

thor of the *vulgate Latin* version, unless he knew that the *Jews* put the points of *Adonai* to *Jehovah*? There is a passage in *Jerom** which is produced by some to disprove the knowledge and use of vowel-points in his time; when speaking of *Enon* near *Salim*, “ it matters not, he says, whether it be called *Salem* or *Salim*, since the
 “ *Hebrews* very seldom make use of vowel-
 “ letters in the middle; and according to
 “ the pleasure of readers and the variety
 “ of countries, the same words are pro-
 “ nounced with different sounds and ac-
 “ cents.” Now *Jerom* is here to be understood either of the *Matres Lectionis* ׀א; and it, is very true that these are seldom used in the sacred books of the *Hebrews*, and which makes the use of vowel-points the more necessary; and if the *Matres Lectionis* were expunged upon the introduction of the points, as is suggested by some, then the points must have been before *Jerom*’s time, and consequently not the invention of the men of *Tiberias*; since it seems the above letters were rarely used in his time as placed between consonants, as *Dabar*, and other

* *Epist. Evagrii*, tom. 3. fol. 13. F.

other words observed by him shew : or else he is to be understood of vowel-points going along with letters ; and these he might truly say, were *very rarely* used, because pointed Bibles in his time were very rare : but then he supposes such were used, tho' but seldom, and this Dr. *Owen* ° took to be his sense ; “ either, says he, I cannot understand him, or he does positively affirm, that the *Hebrew*, had the use of “ vowels, in his epistle to *Evagrius* ;” upon which he observes, “ if they did it *per-* “ *raro*, they did it, and then they had “ them ; though, in these days to keep up “ their credit in teaching, they did not “ much use them ; nor can this be spoken “ of the sound of vowels, for surely, they “ did not *seldom* use the sounds of vowels, “ if they spoke often.” And to this sense, the words of *Jerom* are quoted by R. *Azariah* * ; and from whence he concludes, that the points were really in being before his time, and so they are understood by others † ; to say no more, as not only the vowel-points and accents are said to be the

N in-

° Of the Divine Original of the Scriptures, p. 285.

* *ivre Binah*, c. 59 fol. 181. 1. † *Simeon de*
Mus, *Joseph. de Voylin*. apud *Owen*. *Theologoumen.* p.
 412.

invention of the men of *Tiberias*, after the finishing of the *Talmud*, but the distinction of verses also; it is certain, that *Jerom*, who lived a century or two before these pretended *Tiberians* are said to live, frequently § speaks of verses in the *Hebrew* books, and distinguished by him into colons and commas which the accents make; and of which mention is made before him in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, and even in the *Misnah*, as will be seen hereafter; yea, in the New Testament, *Luke* iv. 17. *Act.* viii. 32.

A. D. 370.

ABOUT this time lived *Epiphanius*, bishop of *Cyprus*; he flourished in the times of *Valens*, *Gratian*, and *Theodosius*, and wrote a book against various heresies; and among them takes notice of those of the *Nicolaitans*, and their followers the *Gnosticks*, &c. who had a sort of deities they paid honour to, and which they called by barbarous names; and one of them was called *Caulaucauch*, a word taken from *Is.* xxviii. 13. as he observes; upon which he gives^p the text in *Hebrew*, thus, “ *Saulafau Saulafau*,
“ *lafau*,

§ Præfat. in Josuam, Paralipomen. Esaiam & Ezekiel.

^p Epiphani. contr. Hæres. l. 1. hæres. 25.

“ *lafau, Caulaucauch, Caulaucauch, Zier-*
“ *sam, Ziersam,*” exactly agreeing with
the present punctuation, only the *Sheva*
in the last word is pronounced as an *i*;
which may be owing to the copier, and is
sometimes not pronounced at all, as before
observed, and when it is, it is differently:
and very nearly to the same manner of poin-
ting, is his quotation of *Pf. cx. 3,* accor-
ding to the *Hebrew* text, “ *Merem messaar*
“ *Laatal jeledeth⁹;*” and so of *Ij. xxvi. 2,*
3. the likeness is very great and much the
same^r. I suppose *Epiphanius* took these *He-*
brew passages from *Origen’s Hexapla,* a work
in being in his time; and if so, this carries
the punctuation still higher; of which more
hereafter. Moreover, the first word ob-
served, was so pronounced by some here-
ticks, if not in the first, yet in the second
century.

A. D. 360.

ABOUT this time lived *R. Ase,* the head
of a school or academy at *Sura* in *Babylon*^s;
he is said to write a large book concerning

N 2 point-

⁹ *Ib. l. 2. hæ. 65.* ^r *Ib. l. 3. hæ. 76. vid. Mont-*
faucon. Hexapla Origen. vol. 2. p. 130 ^s *Vid.*
Ganz, Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 33. l. 2.

pointing, and the *cabalistic* secrets in it, which book R. *Nachman*[†], who lived about the year 1200, says, was then in their academy. Now if this *Rabbi* so early wrote a book about the points, they must then, and before that time be in use, and must have been some time before in use, to be reduced to an art, and brought under certain rules, and treated on at large.

A. D. 340.

ABOUT this time lived R. *Hillell*, the prince, the last of those who was promoted to doctorship in the land of *Ijrael*, as before observed. Now R. *Zacuth*[‡] speaks of a copy of the book of 24, called the Bible, written by R. *Hillell*, by which all books were corrected in the year 956 or 984, (according to the *Jewish* account) and that he saw a part of it sold in *Africa*, and that it had been written in his time 900 years, and observes that *Kimchi* says in his *grammar*, that the *Pentateuch* was at *Toletolo*, or *Toledo*. Some, as *Schickard*[‡] and *Cunæus*[§], are of opinion, that this *Hillell*, was the famous

[†] Apud Buxtorff. de Punct. Antiq. par. 1. p. 55. [‡] *Juchasin*, fol. 112. 1. [§] *Bechinat haperusalem*, p. 51. & *Jus Reg. Heb.* c. 2. theor. 5. f. 4. [¶] *De Republic. Heb.* l. 1. c. 18.

Kamets Chateph; and in another work^a of his, he says of the word תשימה, in 2 *Sam.* xiii. *Mem* is with *Segol*, which is not usual, and is in the room of *Patbach*; and in the book of *Hillell*, which is at *Toletolo* or *Toledo* it is with *Patbach*; and the learned *Mercer*^b observes, that the word רעה, in *Prov.* xxiv. 14. is, in a M S. written with a *Tzere*, but in the margin it is remarked, that in *Hillell* it is written with a *Segol*. Wherefore the points must be annexed to the Bible as early as the times of *Hillell*, and before.

IN the library at *Berlin* is a *Hebrew* MS. written by *Elias* the pointer, containing the *Pentateuch*, the 5 *Megillot*, with the book of *Job*, and some chapters out of the Prophets, with *Masoretical* observations in the margin; which, if what is said of it could be established, it would be full as antient as *Hillell's* copy: at the end of it the writer has put his name, and declares that he wrote it, and pointed it, and finished it in the year from the creation of the world 4094; and *Andrew Mullerus*, sometime provost at *Berlin*, wrote at the beginning of it,

^a *Sepher Shorash. rad.* יטו. *Prov.* xxiv. 14.

^b *Comment. in*

it, that this copy was written by *Elias* in the island of *Rhodes*, A. C. 334; but *La Croze** the late librarian, says, that at the end of the book there are manifest traces of letters blotted out, and others put in, and that the colour of the ink, and form of the parchment clearly shewed, that it could not then be written scarce 400 years.

THERE are several antient copies of the Bible pointed, but the precise age of them cannot be ascertained. The *Jews* in *China*, have a very antient *Hebrew* Bible in *Pekin*, said to be not at all differing from ours^c; by which it should seem that it is pointed, or otherwise it would differ. A copy called *Sinai*, a correct copy of the *Pentateuch*, has the accents, as *Elias Levita* acknowledges^d, who observes that the first word in *Exod.* xviii. 1. is with *Geraschim*, but in *Sinai* with a *Rebiab*; and he also gives another instance of a different accentuation, but adds, that he knew not who was the composer of it. *R. Nachman*^e, who lived about the year 1200, says, he searched most diligently in all the *Baby-*

N 4

lonian

* Apud Wolf. Biblioth. Heb. p. 166. 167. ^c Semedo's History of China, par. 1. c. 30. ^d Sepher Shi-
bre Luchot. ^e Apud Fuxtorff. ut supra.

Ionian and *Jerusalem* copies, and in *Hillell's*, and could not find any where a *Dagesh* in those three guttural letters, ה, ח, ע, but found it in א, in three places, *Lev.* xxiii. 17. *Gen.* xliiii. 26. and *Ezra* viii. 18. by which it appears, that not only *Hillell's* copy, but the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem* copies were pointed. *Ben Melech*, on *Ezek.* xxiv. 10. observes, that *R. Jonab* writes, that he found the word *Harkach* with a *Kamets* under *He* in the *Jerusalem* copy, but in the *Babylonian* copy, he found it with a *Pathach*. There was a *Jerusalem* copy made mention of by several, that was a pointed one; *Muscatus*^f says, that the word אהר, in *Deut.* vi. 4. is pointed with *Segol* and *Kamets*, as it is found in the correct *Jerusalem* copy; and so *Kimchi* affirms^g, that in the correct *Jerusalem* copy, the word חיל, in *Job* xxix. 18. was with a *Skurek* for those of *Nabardea*, and with a *Cholem* for the western *Jews*; and seems to be the copy *R. Jonab* the grammarian, and *Maimonides*, who both lived in the 12th century, trusted to and depended on; and which the latter^h calls the famous *Egyptian* copy, which
was

^f Comment. in *Coffi*, par. 4. fol. 220. 4. ^g *Sepher Shorash.* 1ad. חיל.

^h *Milchot Torah*, c. 8 f. 4.

was many years at *Jerusalem*, and which *Ben Asher* spent much time in correcting, who lived there a long time, as *Elias* saysⁱ, and by which other copies were corrected; and this *Azariab*^k consulted, and says, it was in *Jerusalem* from the times of the *misnic* doctors, and had in it the *Tikkun Sopherim*, the ordination of the scribes, and the Bible-sections open and shut.

A. D. 300.

THE *Rabbot* are commentaries on the five books of *Moses*, written by *Rabbi Bar Nachmoni*, who flourished, according to *Buxtorff*^l, about this year. There are fifteen words which have unusual pricks or points upon them, observed by the *Masorah* and in the *Talmud*; ten of them in the law, four of them in the prophets, and one in the *Hagiographa*; those in the law, most, if not all of them, are taken notice of in these commentaries^m; in one* of

ⁱ Shibre Luchot & Træfat. 3. ad Masoret. ^k Meor Enayim. c. 9. fol. 52. 2. ^l Biblioth. Heb. p. 326.
^m Bereshit Rabba, f. 48. fol. 43. 1.1 & f. 51. fol. 46. 1. & f. 78. fol. 68. 3. & f. 84. fol. 73. 3. Bemidbar Rabba, f. 3. fol. 182. 2. * Bemidbar Rabba f. 3. fol. 182. 2.
 Abot R. Nathan, c. 34. vid. Aruch in voce ׀ק׀ & Maariv Philip. Aquin. fol. 343. 2. who from hence concludes that *Ezra* put the points and accents.

of which are these words concerning them,
 “ said *Exra*, if *Elijab* (another copy has
 “ *Mofes*) should come and say, why hast
 “ thou written them? I will say to him,
 “ now have I pointed them; if he should
 “ say, thou hast written well, I will im-
 “ immediately remove the points from
 “ them.” In another of them, “ express
 “ mention is made of the accents, *Neb.*
 “ viii. 8. is thus paraphrased, *they read in*
 “ *the book of the law of God*, this is the scrip-
 “ ture; *distinctly* this is the *Targum*; and
 “ *gave the sense*, these are the *accents*; and
 “ *caused them to understand the reading*,
 “ these are the heads of verses.”

A. D. 230.

IN this year the *Jerusalem Talmud* was finished, as is generally owned, though *Scaliger** places it in 370, and *Whiston* § in 369, in which the accents are made mention of[†]. The passage in *Neb.* is explained much in the same manner, as in the *Babylonian Talmud*, and in the *Rabbot* just now quoted; the distinction of the verses is observed in it ||, which is made by the accent *Silluk*.

* De Emend. Temp. l. 7. P. 323.
 † Chronological Tables, cent. 19.

‡ Hierof. Megillah, fol. 74. 2. 4.

§ Chronological Tables, cent. 19.
 || Ib. fol. 75. 1. 2.

Silluk. In this *Talmud*† the double reading of a word in *Hag.* i. 8. is observed, which in the text is written וואכבר, but in the margin it is read וואכברה; the one is according to the letters without the ה paragogic, the other according to the points with it, which, as *Schindler* saysⁿ, is the true reading; for because the point *Kametz* is under the last letter, the quiescent letter ה is to be assumed, and so the word is to be read with ה paragogic; but if the word had no points at the time this *Talmud* was compiled, nor written with ה in any copies, why should it be read, or directed to be so read? I have placed this *Talmud* here because it is generally received, though some think it was not written so early, since mention is made in it of *Dioclesian* the king; and if the *Roman* emperor of that name is meant, it must be written in or after his time; though it appears from the *Talmud*° itself, that the *Doclet* or *Dioclesian* spoken of was, according to that, some petty king, that lived in the times of R. *Judab Hakkodesh*, the compiler of the *Misnab*, by whose
 chil-

† T. Hierof. Maccot, fol. 32. 1. & Taanot, fol. 65. 1.
 ° Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 830 ° T. Hierof. Trumot, 46. 2, 3.

children he had been beaten, as pretended, and when he became a king, complained of it; which can not so well agree with the emperor *Dioclesian*: however, what is quoted from it, is a proof of the accents being mentioned in it, which some have denied, and for the sake of which it is observed.

About this time flourished that indefatigable writer *Origen*, who had knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, and is almost the only one of the antients that had, excepting *Jerom*. This writer, in one of his commentaries*, quotes the *Hebrew* reading of *Psf.* cxviii. 25, 26. and agreeable to the present punctuation; in which he appears to be instructed by a *Jew*, since he puts *Adonai* instead of *Jehovah*, and by which it is evident that the *Jews* pointed as they do now. The same writer composed a work called *Hexapla*; which, had it been preserved, would have been of great use in this controversy about the antiquity of the *Hebrew* points; for in this work he placed in the first two columns, first the *Hebrew* text with its proper letters, and then the same in *Greek* characters: *Fabricius*^p has given

* Comment. in Matth. p. 438, 439. Ed. Huet.

^p Bibliothec. Græc. tom. 2. p. 346.

given a specimen of it in the whole first chapter of *Genesis*, collected out of the fragments of the antient *Greek* interpreters; and so has *Montfaucon*^a after him; which I have compared with our pointed Bibles, and find it exactly agrees with our modern punctuation, with scarce any variation at all; take as a proof the first two or three verses.

1. בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ	Βρεσιθ Βαρα Ελωιμ Εθ ασαμαιμ εεθ ακρες
2. וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְּהוֹ וְבוּי וַיִּחְשֶׁן עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וַיִּרַח אֱלֹהִים מִרְחַפְתָּ עַל כְּנֹו הַמַּיִם	κααρες αιεθα θωα εβωα ιιχσεν αλ φνε θεωμ εραχ Ελωιμ μραχεθεθ αλ φνε αμαιμ
3. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר	γιωμερ Ελωιμ ιει ωρ αιει ωρ

THE rest of the specimen, throughout the whole chapter, is agreeable to this; both *Fabricius* and *Montfaucon* have given another specimen of the *Hexapla*, on *Hof. xi. 1.* the same which *Walton*^r has transcribed from a copy of cardinal *Barberini*, from whom they seem to have taken it, which does not so exactly agree with the modern pointing as the other does; but *Montfaucon*^s has given two more specimens,

one

^a Hexapla O ipen. Tom. 1. p. 2. &c. ^r Biblia Polyglott. Tom. . 72 Interpr. Ed. Roman. p. 133. ^s Preliminar. ad Hexapla. c. 1. p. 16.

one out of the *Octapla* of *Pf.* ii. 6. and another out of the *Enneapla* of *Hab.* ii. 4. which perfectly agree with the present punctuation; and it is surprising they should, when it is considered, that particularly the specimen of the whole first chapter of *Genesis* is collected from fragments preserved in various writers, and those but little skilled in the *Hebrew* language, and who sometimes wrote differently one from another; and that these have passed through the hands of various copiers, entirely unacquainted with that language; and yet *Fabricius* complains not of any difficulty in collecting it; *Montfaucon* indeed does^t, and it is pretty much he should, since he wrote after *Fabricius*; this shews that he did not consult him, and that he had not his specimen from him; and therefore it is the more surprising that they should so nearly agree, the difference between them being chiefly not in the vowel-points, but in the powers of some few of the consonant letters. With what precision and exactness, agreeable to the modern punctuation, may it reasonably be supposed were the *Hexapla* of *Origen*, as first published by him,
and

^t Hexapla Gen. p. 14.

and as it would have appeared had it been preserved; and who must have had a pointed Bible before him when he composed it; and the most exquisite care, circumspection and diligence must have been used by him, to observe every letter and every point, so as to write each word in *Greek* characters, and give them a proper regular pronunciation. Though I must confess, that since *Origen* was but indifferently skilled in the *Hebrew* language, as *Huetius*^u has observed, and so father *Simon*^{*}; I greatly suspect he had, by some means or other obtained a copy of the *Hebrew* Bible, written in *Greek* characters, perhaps from a *Jew* with whom he was acquainted, well versed in the *Hebrew* language, both letters and points; for it was allowed by the *Jews*^v to write the *Hebrew* text in the characters of any language, though not to read it so written in their synagogues; and especially they allowed of writing it in *Greek* characters, it may be for the use of the *Hellenistic Jews*; nay they allowed the sacred books to be written in *Greek* characters

^u Origenian. l. 2. c. 1. f. 2. p. 26. * *Disquisit. Critic.* c. 9. p. 61. ^v *T. Bab. Sabbath*, fol. 115. 1. & *Megillah*, fol. 9. 1. & *Debarim Rabba*, f. 1. fol. 233. 1.

racters only, for so it is said in the *Misnah**,
 “ there is no difference between the (sa-
 “ cred) books, the Phylacteries, and *Me-*
 “ *zuzab* (the parchments on the door-
 “ posts) only that the books may be writ-
 “ ten in every tongue, but the Phylacteries
 “ and *Mezuzab* may not be written but in
 “ the *Assyrian* (i. e. in *Hebrew* characters).
 “ *Rabbi Simeon Ben Gamaliel* says, they
 “ don’t allow the books to be written but in
 “ *Greek* ;” and the decision was, according
 to *Simeon*, as *Maimonides** observes; and who
 agreeable to this says, “ they may not
 “ write the Phylacteries and *Mezuzab* but
 “ in *Assyrian* characters, but they allow
 “ the (sacred) books to be written also in
 “ *Greek*, and in that only.” I suspect
 therefore, I say, that *Origen* lighted on one
 of those copies, and what serves to strength-
 en the suspicion is, that in his *Hexapla*, *A-*
donai is put for *Jehovah*, as the *Rabbins*
 read it §. Now what he did in compiling
 his *Hexapla*, was placing the several copies,
 as he found them, in order, in distinct co-
 lumns as follows; first, the *Hebrew* text in
Hebrew letters, as then in use with the
Jews,

* Megillah, c. 1. f. 8. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 15. 3.

* Tephillin, c. 1. s. 19.

Haref. 3. haz. 76.

§ Vid. Epiphan. contr.

Jews, as *Eusebius* assures^x, who doubtless saw the work itself; and next a copy of the same in *Greek* characters, he had somewhere met with; then followed the *Greek* versions of *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, the *Septuagint*, and *Theodotion*: but be it in which way it may, whether the composition of the *Hebrew* copy in *Greek* characters, was *Origen's*, or another's, it seems a clear case that a pointed Bible must then be in being, and was made use of; and that there was a regular punctuation, and that by the specimen the present punctuation agrees with it; which observation sufficiently confutes and destroys those notions and vulgar mistakes so generally received, of the invention of the points by the men of *Tiberias*, and of their being invented after the writing of the *Talmud*, and of their being unknown in the times of *Jerom*; all which must now be retracted.

A. D. 200.

IN this century, and the preceding, lived the Rabbins of *Tiberias*, so frequently mentioned in the *Jerusalem Talmud*, finished in the year 230, as before observed; at this

O

time

^x Ecclesiast. Hist. l. 6. c. 16.

time as there were many synagogues of the *Jews* at *Tiberias*, so there was a famous academy; and now lived the true men of *Tiberias*, spoken of in *Jewish* writings, and at this time only, as to any number of them; for in the following century, universities and promotions ceased in the land of *Israel*. These men, so famous in *Jewish* writings for their knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, and the purity and elegance of it, and the right manner of reading and pronouncing it, lived before the times of *Jerom*, and so not after the finishing of the *Talmud*, as *Elias* says; for *Jerom* manifestly refers to them, and to the sentiments the *Jews* had of them, for their knowledge of the law, and the beauty and elegance of their language*. But though these men studied the *Hebrew* language, and were very expert in it, and in the affair of pointing, yet they were not the inventors of the points; which may be concluded from what *Aben Ezra* says[†] of them; “ I have seen, says he, the books
 “ which the wise men of *Tiberias* examin-
 “ ed, and fifteen of their elders gave it
 “ upon

* *Quæst. seu Trad. Heb. in Gen. T. 3. fol. 73. I. K.*
[†] *Comment. in Exod. 25. 31.*

“ upon oath, that three times they dili-
 “ gently considered every word and every
 “ *point*, every full and deficient word, and
 “ behold, *Yod* was written in the word
 “ תיעשה”, i. e. in *Exod.* xxv. 31. by which
 it appears that the Bible was not pointed
 by them, but pointed Bibles, which they
 had, were examined by them; so that
 pointed Bibles were in being before their
 time; they were pointed to their hands;
 they only searched into them, and studied
 them, and became very expert and accu-
 rate in their knowledge of the points:
 hence the same writer, in another work ² of
 his says, that from them, the men of *Tibe-*
rias were the *Masorettes*; from them
 we have the whole pointing; not that they
 were the authors and inventors of the
 points; but that by them they were
 handed down to them with great accuracy
 and exactness; for he expressly says in an-
 other work of his ^{*}, that “ the men of the
 great synagogue taught the people the
 sense of the scriptures by the *accents*, and
 by the *kings* and *ministers*; so he calls the

O 2

vowel-

² Trachut fol. 138, 2. apud Buxtorf. de Funct. Antiq. p. 11.
^{*} Mezne Leshon Hakodesh apud Buxtorf. ib. p. 13; 14.

vowel-points, *Cholem*, *Sburek*, &c. and were instead of eyes to the blind; therefore in their foot-steps we go forth, them we follow, and on them we lean in all expositions of the scripture." But whatsoever skill the men of *Tiberias* might attain to in the study of the points, they appear to be very unfit for, and unequal to such a work as the invention of them. Hear what Dr. *Lightfoot* ^a has observed of them, who was thoroughly acquainted with their characters, as to be learned from the above *Talmud*. "There are some who
 " believe the holy Bible to be pointed by
 " the men of *Tiberias*; I do not wonder
 " at the impudence of the *Jews* who in-
 " vented this story; but I wonder at the
 " credulity of Christians who applaud it.
 " Recollect, I beseech you, the names of
 " the *Rabbins* of *Tiberias*, from the first si-
 " tuation of the university to the time
 " that it expired; and what at length do
 " you find, but a kind of men mad with
 " *Pharisaism*, bewitching with traditions
 " and bewitched, blind, guileful, doting,
 " they must pardon me, if I say magical
 " and monstrous? men how unfit, how
 unable,

^a Works vol. ii. Chorograph. Cent. c. 81. p. 73-74

“ unable, how foolish, for the undertak-
 “ ing so divine a work ?” Then he gives
 the names of many of them, and observes
 their childishness, sophistry, froth, and
 poison, and adds, “ if you can believe the
 “ Bible was pointed in such a school, be-
 “ lieve also all that the *Talmudists* write.
 “ The pointing of the Bible favours of
 “ the work of the Holy Spirit, not the
 “ work of lost, blinded, and besotted
 “ men ;” and elsewhere he says, “ it is
 “ above the skill of a mere man to point
 “ the Bible ; nay, scarcely a verse as it is.
 “ The ten commandments may puzzle all
 “ the world for that skill.”

As about this time, the universities both
 of *Tiberias* and *Babylon* were the most flour-
 ishing, it may be reasonably supposed,
 that as they had each of them copies of
 the Bible, which they carefully examined,
 and preserved for the use of the *Jews* in
Palestine and *Babylon*, that now were made
 the various readings called *western* and *east-*
ern, published at the end of some printed
 Bibles ; the one for the *Jews* in their own
 land, called *western*, and the other for the
Jews in *Babylon*, called *eastern*. The dif-

* *Erubhim*, or *Miscellanies*, c. 31. vol. i. p. 1014.

ference in number are 216, and none of them in the law; and they are mostly very trivial, and chiefly about letters and words, but not altogether, for in two places, *Jer.* vi. 6. *Amos* iii. 6. they make mention of the point *Mappick*, in which the one copy differs from the other; so that *Elias*^b is wrong, in saying that the differences are about words and letters only, but not about points and accents, and therefore he supposes they were made before the invention of the vowel-points and accents; but he is mistaken, these were then in being. In *Lam.* v. 21. the *western Jews* have the Tetragrammaton, *Jehovah*, but the *eastern* have *Adonai*; the former word, as it should seem, having in their copy the points of the latter, as it sometimes has, they put *Adonai* instead of it; which shews that the points then were.

A. D. 190.

CLEMENS of *Alexandria* lived and wrote about this time, and is thought to make mention of the *Hebrew* points and accents, where he says^c, there are some, who in reading,

^b Præfat. 3. ad Masoret. ^c Stromat. I. 3. p. 412.

reading, by the tone of the voice, pervert the Scriptures to their own pleasure, and by a transposition *τινων προσωδιων και συγμων* (which *Sylburgius* his interpreter renders) *of certain accents and points*, what are wisely and profitably commanded, force to their own liking ;” in which he has respect to a text in *Mal. iii. 15.* and which he vindicates against some heretics of his time ; but not to the *Greek* version of it, and the accents of that ; for those in the opposition say, there were no accents in the *Greek* tongue for ages after^d ; but to the *Hebrew* text, and the points and accents in that ; and the rather this may be supposed, seeing it appears in several parts of his writings, that he had some knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue.

A little before *Clemens, Irenæus* wrote, who, tho’ he had but a small degree of knowledge of the *Hebrew* language, yet something of it he

O 4 endea-

^d Some say they began in the 7th century, vid. *Velaffi* *Dissert. de Lit. Græc. Pronunciat. par. 4. c. 2 p. 95. Romæ, 1751.* It is said the ancients the MSS. are, the fewer are the accents, and that those which exceed a thousand years have none at all, *Mirtisb. Sarpedon* (alias *Frideric Reiffenberg*), *Dissert. de Vera Attic. Pronunciat. par. 3. c. 1. p. 48. Romæ, 1750 ;* but *Gregorius Placentinus* makes them much more ancient. See his *Epitome Græc. Paleograph. c. 11. p. 88. Romæ, 1735.* The controversy about the *Greek* accents has been of late years revived at Rome.