

THE ARGUMENT.

This Prophet was one of the three, which God raised up for the comfort of his Church after the captiuitie, and after him there was no more until Iohn Baptist was sent, which was either a token of Gods wrath, or an admonition that they shulde with more feruent desires loke for the comming of Messiah. He confirmeth the same doctrine, that the two former do, but chiefly he re- proueth the Priests for their couetousnes, and for that they serued God after their owne fantasies, and not according to the prescript of his worde. He also noteth certein peculiar sinnes, which were then among them, as marrying of idolatrous and manie wnes, murmurings against God, impa- cience, and suche like. Notwithstanding for the comfort of the godlie he declareth that God wolde not forget his promes made vnto their fathers, but wolde send Christ his messenger, in whome the co- uenant shulde be accomplished, whose comming shulde be terrible to the wicked, and bring all con- solation and ioye vnto the godlie.

CHAP. I.

A complaint against Israel and chiefly the Priests.

Read Isa 13, 1



HE burden of the wor- de of y Lord to Israél by y ministerie of Malachi.

I haue loued you, saith the Lord: yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loued vs? Was not Esáu Iacob's brother, saith y Lord: yet I loued Iacob,

And I hated Esáu, and made his moun- taines waste, and his heritage a wildernes for dragons.

Thogh Edóm say, We are impouerished, but we wil r:turne and buyld the desolate places, yet saith the Lord of hostes, they shal buyld, but I wil destroye it, and they shal call them, The border of wickednes, and the people, with whome the Lord is angrie for euer.

And your eyes shal se it, and ye shal say, The Lord wil be magnified vpon the bor- der of Israél.

A sonne honoreth his father, and a ser- uant his master. If then I be a father, whe- re is mine honour: & if I be a master, whe- re is my feare, saith the Lord of hostes vn- to you, O Priests, that despise my Na- me: and ye say, Wherein haue we despi- sed thy Name?

Ye offer vncleane bread vpon mine al- tar, & you say, Wherein haue we polluted thee? In that ye say the table of the Lord is not s to be regarded.

And if ye offer the blinde for sacrifice, it is h not euil: and if ye offer the lame and sicke, it is not euil: offer it now vnto thy prince: wil he be content w thee, or accept

thy persone, saith the Lord of hostes? And now, I pray you, pray before God, that he may haue mercie vpo vs: this hath bene by your meanes: wil he regarde your persones, saith the Lord of hostes?

Who is there euen among you, that wolde shut the dores, and kindle not fyre on mine altar in vaine, I haue no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hostes, nether wil I accept an offering at your hand.

For from the rising of the sunne vnto the going downe of the same, my Name is great among the Gentiles, and in euerie place incense shalbe offered vnto my Name, and a pure offering. for my Na- me is great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hostes.

But ye haue polluted it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted, and the frute thereof, euen his meat is not to be regarded.

Ye said also, Beholde, it is a wearines, and ye haue snuffed at it, saith the Lord of hostes, and ye offered that which was torne & the lame and the sicke: thus ye offered an offering: shulde I accept this of your hand, saith the Lord?

But cursed be the deceiuer, which hathe in his flocke a male, and voweth, and sa- crificeth vnto y Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of ho- stes, and my Name is terrible among the heathen.

vice of God, which shulde be vnder the Gospel, when an end shulde be made to all these legal ceremonies by Christs onely sacrifice and y people were infected w this error, y they passed not what was offered: for they thought y God was as wel content w the leane as with the fat: but in the meane season they shewed not that obedience to God, which he required, & so comitted bothe impietie, and also shewed their contempt of God & co- uetousnes. The Priests & people were bothe weary with seruing God, & passed not what manner of sacrifice & seruice they gaue to God, for that it was least profitable, was thought good ynough for the Lord. That is, hathe babi- lonic to serue the Lord according to his worde, and yet wil serue him accord- ing to his couetous made

i He derideth Priests who bare y people in had, y they praised for the. & sheweth y they were the occasion, that these euils ca- me vpon the people. k Will God co- sider your offi- ce and state, seing you are so couetous, & wicked? l Because the Leuites who kept y dores, did not trye whether y sac- rifices that ca- me in, were ac- cording to the Law, God wis- shed, that thei wolde rather shut the dores then to recei- ue suche as were not per- fite. m God shew- eth, y their in- gratitude, and negled of his true seruice shalbe y cause of the calling of the Gentiles: & here y Pro- phet that was vnder the Law framed his wordes to the capacite of y people, and by the altar, and sacrifice he meaneth the spiri- tual ser- uice of God, which shulde be made to all these legal ceremonies by Christs onely sacrifice. n Bothe y Priests and y people were infected w this error, y they passed not what was offered: for they thought y God was as wel content w the leane as with the fat: but in the meane season they shewed not that obedience to God, which he required, & so comitted bothe impietie, and also shewed their contempt of God & co- uetousnes. o The Priests & people were bothe weary with seruing God, & passed not what manner of sacrifice & seruice they gaue to God, for that it was least profitable, was thought good ynough for the Lord. p That is, hathe babi- lonic to serue the Lord according to his worde, and yet wil serue him accord- ing to his couetous made. q He speaketh vnto the chief- ly, but vnder them he con- temneth the peo- ple also.

b Which de- clareth their great ingrati- tude that did not acknowle- ge this loue, which was so euident in that he chose Abra- ham from out of all y wor- lde, and next chose Iacob the younger bro- ther of whom they came and left Esáu the elder. c For besides that the signes of mine hatred appeared euen when he was made seruant vnto his yeg- er brother, being yet in his mothers belly, and also afterward in y he was put fro his birthright, yet euen now before your eyes the signes hereof are eu- dent, in that y his countrey lieth waste, & he shal neuer retorne to in- habit it, where as ye my peo- ple whome y enemy hated more then the are by my gra- ce and loue ro- warde you de- livered. read Rom 9, 13. d Besides the rest of the people he condemneth y Priests chiefly because they shulde haue reproofed others for their hypocritie, & obstinacie against God, & not haue hardened them by their example to greater euils. e He noteth their grosse hy- pocritie, w wolde not se their fautes, but moke impudently co- uered them, & so were blinde guides. f Ye receiue all manner offerings for your owne griedines, and do not examine whether they be according to my Law or no. g Not that they said thus, but by their doings they declared no lesse. h You make it no faute: whereby he condemneth the, y thinke it sufficiēt to serue God partely, as he hath comanded, & partely after mas fantasie, and so come not to that purenes of religion, which he requireth, & therefore in re- proche he sheweth the y a mortal man wolde not be content to be so serued.

CHAP. II.

Threatenings against the Priests being seducers of the people. And now, O ye Priests, this comman- dement is for you.

2 If

b To serue me according to my woroe
c That is, the abundance of Gods benctes
d Your seed sowne thal come to no profite
e You boast of your holines, sacrifices and feastes, but they shal turne to your shame, and be as vile as dongue
f The Priests obiected against the Propheet that he colde not reprocure the, but he must speake against the priest hode, and the office established of God by promes, but he sheweth, that the office is nothing claudered, when these vilenes, & dongue are called by their owne names
g He sheweth what were the two condicions of the couenat made with the tribe of Leui, on Gods parte, that he wolde giue the long life & felicitie, and on their parte, that they shulde faithfully serue him according to his worde
h I prescribed Ieui a certeyne Law to serue me.
i He serued me & set forth the my glorie with all humilitie and submission
k He sheweth that the Priest ought to haue knowledge to instruct other in the worde of the Lord
l He is as the treasure house of Gods worde and ought to giue to euerie one according to their necessitie, and not to referre it for him self
m Shewing, that whosoeuer doeth not declare Gods wil, is not his messenger, and Priest
n The Propheet accuseth the ingratitude of the Iewes toward God and man: for seing they were all borne of one father Abraham, and God had elected them to be his holie people, they ought nether to offend God nor their brethren.
o Whereby they had bounde them selues to God to be an holie people
p They haue toynd them selues in marriage with them that are of another religion
q That is, the Priests
r Ye cause the people to lament, because that God doeth not regard their sacrifices, so that they seme to sacrifice in vaine
s This is another faute, whereof he accuseth them, that is, that they brake the lawes of marriage

2 If ye wil not heare it, nor consider it in your heart to giue glorie vnto my Name, saith the Lord of hostes, I wil euen send a curse vpon you, and wil curse your blessings: yea, I haue cursed them already because ye do not consider it in your heart.
Beholde, I wil corrupt your seed, & cast dogue vpon your faces, euen the dogue of your solemne feasts, and you shal be like vnto it.
4 And ye shal knowe, that I haue sent this commandement vnto you, that my couenant, which I made with Leui, might stand, saith the Lord of hostes.
5 My couenant was with him of life and peace, and I gaue him feare, & he feared me, and was afraid before my Name.
6 The law of trutheth was in his mouth, & there was no iniquitie founde in his lippes: he walked with me in peace and equitie, and did turne manie away from iniquitie.
7 For the Priests lippes shulde preferre knowledge, and they shulde seke the lawe at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the Lord of hostes.
8 But ye are gone out of the way: ye haue caused manie to fall by the Law: ye haue broke the couenat of Leui, saith the Lord of hostes.
9 Therefore haue I also made you to be despised, and vile before all the people, because ye kept not my wayes, but haue bene parcial in the Law.
10 Haue we not all one father? hathe not one God made vs? why do we transgresse euerie one against his brother, and breake the couenant of our fathers?
11 Iudah hathe transgressed, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Ierusalem: for Iudah hathe defiled the holines of the Lord, which he loued, and hathe married the daughter of a strange god.
12 The Lord wil cut of the man that doeth this: bothe the master and the seruant out of the tabernacle of Iakob, and him that offereth an offering vnto the Lord of hostes.
13 And this haue ye done againe, and covered the altar of the Lord with teares, with weeping and with mourning: because the offering is no more regarded, nether receiued acceptably at your hands.
14 Yet ye say, Wherein? Because the Lord hathe bene witnes betwene thee and thy wife of thy youth, against whome thou

haft transgressed: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy couenant.
15 And did not he make one? yet had he abundance of spirit: and wherefore one? because he sought a godlie seed: therefore kepe your selues in your spirit, and let none trespass against the wife of his youth.
16 If thou hatest her, put her away, saith the Lord God of Israel, yet he couereth the iniurie vnder his garment, saith the Lord of hostes: therefore kepe your selues in your spirit, and transgresse not.
17 Ye haue wearied the Lord with your wordes: yet ye say, Wherein haue we wearied him? Wher ye say, Euerie one doeth euil, is good in the sight of the Lord, and he deliteth in them. Or where is the God of iudgement?
boundes, and be sober in minde, and bridle your affections
b Not that he doeth allowe diuorcement, but of the two fautes he sheweth the lesse
c He thinketh it sufficient to kepe his wife still, albeit he take others, and so as it were couereth his faute.
d Ye murmured against God, because he heard not you as you called
e In thinking that God fauored the wicked, and hathe no respect to them that serue him,
f Thus they blasphemed God in condemning his power and iustice, because he iudged not according to their fantasies

t As the one halfe of thy selfe.
u She that was toynd to thee by a solemne couenant, and by the inuocation of Gods Name
x Did not God make man and woman as one flesh and not many?
y By his power & vertue he colde haue made many women for one man
z Suche as shulde be borne in lawful and moderate marriage wherein is no excess of luffes
a Conteyne your selues within your
b Not that

CHAP. III.

1 Of the messenger of the Lord, Iohn Baptist, and of Christs office.

1 Beholde, I wil send my messenger, & he shal prepare the way before me: & the Lord whome ye seke, shal speedely come to his Temple: euen the messenger of the couenant whome ye desire: beholde, he shal come, saith the Lord of hostes.
2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shal endure, when he appeareth? for he is like a purging fyre, and like fullers sope.
3 And he shal sit downe to trye and fine the siluer: he shal euen fine the sonnes of Leui, and purifie them as gold & siluer, that they may bring offerings vnto the Lord in righteousnes.
4 Then shal the offerings of Iudah and Ierusalem be acceptable vnto the Lord, as in olde time and in the yeres afore.
5 And I wil come nere to you to iudgement, and I wil be a swifte witnes against the sothesayers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that wrongfully kepe backe the hirelings wages, and vex the widdowe, and the fatherles, and oppresse the stranger, & feare not me, saith the Lord of hostes.
6 For I am the Lord: I change not, and ye sonnes of Iakob are not consumed.
7 From the daies of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and haue not kept them: & returne vnto me, and I

a This is meet of Iohn Baptist, as Christ expoundeth it, Luk 7, 27
b Meaning, Messiah, as psal 140, 16 dan 9, 17.
c That is, Christ by whome the couenant was made and ratified, who is called the Angel or messenger of the couenant, because he reconciled vs to his father: & is Lord of King, because he hath the gouernement of his Church
d He sheweth that the hyocrites which with so much for the Lords coming, wil not abide when he draweth nere: for he wil consume them, and purge his & make them cleane.
e He beginneth at the Priests that they might be lightes and shines vnto others
f They murmured against God, because they sawe not his helpe euer present to defend them: & therefore he accuseth them of ingratitude, and sheweth that in that they are not daily consumed, it is a token, that he doeth still defend them: and so his mercie toward them neuer changeth.
g Read Zechar 13.
Cccc.iii.

will retuine vnto you, saith the Lord of hostes: but ye said, Wherein shal we retuine?

8 Wil a man spoyle his gods? yet haue ye spoyled me: but ye say, Wherein haue we spoyled thee? In tythes and offrings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curfse: for ye haue spoyled me, euen this whole nacion.

10 Bring ye all the tythes into my storehouse: that there may be meat in mine House, & proue me now herewith; saith the Lord of hostes, if I wil not open my windowes of heauen vnto you, & powre you out a blessing without measure.

11 And I wil rebuke the deuourer for your sakes, and he shal not destroye the frute of your grounde, nether shal your vine be baren in the field, saith the Lord of hostes.

12 And all nacions shal call you blessed: for ye shalbe a pleasant land, saith the Lord of hostes.

13 Your wordes haue bene stout against me, saith the Lord: yet ye say, What haue we spoken against thee?

14 Ye haue said, It is inuaine to serue God: & what profite is it that we haue kept his commandemēt, and that we walked humbly before the Lord of hostes?

15 Therefore we couite the proude blessed: euen they that worke wickednes, are set vp, and they that tempte God, yea, they are deliuered.

16 Then spake they that feared the Lord, euerie one to his neighbour, and the Lord hearkened & heard it, and a boke of remembrance was written before him for the that feared the Lord, & that thoght vpon his Name.

17 And they shalbe to me, saith the Lord of hostes, in that day that I shal do this, for a flocke, and I wil spare them, as a man

spareth his owne sonne that serueth him. 18 Then shal you retuine, and discern betwene the righteous and wicked, betwene him that serueth God, and him that serueth him not.

CHAP. IIIII.

The day of the Lord, before the which Eliab shalde come

1 For beholde, the day cometh that shal burne as an ouen, and all the proude, yea, and all that do wickedly, shal be stubble, & the day that cometh, shal burne them vp, saith the Lord of hostes, and shal leaue them, nether roote nor branche.

2 But vnto you that feare my Name, shal the Sunne of righteoufnes arise, and he shalbe vnder his wings, and ye shal go forthe, and growe vp as fat calues.

3 And ye shal treade downe the wicked: for they shalbe dust vnder the soles of your fete in the day that I shal do this; saith the Lord of hostes.

4 Remember the Lawe of Moses my seruant, which I commanded vnto him in Horeb for all Israēl with the statutes and iudgements.

5 Beholde, I wil send you Eliab the Prophet before the coming of the great and feareful day of the Lord.

6 And he shal turne 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 cursing.

a He propheth of Gods iudgements against the wicked, who wolde not receiue Christ, when as God shulde send him for the re-auration of his Church. b Meaning, Christ, who with his wings or beames of his grace shulde lighten, & comfort his Church, Ephe. 5.14, and he is called the sunne of righteoufnes, because in him self he hath all perfection, and also the iustice of the father dwelleth in him whereby he re-generateth vs into righteoufnes, cleanseth vs from the filth of this worlde, and reformeth vs to the image of God. c Ye shalbe fet

at libertie and increase in the ioye of the Spirit, 2-Cor 3.17 d Because the time was come that the Iewes shulde be dekriture of Prophetes until the time of Christ, because they shulde with more feruent mindes desire his coming, the Prophet exhorreth them to exercise them selues diligently in studying the Lawe of Moses in my meane season, whereby they might come in the true religion and also be armed against all tentations e This Christ expoundeth of Iohn Baptist, Mat. 11. 13, who bothe for his zeale, & restoring of religion is aptly copared to Eliab. f Which as it is true for the wicked, so doeth it waken the godlie and call them to repentance g He sheweth wherein Iohas office shulde stand: in the turning of men to God and toyning the father & children in one vntie of faith: so that my father shal turne to that religion of his sonne which is conuerted to Christ, and the sonne shal imbrace the faith of the true fathers. Abrahā, Izbak and Isakob h The seconde point of his office was to denounce Gods iudgements against them that wolde not receiue Christ.

h There are none of heathen so barba-rous, that wil defraude their gods of their honour, or deale deceitfully with them i Whereby the seruice of God shulde haue bene mainteined, and the Priests, & the poore reliued k Nor hauing respect how much ye neede, but I wil giue you in all abundance: so that ye shal lacke place to put my blessings in. l Meaning, the caterpillar, & whatsoever de-royeth corne and frutes. m The Prophet condemneth them of double blasphemie against God: first in my they said that God had no respect to the my serued him, and next that my wicked were more in his favour then the godlie n They are not onely preferred to honour, but also deliuered from dangers. o After these admonitions of the Prophet some were liuely touched, and incouraged others to feare God p Both because the thing was strange, that some turned to God in that great and valuerful corruption, and also that this might be an example of Gods mercies to all penitent sinners. q When I shal restore my Church according to my promes, they shalbe as mine owne propre goods. r That is, forgue their sinnes, and gouerne them with my Spirit.