

“ the one ; in one they found it written,
 “ זעטוטי, *Exod.* xxiv. 5. in two נערי, they
 “ confirmed the two, and rejected the
 “ other ; in one they found it written תשע,
 “ *Gen.* xxxii. 22. in two אחת עשרה, they
 “ confirmed the two and rejected the one.”

Some think ^b these three copies were what belonged to the three bodies of the *Jews* in *Judea*, *Babylon*, and *Egypt*; and conjecture, that from the collation of these copies arose the *Keri* and *Cetib*; though this refers to times after *Ezra* and the great synagogue. Translators sometimes follow the *Cetib*, and sometimes the *Keri*, as do the *Chaldee* paraphrases, which sometimes take in both, as in *Pf.* xxii. 16. which is a proof of the antiquity of them : there is a various reading in *Is.* xlv. 5. *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, and so *Aquila*, an ancient *Greek* interpreter, translate according to the margin ; and *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, two other ancient ones, translate according to the textual writing, which is observed by *Jerom*ⁱ; so that these various readings were known by him, though it has been denied,

^b Lightfoot, *Hor. Heb.* in *Matt.* 5. 18. p. 140. *Othon. Lexic. Rabbin.* p. 315. ⁱ Vid. *Comment.* in *Is.* c. 49, 5. in *Hierem.* c. 31, 40. fol. 160. Vide *Loc. Heb.* fol. 89. B.

nied, and were in being before the pretended *Masorettes* of *Tiberias*. Nay, the forms and figures of letters unusual, or of an unusual position, marked by the *Masorettes* are observed in the *Talmud**; so that these *Masoretic* remarks were before those men were, said to be after the finishing of that. These readings seem to be designed not as corrections and emendations of the text, but only some as various readings, and others as euphemisms, to be regarded by readers as may seem good to them, and others as observing anomalous punctuations; but in none was it intended that alterations should be made in the text, but that that should stand as it is, and was found: but it seems better with *Carpzovius*^k to suppose that these marginal readings were made after the times of *Antiochus*, when the temple was purified and worship in it restored; and the autograph of *Ezra*, perhaps, and many copies of it being destroyed, though not all, (see *Maccab.* i. 59, 66. and iii. 49, and xii. 9.) it was thought proper to revise the

R 2

books

* T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 30, 1. & 66 2. Bava Bathra, fol. 109, 2. Sanhedrin, fol. 103, 2. Massech. Sopherim c. 9. f. 7. ^k Critic. Sacr. p. 342.

books of the scripture; and observing different readings in the copies they found, they placed them in the margin for the said uses; and therefore I have put the date of the original of them as above: now though these greatly respect words and letters, yet in some instances the change of consonants appears to be in the margin for the sake of vowels found in the text not so suitable to the consonants in it; and therefore the vowels must be in the text when the *Keri* was put in the margin, as the learned *Pocock*¹ has observed in the *Keri* and *Cetib* of *Pf.* xxx. 4. “for, says he, unless the *Masorettes*, or whoever put the *Keri* in the margin had found מִירְדִי, so as it is now pointed, with vowels agreeing to the word מִירְדִי, what need had they to substitute it? since the sense as well, if not better, flows by reading מִירְדִי; but if in other copies they had found it מִירְדִי, and without vowel-points, why did they not dash out the *Vau*, and read it so? and if they had found מִירְדִי, with its own vowels, in which they read it, they would never have dared to have cast them away without necessity, and put those in their
their

¹ Miscellan. Not. in Port. Moses, p. 64, 65.

their room, proper to an infinitive; as it is said, the same commonly is the reason of others, in which *Vau* is postponed to *Ka-metz*, 1. *Sam.* xxvii. 11. *Josb.* xv. 62. *Pf.* ci. 5. and to *Pathach*, *Pf.* v. 9." so that it appears to be the doctrine of the points, and the anomalous ones observed, that is sometimes the cause of the marginal *Keri*, See *If.* xxxvi. 12. where the points under the word in the text better agree with that in the margin, and seems to be the reason of the marginal reading. Some of those *Keries* may not be so ancient as the date above; but additions may be made by some in later times; yet they seem chiefly to be of great antiquity, as appears by what has been observed of the *Targums* and ancient *Greek* copies; and *Buxtorf*^m has given some rules to discern the one from the other.

A. 277. Ante Christum.

IN this year, according to bishop *Usher*ⁿ, *Ptolemy Philadelphus* king of *Egypt*, being desirous of erecting a library in *Alexandria*,

R 3 employed

^m Anticritica, par. 2. c. 4. p. 501.
Test. p. 480.

ⁿ Annal. Vete

employed *Demetrius* his librarian to collect books for that purpose, who in a letter to the king preserved by *Eusebius* °, tells him that he had diligently executed his orders; but that with some few other books, there remained the books of the law of the *Jews* to be got, which he says were contained in *Hebrew* letters and vowels; for what else can be meant by *φωνη*, as distinguished from letters? not the pronunciation and sound, which those volumes could not be said to lie in, but the vowel-points, by which the letters were read and pronounced, and are annexed to them for that purpose; so that it seems at this time the books of the *Jews* were written not only in *Hebrew* letters, but with *Hebrew* points, and in their own characters, as *Demetrius* says †, which were different both from the *Egyptian* and *Syrian*, as he affirms; and which deserves to be remarked, as what may be of some service to shew what were the *Hebrew* characters then in use: and though it is commonly supposed that the seventy interpreters used an unpointed copy from which they translated, whence
 came

° Præpar. Evangel. l. 8. c. 3. p. 351. † Apud Euseb. p. 350. Vid. Aristæ Hist. 70. p. 4, 5. Ed. Oxon. 1692.

came so many mistakes to be made in their version ; yet *Hottinger*⁹ has observed near fifty places in which for *Kametz* they read *Tzere* or *Segol* ; so *Leusden** observes, that they read words with wrong vowels, as *Tzere* for *Kametz*, *Pf.* xl. 5. *Patach* for *Tzere*, *Pf.* vii. 12. *Chirek* for *Patach*, *Pf.* vii. 7. *Patach* for *Segol*, *Pf.* xci. 3. and which might be owing either to a vitiated pointed copy before them, which led them wrong ; or to an unpointed copy, and trusting to their memory, put one point for another ; though *Dr. Lightfoot*[†] suggests they purposely “ used an unpricked Bible, in which
 “ the words written without vowels might
 “ be bended divers ways, and into di-
 “ vers senses, and different from the mean-
 “ ing of the original ; and yet if the trans-
 “ lation was questioned they might prick
 “ or vowel the word so as to agree to
 “ their translation : how they have dealt
 “ in this kind there is none that ever laid
 “ the *Hebrew Bible* and the *Septuagint* to-
 “ gether, but hath observed ;” though he adds, “ their differences from the ori-
 R 4 “ ginal,

⁹ *Theaur. Philolog.* l. 1. c. 3. p. 354, &c. * *Philolog. Heb. Mixt. Dissert.* 4. p. 31. [†] *Works*, vol. 1. p. 490.

“ ginal, which were innumerable, were
 “ partly of ignorance, they themselves not
 “ being able to read the text always true,
 “ in a copy unvowelled ; but this ignorance
 “ was also voluntary in them ; they not
 “ caring to mistake, so that they might do
 “ it with their own security ;” and so Mr.
Broughton † says, “ that the seventy had
 “ not the vowelled Bible, both for the rare-
 “ nefs, and because they never meant to
 “ give the truth ;” but be it that they
 used an unpointed Bible purposely, or a
 pointed one vitiated, it shews that points
 were in use in their time, and very neces-
 sary : and it may be observed, that the
Pentateuch, which some, as *Josephus* and
 others, think was the only part of scrip-
 ture translated by them, is almost every
 where translated in agreement with the
 modern punctuation ; and *Jerom* * long
 ago observed this, that the five books of
Moses translated by them more agreed with
 the *Hebrew* than any other. It is an ob-
 servation of *Capellus* † himself, that the
 seventy interpreters, who lived about 300
 years

† Works, p. 60, 681.
 Gen. fol 65. D. Tom. 3.
 p. 183, 191, 192.

* Quæst. seu Trad. Heb. in
 † Orat. de Nom. Tetragram.

years before *Christ*, instead of the *tetragrammaton* or the word *Jehovah*, always read *Adonai*, and always render it by *κυριος*, a word not expressive of essence, as *Jehovah* is, but of lordship, as *Adonai* is; and that they are followed in this by the Apostles of *Christ*, and the rest of the writers of the New Testament, and the ancient fathers of the church; and that from them the *Greek* interpreters of the Old Testament never depart, as *Aquila*, *Symmachus*, and *Theodotion*. Now what could lead them to read *Adonai*, and sometimes *Elohim* instead of *Jehovah*, and translate the word accordingly? not the consonant letters of *Jehovah*, but the points of *Adonai* and *Elohim* put unto it as they now are; and *Capellus* * plainly confesses that this word had the points of *Adonai*, and sometimes of *Elohim* in their time; for he says, the seventy when יהוה has the points of אלהים oftner render it κυριε κυριε, as *Pf.* lxxviii. 21. & *passim*, and sometimes κυριος, and θεος, as in *Amos* iii. 7. &c. from whence it is conjectured that for *Adonai Jehovah* they read *Adonai Elohim*.

A.

* *Ib.* p. 146.

A. 454. Ante Christum.

IN this year, according to bishop *Usher*¹, *Ezra* was returned from *Babylon*, and was at *Jerusalem*, and read, and expounded the law to the people of the *Jews* there. It is the generally received notion of the *Jews*, that the vowel-points were annexed to the letters of the sacred Books by *Ezra*; not but that they suppose they were originally from *Moses* and the prophets, and that they are equally of divine authority as the letters; only they imagine they were delivered down from them by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*, and by him affixed to the letters; and *Elias*, who invented the story of the men of *Tiberias*, is of the same mind, only with this difference, that the oral tradition of the points was carried down to those men, and they put them to the letters: as much like a fiction as this oral tradition looks, as it undoubtedly does, yet it is little less, if any, what *Capellus* and *Walton* allow, especially the latter; that the pointing of the *Masoretes* is not arbitrary, and at their pleasure, but according to the found,

¹ Annal. Vet. Test. p. 197.

found, pronounciation, true and accustomed reading, always in use, handed down successively to their times, and which contains the true sense and meaning of the Holy Ghost. Dr. *John Prideaux* ^u, an opposer of the antiquity of the points, yet thinks it probable that some of the points and accents for the distinction of the text, and, for the direction of the reading, were devised by *Ezra*, and by the succeeding *Masoretes* before the *Talmudists*, and were preserved in separate parchments and sheets, and that they were used and increased to the times of the *Tiberian Masoretes*, who were after the *Talmudists*; which is giving up the invention of them by the men of *Tiberias*, and ascribing the original of them to *Ezra*. Many who are clear for the divine authority of the points and accents are content they should be ascribed to *Ezra*, since he was divinely inspired, as *Buxtorf* and others; and it may be safely concluded that the points and accents were in being in his time, since the *Masorah* which was begun by him, or about his time ^w, at least by the men of his

^u *Viginti & duæ Lectiones*, Lect. 12. p. 196, 197.

^w *Casaubon. Epist. ep. 390. Porthæfio*, p. 468.

his synagogue, is concerned about the points and accents, as well as other things, as has been observed; and besides, the Scribes, which were assistant to *Ezra* in reading the law, cannot well be thought to read, at least so well, to read it *distinctly*, and cause the people to understand *the reading* of it, even men, women, and children, without the points. Not to take any further notice of the sense the *Talmudists*, both *Jerusalem* and *Babylonian*, give of the text in *Neb.* viii. 8. I now refer to, which has been quoted already. Dr. *Humphrey Prideaux*, though he took that side of the question, which denies that the vowel-points were affixed by *Ezra*, and of the same divine authority with the rest of the text, yet allows, that they came into use a little after the time of *Ezra*, being then necessary for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text *; which is not only an acknowledgement of the great usefulness of the points, but carries the antiquity of them very high; and I see not if they were needful for the reading and teaching of the *Hebrew* text *a little* after the time of *Ezra*, why they were not as necessary in the
time

* Connection, par. 1. b. 5. p. 352, 353.

time of *Ezra*; for was the necessity of them owing to the *Hebrew* language, then ceasing to be vulgarly spoken, so, according to him, it did cease to be in the times of *Ezra*; though I apprehend that is a mistake, for it was some hundreds of years after, ere it ceased to be vulgarly spoken.

THERE is nothing to be observed between the times of *Ezra* and *Moses* relative to the points; for I lay no stress on the different pronunciation of *Sibboleth*, in *Jud.* xii. 6. though *Schindler* * is of opinion that from hence it appears, that the point on the right and left hand of *ש*, was then in use, and so by consequence the other points also.

Elias Levita † roundly asserts, that the copy of the law which was given by *Moses* to the children of *Israel* was without points and accents; but this is said without proof, and is what no man is able to prove. He quotes *Aben Ezra* ‡, who says, the points were delivered at *Sinai*, but the tables of the law were not pointed, which seems to be a flat contradiction, at least it is what is very improbable. Much better
does

* *Lex. Pentaglott.* col. 1792. vid. *Balmesii Gram. Heb.* p. 14. lin. 9. 14. 16. * *Præfat.* 3. ad *Masoret.* † *Zach Shephataim* in *lb.*

does another writer * argue, whom he mentions, who in answer to the question, How do we know that the points and accents are of God? says, “ it may be replied, what is written in *Deut. xxvii. 8. and thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law very plainly; but without the points and accents, which explain the words, no man, he says, can understand them clearly and plainly:*” and whatever may be said for the king’s writing out a copy of the law, and reading in it all the days of his life *Deut. xvii. 18, 19.* and for the priests reading it once a year in the hearing of all *Israel*, which yet is not very easy to account for, without the points, so as to be understood, *Deut. xxxi. 11.* yet how the common people should be able to read it to their children, and teach them the knowledge of it without the points, is still more difficult of belief.

THE common opinion of the *Jews* is, either that the points and accents were delivered to *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, yet only as to the power of pronouncing and reading, but not as to their marks and figures

* R. Levi bar Joseph Semadar, in *ib.*

gures in writing; but that the true manner of reading the scriptures was propagated and preserved by oral tradition to the times of *Ezra*; or that they were given to *Moses* at *Sinai*, but were omitted in writing for the most part afterward, and so were forgotten, 'till *Ezra* came and restored them. But it rather seems that they were as early as the *Hebrew* letters; and since it is not improbable that these were before the flood, and before the confusion of tongues, the points were also; and could the sense of *Gen. xi. 1.* given by a late writer^a, be established, it would be out of all doubt; which is this, *and the whole earth was of one language, i. e. the Hebrew language, as afterwards called, and of one speech, or words*, that is, according to this writer, words distinguished by acute or sharp points; deriving the word used from *ררר* to *sharpen*, whereby he thinks, the tautology in the text is avoided; and to which may be added, that the latter clause of the text is plural: yet I fear the word will not bear this sense, since the singular and plural words used, the one in one clause, and the other in the other, must have

^a Kalf. de Ling. Heb. Natal. p. 33, 37, 38, 39.

have a different derivation, which is not usual of a word in the same text.

IF the book of *Jetzirab* was compiled by *Abraham*, to whom the *Jews*^b commonly ascribe it, though sometimes to *Adam*, the points might be traced to his time; for in that book frequent mention is made of the double letters *Begaa Cephbat*, or *Begad Cephbrat*, as there so called^c, because they have a double pronounciation, which pronounciation depends upon the points, their having or not having in them the *Dagesh lene*. But though there is no reason to believe that the book was written either by *Abraham* or *Adam*, yet it is an ancient one, and by this instance it carries the antiquity of the points higher than is now commonly allowed unto them; for the book is spoken of in the *Talmud*^d; and if it was written by R. *Akiba*, who is the only one mentioned by the *Jews* as the author of it, besides *Adam* and *Abraham*, he died in the beginning of the second century; though if *Jonathan Ben Uzziel* wrote a supplement to it, which was as a com-

^b *Cofri*, par 4. c. 27. *Juchafin*, fol. 52, 2.
f. 2, 9, 10, & c. 2. f. 1. & c. 4. f. 1, 2, 3.
Bab. Sankhedrin, fol. 65, 2.

^c C. 1.
^d T.

commentary on it, as is said^e, it must be before his time, since *Jonathan* was cotemporary with Christ, or a little after him; and it may be observed, that the double pronunciation of the above letters was in use in the times of Christ, as appears from the words, *Armageddon*, *Capernaum*, *Euphrates*, *Joppa*, *Pascha*, *Sarepta*, and others.

It is not only the opinion of some *Jewish* writers, that the vowel-points, as well as letters, were given by God himself to *Adam*, as the author of *Cofri*^f, and his commentator *Muscatus*^g, and of R. *Azariah*^h, and of others; but some Christian writersⁱ also, ascribe them to *Adam*; and indeed, if the *Hebrew* letters were of his invention, as many have thought, and *Walton*^k himself thinks, there can be no reasonable doubt but the vowels were also; but be this as it may, I am inclined to believe that the vowels were coeval with the letters, and that the penmen of the sacred scriptures, severally annexed, the vowel-

S points

^e Vid. Wolfii Bibliothec. Heb. p. 28. ^f Par. 4. c. 25.
^g In Ib. fol. 229, 1. ^h Meor Enayim, c. 59. ⁱ Alsted. Chronolog. p. 267. vid. Buxtorf. de Punct. Antiqu. par. 2. p. 309, 310. ^k Prolegom. 2. f. 7.

points to letters in their writings. My reasons are these :

1. THE perfection of language requires vowels. No language can be perfect without them ; they are the life and soul of language ; letters without them are indeed dead letters ; the consonants are stubborn and immoveable things, they can't be moved or pronounced without vowels, which are, as *Plato* says¹, the bond of letters, by which they are joined, and without which they can't be coupled together : can it be thought, therefore, that the *Hebrew* language, the first, and most perfect of all languages, should be without them, which, if this was the case, would be the most imperfect of all the *oriental* languages ? for notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, the *Samaritan* had its points, though differing from the *Hebrew*, as *Jerom* observes^m, and so a later writerⁿ has observed it has. The *Syrians*, *Chaldæans*, *Arabs*, and *Persians*, had vowel-points likewise, as *Hottinger* affirms^o, and so dean *Prideaux*^p. The invention of the
Syriac

¹ *Sophista* p. 177. ^m *Præfat ad Reg. T.* 3. fol. 5. L.
ⁿ *Petrus a Valle in Antiqu. Eccl. Orient.* p. 184. ^o *The-*
saur. Philolog. p. 403. ^p *Connection, par.* B. 5. p.
355.

Syriac vowel-points is indeed by some⁶ ascribed to *Ephrem Syrus*, who lived in the 4th century; and as for the *Ethiopic* language, the vowels are incorporated into the consonants, and are a part of them, and so must be *ab origine*, and coeval with them; and even those who are for casting away the vowel-points seem to be sensible of a necessity of substituting something in their room, the *matres lectionis*, as they call them, יא to which some add ה; but these are not sufficient, being wanting in a great number of words; witness also the various methods of reading *Hebrew*, contrived by men; but why should they be at pains to find out a method of reading and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language, when there is such a plain one at hand, ready prepared for them, and of which *Walton* himself says⁷, that it is a most profitable and useful invention no man can deny?

2. THE nature and genius of the *Hebrew* language require points; without these the difference can't be discerned between nouns and verbs, in some instances, as דבר, with many others; between verbs active,

S 2

and

⁶ Vid. *Fabritii Bibliothec. Gr. Tom. 5. p. 320.* ⁷ *Prolegom. 8. f. 10.*

and verbs passive, between some conjugations, moods, tenses, and persons, *Kal*, *Piel*, *Pual*; imperatives and infinitives, are proofs hereof; nor can the *Vau* conversive of tenses be observed^r, which yet is used frequently throughout the Bible, and without which, the formation of some of the tenses by letters would be useless. *Morinus*^s himself says, “ that without the
 “ points a grammar cannot be written, as
 “ *Elias* rightly observes; for example, de-
 “ scribe the conjugation *Kal* without
 “ points, and immediately you’ll be at a
 “ stand, and much more in *Piel* ;” and *Walton*^t also owns the use of them in the investigation of the roots. The pronunciation of some letters depends upon the points as has been observed.

3. THE vowel-points are necessary and useful to the more easy learning, reading, and pronouncing the *Hebrew* language. What men well skilled in the language may be able to do is one thing, and what learners of it, and beginners in it can do is another thing; men well versed in it
 may

^r Vid. *Cofri*, par. 2. c. 80.
^s *Epist. Buxtorfio* in *Antiqu. Eccl. Oriental.* p. 392.
 p. 5.

^t *Introduct. Orient. Ling.*

may chuse to read without them ; and so a man that is master of *Brachygraphy* may chuse to read what he has written in short hand, and to which he is used, rather than in long hand ; but this is no proof of the perfection and propriety of his *Brachygraphy*. “ A tongue, as Dr. *Lightfoot* says^u, “ cannot first be learnt without vowels, “ though at last skill and practice may “ make it to be read without ; grammar “ and not nature makes men to do this :” and a late learned writer has observed ^v, that “ to talk of reading *Hebrew* without points, “ is a *collusive* way of speaking ; we may “ do it when we have learnt the language, “ but not before ; as it is a dead language “ we want instructions either by word of “ mouth or by grammar. Points in *Hebrew* are like scaffolds in building, when “ the work is finished we may take them “ down and throw them aside, but not “ sooner with safety.” Dr. *John Prideaux* ^x an opposer of the antiquity of the points, owns that “ the tongue being tossed “ about by various calamities, the points

S 3

“ were

^u Works, vol. i. p. 1014. ^v Chappelow's Preface to his Comment on Job, p. 18, 19. ^x *Viginti & duæ Lectiones*, Lect. 12. p. 189.

“ were added, that it might be the more
 “ accurately preserved, and that by the
 “ *Jews*, to whom it ceased to be vernacular;
 “ as also that by others it might the
 “ more *easily* be understood, and be more
 “ *exactly* pronounced :” and elsewhere he
 says ^y, let them be whose additions to the
 text they may, they are so far from corrupting
 it, that they rather protect it from corruption,
 and lead to a more *easy* reading and understanding
 of it ; and so *Walton* ^z, another opposer of the
 points, says, “ the Christian church received
 their (the *Masoret*s) punctuation, not upon their
 authority, but because it expressed the *true*
 sense received in the church of God ; and
 withal because they saw it conducted
 much to the *more easy* reading of the
 text, and even to the true reading of it,
 as he owns * :” and their great master
 and chief leader *Capellus* ^a, having treated
 of the points and accents devised and added
 to the sacred *Hebrew* text by the *Masoret*s,
 as he supposed, frankly owns, “ that upon
 that account we now certainly owe
 much

^y Fasciculus Controvers. de Script. qu. 3. p. 21. ^z The
 Considerator considered, p. 209. * Prolegom. 8. f. 17.
^a Arcan. Punct. l. 1. c. 17. f. 11.

“ much unto them; or rather, should *give*
 “ *thanks* to God, who stirred up these men
 “ to it, and put them upon the study of
 “ it; for in that *work* they have certainly
 “ laboured most successfully, so that now
 “ by the help of those *little marks* we can
 “ *far more easily*, and even more happily
 “ be conversant in reading and understand-
 “ ing the sacred *Hebrew* text, than other-
 “ wise could have been done by us with-
 “ out this help.” Why then should it
 not be attended to? and indeed I cannot
 see how common people, men, women,
 and children, could be able to read it with-
 out points, when it was their mother
 tongue; it was their duty and interest to
 read their Bible in it, for whose sake it was
 written, and who had as great an interest
 and concern in it as men the most learned
 have, it being the grand charter of their
 salvation; the Bible was not written for
 learned men only, but for these also, and
 therefore it was written, as it was proper
 it should be, in the most plain and easy
 manner.

4. THE vowel-points and accents are useful and necessary, to remove ambiguity and confusion in words and sentences, and