

first position is untenable, for the Massoretic Text itself is faulty. This can be seen from a comparison of similar passages, and from a critical examination of the text itself. It is not a sufficient answer to this, to say that no dogma of the Scriptures is affected by this faultiness. This may be true, but the fact shows that the Massoretic Text is not an infallible standard. The Hebrew Text was originally without vowel points and accents, and the oldest Hebrew MS. on which the Massoretic Text is based, is of the tenth century of our era. The written unpointed text is the Kethib, the various marginal readings are Keris. The vowel points and accents were crystallized in their present form, probably sometime between the seventh and tenth century, A.D. As they determine the meaning and structure of the text, they indicate the text as the Massorets had it or understood it. But it is evident that they did not understand some passages, and suggested various readings recorded in the margin, or that the MSS. before them contained various readings. Some of these marginal readings are of importance in determining the text, as may be seen in Isaiah ix., 3, and other passages.

If the marginal readings are the evidence that there were different recensions with various readings, and that the Massoretic Kethib is the one which was preferred on rational grounds, while the other was inserted in the margin, it shows that the Scribes had to determine as best they could which was the true text. Besides, it further shows that the family, to which our Massoretic written Text belonged, was not an infallible one in the opinion of the Scribes, otherwise they would not have inserted the Keris in the margin at all. If, on the other hand, the marginal readings are the result of careful examination of the text, and are the conjectures of the Rabbins, as to what the true reading was, it is evident that in their opinion, the MS. recension on which the Massoretic Text was founded, did not determine infallibly what the true reading was.

The ancient versions ought to have had greater weight in determining the text than they seem to have had. The Septuagint Version was made in the second century B.C., from Hebrew MSS., twelve centuries older than the oldest existing Hebrew MS. The Syriac Version dates from the second century A.D., and the Vul-