

SAINT JEROME

COMMENTARY ON MALACHI

Commentariorum in Malachiam

SABBATISMUS

Saint Jerome (347–420)
Commentariorum in Malachiam · Commentary on Malachi

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S. EUSEBII HIERONYMI STRIDONENSIS
PRESBYTERI COMMENTARIORUM IN
MALACHIAM PROPHETAM AD MINERVIUM ET
ALEXANDRUM LIBER UNUS.

Prologus.

Ultimum duodecim prophetarum Malachi [Al. Malachim] interpretari volumus, cujus nomen LXX transtulerunt, Angelus ejus, dicentes: Assumptio verbi Domini super Israel in manu Angeli ejus: pro quo in Hebraeo legitur MALACHI (), quod rectius et expressius dicitur, Angelus, id est nuntius meus. Nec putandum est, juxta quorundam (Origenistarum) opinionem, angelum venisse de coelo, et assumpsisse corpus humanum, ut Israeli quae a Domino sunt mandata, loqueretur. Si enim interpretanda sunt nomina, et ex nominibus non spiritualis intelligentia, sed historiae ordo texendus est: ergo et Osee, qui salvator dicitur, et Joel qui interpretatur Dominus Deus, sive incipiens, et caeteri prophetae non erunt homines; sed vel angeli, vel Dominus atque Salvator, quia hoc eorum nomina resonant. Denique exceptis Septuaginta, alii interpretes nomen MALACHI ita ut in Hebraeo legitur, transtulerunt.

Malachi autem Hebraei Ezram aestimant sacerdotem, quia omnia quae in libro illius continentur, etiam hic propheta commemorat, dicens: Labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et Legem requirent ex ore ejus, quid angelus Domini exercituum est (Mal. II, 7). Tempus quoque titulusque conveniunt: quod et in Psalmis diximus, qui titulos non frabent, eorum esse credendos, quorum priores psalmi nominibus praenotati sunt. Igitur et Malachi, id est, Ezras, post Aggaeum et Zachariam, qui sub Dario prophetaverunt, fuisse credendus est. Et propterea titulum non habere, quia liber ejus pro titulo sit: in quo discimus, quod in regno Artaxerxis regis Persarum, Ezras filius Saraiae, et caeterorum, usque ad eum locum ubi dicitur: Filius Phinees, filii Eleazar, filii Aaron sacerdotis; ab initio ascenderit de Babylone, et dederit ei rex secundum manum Domini Dei sui, omnem petitionem ejus: ascenderintque cum illo de filiis Israel, et de filiis sacerdotum, et de filiis Levitarum, et de cantoribus, et de janitoribus, et de Nathineis in Jerusalem, anno septimo Artaxerxis regis, et venerint in Jerusalem mense quinto: ipse est annus septimus regis, quia in primo die mensis primi coepit ascendere de Babylone, et in primo mensis quinti venit in Jerusalem.

BOOK ONE OF THE COMMENTARIES OF SAINT
EUSEBIUS HIERONYMUS, PRESBYTER OF
STRIDON, ON THE PROPHET MALACHI,
ADDRESSED TO MINERVIUS AND ALEXANDER.

Prologue.

We intend to interpret Malachi [or *Malachim*], the last of the twelve prophets, whose name the Seventy translated as *His Angel*, saying: *The burden of the word of the Lord upon Israel in the hand of His Angel*. In place of this, in Hebrew one reads MALACHI, which is more correctly and expressly said, *Angel*, that is, *my messenger*. Nor should it be thought, according to the opinion of certain (Origenists), that an angel came from heaven and assumed a human body to speak to Israel the commands that are from the Lord. For if names are to be interpreted, and from the names not a spiritual understanding but the order of history is to be woven, then Hosea, who is called *savior*, and Joel, who is interpreted as *the Lord God* or *beginning*, and the other prophets will not be men, but either angels, or the Lord and Savior, because this is what their names sound like. Finally, with the exception of the Septuagint, other interpreters have translated the name MALACHI just as it is read in Hebrew.

The Hebrews, however, consider Malachi to be Ezra the priest, because this prophet also mentions all the things that are contained in the book of the latter, saying: *The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the Law from his mouth, for he is the angel of the Lord of hosts* (Mal. 2:7). The time and the title also agree: which we have also said regarding the Psalms, that those which lack titles are to be believed to be by those whose preceding psalms are marked with their names. Therefore, Malachi, that is, Ezra, is to be believed to have lived after Haggai and Zechariah, who prophesied under Darius. And for this reason he has no title, because his book serves as a title: in which we learn that in the reign of Artaxerxes, king of the Persians, Ezra, son of Seraiah, and of the others, down to the place where it is said: *the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest*; from the beginning he went up from Babylon, and the king gave him, according to the hand of the Lord his God, his every request; and there went up with him some of the sons of Israel, and of the sons of the priests, and of the sons of the Levites, and of the singers, and of the gatekeepers, and of the Nethinim to Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, and they came to Jerusalem in the fifth month: this is the seventh year of the king, because on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylon, and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem.

Haec, mi Minervi [Al. Minerve], et Alexander, non tam sanguine, quam religione concordēs, ne susceptum opus dimitterem prophetarum, et extraordinario vobis labore sudarem, breviter in Prooemio sum locutus: ut proponens verba Malachi, primum juxta Hebraicam veritatem, deinde juxta LXX interpretes, orationum vestrarum fultus auxilio, edisseram quae sequuntur.

Scripsit in hunc librum Origenes tria volumina; sed historiam omnino non tetigit, et more suo totus in allegoriae interpretatione versatus est, nullam [Al. non ullam] Ezrae faciens mentionem; sed angelum putans fuisse qui scripsit, secundum illud quod de Joanne legimus: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam (Mat. XI, 10). Quod nos omnino non recipimus, ne animarum de coelo ruinas suscipere compellamur. Alios commentarios in hunc prophetam legisse me nescio: excepto Apollinaris brevi libello, cujus non tam interpretatio quam interpretationis puncta dicenda sunt.

INCIPIT LIBER.

(Cap. I.--Vers. 1.) Onus verbi Domini ad Israel, in manu Malachi. LXX: Assumptio verbi Domini super Israel, in manu angeli ejus. Quid significet onus, id est, pondus, quod Hebraice MASSA (), et ab Aquila ὄγκος dicitur, vel quid λήμμα, id est, assumptio, quod et Septuaginta et caeteri interpretes transtulerunt, in aliis prophetis diximus. Nam et Naum scribit: Onus Ninive: liber Visionis Naum Elcesaei (Num. II). Et Abacuc: Onus quod vidit Abacuc propheta (Abac. I). Et Zacharias: Onus verbi Domini in terra Adrach, et Damasci requiei ejus (Zach. IX et XII). Et rursum in consequentibus: Onus verbi Domini super Israel. Illa itaque simus explanatione contenti: et nunc hoc tantum dicamus, quod pondus verbi Domini ad Israel, sive, ut LXX dicunt, super Israel, grave quidem sit, quia pondus appellatur, sed consolationis aliquid habeat, quod non contra Israel, sed ad Israel sumitur. Aliud est enim quando, verbi gratia, ad illum vel illum scribimus, aliud quando contra illum et illum: quia in altero pars amicitiae, in altero inimicitiarum aperta confessio est.

These things, my Minervius [or *Mineras*] and Alexander, united not so much by blood as by faith, I have briefly spoken in the Preface, lest I should abandon the work I have undertaken on the prophets and sweat for you with extraordinary labor: so that, setting forth the words of Malachi, first according to the Hebrew truth, then according to the Seventy interpreters, supported by the help of your prayers, I may expound what follows.

Origen wrote three volumes on this book; but he did not touch upon the history at all, and, according to his custom, was entirely engaged in allegorical interpretation, making no [or *not any*] mention of Ezra, but thinking that it was an angel who wrote, according to that which we read about John: *Behold, I send my angel before your face* (Matt. 11:10). This we do not accept at all, lest we be compelled to accept the ruin of souls from heaven. I do not know of having read other commentaries on this prophet, except for the short little book of Apollinaris, which should be called not so much an interpretation as points of interpretation.

THE BOOK BEGINS.

CHAPTER I. Verse 1. The burden of the word of the Lord to Israel, by the hand of Malachi. LXX: The assumption of the word of the Lord upon Israel, by the hand of his angel. What *onus*, that is, *pondus* (weight), which in Hebrew is called MASSA, and by Aquila ἄρμα, or what *λήμματα*, that is, *assumptio* (assumption), which the Septuagint and the other interpreters have translated, we have discussed in other prophets. For Nahum also writes: *The burden of Nineveh: the book of the Vision of Nahum the Elkoshite* (Num. II). And Habakkuk: *The burden which Habakkuk the prophet saw* (Hab. I). And Zechariah: *The burden of the word of the Lord in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof* (Zech. IX and XII). And again in the following: *The burden of the word of the Lord upon Israel*. Let us therefore be content with that explanation, and now let us only say this: that the weight of the word of the Lord to Israel, or, as the LXX say, *upon Israel*, is indeed heavy, because it is called a weight, but it has some consolation, because it is taken up not against Israel, but to Israel. For it is one thing when, for example, we write *to* this or that person, and another when we write *against* this or that person; because in the one there is a portion of friendship, in the other an open confession of enmity.

Sciendumque quod abducto in captivitatem Israel, id est, decem tribubus, indifferenter pristino nomine, et duae tribus Juda et Benjamin appellentur Israel. Quod autem dicitur: In manu angeli ejus, sive Malachi, manum pro operibus accipite. Unde et in manu Aggaei, et in manu Jeremiae, et in manu Moysi factus est sermo Dei. In quorum enim manibus est iniquitas, et quorum dextra repleta est muneribus, et quorum manus plenae sunt sanguine, in his non fit sermo Dei; sed qui lavant inter innocentes manus suas (Psal. XXV). Quibus aquis et Pilatus manus lavare conatus est, ne Judaeorum blasphemiiis consentiret (Matt. XXVII), de quibus Psalmista laetatur, dicens: Super aquas refectionis educavit me (Ps. XXII, 2). De hac aqua per prophetam Dominus pollicetur: Aspergam vos aqua mundissima (Ezech. XXXVI). Qui autem peccator est, inebriatur calice Babylonio, et dicitur de eo: Spinae nascuntur in manu ebriosi (Prov. XXVI, 9).

LXX: Ponite super corda vestra. Hoc in Hebraico non habetur, sed puto de Aggaeo additum, in quo legimus: Et nunc ponite super corda vestra a die hac et supra (Aggaei II, 16). Post titulum igitur prophetae sive prooemium, dupliciter accipiendum est: Ponite super corda vestra, id est, animadvertite et considerate, id quod supra dictum est: Assumptio verbi Domini super Israel in manu Angeli ejus. Sive diligenter animadvertite, quae dicenda sunt postea, ut ea non corporis auribus, sed animi et cordis intelligentia cognoscatis, et faciatis vobis thesauros, in quibus recipiatis divitias sermonum Dei: et sapientia agat fiducialiter, cum dilatati fueritis, et repleto corde sermonibus Dei, pepuleritis cogitationes pessimas, quae egrediuntur de corde, homicidia, adulteria, fornicationes, furta (Matt. XV), et reliqua, et impleatis quod a Salvatore dictum est: Qui habet aures audiendi, audiat (Luc. VIII, 8)

Dilexi vos, dicit Dominus. Et dixistis, in quo dilexisti nos? Nonne frater erat Esau Jacob, dicit Dominus: et dilexi Jacob, Esau autem odio habui? Et posui montes ejus in solitudinem, et haereditatem ejus in dracones deserti. Quod si dixerit Idumaea, destructi sumus, sed revertentes aedificabimus quae destructa sunt: haec dicit Dominus exercituum. Isti aedificabunt, et ego destruiam: et vocabuntur termini impietatis, et populus cui iratus est Dominus usque in aeternum. Et oculi vestri videbunt, et vos dicetis: Magnificetur Dominus super terminum Israel.

And it should be known that after Israel, that is, the ten tribes, was led into captivity, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin are also called Israel, indifferently by the former name. As for what is said, **By the hand of his angel**, or **Malachi**, you should understand the hand to mean works. Hence, the word of God was made by the hand of Haggai, and by the hand of Jeremiah, and by the hand of Moses. For the word of God is not made in those in whose hands is iniquity, and whose right hand is filled with bribes, and whose hands are full of blood; but in those who wash their hands among the innocent (Psalm XXV). With which waters Pilate also tried to wash his hands, so as not to consent to the blasphemies of the Jews (Matt. XXVII), about which the Psalmist rejoices, saying: **He has led me over the waters of refreshment** (Ps. XXII, 2). Concerning this water, the Lord promises through the prophet: **I will sprinkle clean water upon you** (Ezek. XXXVI). But he who is a sinner is inebriated by the Babylonian cup, and it is said of him: **Thorns grow in the hand of a drunkard** (Prov. XXVI, 9).

LXX: **Place it upon your hearts**. This is not found in the Hebrew, but I think it was added from Haggai, in whom we read: **And now, place it upon your hearts from this day and upward** (Haggai II, 16). After the title or prologue of the prophet, therefore, it is to be understood in a twofold manner: **Place it upon your hearts**, that is, notice and consider what was said above: **The assumption of the word of the Lord upon Israel by the hand of His Angel**. Or, diligently attend to what will be said hereafter, so that you may know it not with the ears of the body, but with the intelligence of the mind and heart, and make for yourselves treasures in which you may receive the riches of the words of God; and so that wisdom may act confidently, when you have been enlarged, and, with a heart filled with the words of God, you have driven out the worst thoughts that proceed from the heart: murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts (Matt. XV), and the rest, and you may fulfill what was said by the Savior: **He who has ears to hear, let him hear** (Luke VIII, 8).

I have loved you, saith the Lord. And you have said: Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau brother to Jacob, saith the Lord, and I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau? And I have made his mountains a wilderness, and his inheritance for the dragons of the desert. But if Idumea shall say: We are destroyed, but we will return and build up what has been destroyed: thus saith the Lord of hosts. They shall build, and I will destroy: and they shall be called the borders of wickedness, and the people with whom the Lord is angry for ever. And your eyes shall see, and you shall say: The Lord be magnified over the border of Israel.

LXX: Dilexi vos, dicit Dominus: et dixistis, in quo dilexisti nos? Nonne frater erat Esau Jacob, dicit Dominus: et dilexi Jacob, Esau autem odio habui: et posui terminos ejus in desolationem, et haereditatem ejus in domata deserti. Quia dicit Idumaea, destructa est: revertamur et reaedificemus deserta. Haec dicit Dominus omnipotens: Ipsi aedificabunt, et ego destruam: et vocabuntur eis termini iniquitatis, et populus super quem praeparatus est Dominus usque in aeternum. Et oculi vestri videbunt, et vos dicetis: Magnificatus est Dominus super terminos Israel.

Israel, hoc est, Judas, ad quem solebat fieri verbum Dei et visio Domini, onus ejus et pondus suppliciorum gravissimum portare compellitur, ut graviora peccata deponat, et sentiat per tormenta, quae non sensit per beneficia. Et ne poena in suos videatur injusta, subjicit Dominus: Dilexi vos: Quem enim diligit Dominus corripit: castigat autem omnem filium quem recipit (Hebr. XII, 6): Et dicendo dilexi, praesens negat, dum praeteritum confitetur. Illique respondent temeritate qua peccant, obliiti beneficiorum ejus: In quo dilexisti nos?

Ad quae Dominus: Ut caetera, inquit, taceam, et quod nuper de Babylonia captivitate venistis, incunabula vestra tractabo, antequam nasceremini, immo priusquam Rebecca Esau et Jacob utero suo funderet (Gen. XXV): in Jacob vos dilexi: in Esau Idumaeos odio habui. Quem locum apostolus Paulus mystica disputatione eventilans, scribit ad Romanos, duo pariter testimonia de 945 Genesi Malachique [Al. Malachique] conjungens: Sed et Rebecca de uno concubitu habens Isaac patris nostri. Nam cum nondum nati essent, aut aliquid egissent boni vel mali, ut secundum electionem propositum Dei maneat: non ex operibus, sed ex vocante dictum est ei: quia major serviet minori, sicut scriptum est: Jacob dilexi, Esau autem odio habui (Rom. IX, 10, et seqq.). Hoc enim quod dicitur: Sicut scriptum est, et ad Geneseos librum, et ad prophetam Malachi refertur.

Non solum, ait, dilexi Jacob antequam nasceretur, et odio habui Esau priusquam ex utero matris funderetur; sed in posteros eorum amorem meum et odium conservavi: odium in Esau cujus montes qui appellantur Seir, redegit in solitudinem, et urbes feci esse desertas, et a serpentibus ac bestiis obtineri. Si autem dixerit Edom, hoc est, Esau: destructi quidem sumus, ad iram Dei, rursum aedificabimus civitates: haec Domino praedicente cognoscite: quod illis aedificantibus, ego destruam, et iram meam aeterna eorum vastitas approbabit.

LXX: I have loved you, saith the Lord: and you have said, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau brother to Jacob, saith the Lord: and I have loved Jacob, but have hated Esau: and I have laid his borders waste, and his inheritance for the dwellings of the desert. For Idumea will say, It is destroyed: let us return and rebuild the deserted places. Thus saith the Lord almighty: They themselves shall build, and I will destroy: and they shall be called the borders of iniquity, and the people against whom the Lord is arrayed for ever. And your eyes shall see, and you shall say: The Lord is magnified over the borders of Israel.

Israel, that is, Judah, to whom the word of God and the vision of the Lord was accustomed to come, is compelled to bear its burden and the most grievous weight of punishments, so that it may lay aside its more grievous sins, and feel through torments what it did not feel through benefits. And lest the punishment upon His own should seem unjust, the Lord adds: I have loved you: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth: and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth (Heb. XII, 6): And by saying I have loved, He denies the present, while He confesses the past. And they, with the same rashness with which they sin, forgetful of His benefits, respond: Wherein hast thou loved us?

To which the Lord says: To be silent about other matters, and that you have recently come from the Babylonian captivity, I will treat of your origins, before you were born, nay, before Rebecca brought forth Esau and Jacob from her womb (Gen. XXV): in Jacob I loved you; in Esau I hated the Idumeans. The apostle Paul, winnowing this passage in a mystical disputation, writes to the Romans, joining together two testimonies from Genesis and Malachi: But Rebecca also, having conceived by one, Isaac our father. For when they were not yet born, nor had done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand: not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said to her: The elder shall serve the younger, as it is written: Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated (Rom. IX, 10, et seqq.). For that which is said, As it is written, refers both to the book of Genesis and to the prophet Malachi.

Not only, He says, did I love Jacob before he was born, and hate Esau before he was brought forth from his mother's womb; but I have preserved my love and my hatred for their posterity: hatred for Esau, whose mountains, which are called Seir, I have reduced to a wilderness, and have made his cities deserted, and to be possessed by serpents and beasts. But if Edom, that is, Esau, should say: We have indeed been destroyed by the wrath of God, but we will again build cities: know this, with the Lord foretelling it: that as they build, I will destroy, and their eternal devastation will prove my wrath.

Odium igitur in Esau rebus ostendi, amorem autem in vos, hoc est, in Jacob, sequentibus approbabo. Illis destructis atque redactis ad solitudinem, videbunt oculi vestri, et dicetis: Magnificetur Dominus super terminum Israel; et ex comparatione malorum quae frater vester patitur, Dei in vos beneficia sentietis.

Judaei falso sibi blandiuntur, Edom Romanos et Israel in consummatione mundi se prophetari: quod destructo Romano imperio, hoc est, Idumaeo, regnum orbis veniat ad Judaeos.

Haec prout potuimus, historiae fundamenta jacentes, locuti sumus: nunc veniamus ad intelligentiam spirituales. Israel, vir, vel sensus cernens Deum, sive ut ego melius puto, εὐθύτατος Θεοῦ, id est, rectissimus Dei, diligitur a Domino, et vult dilectionis ejus in se scire rationem. Dominusque respondit, Esau et Jacob de una stirpe generatos, hoc est, vitia atque virtutes ex uno cordis fonte procedere: dum ex arbitrii libertate in utramque partem ut volumus, declinamus; sed priora nascuntur vitia per infantiam, pueritiam, juventutem, quae postea aetas firmior corripit atque supplantat.

Major frater hispidus est et sanguinarius (Genes. XXV): 946 venationibus, silvis et bestiis delectatur. Minor levis et simplex, et innocenter habitans domum. Deus fines Idumaeae, hoc est, terrenae et sanguinariae ponit in solitudinem, et nihil de terra crescere sinit et esse perpetuum. Quod si impudens malitia ea quae sunt Dei sermone destructa, rursum aedificare nitatur, Dominus se eorum quae instaurantur a vitiis, adversarium profitetur. Et postquam fuerint hostilium terminorum cuncta subversa: tunc oculos possumus videre Israelis, et sanctos quosque dicere: Magnificetur Dominus in terminis eorum, qui mente conspiciunt Deum (Sapient. XI).

Porro dilectio et odium Dei vel ex praescientia nascitur futurorum, vel ex operibus: alioquin novimus quod omnia Deus diligat, nec quidquam eorum oderit quae creavit; sed proprie eos suae vindicet charitati, qui vitiorum hostes sunt et rebelles. Et contrario illos odit, qui a Deo destructa cupiunt rursum extruere. Odisse autem Deus ἀνθρωποπάθως dicitur: ut flere, ut dolere, ut irasci: ut quando audimus odium ejus in malos, ea quae Deum intelligimus odisse, fugiamus.

Therefore, I have shown my hatred for Esau by deeds, but my love for you, that is, for Jacob, I will prove by what follows. When they have been destroyed and reduced to a wilderness, your eyes will see, and you will say: The Lord be magnified over the border of Israel; and from a comparison with the evils that your brother suffers, you will perceive God's benefits toward you.

The Jews falsely flatter themselves, prophesying that Edom is the Romans and they are Israel at the consummation of the world: that with the destruction of the Roman, that is, the Idumean, empire, the kingdom of the world will come to the Jews.

Having laid these foundations of the history as best we could, we have spoken: now let us come to the spiritual understanding. Israel, a man, or a sense, seeing God, or as I think better, εὐθύτατος Θεοῦ, that is, most upright of God, is loved by the Lord, and wishes to know the reason for His love for him. And the Lord answered that Esau and Jacob were generated from one stock, that is, that vices and virtues proceed from the one fountain of the heart: for by the freedom of the will we incline to either side as we wish; but vices are born first through infancy, boyhood, and youth, which a stronger age later corrects and supplants.

The elder brother is hairy and bloodthirsty (Gen. XXV): he delights in hunting, forests, and beasts. The younger is smooth and simple, and innocently dwelling at home. God sets the borders of Idumea, that is, of the earthly and bloodthirsty, in solitude, and allows nothing to grow from the earth and be perpetual. But if impudent malice should strive to rebuild those things which have been destroyed by the word of God, the Lord declares Himself an adversary to those things which are restored by vices. And after all things of the hostile borders have been overthrown, then we can see the eyes of Israel, and all the saints can say: The Lord be magnified in the borders of those who behold God with the mind (Wisdom XI).

Furthermore, the love and hatred of God arise either from foreknowledge of future things, or from works: otherwise, we know that God loves all things, nor does He hate any of the things which He has created; but He properly claims for His own charity those who are enemies and rebels to vices. And on the contrary, He hates those who desire to build up again what has been destroyed by God. Moreover, God is said to hate anthropopathically (ἀνθρωποπάθως): as to weep, to grieve, to be angry: so that when we hear of His hatred for the wicked, we may flee those things which we understand God to hate.

(Vers. 6.) Filius honorat patrem, et servus dominum suum: si ergo pater ego sum, ubi honor meus est? et si dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus? dicit Dominus exercituum. LXX: Filius glorificat patrem, et servus dominum suum timebit. Et si pater ego sum, ubi est gloria mea? Et si dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus? dicit Dominus omnipotens. Licet priusquam nasceremini, in Jacob quasi filios amare vos coeperim: tamen eligite quo me vocabulo nominetis, aut pater sum vester, aut dominus. Si pater, debitum patri honorem reddite, et dignam parente offerre pietatem. Si dominus, cur me contemnitis? cur dominum non timetis? Loquitur autem ad eos qui sub Zorobabel et Jesu filio Josedec, et Ezra sacerdote, et Neemia, de captivitate Babylonia sunt reversi (I Esdr. III), exstructoque altari, necdum templum aedificaverant, nec muros exstruxerant civitatis, et nihilominus in peccatis pristinis permanebant, Deum nec amore, nec timore venerantes. Quod autem gloriam diximus, vel honorem, et apud Graecos *δόξα*, et apud Hebraeos *947 CHABOD* (), unum verbum est; sed nos pro Latinae linguae proprietate, honorem posuimus. Nam et in Evangelio ubi loquitur Dominus, et Salvator: Pater, venit hora, clarifica Filium tuum, ut Filius tuus clarificet te (Joan. XVII, 1), apud Graecos *δόξασον* legitur, id est, glorifica. Quem locum plerique Latinorum honorifica, interpretati sunt. Simulque consideremus, quod filius ac servus in Scripturis sanctis voluntate fiat, non necessitate naturae. Qui enim spiritum adoptionis acceperit, in filium Dei vertitur: qui autem spiritum servitutis in timorem, Dei servus efficitur (Rom. VIII). Vult itaque primum Deus, ut filii ejus simus, et bonum voluntate faciamus: si hoc consequi volumus, ut saltem servos nos habeat, et a malis per suppliciorum formidinem recedamus. Legimus in malam partem filios: Eramus filii irae, et filii gehennae (Ephes. II, 3), quos Pharisei, mari terrisque circuitis, dignos genuere tormentis (Matth. XXIII). Et Judas proditor, filius perditionis appellatur (Joan. XVII); et in octogesimo octavo psalmo de Domino scribitur: Filius iniquitatis non apponet nocere ei (Ps. LXXXVIII, 23). In Osee quoque filii fornicationis vocantur, qui sunt de matre meretrice generati, de qua scriptum est: Fornicata est mater vestra (Osee II, 5). Et in Evangelio Judaei filii diaboli sugillantur: Vos de patre diabolo nati estis, et desideria patris vestri vultis facere (Joan. VIII, 44). In bonam partem filios legimus, ut filios Dei: Quotquot eum receperunt, dedit eis potestatem filios Dei fieri (Joan. I, 12).

(Verse 6.) A son honors his father, and a servant his master: if then I am a father, where is my honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts. LXX: A son glorifies his father, and a servant will fear his master. And if I am a father, where is my glory? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord almighty. Although before you were born, I began to love you as sons in Jacob, nevertheless, choose by what name you will call me: either I am your father, or your master. If a father, render the honor due to a father, and offer the piety worthy of a parent. If a master, why do you despise me? why do you not fear your master? Now, he speaks to those who, under Zerubbabel and Jeshua son of Jozadak, and Ezra the priest, and Nehemiah, had returned from the Babylonian captivity (1 Esdras 3), and having built an altar, had not yet built the temple, nor had they constructed the walls of the city, and nevertheless they remained in their former sins, venerating God with neither love nor fear. Moreover, what we have called glory, or honor, which is **δόξα** among the Greeks and CHABOD among the Hebrews, is one word; but we, according to the property of the Latin language, have used **honorem**. For also in the Gospel where the Lord and Savior speaks: 'Father, the hour has come, glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you' (John 17:1), among the Greeks one reads **δόξασον**, that is, 'glorify'. This passage most of the Latins have interpreted as 'honor'. And at the same time let us consider that, in the Holy Scriptures, one becomes a son and a servant by will, not by the necessity of nature. For he who has received the spirit of adoption is turned into a son of God; but he who has received the spirit of servitude unto fear is made a servant of God (Romans 8). Therefore, God first wills that we be his sons and do good by will: if we wish to attain this, [the path is] that he should at least have us as servants, and that we should withdraw from evils through fear of punishments. We read of 'sons' in a bad sense: 'We were sons of wrath, and sons of gehenna' (Ephesians 2:3), whom the Pharisees, having traversed sea and land, begot as worthy of torments (Matthew 23). And Judas the betrayer is called 'the son of perdition' (John 17); and in the eighty-eighth psalm it is written of the Lord: 'The son of iniquity shall not harm him' (Psalm 88:23). In Hosea also they are called 'sons of fornication', who are begotten of a harlot mother, of whom it is written: 'Your mother has played the harlot' (Hosea 2:5). And in the Gospel the Jews are reproached as 'sons of the devil': 'You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires' (John 8:44). We read of 'sons' in a good sense, as 'sons of God': 'To all who received him, he gave them power to become sons of God' (John 1:12).

Et filios sapientiae, Evangelio proclamante: Justificata est sapientia, a filiis suis (Matth. XI, 19): Et filios Abraham: Amen amen dico vobis, potest Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abraham (Matth. III, 9). Et filios Apostoli: Filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec Christus formetur in vobis (Galat. IV, 19), et multa istiusmodi. Filius ergo honorat, sive clarificat patrem, juxta illud quod scriptum est: Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus: ut videant vestra opera, et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui est in coelis (Matth. V, 16). Servus quoque honorat dominum suum non eadem charitate qua filius; sed ἀπὸ κοινῶ subauditur, honorat filius patrem, servus dominum suum; et tamen Deus omnipotens sciens differentiam filii et servi, et a filio gloriam, a servo timorem expetit: Principium enim sapientiae timor Domini (Eccl. I, 16), ut de timore servorum, 948 ad filiorum gloriam transeamus.

(Vers. 7.) Ad vos, o sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum, et dixistis: In quo despeximus nomen tuum? Offertis super altare meum panem pollutum, et dicitis: In quo polluimus te? in eo quod dicitis, mensa Domini despecta est. LXX: Vos, sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum, et dixistis: In quo despeximus nomen tuum? Offerentes ad altare meum panes pollutos, et dixistis: In quo polluimus ipsos? in eo quod dicitis, mensa Domini despecta est ÷ et quae superposita sunt, despexistis ÷ Quod autem sequitur: Et quae superposita sunt despexistis, obelo prae-notavimus, quia in Hebraico non habetur, et de sequentibus additum est.

Ad vos, igitur, o sacerdotes, qui despicitis nomen meum, iste sermo dirigitur: qui reversi de Babylone, metu praeteritae servitutis, debueratis ad Dominum plena mente converti: et non solum hoc non facitis, sed imitantes Cain, superbis contra Deum vocibus respondentes, sciscitamine ab eo quem occulta non fallunt, et dicitur: In quo despeximus nomen tuum (Gen. IV)? ut dissimulationis impudentia, vulnus conscientiae protegetis. Vultis ergo scire in quo despexeritis nomen meum? Offertis super altare meum panem pollutum: panes videlicet propositionis, quos juxta traditiones Hebraicas, ipsi serere, ipsi demetere, ipsi molere, ipsi coquere debebatis: et nunc sumitis quoscumque de medio, et voce temeraria respondetis, et dicitis, in quo polluimus eos, sive te? Dum enim sacramenta violantur, ipse cujus sunt sacramenta violatur. Hoc autem quod sequitur: In eo quod dicitis, mensa Domini despecta est, possumus ita interpretari: Quod reversi de Babylone, necdum templo aedificato, manentes in casulis, et in ruinis urbis antiquae, altare tantum exstruxerant, non ejusdem gloriae, cujus pristinum fuerat, et putabant deesse religionis sanctimoniam, quia deerat aedificationis ambitio.

And 'sons of wisdom', with the Gospel proclaiming: 'Wisdom is justified by her children' (Matthew 11:19): And 'sons of Abraham': 'Amen, amen, I say to you, God is able from these stones to raise up sons for Abraham' (Matthew 3:9). And 'sons of the Apostle': 'My little children, for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you' (Galatians 4:19), and many similar instances. Therefore, a son honors, or glorifies, his father, according to that which is written: 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:16). A servant also honors his master, not with the same charity as a son; but it is understood **ἀπὸ κοινοῦ** (in common): 'a son honors his father, a servant his master'; and yet almighty God, knowing the difference between a son and a servant, seeks glory from the son and fear from the servant: for 'the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord' (Ecclesiastes 1:16), so that from the fear of servants, we may pass over to the glory of sons.

(Verse 7.) To you, O priests, who despise my name, and have said: In what have we despised your name? You offer upon my altar polluted bread, and you say: In what have we polluted you? in that you say, the table of the Lord is despised. LXX: You, priests, who despise my name, and have said: In what have we despised your name? Offering polluted loaves at my altar, and you have said: In what have we polluted them? in that you say, the table of the Lord is despised ÷ and what was placed upon it, you have despised ÷ But what follows, "And what was placed upon it, you have despised," we have marked with an obelus, because it is not in the Hebrew, and has been added from what follows.

To you, therefore, O priests, who despise my name, this discourse is directed: you who, having returned from Babylon, out of fear of your past servitude, ought to have turned to the Lord with your whole mind: and not only do you not do this, but, imitating Cain, responding with proud words against God, you inquire of him whom secrets do not deceive, and it is said: "In what have we despised your name" (Gen. IV)? so that by the impudence of dissimulation, you may protect the wound of your conscience. Do you wish, then, to know in what you have despised my name? You offer upon my altar polluted bread: namely, the showbread, which, according to Hebrew traditions, you yourselves ought to have sown, harvested, ground, and baked: and now you take any whatsoever from the midst, and with a rash voice you answer and say, "in what have we polluted them," or "you"? For when the sacraments (sacramenta) are violated, he whose sacraments they are is violated. But what follows, "In that you say, the table of the Lord is despised," we can interpret thus: That having returned from Babylon, with the temple not yet built, dwelling in huts and in the ruins of the ancient city, they had constructed only an altar, not of the same glory as the former had been, and they thought the sanctity of religion was lacking because the ambition of the edifice was absent.

Tenues lineas duximus, quibus imprimenda est explanatio spiritualis. Corripit sermo divinus episcopos, atque presbyteros et diaconos negligentes, sive quoniam genus sacerdotale et regale sumus, omnes qui baptizati in Christo, Christi censentur [Al. censemur] nomine, cur despiciant nomen Dei: et interrogantibus, in quo despererint nomen ejus, causas monstrat offensae: Offeritis, inquit, super altare meum panem pollutum. Polluimus panem, id est, corpus Christi, quando indigni accedimus ad altare, et sordidi mundum sanguinem bibimus, et dicimus, mensa Domini despecta est; non quod hoc aliquis audeat dicere, et quod impie cogitat scelerata voce, proferre; sed opera peccatorum despiciunt mensam Dei.

Possumus et aliter dicere: Doctor Ecclesiae qui spiritualem conficit panem, et eum populis dividit, si vel propter humanam gloriam, vel lucra saeculi quae gloriam consequuntur, loquatur in populis et divitibus blandiatur, et honoret peccatores, et juxta Jacobum suscipiat eos, qui cum annulis aureis ad se veniunt (Jacob. II), et pauperes sanctos repellat, nomen Dei despicit, et panem polluit doctrinarum, et in ipsum Deum jacet contumelias, mensam Scripturarum ejus mensis idolorum saecularisque doctrinae putans esse communem.

(Vers. 8.) Si offeratis caecum ad immolandum, nonne malum est? Et si offeratis claudum et languidum, nonne malum est? offer illud duci tuo, si placuerit ei, aut si susceperit faciem tuam, dicit Dominus exercituum. LXX: Quia si offeratis caecum in sacrificium, nonne malum est? Et si offeratis claudum et languidum, nonne malum est? offer illud duci tuo, si susceperit te, si acceperit faciem tuam, dicit Dominus omnipotens. De diversitate victimarum, et quae vel offerri debeant, vel non offerri, in Levitico plenius discimus (Levit. XXI et XXII). Reversi itaque de Babylone sacerdotes et Levitae, janitores atque cantores, et Nathinnaei servique Salomonis, quorum Ezras scribit *κατάλογον*, illicitas Deo victimas offerebant, caecas videlicet et claudas, ac varia debilitate confectas (I Esd. II); hoc est enim quod dicit languidum, uno cuncta sermone comprehendens. Si istiusmodi, inquit, duci tuo offeres munera, nonne respueret? nonne sibi factam putaret injuriam? et hoc audetis offerre Deo, quod dare hominibus non audetis? Longum est nunc omnium victimarum aperire mysteria: de his tantum loquar quae praesenti capitulo continentur. Caeca est animae victima, quae non illustratur Christi lumine, nec habet oculum de Evangelio contuentem (Matth. 6). 950 Clauda est rogantis oratio, quae duplici mente accedit ad precandum, et audit cum populo Judaeorum: Usquequo claudicatis utroque pede (III Reg. XVIII, 21)? Et languida, et omni infirmitate cooperta, quae non habet Christi Dei virtutem, Deique sapientiam.

We have drawn faint lines, upon which the spiritual explanation is to be imprinted. The divine word rebukes negligent bishops, and presbyters and deacons, or rather, since we are a priestly and royal race, all who, baptized in Christ, are counted by the name of Christ [Alt: are counted], why they despise the name of God: and to those asking in what they have despised his name, it shows the causes of the offense: "You offer," it says, "upon my altar polluted bread." We pollute the bread, that is, the body of Christ, when we unworthily approach the altar, and, being unclean, drink the pure blood, and say, "the table of the Lord is despised"; not that anyone would dare to say this, and to utter with a wicked voice what he impiously thinks; but the works of sinners despise the table of God.

We can also say it another way: The Doctor of the Church who prepares the spiritual bread and distributes it to the peoples, if either for the sake of human glory, or the worldly gains that follow glory, he speaks among the people and flatters the rich, and honors sinners, and according to James receives those who come to him with gold rings (James II), and repels the holy poor, he despises the name of God, and pollutes the bread of doctrines, and casts insults against God himself, thinking the table of His Scriptures to be common with the tables of idols and of worldly doctrine.

(Verse 8.) If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it to your governor; will he be pleased with it, or will he accept your person? says the Lord of hosts. Septuagint: For if you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil? Offer it to your governor; will he receive you, will he accept your person? says the Lord Almighty. We learn more fully in Leviticus about the diversity of victims, and which should or should not be offered (Leviticus 21 and 22). And so, having returned from Babylon, the priests and Levites, the gatekeepers and singers, and the Nethinim and the servants of Solomon, of whom Ezra writes a list (**κατάλογον**), were offering unlawful victims to God, namely, blind and lame ones, and those afflicted with various weaknesses (1 Esdras 2); for this is what "sick" means, comprehending all things in a single word. If you offer gifts of this kind to your governor, he says, would he not reject them? Would he not consider it an injury done to himself? And you dare to offer to God what you do not dare to give to men? It would be too long now to unfold the mysteries of all the victims; I will speak only of those that are contained in the present chapter. The victim of the soul is blind which is not illuminated by the light of Christ, nor has an eye gazing from the Gospel (Matthew 6). 950 The prayer of one who asks is lame which approaches prayer with a double mind, and hears with the people of the Jews: "How long will you limp on both feet?" (3 Kings 18:21). And it is sick, and covered with every infirmity, which does not have the power of Christ God, and the wisdom of God.

Istiusmodi preces, quae sine lumine veritatis sunt, et non habent sapientiae firma vestigia, et debilitatibus variis contabescunt, si offerantur Ecclesiarum principi, aut cuilibet erudito sapientique doctori, nonne repudiabuntur, et in contumeliam ejus recident, qui talia est ausus offerre?

(Vers. 9.) Et nunc deprecamini vultum Dei ut misereatur vestri: de manu enim vestra factum est hoc, si quomodo suscipiat facies vestras, dicit Dominus exercituum. Quis est in vobis qui claudat ostia, et incendat altare meum gratuito? LXX: Et nunc deprecamini faciem Dei vestri, et rogate eum: in manibus vestris facta sunt haec, si suscipiam ex vobis facies vestras, dicit Dominus omnipotens: quia et in vobis claudentur ostia, et non succendetur altare meum gratis. Multum in hoc loco Septuaginta interpretes ab Hebraica veritate discordant: et necesse est, ubi diversa est interpretatio, ut diversus et sensus sit. Quia obtulistis claudas et caecas et debiles victimas, vos enim haec quae dixi universa fecistis: agite poenitentiam, si quo modo misereatur vestri Deus: nullus enim in vobis usque ad extremum ministerium, non dico pontifex, non sacerdos, non Levita, non cantor, sed nec janitor quidem, et is qui ignem supponit altari ad cremandum holocausta, qui non a me mercedem accipiat laboris sui. Hoc autem dicens, decimas significat omnium frugum, quae offeruntur a populis. Ex quo ostenditur, acceptiorem esse Domino servitutem, quae mercedem in praesentiarum non postulat. Unde et Apostolus gratis praedicat Evangelium (I Thess. II); et nocte et die manibus suis laborat, ne cui oneri sit et hanc gloriam suam gratuitaee predicationis in gentibus, nequaquam evacuandam esse testatur (II Thess. III). Porro LXX alium multo suggerunt sensum: O sacerdotes, qui hostias debiles immolatis, convertimini ad poenitentiam, et vultum Domini deprecamini et orate pro operibus manuumstrarum. Quod autem infert: Si suscipiam ex vobis facies vestras, nescio an conveniat exhortationi poenitentiae. Nemo enim dicit, ora me, et non parcam tibi. Sequitur: In vobis claudentur ostia, Patris videlicet, et Filii, et Spiritus sancti. Unde Salvator loquitur: Ego sum ostium (Joan. X, 9). Sive aliter: Non vobis aperientur ostia Scripturarum, nec perspicere poteritis sancta sanctorum, nec Domini sacramenta cognoscere; nec succendere thymiana ejus ad altare: quia orationes vestrae ad illum non pervenient. Et hoc quod dicitur *δωρεάν*, et nos interpretati sumus gratuito: qui hanc sequuntur intelligentiam quam nunc exponimus, vertunt in gratiam, ut videlicet gratiam non habeant altari Domini serviendi.

If prayers of this kind, which are without the light of truth, and do not have the firm footsteps of wisdom, and waste away with various weaknesses, are offered to the prince of the Churches, or to any learned and wise doctor, will they not be repudiated, and will they not fall back as an insult upon him who dared to offer such things?

(Verse 9) And now, entreat the face of God, that he may have mercy on you: for this has been done by your hand, whether he will receive your persons, says the Lord of hosts. Who is there among you that would shut the doors, and kindle my altar for nothing? The Septuagint: And now entreat the face of your God, and beseech him: these things have been done by your hands, whether I shall receive your persons from you, says the Lord almighty: for among you also the doors shall be shut, and my altar shall not be kindled for free. In this passage, the Septuagint interpreters differ greatly from the Hebrew truth: and it is necessary that where the interpretation is different, the sense should also be different. Because you have offered lame, blind, and weak victims—for you have done all these things I have mentioned—do penance, if in any way God may have mercy on you: for there is no one among you, down to the lowliest ministry—I do not say a pontiff, not a priest, not a Levite, not a singer, but not even a doorkeeper, and he who places fire on the altar to burn the holocausts—who does not receive from me a reward for his labor. But in saying this, he signifies the tithes of all the fruits, which are offered by the peoples. From this it is shown that service which does not demand a reward in the present is more acceptable to the Lord. Hence the Apostle also preaches the Gospel for free (I Thess. II); and he labors night and day with his own hands, lest he be a burden to anyone, and he testifies that this glory of his, of preaching for free among the gentiles, should by no means be made void (II Thess. III). Furthermore, the Septuagint suggest a very different sense: O priests, who offer weak victims, turn to penance, and entreat the face of the Lord and pray for the works of your hands. But as for what it adds, 'Whether I shall receive your persons from you,' I do not know if this fits with an exhortation to penance. For no one says, 'Pray to me, and I will not spare you.' It follows: 'Among you the doors shall be shut,' namely, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Whence the Savior says: 'I am the door' (John 10:9). Or alternatively: The doors of the Scriptures will not be opened to you, nor will you be able to see into the holy of holies, nor to know the Lord's sacraments; nor to burn his incense at the altar: because your prayers will not reach him. And as for this word, *δωρεάν*, which we have translated as 'for nothing' (gratuito): those who follow this interpretation which we are now explaining, render it as 'grace,' so that they would not have the grace of serving at the Lord's altar.

(Vers. 10 seqq.) Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus exercituum, et munus non suscipiam de manu vestra: ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, et in omni loco sacrificatur, et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda, quia magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, dicit Dominus exercituum. Et vos pollulistis illud, in eo quod dicitis: Mensa Domini contaminata est, et quod super ponitur, contemptibile est cum igne qui illud devorat. Et dixistis: Ecce de labore, et exsufflastis illud, dicit Dominus exercituum. Et intulistis de rapinis claudum, et languidum, et intulistis munus: numquid suscipiam illud de manu vestra? dicit Dominus.

LXX: Non est voluntas mea in vobis, dicit Dominus omnipotens, et sacrificium non suscipiam de manibus vestris, quia ab ortu solis usque ad occasum nomen meum gloriosum est in gentibus: et in omni loco incensum offertur nomini meo, et sacrificium mundum, quia magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, dicit Dominus omnipotens. Vos autem contaminastis illud, in eo quod dicitis, mensa Domini polluta est, et qui superponuntur despecti sunt cibi ejus, et dixistis, haec de afflictione sunt, et exsufflastis ea, dicit Dominus omnipotens. Et inferebatis rapinas, et clauda et debilia, et offerebatis sacrificium: si suscipiam ea de manibus vestris, dicit Dominus omnipotens?

Regula Scripturarum est: Ubi manifestissima prophetia de futuris textitur, per incerta allegoriae non extenuare quae scripta sunt. Ergo proprie nunc ad sacerdotes Judaeorum sermo fit Domini, qui offerunt caecum et claudum, et languidum ad immolandum; ut sciant carnalibus victimis spirituales victimas successuras. Et nequaquam taurorum hircorumque sanguinem; sed thymiana, hoc est, sanctorum orationes Domino offerendas, et non in una orbis provincia Judaea, nec in una Judaeae urbe Jerusalem; sed in omni loco offerri oblationem, nequaquam immundam, ut a populo Israel; sed mundam, ut in caeremoniis Christianorum.

Ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen Domini in gentibus, dicente Salvatore: Pater, manifestavi nomen tuum hominibus (Joan. XVII, 6). Cumque, inquit, nomen meum magnum in gentibus sit futurum, o vos principes Judaeorum, pollulistis illud atque polluitis. Sic enim futurorum textit vaticinium, ut praesens tempus non deserat.

Propterea autem, o sacerdotes et principes Judaeorum, in omni loco mihi offertur oblatio munda, et magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, quia dicitis mensa Domini contaminata est, et quod superponitur, contemptibile est cum igne qui illud devorat. Reversus de Babylone populus, altare tantum fortuitis et impolitis lapidibus, juxta Ezrae librum exstruxerunt (I Ezr. VI), absque templo, absque urbis aedificiis, absque extruptione murorum, et putabat minorem esse cultum religionis, quia templi ornatu deerat.

(Verses 10 ff.) I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept a gift from your hand: for from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place sacrifice is made, and a pure oblation is offered to my name, because my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. And you have polluted it, in that you say: The table of the Lord is contaminated, and what is placed upon it is contemptible, with the fire that devours it. And you have said: Behold, it is from toil, and you have snorted at it, says the Lord of hosts. And you have brought what was taken by robbery, and the lame, and the sick, and you have brought it as a gift: shall I accept it from your hand? says the Lord.

LXX: I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept a sacrifice from your hands, because from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is glorious among the nations: and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure sacrifice, because my name is great among the nations, says the Lord Almighty. But you have contaminated it, in that you say, the table of the Lord is polluted, and the foods that are placed upon it are despised, and you have said, these things are from affliction, and you have snorted at them, says the Lord Almighty. And you brought things taken by robbery, and the lame and the weak, and you offered a sacrifice: should I accept these from your hands, says the Lord Almighty?

The rule of the Scriptures is: where a most manifest prophecy of future things is woven, not to diminish what is written through the uncertainties of allegory. Therefore, the Lord's word is now properly addressed to the priests of the Jews, who offer the blind, the lame, and the weak for sacrifice, so that they may know that spiritual victims will succeed carnal victims. And not the blood of bulls and goats at all, but incense—that is, the prayers of the saints—is to be offered to the Lord; and not in one province of the world, Judea, nor in one city of Judea, Jerusalem, but in every place a pure oblation is to be offered, by no means unclean like that of the people of Israel, but pure, as in the ceremonies of the Christians.

For from the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is great among the nations, as the Savior says: 'Father, I have manifested your name to men' (John 17:6). And since, He says, my name will be great among the nations, O you princes of the Jews, you have polluted it and you continue to pollute it. For thus He weaves the prophecy of future things, so as not to abandon the present time.

Therefore, O priests and princes of the Jews, a pure oblation is offered to me in every place, and my name is great among the nations, because you say the table of the Lord is contaminated, and what is placed upon it is contemptible, along with the fire that devours it. The people, having returned from Babylon, built only an altar with random and unpolished stones, according to the book of Ezra (1 Ezra 6), without a temple, without city buildings, without the construction of walls, and they thought the religious worship was lesser because the adornment of the temple was lacking.

Ad quos Dominus loquitur: Pollutum putatis altare, et holocausta ac victimas quae supra imponuntur: ignem quoque qui victimas devorat, esse pollutum; nec intelligitis omnipotentem Deum, non aurum, gemmasque, et hostiarum multitudinem quaerere, sed offerentium voluntates.

Qui autem arbitrantur non altare, sed mensam debere intelligi, in qua panes ponebantur, quomodo hoc interpretari possint quod sequitur, cum igne qui illud devorat, omnino non video: neque enim ignis devorat panes propositionis, quos semper novos [Al. novis] pro veteribus commutabant, et ablati cedebant in usus sacerdotum (Levit. II, 4).

Aut certe ita intelligendum: Polluistis nomen meum in eo quod dicitis: quid prodest si offeramus optima? qualiacumque fuerint quae offeruntur, igne sunt devoranda. Fructus autem altaris ignis est, cibusque ignis hostiae vel holocausta.

Nec sufficit prioris sermonis impietas, sed etiam hoc dixistis: Ecce de labore, et exsufflastis illud, dicit Dominus exercituum. Cujus orationis hic sensus est: Dixistis, de captivitate reversi sumus, hostibus praedae fuimus, multum in longo itinere laboravimus, pauperes sumus, quidquid habere potuimus, viae labore consumptum est: qualiacumque habemus, offerimus; et haec dicendo exsufflastis vestra sacrificia, id est, exsufflatione mea digna fecistis: sive ut in Hebraeo legi potest: Et exsufflastis me haec dicendo; non sacrificio, sed mihi cui sacrificabatis, fecistis injuriam.

Quamobrem nequaquam suscipiam illud de manu vestra, dicit Dominus omnipotens.

Quidam putant hoc quod ad Judaeos specialiter dicitur, eo quod victimae eorum immundae sint atque pollutae, et sacrificium transferatur ad gentes, intelligi debere super Ecclesiae sacerdotibus, qui negligenter offerunt victimas Domino. Quod si recipimus: ergo ab Ecclesia rursum ad aliam religionem victimae transferendae sunt. Et quomodo Legi Evangelium, sic rursum Evangelio ea quae non sunt futura, succedent.

Mensam quoque Domini contaminatam ad sanctas Scripturas referunt, si aliter quam scriptae sunt, intelligantur.

Maledictus dolosus qui habet in grege suo masculum, et votum faciens immolat debile Domino. Quia rex magnus ego sum [Vulg. tacet sum], dicit Dominus exercituum, et nomen meum horribile in gentibus. + Et nunc ad vos mandatum hoc, o sacerdotes: Si nolueritis audire, et si nolueritis ponere super cor, ut detis gloriam nomini meo, ait Dominus exercituum: mittam in vos egestatem, et maledicam benedictionibus 954 vestris et maledicam illis, quoniam non posuistis super cor.

To them the Lord speaks: You think the altar is polluted, and the holocausts and victims that are placed upon it; also that the fire which devours the victims is polluted; nor do you understand that Almighty God seeks not gold, gems, and a multitude of sacrifices, but the wills of those who offer them.

But as for those who think that not the altar, but the table on which the loaves were placed, should be understood, I do not see at all how they can interpret what follows, 'with the fire that devours it'; for fire does not devour the loaves of proposition, which they always exchanged, new for old, and which, when removed, went to the use of the priests (Leviticus 2:4).

Or surely it is to be understood thus: You have polluted my name in that you say, 'What good is it if we offer the best things?' Whatever things are offered are to be devoured by fire. For the fruit of the altar is fire, and the food of the fire is the victim or the holocausts.

Nor is the impiety of the former speech sufficient, but you have also said this: 'Behold, it is from toil,' and you have snorted at it, says the Lord of hosts. The meaning of this speech is this: You have said, 'We have returned from captivity, we have been prey to our enemies, we have labored much on the long journey, we are poor, whatever we could have has been consumed by the labor of the road: whatever we have, we offer'; and by saying these things you have snorted at your sacrifices, that is, you have made them worthy of my scorn; or as it can be read in the Hebrew: 'And you have snorted at me' by saying these things; you have done injury not to the sacrifice, but to me to whom you were sacrificing.

Wherefore I will by no means accept it from your hand, says the Lord Almighty.

Some think that this which is said specifically to the Jews—because their victims are unclean and polluted, and the sacrifice is transferred to the Gentiles—ought to be understood as concerning the priests of the Church, who negligently offer victims to the Lord. But if we accept this, then the victims must be transferred again from the Church to another religion. And just as the Gospel succeeded the Law, so again things that are not to be will succeed the Gospel.

They also refer the 'contaminated table of the Lord' to the holy Scriptures, if they are understood otherwise than they are written.

Cursed be the deceitful man who has a male in his flock, and making a vow, sacrifices a weak one to the Lord. For I am a great king [the Vulgate omits *sum*], says the Lord of hosts, and my name is terrible among the nations. + And now, to you is this commandment, O priests: If you will not hear, and if you will not lay it to heart, to give glory to my name, says the Lord of hosts: I will send poverty upon you, and I will curse your blessings, and I will curse them, because you have not laid it to heart.

LXX: Et maledictus qui erat potens, et habebat in grege suo masculum, et votum ejus super eo, et immolat debile Domino: quia rex magnus ego sum, dicit Dominus omnipotens, et nomen meum illustre in gentibus. Et nunc mandatum hoc ad vos, o sacerdotes, si non audieritis, et si non posueritis cor vestrum, ut detis gloriam nomini meo, dicit Dominus omnipotens: mittam super vos maledictionem, et maledicam benedictioni vestrae, et maledicam ei ** et dissipabo benedictionem vestram ÷ et non erit vobis; quia vos non ponitis in cor vestrum. Hoc quod scriptum est, et dissipabo benedictionem vestram, a LXX additum est, et in Hebraico non habetur.

Quidquid potest in excusationem peccati sui humanus animus invenire, et falsa se satisfactione defendere, hoc praevidens sermo divinus corripit atque condemnat. Et est sensus, quia offertis caecum et claudum et languidum, et hoc ipsum non de vestro, sed de rapinis, et spoliis fletibusque miserorum, et insuper dicitis, de labore et paupertate offerimus quod habemus: propterea ego dico generaliter, ut vos arguat propria conscientia. Certe obtenditis paupertatem et captivitatis injuriam, et tenuitatem rei familiaris: audite quod infero: Maledictus dolosus qui habet in grege suo masculum, et votum faciens immolat debile Domino. Si non habes masculum, nihil tibi nocet maledictio. Haec autem dicendo, ostendit eos habere quae optima sunt, et offerre quae mala sunt. Ad vos igitur, o sacerdotes, hoc mandatum est, fecistis quod impium est in contemptum mei. Sed quia malo poenitentiam peccatoris, quam mortem, etiam nunc dico: Si me audire nolueritis, nec intelligere, ut detis nomini meo gloriam, quod est horribile in gentibus, veram in vos mittam penuriam, ut nequaquam mentientes; sed omnium rerum coacti egestate, dicatis vos non habere optima, quae offeratis. Et maledicam, inquit, benedictionibus vestris, hoc est, his quae nunc meis benedictionibus possidetis: sive quidquid a vobis benedicetur [Al. beneditur], a me maledictum erit. Et maledicam illis, subauditur benedictionibus vestris; quoniam noluistis intelligere quae dicuntur; hoc est enim quod dicitur: non posuistis super cor.

Possumus maledictum et dolosum accipere populum Judaeorum, qui cum haberet in grege suo masculum Dominum Salvatorem, et immaculatum agnum, qui tollit peccata mundi (Joan. I), et omnium prophetarum vaticinatione commonitus, ut immolaret atque susciperet arietem, qui haerebat ex cornibus in virgulto Sabec (Gen. XXII), hoc facere noluit; sed immolat debile Domino, crucifigens Salvatorem, et eligens Barabbam latrocinii et seditionis auctorem (Joan. XVIII), qui juxta mysticos intellectus refertur ad diabolum: illisque contemnentibus, et praeferentibus diabolum Salvatori, nomen Christi horribile est in gentibus, quae passionem Domini susceperunt, et eum formidoloso honore venerantur.

LXX: And cursed is he who was able, and had a male in his flock, and his vow is upon it, and he sacrifices a weak one to the Lord: for I am a great king, says the Lord Almighty, and my name is illustrious among the nations. And now this commandment is to you, O priests, if you will not hear, and if you will not set your heart, to give glory to my name, says the Lord Almighty: I will send a curse upon you, and I will curse your blessing, and I will curse it ** and I will scatter your blessing ÷ and it will not be for you; because you do not set it in your heart. This which is written, "and I will scatter your blessing," was added by the LXX, and is not found in the Hebrew.

Whatever the human mind can find to excuse its sin, and to defend itself with false satisfaction, the divine word, foreseeing this, rebukes and condemns. And the meaning is this: because you offer the blind and the lame and the sick, and this not from your own property, but from robberies, and spoils, and the tears of the wretched, and moreover you say, "from our labor and poverty we offer what we have": for this reason I speak generally, that your own conscience may convict you. Certainly you plead poverty and the injury of captivity, and the meagerness of your household's substance: hear what I add: "Cursed be the deceitful man who has a male in his flock, and making a vow, sacrifices a weak one to the Lord." If you do not have a male, the curse does not harm you. But by saying these things, he shows that they have what is best, and offer what is worst. To you, therefore, O priests, is this commandment; you have done what is impious in contempt of me. But because I prefer the repentance of a sinner to his death, even now I say: If you will not hear me, nor understand, so as to give glory to my name, which is terrible among the nations, I will send true want upon you, so that you will not be lying at all, but, compelled by the lack of all things, you will say that you do not have the best things to offer. And I will curse, he says, your blessings, that is, those things which you now possess by my blessings: or whatever will be blessed by you [alternative reading: *is blessed*], will be cursed by me. "And I will curse them," that is, "your blessings" is understood; because you were unwilling to understand what is said; for this is what is meant by: "you have not laid it to heart."

We can understand the cursed and deceitful one to be the Jewish people, who, although they had in their flock the male, the Lord Savior, and the immaculate lamb who takes away the sins of the world (John 1), and were warned by the prophecy of all the prophets to sacrifice and receive the ram that was caught by its horns in the thicket of Sabec (Gen. 22), refused to do so; but they sacrifice a weak thing to the Lord, crucifying the Savior and choosing Barabbas, the author of robbery and sedition (John 18), who, according to mystical interpretations, refers to the devil. And with them scorning and preferring the devil to the Savior, the name of Christ is terrible among the nations, which have received the passion of the Lord and venerate him with awesome honor.

De nobis quoque dici potest: Si creati a Deo sapientes, habentesque naturam sacris congruam disciplinis, nostrum negligamus ingenium, et nos dedamus vitiis atque luxuriae, et habentes masculum, immolemus debile Domino. Debilis autem est, et maculata nostra oratio, quando ira, invidia, inimicitii, et alia animi perturbatione corrumpitur: si offerentes munus ad altare, et recordati quod aliquid frater noster habeat adversum nos, non ante pergimus, et satis ei facimus (Mat. V, 23). Unde et Apostolus praecipit: Volo ergo viros orare in omni loco, levantes sanctas manus sine ira et disceptatione (I Tim. II, 8).

Pastorque cogitationumstrarum atque virtutum sensus est, de quo in centesimo secundo Psalmo (Vers. 1) dicitur: Benedic, anima mea, Domino, et omnia quae intra me sunt nomini sancto ejus. Qui si gregem suum bene rexerit, impletur in eo illa benedictio: Benedicta armenta bouum tuorum, et greges ovium tuarum (Deut. XXVIII, 4). Sin autem habens naturaliter masculum, id est, forte, rigidum ac robustum, imolet leve vel nimia mollitia femineum atque lascivum, vel diversis animae perturbationibus debile atque corruptum, sentiet in se completum esse quod scriptum est: Potentes potenter tormenta patientur (Sap. VI, 7). Et: Cui plus dederint, plus exigunt ab eo (Luc. VIII).

Unde proprie sacerdotibus dicitur, quod si audire noluerint, et corde retinere, ut dent gloriam nomini Domini per bonam conversationem (Rom. II); sed econtrario nomen illius propter eos maledicatur in gentibus, mittat in illos egestatem bonorum omnium, et benedictiones eorum, vertat in maledictionem. Qui sanitate abutuntur in libidinem, et divitias vertunt in luxuriam, bonamque famam sordida conversatione deturpant, hi benedictiones Dei mutant in maledictionem.

Vel certe, quia ad Sacerdotes proprie mandatum est, vertuntur benedictiones eorum in maledictionem, quando non benedicunt sanctis ex vero cordis affectu, sicut Isaac Jacob, et Jacob patriarchis, et Moyses duodecim tribubus (Gen. XXVII et XLIX, et Deut. XXIII), sed per dulces sermones et benedictiones decipiunt corda innocentium (Rom. XVI), et qui inique agunt benedicuntur ab eis, adulanturque peccatoribus dummodo divites sint atque eorum vitiis blandiuntur, de quibus dicitur: Populus meus, qui beatos vos dicunt, seducunt vos, et semitas pedum vestrorum supplantant (Isai. III, 11).

(Vers. 3, 4.)

Ecce ego projiciam vobis branchium, et dispergam super vultum vestrum stercus solemnitarum vestrarum, et assumet vos secum. Et scietis quia misi ad vos mandatum istud [Al. vestrum], ut esset pactum meum cum Levi, dicit Dominus exercituum.

LXX: Ecce ego separabo vobis humerum, et dispergam ventriculum super faciem vestram, ventriculum solemnitarum vestrarum, et suscipiam vos simul: et cognoscetis, quia ego misi ad vos mandatum hoc, ut esset testamentum meum ad Levitas, dicit Dominus omnipotens.

It can also be said of us: if, created wise by God and having a nature suited to sacred disciplines, we neglect our intellect and give ourselves over to vices and luxury, and having a male, we sacrifice a weak thing to the Lord. But our prayer is weak and stained when it is corrupted by anger, envy, enmities, and other disturbances of the soul: if, when offering our gift at the altar, and remembering that our brother has something against us, we do not first go and make amends with him (Matt. 5:23). Whence the Apostle also commands: "I will therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without anger and contention" (1 Tim. 2:8).

And the shepherd of our thoughts and virtues is the mind, of which it is said in the one hundred and second Psalm (Verse 1): "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." If it rules its flock well, that blessing is fulfilled in it: "Blessed shall be the herds of your cattle, and the flocks of your sheep" (Deut. 28:4). But if, having by nature a male, that is, something strong, rigid, and robust, it sacrifices something light or, with excessive softness, effeminate and wanton, or something weak and corrupt through various disturbances of the soul, it will feel fulfilled in itself what is written: "The mighty shall be mightily tormented" (Wisdom 6:7). And: "To whom they have given more, of him they will require the more" (Luke 8).

Whence it is properly said to the priests, that if they are unwilling to hear and to keep in their heart, so as to give glory to the name of the Lord through a good life (Rom. 2); but on the contrary His name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of them, He will send upon them a lack of all good things, and will turn their blessings into a curse. Those who abuse health for lust, and turn riches into luxury, and defile a good reputation with a sordid life, these change the blessings of God into a curse.

Or certainly, because the commandment is properly to the Priests, their blessings are turned into a curse when they do not bless the holy ones from a true affection of the heart, as Isaac did Jacob, and Jacob the patriarchs, and Moses the twelve tribes (Gen. 27 & 49, and Deut. 23), but through sweet words and blessings deceive the hearts of the innocent (Rom. 16), and those who act wickedly are blessed by them, and they flatter sinners as long as they are rich and indulge their vices, of whom it is said: "My people, they who call you blessed, they seduce you, and they supplant the paths of your feet" (Isa. 3:11).

(Verses 3, 4)

Behold, I will cast forth to you the arm, and I will scatter upon your face the dung of your solemnities, and it shall take you away with it. And you shall know that I have sent to you this commandment [or, yours], that my covenant might be with Levi, says the Lord of hosts.

LXX: Behold, I will separate for you the shoulder, and I will scatter the stomach upon your face, the stomach of your solemnities, and I will take you up together: and you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my testament might be with the Levites, says the Lord almighty.

Quia ad sacerdotes loquitur: Projiciam, inquit, in facies vestras, ea quae sanctiora putatis in Lege, et vobis a Deo pro virtutum munere ex hostiis condonata: Brachium, pro quo LXX humerum interpretati sunt, id est, armum animalis dextrum. Et dispergam, inquit, *ἐνστρον* id est, ventriculum; sive juxta Hebraeos, stercus, id est, PHARES (*μετωνυμικῶς*, pro eo quod continet, id quod continetur appellans, et armum enim et pectusculum, et linguam, et ventriculum, et ea quae in Levitico describuntur, accipiebant ex hostiis sacerdotes (Levi. VII et IX). Quae omnia pro peccatis eorum se abjicere, et in facies sacerdotum mittere contestatur (Num. XVIII; Deut. XVIII), ut scilicet tales sint qui offerunt, qualia et illa quae offeruntur. Et assumet vos, inquit, secum, id est, stercus solemnitatumstrarum, ut fetentes facies putida stercoris commixtione turpentur, et ex eo quod vos abjicio, intelligatis ipsum esse me, qui quondam elegi patrem vestrum Levi, et per Levi Aaron, et vobis sacerdotii gloriam condonavi, ut esset pactum meum sive testamentum cum Levi, et aeterno mihi sacerdotio ministraret.

Notandum, quod BRITH (*συνθήκη*) verbum Hebraicum, Aquila *συνθήκη*, id est, pactum interpretatur. LXX: semper *διαθήκη*, id est, testamentum, et in plerisque Scripturarum locis, testamentum non voluntatem defunctorum sonare, sed pactum viventium.

Voluit autem Deus, et omnes quidem homines, sed praecipue sacerdotes, maculam non habere, et sive humerum, sive brachium ornare bonis operibus. In pectusculo significatur bona conscientia: in lingua, sancta confessio: ut quod corde credimus ad justitiam, ore confiteamur in salutem (Rom. X). In ventriculo quoque nihil habere mortiferum; sed quod nostram vitam sustentet ac vegetet: nisi enim cibi in ventriculo concoquantur, et eorum succo corpus irrigetur, attenuatum viribus caret, et fertur in mortem.

Nos autem omnia in contrarium vertimus, ut projiciat nobis Dominus brachium, sive separet opera nostra a sanctorum operibus, et quibus praeceptum est ungere caput nostrum (Matt. VI), et lavare faciem a peccatorum sordibus jejunantes, et revelata facie gloriam Domini contemplari (III Cor. III), nunc dicimus: Confusio vultus mei operuit me (Ps. XLIII, 16), et juxta Cain concidit facies nostra (Gen. IV), nec possumus illud implere quod praeceptum est: Levate oculos vestros et videte (Jer. XIII, 20); sed stercore vitiorum habemus litas facies atque pollutas, et dicimus: Putruerunt et corruptae sunt cicatrices meae, a facie insipientiae meae (Ps. XXXVII, 6).

Because he speaks to the priests, he says: I will cast upon your faces those things which you consider holier in the Law, and which were granted to you by God from the victims as a reward for your virtues: the arm (*brachium*), for which the LXX translated "shoulder," that is, the right foreleg of the animal. And I will scatter, he says, *enystron*, that is, the stomach; or according to the Hebrews, dung, that is, PHARES, metonymically calling what is contained by that which contains it, for the priests received from the victims the foreleg and the breast, and the tongue, and the stomach, and those things which are described in Leviticus (Lev. 7 and 9). He testifies that He rejects all these things for their sins and casts them into the faces of the priests (Num. 18; Deut. 18), so that, of course, those who offer may be of the same quality as those things which are offered. And it shall take you, he says, with it, that is, the dung of your solemnities, so that your stinking faces may be defiled by the foul mixture of dung, and from the fact that I reject you, you may understand that I am He who once chose your father Levi, and through Levi, Aaron, and bestowed upon you the glory of the priesthood, so that my covenant or testament might be with Levi, and he might minister to me in an eternal priesthood.

It should be noted that the Hebrew word BRITH, Aquila translates as *synthēkēn*, that is, a pact. The LXX always translates it as *diathēkēn*, that is, a testament, and in most places in the Scriptures, testament does not mean the will of the deceased, but a covenant of the living.

But God willed that all men indeed, but especially priests, should have no stain, and should adorn either the shoulder or the arm with good works. In the breast is signified a good conscience; in the tongue, a holy confession: so that what we believe in the heart unto justice, we may confess with the mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10). In the stomach, too, to have nothing deadly, but what sustains and quickens our life: for unless food is digested in the stomach, and the body is irrigated with its juice, it becomes weakened, lacks strength, and is carried toward death.

But we turn everything to the contrary, so that the Lord casts our arm away from us, or separates our works from the works of the saints; and we, who were commanded to anoint our head (Matt. 6), and to wash our face from the filth of sins while fasting, and to contemplate the glory of the Lord with unveiled face (2 Cor. 3), now say: "The confusion of my face has covered me" (Ps. 43:16), and like Cain, our countenance has fallen (Gen. 4), nor can we fulfill what was commanded: "Lift up your eyes and see" (Jer. 13:20); but we have our faces smeared and polluted with the dung of vices, and we say: "My wounds have putrefied and are corrupt, because of my foolishness" (Ps. 37:6).

Unde omnia ista in stercus versa sunt, dicente Scriptura: Et assumet vos secum stercus, videlicet quo litae sunt facies nostrae, qui debueramus pleni ac mundi venire in solemnitatibus Dei, et vel carnes agni comedere calciati (Exod. XII), vel expletis septem hebdomadibus, fructus operum nostrorum offerre Deo (Lev. XXIII) vel in tabernaculis hujus saeculi vivere transeuntes, et dicere: Advena sum ego et preregrynus, sicut omnes patres mei (Ps. XXXVIII).

Et quia pro eo quod nos vertimus: assumet vos secum stercus, interpretati sunt Septuaginta, et assumam vos simul, subjicitur intelligentia, quod postquam turpitudine, et ignominia cooperti fuerint sacerdotes, et intellexerint peccatum suum, et egerint poenitentiam, tunc assumantur a Domino, et huic sensui convenire quod sequitur: Et cognoscetis quia ego miserim ad vos mandatum hoc. Sed superior mihi vera videtur interpretatio, ne inter verba comminationis, verba posuerit blandientis, maxime cum et ea quae sequuntur, Dei indignationem sonent.

(Vers. 5 seqq.) Pactum meum fuit cum eo vitae et pacis, et dedi ei timorem, et timuit me, et a facie nominis mei pavebat. Lex veritatis fuit in ore ejus, et iniquitas non est inventa in labiis ejus: in pace et in aequitate ambulavit mecum, et multos avertit ab iniquitate. Labia enim sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et Legem requirent ex ore ejus, quia angelus Domini exercituum est.

LXX: Testamentum meum fuit cum eo vitae et pacis, et dedi ei timorem ut timeret me, et a facie nominis mei formidaret. Lex veritatis [Al. veritas] fuit in ore ejus, et iniquitas non est inventa in labiis ejus. In pace dirigens ambulavit mecum, et multos convertit ab iniquitate. Quoniam labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam, et lex requiretur ex ore ejus: quia angelus Domini omnipotentis est.

Describitur ex persona Dei, perfecti officium sacerdotis, qualis esse debeat, et qualem eum esse voluerit, qui esse praecepit. Supra enim dixerat: Ut esset pactum meum cum Levi, dicit Dominus exercituum; et per Levi patriarcham pervenit ad posteros, Aaron et Eleazarum, Phinees et caeteros, qui de ejus stirpe generati sunt: nunc in fine ait: Irritum fecistis pactum Levi, dicit Dominus exercituum. Ex quo perspicuum est, omne quod dicitur per Levi, ad sacerdotes et specialiter ad pontificem pertinere.

Whence all these things are turned into dung, as the Scripture says: "And the dung shall take you with it," namely that with which our faces are smeared, we who ought to have come full and clean to the solemnities of God, and either to eat the flesh of the lamb with our shoes on (Exod. 12), or after seven weeks were completed, to offer the fruits of our works to God (Lev. 23), or to live as passers-by in the tabernacles of this world, and to say: "I am a stranger and a sojourner, as all my fathers were" (Ps. 38).

And because for that which we translate, "the dung shall take you with it," the Septuagint translated, "and I will take you up together," an interpretation is proposed: that after the priests have been covered with baseness and ignominy, and have understood their sin, and have done penance, then they may be taken up by the Lord; and what follows agrees with this sense: "And you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you." But the former interpretation seems to me to be the true one, lest He should place words of soothing amidst words of threatening, especially since the things that follow also sound of God's indignation.

(Verses 5ff.) My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave him fear, and he feared me, and was afraid before my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and in equity, and turned many away from iniquity. For the priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the Law from his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts.

LXX: My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave him fear that he might fear me, and be in awe before my name. The law of truth [Others: truth] was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips. Walking as a guide in peace, he walked with me, and converted many from iniquity. For the priest's lips shall keep knowledge, and the law shall be required from his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord almighty.

From the person of God, the office of the perfect priest is described, what sort he ought to be, and what sort He, who commanded him to be, willed him to be. For above He had said: "That my covenant might be with Levi, saith the Lord of hosts"; and through the patriarch Levi it came to his posterity, Aaron and Eleazar, Phinehas and the others who were born of his stock: now at the end He says: "You have made void the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts." From this it is clear that everything said through Levi pertains to the priests and especially to the high priest.

Legimus in Numeris de Phinees, qui Zamri cum scorto Madianitide pugione percussit: Phinees filius Eleazar, filii Aaron sacerdotis, requiescere fecit furorem meum a filiis Israel, quoniam aemulatus est zelum meum contra eos, et non perdidit filios Israel in zelo meo, 959 sic dicens: Ecce ego dabo [Vulg. do] ei testamentum pacis, et erit ipsi et semini ejus post eum testamentum sacerdotii sempiterni: pro eo quod zelatus est Deo suo, et exoravit pro filiis Israel (Num. XXV, 11).

Vitae autem testamentum, sive pactum, non hujus arbitremur quae nobis cum bestiis et cunctis animantibus communis est, sed illius quae dicit: Ego sum vita (Joan. XIV, 7). Etenim vita nostra cum Christo abscondita est in Deo (Col. III, 3): de quo possumus dicere, quod et ipse pax nostra sit, Apostolo confirmante: Ipse enim est pax nostra (Ephes. II, 14).

Dedit ergo Dominus Levi, et per eum posteris ejus, ut timerent eum: Principium enim sapientiae timor Domini (Ps. CX, 10), et a facie ejus formidarent, sive subtraherent se atque contraherent, mentis formidinem horrore corporis indicantes, juxta illud quod scriptum est: Super quem requiescam, nisi super humilem et quietum et tremementem verba mea (Isai. LXVI, 2)?

Lex veritatis fuit in ore ejus, hoc est, doctrina populorum, quae in sacerdote nullo debet mendacio deturpari; sed tota de veritatis fonte procedere. Et iniquitas non est inventa in labiis ejus, ut imitetur Dominum suum, de quo dicitur: Qui peccatum non fecit, nec dolus inventus est in ore ejus (I Pet. II, 22).

In pace et in aequitate ambulavit mecum, ut et ipse in se pacem habeat, et caeteros pacificet, nulliusque personam accipiat in judicio, et idcirco ambulet cum Deo, sicut ambulavit Enoch, qui translatus est ad Dominum, et non inveniebatur (Genes. V); Et multos avertit ab iniquitate. Qui sacerdos est, et non corripit delinquentes, sacerdotis officium praeterit.

Labia sacerdotis custodient scientiam: non dixit, proferent, sed, custodient, ut loquantur in tempore, dentque conservis cibaria in tempore suo, Et legem requirent ex ore ejus. In Aggaeo hoc idem scribitur: Interrogate sacerdotes legem Domini (Aggaei II, 12). Ad sacerdotis pertinet disciplinam interrogatam respondere de lege. Qui si ignorantiam in caeteris diligentem, in Scripturis sanctis obtenderit negligentem, frustra jactat dignitatem, cujus opera non exhibet.

We read in Numbers concerning Phinehas, who struck down Zimri with the Midianite harlot with a dagger: "Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with my zeal against them, and I did not destroy the children of Israel in my zeal," 959 saying thus: "Behold, I give [Vulgate: do give] to him my covenant of peace, and it shall be to him and to his seed after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood: because he hath been zealous for his God, and hath made an atonement for the children of Israel" (Num. 25:11).

But let us not think that the testament, or covenant, of life is of this life which is common to us with the beasts and all living things, but of that life which says: "I am the life" (John 14:7). For "our life is hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3): of whom we can say that He Himself is our peace, as the Apostle confirms: "For he is our peace" (Eph. 2:14).

Therefore, the Lord gave to Levi, and through him to his posterity, that they should fear him: "For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 110:10), and that they should be in awe of his face, or withdraw and shrink back, indicating the fear of the mind by the horror of the body, according to that which is written: "On whom shall I rest, but on the humble and quiet, and him that trembleth at my words" (Isa. 66:2)?

"The law of truth was in his mouth," that is, the teaching of the peoples, which in a priest ought to be defiled by no lie, but should proceed entirely from the fount of truth. "And iniquity was not found in his lips," so that he might imitate his Lord, of whom it is said: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22).

"He walked with me in peace and in equity," so that he himself might have peace within himself, and might pacify others, and accept no one's person in judgment, and therefore walk with God, as Enoch walked, who was translated to the Lord, and was not found (Gen. 5); "And he turned many away from iniquity." He who is a priest and does not correct the delinquent, neglects the office of a priest.

"The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge": he did not say, "shall bring forth," but, "shall keep," so that they may speak in season, and give their fellow servants their measure of food in due time, "And they shall seek the law from his mouth." In Haggai this same thing is written: "Ask the priests concerning the law of the Lord" (Hag. 2:12). It pertains to the priest's discipline to answer from the law when questioned. If he, diligent in other matters, should plead ignorance in the holy Scriptures, he boasts in vain of a dignity whose works he does not exhibit.

Hoc est quod apostolus Paulus scribit ad Titum: Ut potens sit exhortari in doctrina sana, et contradicentes revincere (Titum. I, 9). Et ad Timotheum: 960 Quoniam ab infantia sacras litteras nosti, quae te possint instruere ad salutem, ut peccantes coram omnibus arguas (II Tim. III, 13).

Sequitur: Quia angelus Domini exercituum est. Exponit nomen suum Ezras sacerdos Dei, hoc est, Malachi, quod angelus Domini interpretatur; angelus autem, id est, nuntius, sacerdos Dei verissime dicitur, quia Dei et hominum sequester est, ejusque ad populum nuntiat voluntatem: et idcirco in sacerdotis pectore rationale est (Exod. XXIX), et in rationali doctrina et veritas ponitur, ut discamus, sacerdotem doctum esse debere, et praeconem dominicae veritatis. Quidam hoc quod ad Levi et per Levi ad sacerdotes dicitur, falso putant intelligendum esse de Christo, non respicientes ea quae sequuntur, personae Christi esse contraria.

(Vers. 8, 9.) Vos autem recessistis de via, et scandalizastis plurimos in lege: irritum fecistis pactum Levi, dicit Dominus exercituum. Propter quod et ego dedi vos contemptibiles, et humiles omnibus populis, sicut non servastis vias meas, et accepistis faciem in lege. LXX: Vos autem declinastis de via mea, et infirmos fecistis multos in lege, corrupistis testamentum Levi, dicit Dominus omnipotens. Et ego dedi vos contemptibiles, et dissolutos in omnes gentes, pro eo quod non custodistis vias meas, sed accipiebatis personas in lege. Haec ad Christi non pertinere personam, nec ad eos qui illius cultui dedicati sunt, etiamsi ego taceam prudens lector intelligit. Et est sensus: Ego vos volui facere quae priori capitulo continentur, et de quibus per Moysen in Deuteronomio sum locutus: Date Levi doctrinam ejus, et veritatem viro justo (Deut. XXXIII, 8, sec. LXX), et reliqua: vos autem recessistis de via recta, sive declinastis, dicente me: Non declines neque ad dextram, neque ad sinistram (Deut. V, 32); et infirmos fecistis multos in lege, sive scandalizastis, ut Aquila et Symmachus verterunt. Declinare ad dextram, est abstinere a cibis quos Deus creavit ad utendum: condemnare nuptias, et in illud incurrere, quod in alio loco scriptum est: Ne sis justus multum (Eccl. VII, 17). Ad sinistram divertere, est cum quis luxuriae se tradit et libini, et scandalizat multos in lege: cui melius est, ut mola asinaria ligetur circa collum, et in mare praecipitetur, quam scandalizet unum de minimis.

This is what the apostle Paul writes to Titus: "That he may be able to exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). And to Timothy: 960 "Because from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, that thou mayest rebuke them that sin before all" (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 5:20).

It follows: "Because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts." Ezra the priest of God explains his own name, that is, Malachi, which is interpreted "angel of the Lord"; but an angel, that is, a messenger, a priest of God is most truly called, because he is a mediator between God and men, and announces His will to the people: and for this reason there is a rationale on the priest's breast (Exod. 29), and in the rationale are placed doctrine and truth, so that we may learn that a priest ought to be learned, and a herald of the Lord's truth. Certain people falsely think that what is said to Levi and through Levi to the priests should be understood of Christ, not considering that the things which follow are contrary to the person of Christ.

(Verses 8, 9) But you have departed from the way, and have caused many to stumble in the law: you have made void the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. Therefore, I have also made you contemptible and base before all people, just as you have not kept my ways, and have shown partiality in the law. Septuagint: But you have turned aside from my way, and have weakened many in the law; you have corrupted the testament of Levi, says the Lord almighty. And I have made you contemptible and debased among all nations, because you have not kept my ways, but have accepted persons in the law. The prudent reader understands, even if I remain silent, that these things do not pertain to the person of Christ, nor to those who are dedicated to His worship. And the meaning is this: I wished to make you what is contained in the previous chapter, and about which I spoke through Moses in Deuteronomy: "Give to Levi his doctrine, and truth to the just man" (Deut. 33:8, according to the LXX), and the rest; but you have departed from the right way, or turned aside, as I said: "You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left" (Deut. 5:32); and you have weakened many in the law, or caused them to stumble, as Aquila and Symmachus have translated. To turn aside to the right is to abstain from foods which God created to be used, to condemn marriage, and to fall into that which is written in another place: "Be not overly just" (Eccl. 7:17). To turn to the left is when someone gives himself over to luxury and lust, and scandalizes many in the law; for whom it is better that a millstone be tied around his neck and he be cast into the sea, than that he should scandalize one of the least of these.

Infirmos autem faciunt multos, qui cum credentes in Christo fidei robur acceperint, infirmari eos faciunt negligentia conversationis suae, quibus rectissime dicitur: Irritum fecistis pactum Levi, pactum vitae et pacis, et caetera, quae pertinere ad officium diximus sacerdotis. Quam ob causam, et ego, inquit, dedi vos contemptibiles et humiles omnibus populis, ut vos contemnerent, et pro honore et gloria, quasi dejectos humilesque calcarent: Sicut non servastis vias meas, et accepistis faciem in lege. Inter omnia peccata Levi, sive eorum qui ex Levi sunt, sacerdotum Dei, illud et ultimum et maximum ponitur, quare accipiant faciem in lege, ut non causas, sed personas considerint, justumque pauperem despicientes, iniquos divites suscipiant et honorent. Ad quos in octogesimo primo psalmo dicitur: Usquequo judicatis iniquitatem, et facies peccatorum sumitis (Psal. LXXXI, 2)? et Paulus ad Galatas: Deus, inquit, personam hominis non accipit (Gal. XXVI). Pleniusque apostolus Jacobus hoc peccatum arguit, atque condemnat (Jac. 2). Quidquid autem priori populo dicitur, etiam nobis dictum putemus ut cautiore recedamus a vitiis, et faciem non suscipiamus in lege, nec qui sumus cultores Dei, veritati mendacium praeferamus.

(Vers. 10 seqq.) Numquid non Pater unus omnium nostrum? Numquid non Deus unus creavit nos? Quare ergo despicit unusquisque nostrum fratrem suum, violans pactum patrum nostrorum? Transgressus est Juda, et abominatio facta est in Israel, et in Jerusalem: quia contaminavit Juda sanctificationem Domini, quam dilexit, et habuit filiam Dei alieni. Disperdet [Al. disperdat] Dominus virum qui fecerit hoc, magistrum et discipulum de tabernaculis Jacob, et offerentem munus Domino exercituum. LXX: Nonne Pater unus omnium vestrum? Nonne Deus unus creavit vos? Quare reliquistis unusquisque fratrem suum, ut abominabile faceret testamentum patrum vestrorum. Derelictus est Judas, et abominatio facta est in Israel, et in Jerusalem, quia contaminavit Judas sancta Domini, in quibus dilexit, et adinvenit deos alienos. Disperdat Dominus hominem qui facit haec, 962 donec exturbetur de tabernaculis Jacob, et de his, qui offerunt sacrificium Domino omnipotenti.

Moreover, they weaken many who, having received the strength of faith by believing in Christ, are made weak by the negligence of their conduct, to whom it is most rightly said: "You have made void the covenant of Levi," the covenant of life and peace, and the other things which we have said pertain to the office of the priest. For which reason, He says, "I have also made you contemptible and base before all people," so that they would despise you and, instead of honor and glory, trample you as if you were cast down and lowly: "Just as you have not kept my ways, and have shown partiality in the law." Among all the sins of Levi, or of those who are from Levi, the priests of God, this is set down as the last and greatest: that they show partiality in the law, so that they consider not the cases but the persons, despising the just poor man, while receiving and honoring the wicked rich. To whom it is said in the eighty-first psalm: "How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked?" (Psalm 81:2). And Paul to the Galatians: "God," he says, "shows no partiality to a man" (Gal. 2:6). And the apostle James more fully rebukes and condemns this sin (James 2). Whatever, therefore, is said to the former people, let us also consider it said to us, so that we may more cautiously withdraw from vices, and not show partiality in the law, nor, as worshipers of God, prefer falsehood to truth.

Have we not all one Father? (Verses 10ff.) Did not one God create us? Why then does each one of us despise his brother, violating the covenant of our fathers? Judah has transgressed, and an abomination has been committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem: because Judah has profaned the sanctification of the Lord, which he loved, and has taken the daughter of a foreign God. May the Lord cut off [Or: let the Lord cut off] the man who does this, master and disciple, from the tents of Jacob, and him who offers a gift to the Lord of hosts. LXX: Is there not one Father of you all? Did not one God create you? Why has each of you forsaken his brother, to profane the testament of your fathers? Judah has been forsaken, and an abomination has been committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem, because Judah has profaned the holy things of the Lord, in which he delighted, and has taken up alien gods. May the Lord cut off the man who does these things, until he is cast out from the tents of Jacob, and from those who offer sacrifice to the Lord Almighty.

Antequam de praesenti capitulo disputemus, Hebraeorum est ponenda traditio, immo Scripturae veritas explicanda. Legimus in volumine, quod Ezrae titulo praenotatur, ex persona ipsius Ezrae loquentis: Accesserunt ad me principes, dicentes: Non est separatus populus Israel, et sacerdotes et Levitae a populis terrarum, et de abominationibus eorum, Chananaei videlicet, et Ethaei, et Pheresaei, et Jebusaei, et Ammonitarum, et Moabitarum, et Aegyptiorum, et Amorrhaeorum. Tulerunt enim de filiabus eorum sibi, et filiis suis, et commiscuerunt semen sanctum cum populis terrarum. Manus etiam principum et magistratuum fuit in transgressionem hac prima. Cumque audissem sermonem istum, scidi pallium meum et tunicam, et evelli capillos capitis mei et barbae, et sedi moerens (I Esdr. IX 1 seqq.) Et rursum in consequentibus: Inventique sunt de filiis sacerdotum, qui duxerunt uxores alienigenas de filiis Jesu, filii Josedec, et fratres ejus, Maasia, et Eleazar, et Jarib, et Godolia, et dederunt manus suas, ut ejicerent uxores suas, et pro delicto suo arietem de ovibus offerrent (I Esdr. X, 18, 19). In fine quoque capituli post enumerationem eorum, qui uxores alienigenas acceperant [Al. acciperent], Scriptura commemorat: Omnes hi acceperunt uxores alienigenas: et fuerunt ex eis mulieres quae pepererant filios.

Reversi ergo de captivitate Babylonia, tam principes, et sacerdotes, ac Levitae, quam reliquus populus abjecerunt uxores suas Israelitici generis, quae paupertate et injuria longioris viae, et fragilitate sexus non ferentes laborem, confectae erant, et infirmitatem ac deformitatem corporum contraxerant: et cum alienigenis vel aetate florentibus vel cultu corporum pulchrioribus, vel potentum ac divitum filiabus matrimonia copularant. Corripit itaque eos Ezras propheta, et ad repudium novarum conjugum provocat, ut uxores quas dimiserant, recipiant:

Nonne, inquit, pater unus Abraham omnium nostrum est? de quo in Isaia scribitur: Respicite in Abraham patrem vestrum, et in Saram, quae genuit vos, quia unus erat, et vocavi eum (Isai. LI, 2). Nonne Deus unus creavit nos, qui ex Abraham nostrum 963 elegit genus? Quare ergo veteres uxores contemnimus, et fratrum nostrorum abjicimus filias, ut relinquamus pactum patrum nostrorum, et non ex Lege accipiamus uxores? Transgressus est Juda (haec enim tribus reversa est de Babylone cum sacerdotibus ac Levitis, et abominatio facta est in Israel, et in Jerusalem.

Before we discuss the present chapter, the tradition of the Hebrews must be set forth, or rather, the truth of Scripture must be explained. We read in the volume that is titled with the name of Ezra, with Ezra himself speaking: *The princes came to me, saying: The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, nor from their abominations, namely, of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Ammonites, and the Moabites, and the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons, and have mingled the holy seed with the people of the lands. And the hand of the princes and magistrates has been first in this transgression. And when I had heard this word, I rent my mantle and my tunic, and I plucked the hair from my head and my beard, and I sat down mourning* (I Esdras 9:1 ff.). And again in the following: *And there were found of the sons of the priests that had taken strange wives: of the sons of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and his brethren, Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives, and for their trespass they offered a ram of the flock* (I Esdras 10:18, 19). At the end of the chapter as well, after the enumeration of those who had taken [Or: were to take] foreign wives, Scripture records: *All these had taken strange wives: and there were among them women who had borne children.*

Therefore, having returned from the Babylonian captivity, the princes, priests, and Levites, as well as the rest of the people, cast off their wives of Israelite stock—who, worn out by poverty, the hardship of the long journey, and the weakness of their sex that could not bear the toil, had contracted infirmity and physical deformity—and had joined in marriage with foreign women who were either in the bloom of youth, more beautiful in their physical care, or the daughters of the powerful and wealthy. And so the prophet Ezra rebukes them and urges them to repudiate their new spouses, so that they might take back the wives they had dismissed:

'Is not Abraham,' he says, 'the one father of us all?' Of whom it is written in Isaiah: *Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you: for he was one, and I called him* (Isa. 51:2). Did not one God create us, who chose our race from Abraham? Why then do we despise our former wives, and cast off the daughters of our brethren, so that we forsake the covenant of our fathers, and do not take wives according to the Law? Judah has transgressed (for this is the tribe that returned from Babylon with the priests and Levites), and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem.

Nequaquam in decem tribubus, quae ab Assyriis tenebantur; sed in his qui ad Cyri regis imperium sub Zorobabel et Ezra, et Neemia de Babylonia sunt reversi. Quia contaminavit Juda sanctificationem Domini, quam dilexit, et habuit filiam Dei alieni, miscendo cum alienigenis semen Israel, et gentilium; id est, ethnicorum filias, idolis servientes, sumendo uxores. Quia igitur hoc fecerunt, prophetae ad eos sermo dirigitur, et a peccato maledictionibus retrahuntur. Disperdat Dominus virum qui fecerit hoc. Quam pulchre non abscidit errori veniam, nec dixit, maledicat Dominus ei qui fecit hoc; sed qui fecerit, in futurum tendens maledictionem, ut peccatores ad poenitentiam provocet. Doctorem, inquit, atque discipulum de tabernaculis Jacob, sive ille sacerdos sit, sive laicus, una maledictione ferientur, et non erit in eis poenae diversitas, in quibus peccata sunt paria. Et offerentem munus Domino exercituum: subauditur, disperdat Dominus et eum, qui pro huiusmodi hominibus voluerit ad altare munus offerre, quorum solum remedium est, non facere quae fecerunt.

Quidam hunc locum non intelligentes, nec scientes historiae veritatem, id quod ait: Nonne pater unus omnium nostrum? de Abraham sic intelligunt, ut etiam gentium patrem Abraham esse commemorent, secundum illud quod scriptum est: Potest Deus de lapidibus istis suscitare filios Abrahae (Mat. III, 9)? Vel certe unum Deum Patrem affirmant juxta illud quod in Deuteronomio legimus: Nonne iste ipse est Pater, qui possedit te, et fecit te, et creavit te (Deut. XXXII, 6)? Et rursum: Deum qui te creavit, reliquisti (Ibid., 18). Et alibi: Filios genui et exaltavi: ipsi autem reliquerunt me (Isai. I, 2). Et in Psalmorum volumine: Filii alieni mentiti sunt mihi: filii alieni inveterati sunt, et claudicaverunt a semitis suis (Ps. XVII, 46).

964 Et ab hoc uno patre, qui peccaverunt, recedentes, multos vitiorum suorum patres fecere: Omnis enim qui facit peccatum, de diabolo natus est. Idque quod sequitur: Quare despicit unusquisque nostrum fratrem suum, violans pactum patrum nostrorum, sic interpretati sunt, ut dicerent: Nos cunctos ab uno patre generatos, unum esse debere, et unum confessionis habere labium; sed postea per superbiam et aedificationem turris contra Deum in multas linguas atque sententias esse divisos (Gen. XI).

Ad eleemosynam quoque referunt, ut dicant: Despiciere nos fratres nostros, quando non communicamus eis quae a Deo ad sustentandam vitam accepimus. Et ad hoc transeunt, ut asserant fratrem nostrum, secundum Scripturas, dominum appellari, qui praecepit Mariae Magdalenae, ut nuntiet fratribus suis, Dominum surrexisse (Joan. XX), et loquitur in Psalmo: Narrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis, in medio Ecclesiae cantabo tibi (Ps. XXI, 23).

Not at all in the ten tribes, which were held by the Assyrians; but among those who, by the command of King Cyrus, returned from Babylon under Zerubbabel and Ezra and Nehemiah. *Because Judah has profaned the sanctification of the Lord, which he loved, and has taken the daughter of a foreign God,* by mixing the seed of Israel with foreigners and Gentiles; that is, by taking as wives the daughters of the heathens, who serve idols. Therefore, because they have done this, the word of the prophet is directed to them, and they are drawn back from sin by curses. *May the Lord cut off the man who does this.* How beautifully he did not cut off pardon for error, nor did he say, 'may the Lord curse him who did this'; but 'who does this,' extending the curse to the future, so as to provoke sinners to repentance. The teacher, he says, and the disciple from the tents of Jacob, whether he be a priest or a layman, will be struck with one curse, and there will be no difference in punishment for them, in whom the sins are equal. *And him who offers a gift to the Lord of hosts:* it is understood, may the Lord also cut off him who would wish to offer a gift at the altar for men of this sort, whose only remedy is not to do what they have done.

Some, not understanding this passage, nor knowing the historical truth, interpret what it says, *Have we not all one Father?* concerning Abraham in such a way as to commemorate that Abraham is also the father of the Gentiles, according to what is written: *God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham* (Matt. 3:9)? Or they certainly affirm one God the Father according to what we read in Deuteronomy: *Is not he your Father, that has possessed you, and has made you, and created you* (Deut. 32:6)? And again: *You have forsaken the God that created you* (Ibid., 18). And elsewhere: *I have begotten and exalted children: but they have forsaken me* (Isa. 1:2). And in the book of Psalms: *The strange children have lied to me: the strange children have faded away, and have halted from their paths* (Ps. 17:46).

And departing from this one father, those who have sinned have made for themselves many fathers of their vices: *For whosoever commits sin is born of the devil.* And what follows, *Why does each one of us despise his brother, violating the covenant of our fathers?*, they have interpreted in this way, saying: We, all begotten from one father, ought to be one, and to have one lip of confession; but afterwards, through pride and the building of the tower against God, we were divided into many tongues and opinions (Gen. 11).

They also refer it to almsgiving, saying that we despise our brothers when we do not share with them what we have received from God to sustain life. And they proceed to this point, to assert that our brother, according to the Scriptures, is called Lord, who commanded Mary Magdalene to announce to his brothers that the Lord had risen (John 20), and speaks in the Psalm: *I will declare your name to my brethren, in the midst of the Church I will sing to you* (Ps. 21:23).

Deseruerunt ergo Iudaei fratrem suum, et contaminaverunt pactum patrum suorum, quod Deus pepigerat ad Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob, ut in semine eorum, quod interpretatur Christus, benedicerentur omnes gentes. Haec varie suspicantur, quia certam viam non reperiunt.

Denique et hoc quod sequitur juxta LXX: Derelictus est Judas, et abominatio facta est in Israel, et in Jerusalem, sic edisserunt: Desertos esse Judaeos, quia blasphemaverunt Dominum Salvatorem, et sustinuisse quod scriptum est: Secundum multitudinem impietatum eorum expelle eos, quoniam irritaverunt te, Domine (Ps. V, 11), ut in cunctas provincias vagi, et profugi spargerentur.

Contaminaverunt enim sancta Domini, pro Dei Filio diligentes, et adinvenientes sibi deos alienos: Qui enim non recipit Filium, non recipit Patrem, qui misit eum (Luc. IX, 43). Et idcirco quia hoc fecerunt, tamdiu disperire donec humiliantur, vel captivitatis injuria, vel ob conscientiam peccatorum: et projiciantur de tabernaculis Jacob, ut destructo templo, atque altari, nequaquam apud eos offerantur hostiae [Al. bestiae].

Nec hac explanatione contenti (quia Judas [] interpretatur Domini confessio) ad poenitentem, intelligentiam transferunt, qui postquam Dominum confessus est, 965 si peccaverit, abominationem facit in Israel, et in Jerusalem, in sensu vidente Deum, et in visione pacis. Polluit enim Christi mysteria, indigne accipiens corpus ejus et sanguinem (I Cor. XI), pro eo quod dilexerit vitia, et adinvenit sibi deos alienos, secundum numerum peccatorum habens numerum deorum. Juxta apostolum Paulum: Voracium Deus venter est (Phil. III), et secundum Petrum [Al. Jacobum]. A quo quis vincitur, ei subjicitur (II Petr. II, 19). Et qui hoc fecerit, exterminabitur [Al. exterminatur] de Ecclesia, et de tabernaculis Jacob, qui supplantat vitia atque peccata, donec humilietur in bonum suum, et offeratur pro eo victima Domino omnipotenti.

(Vers. 13 seqq.) Et hoc rursum fecistis, operiebatis lacrymis altare Domini fletu, et gemitu [Vulg. mugitu], ita ut non respiciam ultra ad sacrificium, nec accipiam placabile quid de manu vestra. Et dixistis: quam ob causam? Quia Dominus testificatus est inter te et uxorem pubertatis tuae, quam tu despexisti: et haec particeps tua, et uxor foederis tui. Nonne unus fecit, et residuum spiritus ejus est? et quid unus quaerit, nisi semen Dei? Custodite ergo spiritum vestrum, et uxorem adolescentiae tuae noli despiciere.

Therefore, the Jews forsook their brother and profaned the covenant of their fathers, which God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that in their seed, which is interpreted as *Christ*, all nations would be blessed. They conjecture these various things because they do not find the certain path.

Finally, what follows according to the Septuagint: *Judas is forsaken, and an abomination has been committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem,* they expound thus: that the Jews were forsaken because they blasphemed the Lord Savior, and suffered what is written: *According to the multitude of their impieties, expel them, for they have provoked you, O Lord* (Ps. 5:11), so that they were scattered as wanderers and fugitives into all provinces.

For they have contaminated the holy things of the Lord, loving and inventing for themselves alien gods instead of the Son of God: *For he who does not receive the Son, does not receive the Father who sent him* (Luke 9:43). And for this reason, because they have done this, they perish until they are humbled, either by the injury of captivity or by the consciousness of their sins: and they are cast out from the tents of Jacob, so that with the temple and altar destroyed, sacrifices [Or: beasts] are by no means offered among them.

Not content with this explanation (because 'Judas' [] is interpreted as 'confession of the Lord'), they transfer the meaning to the penitent person, who, after having confessed the Lord, if he should sin, commits an abomination in Israel and in Jerusalem, in the sense that sees God, and in the vision of peace. For he pollutes the mysteries of Christ, unworthily receiving his body and blood (I Cor. 11), because he has loved vices and has invented for himself alien gods, having a number of gods according to the number of his sins. According to the apostle Paul: *The god of the gluttonous is their belly* (Phil. 3), and according to Peter [Or: James]. *By whom a man is overcome, to him he is enslaved* (II Pet. 2:19). And he who does this will be exterminated [Or: is exterminated] from the Church, and from the tents of Jacob, who supplants vices and sins, until he is humbled for his own good, and a victim is offered for him to the Lord Almighty.

(Verses 13 ff.) And this you have done again: you covered the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with groaning [Vulgate: bellowing], so that I will no longer look upon your sacrifice, nor receive anything acceptable from your hand. And you said: For what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have despised: and she is your partner, and the wife of your covenant. Did not one make her, and she is the remnant of his spirit? and what does the one seek, but the seed of God? Keep your spirit, therefore, and do not despise the wife of your youth.

Cum odio habueris, dimitte, dicit Dominus Deus Israel; operiet autem iniquitas vestimentum ejus, dicit Dominus exercituum: custodite spiritum vestrum, et nolite despicere. LXX: Et haec quae oderam, fecistis: operiebatis lacrymis altare Domini planctu et gemitu, de laboris adhuc dignum respicere sacrificium, aut suscipere acceptabile de manibus vestris. Et dixistis, propter quid? Quia Dominus testificatus est inter te et uxorem adolescentiae tuae, quam tu reliquisti, et haec particeps tua, et uxor testamenti tui, et non alius fecit, et reliquiae spiritus tui. Et dixistis: quid aliud praeter semen quaerit Deus? et custodite in spiritu vestro, et uxorem adolescentiae tuae ne derelinquas: sed si odio habens dimiseris eam, dicit Dominus Deus Israel, operiet impietus cogitationes tuas, dicit Dominus omnipotens: et custodite in spiritu vestro, et nolite derelinquere.

Interpretemur historiam, et singulis versiculis breves sententias coaptantes, quod nobis ab Hebraeis sit traditum, disseramus. Derelictae uxores Israeliticae, et in thoris maritorum alienarum gentium feminas contemplantes, ad Dei solius auxilium confugebant, diebus ac noctibus ante altare Domini 966 provolutae lacrymis, gemitu, atque ejulatibus invidiam faciebant ejus providentiae; quod non respiceret humana, et [Al. misera] miseras non juvaret. Unde dicit Deus, sacrificium et hostiam de manibus sacerdotum, qui ista commiserunt, se accipere non posse, uxorum fletu et planctibus impeditum, et insuper eos quaerere: quam ob causam de manibus eorum non accipiat sacrificium, statimque infert: Quia Dominus testificatus est inter te, et uxorem pubertatis tuae, quam tu despexisti, dicens: Propter hoc relinquet homo patrem et matrem, et adhaerebit uxori suae, et erunt duo in una carne (Genes. II, 24): et idcirco particeps dicitur, et uxor conjunctionis, et foederis, quae a Deo de costa viri facta est.

Et residuum spiritus ejus, sive Dei, ut quidam putant, sive mariti, ut alii suspirantur, quod propter affectam quodammodo una anima in duobus esse videatur, conjunctis spiritu, mente sociatis.

Cum ergo unus utrumque fecerit, et virum et mulierem: propterea a Deo facta est utriusque conjunctio, ut liberi nascerentur. Unus enim Deus, quid quaerit nisi semen Dei, hoc est filios de Israelitica stirpe generatos? Cum ergo habeatis fecundas conjuges, et liberis gaudeatis, quid pulchritudinem uxorum quaeritis, quae meretricibus apta est, non uxoribus?

When you shall hate her, put her away, says the Lord the God of Israel; but iniquity shall cover his garment, says the Lord of hosts: keep your spirit, and do not despise her. Septuagint: And these things which I hated, you have done: you covered the altar of the Lord with weeping and groaning, so that from your labors I should no longer deem it worthy to look upon a sacrifice, or to receive what is acceptable from your hands. And you said, for what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have left, and she is your partner, and the wife of your testament, and no other made her, and she is the remnant of your spirit. And you said: what else besides seed does God seek? and keep in your spirit, and do not forsake the wife of your youth: but if, hating her, you send her away, says the Lord God of Israel, impiety will cover your thoughts, says the Lord almighty: and keep in your spirit, and do not forsake her.

Let us interpret the history, and adapting brief thoughts to each little verse, let us discuss what has been handed down to us by the Hebrews. The abandoned Israelite wives, contemplating the women of foreign nations in their husbands' beds, fled to the help of God alone; day and night, prostrate before the altar of the Lord 966 with tears, groaning, and wailing, they provoked envy against His providence, because He did not regard human affairs and did not aid their [variant: miserable] miseries. Whence God says that He cannot accept the sacrifice and offering from the hands of the priests who committed these things, being hindered by the weeping and lamentations of the wives, and that they moreover ask for what reason He does not accept the sacrifice from their hands; and He immediately adds: Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have despised, saying: For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh (Gen. 2:24): and therefore she is called a partner, and the wife of conjunction and of the covenant, who was made by God from the rib of the man.

And the remnant of his spirit, whether of God, as some think, or of the husband, as others suspect, is because, on account of affection, one soul seems in a way to be in two, joined in spirit, associated in mind.

Since, therefore, one made both, both man and woman, for this reason the union of both was made by God, that children might be born. For what does the one God seek but the seed of God, that is, sons generated from the Israelite stock? Since, therefore, you have fertile wives and rejoice in children, why do you seek the beauty of wives, which is fitting for harlots, not for wives?

Praecipit itaque per prophetam Deus, et dicit: Custodite spiritum vestrum; ne abducamini libidine, ne alienigenarum amore vincamini. Et uxorem adolescentiae tuae noli despicere, ut quae tibi virginali primum juncta est matrimonio, perseveret usque ad senectutem. Sed poterat fieri, ut principes, sacerdotes, Levitae, populus responderent: Praecepit Deus per Moysen, ut cum odio habuerimus uxores, dimittamus eas. Et legendum est: Dicis mihi scriptum est: Cum odio habueris uxorem tuam, dimitte, dicit Dominus Deus Israel (Deut. XXIV). Statimque respondit: hoc quidem in Lege praeceptum est, sed propter duritiam cordis vestri. Quod plenius Dominus in Evangelio prosequitur: Quicumque autem, excepta causa fornicationis, uxorem inique dimiserit (Mat. V, 52), operiet vestimentum ejus iniquitas, id est, corpus quo anima vestitur, dicit Dominus exercituum: ut in quo peccavit, in ipso puniatur.

Quapropter, hac quaestiuncula dissoluta, inculcat 967 et replicat quod supra dixerat: Custodite spiritum vestrum, et nolite despicere, vel custodiam spiritus vestri, vel certe uxorem, si pauper est, aut deformis.

Quod nos specialiter juxta Ezrae librum super uxoribus exposuimus derelictis: hoc alii generaliter contra eos dictum putant, qui aliena diripiunt, et injuste divitias congregantes, audent offerre munera, Deo, quae dicit se nequaquam posse suscipere, lacrymis eorum, qui vastati sunt, et fletu, ac gemitibus prohibitum, et congruere locum istum illi testimonio: Honora Deum ex justis tuis laboribus (Prov, III, 9). Sed et istum sensum interserunt, eos qui propter rei familiaris amissionem, et interitum liberorum, et naufragium, et caetera quae ad damnum pertinent rerum saecularium, vertuntur in fletus, et totos se tradunt planctui, et gemitibus: nec animi robore, et spe in Deum, et praemiis futurorum cuncta contemnunt: etiamsi dirigant ad Deum orationem, non suscipi ab eo, quia indecoris et incongruis viro planctibus deturpentur.

Hoc autem quod sequitur: Quia Dominus testificatus est inter te, et uxorem pubertatis tuae, sive adolescentiae quam tu despexisti: et haec est particeps [Al. pars] tua, et uxor pacti, vel testamenti tui; et non alius fecit: et reliquiae spiritus tui, sic interpretantur, ut uxorem adolescentiae naturalem dicant intelligentiam, et legem in corde perscriptam, quae omnibus hominibus insita est. Unde et gentes non habentes legem Dei, ea quae sunt Legis, operantur. Et de hac conjugē in Proverbiis praedicari: A Deo conjungitur uxor viro (Prov. XIX, 24); et jubemur ut de nostris aquis bibamus et fontibus: nullusque in potando sit particeps, et ut laetemur cum uxore adolescentiae nostrae.

Therefore, God commands through the prophet, and says: Keep your spirit; lest you be carried away by lust, lest you be overcome by the love of foreign women. And do not despise the wife of your youth, so that she who was first joined to you in virginal matrimony may persevere even to old age. But it could happen that the princes, priests, Levites, and people would answer: God commanded through Moses that when we hate our wives, we should put them away. And it should be read: You say to me it is written: When you hate your wife, put her away, says the Lord God of Israel (Deut. 24). And he immediately responds: this indeed is commanded in the Law, but because of the hardness of your heart. The Lord follows this up more fully in the Gospel: Whoever shall put away his wife unjustly, excepting for the cause of fornication (Matt. 5:32), iniquity shall cover his garment, that is, the body in which the soul is clothed, says the Lord of hosts: so that in that wherein he has sinned, in that he may be punished.

Wherefore, this little question having been resolved, he impresses 967 and repeats what he had said above: Keep your spirit, and do not despise, either the keeping of your spirit, or certainly your wife, if she is poor, or deformed.

What we have expounded specifically concerning the abandoned wives according to the book of Ezra, others think is said generally against those who seize others' property and, unjustly gathering riches, dare to offer gifts to God, which He says He can in no way accept, being prevented by the tears, weeping, and groans of those who have been despoiled, and that this passage agrees with that testimony: Honor God from your just labors (Prov. 3:9). But they also insert this sense: that those who, on account of the loss of family property, the death of children, shipwreck, and other things that pertain to the loss of worldly things, turn to weeping and give themselves wholly to lamentation and groaning, and do not, with strength of mind and hope in God and the rewards of the future, despise all things; even if they direct a prayer to God, it is not received by Him, because they are disfigured by weeping that is unseemly and unfitting for a man.

Now, what follows: Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have despised: and she is your partner [variant: part], and the wife of your pact, or testament; and no other made her: and the remnant of your spirit, they interpret in this way, that they call the wife of youth the natural intelligence, and the law written on the heart, which is innate in all men. Whence also the Gentiles, not having the law of God, do the things that are of the Law. And of this spouse it is preached in Proverbs: A wife is joined to a man by God (Prov. 19:24); and we are ordered to drink from our own waters and fountains: and let no one be a partner in drinking, and that we should rejoice with the wife of our youth.

Haec uxor impellit etiam in credulos dicere: Deus judicet, et Deus videat (Judic. VII, 13): et ipsi cuncta inter me et te dijudicanda permitto, de qua et Ecclesiastes loquitur: Et vive vitam cum muliere quam dilexisti omnibus diebus vanitatis tuae, qui tibi dati sunt sub sole (Eccl. IX, 9).

Haec uxor residuum spiritus nostri est, quia nostro semper sensui copulatur: quae si recedat a nobis, statim offendimus Deum, 968 et operit nos nostra impietas. Unde rursum ingeritur: Custodite spiritum vestrum (Galat. VI), non carnem in qua qui sunt, Deo placere non possunt, non animam: Animalis enim homo non recipit ea, quae spiritus sunt (I Cor. II, 14); sed spiritum: quia spiritus interpellat pro nobis gemitibus ineffabilibus (Rom. VIII, 16).

(Vers. 17.) Laborare fecistis Dominum in sermonibus vestris, et dixistis: in quo eum fecimus laborare? In eo quod dicitis: omnis qui facit malum, bonus est in conspectu Domini, et tales ei placent: aut certe ubi est Deus iudicii? LXX: Qui provocastis Dominum in sermonibus vestris: et dixistis, in quo provocavimus te? In eo quod dicitis, omnis qui facit malum, bonus est in conspectu Domini, et in his sibi complacet; et ubi est Deus iustitiae? Hunc locum plenius septuagesimus secundus psalmus exsequitur, cujus principium est: Quam bonus Israel Deus his qui recto sunt corde! Mei autem pene moti sunt pedes: pene effusi sunt gressus mei: Quia zelatus sum super iniquis, pacem peccatorum videns: Quia non est respectus morti eorum, et firmamentum in plaga eorum. In labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur (Ps. LXXII, 1 seqq). Ac deinde; et dixi, ergo sine causa justificavi cor meum: et lavi inter innocentes manus meas. Reversus ergo populus de Babylone, et videns cunctas in circuitu nationes, ipsosque Babylonis idolis servientes, abundare divitiis, vigere corporibus, omnia quae bona putantur in saeculo possidere; se vero qui habeat [Al. habebat] notitiam Dei, squalore, inedia, servitute coopertum, scandalizatur et dicit: Non est in rebus humanis providentia, omnia casu feruntur incerto, nec Dei iudicio gubernantur, quin potius mala [Al. mali et boni] ei placent, et bona displicent: aut certe si Deus cuncta dijudicat, ubi est illius aequum justumque iudicium?

This wife impels even unbelievers to say: Let God judge, and let God see (Judg. 7:13): and to you I permit all things to be judged between me and you, of which Ecclesiastes also speaks: And live your life with the woman whom you have loved all the days of your vanity, which are given to you under the sun (Eccl. 9:9).

This wife is the remnant of our spirit, because she is always joined to our sense: if she departs from us, we immediately offend God, 968 and our impiety covers us. Whence it is again impressed: Keep your spirit (Gal. 6), not the flesh, for they who are in it cannot please God, not the soul: For the natural man does not receive the things that are of the spirit (1 Cor. 2:14); but the spirit: because the spirit pleads for us with unutterable groanings (Rom. 8:16).

(Verse 17) You have wearied the Lord with your words, and you have said: "In what have we wearied him?" In that you say: "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and such people are pleasing to him"; or surely, "Where is the God of judgment?" The Septuagint: "You who have provoked the Lord with your words: and you have said, 'In what have we provoked you?'" "In that you say, 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and in these he takes pleasure'; and 'Where is the God of justice?'" The seventy-second psalm treats this passage more fully, the beginning of which is: "How good God is to Israel, to those who are upright in heart!" "But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; my steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the wicked, when I saw the peace of sinners. For there is no regard for their death, and their affliction is steadfast." "They are not in the labor of men, and they will not be scourged with men" (Ps. 72:1 ff.). And then: "And I said, 'Therefore, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands among the innocent.'" Therefore, the people, having returned from Babylon and seeing all the surrounding nations, and the Babylonians themselves serving idols, abounding in riches, flourishing in body, possessing all that is considered good in the world; but seeing themselves, who have knowledge of God, covered in squalor, starvation, and servitude, are scandalized and say: "There is no providence in human affairs, all things are carried along by uncertain chance and are not governed by the judgment of God; nay rather, evil things please him, and good things displease him; or surely, if God judges all things, where is his fair and just judgment?"

Istiusmodi quaestionem mens incredula futurorum quotidie suscitatur Deo, et cum viderit iniquos potentes, sanctos humiles illos rebus omnibus affluere, hos ne ea quidem quae ad victum necessaria sunt, habere; et interdum surdis auribus caecisque oculis, et omni parte membrorum ulceribus, et infirmitate depressos, qualis in Evangelio (Luc. XVI) Lazarus legitur, qui ante fores divitis purpurati, desiderabat micis, quae abjiciuntur de mensarum reliquiis, inopem animam sustentare; divitem vero tantae feritatis et crudelitatis, ut non misereatur homo hominis, cujus etiam canum lingua miseretur, non intelligentes tempus iudicii, nec vera bona illa esse, quae perpetua sunt, dicunt: Mali ei placent, et ubi est Deus iudicii?

(Cap. III.---Vers. 1.) Ecce ego mitto. [Al. mittam] angelum meum, et praeparabit viam ante faciem meam: et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis, et angelus testamenti quem vos vultis. LXX: Ecce ego mittam angelum meum, et praeparabit viam ante faciem meam: et subito veniet ad templum suum Dominus quem vos quaeritis, et angelus iustitiae quem vos vultis. Hoc interpretatus est Dominus in Evangelio de Joanne Baptista, dicens: Iste est de quo scriptum est; Ecce ego mittam angelum meum ante faciem tuam, et praeparabit viam tuam coram me (Matth. XI, 10); nec eisdem usus est verbis, quae LXX interpretes transtulerunt. Marcus quoque evangelista duo testimonia Malachiae, et Isaiae sub unius prophetae sermone contexens ita exorsus est: Initium Evangelii Jesu Christi, sicut scriptum est in Isaia propheta: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam, qui praeparabit viam tuam (Marc. I, 2). Hoc licet verbis aliis in Malachia legimus. Quod autem sequitur: Vox clamantis in deserto, parate viam Domini; rectas facite semitas ejus (Isai. XL, 3), ab Isaia propheta dicitur: statimque utrumque testimonium de quo dicatur, exponens: Fuit, inquit, Joannes in deserto, baptizans, et praedicans baptismum poenitentiae, in remissionem peccatorum (Marc. I, 4). Sed et evangelistae vaticinium prophetarum super Joanne interpretati sunt cumque in sensu consentiant, in verbis discrepant. Pro eo enim quod LXX transtulerunt: Rectas facite semitas Dei nostri, Marcus Lucasque dixerunt: Rectas facite semitas ejus. Joannes autem: Dirigite, ait, viam Domini. Ex quo perspicuum est, apostolos, et evangelistas, et ipsum Dominum Salvatorem non LXX interpretum auctoritatem sequi, qua Hebraeae linguae habentes scientiam, non 970 indigenti; sed ex Hebraeo transferre quod legerint: non curantes de syllabis punctisque verborum; dummodo sententiarum veritas transferratur. Quod quidem et in pluribus locis eos fecisse docuimus, et maxime in eo libro qui a nobis inscriptus est, de optimo genere interpretandi, multis simul testimoniis approbatum est.

A mind incredulous of future things raises this sort of question to God daily, and when it sees the iniquitous powerful and the saints humble—the former abounding in all things, the latter not even having what is necessary for sustenance; and sometimes oppressed with deaf ears and blind eyes, and with ulcers on every part of their limbs, and with infirmity, such as Lazarus is read of in the Gospel (Luke 16), who, before the doors of the rich man clothed in purple, desired to sustain his needy soul with the crumbs that are thrown away from the remnants of the tables; but the rich man being of such savagery and cruelty that a man does not pity a man whom even the tongues of dogs pity—not understanding the time of judgment, nor that those true goods are the ones that are perpetual, they say: "The evil are pleasing to him, and where is the God of judgment?"

CHAPTER III. Verse 1. Behold, I send [alt: will send] my angel, and he will prepare the way before my face: and presently the ruler whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire. The Septuagint: Behold, I will send my angel, and he will prepare the way before my face: and suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of justice whom you desire. The Lord interpreted this in the Gospel concerning John the Baptist, saying: This is he of whom it is written; Behold, I will send my angel before your face, and he will prepare your way before me (Matthew 11:10); nor did he use the same words that the Septuagint translators rendered. Mark the evangelist also, weaving together two testimonies of Malachi and Isaiah under the discourse of a single prophet, thus began: The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: Behold, I send my angel before your face, who will prepare your way (Mark 1:2). This we read in Malachi, although with different words. But what follows: The voice of one crying in the desert, prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight (Isaiah 40:3), is said by the prophet Isaiah: and immediately explaining both testimonies of which it is spoken, he says: John was in the desert, baptizing, and preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4). But the evangelists also interpreted the prophecy of the prophets concerning John, and while they agree in sense, they differ in words. For instead of what the Septuagint translated: Make straight the paths of our God, Mark and Luke said: Make his paths straight. But John says: Make straight the way of the Lord. From this it is clear that the apostles, and the evangelists, and the Lord Savior himself do not follow the authority of the Septuagint translators, which they, having knowledge of the Hebrew language, do not need; but they translate from the Hebrew what they have read, not caring for the syllables and points of the words, as long as the truth of the meanings is transferred. Indeed, we have taught that they did this in many places, and it has been approved by many testimonies at once, especially in that book which was written by us, On the best kind of translating.

Hoc ergo quod dicitur: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum et praeparabit viam ante faciem meam, ex persona Christi dicitur, quod Joannem miserit in deserto Judaeae praedicare baptismum poenitentiae, in remissionem peccatorum. Quod autem sequitur: Et statim veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis, et angelus testamenti quem vos vultis, ita de se quasi de altero loquitur, juxta consuetudinem Scripturarum. Nullisque dubium est quin Dominator iste salvator sit, qui Creator est omnium, et angelus testamenti, et magni consilii Angelus appellatur.

Alii vero hoc quod dicitur: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum et praeparabit viam ante faciem meam, ex persona Patris dictum putant: et quod sequitur: Statim veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis, et angelus testamenti quem vos vultis, de Domino Salvatore ab eo dictum intelligunt. Praeparat autem viam Joannes, et rectas facit semitas Dei nostri in cordibus credentium, in quibus propter pravitatem, et incredulitatem, prius Deus ambulare non poterat. Templum autem vel Ecclesiam interpretantur, vel unumquemque credentium in Ecclesia: Aedificamini domos spirituales, sacerdotium sanctum: offerentes spirituales victimas, et acceptabiles Deo per Christum Jesum (I Petr. II, 5). Eos vero qui crediderint: Nescitis quod templum Dei estis, et spiritus Dei habitat in vobis (I Cor. III, 16)?

Judaei hoc quod dicitur: Ecce ego mitto angelum meum, de Elia propheta dictum intelligunt, et quod sequitur: Statim veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis; et angelus testamenti quem vos vultis, referunt ἡλειμμένον, hoc est, Christum suum, quem dicunt ultimo tempore esse venturum. Sed miror quomodo eos rerum-exitus non doceat veritatem. Quod enim templum 971 suum inveniet dominator, quod usque ad fundamenta destructum est, aut si ab alio exstruendum est antequam Christus adveniat, quid Christus eorum amplius facturus est, cum ab alio restituta sint omnia?

Dominus noster in Evangelio Eliam prophetam, Joannem Baptistam interpretans loquitur: Si vultis scire, ipse est Elias qui venturus est (Mat. XI, 14), de quo et hic idem propheta quem nunc disseruimus, scribit in fine: Ecce ego mitto vobis Eliam prophetam, antequam veniat dies Domini magnus et horribilis (Infra IV, 5). Quomodo autem Elias Joannes sit, dedit nobis viam intelligentiae, in virtute et spiritu Eliae eum venisse, commemorans.

Therefore, this which is said: Behold, I send my angel and he will prepare the way before my face, is said from the person of Christ, that he sent John into the desert of Judea to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. But what follows: And presently the ruler whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire, he speaks thus of himself as if of another, according to the custom of the Scriptures. And there is no doubt to anyone that this Ruler is the Savior, who is the Creator of all, and is called the angel of the covenant, and the Angel of great counsel.

Others, however, think that what is said: Behold, I send my angel and he will prepare the way before my face, is said from the person of the Father: and what follows: Presently the ruler whom you seek will come to his temple, and the angel of the covenant whom you desire, they understand to be said by Him concerning the Lord Savior. Moreover, John prepares the way and makes straight the paths of our God in the hearts of believers, in which, on account of perversity and unbelief, God could not previously walk. Moreover, they interpret the temple as either the Church, or each of the believers in the Church: Be you also as living stones, built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5). And to those who have believed: Know you not, that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16).

The Jews understand that what is said: Behold, I send my angel, is said of Elijah the prophet, and what follows: Presently the ruler whom you seek will come to his temple; and the angel of the covenant whom you desire, they refer to the *ēleimmenon*, that is, their Christ, whom they say will come in the last time. But I wonder how the outcome of events does not teach them the truth. For what temple of his will the ruler find, which has been destroyed down to its foundations? Or if it is to be built by another before Christ arrives, what more will their Christ do, when all things have been restored by another?

Our Lord in the Gospel, interpreting Elijah the prophet as John the Baptist, speaks: If you will receive it, he is Elias that is to come (Matthew 11:14), of whom this same prophet whom we have now discussed also writes at the end: Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord (Malachi 4:5). But how Elijah is John, he has given us the way of understanding, by recalling that he came in the virtue and spirit of Elijah.

(Vers. 2. seqq.) Ecce venit, dicit Dominus exercituum, et quis poterit cogitare diem adventus ejus? Et quis stabit ad videndum eum? Ipse enim quasi ignis conflans, et quasi herba fullonum. Et sedebit conflans, et emundans quasi [Vulg. tacet quasi] argentum, et purgabit filios Levi, et colabit eos quasi aurum et quasi argentum: et erunt Domino offerentes sacrificia in justitia. Et placebit Domino sacrificium Juda, et Jerusalem, sicut dies saeculi, et sicut anni antiqui. Et accedam ad vos in iudicio, et ero testis velox maleficis et adulteris, et perjuris, et qui calumniantur mercedem mercenarii, viduas et pupillos, et opprimunt peregrinum: nec timuerunt me, dicit Dominus exercituum. Ego enim Dominus, et non mutor.

LXX: Ecce veniet [Al. venit], dicit Dominus omnipotens, et quis sustinebit diem introitus ejus? aut quis ferre poterit ut aspiciat eum? Quia ipse ingreditur quasi ignis conflatorii, et quasi herba lavantium: et sedebit conflans et emundans sicut argentum, et sicut aurum, et emundabit filios Levi, et fundet eos sicut aurum et sicut argentum, et erunt Domino offerentes hostias in justitia [Al. justitia]: et placebit Domino sacrificium Juda et Jerusalem, sicut diebus pristinis, et sicut annis prioribus. Et accedam ad vos in iudicio, et ero testis velox super maleficos, et super adulteros, et super eos qui jurant in nomine meo mendaciter. Et qui fraudant mercede mercenarios, et opprimunt per potentiam viduas, et percutiunt pupillos et pervertunt iudicium advenae, et qui non timent me, dicit Dominus 972 omnipotens: quoniam ego Dominus Deus vester, et non mutor.

Supra legimus motam Domino quaestionem ab his qui dicunt: Omnis qui facit malum, bonus est in conspectu Domini, et tales ei placent, aut certe si displicent, ubi est Deus iudicii? hoc est, ubi est justitiae veritas? Ad quam dissolvendam Domini sermo respondit: Mittam angelum meum, qui praeparabit viam meam, et veniet ad templum suum dominator quem vos quaeritis, qui iudex est veritatis, de quo dicitur in Psalmo: Deus, iudicium tuum regi da: et justitiam tuam filio regis (Psal. LXXI, I). Non enim Pater iudicat quemquam; sed iudicium omne dedit Filio (Joan. V, 22). Et ille est angelus testamenti quem vos quaeritis, cui mala non placent, qui personam in iudicio non accipit (Coloss. III, 25), qui nulla nec misericordia, nec severitate mutatur: Calix enim in manu Domini vini meri plenus mixto, et inclinavit ex hoc in hoc (Psal. LXXIV, 9), id est, misericordia justitiam temperat, et justitia misericordiam. Iste igitur statim et velociter veniet ad templum suum, id est, Ecclesiam

Et quis poterit cogitare diem adventus ejus? Si cogitare prae potentia majestatis ejus nemo potest, ferre quis poterit? Et quis stabit ad videndum eum, hoc est, quis eum poterit lippientibus et caecutientibus oculis in sua claritate conspicere, qui est sol justitiae, et in cujus pennis est sanitas?

(Verse 2 seqq.) Behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts, and who will be able to think of the day of his coming? And who will stand to see him? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like the fuller's herb. And he will sit refining and cleansing as silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and will refine them as gold and as silver: and they will be offering sacrifices to the Lord in justice. And the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years. And I will come to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness against sorcerers and adulterers, and perjurers, and those who defraud the hire of the laborer, widows and orphans, and oppress the sojourner: nor have they feared me, says the Lord of hosts. For I am the Lord, and I do not change.

LXX: Behold, he will come [variant: he comes], says the Lord Almighty, and who will endure the day of his entry? or who will be able to bear to look at him? For he enters like the fire of a furnace, and like the herb of those who wash: and he will sit refining and cleansing as silver, and as gold, and he will cleanse the sons of Levi, and will pour them out like gold and like silver, and they will be offering hosts to the Lord in justice [variant: justice]: and the sacrifice of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord, as in the former days, and as in the prior years. And I will come to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, and against adulterers, and against those who swear falsely in my name. And those who defraud the hire of laborers, and oppress widows by power, and strike orphans and pervert the judgment of the sojourner, and who do not fear me, says the Lord 972 Almighty: for I am the Lord your God, and I do not change.

Above we read the question posed to the Lord by those who say: 'Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and such people are pleasing to him,' or certainly, if they are displeasing, 'Where is the God of judgment?' that is, where is the truth of justice? To resolve this, the word of the Lord responded: 'I will send my angel, who will prepare my way, and the ruler whom you seek will come to his temple, who is the judge of truth,' of whom it is said in the Psalm: 'Give the king your judgment, O God, and your justice to the king's son' (Psalm 71:1). For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son (John 5:22). And he is the angel of the covenant whom you seek, to whom evil things are not pleasing, who does not show partiality in judgment (Colossians 3:25), who is changed by neither mercy nor severity: 'For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup of pure wine full of mixture, and he has poured from this to that' (Psalm 74:9), that is, mercy tempers justice, and justice, mercy. He, therefore, will come immediately and swiftly to his temple, that is, the Church.

And who will be able to think of the day of his coming? If no one can think of it because of the power of his majesty, who will be able to bear it? And who will stand to see him, that is, who will be able to behold him in his brightness with bleary and dim-sighted eyes, he who is the sun of justice, and in whose wings is healing?

Ipse veniet quasi ignis conflans, et quasi herba fullonum (Inf. 2): Ignis enim in conspectu ejus ardebit, et in circuitu ejus tempestas valida (Ps. XLIX). Tunc vocabit coelum desuper, et terram ut dijudicet populum suum, flumina ignis trahent ante eum, peccatores quosque volventia. Ignis autem dicitur Dominus, et ignis consumens (Deut. IV), ut ligna nostra, fenum, stipulamque comburat. Et non solum ignis; sed et herba fullonum, quae Hebraice BORITH () appellatur, et LXX πόναν id est, herbam fullonum, vertunt. Ipse his qui peccant graviter, ignis conflans est, atque consumens: qui autem levia peccata committunt, herba fullonum, ut lotis munditiam restituat, secundum 973 illud quod scriptum est in Isaia: Lavabit Dominus sordes filiorum et filiarum Sion, et sanguinem emundabit de medio eorum, spiritu judicii, et spiritu combustionis (Isai. IV, 4). Qui sordes habent, spiritu judicii indigent, ut laventur: qui sanguine pleni sunt, spiritu combustionis, ut sanguis qui in eis extrinsecus litus est, auferatur.

Et sedebit conflans et emundans sicut argentum, ut secundum Ezechielem (Cap. XXII), quidquid in auro nostro et argento, id est, sensu et eloquio, aere, stanno, ferro, plumboque commixtum est, in camino Domini percoquatur, ut purum aurum remaneat, et argentum. Unde et Dominus in Evangelio loquitur: Ignem veni mittere super terram, et quam [Al. quem] volo ut ardeat (Luc. XII, 49); et purgabit filios Levi. Tempus est enim ut judicium incipiat a domo Dei (I Petr. IV, 17). Et alibi scribitur: A sanctis meis incipite (Ezech. IX, 6). In filiis autem Levi: omnem sacerdotalem intellige dignitatem. Si autem sacerdotes purgandi sunt et colandi, ut purum aurum remaneat et argentum, quid de caeteris est dicendum? Qui cum emundati fuerint et colati, tunc offerent Domino justa sacrificia, et placebit sacrificium eorum, quod offerunt pro Juda, et Jerusalem, hoc est, pro his qui Dominum confitentur, et pacem ejus mente conspiciunt, sicut dies saeculi, et sicut anni antiqui; ut quomodo in principio placuerunt Deo, sic post peccatum et poenitentiam placere incipiant; cum omni fuerint peccatorum sorde purgati.

Et accedam, inquit, ad vos in judicio, et ero testis velox. Quanta formido judicii, cum ipse sit testis et iudex. Testis est autem cunctis maleficis et adulteris, haec enim crimina perpetrantur occulte, et ideo proferuntur in medium, ne diu lateant. Post maleficos ponuntur adulteri: post adulteros perjuri: post perjuros, qui calumniantur mercedem mercenarii, et nolunt reddere pro operis labore quod debent. Viduas quoque et pupillos, subauditur calumniantur, et opprimunt peregrinum et alienigenam, vel certe catechumenum, qui necdum in civitate Christi civis effectus est.

He will come like a refiner's fire, and like the fuller's herb (cf. below, 2): For a fire will burn in his sight, and a mighty tempest around him (Psalm 49). Then he will call heaven from above, and the earth, to judge his people; rivers of fire will drag before him, sweeping along all sinners. Moreover, the Lord is called a fire, and a consuming fire (Deuteronomy 4), to burn up our wood, hay, and stubble. And not only fire, but also the fuller's herb, which in Hebrew is called BORITH, and which the LXX translate as *πρόα*, that is, the fuller's herb. For those who sin gravely, he is a refining and consuming fire; but for those who commit light sins, he is the fuller's herb, to restore cleanness to those who are washed, according to 973 that which is written in Isaiah: 'The Lord will wash away the filth of the sons and daughters of Zion, and will cleanse the blood from their midst, with the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning' (Isaiah 4:4). Those who have filth need the spirit of judgment, to be washed; those who are full of blood need the spirit of burning, so that the blood which is smeared on them externally may be taken away.

And he will sit refining and cleansing as silver, so that, according to Ezekiel (Chapter 22), whatever in our gold and silver—that is, in our sense and eloquence—is mixed with bronze, tin, iron, and lead, may be thoroughly cooked in the furnace of the Lord, so that pure gold and silver may remain. Whence also the Lord says in the Gospel: 'I came to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish [variant: what I wish] that it would burn' (Luke 12:49); and he will purify the sons of Levi. For it is time for judgment to begin at the house of God (1 Peter 4:17). And elsewhere it is written: 'Begin with my saints' (Ezekiel 9:6). Now, in the sons of Levi, understand every priestly dignity. But if the priests are to be purified and refined, so that pure gold and silver may remain, what is to be said of the rest? When they have been cleansed and refined, then they will offer just sacrifices to the Lord, and their sacrifice, which they offer for Judah and Jerusalem—that is, for those who confess the Lord and behold his peace in their mind—will be pleasing, as in the days of old and as in ancient years; so that just as they were pleasing to God in the beginning, so after sin and repentance they may begin to be pleasing, when they have been purged of all the filth of sin.

'And I will come,' he says, 'to you in judgment, and I will be a swift witness.' How great the dread of judgment, when he himself is both witness and judge. He is a witness, moreover, against all sorcerers and adulterers, for these crimes are perpetrated in secret, and therefore they are brought into the open, lest they lie hidden for long. After sorcerers are placed adulterers; after adulterers, perjurers; after perjurers, those who defraud the hire of the laborer and are unwilling to render what they owe for the labor of the work. Widows also and orphans, it is understood, they defraud, and they oppress the sojourner and the foreigner, or certainly the catechumen, who has not yet been made a citizen in the city of Christ.

Et si ista universa non fecerint, sufficit eis solum crimen ad poenam, quod non timeant Dominum.

Nequaquam igitur levia putemus esse peccata perjurium, et mercedem 974 non reddere laboranti, et calumniari viduam et pupillum, et opprimere alienigenam et peregrinum: quae maleficio, et veneficiis, et adulterio comparantur. Haec et juxta historiam, et juxta tropologiam intelligimus, ut quod eo tempore dicebatur ad principes Judaeorum, nunc dicatur ad principes Ecclesiarum: Quodque sequitur: Ego dominus et non mutor, idcirco ponit, quia supra dixerat: ipse quasi ignis conflans, et quasi herba fullonum, ne putemus eum divinitatis mutare naturam, quum pro nobis aut angelus, aut ignis, aut BORITH nominatur.

(Vers. 6.) Et vos, filii Jacob, non estis consumpti. A diebus enim patrum vestrorum recessistis a legitimis meis, et non custodistis. LXX: Et vos, filii Jacob, non recessistis a peccatis patrum vestrorum, declinastis a legitimis meis, et non custodistis. Supra dixerat: Ero testis velox maleficis, et adulteris, et perjuris, et qui calumniantur mercedem mercenarii, viduas et pupillos, et opprimunt peregrinum, nec timeverunt me, dicit Dominus exercituum. Justumque judicem esse se dicens: quod non accipiat personam in judicio, intulit: Ego Dominus et non mutor. Et est sensus: Vos per maleficia, et adulteria, et perjuria, et calumnias, et violentiam quotidie mutamini, ego in judicio nulla personarum varietate commutor. Cumque severum, et justum judicem esse me fatear, o filii Jacob: tamen non estis tormentorum diversitate consumpti, juxta illud quod scriptum est in Jeremia: Sine causa percussi filios vestros, disciplinam non recepistis (Jer. II, 30): nec hoc nuper facitis, nec semel, ut erroris mereamini, veniam, sed haereditariam habebis impietatem, ex diebus patrum vestrorum a legitimis meis recedendo, et non custodiendo quae praecepi. Filios autem Jacob secundum ἀναγωγὴν supplantatoris, et germani primitiva rapientis, qui non recedant a peccatis patrum suorum, et declinent a legitimis, et non custodiant quae praecepta sunt, intelligamus eos qui in Ecclesia constituti non recedunt a vitiis, et falsum sibi religionis Christianae nomen assumunt.

(Vers. 7 seqq.) Revertimini ad me, et revertar ad vos, dicit Dominus exercituum. Et dixistis, in quo revertemur? Si affiget homo Deum, quia vos configitis me? Et dixistis: In 975 quo confiximus te? in decimis et primitivis. In [Vulg. Et in] penuria vos maledicti estis, et me vos confixistis, gens tota. Inferte omnem decimam in horreum, et sit cibus in domo mea, et probate me super hoc, dicit Dominus: si non aperuero vobis cataractas coeli, et effudero vobis benedictionem usque ad abundantiam.

And if they have not done all these things, this crime alone is sufficient for their punishment: that they have not feared the Lord.

Let us by no means, therefore, think that perjury, and not rendering wages to the laborer, and defrauding the widow and the orphan, and oppressing the foreigner and the sojourner are light sins, for they are compared to sorcery, and witchcraft, and adultery. We understand these things both according to history and according to tropology, so that what was said at that time to the princes of the Jews may now be said to the princes of the Churches: And as for what follows, 'I am the Lord and I do not change,' he places this because he had said above, 'he is like a refiner's fire, and like the fuller's herb,' lest we think that he changes his divine nature when, for our sake, he is named angel, or fire, or BORITH.

(Verse 6) And you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed. For from the days of your fathers you have departed from my statutes, and have not kept them. The Septuagint: And you, O sons of Jacob, have not departed from the sins of your fathers; you have turned aside from my statutes, and have not kept them. Above, He had said: I will be a swift witness against sorcerers, and adulterers, and perjurers, and those who defraud the hired laborer of his wages, the widows, and the orphans, and who oppress the stranger, and have not feared me, says the Lord of hosts. And declaring Himself to be a just judge, who does not show partiality in judgment, He added: I am the Lord, and I do not change. And the meaning is this: You are changed daily through evil deeds, and adulteries, and perjuries, and slanders, and violence; I, in judgment, am not altered by any variety of persons. And although I confess Myself to be a severe and just judge, O sons of Jacob, yet you are not consumed by a diversity of torments, according to that which is written in Jeremiah: "In vain have I struck your children, they have received no discipline" (Jer. 2:30). Nor do you do this recently, nor only once, so that you might merit pardon for an error, but you possess a hereditary impiety, departing from my statutes from the days of your fathers, and not keeping what I have commanded. Moreover, let us understand the sons of Jacob, according to the anagogical sense (*anagogen*), as the supplanter and the one who seizes the birthright of his brother, to be those who, being established in the Church, do not depart from their vices and falsely assume for themselves the name of the Christian religion.

(Vv. 7 ff.) Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. And you said, "In what shall we return?" Will a man afflict God, for you afflict me? And you said: "In what have we afflicted you?" In tithes and first fruits. You are cursed with want [Vulg. And in want], and you, the whole nation, have afflicted me. Bring all the tithe into the storehouse, and let there be food in my house, and test me in this, says the Lord: if I will not open for you the floodgates of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing even to abundance.

Et increpabo pro vobis devorantem, et non corrumpet fructum terrae [Al. vineae] vestrae, nec erit sterilis vinea in agro, dicit Dominus exercituum. Et beatos vos dicent omnes gentes: eritis enim vos terra desiderabilis, dicit Dominus exercituum.

LXX: Revertimini ad me, et revertar ad vos, dicit Dominus omnipotens. Et dixistis, in quo revertemur? Si supplantat homo Deum, quia vos supplantastis me? Et dixistis: in quo supplantavimus te? quia decimae et primitiae vobiscum sunt, et vos videntes respicitis, et me vos supplantatis [Al. supplantastis]: annus impletus est, et intulistis fructus in thesauros, et erit rapina in domibus vestris. Revertimini ergo in hoc, dicit Dominus omnipotens: Nisi aperuero vobis cataractas coeli, et effudero vobis benedictionem meam usque dum sufficiat, et dividam vobis cibos, et non disperdam fructum terrae vestrae, et non infirmabitur vinea vestra in agro, dicit Dominus omnipotens: et beatos vos dicent omnes gentes, quia eritis vos terra voluntaria, dicit Dominus omnipotens.

Et in principio diximus, Malachi prophetam Ezram sacerdotem debere intelligi; omniaque quae in illius scribuntur historia, in hoc quoque volumine contineri: et nunc dicimus, temporibus ejus et Neemiae (quos simul vixisse manifestum est) famem fuisse gravissimam, et ob famem seditionem, et pauperes rerum necessitate compulsos, filios suos et filias, et omnem possessionem, universamque substantiam vendidisse.

Denique dicunt: Filii nostri, et filiae nostrae multae sunt nimis, accipiamus pro pretio eorum frumentum, et comedamus et vivamus. Et erant qui dicerent: Agros nostros et vineas, et domos nostras apponamus, et accipiamus frumentum in fame. Et iratus sum, inquit Ezras. nimis cum audissem clamorem eorum secundum verba haec: cogitavitque 976 cor meum mecum, et increpavi optimates et magistratus (Num. V, 2 seqq.), et reliqua:

Famis igitur tempore annona charissima, intantum, ut suos filios vendere cogerentur, et hi qui parum habebant, et qui in horrea multas fruges congesserant, pro necessitate vel pro pretii magnitudine Levitis decimas nolebant reddere, qui non habebant partem in haereditate Judaeae; sed primitiae et decimae erant haereditas eorum.

And I will rebuke for you the devourer, and he will not corrupt the fruit of your land [Alt. vine], nor will the vine in the field be barren, says the Lord of hosts. And all nations will call you blessed: for you will be a desirable land, says the Lord of hosts.

LXX: Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord almighty. And you said, "In what shall we return?" Does a man trip up God, for you have tripped me up? And you said: "In what have we tripped you up?" Because the tithes and first fruits are with you, and you, seeing, look away, and you trip me up [Alt. you have tripped me up]: the year is completed, and you have brought the fruits into the treasuries, and there will be plunder in your houses. Return therefore in this, says the Lord almighty: Unless I open for you the floodgates of heaven, and pour out for you my blessing until it is sufficient, and I will divide for you food, and I will not destroy the fruit of your land, and your vine in the field will not be weak, says the Lord almighty: and all nations will call you blessed, because you will be a land of delight, says the Lord almighty.

And at the beginning we said that the prophet Malachi should be understood as Ezra the priest; and that all things which are written in the latter's history are also contained in this volume: and now we say that in his time and that of Nehemiah (whom it is manifest lived at the same time) there was a most grievous famine, and on account of the famine, a sedition, and the poor, compelled by the necessity of their situation, sold their sons and their daughters, and all their possessions, and their entire substance.

Finally, they say: "Our sons and our daughters are very many, let us receive grain for their price, and let us eat and live." And there were those who would say: "Let us pledge our fields and vineyards, and our houses, and let us receive grain in the famine." "And I was very angry," says Ezra, "when I had heard their cry according to these words: and my heart took counsel with me, and I rebuked the nobles and the magistrates" (Num. 5:2 ff.), and the rest.

Therefore, in a time of famine, provisions were most dear, to such an extent that they were forced to sell their own children, and those who had little, and those who had gathered much grain into their storehouses, either out of necessity or because of the high price, were unwilling to render tithes to the Levites, who had no portion in the inheritance of Judea; but the first fruits and tithes were their inheritance.

Quod ne putetur nostrum esse, ponamus Ezrae testimonium: Et ego cognovi, inquit, quoniam partes Levitarum non fuissent datae, et fugisset unusquisque in regionem suam de Levitis, et de cantoribus, et de his qui ministrabant: et egi causam adversum magistratus, et dixi: Quare dereliquimus domum Dei? Et congregavi eos, et feci stare in stationibus suis. Et omnis Juda apportabat decimas frumenti, vini et olei in horrea, et constituimus super horrea Selemiam sacerdotem, et Sadoch scribam (Neem. XIII, 10 seqq.), et caetera.

Audivimus Ezrae historiam, nunc prophetae verba repetamus, diligentius intuentes an prophetia historiaque concordent.

Quando dicitur: Revertimini ad me, et ego revertar ad vos, dicit Dominus omnipotens, quos hortatur ut redeant, perspicuum est a Domino recessisse. Et vide clementiam Domini, par pari repromittit, ut in qua mensura mensi fuerint, rementiatur eis (Matth. VII, 1).

Et sicut in Levitico scribitur: Si ambulaveritis ad me perversi, et ego ambulabo contra vos furore perverso (Lev. XVI, 27, 28). Sic et nunc populum cohortatur ad reditum, ut ipse quoque ad eos redeat.

Qui non intelligentes se a Domino recessisse, impudenter interrogant: In quo revertemur? Et dicunt: Quando enim recessimus, ut merito redire cogamur?

Dominus respondit: Si affiget [Al. affigit] homo Deum, quia vos configitis me?

Verbum Hebraicum, quod scribitur HAJECBA (), LXX interpretati sunt si supplantat: pro quo Aquila, et Symmachus, et Theodotio posuerunt, si fraudat, ut sit sensus: Si fraudat homo Deum, quia vos fraudastis [Al. fraudatis] me?

Et revera secundum historiae ordinem, quia decimas et primitias Levitis populus non reddebat, 977 seipsum fraudem, dicit Dominus, sustinere, cujus ministri fame coacti, et penuria templum deseruerint.

Si enim per alios visitatur in carcere, et aegrotus suscipitur, et esuriens sitiensque cibum accipit atque potatur, cur non in ministris suis ipse decimas accipiat, et si non dentur, parte sua ipse privetur?

Hoc quod diximus HAJECBA, lingua Syrorum et Chaldaeorum interpretatur, si affiget: unde et nos ante annos plurimos ita vertimus, magis ad mysterium Dominicae passionis, in qua homines crucifixerunt Deum, quam ad decimas ac primitias (quibus visitatur in carcere, et aegrotus suscipitur, et esuriens sitiensque cibum accipit, atque potatur) scripta referentes.

Lest this be thought to be our own invention, let us present the testimony of Ezra: "And I perceived," he says, "that the portions of the Levites had not been given, and that every one of the Levites, and of the singers, and of those who ministered, had fled to his own region: and I contended against the magistrates, and said: Why have we forsaken the house of God? And I gathered them together, and made them stand in their stations. And all Judah brought the tithes of grain, of wine, and of oil into the storehouses, and we appointed over the storehouses Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe" (Neh. 13:10 ff.), and the rest.

We have heard the history of Ezra; now let us repeat the words of the prophet, considering more diligently whether the prophecy and the history agree.

When it is said: "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord almighty," it is clear that those whom he exhorts to return have departed from the Lord. And behold the clemency of the Lord, he promises like for like, so that "with what measure they have measured, it shall be measured to them again" (Matt. 7:1).

And as it is written in Leviticus: "If you walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you with a perverse fury" (Lev. 26:27, 28). So also now he exhorts the people to return, so that he himself may also return to them.

They, not understanding that they had departed from the Lord, impudently ask: "In what shall we return?" And they say: "For when did we depart, that we should rightly be compelled to return?"

The Lord responds: "Will a man afflict [Alt. afflicts] God, for you afflict me?"

The Hebrew word, which is written HAJECBA, the LXX have interpreted as "if he trips up"; for which Aquila, and Symmachus, and Theodotion have put, "if he defrauds," so that the sense is: "If a man defrauds God, for you have defrauded [Alt. defraud] me?"

And truly, according to the order of the history, because the people did not render tithes and first fruits to the Levites, the Lord says that he himself endures the fraud, whose ministers, compelled by hunger and want, have deserted the temple.

For if through others he is visited in prison, and received when sick, and when hungry and thirsty receives food and drink, why should he not in his own ministers receive the tithes, and if they are not given, be deprived of his own portion?

This word which we have mentioned, HAJECBA, is interpreted in the Syriac and Chaldean languages as "if he will afflict"; whence we also, many years ago, translated it thus, referring the writings more to the mystery of the Lord's passion, in which men crucified God, than to the tithes and first fruits (by which he is visited in prison, and received when sick, and when hungry and thirsty receives food and drink).

Quaerat prudens lector quomodo nostra interpretatio cum his congruat, quae sequuntur: In decimis et primitiis, et videat an possimus haec dicere: Ut me affigeretis cruci: ut sceleratas manus injiceretis Deo vestro, multarum ante rerum meditatione fecistis, subtrahendo decimas et primitias, non dico sacerdotibus meis et Levitis, sed mihi, qui eas per Moysen jussi dari [Al. dare] (Exod. XXIII).

Hoc de verbo uno a nobis dictum sit, lectoris arbitrio intelligentiae iudicium relinquentibus; nunc sequamur ordinem prophetiae.

Quia mihi non reddidistis decimas et primitias, idcirco in fame et penuria maledicti estis, et vos me supplantatis, sive fraudatis atque privatis, gens tota Pro gente, quae in Hebraico scribitur AGGOI (), annum Septuaginta interpretati sunt ἔτος pro ἔθνος.

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Et est sensus. Ecce annus expletus est, et nihil in meos thesauros, sed in vestra horrea comportastis: Et pro decimis et primitivis [Al. primitiis], quae parva erant, si a vobis darentur, ubertatem possessionum vestrarum, et omnem frugum abundantiam perdidistis.

Ut autem sciatis, me hoc irascente perfectum, quia fraudastis me parte mea, hortor vos, atque commoneo, ut inferatis decimas in horrea, hoc est, in thesauros templi, et habeant sacerdotes atque Levitae, qui mihi ministrant, cibos: et 978 probate me, si non tantas pluvias effundero, ut cataractae coeli apertae esse credantur.

Et effundam vobis benedictionem usque ad abundantiam.

Verbum effusionis, nomen largitatis ostendit.

Sed fieri potest ut agros irrigantibus pluviis, sit quidem fertilitas; verum aut locusta aut bruchus, aut erugo aut eruca destruant, et labores hominum pereant; propterea jungit et dicit: Et increpabo pro vobis devorantem, locustam videlicet, et reliqua quae diximus: et non corrumpet fructum terrae vestrae.

Vinea quoque implebit torcularia, et cunctae per circuitum nationes mirabuntur fertilitatem terrae vestrae, intantum ut omnes in ea habitare desiderent, et abundantia rerum omnium cunctis gentibus sitis exemplo.

Quod de decimis primitiisque diximus, quae olim dabantur a populo sacerdotibus ac Levitis, in Ecclesiae quoque populis intelligite, quibus praeceptum est, non solum decimas dare et primitias; sed et vendere omnia quae habent, et dare pauperibus, et sequi Dominum Salvatorem (Matth. XIX, et Marc. X).

Quod si facere nolumus, saltem Judaeorum imitemur exordia, ut pauperibus partem demus ex toto, et sacerdotibus ac Levitis honorem debitum deferamus.

Let the prudent reader inquire how our interpretation agrees with what follows: "In tithes and first fruits," and let him see if we can say this: "So that you might nail me to the cross, so that you might lay wicked hands on your God, you have done so by the meditation of many things beforehand, by withholding the tithes and first fruits, I do not say from my priests and Levites, but from me, who through Moses commanded them to be given [Alt. to give]" (Exod. 23).

Let this be said by us about one word, leaving the judgment of the meaning to the reader's discretion; now let us follow the order of the prophecy.

Because you have not rendered to me the tithes and first fruits, for that reason you are cursed in famine and want, and you, the whole nation, trip me up, or defraud and deprive me.

For "nation," which in Hebrew is written AGGOI, the Seventy have interpreted "year," ἔτος for ἔθνος.

And the sense is: Behold, the year is completed, and you have brought nothing into my treasuries, but into your own storehouses: And for the tithes and first fruits, which were small, if they were given by you, you have lost the fertility of your possessions, and all the abundance of your crops.

But so that you may know that this was done because I was angry, because you defrauded me of my portion, I exhort and admonish you to bring the tithes into the storehouses, that is, into the treasuries of the temple, so that the priests and Levites who minister to me may have food: and test me, if I will not pour out such great rains that the floodgates of heaven are believed to be opened.

"And I will pour out for you a blessing even to abundance."

The word "effusion" shows the name of "generosity."

But it can happen that when the fields are irrigated by rains, there is indeed fertility; but either the locust or the bruchus, or blight or the cankerworm may destroy it, and the labors of men may perish; for this reason he adds and says: "And I will rebuke for you the devourer," namely the locust, and the others we have mentioned: "and he will not corrupt the fruit of your land."

The vine also will fill the winepresses, and all the surrounding nations will marvel at the fertility of your land, to such an extent that all will desire to dwell in it, and by the abundance of all things you will be an example to all nations.

What we have said about the tithes and first fruits, which were formerly given by the people to the priests and Levites, understand also in the peoples of the Church, who are commanded not only to give tithes and first fruits, but also to sell all that they have, and give to the poor, and follow the Lord Savior (Matt. 19, and Mark 10).

If we are unwilling to do this, let us at least imitate the beginnings of the Jews, so that we may give a part of the whole to the poor, and offer due honor to the priests and Levites.

Unde dicit et Apostolus: Honora viduas, quae vere viduae sunt (I Tim. V, 3): et presbyterum duplici honore honorandum, maxime qui laborat in verbo et doctrina Dei.

Quod qui non fecerit, Deum fraudare et supplantare convincitur, et maledicetur ei in penuria rerum omnium: ut qui parce severit, parce et metat; et qui in benedictione seminaverit, in benedictionibus fructus colligat abundanter (II Cor. IX, 6).

Si quando fames et penuria, et rerum omnium egestas opprimunt mundum: sciamus hoc ex Dei ira descendere, qui in pauperibus, si non accipiant eleemosynam, fraudari se loquitur, et sua portione [Al. possessione] privari.

Possumus decimas et primitias et sic interpretari: Si quis doctus et eruditus in Lege [Al. legem] Dei, potest caeteros erudire, non debet suae assignare prudentiae, ingenioque quod possidet: sed gratias agat 979 primum Deo, qui cuncta largitur; deinde sacerdotibus ejus ac magistris, a quibus doctus est.

Si enim non egerit gratias, sed sibi scientiam vindicaverit, in penuria maledicetur.

Quod si intelligens largitorem Deum, et his agens gratias, per quos a Deo eruditus est, humiliaverit se, et in horreum Dei intulerit cibos, hoc est, Scripturae sanctae alimenta in Ecclesia populis ministraverit: statim aperientur super eum cataractae coeli, et effundetur pluvia spiritualis, et mandabit Deus nubibus suis, ut pluant super eum imbrem, et abundantia rerum omnium perfruetur, et increpabit etiam pro eo devorantem, contrarias scilicet fortitudines, et labor ipsius afferet fructum, et consequetur illud quod scriptum est: Beatus qui in aures loquitur audientium (Eccl. XXV).

Levabit quoque oculos suos, et videbit regiones, quoniam jam albae sunt ad metendum (Joan. IV): et colliget fructus in vitam aeternam.

Nec erit sterilis vinea in agro ejus, ille qui dicit in Evangelio: Ego sum vitis (Joan. XV, 1). Et qui loquitur per prophetam: Ego te plantavi vineam frugiferam, omnem veram (Jer. II, 21); et tantam (per humilitatis confessionem, et gratiarum actionem in Deum, ac magistros Ecclesiae ejus) beatitudinem consequetur ut omnes beatum illum dicant gentes, et in terra ejus atque doctrina habitare desiderent, qui illum in Ecclesia audierint disputantem.

Whence the Apostle also says: "Honor widows who are truly widows" (I Tim. 5:3): and that a presbyter is to be honored with double honor, especially he who labors in the word and doctrine of God.

Whoever does not do this is convicted of defrauding and tripping up God, and is cursed with a want of all things: "so that he who sows sparingly, will also reap sparingly; and he who has sown in blessing, will also gather fruits in blessings abundantly" (II Cor. 9:6).

If at any time famine and want, and a scarcity of all things oppress the world, let us know that this descends from the wrath of God, who says that he is defrauded in the poor, if they do not receive alms, and is deprived of his own portion [Alt. possession].

We can also interpret the tithes and first fruits thus: If anyone who is learned and erudite in the Law [Alt. law] of God is able to instruct others, he ought not to attribute it to his own prudence and the talent which he possesses; but let him first give thanks to God, who bestows all things; then to his priests and teachers, by whom he was taught.

For if he does not give thanks, but claims the knowledge for himself, he will be cursed with want.

But if, understanding God as the giver, and giving thanks to those through whom he was taught by God, he humbles himself, and brings food into the storehouse of God, that is, has ministered the nourishment of Holy Scripture to the peoples in the Church: immediately the floodgates of heaven will be opened upon him, and a spiritual rain will be poured out, and God will command his clouds to rain a shower upon him, and he will enjoy an abundance of all things, and he will also rebuke the devourer for him, namely the contrary powers, and his labor will bring forth fruit, and he will attain that which is written: "Blessed is he who speaks into the ears of those who hear" (Ecclus. 25).

He will also lift up his eyes, and will see the regions, that they are already white for the harvest (John 4): and he will gather fruit for eternal life.

Nor will the vine in his field be barren, he who says in the Gospel: "I am the vine" (John 15:1). And who speaks through the prophet: "I planted you a fruitful vine, wholly true" (Jer. 2:21); and (through the confession of humility, and the giving of thanks to God, and to the teachers of his Church) he will attain such beatitude that all nations will call him blessed, and will desire to dwell in his land and his doctrine, who have heard him disputing in the Church.

(Vers. 13, seqq.) Invaluerunt super me verba vestra, dicit Dominus, et dixistis: quid locuti sumus contra te? Dixistis, vanus est qui servit Deo, et quod emolumentum, quia custodivimus praecepta ejus, et quia ambulavimus tristes coram Domino exercituum? Ergo nunc beatos dicimus arrogantes, siquidem aedificati sunt facientes impietatem: et tentaverunt Deum, et salvi facti sunt. LXX: Ingravastis super me verba vestra, dicit Dominus. Et dixistis, in quo locuti sumus contra te? Et dixistis, vanus est qui servit Deo: et quid amplius, quia custodivimus mandata ejus, et quia ambulavimus supplices ante faciem Domini omnipotentis? Et nunc nos beatos dicimus alienos, et aedificantur omnes qui faciunt iniquitatem, et restiterunt Deo, et salvi facti sunt. Prius dixerat: Laborare fecistis Dominum in sermonibus vestris, et dixistis, in quo eum fecimus laborare? In eo cum 980 diceretis: Omnis qui facit malum, bonus est in conspectu Domini, et tales ei placent: aut certe ubi est Deus iudicii? nunc idem plenius repetit: Populus enim qui de Babylone reversus videbatur Dei habere notitiam, et observare legem, et intelligere peccatum suum, et pro peccato offerre victimas, decimas reddere, observare sabbatum, et caetera quae Dei Lege praecepta sunt, cernens cunctas in circuitu nationes rebus omnibus abundare, se in penuria, et fame, et miseria constitutum, scandalizabatur ad singula, atque dicebat: Quid mihi prodest, quia unum et verum Deum colo, abominor idola, et compunctus conscientia delictorum, ante Deum tristis incedo? Quem locum ut supra diximus, septuagesimus et secundus Psalmus plenius latiusque prosequitur. Unde propheta, qui est medicus spiritualis, medetur cunctis vulneribus, et verba blasphemiae in Creatorem recidere contestatur, et dicit ex persona Dei: Invaluerunt super me verba vestra, sive ingravata sunt: etenim juxta Zachariam, iniquitas sedet super talentum plumbi (Zach. V): et quod contra Deum dicitur, gravi blasphemiarum mole deprimitur. Qui non intelligentes verba gravissima, et blasphemiam suam, interrogant, quid locuti sumus contra te? Quibus respondit Dominus: Dixistis: Vanus est qui servit Deo, et quod emolumentum, quia custodivimus praecepta ejus? In praesenti saeculo mercedem pro Dei exigunt servitute, ideo non recipiunt. Et quia ambulavimus tristes coram Domino, juxta illud quod scriptum est in Psalmis: Tota die tristis ingrediebar (Psal. XXXVII, 7). Beatos igitur dicimus arrogantes, qui superbiunt contra Deum, et impia blasphemiarum verba jaculantur. Si quidem aedificati sunt, et post scelera atque blasphemias prosperis omnibus perfruuntur. Tentaverunt Deum, sive restiterunt Deo, et salvi facti sunt.

(Verses 13, ff.) "Your words have been strong against me," says the Lord, "and you have said: 'What have we spoken against you?'" "You have said, 'It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his precepts, and that we have walked sorrowfully before the Lord of hosts?'" "Therefore, we now call the arrogant blessed, for they who do impiety are built up; they have even tempted God and have been saved." Septuagint: "You have weighed down upon me with your words," says the Lord. "And you have said, 'In what have we spoken against you?'" "And you have said, 'It is vain to serve God; and what more, that we have kept his commandments, and that we have walked as supplicants before the face of the Lord Almighty?'" "And now we call foreigners blessed, and all who do iniquity are built up, and they have resisted God and have been saved." He had said before: "You have wearied the Lord with your words, and you said, 'In what have we wearied him?'" In this, when you said: "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and such please him; or surely, where is the God of judgment?" Now he repeats the same thing more fully: for the people who had returned from Babylon seemed to have knowledge of God, to observe the law, to understand their sin, to offer victims for sin, to pay tithes, to observe the Sabbath, and the other things which are commanded by God's Law; yet, seeing all the surrounding nations abounding in all things, while they themselves were established in want, hunger, and misery, they were scandalized at every point and would say: "What does it profit me that I worship the one true God, abhor idols, and, pricked by the conscience of my offenses, walk sorrowfully before God?" This passage, as we said above, the seventy-second Psalm treats more fully and broadly. Hence the prophet, who is a spiritual physician, heals all wounds, and testifies that the words of blasphemy against the Creator must be cut back, and says in the person of God: "Your words have been strong against me," or "have been weighty"; for indeed, according to Zechariah, "iniquity sits upon a talent of lead" (Zech. 5), and what is said against God is weighed down by a heavy mass of blasphemies. They, not understanding their very grave words and their own blasphemy, ask, "What have we spoken against you?" To whom the Lord replied: "You have said: 'It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his precepts?'" They demand a reward in the present age for their service to God, and for that reason they do not receive it. "And that we have walked sorrowfully before the Lord," according to that which is written in the Psalms: "All the day long I went about sorrowful" (Psalm 37:7). "Therefore, we call the arrogant blessed, who are proud against God and hurl impious words of blasphemy." "For they are built up, and after their crimes and blasphemies, they enjoy all prosperous things." "They have tempted God," or "resisted God," "and have been saved."

Salutem, felicitatem praesentis saeculi putant: et idcirco decipiuntur erroribus. Haec et de haereticis Marcione et Valentino, et caeteris, qui vetus non recipiunt Testamentum, et contra Creatorem mundi loquuntur, intelligere possumus, quod proficiant in impietate sua, et multos sceleris socios habeant: ad quos scandalizati, 981 qui in Ecclesia perseverant, et ignorantes causas iudicii Dei, prophetae verba contextunt.

(Vers. 16.) Tunc locuti sunt timentes Deum [Vulg. Dominum], unusquisque cum proximo suo. LXX: Haec locuti sunt, qui timent Dominum, unusquisque ad proximum suum. Juxta Hebraeos ita intelligendum est: illis de Dei iudicio blasphemantibus, qui timent Deum ad invicem sunt locuti, quod retributio bonorum vel malorum, non sit in praesenti et brevi saeculo, sed in futuro et aeterno; et quod homo non possit Dei scire iudicia, et de illius aequitate ac iustitia disputare; et caetera quae debet justus cum justo loqui. Nec dixit, quae sint locuti; sed ex eo quod intulit: Tunc locuti sunt timentes Deum, unusquisque cum proximo suo, intelligere debemus ea locutos timentes Deum, quae omnium Scripturarum vocibus continentur. Juxta LXX vero ἐξάλερον legendum, et pressa voce, ut dicamus: Haec sunt locuti, qui timent Dominum, unusquisque ad proximum suum: hoc est, qui frustra jactitant et dicunt, quod emolumentum, quia custodivimus praecepta ejus, et ambulavimus tristes coram Domino? Si enim timerent Dominum, ista non dicerent.

(Vers. 17, 18.) Et attendit Dominus, et audivit, et scriptus est liber monumenti coram eo timentibus Dominum, et cogitantibus nomen ejus. Et erunt mihi, ait Dominus exercituum, in die qua ego facio, in peculium, et parcam eis, sicut parcit vir filio suo servienti sibi. Et convertimini, et videbitis quid sit inter justum, et impium: et inter servientem Deo, et non servientem ei. LXX: Et attendit Dominus, et audivit, et scripsit librum monumenti in conspectu suo his qui timent Dominum, et qui reverentur [Al. et verentur] nomen ejus. Et erunt mihi, dicit Dominus omnipotens, in die qua ego facio, in acquisitionem, et eligam eos sicut eligit homo filium suum qui servit ei: et convertimini, et videbitis quid sit inter justum, et iniquum, et inter servientem Deo, et eum qui non servit ei. Haec justis loquentibus, et timentibus Deum, singulis cum proximo suo, qui verba blasphemiae, nec audire voluere 982 nec dicere, attendit Dominus et audivit, et scriptus est liber monumenti coram eo, timentibus, et cogitantibus nomen ejus: ut cum dies iudicii venerit, reddat et blasphemantibus poenas, et timentibus praemia.

They consider salvation to be the happiness of the present age, and for that reason they are deceived by their errors. We can also understand these things concerning the heretics Marcion and Valentinus, and others who do not accept the Old Testament and speak against the Creator of the world, that they advance in their impiety and have many partners in crime; at whom those who persevere in the Church are scandalized and, being ignorant of the causes of God's judgment, weave together the prophet's words.

(Verse 16.) Then they that feared God [Vulg. the Lord] spoke, every one with his neighbor. LXX: These things spoke they that fear the Lord, every one to his neighbor. According to the Hebrews, it is to be understood thus: while those others were blaspheming about God's judgment, those who fear God spoke among themselves that the retribution for good or evil is not in the present and brief age, but in the future and eternal one; and that man cannot know God's judgments, nor dispute about His equity and justice; and the other things that a just man ought to speak with a just man. Nor did he say what they spoke; but from what he inferred: *Then they that feared God spoke, every one with his neighbor*, we should understand that those who fear God spoke those things which are contained in the voices of all the Scriptures. According to the LXX, however, it should be read as exceptional (ἐξαιρετον) and in a hushed voice, so that we say: These are the things that they spoke, who fear the Lord, each one to his neighbor: that is, those who boast in vain and say, 'What profit is there, that we have kept his precepts, and walked sorrowfully before the Lord?' For if they feared the Lord, they would not say these things.

(Verses 17, 18.) And the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day that I make, a special possession (*peculium*), and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. And you shall be converted, and you shall see what is between the just and the wicked: and between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. LXX: And the Lord hearkened, and heard, and he wrote a book of remembrance in his sight for those who fear the Lord, and who revere [Alt. and fear] his name. And they shall be to me, says the Lord almighty, in the day that I make, an acquisition, and I will choose them as a man chooses his son who serves him: and you shall be converted, and you shall see what is between the just and the unjust, and between him that serves God, and him that does not serve him. While the just were speaking these things, and fearing God, each with his neighbor, who wished neither to hear 982 nor to speak words of blasphemy, the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for those fearing and thinking upon his name: so that when the day of judgment comes, he may render punishments to the blasphemers and rewards to those who fear.

Liber autem scriptus est, de quo in Daniele legimus: Throni positi sunt, et libri aperti sunt (Dan. VII, 10). Et erunt Domino exercituum in peculium timentes Dominum, in die qua iudicii tempus advenerit. Pro peculio in Hebraeo legitur SGOLLA (), quod Aquila περιούσιον, et caeteri περιποίησιν interpretati sunt. Timentes igitur Dominum, qui locuti sunt cum proximo suo, et ad verba blasphemiae responderunt, erunt in die iudicii in peculium, et parceret eis: quia omnis homo sub peccato. Sive eliget eos, sicut eligere solet homo filium suum servientem sibi. In quo duplex affectus est, et pietatis in filium, et servitutis in famulum. Et tunc qui nunc blasphematis et dicitis: Quod emolumentum, quia custodivimus praecepta ejus, et ambulavimus tristes coram Domino? ex illorum electione et beatitudine, et vestram miseriam cognoscetis, et versi in poenitentiam, videbitis quid sit inter justum et impium, et inter servientem Deo, et non servientem ei.

(Cap. IV.---Vers. 1 seqq.) Ecce enim dies veniet, succensa quasi caminus, et erunt omnes superbi, et omnes facientes impietatem, stipula: et inflammabit eos dies veniens, dicit Dominus exercituum, quae non relinquet eis radicem et germen. Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol justitiae, et sanitas in pennis ejus, et egrediemini, et salietis sicut vituli de armento. Et calcabitis impios cum fuerint cinis sub planta pedum vestrorum, in die qua ego facio, dicit Dominus exercituum. LXX: Quia ecce dies venit ardens sicut clibanus, et comburet eos, et erunt omnes alienigenae, et universi qui faciunt iniquitatem, stipula: succendet eos dies veniens, dicit Dominus omnipotens, et non relinquetur in eis radix neque ramus. Et orietur vobis qui timetis nomen meum sol justitiae, et sanitas in pennis ejus, et egrediemini, et salietis sicut vituli de vinculis relaxati, et 983 conculcabit iniquos, et erunt cinis subter [Al. inter] pedes vestros, in die qua ego facio, dicit Dominus omnipotens.

Quia laborare me fecerunt impii in sermonibus suis, et dixerunt: Omnis qui facit malum, bonus est in conspectu Domini, et tales ei placent: et, vanus est qui servit Deo: et, quod emolumentum, quia custodivimus praecepta ejus, et ambulavimus tristes coram Domino exercituum (Sap. II, in fin.)? Et adversum eorum verba temeraria locuti sunt timentes Deum, et unusquisque cum suo proximo contulerunt ea quae ad timorem Dei pertinent: attendit Dominus et audivit, et scriptus est liber monumenti his qui timent Dominum, et cogitant nomen ejus, et cum dies venerit, habere se eos in peculium pollicetur, et parcere eis sicut parcit homo filio suo servienti sibi, pleniusque inculcat, et dicit:

But a book was written, about which we read in Daniel: *Thrones were set, and the books were opened* (Dan. VII, 10). And those who fear the Lord shall be a special possession for the Lord of hosts, in the day when the time of judgment arrives. For *peculium*, the Hebrew reads SGOLLA (סְגוּלָּה), which Aquila translated as περιούσιον, and the others as περιποίησιν. Therefore, those who fear the Lord, who spoke with their neighbor and responded to the words of blasphemy, will be a special possession on the day of judgment, and he will spare them: because every man is under sin. Or, he will choose them, just as a man is accustomed to choose his son who serves him. In this there is a twofold affection: both of piety towards a son, and of servitude towards a servant. And then you who now blaspheme and say: *What profit is there, that we have kept his precepts, and walked sorrowfully before the Lord?* from their election and blessedness, you will recognize your own misery, and having turned to repentance, you will see what is between the just and the impious, and between the one who serves God and the one who does not serve him.

(Chapter IV, Verses 1 ff.) For behold, the day shall come, kindled as a furnace, and all the proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall set them on fire, saith the Lord of hosts, which shall not leave them root and sprout. And unto you that fear my name, the sun of justice shall arise, and health in his wings: and you shall go forth, and shall leap like calves of the herd. And you shall tread down the wicked when they shall be ashes under the sole of your feet, in the day that I do this, saith the Lord of hosts. LXX: For behold, the day comes burning like an oven, and it will burn them up, and all the foreigners, and all who do iniquity, shall be stubble: the coming day will set them on fire, saith the Lord Almighty, and there shall not be left in them root nor branch. And unto you that fear my name the sun of justice shall arise, and health in his wings: and you shall go forth, and shall leap like calves released from bonds, and 983 you shall tread down the iniquitous, and they shall be ashes under [Al. among] your feet, in the day that I do this, saith the Lord Almighty.

Because the impious have made me labor with their speeches, and have said: Every one that doth evil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and such please him: and, he is vain that serveth God: and, what is the profit, that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked sorrowful before the Lord of hosts (Wisdom II, at the end)? And against their rash words, those who fear God have spoken, and each one has conferred with his neighbor on those things that pertain to the fear of God: the Lord has attended and heard, and a book of remembrance has been written for those who fear the Lord and think on his name, and when the day comes, he promises to have them as his special possession (*peculium*), and to spare them as a man spares his son who serves him, and he inculcates it more fully, and says:

Ecce dies veniet, id est, dies iudicii, quae sanctis lux erit, et peccatoribus tenebrae; et ipsa dies erit succensa quasi caminus, sive clibanus, ut omnes impii vertantur in stipulam, et camini crementur ardoribus. Cumque eos inflammaverit atque combusserit, non relinquet in eis ullam radicem et germen malitiae. Hoc de impiis quid in die iudicii sint passuri. Econtrario dicitur quid timentibus nomen Dei eveniet: Et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol justitiae: qui [Al. quia] vera omnia judicabit: et nec bona nec mala, nec virtutes, nec vitia latere patietur. Et sanitas erit in pennis ejus, ut sanatos per poenitentiam portet in humeris suis, juxta id quod in Deuteronomio scriptum est: Expandens alas suas suscepit eos, et in humeris suis portavit illos (Deut. XXII, 11). Tunc egredientur qui nunc saeculo quasi carcere sunt inclusi, et salient quasi vituli de armento, sive quasi vituli de vinculis liberati. Unde Apostolus dicit: Cupio dissolvi, et esse cum Christo (Philip. I, 23), ut egrediatur et saliat sicut vitulus de vinculis liberatus, et sicut victima Domini. Nec hoc laetitiae fine contentus est; sed calcabit impios, cum fuerint cinis. Unde et ad justos fit imprecatio: Deus autem conterat [Al. conteret] Satanam sub pedibus vestris velociter (Rom. XVI, 20). Abraham locutus est ad Dominum, comparatione divinae 984 majestatis cinerem esse se sentiens: Ego sum terra et cinis (Gen. XVIII, 27); et propterea videbit solem justitiae, et requiescet inter medios ejus cleros, atque ipso portante ad coelestia sublevabitur. Qui vero per superbiam dixit: Ponam super sidera sedem meam, ero similis Altissimo (Isai. XIV, 13), deducetur in terram, et erit quasi cinis sub sanctorum pedibus, cum dies Domini advenerit judicantis.

(Vers. 4.) Mementote legis Moysi servi mei, quam mandavi ei in Oreb, ad omnem Israel praecepta et judicia. LXX similiter. Justa meritorum in futuro erit retributio, quando superbiorum radicem, et germen devorans flamma consumet et comburet, et timentibus Dominum orietur sol justitiae, et sanitas in pennis ejus. Igitur mementote legis Moysi servi mei, quam ei dedi in monte Oreb, qui est Sina, ad omnem Israel praecepta et judicia. Dicente autem Apostolo: Scimus quia lex spiritualis est (Rom. VII, 14): et beato David: Revela oculos meos, et considerabo mirabilia de lege tua (Ps. CXVIII, 18): et quia spiritualiter omnes coeleste manna comedebant, et universus populus Israel de eadem spirituali, et sequente eos bibebant petra, petra autem erat Christus. (I Cor. X, 3, 4): qui credunt in Christo, spiritualiter debent legis praecepta servare, quae dedit in OREB (), quod interpretatur, siccitas, per quam omnium vitiorum humor excoquitur, et ad radios solis justitiae, libidinis rheuma siccatur.

Behold the day shall come, that is, the day of judgment, which will be light for the saints, and darkness for sinners; and that day itself will be kindled like a furnace, or an oven, so that all the impious may be turned into stubble, and be burned by the heat of the furnace. And when it has inflamed and consumed them, it will not leave in them any root and sprout of malice. This is about what the impious will suffer on the day of judgment. On the contrary, it is said what will happen to those who fear the name of God: And unto you that fear my name, the sun of justice shall arise: who [Al. because] will judge all things truly: and will not suffer good or evil, virtues or vices, to lie hidden. And there will be health in his wings, so that he may carry on his shoulders those healed through penance, according to what is written in Deuteronomy: Spreading his wings he took them, and carried them on his shoulders (Deut. XXII, 11). Then those who are now enclosed in the world as in a prison will go forth, and they will leap like calves from the herd, or like calves freed from their bonds. Whence the Apostle says: I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philip. I, 23), that he may go forth and leap like a calf freed from its bonds, and like a victim of the Lord. Nor is he content with this end of joy; but he will tread upon the impious, when they have become ashes. Whence also an imprecation is made against the just: And may the God of peace crush [Al. will crush] Satan under your feet speedily (Rom. XVI, 20). Abraham spoke to the Lord, feeling himself to be ashes in comparison with the divine 984 majesty: I am dust and ashes (Gen. XVIII, 27); and for that reason he will see the sun of justice, and will rest in the midst of his allotted portions, and being carried by him, he will be lifted up to the heavens. But he who through pride said: I will set my throne above the stars, I will be like the most High (Isai. XIV, 13), will be brought down to the earth, and will be like ashes under the feet of the saints, when the day of the judging Lord arrives.

(Verse 4) Remember the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb, for all Israel, the precepts and judgments. The Septuagint is similar. There will be a just retribution of merits in the future, when the devouring flame will consume and burn up the root and shoot of the proud, and for those who fear the Lord the sun of justice will arise, and health in his wings. Therefore, remember the law of Moses my servant, which I gave to him on Mount Horeb, which is Sinai, for all Israel, the precepts and judgments. But with the Apostle saying: "We know that the law is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14); and the blessed David: "Unveil my eyes, and I will consider the wonderful things of your law" (Ps. 118:18); and because they all ate the same spiritual manna, and the entire people of Israel drank from the same spiritual and following rock, and the rock was Christ. (1 Cor. 10:3-4): those who believe in Christ ought to observe spiritually the precepts of the law, which He gave in HOREB, which is interpreted as "dryness," through which the moisture of all vices is boiled away, and by the rays of the sun of justice, the discharge of lust is dried up.

Locutus est autem Dominus ad universum Israel, qui sensu cernit Deum, et de quibus in Evangelio dicitur: Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matt. V, 8).

(Vers. 5, 6.) Ecce ego mittam vobis Eliam prophetam, antequam veniat dies Domini magnus et horribilis: et convertet eor patrum ad filios, et cor filiorum ad patres eorum: ne forte veniam et percutiam terram anathemate. LXX: Ecce ego mittam vobis Eliam Thesbitem, antequam veniat dies Domini magna et illustris: qui convertet cor patris ad filium, et cor hominis ad proximum suum; ne forte veniens percutiam terram penitus. Post Moysen (cujus mandata spiritualiter docuimus esse servanda) Eliam dicit esse mittendum: in Moyse, Legem, in Elia, 985 prophetiam significans, dicente Abraham ad quemdam divitem purpuratum: Habent Moysen et prophetas, illos audiant (Luc. XVI, 29). Et Dominus atque Salvator transfiguratus in monte, loquentes secum habebat Moysen et Eliam in candidis vestibus, qui et dicebant ei quae passurus esset in Jerusalem (Marc. IX): Lex enim et omnis prophetarum chorus Christi praedicat passionem. Igitur antequam veniat dies iudicii, et percutiat Dominus terram anathemate, sive omnino, vel subito, ut LXX transtulerunt: hoc enim significat ἀρδῆν, mittet Dominus in Elia (qui interpretatur, Deus meus, et est de oppido Thesbi, quod conversionem, et poenitentiam sonat) omnem prophetarum chorum, qui convertat cor patrum ad filios, Abraham videlicet et Isaac et Jacob, et omnium patriarcharum, ut credant posterii eorum in Dominum Salvatorem, in quem et illi crediderunt: Abraham enim vidit diem Domini, et laetatus est (Joan. VIII, 56): sive cor patris ad filium, id est, 986 cor Dei ad omnem, qui spiritum adoptionis acceperit. Et cor filiorum ad patres eorum, ut Judaei et Christiani, qui nunc inter se discrepant, pari in Christum religione consentiant. Unde dicitur ad apostolos, qui seminarium in toto orbe Evangelii prodiderunt: Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii (Ps. XLIV, 17). Si enim Elias non cor patrum ad filios ante converterit, et cor filiorum ad patres eorum, cum venerit dies magnus et horribilis (magnus sanctis, horribilis peccatoribus), percutiet verus et justus iudex, non coelum, nec eos qui versantur in coelo; sed terram anathemate, qui faciunt opera terrena. Judaei, et judaizantes haeretici ante ἡλειμμένον suum Eliam putant esse venturum, et restitutum omnia. Unde et Christo in Evangelio proponitur quaestio: Quid quod Pharisei dicunt, quod Elias venturus est? Quibus ille respondit: Elias quidem veniet, et si creditis, jam venit (Mar. IX, 10, 12), in Elia Joannem intelligens.

Moreover, the Lord spoke to all Israel, which perceives God with the mind, and of whom it is said in the Gospel: "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

(Verses 5, 6) Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers: lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. The Septuagint: Behold, I will send you Elijah the Tishbite, before the great and illustrious day of the Lord comes: who will turn the heart of the father to the son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor; lest coming I strike the earth utterly. After Moses (whose commandments we have taught are to be observed spiritually), he says that Elijah is to be sent: signifying the Law in Moses, and prophecy in Elijah, as Abraham said to a certain rich man clothed in purple: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29). And the Lord and Savior, transfigured on the mountain, had Moses and Elijah speaking with him in white garments, who also were telling him what he was to suffer in Jerusalem (Mark 9): for the Law and the entire chorus of the prophets preach the passion of Christ. Therefore, before the day of judgment comes, and the Lord strikes the earth with a curse—or "utterly," or "suddenly," as the Septuagint translated it, for this is what ἀρδῆν signifies—the Lord will send in Elijah (which is interpreted, "My God," and he is from the town of Tishbe, which sounds like "conversion" and "penitence") the entire chorus of the prophets, to turn the heart of the fathers to the sons, namely Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the patriarchs, so that their posterity may believe in the Lord Savior, in whom they also believed: "for Abraham saw the Lord's day, and was glad" (John 8:56); or the heart of the father to the son, that is, the heart of God to everyone who has received the spirit of adoption. And the heart of the children to their fathers, so that Jews and Christians, who now disagree among themselves, may consent in a like religion in Christ. Whence it is said to the apostles, who brought forth the seed of the Gospel in the whole world: "Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you" (Ps. 44:17). For if Elijah does not first turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, when the great and dreadful day comes (great for the saints, dreadful for sinners), the true and just judge will strike, not heaven, nor those who dwell in heaven, but the earth with a curse, those who do earthly works. The Jews, and the Judaizing heretics, think that Elijah will come before their "anointed one" (ἡλειμμένον) and will restore all things. Whence also the question is proposed to Christ in the Gospel: "Why then do the Pharisees say that Elijah must come?" To whom he replied: "Elijah indeed will come, and if you believe, he has already come" (Mark 9:10, 12), understanding John in Elijah.