collection of divine ſongs. The Chriſtian church has from the beginning made them a principal part of her holy ſervices; and in the primitive times it was almoſt a general rule that every biſhop, prieſt, and religious perſon, ſhould have the pſalter by heart.

Many learned fathers, and not a few of the moderns, have maintained that *David* was the author of them all. Several are of a different opinion, and inſiſt that David wrote only 72 of them; and that thoſe without titles are to be aſcribed to the authors oſ the preceding pſalms, whoſe names are affixed to them. Thoſe who ſuppoſe that David alone was the author, contend, that in the New Teſtament, and in the language of the church uni­versal, they are expreſsly called the *Pſalms oſ David.* That David was the principal author of theſe hymns is univerſally acknowledged, and therefore the whole col­lection may properly enough go under his name; but that he wrote them all, is a palpable miſtake. Nothing certain can be gathered from the titles of the pſalms; for although unqueſtionably very ancient, yet authors are not agreed as to their authority, and they differ as much about their ſignification. The Hebrew doctors generally agree that the 92d pſalm was compoſed by Adam; an opinion which for many reaſons we are not inclined to adopt. There ſeems, however, to be no doubt but that ſome of them were written by Moſes; that Solomon was the author of the 49th; and that others were occaſioned by events long poſterior to the flouriſhing era of the kingdom of Judah. The 137th particularly is one of thoſe which mentions the captivi­ty of Babylon.

The following arrangement of the Pſalms, after a careful and judicious examination, has been adopted by Calmet.

**1.** Eight Pſalms of which the date is uncertain, *viz. 1***,** 4, 19, 81, 91, 110, 139, 145. The firſt of theſe was compoſed by David or Ezra, and was ſung in the temple at the feaſt of trumpets held in the beginning of the year and at the feaſt of tabernacles. The 81ſt is attributed to Aſaph, and 110th to David. The au­thors of the reſt are unknown.

2. The Pſalms compoſed by David during the per­secution of Saul. Theſe are ſeventeen, 11, 31, 34, 56, 16, 54, 52, 109, 17, 22, 35, 57, 58, 142, 140, 141, 7.

3. The Pſalms compoſed by David at the beginning of his reign, and after the death of Saul. Theſe are ſixteen, 2,9, 24, 63, 101, 29, 20, 21, 28, 39, 40, 41, 6, 51, 32, 33.

4. The Pſalms written by David during the rebellion of Abialom are eight in number; 3, 4, 53, 62, 70, 71, 143, 144.

5. The Pſalms written between the death of Abſalom and the captivity, which are ten, 18, 30, 72, 47, 78, 82, 83, 76, 74, 79: of theſe David wrote only three; 18, 30, and 72.

6. The Pſalms compoſed during the captivity, which amount to forty. Theſe were chiefly compoſed by the of Rendants of Aſaph and Korah: they are, 10, 12, 13, 14, 53, 15, 25, 26, 27, 28, 36, 37, 42, 43, 44, 49, 50, 60, 64, 69, 73, 75, 77, 80, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, 99, 120, 121, 123, 130, 131, 132.

Laſtly, Thoſe hymns of joy and thankſgiving, writ­ten upon the releaſe from the Babyloniſh captivity, and at the building and dedication of the temple. Theſe are, 122, 61, 63, 124, 23, 87, 85, 46, 47, 48, from 96 to 117 incluſive, 126, 133 to 137 incluſive, 149, 150, 146, 147, 148, 59, 65, 66, 67, 118, 125,

127, 128, 129, 138­. According to this diſtribution, only 45 are poſitively aſſigned to David.

Joſephus, and moſt of the ancient writers, aſſert, that the Pſalms were compoſed in numbers: little, however, reſpecting the nature and principles of the Hebrew verſification is known.

There exiſted a certain kind of poetry among the Hebrews, principally intended, it ſhould ſeem, for the aſſiſtance of the memory; in which, when there was little connection between the ſentiments, a fort of or­der or method was preſerved, by the initial letters oſ each line or ſtanza following the order of the alphabet. Of this there are ſeveral examples extant among the ſacred poems @@(I); and in theſe examples the verſes are ſo exactly marked and defined, that it is impoſſible to miſtake them for proſe; and particularly if we attentively conſider the verſes, and compare them with one another, ſince they are in general ſo regularly accommo­dated, that word anſwers to word, and almoſt ſyllable to ſyllable. This being the caſe, though an appeal can ſcarcely be made to the ear on this occaſion, the eye itſelf will diſtinguiſh. the poetic diviſion and arrange­ment, and alſo that ſome labour and accuracy has been employed in adapting the words to the meaſure.

The Hebrew poetry has likewiſe another property altogether peculiar to metrical compoſition. It admits foreign words and certain particles, which ſeldom occur in proſe compoſition, and thus forms a diſtinct poetical dia­lect. One or two of the peculiarities alſo of the Hebrew verſification it may be proper to remark, which as they are very obſervable in thoſe poems in which the verſes are defined by the initial letters, may at leaſt be reaſonably conjectured of the reſt. The firſt of theſe is, that the verſes are very unequal in length; the ſhorteſt conſifting oſ ſix or ſeven ſyllables; the longeſt extending to about twice that number: the ſame poem is, how­ever, generally continued throughout in verſes not very unequal to each other. It muſt alfo be obſerved, that the cloſe of the verſe generally falls where the members of the ſentences are divided.

But although nothing certain can be defined con­cerning the metre of the particular verſes, there is yet another artifice of poetry to be remarked of them when in a collective ſtate, when ſeveral of thcm are taken to­gether. In the Hebrew poetry, as is before remarked, there may be obſerved a certain conformation of the ſentences ; the nature of which is, that a complete ſenſe is almoſt equally infuſed into every component part, and that every member conſtitutes an entire verſe. So that as the poems divide themſelves in a manner ſpontane- ouſly into periods, for the moſt part equal; ſo the pe­riods themſelves are divided into verſes, moſt common-

@@@(I) Pſalms **XXV.** xxxiv. xxxvii. cxi. cxii. cxix. cxlv. Prov. xxxi. from the 10th verſe to the end. The whole of the Lamentations of Jeremiah except the laſt chapter,