

SAINT BEDE THE VENERABLE

INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF TOBIT

Interpretatio in Librum Tobiae

SABBATISMUS

Saint Bede the Venerable (672–735)
Interpretatio in Librum Tobiae · Interpretation of the Book of Tobit

Latin text: public domain.
Translation, alignment and edition © 2026 Inversiones San Juan Diego (Sabbatismus). Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Sabbatismus is the imprint of the Inversiones San Juan Diego foundation, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.
Set in EB Garamond and Cinzel.
sabbatismus.com

ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BOOK OF THE BLESSED FATHER TOBIAS. (C)

The book of the holy Father Tobias is healthy and clear to readers even on the surface of the letter, inasmuch as it abounds in the greatest examples and warnings of moral life. And if anyone also knows how to interpret it allegorically, he sees that its interior sense surpasses the simplicity of the letter as much as the fruit surpasses the leaves. For it is proven to contain within itself the greatest sacraments of Christ and the Church, if it is understood spiritually. For Tobias himself designates the people of Israel, who, while all the nations were devoted to idolatry, himself served God with right faith and just works, as is read concerning Tobias.

(Tob. I.) *Because when they all went to the golden calves*, etc. Jeroboam, indeed, who fashioned golden calves for the deception of his subjects, expresses the author of idolatry.

And indeed Tobias was captured . . . he did not desert the way of truth. This captivity by the king of the Assyrians designates that captivity of the human race by which, through the king of all the wicked, that is the devil, it was cast out from the habitation of the heavenly homeland and transmigrated into the pilgrimage of this exile.

Tobias shared all that he could have daily with his captive brothers, etc. And the people of Israel, in its teachers, administered the alms of the word of God not only to the simple listeners of its own nation, but also to those from the

nations who wished to be converted to the rite of their conversation. For whatever of natural good it could have, which was not taken away by the capturing enemy, it showed all this to its own people as an example of virtue. But it also always gave some portion of salutary knowledge even to the Gentiles; which is Tobias administering the tithe of his substance to strangers.

Tobias, after he became a man, took a wife Anna from his own tribe, etc. And the same people, after it grew and was multiplied in Egypt, received the synagogue instituted with legal ceremonies through Moses.

He begat a son from her, etc. Because it knew that Christ was to be born from its race, as Moses said: *Our God will raise up a prophet for you from your brothers, just as myself; you shall hear him* (Deut. XVIII). And the Lord to David: *Of the fruit of your womb I will place upon my seat* (Psal. CXXXI). To whom he gave his name, by believing and confessing what the father says of him: *And I will make him the firstborn* (Psal. LXXXVIII). Just as he says of the people themselves: *Israel is my firstborn son* (Exod. IV).

Whom from infancy he taught to fear God, etc. By believing and confessing that he would not commit sin, nor would guile be found in his mouth, but the spirit of the fear of the Lord would fill him.

Tobias gave ten talents of silver under a bond to Gabelus his fellow tribesman who was in need. And the people of God committed the knowledge of the divine law, which is contained

in the Decalogue, to the nations through the Seventy Interpreters, so that through this they might be freed from the poverty of infidelity. But he gave it under a bond, that is, under the condition of restoring it after they themselves grew rich, or the one who had given it should ask for it back. Moreover, the nations received the word of God from the people of Israel through interpretation, which after the dominical incarnation they now also understand spiritually, and exercise for the acquisition of the riches of virtues; but they return it to the money-lender when at the end of the age they receive the believing Jews into the unity of the Church, and commit to them the sacraments of Christ for their salvation, and also unlock the secrets of the Scriptures.

Tobias is ordered by the king to be killed, and all his substance to be taken because of the good things he did, etc. And the devil busied himself to destroy the people of God with spiritual death through idolatry, and to take away from them all the wealth of virtues, but he did not prevail; because there were many holy teachers in them who provided for their life and safety.

But he fled with his son and wife. Because the enemy could take away neither the faith of the dominical incarnation, nor the state of the synagogue, although he insisted violently, he who shone much in the struggles of the Maccabees.

But the king having been killed by his sons, all his things were restored to Tobias. Because the devil having been overcome more often, and

condemned for his crimes, which he begat like a most wicked offspring, prosperous things returned to the people of God. In which altercations we also see the state of the Church fluctuate after the incarnation of the Lord.

(Tob. II.) *Weary from burial, Tobias came into his house, ... and he became blind.* Do not wonder, reader, that sometimes good deeds signify evil typically, and sometimes evil deeds of men signify good. For if that were not allowed, God would never be written with black ink, but always with bright gold, because He is light. But even if you write the name of the devil in white chalk, it nonetheless signifies profound darkness. Therefore, the blinded Tobias designates that, as the Apostle says, *Blindness has happened in part in Israel* (Rom. XI). *He was weary from burial, and blinded*, because he who persists indefatigably in good works is never deprived of the light of faith. He lies spiritually and sleeps weary, who neglects to watch and stand in faith, to act manfully, and to be strengthened. To whom that apostolic word well fits: *Rise you who sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you* (Ephes. V). The swallows (*hirundines*), on account of their light flight, figure pride and levity of heart, whose uncleanness immediately blinds those whom it dominates. For he sleeps as if placed under a nest of swallows, who incautiously subjects his mind to levity, lasciviousness, and pride. Moreover, this blindness prevailed in the people of Israel, especially when the coming of the Lord in the flesh was imminent, when

they were both pressed by the yoke of Roman servitude and violated the precepts of the divine law by living most wickedly.

The kinsmen of Tobias insulted him, and his wife also reproached him, as if he had served God in vain. Rebuking them and instructing them, he turned himself to God in prayer. There were some in that people who with foolish temerity insulted the miseries of the people themselves, which now were distant in light from the former happiness of the holy fathers, who once among them served God sublimely. Whom the same people, through their teachers and chosen ones, took care to correct diligently, and turned themselves to implore the mercy of God for the perception of eternal life. Nor should it seem out of place that the same Tobias, both blind and preaching the word of God, is said to signify the reprobate and the elect at the same time. For also the patriarch Jacob, wrestling with the angel, was made both lame and blessed; signifying in his lameness the infidels of his race, and in his blessing the faithful.

(Tob. III.) *Sarah, daughter of Raguel in a city of the Medes, who had been given to seven men, and a demon killed them as soon as they entered in to her.* This figuratively announces the multitude of nations, whose teachers all knew the life of this world only, which revolves in seven days, and knew nothing to say of the eternal. And therefore they were all snatched by the devil, inasmuch as they were enslaved to idolatry, until the true spouse, our Lord, should arrive, who joined her to Himself through faith,

the enemy having been overcome; just as Tobias received Sarah as a bride, the demon having been bound, by the command and cooperation of the archangel, through whom the divinity of our Savior is not incongruously signified, just as His humanity is through Tobias. Nor will anyone wonder at this, that we say two persons, namely of the angel and of the man, figure the one person of the Mediator of God and men, who has read in the expositions of the venerable Fathers that His one person, suffering for the salvation of the world, was figured in Isaac, who was offered by his father on the altar, and in the ram, which was sacrificed. He who in His humanity was killed like a sheep, in His divinity remains impassible with God the Father, as Isaac returns home living with his father. For if the ram aptly designates the humanity of Christ, and the man His deity; why should not much more aptly the man signify His humanity, and the angel His deity?

Therefore the holy angel of the Lord, Raphael, was sent, who is interpreted as the medicine of God, so that he might free Tobias from blindness and Sarah from the demon. The Lord was sent into the world, who says of Himself: *It is not the healthy who need a physician, but the sick* (Luc. IV); who would redeem both the Jewish people from the darkness of infidelity and the Gentiles from the servitude of idolatry. Of whom the prophet said: *And his name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel* (Isa. IX).

(Tob. V.) *The angel appeared to Tobias, and offered himself as a companion to him, through

whom he might perform great things for the people to whom he was sent.* And the Son of God assumed man, in whom visibly conversing with men, He might save the human race.

Tobias introduced the angel to his father, who greeted him, saying: Joy be to you always. To whom replying: What kind of joy will there be for me, who sit in darkness and do not see the light of heaven? Be of strong mind, he said, it is near that you should be cured by the Lord. And our Lord, through the miracles He performed in the flesh, showed to the people of the Jews, from whom He had received flesh, that He is the Son of God, and the angel, that is, the messenger of the paternal will. To whom He also preached the joy of perpetual salvation, saying: *Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven will approach* (Matth. III). And to those despairing of acquiring the heavenly light: *I am*, He said, *the light of the world; he who follows me does not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life* (Joan. VIII).

The angel promises Tobias to lead his son into Rages, a city of the Medes, and to bring him back to him. The Lord promises to the believers from the people of the Jews, although the same people is in great part blinded, that He will open the sacraments of His incarnation to the Gentile people, and again at the end of time, spread the same more widely to His own people from whom He had assumed flesh, the faith of His divinity accompanying everywhere at once and working all things. He Himself says of the leading to the Medes: *And I have other sheep, which are not of

this fold, and those I must lead*, etc. (Joan. X). The Apostle says of the return: *Until the fullness of the Gentiles should enter, and thus all Israel should be saved* (Rom. XI).

Tobias asking the angel where he was from: I am, he said, Azarias son of Annanias the great. Azarias is interpreted as the helper Lord, Annanias as the grace of the Lord. And the Lord intimates to those who believe in Him that He is the one whom the prophet, desiring Him to come, sang of: *Be my helper and my deliverer, O Lord, do not delay* (Psal. LXIX). Of whom also the evangelist: *And we saw his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth* (Joan. I).

Then, all things being prepared which were to be carried on the way, Tobias said farewell to his father and mother, and they both walked together. When the Lord appeared in the flesh, all things were prepared which pertained to the redemption of the world, and by which the faith and life of the holy Church might be nourished and strengthened until she should finish the way of this world; that is, His virtues, doctrine, temptation, passion, resurrection, ascension, the sending of the Holy Spirit, the faith of believers, the persecution by infidels. These being performed in Judea, the Mediator of God and men Himself preached through the apostles to the people and the synagogue, from which He had received the origin of His flesh, the joys of supernal salvation and peace. And to those who wished to believe and receive them, He gave them

through Himself, and thus He came in those same teachers of His for the salvation of the nations.

(Tob. VI.) *Tobias set out therefore, and a dog followed him.* When the Lord came to save the nations, the holy preachers followed His footsteps, because what He commanded, they fulfilled: *Going teach all nations* (Matth. XXVIII). Finally, the Lord Himself first filled the house of Cornelius with the Holy Spirit, and thus Peter poured water (Act. X). Moreover, teachers are called dogs; because they defend the house, the substance, the spiritual sheep of their Creator from thieves and beasts, that is, from unclean spirits and heretical men.

Tobias, having set out with the angel as guide, remained for the first lodging-place next to the river Tigris; and he went out to wash his feet, and behold a huge fish came out to devour him. Here again the sacrament of the dominical passion is more manifestly signified. For the huge fish, which was killed by Tobias when it sought to devour him, the angel teaching him, designates the ancient devourer of the human race, that is the devil, who while he sought the death of the flesh in our Redeemer, was captured by the power of the divinity. The river Tigris, which received its name from the tiger, the swiftest beast, on account of its most rapid course, indicates the downflow of our death and mortality. In which the huge fish was lurking, because the invisible seducer of the human race had the empire of death. Tobias remained next to the flows of the Tigris, because the Lord, appearing in the world,

led His life among sinners and mortals, but the wave of sin did not touch Him, nor did the prince of darkness, coming, find anything of his own in Him. Moreover, Tobias went out into the river to wash his feet; and the Lord took up death, to which He owed nothing, so that He might wash all the faithful, namely His members, from the contagion of sin and death. The fish occurred to Tobias, desiring to devour him; and when the Lord suffered on the cross, the devil came, who had taught that He should be crucified, seeking if by chance he might find some wickedness in His soul.

Tobias, fearing the fish, cried out with a great voice, saying: Lord, it invades me. And the Lord, when the point of death was imminent, began to fear and be weary, not dreading the devil, but dreading death, which *by the envy of the devil entered into the world* (Sap. II), through the natural frailty of the flesh; whence also He prayed that, *if it were possible, the hour might pass from him* (Marc. XII). And He said: *Abba Father, all things are possible to thee, transfer this cup from me; but not what I will, but what thou* (Luc. XXII).

The angel said to Tobias: Take hold of the gill of the fish, and draw it to you. The Lord took hold of the devil, and him who wished to capture Him in death, He captured and conquered by dying. Moreover, He took hold of his gill, so that He might separate the most wicked head from the deceived body by the right hand of His power, that is, He might take away the wickedness of the

ancient enemy from the hearts of those whom he had evilly joined to himself, and made as one body with himself, and the pious Redeemer might insert these into the body of His Church. For the fish has its gill at the boundary of its head and body. Moreover, just as our Lord is the head of His Church, and the Church is His body; so the devil is the head of all the wicked, and all the wicked are his body and members. Therefore the Lord took hold of the gill of the most huge fish, and drew it to Himself, and cast it onto the dry land, because diminishing the power of the devil, He translated them openly and confidently, and rescued from the power of darkness those whom He foreknew to be children of light.

When he had done this, it began to throb on the dry land before his feet. When the Lord, overcoming the wickedness of the malignant enemy, brought it into the light and made it manifest to all, he still endeavored, being proud, to stir up persecution against His elect, who are His feet; because through them the Lord walks on the earth, who reigns over all things in heaven.

Then the angel of the Lord said to him: Gut this fish, etc. The Lord gutted the fish when He opened the wickedness of the devil more widely to the saints, and as it were eviscerated the secrets of his snares. He put aside for Himself its heart, because He involved its craftiness in the holy books; of which it is written: *But the serpent was craftier than all the animals of the earth* (Gen. III). Of which heart Paul also said: *We are not ignorant of his thoughts* (II Cor. II).

He also put aside the gall, because He wished that with how much fury of malice he raged against the human race should be written and preserved for the sake of caution. He also put aside the liver, because He deigned to make known to us through the teachers of truth his malignant maturity of counsels against us. For they say that the hidden parts of eaten food are cooked out by the heat and power of the liver, and come to digestion. Moreover, when we search out with diligent thought in what order those things which we dispose to do are to be carried out, we as it were cook out the food received in the stomach by the heat of the liver.

For these things are useful as medicines. The craftiness and malice of the devil, the ancient enemy, being recognized by us, profit for healing; because the more certainly we explore them, the more cautiously we decline them.

Tobias roasted the flesh of the fish, etc. Whatever of the fish they took for themselves signifies those who are transferred from the members of the devil into the members of Christ, that is, are converted from infidelity to faith. Moreover, whatever they left behind demonstrates those, on the contrary, who, having heard the word of God, prefer to remain among the dead and putrid members of their deceiver, rather than return into the society of the Savior. He roasted its flesh in those whom He found carnal, but by the fire of His love He rendered them spiritual and strong. Finally, the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles in the vision of fire. *The rest*, he

said, *they salted*; which pertains spiritually to the teachers, to whom it is said: *You are the salt of the earth* (Matth. V). Moreover, they salted, that is, Tobias and the angel; because the same Mediator of God and men both humanly taught the apostles by speaking, and divinely bestowed on them the salt of wisdom in the heart.

Moreover, they took with them what would suffice them, etc. Because the Lord collected so many from Judea to the faith, who would suffice for an example of living, or for the ministry of preaching, until He should place the foundations of the Church also among the nations.

The angel suggests to Tobias that, having entered the house of Raguel, he should ask for his daughter Sarah as a wife for himself. Raguel indicates the people of the nations, whom the Lord deigned to visit through His preachers; so that He might assume a bride for Himself from his stock, that is, make the Gentiles themselves His Church. The name of Sarah also fits the Church, on account of Sarah the wife of the patriarch Abraham, who begat Isaac the son of promise, that is, the free people of the Church. The name Raguel also, which is interpreted as his pasture God, or friend God; designates that people who, the fraud of the devil being conquered, binds itself and its own to the fellowship of the Lord, who knows how to say: *The Lord feeds me, and nothing shall be lacking to me* (Psal. XXXII). And deserves to hear: *Now I will not call you servants, but my friends* (Joan. XV).

To you is owed all his substance. And the Father to the Son: *Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thy inheritance*, and the rest (Psal. II).

(Tob. VII.) *They entered to Raguel, who received them with joy.* The Lord approached the people of the nations through the teachers of His word, who received Him willingly in many places, as the Acts of the Apostles testify.

Being asked for the daughter of Raguel, he first feared, knowing what had happened to those seven men; but the angel teaching that the unclean could not have her, but Tobias, who feared God, could, he soon consented to give her. Hearing the word of faith, the people of the nations, and having been admonished by the apostles that He might make the Church of Christ from their progeny throughout the world, could not receive the rights and law of the new faith without certain exploration; knowing that in many former times it had teachers, who all, as if comprised in the number seven, knew the joys of this life only, and said nothing certain of eternal things, and therefore the destruction of eternal death would have snatched them without hope of immortal life. But the truth itself teaching within, which sounded outside through the mouths of the teachers, at length it understood that it was necessary that the foolish should say foolish things, and those who did not know the true Lord should perish; moreover, by right the Creator of the world, coming into the world, should assume the government of the world. And

having confessed the faith of Christ, it rejoiced to be sanctified by His sacraments.

(Tob. VIII.) *Tobias, being introduced to Sarah in the bedchamber, brought out from his bag a part of the liver*, etc. And the Lord, about to receive the Church from the nations, in the first beginning of her disposition, commands her in each of the believers to renounce Satan, and all his works, and all his pomps; and then to confess the faith of the Holy Trinity for the remission of sins, which is to burn the innermost bowels of peace with living coals.

After these things were done, the angel, seizing the demon, bound him. Because after the renunciation of the devil, after the confession of the right faith, follows the remission of sins, the demon having been expelled through the water of baptism. Moreover, he bound him because he restrained him from harming the faithful; whom although he is permitted to tempt sometimes that they may be tested, he is nevertheless prohibited from overcoming them lest they fail from the faith.

He bound him in the desert of upper Egypt. Both the desert and Egypt signify the hearts of the unfaithful, which are both deserted, that is, forsaken by God, of whose indwelling they are unworthy. And these same are, according to the interpretation of the name of Egypt, obscured by the darkness of their own perfidy. Nor is it undeserved that he who is deserted by the grace of divine light is filled by the prince of darkness. Therefore, the angel, seizing the demon

who desired to kill Tobias, bound him in the desert of upper Egypt; because the same Lord and our Redeemer allows the devil to dominate only the unfaithful, having been restrained from the snatching of the faithful, who are members of their Redeemer. In whom he also holds him bound; because he is not allowed to harm even those impious ones whom he possesses as much as he desires with insatiable fury.

Meanwhile, around the crowing of the cocks, Raguel, fearing lest perhaps Tobias had been killed by the demon, dug a grave with his servants; but this, his safety having been immediately recognized, he ordered to be filled with earth. The crowing of the cocks is the sound of those preaching, who, when they sang that the morning and the true day of faith would be present to the world after the darkness of error, there were some among the people of the nations who doubted whether the Lord had truly conquered the ancient enemy, and therefore they thought it better to overwhelm and hide the faith of his name; who nevertheless afterwards, the light of truth having been recognized, as if with the dawn proceeding and the crowing of the cocks increasing, that is, the voice of the teachers, who are accustomed to raise themselves to heavenly desires with an eager flight of the heart, drove out all the cloud of doubt from their mind, and truly recognized Christ, the enemy having been prostrated, to be the spouse of the holy Church.

Raguel, rejoiced by the life of Tobias, and by the union and marriage of his daughter, ordered

two fat cows and four rams to be killed, and a feast to be prepared for all his neighbors and for all his friends. The people of the nations, rejoiced by the faith of Christ and by the vocation of the gentiles to God, profited so much in the Lord that teachers even became from their number, and the same afterwards also stood out as martyrs. Who are certainly cows, because they bear the light yoke of the Gospel; because they also beget and nourish through preaching those who, so that they may profit in carrying the same yoke. They are also rams, because they are fathers and leaders of the peoples, of whom it is said: Bring to the Lord the offspring of rams (Psal. XXVIII). Moreover, the cows are fat, because the teachers are filled with the grace of heavenly delight. Concerning which the Psalmist prays: Let my soul be filled as with the fat of richness (Psal. LXII). There are two cows killed, because whoever for Christ, either they themselves voluntarily mortify their body that they may become a living sacrifice, or they deliver it into the hands of the unfaithful to be killed: such persons indeed have learned to stand against the enemy through the armor of justice, on the right and on the left, that is, in prosperity and in adversity. There are four rams killed, because the holy teachers and martyrs preserve the four books of the holy Gospel by faith and work, because they are fortified by the four primary virtues: prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice; because they establish the flock of Christ throughout the whole world, which is distinguished by four quarters. Raguel

ordered the cows and rams to be killed, because the people of the nations taught those who had come to the faith from their stock to be such that the enemy would desire to tempt them by the preeminence of virtue, nor would he overcome them when tempted, but he would be able to make them victorious martyrs. Or certainly he himself ordered to be killed those whom he taught to crucify their flesh for Christ with its vices and concupiscences. By whose killing he prepared a feast for all his neighbors, because the progress, life, passion, and crown of the saints grant joy to many, and they receive them as feasts, by whose examples they are refreshed.

And Raguel adjured Tobias to stay with him for two weeks. We also adjure our Lord, praying that He may remain with us until we attain the perfection of holy rest through the grace of the Holy Spirit, by which we may rest from servile acts, that is, from sins in the body, and from depraved thoughts in the mind; and that He Himself may rest in our heart and body, who says: Upon whom shall my spirit rest, except upon the humble and quiet and him that trembles at my words?

(Tob. IX.) Tobias asks the angel that, taking animals or servants, he go to Gabelus in Rages of the Medes, and return his handwriting to him, and receive the money from him, and ask him to come to his marriage; and he consented. The faithful, namely His members, ask the Lord that He take some of the believers and commit to them the business of preaching the word, and that He Himself come in them to gather into His

faith the nations which have not yet received the mysteries of faith, but have only heard the fame; and that He favorably grant them that the talent of the word which they learned by fame, they may return through the obedience of faith; and that they also may be gathered to the marriage of the holy Church, in which Christ is the spouse, in which He made new wine from water, that is, He gives a spiritual understanding of the law, by believing and living rightly. Nor did the Lord refuse, but receiving the vows of those who ask well, He daily gathers new peoples into the Church. It can be spiritually understood, as is said above, concerning those nations which received the letter of the law through the seventy translators: and therefore they were able to receive the faith more quickly, as they held it in known books.

Therefore Raphael, taking four of Raguel's servants and two camels, went to Rages of the Medes; and indicating all things to him concerning Tobias, he received the money, and made him come with him to the marriage. The servants of Raguel and the camels are the preachers chosen from the nations, through whom the Lord also gathers others. Servants, because they serve the necessity of those to whom they evangelize. Camels, because they also carry the burdens of their infirmity by the subjection of fraternal charity. Moreover, why there are four servants and two camels was shown above, where two cows and four rams are killed. Such persons, with Raphael helping, lead Gabelus to the marriage of Tobias, when holy preachers gather new peoples

into the unity of Christ's Church, He Himself divinely helping.

(Tob. X.) Tobias making delays for the sake of the marriage, his parents were saddened because he did not return to them on the appointed day. And now, Christ delaying through faith in the Church gathered from the nations, whoever from the Jews are individually converted to His faith, grieve much in mind; because the Lord delays coming to save them, having been retained among the nations. To whom it well agrees that his mother, poor and as if deprived of husband and son together, said with much grief:

Woe, woe, my son, why did we send you to travel, the light of our eyes, the staff of our old age, etc. And that Tobias, consoling her, responds: Be silent, and do not be troubled, our son is safe, etc., it agrees with those same who now believe from the Jews; who still console themselves and theirs in this, that the time will truly be when the Lord shall return to them, and then all Israel shall be saved; knowing that the Lord is faithful enough who promised this. For as we taught above, the same Tobias designates the unfaithful through his blindness, and the believers through faith, by the usage common to the Scriptures.

Raguel asks Tobias to stay with him for a longer time, and he is not heard, Tobias saying: I know that my father and my mother are now counting the days, and their spirit is tormented within them. And when the fullness of the nations shall have entered, no one will be able to

prohibit God from granting salvation to Israel also, and from taking away its blindness, which has happened in part. For the divine clemency remembers that there is great sadness and continuous sorrow of heart for those who believe from the Jews on account of the blindness of the unfaithful, who are their kinsmen according to the flesh, who are Israelites.

Therefore Raguel dismissed Tobias to his parents, delivering Sarah to him with much substance. The teachers of the Church remit Christ in the end, with the Church herself full of the riches of virtues, for the illustrating by faith and the enriching by the substance of good works of the nation of the Jews, from which He assumed flesh.

(Tob. XI.) The angel and Tobias preceded to his parents; then followed his wife with his substance and family. After the illuminator father precedes by divine grace to illuminate the blindness of the people of the Jews, and they recognize in their writings Christ to be true God and man, and after the recognition of the right faith, as if having seen the angel and their son, whom they had not seen for a long time, they rejoice much; so at length they join themselves to the holy Church, which is gathered from the nations, by the participation of the heavenly mysteries.

As they approached the house, the dog which had been with them in the way ran ahead, and coming as if a messenger, it rejoiced with the wagging of its tail. The figure of this dog, which is a traveler and companion of the angel, is not to be despised. Therefore, it expresses the teachers

of the Church, as we also taught above, who, by frequently conflicting with heretics, drive away grievous wolves from the fold of the highest Shepherd. To whom it well agrees, what is natural to dogs, to repay grace to benefactors, and to extend solicitous watches for the safety of their masters. Therefore the dog runs ahead; because first the teacher preaches salvation to the house, then the Lord illuminator to the hearts of the world. And beautifully it says: coming as if a messenger, because indeed every faithful teacher is a messenger of truth; beautifully: it rejoiced with the wagging of its tail: for the tail, which is the end of the body, insinuates the end of a good work, that is, perfection, or certainly the reward which is granted without end. Therefore the dog rejoiced with the wagging of its tail when it revisited the roofs of its masters, from which it had been absent for a long time. The teachers rejoice in the effect of their work when they understand that Judea is to be gathered again by the Lord through their ministry. They rejoice in the perception of the reward of eternal life, and from this same reward common to all the elect, they gladden the hearts of those to whom they preach, while they promise them the grace of Christ about to come immediately.

Therefore, the dog announcing that Tobias had come, his blind father, rising up, began to run stumbling with his feet. Hearing the word of salvation from the teachers, the people of the Hebrews rose up from the long lethargy of their perfidy, and ran with love to the Lord; although

stumbling with the steps of works, until the fullness of faith and of good work receives the light, being regenerated and instructed in Christ.

And having given his hand to a boy, he ran to meet his son. The blind man gives his hand to a boy that he may run to meet the Lord with an unoffended foot of work; who, even if he himself does not yet fully understand the way of faith, nevertheless strives to offer assent to him who has known the light of truth well, by which he may arrive at the Lord.

And receiving him, he kissed him with his wife, and they wept for joy. Judea, receiving the union of Christ in the end with joy, joined also weeping: rejoicing because it believes; grieving because it arrived so late at the Lord.

Then Tobias, taking of the gall of the fish, smeared the eyes of his father. And the Lord reveals more openly to the believers how great is the malice of the ancient dragon, who once desired to devour Him in His passion; but through this he himself was rather killed, and he lost his members, that is, those whom he previously held.

The albugo, like the membrane of an egg, began to come out from the eyes of Tobias after they were smeared with the gall of the fish, and he received his sight. And the people of the Jews, after they shall have known the most bitter malice of the most wicked enemy, shall receive the lost light. The albugo, which had besieged his eyes, designates the foolishness of pleasing oneself. For they have a zeal of God, but not according

to knowledge (Rom. X). And as it says again: Seeking to establish their own justice, they are not subject to the justice of God (Ibid.). For the black pupil sees, the white one grows dark. And those who seem wise to themselves, saying: Are we also blind? (John IX), in these the truth is not. But those who, conscious of their fragility and ignorance, know how to say: My God, illuminate my darkness (Psal. XVII); these shall enjoy the light of life in the Lord. Moreover, it was well that the albugo was like the membrane of an egg, for through eggs indeed hope is designated; because namely it is not yet alive, it is not yet an animal, but it is separated from the bird which had placed it, when it may live, come forth, run, fly. And the Apostle says: But if we hope for that which we see not, we wait for it with patience (Rom. VIII). Whence also in the evangelical parable under the name of bread, fish, and egg, the three highest virtues, namely faith, hope, and charity, are expressed. Therefore, the people of the Jews still have a veil before the face of their heart, so that they do not understand the grace of Christ. They have an albugo, because they seem white and just above all others to themselves. But they have the same albugo like the membrane of an egg; because they sustain the blindness of the mind, under a most foolish and vain hope of Christ being born in the flesh, and about to deliver them and give them a great kingdom throughout the world. But from whomsoever the mist of error shall have been taken away, they shall recognize that Christ has already come, and has redeemed

the world with His blood. To whom aptly agrees what follows:

Because, sight having been received, Tobias glorified God with his wife, and all his acquaintances, saying: I bless thee, O Lord God of Israel, because thou hast chastised me, and thou hast saved me, etc. Seven days insinuate the light of spiritual grace, which is received as sevenfold. Therefore, after seven days, Tobias having been illuminated, the wife of his son enters, because after Judea shall have been illuminated through faith, after she shall have received the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Church shall enter to her, that there may be one fold and one shepherd, and there may be one house of Christ strengthened by one cornerstone.

And the cattle and the camels entered, and much money of the wife. Many persons of the faithful, many virtues of the Church are then gathered into the people of the Jews.

But also that money which he had received from Gabelus. The knowledge also of the Scriptures, which they once lent to the nations, is then returned to the same.

The cousins of Tobias came, congratulating him on all the good things which the Lord had done for him, and for seven days they feasted with him. This is what Moses said in his song: Rejoice, ye nations, together with his people (Rom. XV). They feast together for seven days; because they rejoice in spiritual gifts and virtues. The angel, about to return to heaven, explains more openly to them who he himself is, and

why he came, and that he is about to return to God. And the Lord then manifests the gifts of His knowledge more broadly to the same people as they profit, opening and showing to all, that He is in the Father, and the Father in Him. Therefore the angel returns to God, Tobias remains with his father. And the Lord is understood by the elect, equal to the Father in divinity, consubstantial to us in humanity.

(Tob. XIII.) Then the elder Tobias, opening his mouth, blessed God. Confessing His severity and mercy, and at the same time admonishing His faithful always to preach His benefits, to dread His scourges; and imbued with the spirit of prophecy, he sings many things by praise concerning the heavenly Jerusalem our mother. And the people of the Jews converted to the faith in the end of the world, shall have many teachers and prophetic men, who may kindle the minds of their neighbors to heavenly desires, while they resonate with a frequent voice the perpetual joys of the heavenly fatherland to them.

(Tob. XIV.) The elder Tobias, in the hour of his exit, called to himself Tobias his son, and his seven sons, his grandsons, and said to them that the destruction of Nineveh and the restoration of Israel were near. And then in Judea, the faithful and just teachers, seeing this, admonish their kinsmen as they are about to exit from the world, that the world now approaches its end, and the good things of the future life are about to come very soon. Moreover, they admonish those especially whom they see reborn through the grace

of the Lord, and filled with the gift of the seven-fold Spirit; which is to be the sons of Tobias the Younger in the number seven, and these young men, that is, strong in the faith and overcoming the malignant one.

Direct your steps that you may go out from Nineveh. For I see that its iniquity will give an end to it. And this is to say to their hearers of the faithful: Direct the intention of your heart, that you may leave the desires of this world and of earthly conversation, and seek heavenly things with your whole mind. For it is certain that so great is the multitude of the depraved, so great the transgression of the commands of God throughout the world, which cannot be terminated otherwise than by the extermination of the world itself, as once in the flood and the abolition of the whole human race.

Therefore, Tobias departed from Nineveh with his wife and sons and the sons of his sons, and returned to his parents-in-law, and found them in a good old age. The Lord does this daily, and is about to do this until the end of the world, when, those being forsaken whom He recognizes not to be His, He is converted to visiting and illustrating the hearts of those whom He predestined to eternal life. For He finds these in a good old age when He rejoices that they have long studied good works, He Himself granting it. Otherwise, He sees them in a bad old age, and therefore He passes by those who, living [far from] divine things, are not mature in counsel, nor to be venerated for the brightness of good action as if by

gray hair, but are bowed by the weight of vices. Concerning such persons Isaiah says: A child of a hundred years shall die, and a sinner of a hundred years shall be accursed (Isa. LXV). Deservedly he shall be subject to accursedness for his sins, who, though he has lived for many years, nevertheless never cared to leave the levity of a childish mind.

He found them safe in a good old age, etc. And our Lord and Savior takes care of those whom He shall have known to persist in the safety of good works. He Himself, closing the gaze of their heart from the delight of the present life, raises it to the contemplation of perpetual light. He Himself leads them to heavenly things after the term of this life. His is the inheritance, concerning which it is sung to Him by the prophet: Arise, O God, judge the earth, for thou shalt inherit in all nations (Psal. LXXXI).

And many years having been completed in the fear of the Lord with joy, all his kinsmen buried him. The burial of Tobias designates the faith of the whole world, when our Lord with His whole body, which is the Church which He redeemed, enters into eternal rest, the angels congratulating on the society of redeemed men, and placing each one, namely the members of their Creator, through the various mansions of the heavenly fatherland, according to the diversity of merits.

And all his generation remained in a good life and holy conversation. That is, one generation throughout the whole world and the whole time of the age, of those seeking the Lord, seeking the face of the God of Jacob (Psal. XXIII). Concerning

which likewise it says: The generation of the righteous shall be blessed (Psal. CXI). Moreover, what life is better, what conversation holier, than to remain perpetually in the glory of one's Creator?

So that they were acceptable both to God and to all the inhabitants of the earth. Men, having been led to the heavenly fatherland, shall be acceptable to God, by whose grace they were redeemed; they shall be acceptable also to the angels, whose number they shall complete, to whom they are to be joined perpetually in fraternal society. For these are the inhabitants of that earth, concerning which the Lord says: Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth (Matth. V); which the Psalmist, desiring to see, said: I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living (Psalm. XXVI).