more technical meaning than this. It means

also a method of "fencing" the sacred text, to use their own word, by an elaborate system of notes. And when the Jews spoke of Massorah, *tradition*, they were thinking, not of their text itself, but of notes for its safeguard, which formed the main point of the oral teaching of the scribes in their schools. And this teaching became more important when their rest at Tiberias was broken up. For when the Roman empire became Christian, spots so intimately connected with our Lord's life could not long remain outside His Church. We soon find Christian bishops at Tiberias, and it ceased to be the centre of Jewish learning. The Jews left it and went to Babylonia, where at Sura and other towns on the Euphrates flourishing schools sprang up; and the Babylonian Talmud, written by Rabbi Asche, of Sura, is the proof that they rivalled the Rabbis of Tiberias in learning.

But their Scriptures still could not be read without a vast amount of knowledge, which could be gained only by oral instruction. And, as I have said, it was this traditional teaching, the object of which was to protect their method of reading from corruption, which was strictly called the Massorah. In a text consisting solely of consonants, and of which even the divisions into words had to be settled by authority, it is easy to imagine that the ingenuity of the scribes would soon lead them to methods for guarding their students from error. Wherever those whom they were instructing found constantly a difficulty, there the teachers would devise a bridge for passing safely over it. And we have reason to believe that copies made of the Scriptures were the object of learned care. One of the busiest periods for the transcription of such copies began about a century before the Christian era. From that time and during our Lord's sojourn on earth such copying was a recognised part of the duties of the Soferim or scribes. And in the second century we find in the Jerusalem Talmud, that attention was already called to errors which the scribes had made. Thus in the *Tikkun Soferim* sixteen places are mentioned where a different (and right) reading was to be restored; *tikkun* meaning restoration. These Soferim also began the custom of placing a small circle over letters or words not to be found in certain MSS.; and if, as there is reason for believing, this was the *tittle*, or *little horn*, referred to by our Lord in Matt. v. 18, then this custom is older than our era. Besides this, they seem to have invented technical methods of verifying their copies. These methods and notes gradually became the Massorah, when they had been handed down by oral teaching through a succession of teachers.

At first there would be safeguards only for those passages where errors of transcription were easy, or where the con-

sonants were capable of two methods of interpretation. But gradually every word of Holy Scripture was protected from change, and thus we can understand how it came to pass that six centuries, from A.D. 570, were occupied in perfecting the system. The notes, moreover, were of a mysterious and technical kind, which required a living voice to explain them. Let us take an instance. In the margin of Gen. i. 5 we read, "The blind man cried intending to go out by night, and he rose in the morning." What can possibly be the meaning of this absurdity? Ask a Massorite, and he will tell you that the word *la-or, to the light*, is so written in Gen. i. 5; Isai. xlii. 16, lix. 9; Zeph. iii. 5; Micah vii. 9; Job xii. 22, xxiv. 14. In other words in these seven places *or, light*, has the definite article, and the preposition *to*.

The Massorah, then, implies, not only a text in existence, but one of high and settled authority. The picture of the Massorites busy among MSS., revising the text, and giving various readings, somewhere between 300 and 600 A.D., is the most unkind attack upon the Massoretic text that was ever penned. The text was the work of Jewish Soferim, beginning with Ezra, ha-sofer—the scribe *par excellence*. At what date the text was perfected we do not know. We gather from the Septuagint that the consonants were not always divided in the same manner as in our text; and hence some of the renderings, which are looked upon by half-taught men as miserable blunders, are really of exceeding interest and value. Possibly it was by gradual thought and study that the verbs were read with the vowels now assigned them. I fear that the scribes were stern grammarians, who showed scant mercy to archaic forms. But there was a text long before the Massorites invented for it their system of noting where every word occurred, and how it was spelt, with the one view of preserving it inviolable for ever.

This thought is, of course, at the bottom of the strange confusion of which the Reviewer is guilty in saying that he possesses a text fifteen hundred years older than the Targum on Genesis. The autograph of Moses would be, did it exist, of that extreme antiquity, and would supersede all other texts whatsoever. So if the autograph of St. Matthew's Gospel existed, we might throw all our MSS. into the fire. As it is, we have to arrive at our conclusions by long and patient study, and at best we arrive only at probability, and not at absolute certainty. So the text of the Old Testament requires study, and thought, and patient labour. But there is this difference, that the Jewish scribes—Soferim and not Massorites—have elaborated a *textus receptus*, more carefully than Erasmus did that of the New Testament; and that the Massorites have

committed their elaborate system to writing. But their work began only in 570 A.D. The Reviewer thinks they were "long-headed men;" if so, my confidence in them would be *nil*. Long-headed men would mould their text to party purposes, and Christians so ill-treated the Jews that they met hatred by hatred. Christians, too, were so ignorant of Hebrew that they had no means of supervising the work of the Jews, or even of judging of it. Where then is our security? How does the Reviewer attain to his conviction that he has a text which is identical with the autographs of Moses, and Samuel, and Isaiah? I am sure I do not know. The utmost that I can say is that the Vulgate, the Versions of Aquila and his compeers, and the Targum of Onkelos enable me to form a judgment upon the Hebrew text, and upon the work of the Massorites some centuries before they actually put their hand to their task; and that in the Peshito and Septuagint I have two Recensions of that text from perfectly independent sources. I may even add that so great was the contempt of the Christian Church for Hebrew, and so good were the Versions, that these two Recensions and the Vulgate sufficed for the supply of the spiritual needs of believers until the Reformation, when Luther made his famous translation of the Old Testament Scriptures directly from the Hebrew.

I shall conclude by saying a few words upon the committal to writing of the Massorah, and finally upon the fact that there are two Recensions of the Massoretic text. Oh! what will the Reviewer say? For he is full of wrath because the Revisers mention the fact that there are several Recensions of the Old Testament text, forgetting that by the mouth of two or three witnesses the Word is established.

We have seen, then, that in the time of our Lord the Hebrew Scriptures consisted of consonants only. Possibly dots were already put between words, but there was no division as yet into sentences. Thus reading was a very difficult task, and could be learnt only of a scribe who knew the traditions. It surprised the people, therefore, that our Lord, who had been brought up in Galilee, and had studied at the feet of no Rabbi, read the Scriptures in the traditional way; for had He divided the consonants differently, and pronounced them with other vowels, there would have been nothing to excite their astonishment (John vii. 15). We notice, then, that our Lord followed, and so gave a general approval to, the traditional text of the Jewish synagogue. Of course the people of Jerusalem knew how they were accustomed to hear it read, but not everyone even there would have ventured to read for himself.

For centuries this method of reading continued. Virtually, it was the repeating the text by heart with the aid of the con-

sonants to guide them. It was not until the sixth century of our era that the scribes attempted to give a permanent form to their inherited knowledge by inventing signs to represent the vowel-sounds, and accents for the arrangement of words into sentences. For the Massoretic text has not vowels only but accents.

Dr. Ginsburg, in his edition of the Massoreth ha-Massoreth of Elias Levita—and we could have no more competent authority—says that it was one Acha, or Achai, of Irak, *i.e.* Babylonia, who first represented the vowel-sounds by marks which he placed over the letters, and that the date of his so doing was about 550 A.C. There are three or four MSS. of the tenth century which have this system of vowels. One of these contains the prophetical books, which include the histories, while the others are fragmentary. This system was followed not only by the Babylonian Jews, but also by the Karaites, until the Jews of Palestine sent missionaries to them, and about the middle of the tenth century converted them to their method of writing. As the Crimea was the chief home of the Karaites, it is possible that among the MSS. discovered there some may be of a date anterior to this conversion; if so, they will be of especial value, because they will hold the place of independent witnesses. And a multitude of independent witnesses, if in the main they agree, produces, not uncertainty, as the Reviewer assumes, but exactly the reverse.

Once started, the idea took root, and in 570 A.C. Mocha of Tiberias contrived the elaborate system which has preserved for us the division of the consonants into words, their pronunciation, their intonation, and their arrangement into sentences, verses, and paragraphs. It is so perfect that it could scarcely have been produced at one effort. Like most great improvements, it was probably gradual. But we are expressly told that the accents formed part of Rabbi Mocha's system, and are an integral portion of it.

The six centuries which followed were not spent in adding vowels and accents to the text, but in perfecting that elaborate system of notes referred to above, of which they had received a large proportion by tradition. Their method was that of the well-instructed scribe described by our Lord (Matt. xiii. 52), who not only brings out of his treasure the old, which his teachers had delivered to him, but completes and perfects their method. It is the ancient notes which, strictly speaking, form the Massorah—the tradition; but the Massorites completed the system, and in Biblical MSS. we find these notes written in the margins, or between the lines, or in fantastic shapes of animals, and so on, with a Massorah finalis often;

that is, an appendix containing such notes as had been squeezed out of the pages of the MS. by want of room.

Lastly, this Massoretic text, being, as I have shown, the received text of the Jewish Synagogue, has come down to us in two Recensions, known as the Palestinian and the Babylonian. As early as the eleventh century these two texts were collated by Aharon ben Asher of Tiberias, and Jacob ben Naphtali, the president of a Babylonian school. They enumerate no less than eight hundred discrepancies—a terrible number. But what are they? Anyone can find them in that well-known book, Walton's "Polyglot Bible," and an account of the collation is given in the *Prolegomena*. From Walton it appears that about six hundred consist in attaching to the consonants different vowels, and in only two hundred places are the consonants different; and in almost every case these are mere differences of spelling, and involve no important difference of meaning.

There is confessedly a considerable difference between the Massoretic text and the quotations from the Old Testament Scripture given in the New Testament. The accusation has therefore often been brought against the Massoretic text, that it was framed by men with a strong anti-Christian bias. In the same way the Jewish Versions into Greek, made by Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus, are often accused of having been made for controversial purposes. We may, therefore, be thankful to God's good providence, for having given us independent testimony to the general trustworthiness of the Massoretic text; and the Revisers came to a sound conclusion when they determined to adhere to this text, its consonants, its vowels, and even its accents, except where there was good authority the other way. I shall hope next month to show more fully what those authorities are.

R. PAYNE-SMITH.



ART. III.—JAN ZISKA, "THE MODERN HANNIBAL."

JAN ZISKA of Trotznow, afterwards of Kalich, was one of the most extraordinary men ever produced by any nationality. Whatever views the supporters of different parties might take of the character and conduct of the man himself, in one respect all were unanimous. He was designated by his enemies a butcher, a villain, a double-dyed traitor; while by his friends he was termed a zealot for God's law, "our true brother Ziska,"