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

CHAP. I.

Of the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language.

ACCORDING to the Targum of Onkelos, on Gen. ii. 7. when God breathed into man the breath of life, that became in man a speaking spirit, or soul; or, as Jonathan paraphrases it, the soul in the body of man became a speaking spirit; that is, man was endued with a natural faculty of speech; so that he may be defined as well ab oratione, a speaking animal, as a ratione,
a reasonable one; for speech is proper and peculiar to men: when it is said, man is endued, as all men are, with a natural faculty of speaking, it is not to be understood, as if he was endued with a faculty of speaking some particular language; but with a power and capacity of speaking any language he hears, or is taught; I say hears, because unless a man has the sense of hearing, he cannot express any articulate sounds, or words: hence such persons as are totally deaf from their birth, are always dumb, and can never speak any language. *Adam* first heard the Lord God speaking, before he uttered a word himself, as it seems from the sacred history. The language *Adam* spake, and which, perhaps, he received not the whole instantaneously, but gradually; in which he improved, as circumstances, and the necessity of things required, and which was continued in his posterity: this very probably is that which remained to the confusion of the tongues at *Babel*, and the dispersion of the people from thence. But of this more hereafter.
Some have fancied, that if children, as soon as born, were brought up in a solitary place, where they could not hear any language spoken, that at the usual time children begin to speak, they would speak the first and primitive language that was spoken in the world. Psammitichus, king of Egypt, made trial of this by putting two children, newly born, under the care of a shepherd; charging him, that not a word should be uttered in their presence; and that they should be brought up in a cottage by themselves; and that goats should be had to them at proper times to suckle them; and commanded him to observe the first word spoken by them, when they left off their inarticulate sounds. Accordingly, at two years end, the shepherd opening the door of the cottage, both the children with their hands stretched out cried bec, bec. This he took no notice of at first, but it being frequently repeated, he told his lord of it, who ordered the children to be brought to him; and when Psammitichus heard them pronounce the word, he enquired what people used it, and upon enquiry found that the Phrygians
called bread by that name; upon this it was allowed that the Phrygians were a more ancient people than the Egyptians, between whom there had been a long contest about antiquity. This is the account given by Herodotus; but the Scholiast of Aristophanes says, that it was at three year's end the king ordered a man to go in silently to them, when he heard them pronounce the above word. And so Suidas relates, that at the same term of time, the king ordered one of his friends to go in silently, who heard and reported the same; and all of them observe, that the story is differently related by others; as that the children were delivered to a nurse or nurses, who had their tongues cut out, that they might not speak before them; and so says Tertullian: yet they all agree in the word spoken by the children. But, as Suidas observes, if the former account is true, as it seems most probable, that they were nourished by goats, and not women; it is no wonder, that often hearing the bleating of the goats, be-ec, be-ec, they should

---

* Euterpe five, l. 2. c. 2, 3.

** In Nubes, p.

---

* Euterpe five, l. 2. c. 2, 3.

---

b In Nubes, p.

c Voce Biciiciian.

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

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

• A Discourse of the Oriental Tongues, p. 38, 39
stinguished by its simplicity and dignity. The celebrated Albert Schultens\(^f\) reckons the Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic languages, as sister-dialects of the primeval language; which I am content they should be accounted, allowing the Hebrew to be the pure dialect, which the others are a deviation from, and not so pure: though I should rather choose to call them daughters, than sisters of the Hebrew tongue; since, as Jerom says\(^s\), the Hebrew tongue is the mother of all languages, at least of the oriental ones. And these daughters are very helpful and assisting to her their mother in her declining state, and now reduced as to purity to the narrow limits of the sacred scriptures; for I cannot prevail upon myself to agree that she should be stripped of her maternal title, dignity, and honour; since the has the best claim to be the primitive language, as will be seen hereafter. Dr. Hunt\(^h\), though he is of the same mind with Schultens, that the above languages are sisters,
having the same parent, the Eastern language, yet seems to allow the Hebrew to be the elder sister. And Schultens himself asserts, that the primæval language, which was from the beginning of the world spoken by our first parents, and the antediluvian patriarchs, and after the flood to the dispersion, is the same which was afterwards called Hebrew, from Heber; from whom it passed through Peleg and Abraham to the nation of the Hebrews, and so the mother-language; but how it could be both mother and sister, is not easy to say.

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

---

1 Vid. Orationes supradictas, p. 6. 41.  
k Antiqu. l. 1. c. 4. § 3. 
patriarchs much contributed to this, for Adam himself lived to the 10th century, and the flood was in the 17th. Methuselah, who died a little before the flood, lived upwards of two hundred years in the days of Adam, and 600 years cotemporary with Noah, and who doubtless spoke the same language that Adam did; yea Lamech, the father of Noah, was born 50 years or more before the death of Adam; so that the language of Adam to the days of Noah is easily accounted for as the same: if any variation, it must be in the offspring of those of the patriarchs who removed from them, and settled in different parts of the world, but of this there is no proof; the separation of Cain and his posterity on account of religion, does not appear to have produced any alteration in language; but the same language was spoken by one as another, as is evident by the names of persons in the line of Cain, and of places inhabited by them to the time of the flood; when, no doubt, the same language was spoken by Noah, from whom his sons received it, and was continued unto the dispersion, which before that was but one; and it is
the opinion of the Persian priests or Magi, that the time will come when the earth will be of one language again §; and if so, it is probable it will be the primitive one, but what that was, is the thing to be enquired into. The Targums of Jonathan and Onkelos on the place, add, by way of explanation, "and they spoke in the holy tongue, in which the world was created at the beginning," meaning the Hebrew language, usually called the holy tongue; and this is the sense of Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and the Jewish writers in general, and of many Christians. But most nations have put in a claim for the superior antiquity of their nation and language, the Europeans not excepted. Goropius Becanus pleaded for the Teutonic language, or that which is spoken in lower Germany and Brabant, to be the original one, and attempted to derive the Hebrew from it; but it has been thought he was not serious in it, only did it to shew his acumen, and the luxuriancy of his fancy and imagination; the eastern nations have a much better pretext to antiquity, and most, if not all of them, have

§ Plutarch. de Iside & Osir. p. 370.
put in their claim for it. There was a long contest between the Egyptians and Phrygians about this matter, as before observed. The Armenians have urged in their favour, that the ark rested on one of the mountains in their country, where Noah and his posterity continued some time, and left their language there. The Arabs pretend, that their language was spoken by Adam before his fall, and then changed into Syriac, and was restored upon his repentance, but again degenerated, and was in danger of being lost, but was preserved by the elder Forham, who escaped with Noah in the ark, and propagated it among his posterity. The Chinese make great pretensions to the primitive language, and many things are urged in their favour, as the antiquity of their nation, their early acquaintance with arts and sciences, the singularity, simplicity, and modesty of their tongue. A countryman of ours, in the last century, published a treatise, called "An historical essay, endeavouring a probability that the language of China is the primitive language, by J. Webb, Esq; London, 1669,

* See the Universal History, Vol. 1. p. 346, 347.
8vo.” But as when many candidates put up for a place, they are generally reduced to a few, and, if possible to two; the same method must be taken here; for the contest lies between the Syriac or Chaldee, and the Hebrew.

The Chaldee or Syriac language has its patrons for the antiquity of it; not only Theodoret, who was by birth a Syrian, and Amyra the Maronite, who are not to be wondered at, and others who have made it their favourite study; but even the Arabic writers, the more judicious of them, give it not only the preference to their own language in point of antiquity, but even make it as early as Adam. Elmacinus says¹, there are historians (Arabic ones) who affirm, that Adam and his posterity spoke the Syriac language until the confusion of tongues; and so Abulpharagius says ῶ, “of our doctors, Basilius and Ephraim assert, that unto Eber the language of men was one, and that that was Syriac, and in which God spoke to Adam;” and it must be allowed, that there are many things plausibly

said in favour of this language being primitive: it must be owned that the Chaldean nation was a very antient one, *Gen.* v. 15. and that the Syriac language was spoken very early, as by Laban; but not earlier than the Hebrew, which was spoken at the same time by Jacob; the one called the heap of stones which was a witness between them Jegar-sabadutha in the Syro-Chaldean language, and the other Galed in Hebrew, which both signify the same thing: what is commonly urged is as follows:

1. **That** the names of a man and woman are as much alike, if not more so, in the Chaldee or Syriac language, as in the Hebrew; a man is called Gabra and a woman Gabretha, which is equally as near as Ish and Ishah produced to prove the antiquity of the Hebrew, *Gen.* ii. 23. But neither in the Chaldee of Onkelos, nor in the Syriac version of that place, is it Gabretha, but Ittetha in the one, and Antetha in the other. Theodoret\(^a\) instances in the names Adam, Cain, Abel, Noah, as proper to the Syriac language; but the de-

\(^a\) In *Gen.* quæst. 59.
rivation of them from the *Hebrew* tongue is more clear and manifest.

2. That it is rather agreeable to truth, that the primæval and common language before the confusion should remain in the country where the tower was built and the confusion made, which was in *Chaldea*, and therefore the *Chaldee* language, must be that language⁸; but rather the contrary seems more natural, that the language, confounded and corrupted, should continue in the place where the confusion was made, and that those possessed of the pure and primitive language should depart from thence, as in fact they afterwards did.

3. It is observed⁹, that both *Eber* and *Abraham* were originally *Chaldeans*, and were brought up in *Chaldea*, and so must speak the language of that country, which therefore must be prior to the *Hebrew*; but it should be considered, that not only *Eber* but *Abraham* lived before the confusion and dispersion; for if the confusion was in the latter end of *Peleg’s* days ⁹, *A-

---

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

4. It is said †, the Hebrews sprung from the Chaldeans, Judith v. 5. and so their language must be later than theirs; this is founded on Abraham’s being of Ur of the Chaldees, from whence he came; but it does not follow, that because he was born and lived in that country before the confusion of Babel, that therefore he spoke the language used in that country afterwards, since he was soon called out of it; and it appears that he spoke not the Chaldee or Syriac language, but the Hebrew, as before observed.

5. It is urged ‡, as highly probable, that the language the second Adam spake, the

† Seder Olam, ib. † Myricæus, ut supra. ‡ Ibid.
first Adam did; now Christ and his Apostles, and the people of the Jews in their times, spoke in the Syriac language, as appears from Matt. xxvii. 46. Mark v. 41. and vii. 34. but according to some learned men, as Masius, and Fabricius Boderianus, this was not the ancient language of the Syrians and Chaldeans, but a new language, which had its first rise in the Babylonish captivity, and was a mixture of Chaldee and Hebrew; tho' rather the mixture began in the times of the Seleucidæ, the Syrian kings, who entered into and distressed Judea; and therefore no argument can be taken from it in favour of the Syriac being the primitive language. I proceed now to propose the arguments that are, or may be used in favour of the Hebrew language being the primitive one; and the

First, may be taken from the alphabet of the tongue itself, which appears to be the first alphabet of all the eastern languages. The Chaldee or Syriac, Phœnician or Samaritan, have their alphabets manifestly from it; the names, the number, and order of their letters, and even the form and ducts of

† Praefat. ad Gram. Syr. ‡ Praefat. ad Diction. Syro-Chald.
them seem to be taken from thence, and to be corrupt deviations from it; and the Arabic language, tho' the order of its alphabet is somewhat disturbed, yet the names of most of the letters are plainly from the Hebrew; and so indeed is the greater part of the names of letters in the Greek alphabet, from whence the Romans have taken theirs, and other European nations.⁵ Hermannus Hugo observes, that it is agreed among all, that from the names of the Hebrew characters, the letters of all nations have their names; now that language, whose alphabet appears to be the first, and to give rise to the alphabets of other tongues, bids fairest to be the first and primitive language: let it be observed that the Hebrew alphabet, as it now is, is exactly the same as it was in the days of David and Solomon, so early it can be traced; for it is to be seen in the 119th Psalm, and in others, and in the last chapter of the book of Proverbs, as well as in the book of Lamentations, written before or at the beginning of the Babylonish captivity.

⁵ De prima scribendi orig. c. 7. p. 65.
Secondly, Another argument for the antiquity of the Hebrew language, may be formed from the perfection and purity of it. Abraham de Balmis w says of it, that "it is perfect in its letters and in its points. Our language, says he, is the most perfect language, and in its writing the most perfect of all writings of all languages; there is nothing wanting, and there is nothing redundant in it, according to the laws and rules of things perfect and complete." It consists of words which most fully and effectually express the nature of the things signified by 'em; its roots, which are of a certain number, are, for the most part, of three letters only, and it has no exotic or strange words used in it. Whoever compares it with the Syriac or Chaldee, will easily perceive the difference as to the purity of 'em, and that the Chaldee is derived from the Hebrew, and is later than that; for as Scaliger long ago observed x ניב מלכת must be before ניב אלכה, the latter being derived from the former; and the same may be observed in a multitude of other instances: now that

which is perfect, pure, and underived, must be before that which is imperfect, corrupt, and derived; or, as the philosopher expresses it, that which is vicious and corrupt must be later than that which is incorrupt.

Thirdly, The Paronomasia which Adam used when he called his wife woman, may be thought to be a good proof of the antiquity of the Hebrew language; since it will agree with that language only, she shall be called Ishah, woman, because she was taken, meish, out of man, Gen. ii. 23. which paronomasia does not appear neither in the Syriac version, nor in the Chaldee paraphrases of Onkelos and Jonathan, in which tho' Gabra is used of a man, yet never Gabretba of a woman, not even in places where men and women are spoken of together; see the Syriac version and Chaldee paraphrase of Exod. xxxv. 22. Deut. ii. 34. and many other places; and the reason for it is plain, the word is expressive of power and might, and so not so proper to be used of the weaker sex. The Syriac or Chaldee language will not admit of such an allusion

v Aristot. de Republica, l. 3. c. 1.
as is in the text; for on the one hand, as Gabra is used for a man, and not Gabretha for a woman, so on the other hand, Itta, Ittetha, and Intetha or Antetha, are used for a woman, but never Itt for a man. Now as we prove that the additions to the book of Daniel were written in Greek, from the paronomasia in ch. xiii. 55. 59. so this seems to prove that the language Adam spoke in to his wife must be the Hebrew language, and consequently is the primitive one.⁴

Forthbly, The names of persons and places before the confusion at Babel, are in the Hebrew language, and are plainly derived from words in it; as Adam from Ḥayyā Ahadam, earth, out of which he was formed, as is generally thought. Eve, from Ḥayyā Chayah, to live, because the mother of all living; Cain from Ḥayyā to get, obtain, possess, being gotten from the Lord; Abel, from Hebē Hebel, vanity, as his life was; and Seth, from Ḥayyē Sheth, put, appointed, because put, set, or appointed another seed in the room of Abel: and so all the names of the Antediluvian patri-

⁴ Vid. Berešit Rabba l. 18. fol. 15. 2. ⁵ Vid. Sepher Cosfr, par. 1. c. 68.
archs down to Noah and his sons, and their names also, with all those before the confusion and dispersion at Babel; and likewise the names of places, as of the garden of Eden, from ظٓٓ delight, pleasure, it being a very pleasant place; and the land of Nod from نود to wander about; Cain being an exile and wanderer in it: now these being the names of persons and places before the confusion of tongues, clearly shew what language was spoken before that time, namely the Hebrew, which therefore seems to be the primitive one.

Fifthly, It is notorious that the law and the prophets, or the books of the old testament, were written in the Hebrew tongue. The law was written in it on two tables of stone by the finger of God himself, and the sacred books were written in the same language, under divine inspiration. Now it is reasonable to conclude, that the same language God wrote and inspired the prophets to write in, he himself spoke in to Adam, and inspired him with it, or however gave him a faculty of speaking it, and which he did speak, and therefore may be concluded to be the first and primitive tongue.
It now remains only to be enquired into, why this language is called Hebrew. It is supposed by some to have its name from Eber, the father of Peleg, in whose days the earth was divided, and from whom the Hebrews sprung and have their name; and which opinion has been most generally received. Others think it has its name from הָבָר Abar, to pass over, from Abraham’s passing over the river Euphrates into the land of Canaan; this notion Aben Ezra makes mention of in Exod. xxi. 2. and has been espoused by Theodoret among the ancients, and indeed according to Origen† the word Hebrew signifies pæßer over, and so Jerom; and by Scaliger and Arias Montanus among the moderns, in which they have been followed by many. The matter is not of very great consequence, but I must confess I am most inclined to the former; for as Austin observes, before the confusion language was one, and common to all, and needed no name to distinguish it; it was enough to call it the speech of man, or the human language; but when there

---

b Suidas in voce Ἑβραῖος.

c Theodoret. in Gen. Qu. 60.


d Epist. ad Thompion. et ad Ubertum.

e Canaan c. 9. 10.

f De Civ. Dei, l. 16. c. 11.
was a confusion of tongues, and so more than one, it became necessary to distinguish them by names; and what name more proper for the first language than that of Hebrew, from Eber, the last man in whole days it was alone and common to all? for in his son's days the earth was divided into different nations, speaking different languages. Moreover, Shem is said to be the Father of all the children of Eber, Gen. iv. 21. or as Jonathan paraphrases it, of all the children of the Hebrews, or of Hebrew children: respect is had, as the learned Rivet observes, to the blessing of Shem, in opposition to the curse of Ham, Gen. ix. 25. 26. Now as Canaan sprung from Ham, and was the father of the Canaanites, so Eber sprung from Shem and was the father of the Hebrews; and as afterwards they were called the children of Israel, and Israelites from Israel, and the children of Judah and Jews from Judah; so the children of Eber or Hebrews from him, and with equal propriety the language they spoke may be called Hebrew from him; and their country likewise, as in Gen. xl. 15. for it does not seem probable that the

*In Gen. Exercitat. 66. p. 319.*
land of Canaan should be called the land of the Hebrews, as it is there, so early as in the youth of Joseph, from a single family being passengers, travellers, and strangers in it, which are characters not very respectful and honourable, nor distinguishing; but rather from Eber, who, and his immediate offspring, might inhabit it, it being that part assigned and divided to 'em at the division of the earth, Deut. xxxii. 8. out of which they might be driven by the Canaanites, see Gen. xiii. 7. and xiv. 1, 4. therefore it was an act of justice to dispossess them and replace the children of Eber in it: and this may also serve to account for the names of places in pure Hebrew in old Canaan, by which they were called, when Joshua made a conquest of it, as well as in the time of Abraham, since it was the land of Eber before it was the land of Canaan; if Melchizedek was Shem, as the Jews in general believe, he was king of a city in it, and Eber his first born had a right unto it, claim’d by Chedarlausmer, a descendant of his, who attempted the rescue of it from the Canaanites, who had usurped a power over it, at least over

* See Dr. Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 327.
some part of it; and it is easy to observe that in the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 24. as the Assyrians are called Ashur, from their original progenitor, so the Hebrews have the name of Eber from him; and so the word Eber there is rendered Hebrews by the Septuagint and other translators; and as they, so their language, may be called from him. As to what is objected, that Eber and Abraham were Chaldeans, and spoke the Chaldee language, this has been reply'd to already; and whereas it is observed, that from the time of Eber to Abraham, no one is ever called an Hebrew from him; it is not to be wondered at, since Eber lived to the time of Abraham, and even to the time of Jacob, according to both the Jewish and Scripture-chronology.

The foundation of the other opinion, that the Hebrews and their language have their name from Abraham's passing over the Euphrates to the land of Canaan, is the Septuagint version of Gen. xiv. 13. which instead of Abraham the Hebrew, reads τω περατη the transitor or passer over;

b Erpen. Orat. de Ling Heb.  c. 2. p. 4. 1 Seder Olam Rabba,
tho’ perhaps no more is meant by that version, than that he was, as Juvenal’s expression it, natus ad Euphratem, born near the river Perat, for that is its name in Hebrew; but whatever may be said for Abraham’s being called an Hebrew from such a circumstance, it can scarcely be thought that a whole nation should be denominated from such an action of a remote ancestor, when they themselves passed not over the same river; besides there were multitudes who passed over the Euphrates besides Abraham, who yet never were so called; as Canaan and his posterity must pass over it, when they removed from Shinar to the land afterwards called by their name; and indeed Erpenius is of opinion that the Canaanites were first called Hebrews, or passers over, by the Chaldeans, because they passed over the river Jordan into the country which lay between that and the Mediterranean sea, afterwards called from them the land of Canaan; and that Abraham had not his name from his passage into it, but from his dwelling there, and learning their language; hence his posterity were called Hebrews, and the Hebrew language the lan-

k Satyr. i. v. 104.  

\[ Ut supra. \]
guage of Canaan, *If.* xix. 18. and the same writer thinks, that if the Hebrews were only those of the family of Jacob, they would not have been so well known to the Egyptians in the time of Joseph as they were: but to all this it may be reply'd, that the Canaanites were ever called Hebrews, does not appear from any writers, sacred or prophane; nor is it probable that the pure and primitive language, that is the Hebrew, as has been shewn, should be left with and continued in the race of Canaan; and still more improbable, that Abraham should learn it of them, who was possed of the first and primitive language before the confusion of tongues, as has been observed, and before he came into the land of Canaan; besides he seems to be called Abraham the Hebrew, *Gen.* xiv. 13. to distinguish him from Mamre, Escol, and Aner, who were Canaanites, confederates with him; nor is the Hebrew language called the language of Canaan, because first spoken by the Canaanites, but because the people of Israil spoke it, who for a long time had inhabited the land

---

which bore that name; nor need it seem strange, that the name of Hebrew should be so well known in Potiphar’s family, and to the Egyptians in Joseph’s time, when he himself told them, no doubt, that he was an Hebrew, as he told the chief butler, Gen. xxxix. 17. and xli. 12. and especially if what has been before observed concerning the land of the Hebrews, can be established, Gen. xl. 15. as being inhabited by Eber and his sons, before the Canaanites possessed it.

There are other etymologies of the name of the Hebrews and their language, which scarce deserve any notice; as that they have their name from Abraham; so Artapanus, an heathen writer, says the Jews are called Hebrews from Abraham, but there are but few that have embraced this notion; others say, they are so called from Eber-banoar, which signifies beyond or the other side of the river, that is, of the Euphrates, where Abraham and his father Terah dwelt, and from whence Abraham is said to be taken; but there were many Besides them, even whole nations who dwelt beyond that river, who were never called Hebrews,

nor can any good reason be given, why these and their posterity and their language should be called Hebrew from thence; tho' many, both Jews and Christians, have imbibed this notion: Eusebius†, tho' he thinks the Hebrews had their name from Eber, yet as the word signifies a passer over, not from one country to the other, but from the vanity of the things of this present world, to the study of divine things, and in which they rested not, but passed on in search of more recondite knowledge: perhaps, after all, the true original of the name may be taken from the place of Abraham's birth, who is first called בֵּית אֵרֶץ the Hebrew, or rather the Ibrite, Gen. xiv. 13. the place of his birth was Ur of the Chaldees, as Aben Ezra p rightly judges, since it is expressly said to be the land of his brother Haran's nativity, and therefore most probably his also; now Ur of the Chaldees is called וַיְהֵשׁ אֵרֶץ Ibira Zeira⁹ and so Abraham might have this epithet from the place of his nativity, the Ibrite, to distinguish him, as before observed, from

---

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

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