

GENERAL ANNOTATIONS VPON THIS CXVIII PALME.

As this Pſalme is the longeſt in the whole Pſalter, ſo it ſemeth to the ancient Fathers moſt profound in ſenſe. And ſo much the harder to be vnderſtood, becauſe alſo the very hardnes therof lieth hidden, which in diuers other Pſalmes, and partes of holie Scripture, eaſily appeareth to the reader. But here the wordes being clere, and the ſenſe alſo plaine and eaſie in ſome pointes of doctrine, yet the more diligence is employed, the more difficultie is found in ſearching the whole ſenſe and meaning of euerie word and ſentence, with the maner obſerued in compoſing it, and the frequent repetition of the ſame or like wordes. Al which maturely conſidered cauſed that great Clerke, and light of the Church S. Auguſtin, to omitte this Pſalme, when he explicated al the reſt. And when at laſt he added alſo this, he wittingly omitted one ſpecial difficultie, which he doubted not, to be conteyned in the maner of compoſing it, not only by order of the Hebrew Alphabet, as diuers more Pſalmes, and ſome other partes of holie Scripture, but more artificially then anie other, the firſt eight verſes al beginning with the firſt letter Aleph; the next eight, with the ſecond letter Beth; and ſo to the laſt of the two and twentie letters. Of which omiſſion he yeldeth this only reaſon, becauſe he found nothing (as he humbly affirmeth) that might properly perteyne therunto. Confeſſing alſo expreſly that whenſoeuer he applied his cogitations to expound the text itſelf, it alwayes exceded his habilitie. But finally to ſatiſfie the often and earneſt requeſt of his bretheren and freindes, truſting (as alvvayes) in Gods ſpecial helpe, he largely expoundeth it, in thirtie two diſtinct Sermons.

S. Ambroſe alſo moued with like pietie, made two and twentie Sermons in expoſition of this Pſalme. Affirming in his Prologue, that amongſt other Pſalmes, eſpecially this ſheweth how great a maſter king Dauid was of moral good life. For al moral doctrine, being of his owne nature ſwete, yet moſt delighteth the eares,

The obſcuritie of this profound Pſalme appeareth not to the vulgar reader.

S. Auguſtin differed the explication of this Pſalme. Omitted to diſcuſſe one difficultie.

At laſt made 32. ſermons in explication therof.

S. Ambroſe writte 22. ſermons vpon this Pſalme. King Dauid a great maſter of moral doctrin.

and gently toucheth the minde, being vttered, as here it is, with pleafantnes of verfe, and fwetenes of fongue. Againe whereas this Royal Prophet in manie places of this booke, powreth out fentences of moral pfalmes or fongues, as bright ftarres, that fhine and glifter to al the world, here moft excellently he produceth a more fingular mirrhor, as the funne, of ful light, burning with meridian heate. And for the profite of al, the better to draw our attentions, to lerne that we may, though we can not attaine to al that we vvould, he difpofed this Pfalme through al the Alphabeth: that as children beginning vvith the firft letters, make entrance to further knowvlege: fo by the fame beginniges vve fhould lay the firft foundation, and therupon procede in our fpiritual building, tovwards perfection in good life, the true feruice of God. VVhich is yet further infinuated (as the fame Doctor teacheth) by the eight verfes continually beginning vvith the fame letter, and fo other eight in order through the vvhole Alphabet, to fignifie that after feuen dayes trauel in this temporal life, vve may come to that vnitie, vvich vve expect in the eight day of refurrection, vvhen vve hope to rife reuiued in our Lord IESVS, in nevvnes of eternal life.

Likevvife S. Bafil in the Argument of this Pfalme admonifheth, that vvheras holie Daud, according to diuers ftates, vvich he paffed, vvritte diuers Pfalmes: as vvhen he fled from his enimies, vvhen he lamented his diftreffes, mourned in penfiuenes, enjoyed peace and comforte, ranne a right courfe of vertue, fel from God by finne, & againe returning obferued Gods lavves: in this one Pfalme he comprehendeth al his prayers made to God at fundrie times, & here propofeth the fame, as a certaine profitable moral doctrine, to al fortes and ftates of men. Neither doth he pretermite doctrinal pointes of faith, but interpofeth them alfo with moral documents, in fuch forte, that this one Pfalme may fuffice to teach the vvell difpofed, hovv to attaine to perfection in vertue, to fturre vp the flouthful vnto diligent

VVhy this Pfalme was compofed in order of the Alphabet.

VVhy eight verfes are begunne with euerie letter.

S. Bafils iudgement that this Pfalme conteyneth the argument of manie Pfalmes.

care of their foules, to recreate the defolate vvith fpiri-
tual confolations, & briefly it adminiftereth al kinde of
medicine, to the diuers paffions of mortal men.

For the like iudgements of other Fathers vve re-
mitte the lerned reader, to S. Hilarie, Theodoret, Profper,
Arnobius, Caffiodorus, Beda, Enthymius, and others,
but can not wel omitte a brief inftruction of S. Ierom.
VWho in his *Epiftle to Paula Vrbica*: not only fheweth
the interpretation of the two and twentie letters, but alfo
explicateth their fenfe in this place, by connecting them
into certaine fhorte fentences, ^{a)}in this maner.

Other
expofitors of
this Pfalme.

Aleph	Beth	Gimel	Daleth
<i>Doctrina</i>	<i>Domus</i>	<i>Plenitudo</i>	<i>Tabularum</i>
Doctrine	Of the houfe	Fulneffe	Of tables

S. Ieroms inter-
pretation, and
explication of
the Hebrew Al-
phabet.

VWhich is the firft connexion, fignifying that the doc-
trine of the houfe, that is, the Church of God, is found
in the fulnes of diuine bookes.

The fecond connexion is:

He	Vau	Zain	Heth
<i>Ifta</i>	<i>Et NC Hæc</i>	<i>Vita</i>	
This thing	And	This	Life

For what other life can there be without knowledge of
Scriptures? wherby alfo Chrifft is knowen, who is the life
of them that beleue in him.

*Idem Præm.
lamen.*

The third connexion is:

Teth	Iod
<i>Bonum</i>	<i>Principium</i>
Good	Beginning

Albeit we now could know al thinges which are written,
1. Cor. 13. yet we know but in part, and in part we prophecie: for

^a Moft of thefe letters haue alfo other fignifications. And are diuerfly
explicated by S. Ambrofe, S. Beda, and others. VVherby we may
lerne (though we vnderftand no more) that holie Scriptures are ful
of myfteries (as S. Ierom calleth this) and hard to be vnderftod.

we see now by a glasse, in a dark fort, but when we shall be worthy to be with Christ, and shall be like to Angels, then doctrine of bookes shall cease, and then we shall see God in himself. face to face: the Good Beginning, euen as he is.

The fourth connexion is:

Caph	Lamed
<i>Manus</i>	<i>Disciplinæ, siue cordis</i>
The hande	Of discipline, or of hart

The handes are vnderstood in worke, hart and discipline are vnderstood in sense or meaning, because we can not rightly doe anie thing, vnles we first knowe vvhath thinges are to be donne.

The fift connexion is:

Mem	Nun	Samech
<i>Ex ipsis</i>	<i>Sempternum</i>	<i>Adiutorum</i>
Of them	Euerlasting	Helpe

This needeth not explication, for it is manifest as the light, that from Scriptures are eternal helpes.

The sixt connexion is:

Ain	Phe	Sade
<i>Fons, siue Oculus</i>	<i>Oris</i>	<i>Iustitiæ</i>
Fountaine, or eye	Of the mouth	Of iustice

According to that vvhich we haue expounded in the fourth connexion: that dedes and intention must concurre.

The seuenth connexion vvhich is last, in vvhich number of feuen is also mystical vnderstanding:

Coph	Res	Shin	Tau
<i>Vocatio</i>	<i>Capitis</i>	<i>Dentium</i>	<i>Signa</i>
Vocation	Of the head	Of teeth	Signes

Distinct voice is produced by the teeth, & in these signes we come to the Head of al, vvhich is Christ, by vvhom we haue acceffe to the euerlasting kingdom.

Or thus (not tranſpoſing the vvordes) By vocation of Chriſt the Head, throught diſtinct voice of ſignes (for vvordes are ſignes ſhevving the mind) vve are conducted to the eternal kingdom, the happines vvich al men defire.

VVhat I pray thee (faith this holie Doctor) is more ſacred then this myſterie, vvhat more pleaſant then this delight? VVhat meate, & vvhat honey are ſvveeter, then to knovv Gods vvifdom; to enter into his ſecrete cloſſet; to behold the ſenſe of our Creator; and to teach the vvordes of thy Lord God, ful of ſpiritual vvifdom, vvich are derided by the vvife of this vvorld.

VVe muſt alſo aduertife the reader of the like diſcourſes of ancient Fathers (ouer long to be here recited) concerning the manifold hiegh praifes of Gods Lavv conteyned in this Pſalme, vvith frequent repetitiõ of certaine Synonyma vvordes ſignifying the ſame thing, in al fourtene, to vvitte: The Lavv of God, his VVayes, Teſtimonies, Commandments, Precepts, Statutes, Iuſtifications, Iudgements, Iuſtice, Equitie, Veritie, VVordes, Speaches, & Sermons: of vvich there is commonly one in euerie verſe, and ſomtimes tvvo or three in the ſame verſe. But our Engliſh tongue hardly ſufficing rightly to diſtinguiſh the three laſt, which in latin are *Verba*, *Eloquia*, *Sermones*, we tranſlate VVORDES only, adding in the margen, *Eloquia*, and *Sermones*, when they occurre.

Leauing therfore larger commentaries to others, we ſhal proſecute our wonted maner of briefe gloſſes. Only here premoniſhing the diligent readers, eſpecially Clergymen (our ſelues and our brethren) who euerie day ſing or read this whole Pſalme in the Canonical houres, to obſerue two particular pointes of Chriſtian doctrine, euidently proued by manie places of this Pſalme. The one againſt the Pelagians hereſie, denying the neceſſitie of Gods ſpecial grace in meritorious workes. For the Pſalmiſt often here inculcateth mans inſufficiencie, that of himſelfe, and by natural forces, he can not kepe the

Gods lavv eſpecially commended in this Pſalme.

14. Synonyma ſignifying the lavv of God.

Gods grace neceſſarie in euerie good vvorke.

commandments of God, but needeth alwayes the particular grace of God, as vvel to beleue in him, to repent for finnes, and to beginne good vvorkes; as to procede, and perfeuere in good ftate to the end. The other againft the herefie of our time, denying merite by grace & freewil. For here it is alfo manifefte, that Gods grace maketh man able, to kepe his commandments, and by keeping them to become iuft in this life, and fo to merite eternal glorie. Sundrie other principal Articles of Chriftian Catholique Religion are likevvife comprifed in this one Pfalme: but efpecially Moral doctrin.

It enableth
freevvil to
merite.