

ANTIQUITIES

SACRED and PROFANE:

OR, A

COLLECTION

OF

Curious and Critical DISSERTATIONS

ON THE

Old and New Testament.

Necessary for all those who desire to have a thorough
Knowledge of the HOLY SCRIPTURES.

*Done into ENGLISH from the FRENCH, with Notes,
by a Clergyman of the Church of England.*

Illustrated with COPPER PLATES.

We must not be carried away with a Notion, that the first Interpreters of the Holy Bible have left no room for new Discoveries, or that it is impossible to clear up these Difficulties which have not as yet been explained. In Matters of this Nature we ought not to be byass'd by AUTHORITY and NUMBERS. The Majority of Commentators take the easiest Course, and the easiest Course is to copy after others, and take what they say for granted. But let a Man carefully examine one single Chapter, and he'll soon be convinced how much the Inspired Writings stand in need of some farther Illustrations.

CALMET. Gen. Pref.

L O N D O N;

Printed for J. ROBERTS, near the Oxford-Arms, in Warwick-lane; S. WILMOT, in Oxford; and C. CROWNFIELD, in Cambridge. M.DCC.XXIV.

395 B. 1. 4

To the Honourable

Sir Charles Wager, K^t.

One of the

Lords Commissioners of the
Admiralty,

T H E S E

T R A N S L A T I O N S

Are humbly Dedicated.



T H E

P R E F A C E.



I will be necessary, for the Reader's Satisfaction, to give a short Account of these Dissertations. Father Calmet, of the Order of St. Benedict, published at Paris, in the Year 1707. in twenty Volumes in Quarto, A Literal Commentary in French upon all the Books of the Old and New Testament. A second Edition came out in 1715, and there is now in the Press a third Edition, printing by Subscription, in eight Volumes in Folio. So many Editions, in a few Years, of so voluminous a Work, are infallible Signs of the universal Approbation this learned and excellent Comment has met with ; and indeed it is no wonder, since it contains all that is necessary for a clear and thorough Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

The most difficult and important Matters, which could not be fully explained in the Body of the Comment, without running it out to an immoderate Length, are

are discussed and cleared up in distinct and separate Discourses. These Discourses are the Life and Soul of the whole, and are exceeding curious and useful, being a Treasure of the Hebrew, Greek, Roman, &c. Literature. For this Reason they were all extracted and printed by themselves at Paris in three Volumes in Quarto, for the sake of those who are not willing or able to go to the great Price of the whole Work, and yet would be very glad to reap the Benefit and Advantage of the Light these learned Dissertations afford.

The Edition of these Discourses met with the same Success as those of the compleat Commentary, and notwithstanding the great Number of the Copies that were printed, they were all in a manner sold off in a very little time : and therefore they are now publishing at Amsterdam, in Octavo, a second Edition ; in which the Dissertations are ranged under General Heads, and those that treat of the same Subjects follow one another in their natural Order.

The Translator has thought fit to follow the Amsterdam Edition in this Particular, and you will find, immediately after this Preface, a Table of the General Heads to which all the Dissertations are referred.

Father Calmet has lately published, as a Supplement to his Commentary, A Critical, &c. Dictionary of the Holy Bible, in two Volumes in Folio; from whence all the new and useful Dissertations shall be extracted, and inserted under their proper Heads.



A
T A B L E
O F T H E

General HEADS, to which all the
DISSERTATIONS are referred.

I. Poetry and Musick.



*THE Poetry and Musick of the
Antients, particularly of the
Hebrews. Their Musical In-
struments, with Cuts.*

*ther the Lawgivers and Philosophers
of old had their Laws and Rules of
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*Original and Antiquity of Circumcision,
&c. Baptism of the Jews. Of
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*The Form of the Books and Way of
Writing among the Antients. Inspi-
ration. Whether Ezra the Author
or Editor only of the Bible. Whe-
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VI. The Civil and Military Go-
vernment of the Jews.

*The Civil Polity and Methods of ad-
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hedrim.*

bedrim. The several Punishments that occur in Scripture, &c. &c. Whether any Executioners. Military State. Employments at the Court and in the Army. The Rechabites, &c. &c.

VII. Money.

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VIII. Laws relating to Marriage. *Marriages of the Hebrews. Divorce. Vow of Jephtha. Relation between the Jews and Lacedemonians, &c.*

IX. Diseases.

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X. Chronology.

The Years, Months, Hours, of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews. Daniel's seventy Weeks, &c. St. Peter's Journey to Rome. Chronological Tables of the Kings of Assyria, Persia, Chaldæa, Media, Monarchy of the Greeks in the East. Asmonæan Princes. High Priests of the Jews, &c. &c.

XI. History.

The Excellency of the History of the Hebrews above that of any other Nation. Of the neighbouring Nations of the Jews, the Philistines, Phœnicians, Idumæans, Moabites, &c. &c. A Summary of the History of

the Eastern Nations from Solomon to the Babylonish Captivity, &c. &c. &c.

XII. Geography.

A Map of the Land of Promise, with Remarks. The antient Abode of the Hebrews, &c. The Land of Ophir. The Country to which the ten Tribes were transported, &c. Where they are at this time, &c. &c. &c.

XIII. Genealogy.

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The State of Religion in Judah and Israel after their Separation. The Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, Essenes, &c. &c.

XV. The Religion and Deities of the Heathens.

The Original of Idolatry. The Temples of the Antients. The Idolatry of the Israelites in the Wilderness, of the God Rephan or Remphan. The Original and Gods of the Philistines, Astaroth, Beelzebub, &c. The Gods of the Phœnicians or Canaanites. Baal. Astaroth. Adonis. Of Molock the God of the Ammonites, of the Gods of the Moabites, Baal-peor, &c. Good and bad Angels. The Demon Asmodæus. Naaman's Petition to bow before Rimmon. The Inscription on the Altar of Athens, To the unknown God.



A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
POETRY
IN GENERAL,

And concerning that of the HEBREWS in Particular.

By Mr. ABBOT *FLEURY*.

MR. Abbot Fleury composed this Discourse several Years ago, with a Design to insert it in a Treatise concerning the Poetry of the Antients, which he had then Thoughts of publishing. He has since been pleas'd to communicate it to me, with leave to impart it to the Publick.

I have likewise given my Sentiments of the Hebrew Poetry, in a Dissertation made on purpose for that end, and which immediately follows this.

AS there are certain Times and Circumstances, wherein it is natural for Men to *run or dance, to sing or cry out,* ^{The Original of Poetry.} tho' such kinds of Sounds and Motions are in themselves neither

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the easiest nor most simple ; so likewise strong and lively Passions cause Men to break out into a Language, which seems to cool and sedate Tempers unnatural and affected, inasmuch as it abounds more with Exaggerations, Comparisons, bold Figures, and pompous Words, than the common Forms of Speech. Again, the same Principle that excites Men to *sing*, puts them upon measuring their Words, in order to make them run the more smooth and tuneable, by observing the Quantity and Number of the Syllables, their Sound and Harmony, and the Cadence or Close that from time to time is to make its Returns. This is what gives birth to Verses and Couplets, as lofty and figurative Expressions are the distinguishing Marks of the Poetick Style. Hence therefore it is no more strange to find, in all Ages, and among all Nations, Verses and Poetry of one sort or another, than it is to find that they sing and dance ; the former being so steady a Consequence of the latter, that even the most barbarous Nations are no Exceptions in this Case. The Antients observed that the *Gauls* and *Germans* had their Musick and Poetry ; and we find the same Things, at this very day, among the Negroes, the *Iroquois*, and the Inhabitants of the *Caribby Islands*.

Improved first
by the East-
ern Nations.

Syrians.

As the *Eastern* Nations were naturally of a refined Temper and lively Passions, and as they were the People of the World the first civilized, so were they the first who cultivated and improved by Art this innate Inclination to Musick and Poetry. The *Egyptians* and *Syrians* are those whom the *Greeks* have left us the fullest Accounts of. There is still extant among the *Greek* Poets an Hymn on the Death of *Adonis* (a), which seems to be an Imitation of that in the Prophet *Ezekiel* (b), and which undoubtedly, as well as the whole Fable, is originally *Syrian*. And the Threatning of God, in the same Prophet (c), to cause the Noise of their Songs to cease, and the Sound of their Harps to be no more heard at *Tyre* ; and his commanding, in the Prophet *Isaiah* (d), the *Tyrian* Harlots to take their Harps, and go about the City, singing many Songs, and making Melody ; are manifest Proofs how much Musick was in vogue there.

(a) Theocritus and Bion.

(b) Ezekiel viii. 14. Adonis the same as Tammuz.

(c) Ezekiel xxvi. 13.

(d) Isaiah xxiii. 16.

As for the *Egyptians*, *Plato* informs us (*a*), that Musick, Held in great Veneration by the Egyptians. (under which he comprehends Poetry) was not only of a very long standing among them, but that they had the highest Regard imaginable for it, as being a Part of their Religion and Laws. He says, they consecrated to certain Deities all manner of Songs and Dances, prescribing the Days and Ceremonies to be for ever inviolably observed by all; and in case any Change or Innovation was attempted, the Priests and Priestesses were to call in the Assistance of the Secular Arm, and immediately put a stop to it; and the Attempter, unless he submitted, was to be looked upon all his Life after as a profane and irreligious Person.

Of all the antient *Oriental* Writings none but those of the *Hebrews* have reached our Times, and consequently we can By the Hebrews and others. form a Judgment of no Poetry but of theirs only. Now all the Remains we have of the *Hebrew* Poetry are in the Holy Scriptures, where we find that the *Hebrews* likewise made use of this Art in their Religious Worship; and altho' they might have also their Profane Poetry, yet is it plain that their Notions in this Matter were the same with those of the *Egyptians*, whether the *Egyptians* had them from the *Hebrews*, or whether they were derived to both from one common Fountain. It is very probable, that it was held in the same Veneration by all the other Nations of the first Ages of the World; for the *Grecian* Worship in particular was made up in a great measure of their Poetry, which was looked upon as Sacred and Divine at its first Appearance among them.

All the Poetical Works in the Holy Scriptures are either The Poetical Works of Scripture. Psalms or Hymns, to express the various Sentiments and Affections of the Mind, or Collections of Moral Sentences to instruct Men in their Duty. The largest and most antient of these Works is the Book of *Job*, composed of both the forementioned Job. Particulars; for as the main Scope and Design of it is this great and important Point of Morality, That God sometimes afflicts good Men, not to punish them, but to exercise and brighten their Virtues; so likewise the Sentiments and Maxims that relate to the Justice of God, and the Methods of his Providence; to the Reward of Virtue, and Punishment of Vice; to an entire Resignation to the Divine Will, and the Peace and Security of a good Conscience, are fully handled; and moreover, the

(a) *Plato*, lib. 2. de *Legib.*

Affliction of *Job*, and the Indignation of his three Friends, are drawn to the Life.

The Pro-
verbs and
the Psalms.

The *Proverbs* of *Solomon* are nothing else but so many Rules of Moral Duty, as are several of the *Psalms*. But these last, for the most part, as well as all the Songs or Hymns, that are dispersed up and down the Holy Scriptures, express the Affections of the Mind towards God or towards Man. Those that are addressed to God, are either to adore, laud, and magnify his most Holy Name, or to render him Thanks for all his Benefits, or to ask Pardon and Forgiveness for past Offences, or to implore some future Temporal or Spiritual Blessing. These are the Subjects of the greatest part of these Sacred Hymns; the rest are employ'd in expressing the Passions of Grief, Joy, Indignation, Hatred, and the like, whose Object is either the Person speaking, or other Men represented generally under the Character of the Righteous or Wicked.

Scripture-
Poetry very
noble and sub-
lime.

Poetry so full of moving and affecting Sentiments, must of Course, as to its Figures and Expressions, be very noble and sublime; if it be true that the Energy or Force of Figures, and true Sublimity of Style, are the natural Effects of the Passions. Accordingly we find this to be the great and distinguishing Beauty of the *Hebrew* Poetry; in this point no Poetry excels, if any equals, it. All is figurative, and the Figures are very often and suddenly changed, and not only the Figures, but the Persons also who are speaking, frequently and insensibly vary.

One while it is the Prophet, another while it is God himself; now again it is the Righteous Man or the Sinner that speaks, sometimes a Voice and Utterance are given even to inanimate Things, as Rocks, and Mountains, and Rivers, and the like. The Majesty of God is display'd under strong and lively Images; he is represented as sitting upon the Cherubims, and riding upon the Wings of the Wind; at his Wrath the Earth shakes and trembles, at his Rebuke the Foundations of the World are discovered. The Similes and Allusions are thick sown, and are all taken from Things obvious and familiar to those for whom they were written; for the Palm-Trees and Cedars, the Lions and Eagles, so frequently alluded to, were Things well known to the Inhabitants of *Palestine*. For this Reason we must not, from our Notions of Things, judge of the other Comparisons which appear to us less noble and beautiful; neither are we to
imagine

imagine that every Word and Circumstance of a Similitude are to be applied, the Resemblance generally falls upon some one single Circumstance, and the rest are added, not as Parts of the Comparison, but to give some agreeable and natural Image of the Thing from whence the Comparison is taken: *Thy Teeth are as a Flock of Sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth Twins, and there is not one barren among them*; that is to say, thy Teeth are white, even, and well-set.

As for the Poetick Style, it is so different from the Prose, that it is in a manner quite another Language; so that a Man, who has *Hebrew* enough to read the Historical Parts of the Bible, when he has gone thro' *Genesis*, and comes to *Jacob's* Blessings, will find himself entirely ignorant of the Matter, neither will he understand but just the Beginning and End of the Book of *Job*. *The Poetick Style very different from the Prose.*

This great Difference arises from the many Words and Phrases that are not the same with those in Prose; from the Tropes and Figures, that are very frequent and bold; from the Construction, which is very irregular, and supposes abundance of Words to be understood. On the other hand, this Style abounds with Repetitions, and the same Thoughts are expressed twice over, in different Terms: *Have Mercy upon me, O God, after thy great Goodness; according to the Multitude of thy Mercies, do away mine Offences* (a). The same is observable almost throughout this whole Psalm. They did this, either to afford the Mind a longer time to contemplate the same Thought, or because these Songs or Hymns were sung alternately by two different Choirs, or for some such like Reason. *The Reasons of it.*

But however this be, these Repetitions are the most obvious and common Mark of the Poetick Style. Hence chiefly it is, that I take *Lamech's* Discourse to his two Wives, wherein he informs them of his having killed *Cain* (b), to be poetical; and if this Conjecture be true, it is the most antient Piece of Poetry now in the World. The Thoughts or Sentiments that are clothed with this eloquent and figurative Language, are not only true, solid, and useful, (as indeed who can doubt it, know- *The Marks of the Poetick Style.*

(a) Psalm li. 1.

(b) Our Author seems here to have mistaken the Sense of *Lamech's* Words.

ing them to be the Inspirations of the Spirit of God) but are likewise very often beautiful, shining, and sublime.

Instances of this are the cxxxixth Psalm, where the Knowledge of God, and the Impossibility of flying from his Presence, are described in a wonderful elevated Manner. The xlvth, where we behold the righteous Man searching after even his most secret Sins, and those of other Men wherein he partakes; and civth, where we have a beautiful and noble Description of Nature, and of the Providence of God watching over it. To these might be added most of the others, too many to be enumerated. Neither are the Thoughts set down at random, but are ranged with a great deal of Art and Contrivance. Each Song and each Psalm is a compleat Piece, whose Parts follow one another in their natural Order. Sometimes there is a Connection for several whole Psalms together, as the ciid, civth, cvth, cvith, cviith, which are all Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving. The ciid praises God for the Blessings of Grace; the civth for those of Nature; the cvth for the Benefits he hath bestowed upon his People; the cvith for his Goodness in pardoning their Offences; these two last make one continued History; the cviith renders God Thanks, in behalf of all Mankind, for his Aid and Assistance in the four great Calamities of Life, Famine, Captivity, Sickness, and Shipwreck. Instances where the Design is particular, are Psalms the xviiith, xixth, xxiid, lxxviiith, lxxxixth, xcist, and the two Songs of *Moses*; that in *Exodus*, after the Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*; and that in *Deuteronomy*, a little before his Death.

Acrosticks.

Some Pieces, where the Order was entirely arbitrary, because they consist only of the Sentiments of the Passions, or Maxims of Morality, which have no necessary Connexion, are composed after the Acrostick Manner, according to the Order of the Letters of the Alphabet; that they might, in all likelihood, be the less burdensome to the Memory. Of this kind are the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah*, several Psalms, as the xxxivth and cxixth, and *Solomon's* Description of a virtuous Wife, with which he concludes his *Proverbs*.

Want of moving Sentiments in the moral Parts made up by beautiful Paintings, &c.

It is observable of the Book of *Proverbs*, of great Part of *Job*, and of several of the Psalms, as the ist, xvth, xxxv, whose Subjects are purely Moral Matters, that the want of tender and moving Sentiments is amply compensated by beautiful Paintings,

Paintings, fine Metaphors, and noble Comparisons, from whence is derived the Name of Parables, or *Proverbs*. The Obscurity of the Style is no greater than what is necessary to exercise the Mind in an agreeable manner, whilst the important Truths conveyed under such natural and lively Images, make deep Impressions on the Heart; and therefore as *Moses's* Poetry is the more strong and masculine, that of *Solomon* seems to be the more refined and polite. Examine, among other things, how he represents, in several Passages of the Preface to his *Proverbs*, the Artifices of Women to ensnare young Men, and the fatal Consequences of a criminal Passion. You'll find there the Flames and Chains of Love, the Darts that pierce the Heart, and the Wings wherewith the Lover flies like a Bird into the Snare that is laid for him, and all the other Thoughts, that appear so bright and gallant in profane Poetry, painted to the Life; but with this very material Difference, that *Solomon's* Descriptions are intended only to raise our Horror and Aversion.

All then we can know of the *Hebrew* Poetry, is the Design, the Thoughts, the Figures, and the Language. The Knowledge of this last is indeed confined to those who are Masters of the *Hebrew* Tongue; others must be content to behold its Beauties thro' the Veil of a Translation, which deprives them of all their Lustre, more especially with regard to the Psalms, where the Veil is double, for the *Vulgate* Version is taken from the Translation of the *Seventy*. Let a Man thus translate the most beautiful Passages of the *Latin* Poets, or rather to make the Case exactly parallel, let him render into *English* the *Latin* Versions of the *Greek* Poets, and see whether they will not be intolerable. Hence therefore we may judge of the great Beauty of the *Hebrew* Poetry, since it shines so visible even thro' a second-hand Translation.

But besides these, there were many more considerable Charms and Graces that are entirely unknown to us, and even to those *Jews* themselves, that are best skilled in the *Hebrew* Language. For the antient Pronunciation of this as well as of all the other dead Tongues being entirely lost, we can have no Notion of the Harmony of the Words and Quantity of the Syllables, wherein the whole Beauty of Verses consists. We have not so much as any Rules, as we have for the *Greek* and *Latin*, to find out the Quantity of the Syllables, the Names and Number of the Feet,

What we can know of the Hebrew Poetry.

Several Charms and Graces unknown to us.

Feet, and the Construction of the Verses, and yet, doubtless, the *Hebrews* observed all these Things. We find, in their Poetical Works, Letters added or taken away at the end of the Words, which are plain Proofs of their being confined to a certain Number of Syllables, and the word *Selah* seems to be of no other use, but to fill up a void Space, and help out the Verse. St. *Jerom* (a) speaks of these Verses as Things well-known to him, and compares those of *Job* to Hexameters, and those of the *Psalms*, *Lamentations*, and the other Hymns or Songs, to the Verses of *Horace*, *Pindar*, and the rest of the *Lyrick* Poets : But since his time, the *Jews* have entirely lost this antient Art of Versification, and have substituted one in its room borrowed from the *Arabs*.

We are ignorant likewise of the Manner of the Singing and Dancing that accompanied these Divine Hymns. We are sure indeed that they were sung, and that they were composed for that purpose, from their being stiled *Sir* or Hymns, and *Mizmor* or Psalm, and from several express Declarations of Scripture, as at the Passage thro' the *Red Sea*, and from the Inscriptions over the Psalms, where frequent mention is made of the Masters in Musick. And we may in some measure judge of the Fineness of their Vocal Musick, from the Beauty of the Words, and from all that Art and Contrivance just now taken notice of.

It is certain also, that their Singing was accompany'd with Dancing ; for the *Choirs* (b) the Scriptures so often speak of, are Companies of Dancing-Men and Dancing-Women. Mention is made of Dancings at the time of publick Rejoicings for Victories, and at the Celebration of some Religious Ceremonies, as at the Procession made by *David*, when he brought back the Ark of the Covenant to *Sion*, and at the Dedication of the Walls of *Jerusalem*, in the time of *Nehemiah*, where the two *Choirs*, who had begun singing on the Walls, came and made an end together in the Temple. Our Notions then of these Sacred Songs must needs be very imperfect, seeing we have nothing left us but the naked Letter stript of all its external Ornaments. They were doubtless other-guess Things in the mouth of the Musician, set off with all the Splendor and Magnificence

(a) *Pref. in Job.* See this Matter set in a clear Light in the following Dissertation.

(b) *חלל* which we translate Dances, is rendred in the Vulgate by Chorus, *Exod. xv. 20*, &c.

Disc. I. *the* POETRY of *the* ANTIENTS, &c.

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of the Festivals they were designed for ; and therefore to form a tolerable Idea of their Beauty, we must imagine ourselves placed in the Temple of *Solomon*, amidst innumerable Multitudes, crowding the Courts and Galleries, and beholding there the Altar loaded with Victims, and surrounded with the Priests, all cloathed in white Garments, and the *Levites*, at a distance, disposed into Companies, some playing on Instruments, others singing and dancing in a grave and solemn manner..

The *Hebrews* never had, as we know of, any Comedies, Tragedies, Epic Poems, or any of that kind of Poetry *Plato* calls *Poetry of Imitation*, or that imitates the Manners of Men. The *Song of Solomon* is so far a Dramatick Poem, as that different *Persons* are introduced speaking. The same may be observed in the Psalms, and all the other Poetical Works in Scripture, there being no Poetry without it; but as *Solomon's Song* consists only of Sentiments, it wants what seems absolutely necessary to Dramatic and Heroic Poems, a continued Scene of Action. We have only in Scripture, Hymns, Psalms, Odes, or, as we call them, Songs ; that is to say, that kind of Poetry which *Plato* affirms to be alone the most antient ; and indeed it does not appear that the *Greeks* copied from others their Dramatick Poetry ; all their Poets of this kind are of a later Date than the *Babylonish Captivity*.

Hebrews had no Dramatick or Heroick Poems.

The *Psalter* is a Collection of 150 Psalms, composed upon different Subjects, and by different Hands. When one reads them at first in a cursory manner, they seem to be nothing else but Repetitions of the same thing over and over ; but the more one considers them, the more full one finds them of different Thoughts, and of always new and surprizing Figures. This pleasing Variety is to be met with in all the celebrated Pieces of Antiquity, but is rarely to be found in our modern Compositions ; and for that Reason they are for the most part extremely dull and tiresome. These Figures are bold, but natural : Interrogations, Apostrophes, and Exclamations.

The more we consider the Psalms, the more we find in them.

In those Psalms, where Design is required, we find it very closely followed and perfectly well executed. For example, the xviiiith Psalm is a Thanksgiving of *David*, after God had delivered him out of the hands of his Enemies. He immediately proposes his Design : (1.) He represents his deplorable State. (2.) His Prayer. (3.) How God hearken'd unto it. (4.) How he

he resolved to send him Help. Here he paints out, in a Poetical Manner, the Power of God, that makes all Nature tremble. (5.) How God discomfited all his Enemies. (6.) How he delivered *David*. (7.) Why he did so? because of the righteous Dealing of *David*. (8.) The happy Condition wherein he was placed. (9.) His Advantage over his Adversaries, their Misery and Fall. (10.) The Favours and Blessings he still hopes for. (11.) He concludes with praising God as he begun (a). This Psalm contains all these Particulars exactly in the manner I have set them down, and this Order of Things appears to me very beautiful; he was in Affliction; he prayed for Assistance; God sent him Help; his Enemies are confounded; he was not only delivered, but exalted above them; and, in his turn, cast down under his Feet all his Persecutors.

The Narration of the Historical Psalms different from that of a mere History.

It is to be observed, that the narrative Style, in the Historical Psalms, is very different from that of a mere History. None but the principal and most remarkable Events are taken notice of, and if any Circumstance indulges the Prophet in his Poetick Flight, he never fails of raising it to the Sublime. See the History of *Joseph* in the cvth Psalm; God called for a Dearth upon the Land, and destroy'd all the Provision of Bread: But he had sent a Man before them (before the Children of *Israel*, of whom he was speaking) *even Joseph, who was sold to be a Bond-Servant*. Observe the Sublimity of the Narration, how it soars immediately as high as the Purposes and Decrees of God! Observe likewise how beautiful the Figure! God calls for the Dearth, just as if he was laying his Commands on some rational and intelligent Creature. There are no words in our Language that can properly express what follows in the Original. The Scriptures in this, and some other Places, compare Bread, that is, the Necessaries of Life, to a Staff, on which a feeble Person leans as he walks; so that to take away Bread from Men, is the same thing as to take away from an old infirm Person the Staff that supports him. But instead of all these Circumlocutions, the Scriptures, in strong and bold Metaphors, peculiar to the *Hebrew* Tongue, express it thus, *The Famine breaks the Staff of our Bread*. After this, the Psalmist represents *Joseph* in Irons, to denote, in a word, his Imprisonment, and immediately returns to God, who delivers him by his Word and by his Wisdom with which he inspires him; and

(a) See xvii Vulgate,

accordingly.

accordingly *the King sent and delivered him; the Prince of the People let him go free. He made him Lord also of his House, and Ruler of all his Substance, that he might inform his Princes after his Will, and teach his Senator's Wisdom.* We have here, in this narrow Compass, the whole History of *Joseph*, his Captivity, his Deliverance, his Advancement to Power, and all by the Direction and Appointment of God. There is something of this kind of Narration to be seen in *Virgil*, where he represents, upon the Shield of *Eneas*, the most shining Passages of the *Roman* History.

The cxxxixth Psalm is an Instance of sublime and elevated, as well as of exquisitely fine and delicate Sentiments; *O Lord! thou hast searched me out, and known me; thou knowest my Down-sitting, and mine Up-rising: Thou knowest all my outward Actions, and what is more, Thou understandest my Thoughts long before; thou art about my Path, and about my Bed, and spiest out all my Ways. For, lo! there is not a Word in my Tongue, but thou, O Lord! knowest it altogether.* And no wonder, for *Thou hast fashioned me behind and before, and laid thy Hand upon me, to preserve and guide me; such Knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it.* Then varying the Figure, he breaks out on a sudden into this Exclamation, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I fly from thy Presence?* He takes in the whole Extent of the Universe, considered in all its Dimensions; *If I climb up into Heaven, thou art there; if I go down to Hell, thou art there also.* And again, in a more noble Figure, *If I take the Wings of the Morning, and remain in the uttermost Parts of the Sea.* To this he does not coldly say, *It would be all in vain, or even, as he said in the foregoing Verse, Thou art there;* but makes use of a much more fine and elaborate Thought, as of a Man that accused himself of extreme Folly, in endeavouring to conceal himself from God: *So far shall I be from flying from thy Presence, that even there also shall thy Hand lead me, and thy right Hand shall hold me.* What chimerical Notions soever I may frame to myself, I can never think of subsisting one moment without thee: *Tho' I could fly, as I said, on the Wings of the Morning, it would be thy Hand that would guide me, and thy right Hand that would support me.* Here he seems to have quite exhausted his Imagination;

nation ; but behold a new and more studied means of hiding himself from the All-seeing Eye of God : *If I say, peradventure the Darkness shall cover me, then shall my Night be turned into Day.* Still this is all mere Folly and Extravagance ; *The Darkness is no Darkness with thee, but the Night is as clear as the Day ; the Darkness and Light to thee are both alike.* Let our modern Wits, after this, look upon the honest Shepherds of *Palestine* as a Company of rude and unpolished Clowns ; let them, if they can, produce, from profane Authors, Thoughts that are more sublime, more delicate, or better turn'd ; not to mention the profound Divinity and solid Piety couch'd under these Expressions. The rest of the Psalm contains admirable Reflections on the Formation of Man in his Mother's Womb, and concerning Predestination ; whence the Prophet takes occasion to express his Love and Esteem for the Righteous, and his Hatred and Contempt for the Wicked.

Variety of
Tropes and Fi-
gures in all
the Psalms.

Variety of beautiful Tropes and Figures every where shine throughout the whole Book of Psalms, tho' the Number is not so great in the historical Psalms, as in those that consist of Prayers and Exhortations. In the xcist Psalm, one of those that are the most familiar to us, the Poet himself begins with laying down his Design, namely, to declare the Protection of God towards Men ; and this he does in two Expressions, the words whereof exactly correspond with one another. In the two next Verses the Person protected is introduced speaking ; but makes use of two different Figures. In the second Verse he addresses himself immediately to God. In the third, he speaks of him in the third Person. In the fifth Verse, the Poet again speaks, addressing himself to the protected Person, and enumerates, in great Variety of Comparisons and Metaphors, the several Methods and Ways of Protection. At the ninth Verse, the just Man interrupts him, with saying, *For thou, O Lord, art my Hope,* to denote the Reason of what had been said ; then the Poet immediately answers, *Thou hast set thine House of Defence very high, there shall no Evil happen unto thee, &c.* and goes on in the four following Verses (addressing himself all along to the protected Person) to declare other and greater Effects of the Divine Protection. Among the rest, the continual Assistance of good Angels, and their Power over the Demons, represented in Scripture under the Character of venomous Creatures.

Creatures. In the three last Verses, God himself is introduced speaking, to confirm and authorize all that had been said before, who likewise declares some farther Effects of his Protection, concluding with a Promise of long Life, and a Sight of his Salvation. They who are never so little versed in the Poets, are not at all surprized at this sudden shifting of the Persons, without any notice to prepare them for it. Nothing is more common in *Horace*, not only in his Odes, but in his Satires and Epistles; and I see no Reason why the xcist Psalm should be looked upon as Dramatick upon this Account, unless the greatest Part of the others be reckoned so too.

By the Light of these few Examples, we may discover an infinite Number of the like Beauties; for the Psalms every where abound with them, and not only the Psalms, but *Job*, where the Poetry is generally more bold and sublime, and all the other Poetical Works of Scripture. Read, for Instance, the Song of *Moses* at the end of *Deuteronomy*, and the Song of *Barak* and *Deborah*. *And in all the Poetical Works of Scripture*

But after all, to say nothing of the Difference between our Customs and Manners, how very imperfect is our Knowledge of the Beauties of these Works? It is certain, as hath been observed, that all we know of the *Hebrew* Poetry is confined to the Design, the Thoughts, and the Figures. As for the Language, none but those that are skilled in the *Hebrew*, can judge of it; and where is the Man that can boast he is a perfect Master of that Tongue? But for the other Beauties, I mean the Harmony of the Words, the Measure of the Verses, and the Airs or Tunes of the Hymns and Songs, I will be bold to say not a Man upon Earth knows any thing of the Matter. Now there is no one but knows how essential all these Graces and Ornaments are to Poetry. *Our Knowledge of the Hebrew Poetry very imperfect.*

We are entirely ignorant of the Pronunciation of the *Hebrew*, as well as of the *Greek* and *Latin*, and other dead Tongues. And as is evident, from the different ways in the Septuagint, St. *Jerom*, and other antient Authors, of writing the same *Hebrew* Word in *Greek* or *Latin* Letters, the Pronunciation has for many Ages been lost. We have not even the Privilege of knowing, as we do in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poetry, the Measure of the Verses, and Quantity of the Syllables. In fine, we know no more of the Nature of the Airs, or Tunes of the Psalms

Psalms and Songs, than we do of those of the *Greek* and *Latin* Odes; and yet they were composed on purpose to be sung, as is plain from the Sacred History, and the Inscriptions over the Psalms.

Plato, according to the Notions of the wisest of the Antients, is of Opinion, that Airs and Words ought to be inseparable, and that to compose Verses without a Tune, or Tunes without Words, as those play'd on Musical Instruments, are great Abuses of these Things. That the Airs or Tunes of the Songs or Hymns were extremely fine, we have several good Proofs: (1.) The Beauty of the Words, and the artful Manner of their Poetry, which make it probable that every thing else was answerable to them. (2.) The Variety of musical Instruments, whose Names are mentioned in the Holy Scriptures. (3.) The great Number of Musicians, who, being instructed in their Art by their Predecessors, and making Musick the chief Business of their Lives, render'd themselves Masters of it; among whom, doubtless, there were some at least that were extraordinary in their way.

*The Musick
of the An-
cients.*

If I may be allowed to give my Opinion of what we have no distinct Knowledge of, I imagine that their Musick was composed with great Simplicity, and that the Beauty and Excellency of it lay in aptly expressing and humouring the Sense of the Words, in moving and affecting the Heart in an agreeable and tender manner, and in exciting those Passions and Sentiments the Poet intended to inspire; but that it had not that Mixture and Variety of different Parts, and those Sweetnesses of our modern Musick: I ground these Conjectures upon the Air and Manner in general of the Writings of those early Ages.

*Literal
Translations
lose all the
Beauties of the
Original.*

We are likewise, as has been hinted, at a great loss how to judge of the Beauty of the Words, because our Translations are too servile and too literal. Were a Man to render the Odes of *Horace* into our Language word for word, they would lose all their Life and Spirit: *Silver hath no Colour, O Crispus Salustius! thou Enemy to thin Plates of Metal concealed in the avaritious Earth, unless it shines in a temperate Use.* I took these Verses just as they lay before me. Let us try the very first of all his Works: *O Mecenas! sprung from Forefathers Kings; O my Support and sweet Ornament! There are some whom it delights to have gathered together in the Course*
the

the Olympick Dust, and whom the Boundary, avoided by the fervid Wheels, and the illustrious Palm-Tree lifts up to the Gods Lords of the Earths. As these Passages were not culled out on purpose, I suppose the Case would be the same with almost any other. I have not imitated the Transposition of the words as they are in the *Latin*, because our Language will not admit of it, and there are some of the Words which may be rendered still more literally, *There is no Colour to Silver, for Silver hath no Colour*; and in the other Instance, *my Bulwark*, instead of *my Support*. And after all, there ought to be a greater Affinity between our Language and the *Latin*, from whence it is derived, than between the *Greek*, or *Latin*, and the *Hebrew*, with which they have not, as we know of, any manner of Relation. Besides, these Translations are made immediately from the Original, and therefore to give an Instance of a Translation, like that of the Psalms, we must render into our Language a Stanza of *Pindar* from the *Latin* Version; one of the easiest is as follows.

O Hymns ruling over the Lute! what God? what Hero? what Man shall we praise? Certainly Pisa is Jupiter's, and Hercules instituted the Olympick Combat, the first Fruits of the Spoils of War; but it is Theron that must be sung with the Voice, because of his Race in a Chariot with four Horses Conqueror, the Just, the Hospitable, the Support of Agrigentum, Flower of noble Ancestors, Governor of Cities. There are many Places in *Pindar*, which translated thus word for word, would appear downright Nonsense.

What has been said concerning the Beauty of the Psalms in *The Necessity* the Original, ought not in the least to lessen our Esteem for the *of it.* *Vulgate* Version. All Poetry, as is plain from the Instances above, must of necessity lose the greatest part of its Graces and Beauties in verbal Translations. This is an unavoidable Misfortune, and consequently the Translation is by no means to be found fault with upon that Account.

The *Seventy*, in rendering the Old Testament into *Greek*, *The Septuagint Version of the Psalms* have kept as close to the Letter as possible, fearing that the least Paraphrase might alter the Sense. Had they not taken this *why retained in the Romish Church* Method with relation to the Psalms, all the noble Figures and beautiful Expressions of the Original had vanished, and instead of the Thoughts and Sentiments of the Prophet, we should have

have had, it is to be feared, those of the Translators. The Primitive Christians at *Rome*, and in other Places where *Latin* was the vulgar Tongue, understood nothing of *Hebrew*, and therefore were obliged to translate the Scriptures from the *Greek* Septuagint ; and it is well known, that the Church made use of this Version till that of St. *Jerom* came to be received, that is to say, for more than six hundred Years : so that all Christians, for so many Ages together, being used to sing the Psalms according to this antient Version, the Catholick Church, cautious of making the least Alterations even in Externals, hath thought fit to retain this Version from the *Greek*. It is true indeed, that it differs in many Places from the *Hebrew* Text, as it is now, and as it was in St. *Jerom*'s Time, and that there are some Passages, according to our Version, more obscure and difficult ; but then there are others where we find that the *Seventy* followed a more correct Copy, or a better *Reading*. And in what Place soever our Version is different from the *Hebrew*, the Sense is always Sound and Catholick ; and that is sufficient. We ought not to be more nice and scrupulous than all those pious and holy Men, who, from the very Beginning of Christianity, have taken from this Version, as it is at present, the Subject-Matter of their Prayers and Praises, and of their Exhortations and Instructions to the People.

Private Persons, however, have the Church's Leave and Approbation to consult the various *Readings*, in order to find out the best Senses, and display all the Beauties of the Psalms ; as Cardinal *Bellarmino*, among others, has done with very good Success. As for the rest of the Poetical Works of Scripture, we have them all translated immediately from the *Hebrew* by St. *Jerom*.

To conclude ; we must not wonder that our Taste of Poetry is so very different from that of the Antients. The Reason is, to speak the plain Truth, because our modern Compositions are such miserable Stuff in comparison of theirs. We write indeed at present in a more correct and polite manner than our Poets of old did, or even than those of the last Century ; nevertheless we are not in the main one whit altered for the better. Love-Songs and Drunken-Catches are still the Productions of our Top-Wits ; these are the noble Subjects that employ their Pens ; and we have found the means, in defiance of all Antiquity, whom yet

The Conclusion, showing the true Use of Poetry.

yet we pretend to imitate, to stuff our Tragedies and Heroic Poems with little mean amorous Intrigues and Follies, without any manner of regard to the Gravity of those Works that are said to be so solemn and serious; and without the least Apprehension of confounding the Distinction and Characters of Poems, which were so religiously observed and kept up by the Antients.

For my part, I can never persuade myself that this is the true Use of a Poetical Genius. No, I can never believe that God endows a Man with a fine and lively Imagination, with beautiful and sublime Sentiments, with an easy and natural Expression, and the other Qualifications of a Poet, to no other end but that he should employ them upon trifling and wanton Subjects, in soothing his own criminal Passions, or in exciting lascivious Thoughts in others. I much rather think that these Divine Accomplishments were intended for quite different Purposes, to give us a Relish of solid Truths, to render Virtue and Goodness more amiable, and inflame us with the Love of all that may feed and improve our Souls, as the agreeable Tastes and pleasant Flavours of our Meats and Drinks were designed as Incentives to those Things that nourish and preserve our Bodies.

For after all, why are Profit and Pleasure, Instruction and Delight separated? Why are the Precepts of Religion and Discourses of Morality rendered like bitter Potions by a harsh and dry Style? or like insipid Dishes by their dull and tedious Lengths? So that to get them down we must fortify ourselves beforehand with many serious Reflections, and call in our best Reason to our Assistance. On the contrary, why are all our Talents, Study, and Arts of Eloquence employed in dressing up, for young and tender Minds, *Ragoos* and *Dainties* to corrupt and poison their Morals, under a Pretence of pleasing their Palates? Either therefore Poetry in general must be condemned (which the Learned and Equitable will never agree to) or its Course must be diverted to a nobler Channel, turned to Subjects worthy of its Divine Original, and made to go hand in hand with true Philosophy, that is, with sound Morality and solid Piety. I am sensible an Undertaking of this kind would be entirely new in our Language, and that hitherto we have had no Instances of Sacred Poetry that has had any tolerable
D Success;

Success; and doubtless one great Reason of it, is the Corruption of the Age, and the Spirit of Libertinism that every where prevails: but may it not likewise, in some measure, be owing to the Fault of our Writers? I can meet with no Hymns that come up to the Character of those in Scripture, and in the Translations that have been made of the Psalms themselves, too little Care has been taken to keep up the Spirit and Force of the Expressions, or to preserve the beautiful Tropes and Figures that give a Lustre to the whole; and what we call Paraphrases, are Things spun out to such immoderate Lengths, that the Thoughts and Sentiments of the Prophet lie buried among a huge Heap of Rubbish. Perhaps it would be better to imitate than translate them, and as these Divine Poems contain a great many Things that don't at all square with our Customs and Manners, the best way would be to attempt something of the like nature, upon Subjects that are more known and familiar to us; upon the Mysteries of our Holy Religion; upon the sudden and wonderful Progress of the Gospel; upon the Virtues of the Saints and Martyrs; upon the Benefits and Mercies that our Nation, our Country, and our City have received at the hands of God; and upon all the general Heads of Morality, as the Happiness of good Men, the Contempt of the Things of this World, &c. with an Eye always to our own Usages, Customs, and Notions of Things.

I don't know whether an Attempt of this nature would not have many Difficulties to encounter in the execution; however, it must be owned, that the Design at least is noble; and if we despair of ever being able to accomplish it, we must not look with an Eye of Envy upon those who have succeeded in it. We must therefore give the *Hebrew* Poetry its just Praise and Commendation, tho' at the same time we should find it to be imitable.





A
 DISSERTATION
 Concerning the
 POETRY
 OF THE
 ANTIENT HEBREWS.



THE many different Opinions concerning the Nature of the *Hebrew* Poetry, and the Errors and Mistakes of those who have undertaken to clear up this Point, are evident Proofs of our Ignorance in this Matter. The most antient and learned Authors upon this Head are *Josephus*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, and *St. Jerom*, whose great Name and Reputation have drawn in for the most Part those, who have since writ upon this Subject, to embrace their Sentiments. They had been informed that the Songs of *Moses* were writ in Verse; and *Josephus* does not scruple to assure us in several Places (a), that they were writ in Heroick Verse. *Origen* and *Eusebius* (b) are

Different Opinions about the Nature of the Hebrew Poetry.

(a) *Antiq.* l. 2. c. ult. lib. 4. c. ult. lib. 7. c. 12.

(b) *Euf. Præp.* l. 11. c. 3.

St. Jerom's
Opinion.

of the same Opinion ; and St. *Jerom* very much improves the Notion, and tells us (a), *That the Psalter was composed of Iambic, Alcæic, and Saphic Verses, like Pindar and Horace, and that the Songs in Deuteronomy (b) and Isaiah, the Books of Job and Solomon, are written in Hexameters and Pentameters.* He says elsewhere (c), that the Song in *Deuteronomy* consists of Iambic Verses of four Feet, just as the cxixth and clxvth Psalms, whereas the cxith and cxiith Psalms consist likewise of Iambic Verses but of three Feet only. He observes in the *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah* a sort of Saphic Verses, and others of three Measures : In fine, he repeats what he had said concerning the Book of *Job* in his Preface to that Book, affirming, that *from these Words, Let the Day perish wherein I was born, the Verses are Hexameters, composed of Dactyls and Spondees, intermixed here and there with other Feet of the same Measure, tho' not of the same Number of Syllables, because of the great Variety of that Language. Sometimes there is no regard to the Quantity of the Syllables, and we find only a bare Ryme, or an agreeable Cadence, which is discernible by those only who are instructed in the Rules of Poetry.* In a word, he speaks of the Book of Psalms, in several Places (d), as of a Work consisting of Lyric Verses, like those of *Pindar, Alcæus, Horace, Catullus, and Serenus.*

We very justly admire the profound Capacity of St. *Jerom*, and pay a great Deference to the Opinions of so eminent a Father of the Church ; but, however, it must be owned, that a great many of our learned Criticks in the *Hebrew* Tongue don't observe now in the Psalms, and the other Poetical Works of Scripture, the same Feet and Measures St. *Jerom* saw there ; and even the most zealous Advocates of this holy Father say no more, than that we are not to understand him as if he meant we were to find in the Psalter and Book of *Job* perfect *Hexameters* and *Pentameters*, or Lyric Verses, exactly of the same Feet and Measures with those of *Horace, Pindar, and Sapho*, but only something near a-kin to them, some Cadences that have a Similitude or Resemblance of these Measures ; *Simili-*

(a) Præf. in Chronic. Euseb.

(b) Deut. xxxii.

(c) Epist. 155. ad Paulam Urbicam.

(d) Epist. ad Paulin. & lib. 9. Comment. in Ezek. xxx.

tudinem (a) quandam Heroicorum Versuum intelligere debes, & sic de ceteris Metrorum Generibus.

Philo, speaking of the *Essenes*, assures us, they had antient Poems delivered down to them by their Poets of old (b); he means the Sacred Authors of the Scripture-Poetry. The Verses (says he) are of several Forms and Measures; some consist of three Members, and are to be sung at the time of going to the Temple to worship; others are Hymns to be recited at the Altar, whilst the Sacrifices are offering, and the Libations pouring out before the Lord; some again are to be sung standing, without any Motion; and others are designed for *Choirs* and for Dances.

But *Scaliger* (c) can see nothing of all this, he can't perceive the least Signs of any Feet in the Verses of the antient *Hebrews*; on the contrary he asserts, that their Language, as well as that of the *Syrians*, *Arabians*, and *Abyssines*, is incapable of being confined to Feet and Measures. *Nam ut in Hebraico, Syriaco, Arabico, & Abyssino idiomate ulla metri Species concipi possit, nemo efficere possit; quia id Natura Sermonis non patitur.* He adds, that there are no *Hexameters* in *Job*, nor Iambic or Alcaic Verses in the *Psalms*: *De Psalterio magis miror, cum neque in eo, neque in Thronis ullum Canticum sit metricis Legibus astrictum, sed mere soluta Oratio, Caractere Poëtico animata.*

Augustinus d'Eugubio is no less warm for this Opinion; he says, that the *Hebrews* have neither Heroic nor Iambic Verses, nor any Measures like those of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, but only some faint Resemblances of them, such as are to be met with in the Songs of the Barbarians. One finds in their Poetry certain Cadences, which give the Style a different Turn from Prose; one observes a Manner of Expression and certain Figures, which make the Language deviate from the common Forms of Speech. *Carmen Hebraicum non idem est atque Græcorum & Latinorum; Hebraicum nulla Tempora, sed Numerum duntaxat observat. Itaque neque Heroicum Carmen apud Hebræos extat, neque Iambicum, alia Genera; sed simile quiddam, & quale Barbari diversis Ritibus canunt.* This kind of Poetry

(a) Vide Proleg. in Div. Biblioth. S. Hieron. nov. Edit. Art. 5.

(b) *ἱεραὶ γὰρ, &c.* Philo de Vita Contemplativa ad finem.

(c) Scaliger in Chronic. Euseb.

is more simple, more natural, more majestick, and more becoming the Greatness of God, than a Poetry ty'd down to Method and Rules; in which it is extremely difficult to express, in a natural manner, the Sentiments of the Spirit of God, without injuring, at the same time, the Sublimity of the Sense, and the Loftiness of the Thoughts.

As are several other learned Critics.

Scaliger's Opinion has been espoused by several learned Critics besides *Augustinus d'Eugubio*, as *Lewis Cappel*, *Martinus*, *Samuel Boblius*, *Vasimuth*, *Pfeiffer*, &c. *Grotius* (a) may also be reckoned among those Writers, who hold, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* had neither Ryme nor Measure. And for my part I shall make no difficulty of listing myself in their Number, and shall endeavour to defend their Opinion, after I have first laid down and confuted the Notions of those who have undertaken to ascertain the Manner of the *Hebrew* Poetry, by comparing it with that of the *Greeks* or *Latins*, or with that of the living Languages. I shall give myself no Trouble about those Authors, who have advanced nothing but what they have from others, or those who profess they understand nothing of the Matter, or believe it is impossible to be cleared up: I shall consider those Writers only, who have proposed some new Scheme or Hypothesis upon this Head.

The Schemes of some Moderns examined and confuted.

Mercerus.

Mercerus, upon the third Chapter of *Job*, says, he had been informed that *Franciscus Vatablus* had discovered the true Nature of the Verses in *Job* and the Book of *Psalms*, and that he had actually drawn up the Rules and Principles of them, in order to let the World into this great Secret. Every one allows the profound Capacity of *Vatablus* in Matters of this nature. *Mercerus* pleased himself with the Thoughts, that the Discoveries of this Great Man would one day be made publick, but there are no hopes at present of their ever seeing the Light; nay, it is even doubted whether *Vatablus* did ever write at all, or at least whether he has left any thing finished, upon this Subject.

Theodorus Herbert.

Theodorus Herbert imagined he found in the Bible Verses like those of our Times, that is, with Rymes, according to certain Rules he prescribes. He observed (as he says himself) some of these Verses in *Psal.* vi. 2. viii. 5. cv. 20. cvi. 5. cxvi. 7. cxviii. 25. cxix. 30. cxlvi. 7. *Job* xxi. 4. *Prov.* xxv. 19. But

(a) *Grot.* in *Luc.* I. 46.

what

what can be inferred from hence? Does it follow therefore that this artificial sort of Poetry was common among the *Jews* from the Time of *Moses, Job, or David* ? Do a few Verses found in a Prose-Book prove the whole to be writ in Verse?

Some *Hebrew* Rabbins maintain, that their Poetry in Ryme ^{Some Hebrew Rabbins.} is of a very long standing, and was in use at the time that their Forefathers sojourned in *Palestine* . They ground this Assertion of theirs upon certain *Hebrew* Verses in Ryme, found in the Kingdom of *Valencia* , upon the Tomb of one of the Officers of *Amasias* King of *Juda* (a): But this hath too much the Air of a Fable, to gain any Credit with those who are concerned only for the Truth.

A modern Author, one *Meibomius* (b), pretends, that for ^{Meibomius.]} these two thousand Years last past all the World have lived in ignorance of the Nature of the *Hebrew* Poetry but himself; and it is solely upon this extraordinary Knowledge of his, that he grounds all those Corrections and Amendments he has made in the Original Text of Scripture. *My Design* (says he, in his Epistle directed to all the Christian Kings and Princes in *Europe*) is to publish a new Translation of the Holy Bible, with an Explanation of the most difficult Places, a Specimen whereof I here present you with; if you give it the Reception it deserves, I pass my Word to favour the Publick with the rest of the *Old Testament* , and make known the Measure of the Verses wherein it is written.

In his Preface, he makes his Boast of having corrected, in the Sacred Text, above three thousand Faults, which made so many Alterations in the Sense of it, and all by the means of a Light darted into his Soul from above, and the help of the Rules of the *Hebrew* Poetry, which have lain concealed ever since the Days of *Jeremiah* and *Daniel* , and were unknown to *Haggai* and *Ezra* .

He adds, that if the antient Sages of *Judea* were to take a Trip into the World again, they would admire in him this inestimable Gift of Heaven; that the *Seventy* would readily acknowledge the Uselessness of their Labours; that *Origen* would throw away his *Hexapla* ; that *St. Jerom* would compliment him upon having carried the Day from all the *Latin* Transla-

(a) Rab. Moses Ben Charif Darkenoam.

(b) Journal des Savans, 1699.

tors, and congratulate him upon his Discovery of the *Hebrew* Poetry, and profound Knowledge in the Sacred Tongue.

This Author, with his Poetry, turns the whole Bible upside down, and as yet affords us but a very small Sketch of his Art, jealous of letting us into the Secret of so noble an Invention, he keeps the Key close to himself. The Publick, in all appearance, have set light by his Essay, and don't seem at all desirous of his Performances, since *Meibomius* has not hitherto made good any thing of what he so largely promised.

Gomarus.

Franciscus Gomarus, in his Book, intitled *Davidis Lyra*, takes upon him to prove, that the Verses in Scripture are like those of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. In order to this, he applies himself to lay down the Rules and Principles of the *Hebrew* Poetry, to ascertain the Number of the Feet, and distinguish the several sorts of the Verses. His Book is divided into two Parts: In the first, he establishes Rules for finding out the Quantity of the *Hebrew* Syllables; he mentions the several sorts of Feet in the *Hebrew* Verses, and compares them with those of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. In the second Part, he proceeds to the Application of his Rules to the Verses in Scripture; he takes them to pieces, shews the Nature of their Composition, and produces Examples to confirm all he lays down. This Work of *Gomarus* gained him immediately the Applauses of several learned Criticks, as *Buxtorf*, *Lewis de Dieu*, *Constantine l'Empereur*, *Heinsius*, and *Hottinger*: But *Lewis Cappel* strenuously attacked him, and answered all his Arguments. He says, that *Gomarus*, in his Book, takes two Principles for granted, which he would find a very difficult matter to prove effectually: The first is, that the Vowel-Points, as they are now read in the *Hebrew* Bible, were not the Invention of After-Ages, but came immediately from the inspired Penmen themselves. The second is, that no Alterations have happened to the Holy Scriptures, either thro' the Carelessness of Transcribers, or by the Length of Time.

One of *Gomarus's* Rules is this, *Scheva non vocalis est, sed illius sub Consonante mobili Absentiæ Nota*; *Scheva* is no Vowel, but denotes only the Absence of a Vowel under a Consonant that is pronounced. *Cappel* overthrows this Principle,

(1.) By the Authority of several Grammarians, who all teach, that *Scheva* hath the true Nature of a short Vowel.

(2.) Be-

(2.) Because by this Rule Multitudes of *Hebrew* Words are rendered incapable of being pronounced, even in the most barbarous manner : As for Instance, *Febarku* (a). Moreover, by this means an infinite Number of Words, that really consist of three, would necessarily be reduced to two, Syllables.

(3.) This Rule of *Gomarus* destroys another Principle of the *Hebrew* Grammar, *Scheva* is pronounced under a Letter marked with a *Dages*. For Example, in *Pakkedu*, where the *Dages* must either be taken away, or it must be shown how it is possible to pronounce the double Letter, if the *Scheva* is not heard.

(4.) *Cappel* observes, that where we read a *Scheva*, the Antients, as the *Seventy*, and St. *Jerom*, read sometimes one Vowel, sometimes another; which is a clear Evidence that we are not tied down so strictly to that Vowel-Point, as *Gomarus* would have us, and that there is a Necessity of pronouncing it upon many Occasions.

Another Principle laid down by *Gomarus*, is this, *There are no common Syllables in Hebrew, but all are long or short; and the short Syllables do not, as in Greek and Latin, become long by Position*. If the *Hebrew* Tongue was like the *English*, or most of the *European* Languages, where, in writing Verses, no regard is had to the Quantity of the Syllables, this Rule of *Gomarus* might take place; but since he asserts that the *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin* Tongues resemble one another, and that the Rules of their Poetry are very near the same, it is not to be conceived upon what Foundation he builds this Principle. He is no less unhappy in the Application of it, for he is plainly proved to relapse into that Barbarousness and Difficulty of Pronunciation so often objected to him. *Cappel* maintains, there is no distinguishing the short from the long Syllables in *Hebrew*, as long as the true Pronunciation of them is not settled, and that it is impossible to read or pronounce the *Hebrew* Verses according to the Rules of *Gomarus*. *Gomarus* acknowledges, that his Rules are never applicable to above two or three Verses at a time of the same sort. *Cappel* infers from this Confession, that there can be no such thing as fixing the Rules of the *Hebrew* Poetry, as it would be but lost Labour to endeavour to lay down the Rules of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poetry, were there

(a) יִבְרָכֶּךָ

E

in

in those Languages no entire Pieces written in Verses, that steadily observed the same Method and Rules. Would not a Man make himself ridiculous, if, upon finding a few irregular Verses scattered up and down the Works of *Sophocles* and *Pindar*, he should undertake to prescribe Rules for a sort of Poetry so uncertain, so immethodical?

Thus by confessing that all the *Hebrew* Verses are of a different kind from one another, that they are intermixed without any Order or Method, *Varia, Promiscua*, "ΑΤΑΚΤΑ; that they are independent, that is, have no manner of Relation to one another, and that few or none of the same sort are to be found together; *Gomarus* undermines, before he is aware of it, the whole Design of his Book, since it is an impossible Thing to establish Rules for a Poesy so unsettled and unconfined. *Cappel* observes, that his Adversary is obliged to suppose so great a Number of regular and irregular Verses in the same Song or Hymn, that it would be impossible not to find the like every where, and that it would be full as easy to shew that the whole Bible is in Verse, as it was for him to prove that the Psalter only is so. In fine, he maintains, that by *Gomarus's* Way and Method a Man might make it appear, that all the Orations of *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*, that the Histories of *Livy* and *Thucydides* are truly and really Poems; the Ridiculousness of which Consequences are sufficient Proofs of the Falseness of the Principles from whence they are drawn.

Pfeiffer (a) undertakes, by the help of *Gomarus's* Rules, to put the *Pater-noster* into Verse; and to let us see that he undertook nothing but what he could perform, he has actually reduced the Lord's Prayer into several sorts of Verses, without changing so much as one Word.

The Author
of the Biblio-
theque Uni-
verselle.

The Author of the *Bibliothèque Universelle* has advanced a new Hypothesis concerning the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews*; he will have it that their Verses are in Ryme, and alledges these as the principal Reasons of his Opinion: (1.) He observes, that the *Hebrew* Tongue will not, no more than the *French* or *English*, admit of those Transpositions of the Words which the *Greeks* and *Latins* used both in their Prose and Verse. (2.) The *Hebrew* Nouns have the same Termination or Ending throughout all the Cases of the Singular and Plural Numbers. In the

(a) *Pfeiffer* de Poesi Hebræorum.

Plural

Plural the Masculine Nouns end in *im*, and the Feminine in *oth* ; this shows how easy it is to compose Verses in that Language in Ryme, and how difficult to do it, as the *Greeks* and *Latins* did, in Measure. (3.) The *Hebrews* have a vast Number of long Syllables, and but very few short ones ; consequently it would be a hard Matter to vary the Feet as often as is necessary to make good Verses in imitation of the *Greeks* and *Latins* ; on the contrary, Rymes are so ready at hand in *Hebrew*, that it is almost impossible to write without ryming, even when one least designs it. (4.) This Author does not pretend to say, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* was very regular and exact, he believes it was never reduced to any Rules of Art. Their Rymes are not always the most lucky, and there are several Passages in their Poems where there are no Rymes at all to be found : In all probability, says he, they did not regard these things equally at all times, but were satisfied now and then with the Cadence only. (5.) The Number of the Rymes is not fixed, there are sometimes a great many of one sort, and but few of another ; the Order of the Rymes is not regulated, and the Length of the Verses is still less uniform : The *Hebrews*, says he, seem to have given themselves little or no Trouble about these Matters. (6.) In their Rymes they had a greater regard to the Sound of the Words, and Likeness of the Cadence, than to a Similitude of Letters or Syllables. (7.) Poetical Licences, like those in the Poetry of the *Greeks* and *Latins*, are to be observed in the Poetry of the *Hebrews* ; they borrowed from the neighbouring Nations, *Chaldea* and *Arabia*, their Ways and Manners of Expression, particularly in those Places where the *Hebrew* Words would not have rymed, whereas those they borrowed ryme perfectly well. (8.) Lastly, a good Argument to induce us to believe that the *Hebrew* Verses were writ in Ryme, is the little Trouble that is required to reduce into Ryme all the Songs, Hymns, and Poetical Works of Scripture. Accordingly this Author has published the Song of *Moses* in Ryme, and assures us he has applied his Endeavours with Success to the Psalms, and reduced them into Ryme likewise. It must be noted, that there are Rymes in the Scene of *Plautus's* *Pænulus*, written in the *Punic* Language. This last Proof is, without doubt, the best as well as the most proper to decide the Matter in question ; for if there are any constant, uniform,

and studied Rymes to be plainly seen in the Poems of the *Hebrews*, it is very visible that their Poetry is in Ryme. But in order to reduce into Ryme the Psalms and Hymns of Scripture, this Author curtails, lengthens, and shortens the Verses just as he thinks fit, without keeping any Proportion, or observing any Rule. By such a Method as this, any one of *Cicero's* Orations may be easily made to ryme.

It can't be denied but that there are Rymes, and sometimes designed ones, in some Places of the Psalms, and the other Poetical Works of Scripture; but it does not follow therefore that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* is in Ryme. The best way to know whether the *Hebrew* Verses are in Ryme, is to pitch upon such Verses as plainly discover, by some Circumstance, where they end exactly; which will be a means to prevent its being objected, that we cut off the Verses where we please in order to make them ryme. The cxixth Psalm is an Acrostick, and therefore the Beginning and End of the Verses are certainly known. This Psalm is of a great Length, and nothing is more easy than to find out the Nature of the Verses, by comparing them with one another. Now altho' we meet with a great many Rymes in this Psalm, yet we can't be sure they were intended or premeditated; they are neither constant nor uniform. We find sometimes four or five Rymes one after another, then two or three, after that three or four Verses without any Ryme at all, or a single Verse that does not ryme with any other. Can a Poem upon this Account be said to be writ in Ryme? The *Lamentations* of *Jeremiah* are likewise Acrostick Verses, but I can find no regular or constant Rymes, nor any that can be said to be designed or made on purpose. When two Verses together end alike, we may be certain that it was the pure Effect of Chance.

The Truth of what has been said, will appear more evident, if you cast an Eye on the 3d Chapter of the *Lamentations*, where each Verse begins with a Letter of the Alphabet, according to their natural Order; for in the first, second, and fourth Chapters we are not so sure where the Verses end, because there are more than two under the same Letter, which is placed only at the Beginning of the first Verse. We find also in the *Song of Songs* some Rymes and agreeable Cadences, that, in all probability, were designed and intended; but they are neither uniform
nor

nor steady, nor to be met with every where throughout the whole Book. It is almost impossible, whether you design it or no, not to hit upon Rymes in *Hebrew*. I defy any Man, let him study to avoid it as much as he pleases, to talk to another Person in this Language, without falling into a Gingle of Words, or using Periods and Sentences which shall have the same Termination, by reason of the *Affixes* and the great Number of Words that end alike, as has been already observed. The cxith and cxiith Psalms, which are likewise Acrosticks, are further Proofs of what I have advanced; there is not so much as one Ryme in them that we can be sure of. But, however, we find there somewhat of Importance in relation to the Subject I am upon, namely, that the *Hebrews* had Verses of different Lengths; for the Verses in the cxixth Psalm, and in the third Chapter of the *Lamentations*, are twice as long as those in these two Psalms: and it may be the *Hebrews* had Acrostick Verses, whose first Part to the Place where the Verse breaks off, began with a Letter of the Alphabet; and the second Part of the same Verse, after the breaking off, began with the next Letter, according to the Order of the Alphabet; and this Notion seems to me to be the more just, because the Sense is suspended where the Verse breaks off, and is not compleated before the End of the second Part of the Verse: But wherever the Verse is supposed to end, I am very well assured that no regular and settled Rymes can be found, from whence a Man may, with the least colour of Reason, infer, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* was in Ryme.

After having examined these several Opinions, it remains now that I give my own Sentiments of the Matter under Consideration. I take the Essence and Soul of Poetry to consist in a lively, animated, affecting Manner of Discourse, enriched with bold and surprizing Figures. I am of Opinion, that the Art of versifying alone no more makes the Poet, than the Numbers and Measures make the Poetry. The Antients tell us, that *Plato*, *Florus*, and other Authors, composed Poetical Works in Prose; and *Horace* says of himself, that his Verses come nearer Prose than Verse; and *Quintilian* thought *Lucan* ought rather to be ranked among the Orators than the Poets.

Poetry may be distinguish'd into two sorts, natural and artificial. Natural Poetry is as old as the first Man. Cool Reason and Judgment

*The Author's
Opinion of this
Matter.*

*Two sorts of
Poetry, natu-
ral and arti-
ficial.*

Judgment speak in direct and plain Terms, but Passion breaks out with Life and Spirit. Vehemence of Expressions, daring Figures, and Elevation of Thoughts, in proportion to the Grandeur and Quality of the Subject, make up what I call natural Poetry, which gave Being to methodical and artificial Poetry. This last paints the Passions and Sentiments in a strong and pathetic manner, and this is common to it with natural Poetry; but then it represents them in select studied Terms, confined to a certain Measure and Cadence, and this distinguishes it from natural Poetry: So that it may be said, artificial Poetry is the Art of painting the Passions with Study and Attention, but natural Poetry expresses them without any Art or Reflection.

Their Difference.

Each Nation, each Country, each Temper or Constitution, each Passion has its natural Rhetorick and Poetry. Indignation, Anger, Joy, Grief, Hatred, and Love always break forth with Energy and Force; Art and Reflection come not in till all is over. Nature furnishes Art with all her Materials, and lays the Foundations of all her Improvements. As Poetry and Musick were inseparable among the Antients, who knew no Poet that was not at the same time Musician too, and who called making Verses, singing, and Verses, Songs; what has been said of Poetry may likewise be applied to Musick. There is a natural Musick which preceded and gave birth to the artificial: Both tend to the same end, namely, to express the Sentiments of the Poet in such Sounds and Terms, as have a Correspondence to what he feels within himself, and would inspire others with.

Some Remains of the antient natural Poetry.

We may observe, long before the time of *Moses*, some Remains of the antient natural Poetry in *Lamech's* Discourse to his two Wives (*a*), in *Noah's* blessing *Shem* and *Japheth*, and cursing *Canaan* (*b*); in *Jacob's* last Words to his Sons upon his Death-Bed (*c*); in the Book of *Job*, supposing it to have been written before *Moses* lived. All these Things are poetical, and are so many Proofs of the Antiquity of this natural Poetry I am speaking of, which consisted altogether in the Style, and not at all in the Measure of the Syllables. The whole was nothing else but figurative, sublime, and sententious Expressions, wherein they generally affected a kind of Repetition of the same

(a) Gen. iv. 23, 24.

(b) Gen. ix. 25, 26, 27.

(c) Gen. lxix.

thing in different Terms, in the two Parts of the same Sentence, and sometimes we find a sort of Ryme and Cadence, which are so obvious and remarkable, that we need not be at much pains to discover them.

This was the Nature of the Poetry of the Antients before the Invention of artificial and methodical Poetry was found out. The *Greeks*, even after the Times of *Hesiod* and *Homer*, had not entirely lost the Notion and Use of natural Poetry. *Demosthenes* (a) very rightly distinguishes the Poets who observed the Rules of Art, from those who writ what they call *Adomona*, or Songs. *Diogenes Laertius* (b) calls by the same Name the *Sayings* he attributes to the Wisemen of *Greece*; and *Casaubon* makes no doubt but that they were Remains of the antient Poetry in use before *Homer*. *St. Clement* of (c) *Alexandria* compares the *Hebrew* Psalms, as to the Measure and Style, to certain Hymns termed *Scolia* among the *Greeks*, which they were wont to sing at their Feasts. They were loose and irregular Verses, wherein, without having any regard to the Measure of the Feet, and Quantity of the Syllables, they expressed their Thoughts in a lively and concise manner. There are Instances in *Athenæus* (d) of this free and unconfined way of writing; but, in process of Time, they made use of greater Art, and a more regular Method.

Such, in my Opinion, was the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews*, The Nature of the Hebrew Poetry. without Art or Study they imitated Nature, and expressed her Motions and Sentiments. They spoke and wrote in a so much more enlivened and emphatical manner, as their Thoughts were not suffered to grow cool by Reflection and Study. In all their Ways of Discourse, in their Poems, their Narratives, their Invectives, their Exhortations, their Instructions, their Hymns, you meet with nothing that is far-fetched or affected; which is the Reason of their being so animated, so moving, so natural, so beautiful.

It does not appear that the Poetry of the *Hebrews* ever underwent any Change: We find it the same in the time of *David*, of *Isaiab*, of *Jeremiab*, and of *Daniel* as it was in the It was always the same.

(a) Apud Casaub. in Laert. l. r.

(b) Diog. Laert. in Vir. sept. Sapient.

(c) Clem. Alex. Pedag. l. 2.

(d) Athenæus, l. 10. c. 14. Dipnosoph.

time of *Moses*; and the Hymns or Songs in the New Testament are of the same nature with those in the Old. Is it possible that a methodical and artificial Poetry should be thus of the same Style and Nature, should keep exactly to the same manner of writing, and to the same Rules, without any Additions or Diminutions, for the Space of above a thousand Years?

No artificial
Poetry when
Moses writ.

When *Moses* writ, most certainly there was then no Poetry reduced to the Rules of Art in any Part of the World that we know of. The *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians*, the most antient Nations among whom Literature was cultivated, don't seem to have had the least Knowledge of a Poetry confined to a certain Number of Feet, and a certain Quantity of long or short Syllables, or that consisted of uniform and regular Rymes.

The most an-
tient Verses of
the Eastern
Writers.

As to the Business of Verses, the most antient we have of the *Eastern* Writers came from the *Arabians*. Some of their Poets lived before *Mahomet*, and are like those of the present Age as to Rymes; they make no Distinction between long and short Syllables. It is reported that *Harmonius*, the Son of *Barde-sanes*, in the second Century of the Church, composed musical Airs and Verses in the *Syriack* Tongue, in imitation of the *Greeks*. But what is all this to our purpose? how modern are these things when compared to the Time of *Moses*? The *Greeks* have no Poem of an older Date than those of *Homer* and *Hesiod* who lived above six hundred Years after *Moses*? What Man therefore, when he considers these things, can believe that the Lawgiver of the *Hebrews*, that *Job*, that *David* observed the Rules of an artificial and methodical Poetry, or that the Art of Poetry was arrived to Perfection among the *Hebrews* so many Ages before any other Nation had the least Intimation of any such thing?

Had the Poe-
try of the He-
brews been
artificial, it
would be as
visible now as
heretofore.

Besides, Had the Poetry of the Antient *Hebrews* been reduced to any Rules of Art, would these Rules be intirely unknown, now that the Oriental Languages are so thoroughly and successfully studied? If there were Heroic Verses in *Moses*, in *Job*, and in the Psalter, would they not be as visible to us at present, as they were to those Authors who fancied they saw them there heretofore? If these Verses had any Uniformity, or Regularity in their Measures, in their Forms, and in their Cadences, is it possible that no Man shou'd have had the least Glimpse of them to this very day? Would the Authors of these

Sacred

Sacred Poems never have made use of any Term of Art ? Would not some one or other have prefix'd before the Psalm or Hymn he had compos'd, the Measure of the Verses, as we find they frequently give us the Name of the Musician by whom it was to be sung, or the Instrument on which it was to be play'd ?

The Manner in which the Songs or Hymns of Scripture were composed, affords another good Proof against their Opinion, who hold, that they were made according to Art and the Rules of a methodical Poesy. These Songs, for the most part, were extemporaneous Productions, and the sudden Effects of a divine and supernatural Impulse. Now a Piece of artificial Poetry is incapable of being produced thus on a sudden without any Pre-meditation ; and the divine Impulse, or Inspiration, allows no time to reflect on the Rules of Art.

Your common Poets, in order to compose, stand in need of a certain *Fire* of Imagination, which they term Rapture ; but this *Fire* or *Heat* of Fancy furnishes only the Thoughts and Flights, it is the Business of Art to range and dispose the Words, and this Disposition is made at leisure, and with Deliberation. But we find not the least Footsteps of this artful ranging of the Words in the Sacred Writers ; they speak all on a sudden, and in the midst of Hurry and Tumult. *Moses* immediately, upon the Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*, breaks out into the Song that gave Occasion to our present Inquiries. *David* composed several of his Psalms in the midst of the greatest Straits and Difficulties, and in Circumstances wherein it would have been a very hard matter for him to have been Master of so much Presence of Mind, as the Attention to the Rules of an artificial Poetry requires.

The Hymns or Songs, I am speaking of, were many times composed by Women or illiterate Men, whose Tongues were made use of but as mere Instruments or *Organs* by the Spirit of God. Will any one say, that such Persons commenced Poets on a sudden, and uttered Poems in Ryme, or made according to the Rules of the Art of Poetry ? *Anna*, the Mother of *Samuel*, *Deborah*, *Judith*, *Tobias*, the Blessed Virgin, *Zacharias*, *Simeon* composed their Songs *extempore*, without any Premeditation or Study : Their Poetry therefore, considered in itself, was entirely natural, tho' with respect to the Spirit of God, who was the Author of it, it was of a supernatural Order, infinitely

infinitely above all humane Art or Contrivance. Let them show us wherein the Difference lies between the Hymns or Songs composed by these Persons, who never applied themselves to Learning, and those of *Moses, David, Isaiah*, who were all Men of Letters, and could not have been ignorant of the Rules of Poetry, supposing there had been any such in their Times : But if they can find no manner of Difference or Distinction between these several Poems, as to their Form or Art, they must be forced to own that the Poetry was purely natural ; for the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost causes no Change in the natural or acquired Habits of those who are inspired. Their Minds are raised, illuminated, enlivened : But as he, who was eloquent before he was inspired, maintains the same Character after his Inspiration ; so those, whose Understandings were less cultivated and improved, become not afterwards more knowing in *Sciences* purely human, as is the Art of Poetry.

But as for the Style, and those enliven'd, surprizing, figurative, and sublime Expressions to be met with in the Hymns and Songs of Scripture, it is no difficult Matter for Persons, without any previous Study or Art, but transported with a Divine Impulse, to break out into Poetical Forms of Speech. As this Style was very agreeable to the Genius of the *Eastern* People, and a way of Expression they naturally affected, it is the less to be wondered at, that they should on a sudden, without any Pre-meditation, express themselves in this manner, and continue to do so for so many Ages together.

Poetry, confined to Method and Rules, must needs be cramp'd and fetter'd ; and the unavoidable Necessity one lies under of transposing the Words, in order to come at the Measures of the Verses, obliges one to stuff a Poem with *Epithets*, and obsolete Terms and Phrases : Very often we must give the Thought an affected Turn, especially when we write in haste, and without taking a great deal of Time and Pains. Now, in the Verses of the *Hebrews*, we observe none of these Transpositions, nay their Language will not bear them, we don't find that Number of *Epithets* to spin out the Verse, nor those affected Turns, which, for the sake of the Measure, are necessarily made use of in artificial Poetry, and in the Poems of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. If we meet with some Terms that are not so commonly used, it is because the animated, sublime, and pa-
thetick

thetick Style of the Psalms and Hymns require uncommon and pompous Expressions. These give a Majesty and Weight to the Discourse, and perhaps were designed likewise to facilitate the Pronunciation and Singing, and to make the Verses run the smoother, rather than upon account of the Feet or Measures.

Had the Poetry of the *Hebrews* been like that of the *Greeks*, they would not have fail'd of taking notice of the Art of it, and laying down its Rules and Methods. It is not probable that they would have entirely neglected an Invention of such Importance, or that no one, either out of Curiosity, or Interest, or Inclination, should ever take it in his head to write upon this Subject, and make a Collection of the Rules and Precepts of the Art of Poetry. But we don't find one single Word in the Language of the *Hebrews*, or in their whole History, which so much as intimates to us, that there ever were any professed Poets among them : Not but that they writ Songs or Hymns a long while after the Art of Poetry was invented in *Greece*. These Songs don't seem at all to differ from those of *Moses* and *David* ; both the one and the other were compos'd in order to be sung, as was all the Poetry of the antient *Greeks* and *Latins* : but with this Difference, that among these last the Air or Tune of the Verses was fixed and ascertained by their Measure and Cadence, whereas among the *Hebrews* almost all the Songs might be sung to all sorts of Tunes ; as in Church-Musick different Psalms are sung to what Tune is judged most proper. The Manner in which the *Jews* sing and read the Holy Bible in their Synagogue, is no modern Invention, since the musical Accents in the Text, which show when the Voice in singing is to be rais'd or fallen, are themselves of very great Antiquity ; and the steady Adherence of the *Jews* to Ceremonies and Practices so little troublesome as this, is a farther Reason to induce us to believe, that their Manner of Singing came to them from the Antients. And as their Musick is applicable not only to the Verses of an artificial Poesy, but likewise to Poems compos'd without any Rules of Art, and even to mere Prose, it plainly follows, that nothing can be infer'd in favour of Ryme or Measure in the Verses of the *Hebrews*, from their being sung heretofore at religious Festivals, or Times of publick Rejoicings.

It is then very credible, that the Poetry of the antient *Hebrews* consisted wholly in the Grandeur, Nobleness, and Sublimity of the Thoughts and Style, in the Daringness of the Figures, in lively and pathetick Expressions, in a brief and concise manner of Discourse, in a Turn more florid, more enlivened, more expressive, more proper to paint and display the Images of Things before our Eyes, than the common Forms of Speech: that their Poems were the Productions of a happy Genius, animated and inspired by the Spirit of God, which being carried, by the Divine Impulse, above the Restraint of the Rules of a methodical Poetry, expressed its Thoughts and Sentiments in a sublime and poetical manner. The *Hebrews* were never very fond of Novelty, nor were they of so nice a Taste as the *Greeks* and *Romans*: but satisfied with their antient Poetry and Musick, which was grave, solemn, affecting, agreeable, and seldom made use of but in religious Matters; they took no Pains to polish and refine them.

