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COMMENTARIES

EXPOSITION OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

HABAKKUK

by John Gill

*Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth*
— Psalm 60:4

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INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK

This book is called, in the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions, “the Prophecy of Habakkuk”. Of this prophet, Aben Ezra and Kimchi say, we know neither his age nor his family; which shows they paid no regard to a tradition of their nation, mentioned by some of their ancient writers^{f1}, that he was the son of the Shunammite, whom Elisha raised from the dead; and find the etymology of his name in the words of the prophet to her, “about this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son”, (^{<1246>}2 Kings 4:16) where the root of his name is used; and they account for the doubling of the last radical in his name, because of the two embraces of him, one by his mother, and the other by the prophet. His name indeed signifies “an embrace”^{f2}; or, as some, “an embracer”^{f3}; and the last letter being doubled, it is with others interpreted “the best embracer”^{f4}; to which name his character and conduct agree; who, in the most tender manner, embraced the people of God, as parents their children, and comforted them with the assurance of their preservation, notwithstanding their captivity, and with the promise of the Messiah’s coming; suggesting to them they should live by faith, to which he led them the way by his own example, (^{<3012>}Habakkuk 1:12) (^{<3013>}Habakkuk 2:3,4 ^{<3017>}Habakkuk 3:17-19) but as this is placing him too early, to put him in the times of Elisha; so it is fixing him too late, to make him to be in the times of Daniel, and to feed him in the den of the lions, as Joseph ben Gorion^{f5}, and the author of the apocryphal book of Bel and the Dragon, say he did, which was after the Babylonish captivity was ended; whereas it is certain this prophet prophesied of it, and must have lived some time before it; for he speaks of the Chaldeans by name coming against the Jews, and carrying them captive, (^{<3006>}Habakkuk 1:6,9). The learned Huetius^{f6}, and others, think there were two prophets of this name; one of the tribe of Simeon, who lived before the captivity; and another of the tribe of Levi, who lived after it. The Jewish chronologers^{f7} generally place this our prophet in the times of Manasseh; with which well enough agrees the description of the times the prophet lived in, given in (^{<3002>}Habakkuk 1:2-4) though some think he lived in the latter times of Josiah^{f8}, or the beginning of Jehoiakim^{f9}; and it is probable he was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah, with whom he agrees in many things, and prophesied of the same. However, there is no room to doubt of the authority of this book, being always received by the

Jewish church, and agreeing with other parts of Scripture, and especially with the prophecies of Jeremiah; and may be further confirmed and established by the quotations out of it in the New Testament, as (~~<3005>~~ Habakkuk 1:5) in (~~<4434>~~ Acts 13:41) and (~~<3004>~~ Habakkuk 2:4) in (~~<5017>~~ Romans 1:17 ~~<8081>~~ Galatians 3:11 ~~<3008>~~ Hebrews 10:38). The general design of the prophecy is to comfort the people of God under the afflictions that were coming upon them, and to encourage them to the exercise of faith and patience, in the hope and view of the coming of the Messiah. Pseudo Epiphanius^{f10} says that Habakkuk died two years before the people of the Jews returned from Babylon, and was honourably buried in his own native place, which he says was Bethsocher, in the tribe of Simeon. With whom Isidore^{f11} agrees, as to the time of his death; but the place of his birth, he says, was Bethacat; and of his death, Sabarta. Sozomen^{f12} reports, that, in the days of Theodosius, the grave of Habakkuk was found in Cele, formerly the city Ceila. So Eusebius says it was shown at Kela, eight miles from Eleutheropolis; though, in another place, he says it was to be seen at Gabbatha, twelve miles from the same place; which may be reconciled, by observing that it might be between them both, and be seen from each, since they were places near to each other^{f13}. But the Cippi Hebraici^{f14} say it was at a place called Jakuk in Galilee, not far from Sephetta, where was an academy of the Jews; and this seems to agree with what Sanderson, a countryman of ours, as quoted by Van Till^{f15}, observes; that in his journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, between Sephet and Chapherchittin, he found a village, in which, the Jews report, Habakkuk the prophet dwelt and died, the name of which is Jeakoke. But these things are not to be depended on.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 1

In this chapter, after the inscription, in which are the title of the book, the name and character of the writer, (^{<3000>}Habakkuk 1:1), there is a complaint made by the prophet of his cry not being heard, and of salvation being deferred, which was long expected, (^{<3000>}Habakkuk 1:2) and of the wickedness of the times he lived in; of iniquity and trouble, rapine and oppression, in general; and particularly of corruption in courts of judicature, in which there were nothing but strife and contention, a dilatoriness in proceedings at law, and justice was stopped and suppressed, (^{<3003>}Habakkuk 1:3,4) then follows an answer to this, showing that some sore judgment, amazing and incredible, would soon be executed for such sins, (^{<3005>}Habakkuk 1:5) that the Chaldeans would be raised up and sent against the Jews, and spoil them, and carry them captive; who are described by the cruelty of their temper and disposition; by the swiftness and fierceness of their cavalry; and by their derision of kings, princes, and strong holds; and by their victories and success, which they should impute to their idols, (^{<3006>}Habakkuk 1:6-11) and then the prophet, in the name of the church, expresses his faith that the people of God, and his interest, would be preserved, and not perish in this calamity; which is urged from the eternity, holiness, faithfulness, and power of God, and from his design in this affliction, which was correction, and not destruction, (^{<3012>}Habakkuk 1:12) and the chapter is closed with an expostulation of the prophet with God, in consideration of his purity and holiness; how he could bear with such a wicked nation as the Chaldeans, and suffer them to devour men as fishes, in an arbitrary way, that have no ruler; catch them in their net, and insult them, and ascribe all to their own power and prudence, and think to go on continually in this way, (^{<3013>}Habakkuk 1:13-17).

Ver. 1. *The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see.*] This prophecy is called a “burden”, or something took up and carried, being what the prophet received from the Lord, and went with to the people of the Jews, and was a heavy burdensome prophecy to them; declaring the calamities that should come upon them by the Chaldeans, who would invade their

land, and carry them captive; and Habakkuk, that brought this account, is called a “prophet”, to give the greater sanction to it; and it was what he had in vision from the Lord represented unto him, and therefore should be credited. Abarbinel inquires why Habakkuk should be called a prophet, when none of the lesser prophets are, excepting Haggai and Zechariah; and thinks the reason of it is, to give weight to his prophecy, since it might be suspected by some whether he was one; there being none of those phrases to be met with in this prophecy as in others, as “the word of the Lord came”, etc. or “thus saith the Lord”.

Ver. 2. *O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear!* etc.] The prophet having long observed the sins and iniquities of the people among whom he lived, and being greatly distressed in his mind on account of them, had frequently and importunately cried unto the Lord to put a stop to the abounding of them, that the people might be brought to a sense of their sins, and reform from them; but nothing of this kind appearing, he concludes his prayers were not heard, and therefore expostulates with the Lord upon this head:

[even] cry unto thee [of] violence, and thou wilt not save! either of violence done to himself in the discharge of his office, or of one man to another, of the rich to the poor; and yet, though he cried again and again to the Lord, to check this growing evil, and deliver the oppressed out of the hands of their oppressors, it was not done; which was matter of grief and trouble to him.

Ver. 3. *Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause [me] to behold grievance?* etc.] That is, wicked men, and such as give a great deal of trouble vexation, and grief to others, by their rapine and oppression; suggesting that he could not turn his eyes any where, but such persons presented themselves to his view; and that their wicked actions were performed by them openly and publicly, in the sight of all, without any shame or fear. So the Targum,

“why do I see oppressors, and behold those that do the labour of falsehood?”

For spoiling and violence [are] before me; in my sight and presence, though a prophet, and notwithstanding all my remonstrances, exhortations, and reproofs; such were the hardness, obstinacy, and impudence of this

people; to such a height and pitch of iniquity were they arrived, as to regard not the prophets of the Lord. The Targum is,

“spoilers and robbers are before me:”

or, “against me”^{f16}, as in the text; these sins were committed against him, he was injuriously used himself; or they were done to others, contrary to his advice and persuasion:

and there are [that] raise up strife and contention; in the kingdom, in cities, in families; in one man, brother, friend, and neighbour, against another; which occasion lawsuits, and in them justice is not done, as follows. It may be rendered, and “there shall be [and] is [a man] of strife”; so Japhet: “and he shall raise up contention”; one man given to strife will and does use great contention in communities, civil and religious.

Ver. 4. *Therefore the law is slacked*, etc.] Is not put into execution against offenders: the civil magistrates, whose office it is to do justice according to law, are dilatory, and do not proceed with vigour and spirit against the transgressors of it, and in favour of honest and good men oppressed: or “it intermits”^{f17}, or is “intermitted”; it is like a man whose pulse beats low, and is scarce perceived, which is a sign that he is not in good health as the body politic is not, when the law, which is the soul of it, is not suffered to take place, and do its office. So the Targum,

“the law languishes;”

loses its force and vigour, and is ready to expire; which is a sad symptom of the bad estate of a commonwealth.

And judgment doth never go forth; at least not right, to the justifying of the righteous, acquitting the innocent, and giving the cause on the right side; condemning the wicked, and punishing offenders as their crime deserves: it never appears as it should do; it is either not done at all, or done badly and perversely:

for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; to hurt him or ensnare him, and by frauds and wicked artifices, and false witnesses, to carry a cause against him:

therefore wrong judgment proceedeth; the cause is given on the wrong side, against a good man, and for a wicked man; all these things the

prophet saw with grief, and complained of to the Lord, from whom he has an answer in the following words:

Ver. 5. *Behold ye among the heathen, and regard,* etc.] This is the Lord's answer to the prophet's complaint, or what he directs him to say to the Jews, guilty of the crimes complained of, which should not go long unpunished; and who are called upon to look around them, and see what was doing among the nations; how the king of Babylon had overturned the Assyrian empire, and was going from place to place, subduing one nation after another, and their turn would be quickly: for these words are not addressed to the heathen, to stir them up to observe what was doing, or about to be done, to the Jews; but to the Jews themselves, to consider and regard the operations of the Lord, and the works of his providence among the nations of the earth. These words are differently rendered in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and which better agree with the quotation of them by the apostle, (see Gill on "~~4134~~ Acts 13:41"):

and wonder marvellously; or "wonder, wonder"^{f18}; the word is repeated, to express the great admiration there would be found just reason for, on consideration of what was now doing in the world, and would be done, especially in Judea:

for [I] will work a work in your days, [which] ye will not believe, though it be told [you]; which was the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple, by the Chaldeans, as is evident from the following words; and, though they were the instruments of it, it was the work of divine Providence; it was done according to the will of God, and by his direction, he giving success; and, being thus declared, was a certain thing, and might be depended on, nothing should hinder it; and it should be done speedily, in that generation, some then living should see it; though the thing was so amazing and incredible, that they would not believe it ever would be; partly because the Chaldeans were their good friends and allies, as they thought, as appears by Josiah's going out against the king of Egypt, when he was marching his army against the king of Babylon; and partly because they were the covenant people of God, and would never be abandoned and given up by him into the hands of another people; and therefore, when they were told of it by the prophets of the Lord, especially by Jeremiah, time after time; who expressly said the king of Babylon would come against them, and they would be delivered into the hands of the Chaldeans; yet they would give no credit to it, till their ruin came upon them, as may be

observed in various parts of his prophecy. The apostle quotes this passage in the place above mentioned, and applies it to the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, for their contemptuous rejection of the Messiah and his Gospel; which yet they would not believe to the last, though it was foretold by Christ and his apostles.

Ver. 6. *For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans*, etc.] A people still of late mean and low, famous only for their soothsaying, divination, and judicial astrology; but now become a powerful and warlike people, rising up under the permission of Providence to universal monarchy, and who would quickly add Judea to the rest of their dominions:

[that] bitter and hasty nation; a cruel and merciless people in their temper and disposition: “bitter” against the people of God and true religion, and causing bitterness, calamities, and distress, wherever they came: “hasty” and precipitate in their determinations; swift and nimble in their motions; active and vigorous in the prosecution of their designs:

which shall march through the breadth of the land; or “breadths of the land”^{f19}; through the whole world, as they were attempting to do, having subdued Syria, all Asia, and great part of Africa, through which they boldly marched, bearing down all opposition that was in their way; or through the breadth of the land of Judea, taking all the fenced cities as they went along, and Jerusalem the metropolis of it; see (²³⁸¹ Isaiah 8:7,8):

to possess the dwellingplaces [that are] not theirs; the cities of Judea, and houses in them, as well as the palaces and dwellingplaces in Jerusalem, which they had no right unto, but what they got by the sword; what were the legal possessions and inheritances of others from father to son for ages past, these the Chaldeans would dispossess them of; and not only take them, and the spoil and plunder of them, for the present, but retain them in their possession, as an inheritance to be transmitted to their posterity. This may have some respect to the length of the captivity of the Jews, and their land being in the hands of their enemies for the space of seventy years.

Ver. 7. *They [are] terrible and dreadful*, etc.] For the fierceness of their countenances; the number and valour of their troops; the splendor of their armour; the victories they had obtained, and the cruelty they had exercised; the fame of all which spread terror wherever they came:

their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves; they will not be directed and governed by any laws of God and man, but by their own;

they will do according to their will and pleasure, and none will be able to gainsay and resist them; they will hear no reason or argument; their decrees and determinations they make of themselves shall be put into execution, and there will be no opposing their tyrannical measures; they will usurp a power, and take upon them an authority over others of themselves, which all must submit unto; no mercy and pity: no goodness and humanity, are to be expected from such lawless and imperious enemies.

Ver. 8. *Their horses also are swifter than the leopards,* etc.] Creatures remarkable for their swiftness: these are creatures born of the mating of a he panther and a lioness, and not of a lion and a she panther, as some have affirmed; and which adultery is highly resented by the lion; nor will he suffer it to go unrevenged, as Pliny^{f20} and Philostratus^{f21} observe: those thus begotten differ from common lions in this, that they have no manes: the panthers are the creatures here meant, which are very swift, as Bochart^{f22} from various authors has observed. Lucan^{f23} calls this creature “celerem pardum”, “the swift panther”; and Jerom says^{f24} nothing is swifter than the panther; and Aelianus^{f25} observes that the panther, by the swiftness of its running, will overtake most creatures, and particularly apes; and Eustathius^{f26} confirms the same, saying that it exceeds other creatures in swiftness, and as it were flies before the eyes of hunters; and Osorius^{f27} relates, that the king of Portugal once sent to the pope of Rome a panther tamed, which being had into the woods a hunting by a Persian hunter, with wonderful swiftness leaped upon the boars and deer, and killed them at once; and the Septuagint version here is, “their horses will leap above the panthers”: or exceed them in leaping, for which these panthers are very famous too: an Arabic writer^{f28}, whom Bochart mentions, says it will leap above forty cubits at a leap. Pliny^{f29} reports, that the panthers in Africa will get up into thick trees, and hide themselves in the branches, and leap from thence on those that pass by; and because of the swiftness of this creature, with other qualities of it, the third beast or Grecian monarchy, especially in its first head Alexander the great, is represented by it, (²⁰⁰⁶ Daniel 7:6) he making such a swift and rapid progress in his conquests; and yet the Chaldean horses would exceed them in swiftness, and be very speedy in their march into the land of Judea; and therefore it was in vain for the Jews to please themselves with the thoughts that these people were a great way off, and so they secure from them, when they could and would be upon them presently, ere they were aware:

and are more fierce than ravening wolves; which creatures are naturally fierce, and especially when they are hungry, and particularly at evening; when, having had no food all the day, their appetites are very keen, and they go in quest of their prey; and, when they meet with it, fall upon it with greater eagerness and fierceness. The Septuagint and Arabic versions render it, than the wolves of Arabia; that there are wolves very frequent in Arabia, is observed by Diodorus Siculus^{f30}, and Strabo^{f31}; but that these are remarkable for their fierceness does not appear; rather those in colder climates are more fierce; so Pliny^{f32} says, they are little and sluggish in Africa and Egypt, but rough and fierce in cold climates. It is, in the original text, “more sharp”^{f33}; which some interpret of the sharpness of their sight. Aelianus says^{f34}, it is a most quick and sharp sighted creature; and can see in the night season, even though the moon shines not: the reason of which Pliny^{f35} gives is, because the eyes of wolves are shining, and dart light; hence Aelianus^{f36} observes, that that time of the night in which the wolf only by nature enjoys the light is called wolf light; and that Homer^{f37} calls a night which has some glimmering of light, or a sort of twilight, such as the wolves can see themselves walk by, *αμφιλυχη νυξ*, which is that light that precedes the rising sun; and he also observes that the wolf is sacred to the sun, and to Apollo, which are the same; and there was an image of one at Delphos; and so Macrobius^{f38} says, that the inhabitants of Lycopolis, a city of Thebais in Egypt, alike worship Apollo and a wolf, and in both the sun, because this animal takes and consumes all things like the sun; and, because perceiving much by the quick sight of its eyes, overcomes the darkness of the night; and observes, that some think they have their name from light, though they would have it be from the morning light; because those creatures especially observe that time for seizing on cattle, after a nights hunger, when before day light they are turned out of the stables into pasture; but it is for the most part at evening, and in the night, that wolves prowl about for their prey^{f39}; and from whence they have the name of evening wolves, to which the Chaldean horses are here compared: and yet there seems to be an antipathy between these, if what some naturalists^{f40} say is true; as that if a horse by chance treads in the footsteps of a wolf, a numbness will immediately seize it, yea, even its belly will burst; and that, if the hip bone of a wolf is thrown under horses drawing a chariot full speed, and they tread upon it, they will stop and stand stone still, immovable: whether respect is here had to the quick sight or sharp hunger of these creatures is not easy to say; though rather, since the comparison of them is with horses, it seems to respect the fierceness of them, for which the war

horse is famous, (~~8324~~ Job 39:24) and may be better understood of the sharpness of the appetite of evening wolves, when hunger bitten:

and their horsemen shall spread themselves; or be multiplied, as the Targum; they shall be many, and spread themselves all over the country, so that there will be no escaping; all will fall into their hands:

and their horsemen shall come from far; as Chaldea was reckoned from Judea, and especially in comparison of neighbouring nations, who used to be troublesome, as Moab, Edom, etc. (see ~~2455~~ Jeremiah 5:15):

they shall flee as the eagle [that] hasteth to eat; those horsemen shall be so speedy in their march, that they shall seem rather to fly than ride, and even to fly as swift as the eagle, the swiftest of birds, and which itself flies swiftest when hungry, and in sight of its prey; and the rather this bird is mentioned, because used by many nations, as the Persians, and others, for a military sign^{f41}.

Ver. 9. *They shall come all for violence*, etc.] Or, “the whole of it”^{f42}; the whole army of the Chaldeans, everyone of them; this would be their sole view, not to do themselves justice, as might be pretended, or avenge any injuries or affronts done to them by the Jews; but purely for the sake of spoil and plunder:

their faces shall sup up [as] the east wind: their countenances will appear so stern and fierce, that their very looks will so frighten, as to cause men to sink and die through terror; just as herbs and plants shrivel up and wither away, when blasted by a nipping east wind. So the Targum,

“the reception or look of their faces is like to a vehement east wind.”

Some render it,

“the look or design of their faces is to the east”^{f43};

when the Chaldeans were on their march to Judea, their faces were to the west or south west; but then their desire and views were, that when they had got the spoil they came for, as in the preceding clause, to carry it to Babylon, which lay eastward or north east of Judea, and thither their faces looked:

and they shall gather the captivity as the sand; or gather up persons, both in Judea, and in other countries conquered by them, as innumerable as the sand of the sea, and carry them captive into their own land. Captivity is put for captives.

Ver. 10. *And they shall scoff at the kings*, etc.] Or, “he shall”^{f44}, Nebuchadnezzar king of the Chaldeans, and the army with him; who would make a jest of kings and their armies that should oppose them, as being not at all a match for them; as the kings of Judah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, they carried captive, and all others confederate with them, in whom they trusted, as the king of Egypt particularly; and which is observed to show the vanity of trusting in princes for safety; though it may also include all other kings the Chaldeans fought against, and the kingdoms they invaded and subdued:

and the princes shall be a scorn unto them; the nobles, counsellors, and ministers of state; or leaders and commanders of armies, and general officers, in whom great confidence is often put; but these the king of Babylon and his forces would mock and laugh at, as being nothing in their hands, and who would fall an easy prey to them:

they shall deride every strong hold; in Jerusalem, in the whole land of Judea, and in every other country they invade, or pass through, none being able to stand out against them:

for they shall heap dust, and take it; easily, as it were in sport, only by raising a dust heap, or a heap of dirt; by which is meant a mount raised up to give them a little rise, to throw in their darts or stones, or use their engines and battering rams to more advantage, and to scale the walls, and get possession. There are two other senses mentioned by Kimchi; as that they shall gather a great number of people as dust, and take it; or they shall gather dust to till up the trenches and ditches about the wall, that so they may come at it, and take it.

Ver. 11. *Then shall [his] mind change*, etc.] The mind of the king of Babylon; not that, when he had taken Jerusalem, he altered his purpose, and laid aside his designs of attacking other nations, and returned to his own country; where he became guilty of gross idolatry, in setting up the golden image in the plain of Dura, which he required all his subjects to worship, and to which he ascribed all his victories; for, five years after this, Josephus^{f45} says, he led his army into Coelesyria, and conquered the

Moabites and Ammonites, and entered Egypt, and slew the reigning king of it: but rather the disposition of his mind changed for the worse upon his success in subduing kings and princes, and their kingdoms; for though his mind was never good, but always proud, haughty, and ambitious, insolent, cruel, and tyrannical; yet, being flushed with his conquests, he grew more and more so:

and he shall pass over^{f46}, or “transgress”, all bounds of modesty and sobriety, of humanity and goodness:

and offend, [imputing] this his power unto his god^{f47}; this particularly will be the sin he will be guilty of, he will ascribe all his achievements to his idol Bel; or rather to himself, to his own prowess and valour, his wisdom and skill in military affairs; for so it will bear to be rendered, making “this his own power to be his god”; and perhaps the golden image Nebuchadnezzar set up to be worshipped was for himself; (see ^{<2083>}Daniel 4:30). The Targum is,

“therefore, because of the lifting up of his spirit, his kingdom was removed from him; and he committed an offence, in that he multiplied glory to his idol;”

and some interpret the whole of this of the miserable condition Nebuchadnezzar was brought into, being a prophecy of it: “then shall his mind change”; his heart from man’s to a beast’s, (^{<2046>}Daniel 4:16): “and he shall pass over”; from all society and conversation with men, and have his dwelling with beasts, (^{<2061>}Daniel 4:31,32): “and offend”, or rather “be punished”, and become desolate and miserable, for his pride, and idolatry, and other sins: “this his power” is “his god”,^{f48}; spoken ironically; see what his power is now, being changed into a beast, which he reckoned his god, or gloried in as what he had from his god: but I rather think the whole is a continuation of his success, particularly in the land of Judea; and to be rendered, “then shall he pass through, as the wind, and shall pass over; and he shall bear the punishment of his sin, whose power is his god”; that is, the king of Babylon and his army, the Chaldeans, should pass through all nations and kingdoms that were between them and Judea, like a strong wind or whirlwind, to which they are compared, (^{<2043>}Jeremiah 4:13) and carry all before them, none being able to resist and oppose them; and should pass over rivers that lay in their way, and the boundaries of Judea, and spread themselves over the whole country; and then that country, and the inhabitants of it, should be punished for their sins, particularly for their

confidence in themselves; in their wealth and riches; in their fortresses and strong towers; in their own works of righteousness; all which they made idols of, and trusted not in their God, as they ought to have done.

Ver. 12. [*Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy One?* etc.] The prophet, foreseeing these calamities coming upon his nation and people, observes some things for their comfort in this verse; and expostulates with God in the following verses (³⁰¹³Habakkuk 1:13-17) about his providential dealings, in order to obtain an answer from him, which might remove the objections of his own mind, and those of other good men he personates, raised against them; being stumbled at this, that wicked men should be suffered to succeed and prosper, and the righteous should be afflicted and distressed by them: but for his own present consolation, and that of others, in a view of the worst that should befall them, he strongly asserts,

we shall not die; meaning not a corporeal death, for that all men die, good and bad; and this the Jews did die, and no doubt good men among them too, at the siege and taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldean army, either by famine, or pestilence, or sword: nor a death of affliction, which the people of God are subject to, as well as others; is often their case, and is for their good, and in love, and not wrath: but a spiritual death, which none that are quickened by the Spirit and grace of God ever die; though grace may be low, it is never lost; though saints may be in dead and lifeless frames, and need quickening afresh, yet they are not without the principle of spiritual life; grace in them is a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life; their spiritual life can never fail them, since it is secured in Christ: and much less shall they die the second, or an eternal death; they are ordained to eternal life; Christ is come, and given his flesh for it, that they might have it; it is in his hands for them; they are united to him, and have both the promise and pledge of it: and this may be argued, as by the prophet here, from the eternity of God, art “*thou not from everlasting?*” he is from everlasting to everlasting, the Ancient of days, that inhabits eternity, is, was, and is to come: therefore “*we shall not die*”; none of his people shall perish, because he loves them with an everlasting love; has made an everlasting choice of them; has set up Christ from everlasting as their surety and Saviour; entered into an everlasting covenant with them in Christ; is their everlasting Father, and will be their everlasting portion; is the unchangeable Jehovah, and therefore they shall not be consumed: this may be concluded from their covenant interest in God, “*O Lord my God*”;

they are his peculiar people, given to Christ to be preserved by him, and covenant interest always continues; he that is their God is their God and guide unto death: and also from the holiness of God, “mine holy One”; who has sworn by his holiness to them, and is faithful to his covenant and promise; and is the sanctifier of them, that has sanctified or set them apart for himself; made Christ sanctification to them, and makes them holy by his Spirit and grace, and enables them to persevere in grace and holiness: moreover, this may be understood of the people of the Jews, as a church and nation; who, though they would be carried captive into Babylon, yet would still continue as such, and be returned again as such, and not die, sink, and perish; since the Messiah was to spring from them; and they might be assured of their preservation for that purpose, from the perfections of God, his covenant with them, and their relation to him: nor shall the church of Christ in any age die and perish, though in ever so low a state; a particular church may, but the interest and church of Christ in general, or his spiritual seed, never shall. This is one of the eighteen passages, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe, called “Tikkun-Sopherim”, the correction of the scribes, of Ezra, and his company; it having been written, in some copies, “thou shall not die”^{f49}; asserting the immortality of God, or his eternity to come; and that, as he was from everlasting, so he should continue to everlasting; and to this sense the Targum paraphrases the words,

“thy Word remaineth for ever;”

and so the Syriac version follows the same reading:

O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment: that is, the Chaldeans; either to be judged and punished themselves for their sins, as all wicked Christless sinners are, even righteously foreordained to condemnation for their sins; or rather to be the instruments of punishing the wicked among the Jews; for this purpose were these people ordained in the counsels of God, and raised up in his providence, and constituted a kingdom, and made a powerful nation:

O mighty God; or “rock”^{f50}; the rock and refuge of his people:

thou hast established them for correction; or “founded”^{f51} them, and settled them as a monarchy, strong and mighty for this end, that they might be a rod in the hand of the Lord, not for destruction, but for correction and

chastisement; and from hence it might be also comfortably concluded that they should not die and utterly perish.

Ver. 13. [*Thou art*] of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look upon iniquity, etc.] The Lord with his eyes of omniscience beholds all things good and evil, and all men good and bad, with all their actions; but then he does not look upon the sins of men with pleasure and approbation; since they are contrary to his nature, repugnant to his will, and breaches of his righteous law: and though sin in general may be included here, yet there seems to be a particular respect had to the “evil” or injury done by the Chaldeans to the Jews, in invading their land, spoiling their substance, and slaying their persons; and to the “iniquity”, labour, or grievance, by which may be meant the oppression and violence the same people exercised upon the inhabitants of Judea; which, though permitted by the Lord, could not be well pleasing in his sight. The Targum interprets it of persons, workers of evil, and workers of the labour of falsehood; (see ^{<4174>}Psalm 5:4,5):

wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously; the Chaldeans, who dealt treacherously with God, by worshipping idols; and with the Jews, pretending to be their good friends and allies, when they meditated their ruin and destruction; and yet the Lord in his providence seemed to look favourably on these perfidious persons, since they succeeded in all their enterprises: this was stumbling to the prophet, and all good men; and they knew not how, or at least found great difficulty, to reconcile this to the purity and holiness of God, and to his justice and faithfulness; (see ^{<4175>}Jeremiah 12:1,2):

and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth [the man that is] more righteous than he? the comparison does not lie so much personally between Nebuchadnezzar and Zedekiah the last king of the Jews, whose eyes the king of Babylon put out, and whom he used in a cruel manner; who was, no doubt, comparatively speaking, a more righteous person than the Chaldean monarch was; being not the worst of the kings of Judea, and whose name has the signification of righteousness in it: but rather between the Chaldeans and the Jews; who, though there were many wicked persons among them, yet there were some truly righteous, who fell in the common calamity; and, as to the bulk of them, were a more righteous people, at the worst, than their enemies were, who devoured them, destroyed many with the sword, plundered them of their substance, and carried them captive; and the Lord was silent all this while, said nothing in his providence against

them, put no stop to their proceedings; and by his silence seemed to approve of, at least to connive at, what they did; and this the prophet in the name of good men reasons with the Lord about.

Ver. 14. *And makest men as the fishes of the sea*, etc.] That is, sufferest them to be used as the fishes of the sea, which are easily taken in the net, and are common to everyone; whosoever will may take them up, and kill them, and use them for their food; and which also among themselves are often hardly used, the lesser being devoured by the greater; and in like manner the prophet suggests, that the people of the Jews, who were men made after the image of God, and made for society and usefulness, and moreover were God's covenant people; and it might have been expected, that a more special providence would have attended them, more than other men, and especially than what attended the fishes of the sea; yet it looked as if there were no more care taken of them than of these:

as the creeping things [that have] no ruler over them; not the creeping things of the earth, but of the water, the lesser sort of fishes that move in the water; or those that more properly creep, as crabs, prawns, and shrimps; (see ¹⁹⁴²⁵Psalm 104:25) who have none to protect and defend them, and restrain others from taking and hurting them: this may seem contrary to what Aristotle^{f52} and Pliny^{f53} say of some fishes, that they go in company, and have a leader or governor; but, as Bochart^{f54} observes, it is one thing to be a leader of the way, a guide and director, which way to steer their course in swimming; and another thing to be as the general of an army, to protect and defend, or under whose directions they might defend themselves; such an one the prophet denies they had: and so, the prophet complains, this was the case of the Jews; they were exposed to the cruelty of their enemies, as if there was no God that governed in the world, and no providence to direct and order things for the preservation of men, and to keep good men from being hurt by evil men; or those that were weak and feeble from being oppressed by the powerful and mighty; this he reasons with the Lord about, and was desirous of an answer to it.

Ver. 15. *They take up all of them with the angle*, etc.] The prophet continues the metaphor of fishing, and observes the different ways of taking fish; which is to be applied to the case he is speaking of: as fishermen take all they can with their angles, so "they" or "he", for it is in the singular number, Nebuchadnezzar and his army, take up all out of the sea of the world; are ambitious of getting all kingdoms and nations of the

world under their power and dominion; particularly all Judea, and all the inhabitants of it, good and bad, without any distinction; for all were fish which came to their net: this may design the artful and alluring methods they first made use of to get the people into their hands, by making covenants with them, and drawing them into making of presents, and paying of tribute:

they catch them in their net, and gather them in their drag; with the angle the fisherman catches fish one by one, but with the net great numbers; and what he misses by throwing the net, he gets by using the drag; all which may be expressive of the ways and methods used by the king of Babylon and his army, both in the times of Jeconiah, and of Zedekiah; under the former he used the net, and carried off large numbers, and with them the royal family and great substance, but left many behind; under the latter he came and swept away all, drained the land of its riches and its inhabitants:

therefore they rejoice and are glad; as fishermen do when they have good sport; so these people rejoiced in their own success, and in the calamities of their neighbours.

Ver. 16. *Therefore they sacrifice unto their net, and burn incense unto their drag*, etc.] Either to their idols, to fortune and the stars, as Aben Ezra; imagining they gave them success, and prospered them in the arts and methods they used: or to their arms, as the Targum; nor was it unusual with the Heathens to worship their spears, sacrifice to them, and swear by them^{f55}. So Justin says^{f56}, originally the ancients worshipped spears for gods, in memory of whose religion spears are still added to the images of the gods. Lucian^{f57} asserts that the Scythians sacrificed to a scimitar; and Arnobius^{f58} says the same; and Ammianus Marcellinus^{f59} reports, that the Quadi worship their swords or daggers instead of gods; and that it was usual to swear by the spear is evident from others^{f60}. Or else the sense is, they sacrificed to their own valour and courage, skill and conduct.

Because by them their portion [is] fat, and their meat plenteous: that is, by their angle, net, and drag; or by those things signified by them, the arts and methods they used to subdue nations, conquer kingdoms, and bring them into subjection to them; they enlarged their dominions, increased their riches and revenues, and had plenty of everything that was desirable for food and raiment, for pleasure and profit; or to gratify the most unbounded ambition, having everything that heart could wish for and desire: the

allusion is to making sumptuous feasts, and rich banquets, on occasion of victories obtained.

Ver. 17. *Shall they therefore empty their net*, etc.] Or “thus”, after this manner, so Noldius; as fishermen do, when they have had a good cast, and a large draught, spread the net, and take out the fishes, in order to throw it again, and catch more; and so it is asked, should these Chaldeans, when they have conquered one nation, and so filled their net or themselves with the spoil, carry it to Babylon, and there lay it up, and then proceed to fight against another kingdom and nation, and plunder it in like manner?

and not spare continually to slay the nations? the inhabitants of them one after another, and subdue them under them, and make themselves master of all their treasure, until they are arrived to universal monarchy by such cruel and unmerciful methods. The Targum is,

“shall he send his armies continually to consume nations, and that without mercy?”

This the prophet proposes in the name of the whole body of the Lord’s people, and leaves it with him to have an answer to it, which is given in the following chapter (^{<3111>}Habakkuk 2:1-20).

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 2

This chapter contains an answer from the Lord to the expostulations, pleadings, and reasonings of the prophet, in the name of the people. The preparation of the prophet to receive this answer is described, (^{<310>}Habakkuk 2:1) then follows the answer itself, in which he is bid to write and make plain the vision he had, that it might be easily read, (^{<311>}Habakkuk 2:2) and a promise is made, that vision should still be continued to the appointed time, at which time the Messiah would come; and this the righteous man, in opposition to the vain and proud man, is encouraged to live in the faith of, (^{<312>}Habakkuk 2:3,4) and then the destruction of the enemies of the people of God is threatened for their pride, ambition, covetousness, oppression, and murder, (^{<313>}Habakkuk 2:5-12) which would be unavoidable, (^{<314>}Habakkuk 2:13) and issue in the spread of the knowledge of the glory of God in the world, (^{<315>}Habakkuk 2:14) and also the ruin of other enemies is threatened, for drawing men into apostasy, and for their violence and idolatry, (^{<316>}Habakkuk 2:15-19) upon which would follow an universal silence in the earth, (^{<317>}Habakkuk 2:20).

Ver. 1. *I will stand upon my watch*, etc.] These are the words of the prophet: so the Targum introduces them,

“the prophet said;”

and this he said in character as a watchman, as all the prophets were: as a watchman takes the proper place he watches in and looks out, especially in time of danger and distress, if he can spy anyone bringing tidings, that he may receive it, and notify it to the people that have appointed him a watchman; so the prophet retired from the world, and gave himself up to meditation and prayer, and put himself in a waiting posture; looking up to the Lord, and expecting an answer to his expostulations with him, concerning the success of the enemies of God’s people, and the calamities that were like to come upon them, that he might report it to them; (see ^{<318>}Isaiah 21:8):

and set me upon the tower; a place of eminence, from which he could behold an object at a distance: it signifies a strait place, in which he was as one besieged; and may be an emblem of the straits and difficulties he was in, which he wanted to be extricated out of: the thoughts of his heart troubled him; he had a great many objections that rose up in his mind against the providences that were like to attend his people; he was beset with the temptations of Satan, and surrounded with objectors to what he had delivered, concerning the Chaldeans being raised up by God to the destruction of the Jewish nation; and, amidst these difficulties, he sets himself to reading the word of God, and meditation on it, to pray to God for instruction and information in this matter; as Asaph, in a like case, went into the sanctuary of the Lord, where he got satisfaction, (^{1973D}Psalm 73:2,3,16,17) as well as it may be expressive of the confidence he had in God, in his covenant and promises, which were as a fortress and strong tower to him; in short, he kept his place, he was found in the way of his duty, in the performance of his office, and was humbly and patiently waiting on God, to know more of his mind and will, and acquaint the people with it.

And will watch to see what he will say unto me; or “in me”^{f61}; that is, what the Lord would say unto him, either outwardly by an audible voice; or inwardly by impressing things upon his mind; or in a vision by the Spirit of prophecy, as Kimchi; so David, “the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me”, or “in me”, (^{1031D}2 Samuel 23:2) he was determined to wait patiently for an answer, and to continue in the present posture, and constantly attend to every motion and dictate of the Spirit of God, and take particular notice of what should be suggested to him:

and what I shall answer when I am reproved; either by the Lord, for using so much freedom and boldness in expostulations and reasonings with him, who is under no obligation to give an account of his matters unto the children of men; or by others, how he should be able to satisfy his own mind, and remove the scruples, doubts, and objections, that arose there against the providence of God, in prospering the wicked, and afflicting the righteous, and repel the temptation he was under to quarrel with God, and arraign his proceedings; and how he should answer the objections that his people made, both against his prophecies, and the providence of God, for which they reproved him; or, however, he expected they would. The Targum is,

“and what will be returned to my request.”

Ver. 2. *And the Lord answered me*, etc.] As he does his ministers and people sooner or later, in one way or another, when they call upon him with humility and reverence, with faith and fervency:

and said, Write the vision; which the prophet now had from him, concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the destruction of the enemies of the church and people of God: and this he has orders to “write”; not only to tell it to the people then present, for their particular information and satisfaction; but to write it, that it may be read over and over, and that it may remain, and be of use in times to come:

and make [it] plain upon tables, engrave it in plain legible letters on tables of wood; on box tree, as the Septuagint version; on which they used to write before paper was found out and used. Writing tables are of ancient use; they were used in and before the times of Homer, for he speaks^{f62} of writing very pernicious things on a two leaved table; wherefore Josephus must be mistaken when he suggests^{f63} that letters were not found out in the times of Homer. These tables were made of wood, sometimes of one sort, and sometimes of another; sometimes they were made of the pine tree, as appears from Euripides^{f64} but, for the most part, of box^{f65}, according to the Greek version as above; and consisted sometimes of two leaves, for the most part of three or five, covered with wax^{f66}, on which impressions were easily made, and continued long, and were very legible; and these impressions or letters were formed with an iron style or pen; (see ²⁴⁷¹Jeremiah 17:1) this the Greeks and Tuscans first used, but was afterwards forbidden by the Romans, who, instead of it, ordered an instrument of bone to be used^{f67}: hence these tables were wont to be called “wax”, because besmeared with it; and so, in wills and testaments written on them, the heirs are said to be written either in the first wax, or in the bottom of the wax^{f68}, that is, of the will, or in the lowest part of the table, or what we should call the bottom of the leaf or page: and it was a custom among the Romans, as Cicero^{f69} relates, that the public affairs of every year were committed to writing by the Pontifex Maximus, or high priest, and published on a table, and set to view within doors, that the people might have an opportunity and be able to know them; yea, it was usual to hang up laws, approved and recorded, in tables of brass, in their market places, and in their temples, that^{f70} they might be seen and read; the same we call annals. In like manner the Jewish prophets used to write and expose their

prophecies publicly on tables, either in their own houses, or in the temple, that everyone that passed by might read them.

That he may run that readeth it; may run through the whole without any difficulty, without making any stop, being written in such large capital letters; and those cut so well, and made so plain, that a man might run it over at once with ease, or even read it as he was running; nor need he stop his pace, or stand to read. The Targum is,

“write the prophecy, and explain it in the book of the law, that he may hasten to obtain wisdom, whoever he is that reads in it.”

Ver. 3. *For the vision [is] yet for an appointed time*, etc.] Not the present vision only, but vision or prophecy in general: it was a doubt that arose in the minds of the prophet and other good men, upon the notice given that the Chaldeans would be raised up to the destruction of the Jews; that then the law of God would cease, his worship would not continue; vision and prophecy would be no more; it would be all over with the doctrine of the law and the prophets: now in answer to this, and to remove this doubt, they are assured that vision or prophecy should “yet”, or still, continue, and even “to the appointed time”; the time fixed for the continuance of it, notwithstanding the people of the Jews should be carried captive into another land: and accordingly so it was; there were prophets, as Daniel and Ezekiel, in the time of the captivity; and, after it, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; yea, the law and the prophets were until John; for vision and prophecy were to be sealed up by the Messiah, and not before; (see ^{<2166>}Luke 16:16 ^{<2102>}Daniel 9:24) it was true indeed with respect to the present vision or prophecy concerning the Messiah, that that was not to be fulfilled presently; there was some considerable time first to elapse; there was a time appointed for the accomplishment of it, and it would remain till that time, and then be most surely fulfilled; which would be before the sceptre departed from Judah, while the second temple was yet standing, and when Daniel’s seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, were come; which were the limited, determined, and appointed time for the Messiah’s coming, the time appointed of the Father, the fulness of time; so there was an appointed time for his coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him, to which the apostle applies these words, (^{<8107>}Hebrews 10:37) and also for his spiritual coming, to visit his people in a gracious way; there is a set time to favour Zion and her

children; as well as there is a day fixed for his second coming, or coming to judgment.

But at the end it shall speak, and not lie; or rather, “he shall speak”^{f71}; and so in the following clauses it should be rendered, not “it”, but “he”; and so the apostle has taught us to interpret it of a person, and not a thing, (^{<3107>}Hebrews 10:37) that is, “at the end” of the time appointed, or at the end of the Jewish state, both civil and ecclesiastic, the Messiah should appear, as he did, which is called the end of the world, (^{<6011>}1 Corinthians 10:11 ^{<3106>}Hebrews 10:26) when a new world began, the world to come, the Gospel dispensation, of which Christ is said to be the Father, in the Greek version of (^{<2306>}Isaiah 9:6) (see ^{<3105>}Hebrews 2:5) and being come, he shall “speak”; or, as it may be rendered, “at the end thereof” shall be “the speaker”, or “preacher”^{f72}; that shall publish and proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel; and this agrees with Christ, the Logos, or Word of God, the great Prophet that should be raised up in the church, the teacher sent of God, the Wonderful Counsellor, and faithful witness; who spoke out the whole mind and will of God; published the everlasting Gospel; delivered out the doctrines of grace and truth; and spoke such words of grace as never man did, and with such power and authority as the Scribes and Pharisees did not. Some render the words, “and he shall break forth as the morning”^{f73}; so the word is used in (^{<2107>}Song of Solomon 2:17 ^{<2106>}Song of Solomon 4:6) and so the Septuagint version, “he shall arise at the end”; like the rising sun: this agrees with Christ, the day spring from on high, and whose coming is said to be as the morning, (^{<4178>}Luke 1:78 ^{<1234>}2 Samuel 23:4 ^{<3103>}Hosea 6:3) and when he should thus appear, and exercise his prophetic office, he should “not lie”; this is the character of God himself, as opposed to a mere man, who is subject to lying and deceit; and suits well with Christ, who is truly God, and not a mere man; and answers to his character in prophecy and fact, that there was no guile in his mouth and lips, (^{<2304>}Isaiah 53:4 ^{<6122>}1 Peter 2:22) and fitly describes him as a preacher, who is truth itself; taught the way of God in truth; spoke the word of truth, the Gospel of our salvation; and no lie is of the truth; and who is infallible in all his doctrines, and does not and cannot deceive any; all his words are to be depended upon as faithful and true.

Though it tarry, wait for it; or “though he tarry, wait for him”; not that he really would or did tarry; but he might seem to do so, not coming so soon as the Old Testament saints expected, and as they wished for and desired; it was a long time from the first promise of him; and sometimes the saints

were ready to give it up, and their hearts to sink and faint, because it was seemingly deferred. This shows that this prophecy does not respect the Babylonish captivity; for that had no seeming delay, but, as soon as ever the seventy years were up, there was a deliverance from it; but the Messiah's coming was long expected, and seemed to be deferred, and the patience of the saints was almost wore out; but they are here encouraged, when this was the case, still to wait for him, as good old Simeon and others did, about the time of his coming; and so his spiritual and second coming should be waited patiently for, though they may seem to be delayed.

Because it will surely come, it will not tarry; or “for he that is to come”, or “is coming, will come”^{f74}, and not tarry”; beyond the appointed time. This is a periphrasis of the Messiah; for, being so often spoken of as to come, it became a description of him, “he that is to come”; (see ~~400B~~ Matthew 11:3) and as it was foretold he would come, so assuredly he would come, and not stay a moment longer than the time appointed of the Father; in which fulness of time God sent him, and he came, (~~400B~~ Galatians 4:3,4). The person here prophesied of is not Jeremiah, as Jarchi, but the Messiah; and this is acknowledged by some Jewish writers, ancient and modern; and removes the doubt and objection that might arise from the Chaldeans coming upon the Jews, and carrying them captive, as if the promise of the Messiah would fail, whereas it would not. In the Talmud^{f75}, they say,

“God does not renew his world till after seven thousand years; another says five thousand. R. Nathan says, this Scripture penetrates and descends into the abyss; i.e. fixes no particular time; “the vision is for an appointed time”, etc.; not as our Rabbins, who inquire the meaning of a time, and times, and half a time; what then is meant, “but at the end it shall speak”, and “not lie?” Let them burst that compute the times, who used to say when the time comes, and he cometh not, he will never come; but wait for him, as it is said, “if he tarry, wait for him”: perhaps you will say, we wait, but he does not wait; this may be an instruction to you what he says, “therefore the Lord waiteth to be gracious”, etc.”

Maimonides says^{f76}, their twelfth fundamental article of faith is, the days of the Messiah; that is, to believe, and be firmly persuaded, that he will come, nor will he tarry; “if he tarry, wait for him”: though, he observes, this Scripture does not fix the certain time; nor is it to be so expounded, so as to gather from thence the exact time of his coming. This they do not

choose to own, though it does, because the time is long ago elapsed. Abarbanel^{f77} owns that this vision is different from that in the preceding verse (~~300~~ Habakkuk 2:2), which concerns the second temple, but this another redemption; and would have it that the words may be explained thus, he that shall come will come at the time appointed, which is mentioned; and, after his coming, the King Messiah shall not tarry from coming to redeem you; which, though a wrong sense, shows his conviction of the prophecy belonging to the Messiah. So Abendana^{f78} says, our Rabbins understand this, “at the end it shall speak”, of the end of our redemption from this captivity in which we now are; and in this way it appears right to explain it, for the prophet was complaining of the prosperity of Nebuchadnezzar; and the Lord answers him, that he should write the vision of the destruction of Babylon, which should be at the end of seventy years; and said, do not wonder that I prolong to Babylon seventy years, for “yet the vision is for an appointed time”: as if he should say, yet there is a vision for times afar off, “and at the end it shall speak”: in all which there are plain traces of the sense the ancient synagogue put on this text, though now perverted, to favour their hypothesis of the Messiah being yet to come and save them.

Ver. 4. *Behold, his soul [which] is lifted up is not upright in him,* etc.] This and the following clause describe two sorts of persons differently affected to the Messiah, and the promise of his coming. Here it points at such as were “incredulous”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; that disbelieved his coming, and mocked and scoffed at the promise of it; as well as those that did not believe in him when he came, though he had all the characteristics of the Messiah; and damnation was the certain consequence of their unbelief. The proud and haughty Scribes and Pharisees are here plainly described, whose minds were elated with themselves; whose hearts were like bubbles, blown up, full of wind; whose souls swelled with pride and vanity, and a high conceit of themselves; of their merit and worth; of their holiness and works of righteousness; and treated those they thought below them in these things with the utmost disdain and contempt; and trusted in themselves, and to their own righteousness, to the great neglect of the true Messiah and his righteousness^{f79}. The word for “lifted up” has in it the signification of a hill, mountain, fortress, or tower; see (~~304~~ Isaiah 32:14 ~~308~~ Micah 4:8) as Aben Ezra observes. So R. Moses Kimchi interprets the passage,

“he whose soul is not right in him places himself in a fortress or tower, to set himself on high there from the enemy, and does not return to God, nor seek deliverance of him; but the righteous has no need to place himself on high in a fortress, for he shall live by his faith.”

Ophel was part of the hill of Zion, on which the temple was built; and Cocceius thinks there is a reference in the words to Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood: and in this sense the words aptly agree with the pharisaical Jews, who boasted of their temple, and gloried in it, and trusted in the service and sacrifices of it; and betook themselves to the observance of rites and ceremonies, and the traditions of their elders, and to their moral works of righteousness, for their justification and salvation, as their tower of safety, and place of defence; neglecting the Messiah, the Rock of salvation, the Rock of Israel, the munition of rocks, the strong hold and tower, where only safety and salvation are. The apostle, following the Greek version, renders the word in (~~308~~ Hebrews 10:38), “if any man draw back”, etc. and Deuteronomy Dieu^{f80} observes, that the word in the Arabic language signifies to neglect or withdraw the mind from a person or thing; and may be fitly applied to the same persons who neglected Christ, and the great salvation by him; hid their faces from him; would not look at him, nor converse with him, nor attend his ministry, nor suffer others to do it; they withdrew from his apostles and ministers, and the Christian churches, and persecuted them both in Judea and in the Gentile world; and many of the Jews that did make a profession, and joined themselves to Christian churches, after a time separated from them; being sensual, and not having the Spirit, went out from among them, not being truly of them, and forsook the assembling of themselves together with them; and to these the apostle applies the words in the aforementioned place. Now of every such person it may be said, “his soul is not upright in him”; either “in himself”, as the Vulgate Latin version, and so Kimchi; he is not a just man, not truly upright and righteous, though he may think he is, and may be thought so by others; yet he is not in the sight of God; his heart is not sincere; he has not the truth of grace in him; a right spirit is not created and renewed in him; he never was convinced by the Spirit of God of sin and righteousness, or he would not be thus elated with himself: his soul is not upright towards God; he seeks himself, and his own applause, in all he does, and not the honour and glory of God, and the magnifying of his grace and goodness; he has no right notions of the righteousness of God, and of his holy law; nor

of Christ, his person, and offices; nor indeed of himself. Or “his soul is not right in him”^{f81}; that is, in Christ, who was to come, nor when he was come; that is, he is not rightly, sincerely, and heartily affected to him; he has no true knowledge of him, real desire unto him, hearty affection for him, or faith in him, or regard unto him, his Gospel and his ordinances; all which was most clearly true of the carnal Jews, and is of all self-righteous persons. The apostle, in (^{<310B>}Hebrews 10:38) seems to understand it of the soul of God, that that, or he, was not affected to, and pleased with, persons of such a character and complexion; (see ^{<2141>}Luke 14:11 ^{<2184>}Luke 18:14).

But the just shall live by faith; the “just” man is the reverse of the former; he is one that believed in the coming of Christ, and believed in him when come; who has no overweening opinion of himself, and of his own righteousness; nor does he trust in it for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; but in the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, from whence he is denominated a just man: and such an one “shall live”, not merely a corporeal life, for righteous men die as well as others; nor an eternal life, though such shall live this life, and have it now in some sense, for this life is enjoyed not by faith, but by sight; but a spiritual life, begun in regeneration, and maintained by the Spirit and grace of God; such live a life of justification on Christ, of sanctification from him, and of communion with him; they live cheerfully, comfortably, and delightfully, a life of peace, joy, and comfort; which is greatly the sense of the word here, as in (^{<4225>}Psalms 22:26) (^{<251D>}Isaiah 55:2) and this is “by his faith”; his own faith, and not another’s; which though for its kind is the same in all, alike precious faith, yet as to its acting is peculiar to one, and is not another’s: or by the faith of God; that is, by that faith which is the gift of God, and of his operation, and has him for its object; such live by faith upon a promising God, and so live comfortably: or by the faith of Christ, promised to come in the preceding verse (^{<311B>}Habakkuk 2:3); by that faith, of which he is the object, author, and finisher: just men live not upon their faith, but by it on Christ, as crucified for them, as the bread of life, and as the Lord their righteousness; and so have joy and peace in believing. There is a different accentuation of this clause. Some put the stop after “just”, and read the words, “the just, by his faith shall live”; that is, he who is a just man, in an evangelical sense, he shall live by his faith, in the sense before explained; not that he is a just man that lives righteously and unblamably before men; but who lives a life of faith on Christ, and whose hope of eternal life is not founded upon his holy life and conversation, but upon the

righteousness of Christ, which he by faith lives upon; for neither eternal life, nor the hope of it, are to be ascribed to faith in itself, but to the object of it. But the most correct Hebrew copies unite, by the accent “merca”, the words “by his faith”, to the “just man”; and so they are to be read, “the just by his faith, he shall live”; that is, the man who is just, not by the works of the law, but by faith in the righteousness of Christ, or through the righteousness of Christ received by faith; for it is not faith itself, or the act of believing, that is a man’s justifying righteousness, or is imputed to him for righteousness, or denominates him righteous, but the righteousness of Christ he lays hold on by faith; and such a man shall live both spiritually and eternally. And this manner of accenting the words is approved of by Wasmuth^{f82}, and by Reinbeck^{f83}. Burkius, a late annotator thinks, it might be safest to repeat the word that is controverted, and read it thus, “the just in” or “by his faith”: “in” or “by his faith he shall live”; which takes in both senses, and either of which rightly explained may be admitted. Junius, with whom Van Till agrees, is of opinion that respect is had to the example of Abraham, of whom we read (^{<0156}Genesis 15:6) and “he believed in the Lord”, and “he counted it to him for righteousness”; not his faith, but the object of it, or what he believed, the promised seed. And so the ancient Jews compare this faith with Abraham’s; for, mentioning the text in (^{<0156}Genesis 15:6), say they^{f84},

“this is the faith by which the Israelites inherit, of which the Scripture says, “and the just by his faith shall live”.”

And they have also a saying^{f85}, that the law, and all the precepts of it, delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, are reduced by Habakkuk to one, namely this, “the just by his faith shall live”; which is true, if rightly understood; for the righteousness of Christ, the just man becomes so by, and which by faith he lives upon, is answerable to the whole law. The apostle produces this passage three times to prove that the righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel is to faith; that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God; that the just man shall live, and not die; shall not draw back to perdition, but believe to the saving of the soul, (^{<0117}Romans 1:17 ^{<0111}Galatians 3:11 ^{<0108}Hebrews 10:38,39) which shows that it belongs to Gospel times and things. The Targum of the whole is,

“behold, the wicked say all these things “shall [not] be”, but the righteous shall remain in their truth.”

Kimchi interprets the former part of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar his son; and the latter part of the Israelites carried into captivity with Zedekiah; but very wrongly.

Ver. 5. *Yea also, because he transgresseth by wine*, etc.] Or rather, “how much less” or “more”^{f86}, wine dealing treacherously”: or “a man of wine”, as Aben Ezra supplies it; that is, a winebibber, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: and the sense in connection with the preceding verse (~~3124~~ Habakkuk 2:4) is, if a Jew, elated with his works of righteousness, his soul is not right in him, “how much less” a drunken, treacherous, proud, and ambitious heathen? if the Scribes and Pharisees, who expected the coming of the Messiah, yet withdrew from him, and opposed themselves unto him when come, “how much more” will such persons set themselves against him and his interest, thus described? by whom are meant, not the Babylonian monarchs, Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar and the Chaldeans, as usually interpreted, though there are many things in the account applicable to them; but this is breaking the thread of the prophecy, which carries on the account of the enemies of Christ, and of his kingdom, from his first to his second coming; whereas to interpret this prophecy of the Chaldeans is to go back to times before the first coming of Christ; nor does it seem necessary to say anything more concerning them, since the people of God might be satisfied that these would be in their turn destroyed, and they delivered from them; and that they, the Jews, could not be cut off as a people, since the promise of the Messiah, as springing from them, is firmly established; and it is so strongly asserted, that he should come at the appointed time, and not tarry: after which the prophet goes on to observe two different sorts of people among the Jews; one sort proud and vain glorious, who opposed themselves to Christ when he came; the other sort true believers in him, who lived by faith upon him: so things would stand among the Jews when Christ came, and so they did; there was a separation among them on his account: next the prophet proceeds to observe another sort of enemies to Christ and his interest among the heathens, which was not to be wondered at, and therefore introduced by a comparative particle, “how much more” or “less”; and who must be removed to make way for his kingdom and glory in the latter day, manifestly pointed at in (~~3124~~ Habakkuk 2:14,20) now who can these be but the Romans, both Pagan and Papal in succession? and with these and their rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, do the characters given as well agree as with the Babylonian monarchy, and the Chaldeans, or better and therefore, after Cocceius and

Van Till I shall choose to interpret the whole of them; and it is well known that several of the Roman emperors were greatly given to luxury and intemperance, the first character they stand described by in the text. Tiberius was greatly addicted to this vice; and, because of his greediness after wine^{f87}, used to be called Biberius Caldius Mero, instead of Tiberius Claudius Nero; his successor Caligula spent the immense riches Tiberius had gathered together in less than a year's time in luxury and intemperance^{f88} and Claudius, that succeeded him, scarce ever went out of his doors but he was drunk^{f89}; and Nero, who came after him to the empire, was of unusual luxury and sumptuousness, as the historian says^{f90}; he used to keep on his banquets from the middle of the day to the middle of the night^{f91}; to say nothing of Domitian, Commodus, and other emperors that followed after them: and these men were deceitful and treacherous, both to their friends and enemies; and it is no wonder that such as these should oppose themselves to the kingdom and interest of Christ, as they did. Kimchi interprets this of Nebuchadnezzar; and Jarchi of Belshazzar; and most interpreters think it refers to his drinking in the vessels of the temple, (~~2ND~~ Daniel 5:2,3):

[he is] a proud man; the Roman emperors were excessively proud, like the unjust judge, neither feared God, nor regarded man; nay, set up themselves for gods, and required divine worship to be given them. Caius Caligula claimed divine majesty to himself, and set himself up to be worshipped among his brother gods; he built a temple to his own deity, and appointed priests and sacrifices; and placed a golden image of himself in it, and clothed it every day with such a garment as he himself wore^{f92}; he also set up his own image in the temple at Jerusalem. Nero suffered himself to be called lord and god by Tiridates king of the Armenians, with bended knees, and hands lift up to heaven. Domitian and Aurelianus took the same titles as Nero did; and Dioclesian would be worshipped as a god, and called himself the brother of the sun and moon; and no marvel that such men as these should be enemies to Christ, and persecutors of his people:

neither keepeth at home; or “dwells not in the fold”^{f93}; in the sheepfold of Christ, in his church, being none of his sheep, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel; and so it denotes a infidel, an heathen; a fit character for the Pagan emperors, who had no habitation in the house of God. Kimchi interprets it of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom not being continued; or of his being driven from his habitation, his palace, from

among men, to live with beasts; but it is the character, and not the punishment, of the person that is here pointed at:

who enlargeth his desire as hell, and [is] as death, and cannot be satisfied; death and the grave, though such vast numbers are continually slain by the one, and laid in the other, yet are never satisfied; (see ^{<1771>}Proverbs 27:20 ^{<1785>}Proverbs 30:15,16). This describes the insatiable thirst of the Roman emperors after honour, riches, and universal monarchy; who were never satisfied with what they obtained:

but gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all people; that is, subdued them, and made them provinces of the Roman empire, and tributary to it, even almost all the then known world; hence the Roman empire is called the whole world, (^{<1800>}Luke 2:1) so Agrippa, in his orations to the Jews, mentions all nations as subject to the Romans^{f94}.

Ver. 6. *Shall not all these take up a parable against him*, etc.] A proverbial expression, a short sentence, a laconic speech, delivered in a few words, which contains much in them concerning the vices of these emperors, and imprecating judgments upon them for them; took up and expressed by the nations brought into subjection unto them, and especially by the Christians in those nations spoiled and persecuted by them:

and a taunting proverb against him; or, “whose explanation are riddles to him”^{f95}; the proverb, when explained, would be a riddle to him, which he could not understand, nor would give any credit to; taking it not to belong to him or them, and in which they had no concern; though afterwards would find they had, to their great mortification:

and say, Woe to him that increaseth [that which is] not his! substance or goods, not his own, as the Targum explains it; which they had no right unto, nor property in, but were another’s; and therefore guilty of great injustice in taking it from them, and might justly expect vengeance would pursue them for it; such were the goods they spoiled the Christians of for not worshipping their idols, and for professing and abiding by the Christian religion:

how long? that is, how long shall they go on increasing their substance by such unjust and unlawful methods? how long shall they keep that which they have so unjustly got? this suggests as if it was a long time, which, as Cocceius observes, does not so well agree with the Babylonian as the Roman empire, which stood much longer:

and to him that ladeth himself with thick clay: such is gold and silver, no other than yellow and white dust and dirt; and may be called clay, because dug out of the earth, as that; and as clay is defiling, so are gold and silver, when ill gotten, or ill used, or the heart set too much upon them; and as that is very ponderous and troublesome to carry, so an abundance of riches bring much care with them, and often are very troublesome to the owners of them, and frequently hinder their sleep, rest, and ease; and as clay when it sticks to the heels hinders walking, so riches, when the affections are too much set on them, are great obstacles in the way of true religion and godliness; hence our Lord observes, “how hard it is them, that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God”, (~~411B~~ Mark 10:24) they are even a weight, a clog to good men. The phrase seems to point at the meanness of them, as well as the hurt that sometimes comes by them, and the contempt they should be had in, in comparison of the true riches; hence, agreeable to this way of speaking, a good man Drusius makes mention of used to call gold “yellow earth”: and a certain Greek writer^{f96} says gold is ashes, and so is silver. The word used is a compound; and, as Kimchi observes, signifies an abundance of riches; but our countryman Mr. Fuller^{f97} chooses rather to render it an “abundance of pledges”; and thinks it has respect to the many pledges which the person here spoken of, by whom he supposes is meant the Babylonian monarch, had in an unjust manner took of several nations, and heaped up like an usurer; and which should in due time be taken from him, by those whom he had plundered of them: but this expresses the greedy desire of the Romans after money, as well as the unlawful methods they took to acquire wealth, and the vast sums they became masters of, so that they were even loaded with it; but, getting it in an unrighteous manner, it brought the curses and imprecations of the people upon them, especially those they defrauded of it. Joseph Kimchi, as his son David observes, interprets it,

“he shall make thick clay lie heavy on his grave;”

and it was a custom with the Romans, as Drusius^{f98} relates, that when one imprecated evil upon another, he used to wish a heavy load of earth upon him, that is, when he was dead; as, on the contrary, when one was wished well after death, it was desired he might have a light earth upon him: so Julian the emperor, speaking of Constantius, says^{f99},

“when he is become happy, or departs out of this life, may the earth be light upon him;”

which is wishing all felicity, and freedom from punishment; whereas the contrary, to have a load of earth or thick clay, is an imprecation of the heaviest punishment.

Ver. 7. *Shall not they rise up suddenly that shall bite thee*, etc.] Or, “thy usurers”, or “creditors”^{f100}, as some render it; the Christians, whose money, goods, and substance, they had spoiled them of, but now should be repaid with great usury and gain; these, that is, their princes and emperors, as Constantine and Theodosius, rose up suddenly, and conquered the heathen emperors, and took away their power and authority from them, and their wealth and riches, and gave them to the Christians, what they and those under them had plundered them of:

and awake that shall vex thee, or “move thee”^{f101}; the emperor, from the throne of the empire; and other subordinate magistrates from their places of dignity, trust, and profit; the priests out of their temples; and change the face of things everywhere; and which is expressed in language agreeable to this, in (^{¶¶¶¶}Revelation 6:14), and has respect to the same times and things, “and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their place”; which is to be understood of the fall of the Pagan Roman empire:

and thou shalt be for booties unto them? the wealth and riches found in the Roman empire, as it fell into the hands of Constantine, were converted to the use of the Christians for the building of their temples, and the maintenance of their ministers, the relief of their poor, and for the reparation of losses others had sustained under the persecutions: thus the Christian emperors rose up at once, and exerted themselves; and who before seemed to be asleep awoke, and seized upon the empire, and the riches of it, and divided the spoil among themselves and their people.

Ver. 8. *Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the people shall spoil thee*, etc.] Those that survived the persecutions of the Roman emperors; those that were left of the great numbers put to death by them; those under Constantine rose up, and by just retaliation spoiled them of all their power and wealth:

because of men’s blood; the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, of those under the altar, whose blood cried for vengeance, (^{¶¶¶}Revelation 6:9,10), which was shed under the ten bloody persecutions: or, “because of the blood of a man”: of Adam^{f102}, as it may be rendered; the blood of

Christ the second Adam, which, though shed at the instance of the Jews, yet by the order of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor:

and [for] the violence of the land, and of the city, and of all that dwell therein: that is, for the violence and injuries done to the land of Israel and city of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants thereof, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; and which were done by the Romans to those places and people, under Titus Vespasian, when he invaded the country of Judea, and made it desolate; besieged and took Jerusalem, and burnt it with fire; destroyed great numbers of its inhabitants, and carried them captive, and sent great multitudes of them to the mines; as well as for what were done to the Christians in every country and city where they dwelt; and to the city of the living God, the church, the heavenly Jerusalem, and the citizens of it, who were used by them in a very cruel and inhuman manner, and for which vengeance would be, and was, taken upon them.

Ver. 9. *Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house,* etc.]

The bishops of Rome, being enriched by the donations of Constantine, were not satisfied, but coveted more; these are the greedy dogs Isaiah speaks of, that could never have enough, (²⁵⁶¹Isaiah 56:11) but were still seeking and gaping after more for themselves and families, and for their own house or church; which, from the time of their apostasy, became their own house, in distinction from, and in opposition to, the house or true church of God; and of those covetous bishops, or Rome Papal, are these and the following words to (²⁵⁶²Habakkuk 2:9-14) to be understood:

that he may set his nest on high: in allusion to birds, especially the eagle, which builds its nest in high places, that it may be secure from any that would otherwise disturb it, or take it away: so these covetous and ambitious bishops, getting great wealth and riches, and large dominions into their hands, secular power and authority, as well as ecclesiastical, set themselves up, and advanced their see and seat, not only above all other bishops, but even above the kings and princes of the earth, above all that are called gods, (²⁵⁶³2 Thessalonians 2:4) and by such means endeavoured to gain their point, the main thing they had in view:

that he may be delivered from the power of evil; that they might be safe and secure against all worldly power, and be out of the jurisdiction of the princes of the earth, and in no danger of being dispossessed or crushed by them.

Ver. 10. *Thou hast consulted shame to thy house*, etc.] Instead of bringing real honour and glory to their church, and that into the esteem of men, by such covetousness, ambition, and arrogance, they brought it into shame and disgrace, especially with all good men; and which they as effectually did as if they had studied it, and as if this was the thing they had in view in all their schemes and measures: this they procured

by cutting off many people; by making war with the saints, and killing great multitudes of them with the sword, as the Waldenses and Albigenes, and many of the Protestants by fire and faggot; and also by cutting off all such they called heretics and schismatics, with their anathemas and excommunications; neither of which were to their honour, but to their eternal infamy:

and hast sinned [against] thy soul; and exposed it to eternal damnation; that is, they sinned against the light and dictates of their own consciences, which is an aggravation of their sin, and might justly cause shame and confusion of mind.

Ver. 11. *For the stone shall cry out of the wall*, etc.] Of their own house; some from among themselves, that truly feared God, seeing the evil practices done among them, and abhorring them, such as their covetousness, ambition, murders, excommunications, and anathemas, should cry out against them in their sermons and writings; such as were lively stones, eminent for religion and godliness, as Bernard, Wickliff, Huss, and others:

and the beam out of the timber shall answer it; such as were of eminent note in things civil, as beams and rafters in the house; emperors and governors of provinces, who observed the complaints of godly ministers and people, answered to them, and checked the evil bishops and clergy, and hindered them in the pursuit of their schemes, and so brought them to shame and confusion. Aben Ezra observes, that the word signifies the hard place in the wood; or the harder part of it, the knotty part, or the knot in it; and which is confirmed by the use of the word in the Arabic language, as Hottinger^{f103} observes; and so may have respect to such persons as were raised up at the beginning of the Reformation, who were of rough dispositions, and hardy spirits, fit to go through the work they were called to; such as Luther, and others, who answered and were correspondent to the doctrines of those before mentioned, who preceded them: for not a beetle, as the Septuagint version, which breeds, and lives not in wood, and

so represents heretics, as Jerom; much better, as some other Greek versions, a “worm”; though rather the word may signify a brick, as it is used by the Talmudists^{f104} for one of a span and a half, which answers well enough to a stone in the former clause; nor is it unusual with heathen writers^{f105} to represent stones and timbers speaking, when any criminal silence is kept; (see ^{<294>}Luke 19:40).

Ver. 12. *Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!*] This is what the stone and beam should say, if others were silent. The town and city are the church of Rome, mystical Babylon, the great city, called spiritually Egypt and Sodom; the builder of this is the pope of Rome, the bishops of it in succession, who built it with blood: the pope of Rome received his title as head of the church from Phocas, that murdered the emperor Mauritius; the foundation of the church of Rome is the blood of the saints, shed in persecutions and wars; hence she is said to be drunk with the blood of them, and to have the blood of prophets and saints found in her, (^{<617>}Revelation 17:5 ^{<618>}Revelation 18:24) and it is established by unjust exactions of tribute from all countries subject to it, and by indulgences, processions, and various methods taken to extort money from the people, to support its pageantry, pomp, and grandeur; but there is a “woe” denounced against such that are concerned herein, and which will take place in due time, nor can it be awarded, as follows:

Ver. 13. *Behold, [is it] not of the Lord of hosts?* etc.] That which follows; the judgments of God upon the bloody city, which they that labour to prevent labour in vain. So the Targum,

“lo, strong and mighty blows or judgments come from the Lord of hosts;”

the mighty God, the Lord of armies, whose hand when stretched out none can turn back; he does what he pleases, and none can hinder him; when the decree is gone forth from him, it is in vain to attempt to stop it:

that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? words of the same import, and expressed in much the same language, were used of the destruction of literal Babylon by fire, and of the vain attempts of the Chaldeans in labouring and wearying themselves to quench it, (^{<251>}Jeremiah 51:58) and here of mystical Babylon, and the vanity of the people of it, in labouring to support it by their wars, for recovering the holy land from the Turks, and against the Waldenses,

Hussites, and Bohemians; for, notwithstanding all their successes, and the vast number of persons slain by them, yet they could never prevail so as to root out the kingdom and interest of Christ: and their city and state shall fall, and they will not be able to uphold it; and a considerable blow and shock it received at the time of the Reformation; and this great city Babylon will be destroyed by fire, which its best friends cannot prevent; even the ten kings that have given their kingdom to the beast will hate the whore, and burn her with fire; and those antichristian kings that will continue friends to her, when they see her burning, will find it in vain to attempt to help her, and will stand afar off lamenting her case, (^{<6676>}Revelation 17:16 ^{<6680>}Revelation 18:9,10). Kimchi begins here to see that this section and paragraph does not belong to Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans, but to the times of the Messiah; and interprets it of the vengeance of God that shall come upon all the nations that come along with Gog against Jerusalem in the latter day; but he is mistaken: it designs what will come on mystical Babylon; so Abarbinel owns, that, from (^{<3922>}Habakkuk 2:12,13), what is said belongs to the Roman empire, which he calls the kingdom of Edom.

Ver. 14. *For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord*, etc.] Of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; of the glory of his person, as the Son of God, and truly God; which is essential to him, and underived; the same with his Father's, and what transcends the glory of all created beings; and of the glory of his office as Mediator, which itself is glorious and honourable: and this his glory lies in his fitness for it; in his faithful performance of it, and the honour given him by his Father upon it; as well as in the fulness of grace in him, which makes him appear glorious to his people; and who are continually giving glory to him as the Lord their righteousness, by exercising faith on his righteousness, and glorying in it; and as their only Saviour and Redeemer, by looking to him, and believing in him as such; and as the only Head of the church, by owning and holding to him; and as the only Mediator between God and man, by making use of him for that purpose, and not angels and saints; and as their Prophet, by hearkening to his voice, yielding a subjection to his Gospel, and submission to his ordinances; and as their Priest, by dealing with his blood and sacrifice for the atonement and pardon of their sins; and as their King, by obedience to his commands; and who will now take to himself his great power, and reign gloriously before his saints; the glory of his kingly office will be now seen and known, when this prophecy shall have its full accomplishment,

and which seems greatly intended. The “knowledge” of all this glory will not be a mere notional and speculative one, but special and spiritual; an experimental knowledge, accompanied with affection, approbation, confidence, and appropriation: and “the earth will be filled with” this; that is, the inhabitants of it: this had an accomplishment in part in the times of the apostles, when they were sent into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature, and diffused the savour of the knowledge of Christ everywhere; and had a further accomplishment in the times of Constantine, when the whole Roman empire, or all the world, became Christians; and again at the time of the Reformation, when many nations, especially in Europe, were freed from Popish darkness by the pure light of the Gospel; but will have its final accomplishment in the latter day; and which will bring on the destruction of antichrist, and seems here intended; since this is given as a reason why it will be all labour in vain to attempt the prevention of it. It will be by means of the Gospel spreading the knowledge of Christ everywhere that antichrist will fall; this is the brightness of Christ’s coming, with which he will be destroyed; hence the angel, with the everlasting Gospel to preach to all nations, and with whose glory the whole earth will be lightened, is represented as preceding the fall of Babylon, and as the means of it; (see ^{<3118>}2 Thessalonians 2:8 ^{<6416>}Revelation 14:6-8 ^{<6811>}Revelation 18:1,2) and the great spread and large abundance of this knowledge communicated by the preaching of the Gospel is thus illustrated and exemplified,

as the waters cover the sea; expressing the nature of Gospel doctrines, revealing the glory of Christ and his grace, which, like waters, refresh and make fruitful; and the force and power of them, bearing down all before them, like an inundation of water when it breaks its banks; and likewise the depths of them, these being the deep things of God; and more especially the general spread and large abundance of them, and of the knowledge conveyed by them; which will fill the earth, as the waters of the sea fill up and cover the vast chasm prepared for them; see (^{<2310>}Isaiah 11:9).

Ver. 15. *Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink*, etc.] Before the full accomplishment of the above prophecy concerning the abundance of the knowledge of the Lord in the earth, and before the utter destruction of antichrist; between that and the Reformation, when it had its fulfilment in part; the following practices inveighed against would be used, as we find they are, and for which the man of sin and his followers will be punished: one of which is expressed by a man’s “giving his neighbour drink”; which is

a commendable action, when drink is given to a person in want to quench his thirst, or in sorrowful and distressed circumstances to refresh and cheer him; but when this is done to intoxicate him, and draw him into uncleanness, it is an evil one; and which is the sense of the phrase here, as appears by the “woe” denounced, and by what follows; and is to be understood, not in a literal sense, but in a figurative one; and is expressive of the various artful methods and alluring ways used by the Papists, especially the Jesuits, after the Reformation, with the Protestants, to forsake their religion, and to draw them into the superstition and idolatry of the church of Rome; and which are in the New Testament signified by “the wine of her fornication”, with which the kings, nations, and inhabitants of the earth, are made drunk, (~~667D~~ Revelation 17:2) crying up the devotion and religion of their church, its antiquity, purity, holiness, and unity; pretending great love to the souls of men, that they seek nothing but their spiritual good; promising them great advantages, temporal and spiritual, worldly riches and honour, and sure and certain salvation within the pale of their church, without which they say there is none; and by such means they have intoxicated many princes, kingdoms, and multitudes of people, since the Reformation; and have drawn them off from the profession of the Protestant religion, and brought them back to Popery again, as in Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Germany, France, and other places; and these methods they are now taking in all Protestant countries, and in ours, and that with great success, as is notorious, and time will more abundantly show; but there is a “woe” lies against them for it:

that puttest thy bottle to [him]; giving him not only a glass or cup at a time, but a whole bottle to drink off at once, in order to inebriate him. The word is by some translated “thy gall”, or “thy poison”,^{f106}; which fitly enough expresses the poisonous doctrines of the church of Rome, which men insensibly imbibe, infused in her wine of fornication, or drink in through the alluring and ensnaring methods taken. It properly signifies “heat” or “wrath”. The Targum is,

“that pours it with heat, that he may drink, and be inebriated.”

The Syriac version is,

“woe to him that gives his neighbour to drink the dregs of fury.”

The words may be truly rendered, “adding thy wrath”,^{f107}; that is, to the alluring and enticing methods before mentioned, adding menaces, wrathful

words, and furious persecutions: and this the Papists do where they can; when good words and fair speeches will not prevail, and they can not gain over proselytes with flattery, deceit, and lying, they threaten them with racks and tortures, with prisons and galleys, and death itself in various shapes, to force men into their communion; and which they have put in execution in many places, in Bohemia, Hungary, and in France even to this day; and this is what in the New Testament is called “the wine of the wrath of her fornication”, (~~64B~~ Revelation 14:8 ~~68B~~ Revelation 18:3):

and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness! as Ham did on his father’s nakedness when in such circumstances: all the above methods are taken in order to intoxicate them, deprive them of the use of their reason, as is the case of a drunken man; and so bring them to believe, with an implicit faith, as the church believes; to believe things contrary to reason; to give into the spiritual whoredom and idolatry of that church, as men when drunk are easily drawn into uncleanness; to cast off their profession of the true religion, as a garment is cast off, as men when drunk are apt to do; and particularly to reject the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, which is the only robe to cover the nakedness of men, and receive the doctrine of merit and justification by works; in short, to apostatize wholly from the religion they have professed, and join in communion with the whore of Rome, that so they may look upon their apostasy, which is their nakedness, with the utmost pleasure and delight.

Ver. 16. *Thou art filled with shame for glory*, etc.] This is said by the Lord to the man that gives his neighbour drink to intoxicate him, that he may draw him into uncleanness, and please himself with it; who, instead of being filled with the glory of the Lord, and the knowledge of it, as the earth is before said to be, such are filled with shameful doctrines and abominable practices, as those of the church of Rome are; and instead of seeking the glory of God, and the honour of their neighbours, they are satiated with the shameful spectacle of their apostasy, they have been the instruments of; and yet, instead of taking shame to themselves, as they ought to do, they glory in their shame; count it an honour they have been the instruments of bringing them into such uncleanness and idolatry; and glut themselves with the delightful sight; which in the esteem of God, was filling themselves with shame, instead of bringing any glory to him, to themselves, or their neighbours; and therefore should severely smart for it:

drink thou also: of another cup, the cup “of the wine of the wrath of God”; as a just retaliation for giving to others “the wine of wrath of fornication” to drink, and to intoxicate men with; which will be given to mystical Babylon at the time she comes into remembrance before God, or when the time to punish her is come, and to all the followers and worshippers of the beast; (see ^{<6140>}Revelation 14:10 ^{<6169>}Revelation 16:19):

and let thy foreskin be uncovered; in retaliation for uncovering the nakedness of others, and looking with pleasure on it; by which it will appear that the men here spoken of, that take all the above methods to draw or force others into the communion of their church, are no other than heathens; their religion consisting greatly of Gentilism; or what has a very great likeness to it; hence the Papists are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles; (see ^{<9016>}Psalm 10:16 ^{<6112>}Revelation 11:2):

the cup of the Lord’s right hand shall be turned unto thee; who, in their turn, shall drink of it, when his right hand, in which it is, shall reach it out; for there is no resisting the power of that; when he gives the orders to drink it, they must; and this cup in his right hand is a cup of red wine, of the wrath, fury, and indignation of God, the dregs of which these wicked men must wring out, and drink up; (see ^{<1978>}Psalm 75:8). It is no unusual thing in Scripture for the wrath, vengeance, and judgments of God to be represented by a cup, as in (^{<2517>}Isaiah 51:17) (^{<2425>}Jeremiah 25:15-17):

and shameful spewing [shall be] on thy glory: signifying that they should be like a man intoxicated with wine, that vomits it up again; and which, falling on his fine clothes, spoils the glory of them: so when this cup of wrath and vengeance should be given unto them, and they be made to drink of it, they should be so full of it, that all their glory should be covered with shame; or all their glorious things should be spoiled, and they deprived of all their riches and honours, their titles and grandeur; the magnificence of their temples, altars, idols, and vestments, etc.

Ver. 17. *For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee*, etc.] Lebanon was a mountain on the borders of the land of Israel, from whence cedar wood was brought, of which the temple was built, and for that reason is sometimes so called, as in (^{<3107>}Zechariah 11:1) and so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it,

“the violence of the house of the sanctuary shall cover thee;”

and this was a type of the church of Christ, the violence of which is that which is offered to it, and which it suffers; and designs all the injuries, oppressions, and persecutions of it by the Papists; who shall be surrounded with the judgments of God, and covered with his wrath and vengeance for the violence done to his people, as a man is covered with a garment: or else the sense is, that the same, or a like judgment, should come upon them, as did on Lebanon, or the material temple of Jerusalem, which with great force and violence destroyed it; as that was consumed by fire for the sins of the Jews in rejecting Christ and persecuting his people, so shall Rome be burnt with fire for the opposition of the inhabitants of it to Christ, and the injuries they have done to his church and people:

and the spoil of beasts, [which] made them afraid; or, “the spoil of the beasts” shall cover thee, which “made them afraid”; we read of two beasts, one rising out of the sea, and the other out of the earth; and both design the pope of Rome in different capacities, as considered in his secular and ecclesiastical power; and the spoil he has made of those that oppose him, the calamities of fire and sword he has brought upon them, are what have greatly terrified the sheep of Christ; but for all the spoil and havoc he has made, the judgments of God shall come upon him on all sides, and utterly destroy him; the beast and false prophet shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone; (see ^{<613>}Revelation 13:1,11 ^{<617>}Revelation 17:8 ^{<621>}Revelation 19:20):

because of men’s blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein; the same that is said in (^{<318>}Habakkuk 2:8) and here repeated, as respecting another body of men, guilty of the same or like crimes: there Rome Pagan, concerned in the crucifixion of Christ, the desolation of the land of Judea, and city of Jerusalem, and their inhabitants, as well as in persecuting the saints, the citizens of the church of God; here Rome Papal, where our Lord has been crucified again, and his blood, and the efficacy of it, set at nought; the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus shed in great abundance, and violent persecutions of the churches of Christ, and the members of them; for all which the above judgments shall come upon them; (see ^{<618>}Revelation 11:8 ^{<624>}Revelation 18:24).

Ver. 18. *What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it,* etc.] The graven images the church of Rome enjoins the worship of; the images of the Trinity, of Christ, of the Virgin Mary, of angels and saints departed, and which are still continued since the Reformation; but of

what profit and advantage are they? they may be profitable to the graver, who is paid for graving them; and the metal or matters of which they are made, if sold, and converted to another use, may turn to account; but as deities, and worshipped as such, they are of no profit to them that worship them; they can not hear their prayers, nor answer them; can not bestow any favours on them, and deliver them out of any distress; and particularly can not save them from the judgments before denounced:

the molten image, and a teacher of lies: nor is a molten image any ways profitable, which is made of liquid matter, gold or silver melted and poured into a mould, from whence it receives its form: it may be profitable to the founder, and the metal to the owner, if put to another use; but, as a god, is of no service; and both the graven and molten image, the one and the other, each of them is “a teacher of lies”, and so unprofitable; if they are laymen’s books, as they are said to be, they do not teach them truth; they do not teach them what God is in his nature and perfections; what Christ is in his person and offices; what angels are, who are incorporeal; nor the saints, they neither describe the shape and features of their body, nor express their characters, minds, or manners; they teach men to believe lies, and to worship false deities, as they are. So the Targum renders it, a false deity; which imposes on men, and therefore cannot profit them: or this may be understood of an idolatrous priest, as Aben Ezra; as the idol itself cannot profit, so neither can the priest that teaches men such lies as to worship the idol, and put trust in it:

that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? or, “whilst making dumb idols”^{f108}; which is great stupidity indeed! that while a man is graving an image, or casting an idol, which are lifeless senseless things, that can neither move nor speak, yea, are his workmanship, yet puts his trust and confidence in them, that they can do him service he needs, help him in distress, and save him out of his troubles; what profit can be expected from these, though ever so nicely framed, when he considers they are of his own framing, and that they are idols, which are nothing in the world, as the word^{f109} here used signifies; and dumb ones, which can give no answer to the requests of their votaries? The Targum is,

“idols in whom there is no profit.”

Ver. 19. *Woe to him that saith to the wood, Awake*, etc.] That saith to a wooden image, let him go by what name he will; saint such an one, or such an one; awake, arise, exert thyself on our behalf; deliver us from present

danger; save us from our enemies; or pray and intercede for us, that we may be delivered and saved, as the Papists do; addressing a block of wood as they would God himself, or as his people do, (^(~~1423~~)Psalm 44:23). This must be very displeasing and detestable to God, and therefore a woe is threatened to such idol worshippers: who also say

to the dumb stone, Arise; to the idol of stone, as the Targum; the stone statue, an image made of stone, such as the Papists have even of wood, and of stone, as well as of gold, and silver, and brass, (^(~~1420~~)Revelation 9:20) and so stupid as to say to such stocks and stones, arise, stand up, and help us:

it shall teach; the stone itself would teach them better, would they but consider what it is, look upon it, and handle it, when they would find it to be a mere stone, and no deity: or, “shall it teach?” so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; no, it cannot teach any true doctrine, or direct to right worship; it cannot teach men their duty, or where they may have help; it is a dumb idol; it cannot teach men the nature of God, and the knowledge of him; or instruct in his mind and will; or inform of things secret or future:

it [is] laid over with gold and silver; it is made of stone, and covered with gold and silver; how should it teach?

and [there is] no breath at all in the midst of it; or, “no spirit”^{f110}; so far from having the spirit of divinity in it, or the Spirit of God, that it has not the spirit of a man in it, nor even the spirit of a brute creature; it has not so much as animal breath, and so no life, motion, or activity in it; and therefore must be quite unprofitable to the worshipper of it; incapable of teaching those who apply to it; and they must be stupid that do it, and most righteously bring themselves under the displeasure and wrath of God, and expose themselves to the woe here denounced against such persons.

Ver. 20. *But the Lord [is] in his holy temple*, etc.] Not in graven and molten images; not in idols of wood and stone, covered with gold and silver; but in heaven, the habitation of his holiness, the place of his residence, where he is seen and worshipped by the holy angels and glorified saints; and from whence he surveys all the children of men, and their actions; observes the folly and stupidity of idol worshippers; and hears and answers the prayers of his own people: or this intends his church, which is his temple, sanctified by him, and set apart for his service, worship, and glory: here he grants his gracious presence to those who worship him in spirit and in truth; and here he will appear as King of saints, in a most

glorious manner, when these several woes before mentioned have taken place; as on Rome Pagan already, and in part on Rome Papal at the Reformation, so completely on it, and all worshippers of images hereafter. The word **I kyh**, here used, signifies that part of the temple, called the holy place, as distinct from the holy of holies; which was the proper seat of the divine Majesty, and a figure of heaven, as the holy place was of the church; and so he was, as it were, removed from the one to the other; hence the more observable and remarkable, and the greater reason for what follows; and this serves to illustrate and confirm the sense given:

let all the earth keep silence before him; stand in awe of him, and reverence him; be subject to him, and silently adore him; as all the inhabitants of the earth will when the above enemies of his are entirely removed out of it; there will be no more clamours and objections against the Christian religion by Jews and Mahometans, on account of image worship, which will be no more; no more wars, or rumours of wars, but a profound peace everywhere; no more persecutions of the saints; no more will be heard the cry of violence and oppression, all their enemies being destroyed; no more repining and murmurings among the people of God, through impatience and unbelief, all afflictions being at an end; there will be an entire silence of this kind everywhere; only the voice of the Gospel, prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, will be heard. This is not the case now, nor was there ever as yet such a time on earth; this shows that the prophecy regards time to come.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 3

The title of this chapter is a prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, composed after the manner of a psalm of David, and directed to the chief singer, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:1,19). The occasion of it is expressed, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:2) in which the prophet declares his concern for the work of the Lord, and the promotion of the kingdom and interest of Christ; and observes the various steps that were, or would be, taken for the advancement of it; for which he prays, and suggests that these would be after the manner of the Lord's dealing with the people of Israel, and settling them in the land of Canaan, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:3-15) and there being several things awful in this account, both with respect to the judgments of God on his enemies, and the conflicts and trials of his own people, it greatly affected the mind of the prophet, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:16) and yet, in the view of the worst, he expresses his strong faith in the Lord, as to better times and things, that would most assuredly come, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:17-19).

Ver. 1. *A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.*] Of the name, character, and office of the prophet, (see Gill on "~~310B~~Habakkuk 1:1"). This chapter is entitled a "prayer" of his, a supplicatory one, put up in an humble and earnest manner, and in the exercise of faith, and under the influence of a spirit of prophecy. He before had a vision of the coming of Christ, and of what enemies would rise up, and obstruct his kingdom and interest in the world; and here he prays that these obstructions might be removed, and that the kingdom of Christ, in its full extent and glory, might take place in the world; and is a prayer of faith, as he prayed it might be, he believed it would be; and left this prayer behind him, for the use and instruction of the church in all ages, until the whole should be accomplished. It seems to be composed after the manner of the psalms of David, to make it the more pleasant and agreeable; and that it might be the more regarded, and be more fitted for the public use and service of the sanctuary: this appears from the style of it, which is poetical, lofty, and sublime; from the frequent use of the word "Selah", peculiar to the psalms of David, (~~310B~~Habakkuk 3:3,9,13) and from the direction of it to the chief

singer on the stringed instruments, (~~319~~ Habakkuk 3:19) and from the phrase “upon”, or “according to Shigionoth” here, which the Septuagint version renders “with a song”; and so the Arabic version, “after [the manner] of a song”; for this word seems to be the plural of Shiggaion, the title of the seventh psalm (~~300~~ Psalm 7:1); which was either the name, title, or first word of some song or songs, according to which this was to be sung; or the name of the tune with which it was to be sung; or of the instrument on which was to be sung: it very probably designs, and may called, an “erratic” or “wandering” song, because of the variableness of its metre, and of its tune. The Vulgate Latin version wrongly interprets it, “for ignorances”; as if this was a prayer of the prophet’s for the pardon sins of error and ignorance committed by himself, or by others, or both; which sense is favoured by the Targum,

“a prayer which Habakkuk the prophet prayed, when it was revealed unto him concerning the length (of time) which (God) gave to the wicked; that, if they would return to the law with a perfect heart, they should be forgiven all the sins which they had committed before him as ignorance.”

but there does not appear throughout the whole prayer one single petition for the pardon of any sin at all.

Ver. 2. *O Lord, I have heard thy speech, [and] was afraid*, etc.] Or, “thy hearing”^{f111}; which the Lord had caused to be heard from and of himself; the report that had been made to him, and other prophets before him, particularly Isaiah, who says, “who hath believed our report?” (~~250~~ Isaiah 53:1) where the same phrase is used as here: though it seems here not so much to regard the evangelical part of that report, concerning the coming of Christ, his sufferings and death, in order obtain redemption and salvation for his people; for this would have been, and was, matter of joy, and not of fear and consternation: but the truth is this, the Lord in the preceding speech, being a report he made to the prophet concerning the Messiah, had signified that Christ would have many enemies from the Jews and from the Gentiles, from Rome Pagan and Rome Papal; that the church of Christ would meet with great afflictions and persecutions, and be attended with many conflicts, temptations, and difficulties; that the interest of the Redeemer would be sometimes very low, and the work of the Lord at a stand in the world, yea, seemingly dead, quite lost and gone; this is what

caused the fear and distress in the prophet's mind, and gave him that pain and uneasiness: and hence the following petition,

O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years; which refers not to the deliverance from the Babylonish captivity, which was fixed to a term of years, when, and not before, not in the midst of them it would be wrought; but to the great work of the Lord in the times of the Gospel. There is a double reading of these words in the Septuagint version of them, and both very different from the Hebrew text. The one is, "in the midst of two lives thou shalt be known"; the life that now is, and that which is to come. The other, by a change of the accent, is, "in the midst of two animals thou shall be known"; so the Arabic version. Theodoret makes mention of both, and inclines to the former;

"some (he says) by two animals understand angels and men; some the incorporeal powers near the divine Glory, the cherubim and seraphim; others the Jews and Babylonians; but to me it seems that the prophet does not say animals, but lives, the present and future, in the midst of which he was a just Judge:"

but the latter reading is followed by many of the ancients, whose different senses are given by Jerom on the place; some interpreting them of the Son and Spirit, by whom the Father is made known; others of the two cherubim in Exodus, and of the two seraphim in Isaiah; and there were some who understood them of the two Testaments, the Old and New, in the midst of which the Lord may be known; and others of Christ's being crucified between two thieves, by which he might be known: but, besides these different sentiments, many of the ancients concluded from hence that Christ lay in the manger between two animals, the ox and the ass, and to which they refer in their ancient hymns^{f112}; but though this is a wrong version of the text, and a wrong sense which is put upon it, together with (~~2000B~~ Isaiah 1:3); yet, as Burkius observes, there is in this mistake a certain and ancient truth, that the text of Habakkuk belongs to the work of God in Christ, and especially to the nativity of our Lord Jesus; and so some later writers apply this to the wonderful work of the incarnation of Christ, that new, unheard of, and amazing thing the Lord would work in the earth; the promise of which, being delayed, might seem to be dead; and therefore it is entreated it might be revived, and the performance of it hastened; and others to the work of redemption by Christ, which the Father gave him to do, and he promised to come and perform; but, being deferred, the Old Testament

saints were impatient of it. Cocceius and Van Till restrain it to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, his coming being prophesied of before; and render the words, “O Lord, thy work is his life”^{f113}, in the midst of the years”; the resurrection of Christ from the dead, or the quickening of him, is prophesied of in many places as a work that would be done, and in which the hope and expectation of the saints were placed; this being a work of great importance both to Christ, his exaltation and glory, and to his people; their quickening together with him; their regeneration, or passing from death to life; their justification of life, and resurrection from the dead, depending upon it; and this is the Lord’s work, and owing to the exceeding greatness of his power, and is frequently ascribed to God the Father, who raised Christ from the dead, and gave him glory: and this was “in the midst of the years”, or between the years of the Old and of the New Testament; the former was the year of God’s longsuffering and forbearance, the time when the Jewish church, like children, were under governors and tutors, until the time appointed of the Father; the latter is the acceptable year of the Lord, and the year of the redeemed; and between these two years, at the end of the one, and the beginning of the other, the Messiah came, was cut off or died, and was quickened and raised again: but I should choose rather to understand this more generally of the work of the Lord in the Christian churches throughout the whole Gospel dispensation, or at least in some certain periods of it. The church itself is the work of the hands of the Lord, (²³⁵¹Isaiah 45:11) which sometimes has seemed to have been in a very dead and lifeless state and condition, as in the dark times of Popery; and though there was a reviving of it upon the Reformation, yet there has been a decline since; and the Sardian church state, in which we now are, is described as having a “name”, that it “lives”, and yet is “dead”; and the interest of religion, and the church of Christ, will be lower still when the witnesses are slain, and their dead bodies lie unburied, before the Spirit of the Lord enters into them, and revives them: now the prophet having in view these various intervals, and especially the last, prays for a reviving of the interest and church of Christ, and the work of the Lord in it; and which will be done when Christ will come in a spiritual manner, and destroy antichrist; when the Spirit will be poured down plentifully from on high; when the Gospel will be purely and powerfully preached all over the world; when the ordinances of it will be administered as at the beginning; when multitudes of churches will be raised and formed, the Jews will be converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles brought in: this will be a reviving time indeed! and there never will

be a thorough one till this time comes; and this will be in “the midst of the years”; between the years of the reign of antichrist, the 1260 days or years of it, which will now expire, and the thousand years of Christ’s personal reign on earth; between these two will be this reviving time or spiritual reign of Christ^{f114}. The words may to good purpose be applied to the work of grace in the hearts of true believers in Christ, which is the Lord’s work, and his only; not men, not ministers, not angels, but Jehovah only is the author and finisher of it. This sometimes seems as it were to be dead, when the graces of the Spirit are not in exercise; when saints are in dead and lifeless frames of soul; when they are backward to spiritual and religious exercises; when the world, and the things of it, have got power over them, and they are unconcerned for the things of Christ, the honour of his name, and the good of their own souls; when they are under the power of some sin, and are carried captive by it, as was the case of David, Peter, and others: now this work is revived, when the graces of the Spirit are called forth again into lively exercise; when the affections go out strongly after divine objects and things; when the thoughts of the mind, and the meditations of the heart, are on spiritual subjects; when the talk and conversation turns chiefly on things of a religious and heavenly nature; when there is a forwardness to spiritual exercises, a stirring up of themselves and others to them, and a continuance in them; when there is a visible growing in grace, and a fruitfulness in every good work: this is to be prayed for, and is from the Lord; and is owing to his setting his hand a second time to the work; to his being as the dew to his people; to Christ the sun of righteousness arising on them, with healing in his wings; and to the south wind of the Spirit blowing upon them, and causing their spices to flow out; and this is desirable in the midst of their years, before the years come on in which they have no pleasure, or before they go hence, and be no more:

in the midst of the years make known; which Cocceius and Van Till restrain to the notification of Christ’s resurrection from the dead by the ministry of the Gospel, for the benefit of the Lord’s people, both Jews and Gentiles; as being a matter of great consequence to them, and for the confirmation of the Christian religion, as it undoubtedly was: but it seems better to understand it in a more general sense, that God would make known more of himself, as the covenant God and Father of his people, of his mind and will, of his love, grace, and mercy in Christ; that he would make known more of Christ, of his person, offices, and grace; that he

would make known more clearly the work of his Spirit and grace upon their hearts, and display his power, and the efficacy of his grace, in reviving it, and carrying it on; that he would make known more largely his covenant and promises, his truth and faithfulness in the performance of them; that he would grant a larger measure of knowledge of all divine things of the Gospel, and the truths of it; such as is promised, and is expected will be in the latter day, when the earth shall be everywhere filled with the knowledge of the Lord, (^{<3124>}Habakkuk 2:14):

in wrath remember mercy; the above interpreters refer this to the time of God's wrath and vengeance upon the Jewish nation for their rejection of the Messiah; and which the prophet does not pray might be averted, but that mercy might be remembered to his own people among them, as was; who had the Gospel first preached to them, and were called by grace and saved; and who had an opportunity given them of escaping from Jerusalem, before the destruction of that city: but it may be more agreeable to interpret this of the state of the churches of Christ and true believers; who, when under affliction and distress, or in temptation and desertion, are ready to conclude that God is dealing with them in wrath; and whom the prophet personates, and by him they are taught to pray, that at such seasons God would remember his covenant, his promises, his lovingkindness and tender mercies, the favour he bears to his own people, and smile on them again, and comfort their souls.

Ver. 3. *God came from Teman*, etc.] Or, “may God come from Teman”^{f115}; since it is part of the prayer of Habakkuk: or, as “from Teman”^{f116}; as he of old came from thence, a city in the land of Edom, (^{<2407>}Jeremiah 49:7 ^{<3000>}Amos 1:12) it was five miles from Petra, in Idumea, where was Mount Seir, from whence the Lord arose, and shone forth from Mount Paran, at the giving of the law, (^{<6302>}Deuteronomy 33:2) to which the allusion is here. So the Targum,

“at the giving of the law to his people, God was revealed from the south;”

for so Teman signifies. The prophet, to encourage his own faith, and the faith of others, takes notice, in this and the following verses, of the instances of the grace, goodness, and power of God to his people Israel, in appearing to them at Mount Sinai, going before them in the wilderness, destroying their enemies, casting them out before them, and introducing them into the land of Canaan, and settling them there; suggesting, that he

that had done these great and wonderful things would support and maintain, carry on and promote, his own kingdom and interest in the world; in order to which the prophet prays to God the Father for the coming of his Son, either in the flesh, that the incarnate God would appear in the world, and set up his kingdom in it; or, in prayer, he prophesies of it, and expresses his faith in it: “God cometh from the south”; or, “he shall come”^{f117}, as it may be rendered: he knew, from the prophecy of Micah, that he that was to be ruler in Israel was to come from Bethlehem, (~~<388D>~~ Micah 5:2) which lay to the south of Jerusalem; and from hence he expected him, and believed he would come, and prayed for it as being most desirable and welcome: or else this respects the coming of the Messiah, in the ministration of the word to Jews and Gentiles, after his resurrection from the dead, and ascension to heaven, and the pouring forth of his Spirit on the day of Pentecost; that as the Lord came from the places here mentioned, when he gave the law on Mount Sinai, so he would send forth his Gospel out of Zion and Jerusalem, and go forth himself along with it, riding in his glory, and in his majesty, conquering and to conquer; causing his ministers to triumph in him, and by them subdue multitudes of souls to him, both in Judea, and in the Gentile world, whereby his kingdom might appear in it:

and the Holy One from Mount Paran; or, “even the Holy One”^{f118}; that came or shined forth “from Mount Paran” formerly; for it was Christ then that appeared on Mount Sinai, and gave to Moses the lively oracles of God; (see ~~<968F>~~ Psalm 68:17,18 ~~<417B>~~ Acts 7:38) he, as he is truly God, God manifest in the flesh, “Immanuel”, God with us; so he is the holy One of God, infinitely and essentially holy, as a divine Person; and holy, and harmless, and without sin in his human nature and life; and is the sanctifier and sanctification of his people. Mount Paran was situated to the south of the land of Canaan, as well as Teman, which so signifies, as before observed. It is called by Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, and others, Strobilus, from its likeness to a pineapple. It had its name from the city Paran, which lay between Egypt and Arabia^{f119}; (see ~~<1118>~~ 1 Kings 11:18) which Jerom says^{f120} was three days’ journey from Aila to the east; mention is made of Ail, or Elparan in (~~<0146>~~ Genesis 14:6) near to which was the wilderness of Paran, frequently spoken of in Scripture, (~~<0121>~~ Genesis 21:21 ~~<04012>~~ Numbers 10:12 ~~<0413>~~ Numbers 13:3,26 ~~<0270>~~ 1 Samuel 25:1) the same which Josephus^{f121} calls the valley or plain of Pharan, where Simon of Gerasa made caves and dens, and hid the treasure he plundered from the people: according to

Adrichomius^{f122}, it was a most dreadful barren desert, where nothing grew, or was to be had, through which the children of Israel journeyed; and was sometimes taken for the first part of the desert of Arabia, near Mount Sinai, and sometimes for the last part of it, towards the land of promise; sometimes it was called the desert of Sin, and sometimes the desert of Sinai, from that mountain; but its most general name was that of Paran, and contained eleven days' journey from Mount Sinai to Kadeshbarnea. Mount Paran (he says^{f123}) is thick and shady, near to Mount Sinai, and even "contiguous", as it should seem to be from (~~631D~~ Deuteronomy 33:2) to which the reference is here. So Hillerus^{f124} interprets it, "full of boughs", or "branches"; or else he would have it to signify "the corner of Aran", the son of Dishan, a son of Seir the Horite, who inhabited this country; (see ~~633D~~ Genesis 36:20,28) and both Teman and Paran being to the south, may point to the place of the Redeemer, by whom the great work was to be done, referred unto. Jerom says he heard a Hebrew man discourse on this passage, thus,

"that Bethlehem lies to the south, where the Lord and Saviour was born: and that he it is of whom it is here said, "the Lord shall come from the south"; that is, shall be born in Bethlehem, and thence arise; and because he who is born in Bethlehem formerly gave the law on Mount Sinai, he is "the Holy One" that came from "Mount Paran"; seeing Paran is a place near to Mount Sinai; and the word "Selah" signifies "always"; and the sense is, he who is born in Bethlehem, and who on Mount Sinai, that is, on Mount Paran, gave the law, always is the author and giver of all blessings, past, present, and to come."

The word

Selah stands here in the middle of the verse. It is interpreted, by several of the Jewish writers, "for ever", as by the aforementioned Hebrew; and by others as an affirmation, and render it, "verily, truly", as answering to "Amen". Some understand it as a pause or full stop, denoting attention to something said that is remarkable; and others take it to be a note, directing the singer to the elevation of his voice, where it stands; and so it is no other than a musical note; hence the Septuagint render it $\delta\iota\alpha\theta\alpha\lambda\mu\alpha$. A very learned man^{f125} has wrote a dissertation upon it, showing that it is one of the names of God; and used differently, as the sense requires, either in the

vocative case, as “Selah”, that is, O God; or in the other cases, of God, to God, etc.:

his glory covered the heavens; that is, the glory of God, the Holy One, when he came, or should come: this was true of him when he descended on Mount Sinai, and his glory abode upon it; and the sight of his glory was like devouring fire; and the elders saw the God of Israel, under whose feet was as a paved work of sapphire, and as the body of heaven in its clearness; yea, so great as to make the light and glory of the celestial bodies useless, even to cover and hide the shining of them; (see ^{<1240>}Exodus 24:10,16,17) and may respect the glorious appearances at the birth of Christ, when the heavenly host descended, and sung Glory to God in the highest, and when the glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, (^{<1119>}Luke 2:9-14) and at his baptism, when the heavens were opened, the Father’s voice was heard, and the Spirit descended on Christ, as a dove; and at his transfiguration, when his face shone as the sun; and Moses and Elias appeared in glorious forms, and a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice was heard from the excellent Glory, (^{<1186>}Matthew 3:16,17 17:2-5 ^{<1019>}2 Peter 1:19) or rather it may be, this may respect Christ as the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the glory of God in the face of Christ, as set forth in the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, when carried throughout the world by his apostles; whereby his glory was so spread in it, that the heavens were covered with it, and declared it; yea, it was set above the heavens, and the name of the Lord became excellent in all the earth, as follows; (see ^{<1990>}Psalms 19:1-4 8:1):

and the earth was full of his praise; with the words of his praise, as the Targum; so the fame of the mighty things done by the Lord in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, for his people, reached the nations of the world, and especially those of the land of Canaan, and struck them with awe and dread, (^{<1119>}Joshua 2:9,10) and the fame of Christ, his miracles and doctrines, went through the land of Israel, and all Syria; and multitudes glorified God, and praised him for what was done by him, (^{<1123>}Matthew 4:23,24 15:31) and more especially the earth was filled with his glory and praise when his Gospel was carried into all the parts of it by his apostles; which occasioned universal joy to all sensible sinners, and filled their hearts and mouths with praise to God for such a Saviour, and for such blessings of grace and good things that came by him: or, “the earth was full of his light”^{<1126>}; of the light of his Gospel, and of the knowledge of himself by it.

Ver. 4. *And [his] brightness was as the light,* etc.] Of fire, of devouring fire on the top of the mount, to which the sight of his glory was like, (^{<0246>}Exodus 24:16) to which Kimchi refers it. Aben Ezra thinks the pillar of fire is intended, in which the Lord went before his people in the wilderness, (^{<0132>}Exodus 13:21,22) or as the light and splendour of Bereshith, as the Targum, of that primogenital light which was produced on the first day of the creation; or as the light of the seven days of the creation, as Jarchi; (see ^{<2316>}Isaiah 30:26) or rather as the light of the sun shining in its full strength, Christ being the light of the world, and the sun of righteousness; and so may describe him as the brightness of his Father's glory; or his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, seen by his own disciples in the days of his flesh, shining through his works and miracles; or as exhibited in the light of his glorious Gospel, which is the great light that shined on men; and in and by which they that sat in darkness saw light, and who were darkness itself were made light in the Lord: what a glory, lustre, brightness, and light, did the Gospel spread in the world at the first publication of it!

he had horns coming out of his hand; which the Jewish interpreters understand of Moses having horns or beams of light and glory from the hand and power of God, when he conversed with him on the mount, and the skin of his face shone, where the same word is used as here, (^{<0329>}Exodus 34:29,35) though some of them interpret it of the two tables of the law, which came from the hand of the Lord, edged with glory and brightness, and looked like fire; hence called a "fiery law", (^{<0332>}Deuteronomy 33:2). The words may be rendered, as in the margin, "he had beams" coming "out of his side"^{f127}; and be understood of Christ, who has beams and rays of glory on all sides of him, all around him; he is all glory^{f128}; he is crowned with glory and honour, and highly exalted at his Father's right hand, above all principalities and powers: and "horns" being an emblem of power and might, authority and dominion, the phrase may denote that power and authority in heaven and in earth are given to him as Mediator, and exercised by him. Van Till observes, that the word "horn" is a military term, and is used for the wings of armies, the right and left; and as Christ is here described as a General of an army, marching forth in a warlike manner; these may denote the armies or companies under him, at his hand, and under his command, accoutred, and ready to obey his orders; and particularly may have respect to the division made among the apostles, whom he sent forth to subdue men to him; committing the Gospel of the circumcision to Peter, and of the uncircumcision to Paul, (^{<0811>}Galatians

2:7,8) whose ministrations were made successful to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin and Satan, and reducing many to the obedience of Christ:

and there [was] the hiding of his power; that is, in his hand; there his power, which before was hidden, was made manifest; and yet so little displayed, in comparison of what it is in itself, that it may be rather said to be hid than revealed; or there, in his hand, lies his power, with which he hides and covers his people in the day of battle; especially his ministering servants, whom he holds in his right hand, and preserves them amidst a thousand dangers and difficulties, and keeps them for further usefulness; (see ^{<4180>}Acts 18:10 ^{<4101>}Revelation 2:1). The Targum is,

“sparks went out from the chariot of his glory; there he revealed his majesty, which was hid from the children of men, with sublime power.”

Aben Ezra thinks the ark is meant by “the hiding of his power”, called “the ark [of his] strength”, (^{<41018>}Psalm 132:8).

Ver. 5. *Before him went the pestilence,* etc.] Either in the land of Egypt, when he marched through that, and slew all their firstborn, (^{<41981>}Psalm 78:50,51) or rather which he sent before him, and Israel his people among the nations of the land of Canaan, with other diseases and judgments, and destroyed them to make way for his people, which may be here alluded to, (^{<41227>}Exodus 23:27,28) and may point at the judgments of God, and those pestilential diseases which seized upon the persecutors of the Christians, both among the Jews, as Herod, (^{<41123>}Acts 12:23) and among the Gentiles, as many of the Roman emperors, who died violent and grievous deaths; and particularly it may regard the pestilence, famine, and other sore judgments preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of it, for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah:

and burning coals went forth at his feet; which some understand of hailstones mingled with fire, to which the allusion may be, being one of the plagues of Egypt, (^{<41023>}Exodus 9:23,24). Some interpret it of hot diseases, burning fevers, so Kimchi; which are at the command of God, and sent forth by him when he pleases, to do his will. The ancient fathers expound all this of the destruction of death, and the devil, and his principalities, by Christ upon the cross; and the Targum is,

“from before him was sent forth the angel of death, and his word went forth in a flame of fire;”

but this seems to have respect to the burning of the city and temple of Jerusalem, which was done by the Romans as instruments, but according to the direction, order, and will of Christ, (^{<4127>}Matthew 22:7) see (^{<4982>}Psalms 18:12,13).

Ver. 6. *He stood and measured the earth*, etc.] This alludes to the ark of the Lord, the symbol of his presence, standing and abiding at Gilgal for the space of fourteen years, while the land of Canaan was subdued by Joshua; and then measured out by him, and divided by lot, as an inheritance to the children of Israel, according to the direction and appointment of the Lord, (^{<4630>}Joshua 13:1-33) etc.: here it may have respect to the mission of the apostles into the various parts of the world, and the distribution of it among them; some being sent into one part, and some into another, called their particular line and measure, (^{<4704>}2 Corinthians 10:14-16) some into India, others into Ethiopia; some into Asia, and others into Europe; by which means the Gospel was preached everywhere, and great part of the world became Christians:

he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; with a look of his he made them give way; he drove the Canaanites out of the land, and separated them from one another, and scattered them about, to make room for his people Israel, (^{<4985>}Psalms 78:55):

and the everlasting mountains were scattered; or, “were broken”^{f129}:

the perpetual hills did bow; the mountains and hills that were from the beginning of the creation, that were settled upon their bases, and never moved, now trembled, shook, and bowed, as Sinai and others did, at the presence of the God of Israel; (see ^{<4085>}Judges 5:5 ^{<4985>}Psalms 68:8,16) or rather, figuratively, these may design the kingdoms and states, kings and princes, greater and lesser, belonging to the land of Canaan, which were shaken, moved, and taken by the Israelites, and brought into subjection to them; and in like manner kings and kingdoms, comparable to mountains and hills, through the preaching of the Gospel, and the power of Christ attending it, were brought to yield unto him, at the downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire: this is signified by every mountain and island being moved out of their places, and kings and great men calling to the rocks and

mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb, (~~6164~~ Revelation 6:14-17):

his ways [are] everlasting; and what he has done in ages past he can do again; his power, his wisdom, and his grace, are unchangeably the same; and all he does in time, every step he takes, is according to his counsels, purposes, and decrees in eternity, which infallibly come to pass; nor can he be hindered and frustrated in the execution of them; as he has begun, he will go on; as he has set up his kingdom in the world, he will support and maintain it; and though there are many obstructions and remoras in the way of it, he will go on, and remove them, until he has thoroughly established it, and brought it to its highest glory, which he has designed; all mountains and hills are nothing before him; he can soon make them a plain; (see ~~6115~~ Revelation 11:15,17): or, “the ways of the world^{f130} are his”; the world is under his government, and all things in it subject to his providence; he can rule and overrule all things for his own glory, and the good of his interest, and he will do it; everything is subject to his control, and under his direction; not a step can be taken without his will. This the prophet observes along with the above things, to encourage the faith and expectation of the saints, that the work of the Lord will be revived, and his kingdom and interest promoted and established in the world; though there may, and will, be many difficulties and distresses previous to it.

Ver. 7. *I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction*, etc.] The same with Cush or Ethiopia; hence the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it, “the tents of the Ethiopians”; and these are the same with “the curtains of Midian” in the next clause, tents being made of curtains, and the Ethiopians and Midianites the same people; so the daughter of the priest of Midian, whom Moses married, is called an Ethiopian woman, (~~6121~~ Exodus 2:21 ~~6111~~ Numbers 12:1). This seems to have respect to that panic which seized the neighbouring nations by whom the Israelites passed, as well as the Canaanites, into whose land they were marching, when they heard what wonderful things were done for them in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, which was predicted by Moses in (~~6154~~ Exodus 15:14,15) and not only fulfilled in the Canaanites, as appears from what Rahab says, (~~6119~~ Joshua 2:9-11) but particularly in the Moabites and Midianites, who sent to each other, and consulted together against Israel; and, by the advice of Balaam, found ways and means to draw them into fornication, and so to idolatry; for which the Israelites having suffered, were stirred up to avenge themselves on them, and slew five of their kings, and a great multitude of

their people; and so the words may be rendered, “for iniquity”^{f131}; and the word is often used for idolatry; that is, for the sin they drew the Israelites into, they were brought into trembling and great distress, which the prophet saw, perceived, and understood by reading the history of those times; (see ^{<4213>}Numbers 22:3,4,7 25:6,17,18 31:2-8) though the Jewish commentators, and others, generally refer this to the case of Chushanrithathaim king of Mesopotamia, who carried Israel into captivity, from whence they were delivered by Othniel, who prevailed against Cushan, and into whose hands he fell; and so then he and his people were seen in affliction, (^{<4087>}Judges 3:7-10) but Cushan here is not the name of a man, but of a country: and whereas it follows,

the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble; this is thought to refer to the times of Gideon, when the Midianites were overcome by him with three hundred men, and in their fright fell upon and destroyed each other; signified by a barley cake tumbling into the host of Midian, and overturning a tent, as represented in a dream to one of Gideon’s men, (^{<4071>}Judges 7:13,21,22) but the former reference seems best; and it should be observed, that Cush or Ethiopia, and Midian, were parts of Arabia; for not only the Arabians are said to be near the Ethiopians, or at the hand of the Cushites, (^{<4216>}2 Chronicles 21:16) but Sinai, a part of Horeb, where Moses fed the flock of his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, is expressly said to be in Arabia; compare (^{<4181>}Exodus 3:1 ^{<4025>}Galatians 4:25) and with those Arabians called Scenitae, from their dwelling in tents, agree the characters in the text: now the people inhabiting those places, the prophet foresaw by a spirit of prophecy “under vanity”^{f132}, as it may be rendered; that is, “subject” to it, as the whole Gentile world was, (^{<4181>}Romans 8:20) or under the power of idolatry; but it was foretold that these should be converted in Gospel times, (^{<4081>}Psalms 68:31 87:4) which was brought about, partly by the Apostles Matthew and Matthias, said to be sent into Ethiopia; and partly by the Ethiopian eunuch, converted and baptized by Philip, who doubtless was the means of spreading the Gospel in his own country, when returned to it, (^{<4487>}Acts 8:27) and chiefly by the Apostle Paul, who went into Arabia, and preached there, quickly after his conversion; and here were churches in the first times of Christianity; (see Gill on “^{<4017>}Galatians 1:17”) and at this time Cushan or Ethiopia was in affliction; and the Midianites trembled, such of them to whom the word came in power, and they were made sensible of their danger and misery, as the apostle did, the instrument of their conversion, (^{<4406>}Acts 9:6) once more, as an Ethiopian is

an emblem of a man in a state of nature, and describes very aptly wicked and profligate persons, apostates from religion, and such as are persecutors of good men, (^{<2433>}Jeremiah 13:23 ^{<1007>}Amos 9:7) it may design such here; and be expressive of their distress and trouble, the fear and dread they would be seized with on seeing Christianity prevail, and Paganism falling in the Roman empire; which distress and trembling are in a very lively manner set forth in (^{<665>}Revelation 6:15-17).

Ver. 8. *Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? [was] thine anger against the rivers?* etc.] Referring, as is commonly thought, either to the rivers in Egypt turned into blood, which was one of the plagues of that land, (^{<070>}Exodus 7:20) when the resentment of the Lord was not so much against them as against the Egyptians; and as a punishment of them for drowning the infants of the Israelites in them, and in order to obtain the dismissal of his people from that land: or else to the river Jordan, called “rivers”, because of the largeness of it, and the abundance of water in it; against which the Lord was not angry, when he divided the waters of it, which was done only to make a passage through it for his people into the land of Canaan, (^{<086>}Joshua 3:16,17):

[was] thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses [and] thy chariots of salvation? the Red sea, when a strong east wind was sent, and divided the waters of it, which was no mark of displeasure against that; but for the benefit of the people of Israel, that they might pass through it as on dry land; and for the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts, who, entering into it with his horses and chariots, were drowned; the Lord coming forth against him, riding on his horses and chariots, the pillar of fire and cloud, by which he defended Israel, and through which he looked, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, and wrought salvation for his people; (see ^{<249>}Exodus 14:19-28) with which compare (^{<134>}Psalm 114:3). The clouds are the chariots of the Lord, (^{<943>}Psalm 104:3) so angels, who are sometimes signified by horses and chariots, (^{<980>}Psalm 18:10 ^{<121>}2 Kings 2:11 6:17) (^{<308>}Zechariah 1:8 6:1-5) and here they may design the angels of Michael, or Christ, (^{<617>}Revelation 12:7,8) the Christian emperors, Constantine and Theodosius, whom the Lord raised up, and made use of as instruments to demolish Paganism, establish Christianity, and deliver and save his people from their persecutors, who came in like a flood upon them; and who, for their number and force, were comparable to rivers, yea, to the sea; and upon whom the Lord showed some manifest tokens of his wrath and displeasure; so people, tongues, and nations, are

compared to many waters, (⁶⁶⁷¹⁵Revelation 17:15) and monarchs and their armies, (²³⁸⁰⁷Isaiah 8:7,8) and the Targum here interprets the rivers of kings and their armies: and it may be observed that some parts of the Roman empire are signified by the sea, and rivers and fountains of waters, on which the blowing of the second and third trumpets brought desolation; as the antichristian states are described by the same, on which the second and third vials of God's wrath will be poured, when he will indeed be displeased and angry with the rivers and the sea, figuratively understood, (⁶⁶⁸⁸³Revelation 8:8,10 16:3,4).

Ver. 9. *Thy bow was made quite naked*, etc.] It was took out of its case, and arrows out of their quiver, and these made use of against the enemies of his people: this is put for all weapons of war; the sword was unsheathed, and all military weapons employed, and the power of the Lord was exerted; or, as the Targum,

“the Lord was revealed in his power;”

fighting the battles of his people, as in the times of Joshua:

[according] to the oaths of the tribes, [even thy] word. Selah. That is, to fulfil his word of promise, to which he had annexed his oaths, he at several times swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to the fathers of the Israelites, that he would put them in possession of the land of Canaan; and which being worthy of notice, and to be remarked, the word “Selah” is added. So the Targum,

“in revealing thou art revealed in thy power, because of thy covenant which thy word made with the tribes for ever.”

The “bow” here is an emblem of the Gospel, with which Christ the Captain of our salvation, the antitype of Joshua, went forth, more especially in the first ages of Christianity, conquering and to conquer, (⁶⁶⁶¹⁰Revelation 6:2). The arrows of this bow are the doctrines of the Gospel, which are sharp in the heart of Christ's enemies, his elect; who are so in a state of nature, whereby they are brought into subjection to him, (¹⁹⁸¹⁵Psalms 45:5) and hereby the promises of God confirmed by his oaths are accomplished, that the spiritual seed of Christ shall endure for ever; or he shall never want a seed to serve him, (¹⁹⁸²⁵Psalms 89:35,36):

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers; which is generally supposed to allude to the smiting of the rock, from whence waters gushed out, and ran

in dry places like a river; for which channels or canals were made in the earth, in which they flowed and followed the Israelites wherever they went, and supplied man and beast with water. So the Targum,

“for thou didst break strong rocks, rivers came forth overflowing the earth;”

(see ^{<1958>}Psalm 105:41 ^{<600>}1 Corinthians 10:4) but this seems to be going back in the history; rather therefore this refers to the rivers formed in the land of Canaan, whereby it became fertile; hence it is called a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of valleys and hills, (^{<1807>}Deuteronomy 8:7). This may respect, in futurity, either the provisions of grace, and the large abundance of the blessings of it, made for the supply and satisfaction of the children of God in times of distress and difficulty, (^{<2417>}Isaiah 41:17,18) or that help and assistance against, protection and deliverance from, the flood of persecution, cast out after the church by Satan, in order to overwhelm her, by the earth opening its mouth, and swallowing up the flood, (^{<6625>}Revelation 12:15,16).

Ver. 10. *The mountains saw thee, [and] they trembled,* etc.] At the power and presence of God, as Sinai of old; (see Gill on “^{<3816>}Habakkuk 3:6”) by which are signified mighty people and nations, kings and great men, struck with terror at the amazing providence of God in the world, on the behalf of his own people, and against their enemies; (see ^{<6614>}Revelation 6:14-17):

the overflowing of the water passed by; which is usually referred to the overflowing of the river Jordan at the time of the passage of the Israelites through it, when the waters above stood and rose up as a heap, and those below failed, and were cut off, and passed away into the salt sea, (^{<1815>}Joshua 3:15,16) but perhaps it may refer to the times of David, when he conquered all his enemies round about, who were like an overflowing flood; but now passed away, particularly the Philistines, who had always been very troublesome to Israel, but now were overcome by David at Baalperazim; where the Lord, on the contrary, broke forth upon his enemies as the breach of waters, from whence the place had its name, (^{<1050>}2 Samuel 5:20) and as this respects time that was then to come, when this prayer was made, it may regard the flood of persecution, which ceased in Constantine’s time, when Paganism was abolished, and Christianity established; concerning which it might be said, “the winter is past, the rain is over and gone”, (^{<2211>}Song of Solomon 2:11) and the word^{f133} here used

signifies a large shower of rain, causing an inundation, a storm, a tempest; and so fitly expresses the violence of persecution, now at an end:

the deep uttered his voice, [and] lifted up hands on high; language very poetical, exceeding striking, very beautiful and elegant. It is generally understood of the deep waters of the Red sea, or of Jordan, or both, when divided for the Israelites to pass through; at which time, when they rose up, they made a great noise, and stood on a heap; and so the phrases are expressive of the roaring and raging of them as they rose up, which was as if they had spoken; and of the position in which they were, standing up on high, as if they had hands, and these lifted up: but rather they figuratively refer to the mighty nations conquered by David, who asked favour and mercy of him, and signified their subjection to him; and, having respect to times to come, may denote the subjection of the multitude of people and nations in the Roman empire to Christ, when heathenism was abolished in it; and the joy and rejoicing of Christians upon it, and the ceasing of persecution in it, even high and low, rich and poor, all ranks and degrees of men; height and depth, men in high or low circumstances, signified by the depth uttering his voice, and the height lifting up its hands, in token of praise and thankfulness; for so the latter clause may be rendered, “the height lifted up his hands”^{f134}; and answers to the deep in the preceding clause; agreeable to this sense is Jarchi’s note,

““the deep uttered his voice”: the inhabitants of the earth praised him; “the height lifted up his hands”; the host of heaven confessed unto him;”

every creature in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, ascribed blessing, honour, glory, and power, to the Lord on this occasion, (~~663~~ Revelation 5:13). The Targum is,

“the powers on high stood wondering;”

amazed at what was done, and lifted up their hands with astonishment.

Ver. 11. *The sun [and] moon stood still in their habitation*, etc.] This is generally thought to refer to the miracle in the times of Joshua, (~~602~~ Joshua 10:12,13) but a different word is there used, especially of the standing still of the sun; nor are the sun and moon said there to stand in their habitation; nor will the series of the history of times past, or the thread of prophecy of things to come, admit of this reference; nor do the words express the clear shining of the sun and moon at their standing still, but the reverse; for the

phrase, “in their habitation”, may be rendered, “within their tent”^{f135}, or pavilion; (see Gill on “~~(1904)~~ Psalm 19:4”); which is no other than their being encompassed and covered with clouds; which is just such a pavilion as God is said to be in, when “darkness was his secret place; his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies”, (~~(1981)~~ Psalm 18:11) and so is expressive of the dark times of antichrist, which followed, when the Pagan persecutions were over, Christianity supported by secular powers, and the Christian churches raised to the height of riches and honour; and then the man of sin showed himself, the pope of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop, and introduced false doctrines, strange worship, and bad discipline, into the church, and obscured the glorious light of it; and Mahomet also arose with his locusts, the Saracens, out of the bottomless pit opened, from whence came a smoke which darkened the sun and air, (~~(601)~~ Revelation 9:1,2):

at the light of thine arrows they went, [and] at the shining of thy glittering spear; the commonly received sense of the words is, either at the light and shining of the sun and moon, when they stood still in Joshua’s time; the arrows of the Almighty, and the lightning of his spear, that is, hailstones mingled with fire, and thunder, and lightning, which the heathens call Jupiter’s arrows; these steered their course, being directed against the enemies of the Lord’s people, and fought for them, (~~(6500)~~ Joshua 10:10,11) or at the light of these, which looked very bright and dazzling through the rays of the sun upon them, the Israelites marched against their enemies, and avenged themselves on them: but these bright arrows and glittering spear, and the light and shining of them, seem to design no other than the weapons of the Christian ministry or warfare; the Gospel, and the doctrines of it; the light of which broke forth at the Reformation, the same that is meant by the “morning star”, (~~(6128)~~ Revelation 2:28) irradiated by which, the ministers of it especially went forth with courage against their antichristian enemies, and prevailed, and spread the Gospel in many countries. It may be rendered as a petition, “let them walk at the light”^{f136}, etc.; a prayer of faith that it might be, and which is a prophecy that it would be.

Ver. 12. *Thou didst march through the land with indignation*, etc.] Not the land of Canaan, fighting against the inhabitants of it, dispossessing them to make room for the Israelites, whatever allusion may be to it; but the antichristian land, the whole Romish jurisdiction, and all the states of it, through which the Lord will march in wrath and fury, when he pours out the vials of it upon them; or this is desired, and prayed for; for it may be

rendered, “do thou march through the land”^{f137}, etc.; foreseeing and believing that he would:

thou didst thresh the heathen in anger; or, “do thou thresh”^{f138}, etc.; these are the Papists, called heathens and Gentiles in Scripture, because of the heathenish customs and practices they have introduced into the Christian religion, (^{<1906>}Psalm 10:16 ^{<1110>}Revelation 11:2) these are the nations that will be gathered together like sheaves of grain on a floor to be threshed; and when Zion the church of Christ, and Christian princes, will be called upon to arise, and thresh them; and the Lord by them will do it, namely, separate his own people from them, which are like wheat, and utterly destroy them, as chaff and stubble, (^{<3042>}Micah 4:12,13).

Ver. 13. *Thou wentest forth for the salvation of that people, [even] for salvation with thine anointed*, etc.] Or, “thy Messiah”; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of Messiah the son of David; and read and give the sense of the words thus,

“as thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people, by bringing them into the land of Canaan, so do thou go forth for salvation with thy Messiah.”

God of old went forth in his power and providence for the salvation of his people, whom he chose above all people to be his special and peculiar people; making use of Moses and Aaron in bringing them out of Egypt, and leading them through the wilderness, and of Joshua to introduce them, and settle them in the land of Canaan; who were all types of Christ in the salvation of the chosen people. Joshua particularly was a type of Jesus; they agree in their name, which signifies a Saviour the salvation of God, or God the salvation; and in their character, office, and usefulness to the people of God, Jesus is the Lord’s “anointed”; anointed with the Holy Ghost, the oil of gladness, above his fellows, which he received without measure; anointed to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King; and from whom his people receive the unction, and are denominated Christians, or anointed ones: and the “people” of God, for whose salvation he went forth with him, are not all mankind, who are not all saved; nor the people of the Jews only, or all of them; but a peculiar people, out of Jews and Gentiles, loved with a special love; chosen to salvation, secured in the covenant of grace, and given to Christ as his portion and people, and so saved by him, (^{<402>}Matthew 1:21). The “salvation” of them is a spiritual one, a salvation from all their sins; from the power and dominion, pollution and guilt, the

damning power of them, and at last from the very being of them; as well as from Satan, the law, death, hell, and wrath to come: it is perfect and complete, and endures for ever. Jehovah the Father “went forth” with Christ his Son for this salvation, in his purposes and decrees concerning it; in his council and covenant relating to it; in the mission of him into this world to effect it; and by helping and assisting him in it, as man and Mediator. The words may be rendered, “thou wentest forth”; or, “thou goest forth”; thou wilt do so; and mayest thou do so, “to save thy people, to save thy anointed”^{f139}; and so respect not the salvation of Israel by Moses or Joshua; nor the spiritual and eternal salvation of God’s elect by the Messiah; but the salvation of the Lord’s people from mystical Babylon, from the oppression and tyranny of antichrist, and from all his false doctrines, superstition, and idolatry, and ruin by them; and particularly the salvation of the two witnesses, the two olive trees, the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the whole earth; the singular being put for the plural, “anointed” for “anointed ones”; and so the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version, and the Arabic version, render it, “thy Christs”, or “thy anointed ones”; now this will be done when the Lord shall go forth in his power and providence, and quicken and raise their dead bodies, when they have lain three days and a half, and shall cause them to ascend to heaven in the sight of their enemies; (see ^{<3044>}Zechariah 4:14 ^{<611B>}Revelation 11:3,4,11,12):

thou woundedst the head out of the house of the wicked; not the princes of the families of the land of Canaan, as some; nor the first born of Pharaoh’s family in Egypt, or him and his host at the Red sea, as, others; nor Goliath of Gath, smitten by David, as Burkius; nor Satan and his principalities and powers by Christ on the cross; but antichrist the man of sin, that wicked and lawless one, who is at the head of a wicked house or family, the antichristian party; who received a wound at the Reformation; and ere long the kings of the earth will hate the whore, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire; and Christ, will utterly consume and destroy this wicked one with the breath of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, (^{<611B>}Revelation 13:3 17:16 ^{<3018>}2 Thessalonians 2:8) (see ^{<9116>}Psalms 110:6). Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret this of the head of the army of wicked Gog, the king of Magog, taking it to belong to future time; and so some render all those phrases, “thou wilt go forth, thou wilt wound”^{f140}, etc.:

by discovering the foundation unto the neck; or “razing the foundation”, as in (^{<9107>}Psalms 137:7). There seems to be a double metaphor in the words,

expressing the utter ruin and destruction of antichrist and his party; who, being compared to a building, will be demolished, and razed to the very foundation; that will be dug up, and laid bare, and no trace of an edifice to be seen any more; and, being compared to a human body, will be plunged into such distresses and calamities, as to be as it were up to the neck in them, from whence there is no escape and deliverance. Some understand this of the princes of this head, or of his friends, and those of his family that are nearest to him, as the neck is to the head; or of the whole body of the people under him, of which he will be deprived; and so be as a head without a body, and who cannot long survive them.

Selah is added as a mark of attention, something of moment and importance being observed.

Ver. 14. *Thou didst strike through with his staves the head of his villages,* etc.] Of his warriors, mighty men, princes; so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; or of his armies, as Jarchi and Kimchi; which some interpret of Pharaoh and his host, who were destroyed by the steps and methods which they themselves took, going into the sea of themselves, and so were struck through with their own staves: others of the princes and armies of the Canaanites, who destroyed one another with their own weapons of war, as the Midianites did; though we have no instance of it on record: others of Goliath, as Burkus, called before “the head out of the house of the wicked”, with respect to his rise from Gath; here, “the head of his Pagans”, as he renders it, or Gentiles, with respect to his preeminence over the common soldiers, and all the Philistines: others of Sennacherib and his army, as Jarchi; but Kimchi’s sense is much better, who interprets it of Gog and his army; and which, if understood of the Turk, the eastern antichrist, is not amiss; and so, as the western antichrist and his destruction are pointed at in the preceding verse (³⁸¹³Habakkuk 3:13), the ruin of the other is intimated here; whose armies are expressed by a word which sometimes has the signification of villages; because he said, “I will go up to the land of unwall’d villages”, (³⁸¹¹Ezekiel 38:11) in the land of Judea about Jerusalem, where he will distribute and quarter his soldiers; and where he and they at the head of them in these villages will be cut to pieces with their own weapons; as it is said, “every man’s sword shall be against his brother”, (³⁸²¹Ezekiel 38:21), Cocceius and Van Till render the words, “thou hast designed”, marked out, or expressed by name, “in his tribes, the head of his villages”; and understand them, not of the enemy, but of Christ the anointed One, and his people; the Protestants, or

reformed churches, who, being separated from antichrist, are represented as divided into tribes, and as dwelling in villages alone, and in separate states and kingdoms; and suppose that God has designed in his purposes and decrees some particular place, called the head or beginning of these villages, where his great and glorious work in the latter day will first appear; but what and where that place is is not said:

they came out as a whirlwind to scatter me; the prophet representing the true Israel, or the whole church of Christ: it is not unusual for mighty armies to be compared to a whirlwind coming forth with great force, suddenly and swiftly; (see ^{<244B>}Jeremiah 4:13) and particularly it is said of the army of Gog or the Turk, which shall invade Judea, in order to dispossess the Jews of their land, when converted and returned to it; “thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud, to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee”, (^{<280B>}Ezekiel 38:9) who will think to scatter the people of the Jews again among the nations, as they have been:

their rejoicing [was] as to devour the poor secretly; the poor people of the Jews, to strip them of their substance, to carry off their gold and silver, their cattle and their goods; and which they thought they should as easily accomplish as a rich man gets the mastery over a poor man, and ruins him, that has none to help him; and that they should do this in a still, private, secret manner, so as that the Christian princes should have no knowledge of it, and come in to their assistance; and this they rejoiced at in themselves, and pleased themselves with it; (see ^{<280B>}Ezekiel 38:10-13 ^{<248B>}Psalms 108:10). The above interpreters render this clause as a prayer, “let them tremble for fear”: or be filled with horror, who come “to scatter me, whose rejoicing is as to devour the poor in secret”; which is interpreted of the Papists being terrified by some Christian princes, since the Reformation, from carrying some of their designs into execution; and of the clandestine arts and secret methods the Jesuits particularly use to do injury to the interest of Christ and true religion.

Ver. 15. *Thou didst walk through the sea with thine horses*, etc.] And as thou didst of old, so do again; as Jehovah walked through the Red sea in a pillar of cloud and fire, which were his horses and chariots, and destroyed the Egyptians; so may he walk through another sea by his instruments, and destroy the enemies of his church and people; (see Gill on “^{<280B>}Habakkuk 3:8”). The “sea” here signifies the world, compared to it for the multitude

of its people; the noise, fluctuation, and uncertainty of all things in it; and particularly the Roman empire, the sea out of which the antichristian beast arose, (^{<660>}Revelation 13:1). The “horses” are the angels or Christian princes, with whom the Lord will walk in majesty, and in the greatness of his strength, pouring out the vials of his wrath on the antichristian states:

through the heap of many waters; or “the clay”, or “mud of many waters”^{f141}; that lies at the bottom of them; which being walked through and trampled on by horses, is raised up, and “troubles” them, as the Septuagint and Arabic versions render it: these “many waters” are those on which the whore of Rome is said to sit; and which are interpreted of people, multitudes, nations, and tongues, (^{<670>}Revelation 17:1,15) and the “mud” of them is expressive of their pollution and corruption, with her false doctrines, idolatry, superstition, and immoralities; and of their disturbed state and condition, through the judgments of God upon them, signified by his horses walking through them; trampling upon them in fury; treating them with the utmost contempt; treading them like mire and clay, and bringing upon them utter ruin and destruction.

Ver. 16. *When I heard, my belly trembled*, etc.] His bowels, his heart within him, at the report made of what would come to pass in future time; and not so much at hearing of the judgments of God that should come upon the enemies of his Church, antichrist and his followers; though even these are awful and tremendous to good men; (see ^{<690>}Psalm 119:120) but upon hearing what troubles and distresses would come upon the churches of Christ, previous to these, afterwards called a day of trouble in this verse, and more particularly described in the next (^{<700>}Habakkuk 3:17):

my lips quivered at the voice; at the voice of these words, as the Targum; at the voice of the Lord, expressing and foretelling these calamities, through fear and dread, consternation and amazement; under which circumstances the natural heat of the outward parts of the body retires to defend the heart, and leaves them trembling and quivering, particularly the lips, so that they lose their use for a time; and a person in such a case can hardly speak:

rottenness entered into my bones; he became weak and without strength, as if he had long been in a wasting consumption; or was at once deprived of all his strength, and it was turned into corruption; (see ^{<710>}Daniel 10:8):

and I trembled in myself; within himself, in all his inward parts, as well as in his outward parts: or, “under myself”^{f142}; was not able to keep his place, could not stand upon the ground that was under him; his knees trembled, as the Syriac version:

that I might rest in the day of trouble; rather, as Noldius^{f143} renders the particle, “yet”, or “notwithstanding, I shall rest in the day of trouble”; which had been represented to him in vision; and which he had a sight of by a spirit of prophecy, as coming upon the church of Christ, and had given him that concern before expressed. The Syriac version of this and the next clause, which it joins, is, “he showed me the day of calamity, which is about to come upon the people”. Here begins the prophet’s expression of his strong faith and joy in the midst of all the distresses he saw were at hand; herein representing the church, and all true believers helped to exercise faith in those worst of times. This “day of trouble” is the same with the hour of temptation that shall come upon all the earth to try the inhabitants of it; the time of the slaying of the witnesses, which will be such a time of trouble as never was in the world; (see ~~ⲉⲓⲃⲓⲟ~~ Revelation 3:10 ~~ⲉⲓⲃⲓⲟ~~ Daniel 12:1). The “rest” the people of God will have then, which the prophet had faith in for them, will lie in the Lord’s protection and keeping of his people; his perfections, power, and providence, are the chambers of rest and safety he will call them unto, and the shadow of his wings, which they will make their refuge till these calamities and indignation be overpast, (~~ⲉⲓⲃⲓⲟ~~ Isaiah 26:20 ~~ⲉⲓⲃⲓⲟ~~ Psalm 52:1)

when he cometh up unto the people, he will invade them with his troops; or rather “him”; not “the people”; the people of God, “he” the Lord or Christ comes unto; but the enemy of them: this is the ground of the prophet’s faith and confidence before expressed, or of the church’s he personated; namely, that when Christ, Michael the great Prince, should come up to his people, appear for them, and stand on their side, he would lead his troops and march his army against their grand enemy antichrist; and “cut him to pieces”^{f144}, as some render the word: so Christ is represented as a mighty warrior, marching at the head of his troops, the armies of heaven following him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, who are the called, chosen, and faithful; and with these he will fall upon the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, gathered together at Armageddon, and utterly destroy them, (~~ⲉⲓⲃⲓⲟ~~ Revelation 16:14,16 17:14 19:14-21).

Ver. 17. *Although the fig tree shall not blossom*, etc.] Or rather, as the Septuagint version, “shall not bring forth fruit”; since the fig tree does not bear blossoms and flowers, but puts forth green figs at once. This was a tree common in the land of Canaan, and its fruit much in use, and for food; hence we read of cakes of figs among the provisions Abigail brought to David, (^{<02518>}1 Samuel 25:18) so that, when there was a scarcity of these, it was a bad time:

neither [shall] fruit [be] in the vines; no grapes, or clusters of them, out of which wine was pressed; a liquor very refreshing and reviving to nature; and is said to cheer God and man, being used in sacrifices and libations to God, and the common drink of men, (^{<07013>}Judges 9:13) so that, when it failed, it was a public calamity:

the labour of the olive shall fail; or “lie”^{f145}; disappoint the expectation of those who planted and cultivated it with much toil and labour, it not producing fruit as looked for. This tree yielded berries of an agreeable taste, and out of which oil was extracted, the Jews used instead of butter, and for various purposes; so that, when it failed of fruit, it was a great loss on many accounts:

and the fields shall yield no meat; the grass fields no herbage for beasts; the grain fields no grain for man; the consequence of which must be a famine to both; and this must be very dismal and distressing:

the flock shall be cut off from the fold; flocks of sheep; either by the hand of God, some disease being sent among them; or by the hand of man, drove off by the enemy, or killed for their use; so that the folds were empty of them, and none to gather into them:

and there [shall be] no herd in the stalls; or oxen in the stables, where they are kept, and have their food; or stalls in which they are fattened for use; and by all these are signified the necessaries of life, which, when they fail, make a famine, which is a very distressing case; and yet, in the midst of all this, the prophet, representing the church, expresses his faith and joy in the Lord, as in the following verse (^{<37118>}Habakkuk 3:18); though all this is to be understood, not so much in a literal as in a figurative sense. “Fig trees, vines”, and “olives”, are often used as emblems of truly gracious persons, (^{<2013>}Song of Solomon 2:13 ^{<1518>}Psalms 52:8) partly because of their fruitfulness in grace and good works, and partly because of their perseverance therein; all these trees being fruitful ones; and some, as the

olive, ever green: of such persons there is sometimes a scarcity, as is complained of in the times of David and Micah, (~~3101~~ Psalm 12:1 ~~3100~~ Micah 7:1) and especially there will be in the latter day; for righteous and merciful men will be taken away from the evil to come, (~~2570~~ Isaiah 57:1) and, however, there will be very few lively, spiritual, and fruitful Christians, such as abound in the exercise of grace, and are diligent in the discharge of duty; for, when the Son of Man cometh, he will not find faith on the earth; and he will find the virgins sleeping, (~~4208~~ Luke 18:8 ~~4205~~ Matthew 25:5). The “fields not” yielding “meat” may signify that the provisions of the house of God will be cut off; there will be no ministration of the word, or administration of ordinances; the word of the Lord will be scarce, rare, and precious; there will be a famine, not of bread and of water, but of hearing the word of the Lord; one of the days of the Son of Man will be desired, but not enjoyed; so no spiritual food in the use of means to be had; a very uncomfortable time this will be, (~~3081~~ Amos 8:11) (~~4272~~ Luke 17:22). The “flock” being “cut off from the fold” may denote that the sheep of Christ will be given up to the slaughter of the enemy, or be scattered abroad in this dark and cloudy day of persecution; so that there will be no fold, no flock, no sheep gathered together; and perhaps such will be the case, that there will not be one visible congregated church in due order throughout the whole world; all will be broke up, and dispersed here and there: no “herd” or “oxen in the stall” may signify that the ministers of the Gospel, compared to oxen for their strength, industry, and laboriousness in the work of the Lord, will be removed, or not suffered to exercise their ministry, nor be encouraged by any in it: this will be the case at the slaying of the witnesses, and a most distressing time it will be; and yet the prophet, or the church represented by him, expresses an uncommon frame of spirit in the following verse (~~3108~~ Habakkuk 3:18). The Targum interprets all this figuratively of each of the monarchies of the world, which should be no more;

“the kingdom of Babylon shall not continue, nor shall it exercise dominion over Israel; the kings of the Medes shall be killed; and the mighty men of Greece shall not prosper; and the Romans shall be destroyed, and shall not collect tribute from Jerusalem; therefore for the wonder, and for the redemption, thou shalt work for thy Messiah; and for the rest of thy people who shall remain, they shall praise, saying: the prophet said;”

as follows:

Ver. 18. *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord*, etc.] In the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; the essential Word of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ; in his person, the greatness and glory of it; in his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King, the only Mediator and Saviour; in his relations, as head and husband, father, brother, friend; in his fulness, grace, and righteousness; in his spiritual presence, and comfortable communion with him, which may be expected in a remarkable manner after the above day of trouble is over; and in his personal appearance, which will shortly be, and when his tabernacle will be with men on earth:

I will joy in the God of my salvation; in Christ, who is God, and so able to save his people; to make everything he did and suffered in human nature effectual and available to them; to supply all their wants, and to keep what they commit unto him, and to preserve them safe to his kingdom and glory: and who also joy in the salvation of their God, or which he is the author of, both temporal and spiritual, especially the latter; which is so great and glorious in itself, so suitable to their case, so complete and perfect, and makes so much for the glory of all the divine perfections, and is all of free grace, and lasts for ever: this salvation is peculiar to the people of God; it is theirs, and theirs only; it is what they choose and prefer to all other ways of salvation; it is brought and applied to them by the Spirit, and which they appropriate to themselves under his witnessings; and then it is they can and do rejoice: particularly salvation and deliverance from antichristianism, in all the branches of it, may be chiefly pointed at as the matter and ground of joy; and the enjoyment of Gospel privileges in the full extent of them; the word and ordinances in their power and purity; and the presence of Christ in them.

Ver. 19. *The Lord God [is] my strength*, etc.] The author and giver of natural and spiritual strength, as he is to all his people; he is the strength of their hearts when ready to faint and sink, and of their graces, faith, hope, love, patience, etc. and continues and increases them, and draws them forth into lively acts and exercise; and of their lives, natural and spiritual, which he supports and maintains, secures and defends; from him they have their strength to perform the duties of religion; to oppose their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; and to bear them up under all trials and afflictions, and carry them through them, and deliver out of them, and which is principally intended here: the church, though in distress, and pressed with sorrows, yet believed the strength of Christ would be made

perfect in her weakness, and she should be upheld by him under all, and brought out of it:

and he will make my feet like hinds' [feet]; swift as they, as the Targum, which are very swift; and on account of the swiftness of them is the comparison used: and which is to be understood, not barely of the Jews being swift of foot to return to their own country, when the time of their conversion is come; or to pursue their enemies, as Kimchi; that is, Gog or the Turks, having got the victory over them: but of all Christians, whose feet will be swift to run, in a lively cheerful manner, the way of Christ's commandments; their souls being strengthened, and their hearts enlarged with the love and grace of God; and to surmount with ease all difficulties and obstructions that lie in their way: and chiefly this regards the ministers of the Gospel, and the swift progress they will make in spreading it in the world; as the apostles and first ministers of the word, having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, went swiftly through all parts of the world, even to the ends of the earth, with it; so in the latter day many will run to and fro, everywhere preaching the everlasting Gospel to all nations; the knowledge of it shall greatly increase; (see ⁷¹²⁴ Daniel 12:4 ⁶⁴⁴⁶ Revelation 14:6) this passage seems to be taken out of (¹⁹⁸³³ Psalm 18:33) and there may be not only an allusion to the swiftness of those creatures, but to the strength and firmness of their feet; so that they can go upon rocks and mountains securely, and tread and walk, and even run upon them with safety; and this sense is directed to, not only by what follows, concerning "walking" on "high places"; but by the word here used, which signifies to "make", or "set", fix, place, order, and settle^{f146}; and this agrees with the nature of those creatures, whose feet are not only swift, but firm; they tread sure and stable; hence hinds and harts are by the poets^{f147} called the "brassen footed hinds", or "harts"; because of the firmness and stability of their going; and it is an observation of Jarchi's^{f148}, that the feet of the females stand firmer and more upright than the feet of the males; wherefore, both here, and in (¹⁹⁸³³ Psalm 18:33), not harts, but hinds, are made mention of; and so this may also denote the stability of the saints in those times, both ministers and common Christians, in the exercise of grace, and in the performance of duty; their hearts will be established in the faith of Christ, and in love to him, and in the hope of eternal life by him; all which they will be settled in, and will hold fast, and not let go; and will be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord their God; and so in the Gospel of Christ, and in the ordinances of it, their souls

will be established in and with the doctrines of grace, and will continue steadfastly in them, and abide by and keep the ordinances as they have been delivered to them; nor will any difficulties, which may seem like hills and mountains, and cragged rocks, deter or discourage them, or move them from the hope of the Gospel, or from their duty; but they shall walk on securely and firmly:

and he will make me to walk upon mine high places: meaning not so much the high places of the land of Judea, some part of it being mountainous, though there may be some reference to them; but it signifies the exalted state of the church after the troublesome times, when it shall be exalted above the hills, and established on the top of the mountains; when Christ the Lamb, with his 144,000 sealed ones, shall stand upon Mount Zion with harps in their hands, having gotten the victory over the antichristian beast and his image; and when the saints shall have the dominion of the world; and the kingdom and the greatness of it, under the whole heaven, shall be given to them, (^{<2010>}Isaiah 2:2 ^{<640>}Revelation 14:1 15:1 ^{<207>}Daniel 7:27) as well as they shall be in lively, spiritual, and heavenly frames of soul; mount up with wings, as eagles; soar aloft in the exercise of faith; dwell on high in the contemplation of divine things; have their affections set on things above; and their conversation in heaven while they are on earth: especially this may be said of them when they shall have the glory of God upon them in the New Jerusalem state, and shall dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, with Christ at the head of them; and when they shall possess the ultimate glory in the highest heavens to all eternity; (see ^{<633>}Deuteronomy 33:29) and thus ends this prayer of Habakkuk; which serves to draw out the desires of good men after the flourishing estate of the kingdom and interest of Christ; to assist their faith in the belief, hope, and expectation of it; and to lead their views to its summit and perfection, notwithstanding all the difficulties and discouragements that may lie in its way: and being of so much moment and importance, that it might remain and continue, and be of use to the church in succeeding ages, the prophet delivered or directed it

to the chief singer, to be set to tune, and sung by him, as David's prayers, and others, sometimes were, and to be preserved for future usefulness; and this he would have sung (he says)

on my stringed instruments; which were either invented by him, or used by him in the temple, or were his own property: or he sent this prayer or ode to him who was over these instruments, had the care and use of them; and

which were such as were to be stricken with the hand, bone, or quill; and are the same that are called “Neginoth” in the title of the fourth Psalm (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 4:1), and others.

FOOTNOTES

- ft1 -- Zohar in Gen. fol. 6. 3. Vid. Shalsholet Hakabala, fol. 12. 2.
- ft2 -- **qwqbj** “amplexus”, Hillerus; “amplexatio”, Hieronymus.
- ft3 -- “Amplexans”, *ibid*.
- ft4 -- “Optimus amplexator”, Tarnovius.
- ft5 -- Hist. Heb. l. 1. c. 11. p. 35, 36.
- ft6 -- Demonstr. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 284, 301.
- ft7 -- Seder Olam Rabba, p. 55. Seder Olam Zuta, p. 105. Tzemach David, fol. 15. 1. Juchasin, fol. 12. 2.
- ft8 -- Bedford’s Scripture Chronology, p. 674.
- ft9 -- Usher. Annales Vet. Test. A. M. 3395.
- ft10 -- Deuteronomy Prophet. Vit. & Interit. c. 18.
- ft11 -- Deuteronomy Vit. & Mort. Sanct. c. 47.
- ft12 -- Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 7. c. 29.
- ft13 -- Vid. Reland. Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 772.
- ft14 -- P. 63. Ed. Hottinger.
- ft15 -- Habakkuk Illustratus, p. 214.
- ft16 -- **ydgnl** “contra me”, Pagninus, Montanus; “e regione mei”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Tarnovius.
- ft17 -- **gwpt** “intermittitur”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Burkius; **gwp** “est, animi deliquium pati”, Tarnovius.
- ft18 -- **whmt whmthw** “et admiramini, admiramini”, Vatablus, Drusius, Burkius.
- ft19 -- **ba ybj rml** “latitudines terrae”, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

- ft20 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.
- ft21 -- Deuteronomy Vita Apollonii, l. 2. c. 7.
- ft22 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 7. col. 788.
- ft23 -- Pharsalia, l. 6.
- ft24 -- Comment. in Hos. v. 14. fol. 10. L.
- ft25 -- Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 6.
- ft26 -- In Hexaemeron.
- ft27 -- Deuteronomy Rebus Portugall. l. 9. apud Frantz. Hist. Animal. Sacr. par. 1. 8. p. 90.
- ft28 -- Damir apud Bochart, ut supra. (Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 7. col. 788.)
- ft29 -- Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 73.
- ft30 -- Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 177.
- ft31 -- Geograph. l. 16. p. 534.
- ft32 -- Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 22.
- ft33 -- **wdj w** “et acuti erunt”, Montanus, Cocceius; “et acutiores”, Pagninus, Calvin, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Grotius; so Ben Melech; “et acuti sunt”, Burkus.
- ft34 -- Deuteronomy Animal. l. 10. c. 26.
- ft35 -- Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37.
- ft36 -- Ut supra. (Deuteronomy Animal. l. 10. c. 26.)
- ft37 -- Iliad. 7. prope finem.
- ft38 -- Saturnal. l. 1. c. 17.
- ft39 -- “Vesper ubi e pastu vitulos ad tecta reducit, Auditisque lupos acuunt balatibus agni.” Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. “Acts veluti pleno lupo insidiatus ovili Nocte super media-----”, Ibid. Aeneid. l. 8.
- ft40 -- Aelian. de Animal. l. 1. c. 36. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 20.
- ft41 -- Vid. Lydium de Revelation Militari, l. 3. c. 7. p. 87.

- ft42 -- **hl k** “illa teta”, Junius & Tremellius; “sub. gens”, Pagninus, Piscator; “totus exercitus”, Vatablus; “populus”, Calvin.
- ft43 -- **hmydq** “ad orientem”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; “orientem versus”, Junius & Tremellius, Deuteronomy Dieu, Burkius; so Abarbinel.
- ft44 -- **awhw** “et ipse”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius, Tarnovius, Grotius, Cocceius.
- ft45 -- Antiqu. l. 10. c. 9. sect. 7.
- ft46 -- **rb[y]** “transgredietur”, Pagninus, Vatablus, Calvin, Drusius, Tarnovius.
- ft47 -- **whwl al wj wk wz** “iste est, ejus robur fuit pro deo ejus”, Gussetius.
- ft48 -- “Tune immutatus est spiritu, et transiit et desolatus est, hoc robur ejus est dei ejus”, Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft49 -- **twmt al** “non morieris”, Vatablus, Drusius, Grotius.
- ft50 -- **rxw** “O rupes”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till; “O petra”, Drusius.
- ft51 -- **wtdsy** “fundasti eum”, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till; “constituisti”, Vatablus.
- ft52 -- Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 13.
- ft53 -- Nat. Hist. l. 9. c. 15.
- ft54 -- Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 1. c. 6. col. 39.
- ft55 -- Vid. Doughtaei Analect. Sacra, p. 494, 495.
- ft56 -- E Trogo, l. 43. c. 3, 4.
- ft57 -- In Jupiter Tragoedus.
- ft58 -- Adv. Gentes, l. 6. p. 232.
- ft59 -- Hist. l. 17.
- ft60 -- **ομνυσι δ ουιχην**, Aeschylus.

- ft61 -- **yb** “in me”, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Tarnovius, Van Till, Burkius.
- ft62 -- **γραθας εν πινακι πτυκτω**, etc. Homer. Iliad. 6.
- ft63 -- Contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 2.
- ft64 -- In Hippolito.
- ft65 -- “Ergo tam doctae nobis periere tabellae, Non illas fixum charas effeceret aurum, Vulgari buxo sordida cera fuit. Propertius. Buxa crepent cerata-----” Prudentius.
- ft66 -- Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 30.
- ft67 -- Isidor. Originum, l. 6. c. 8.
- ft68 -- “In ima cera”, Sueton. in Vit. Jul. Caesar. c. 83. “in extrema cera”, Cicero in Verrem, l. 3. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. ib. l. 1. c. 1.
- ft69 -- Deuteronomy Oratore, l. 2. sect. 34.
- ft70 -- Taciti Annales, l. 11. c. 14.
- ft71 -- **j pyw** “idque ille loquetur”, Castalio.
- ft72 -- “Praeco erit in fine”, Cocceius; “et praeco aderit in fine”, Van Till.
- ft73 -- **και ανατελει**, Sept.
- ft74 -- **aby ab yk** “quia veniens veniet”, V. L.; “veniendo veniet”, Pagninus, Montanus, Cocceius, Van Till, Burkius.
- ft75 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 97. 2.
- ft76 -- In Pocock. Porta Mosis, p. 176.
- ft77 -- Mashmia Jeshua, fol. 64. 1.
- ft78 -- Not. in Miclol Yophi in loc. Vid. Caphtor Uperah, fol. 6. 4. & 45. 1. 2.
- ft79 -- So Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the word has the signification of haughtiness of heart, and of pride; and Jarchi of impudence; and the Arabic word “muthaphilin”, in Schindler, is rendered “despisers”.
- ft80 -- So <Arabic> according to Castel is “neglixit”, Act. vi. 1. “substraxit

se”, Judg. xx. 36. and so it is used in the Alcoran, Surat. Joseph. ver. 13. and in the Arabic version of Psal. xxviii. 1. Matt. xxiii. 23. Heb. xii. 5.

- ft81** -- **wb wçpn hrçy al** “non recta (est) anima ejus in eo”, Montanus, Calvin, Drusius, Burkius.
- ft82** -- Vindiciae Hebr. par. 2. c. p. 322.
- ft83** -- Deuteronomy Accent. Hebr. p. 488, 489. So Boston. Tract. Stigmologic. p. 33, 34.
- ft84** -- Shemot Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 107. 3.
- ft85** -- T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 24. 1.
- ft86** -- **yk Paw** “quanto magis”, Calvin, Drusius, Tarnovius, Cocceius, Van Till, Burkius.
- ft87** -- Suetonius in Vita Tiberii, c. 42.
- ft88** -- Ib. Vita Caligulae, c. 37.
- ft89** -- Ib. Vita Claudii, c. 33.
- ft90** -- Eutrop. Hist. Rom. l. 7.
- ft91** -- Suetonius in Vita Neronis, c. 27.
- ft92** -- Suetonius in Vita Caligulae, c. 22.
- ft93** -- **hwny al w** “qui non habitat; quod de mansionibus ovium imprimis dicitur”, Cocceius; “qui non inhabitat grata”, Van Till.
- ft94** -- Apud Joseph de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 16. sect. 4.
- ft95** -- **wl twdyj hxyll mw** “et interpretationem aenigmata ei”, Drusius, Burkius; “et interpretatio erit aenigmata ipsi”, Cocceius; “cujus explicatio illi erit aenigmatum loco”, Van Till.
- ft96** -- **χρυσος τοι κονις εστι, και αργυρος**, Naumachius apud Grotium in loc.
- ft97** -- Miscel. Sacr. l. 5. c. 8.
- ft98** -- Observat. l. 15. c. 18.

- ft99 -- Epist. Hermogeni, Ep. 23. p. 141.
- ft100 -- **Æykçn** “foeneratores tui, [seu] creditores tui”, Cocceius, Van Till.
- ft101 -- **Æy[z]zm** “qui commoveant te”, Pagninus, Vatablus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 56. 1. “excutientes”, Cocceius, Van Till; “commoventes te”, Burkius.
- ft102 -- **µda ymdm** “propter sanguinem hominis”, i. e. “Christi, qui est secundus Adam”, Cocceius, Van Till.
- ft103 -- Smegma Orientale, l. 1. c. 7. p. 163.
- ft104 -- T. Bava Metzia, fol. 117. 2. & Bathra, fol. 3. 1.
- ft105 -- “----Secretum divitis ullum Esse putas? servi ut taceant, jumenta loquentur, Et canis, et postes, et marmora.----” Juvenal. Satyr. 9.
- ft106 -- **Ætmj** “venenum tuum”, Montanus; so some in Drusius, and R. Jonah in Ben Melech.
- ft107 -- **Ætmj j psm** “adjugenti, [sive] adhibenti furorem tuum”, Tigurine version.
- ft108 -- **µym| a µyl yl a twç[|** “faciendo idola muta”, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus.
- ft109 -- **µyl yl a** “dii nihili”, Drusius.
- ft110 -- **j wr** “spiritus”, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius, Burkius.
- ft111 -- **Æ[mç** “tuam auditionem”, V. L. Burkius; “tuum auditum”, Pagninus, Montanus; “rumorem”, Tarnovius.
- ft112 -- “Agnoscat bos et asinus Jacentem in praesepio.” And again, “Cognovit bos et asinus, Quod paer erat Dominus.”
- ft113 -- Taking **whyjy** for **wyjy** , as **whydy** for **wydy** in ver. 10. So Ben Melech observes it may be taken.
- ft114 -- The Targum interprets these years of the time in which God will renew the world.

- ft115 -- **awby** “veniet”, so some in Calvin, Van Till.
- ft116 -- **^mytm** “sicuti olim ex Theman”, Van Till.
- ft117 -- Venit, Grotius; “veniet”, Pagninus, Montanus, Calvin, Gussetius.
- ft118 -- **çwdqw**.
- ft119 -- Hiller. Onomastic. p. 585, 908.
- ft120 -- Deuteronomy locis Hebr. fol. 91. F. G.
- ft121 -- Deuteronomy Bello Jud. 1. 4. c. 9. sect. 4.
- ft122 -- Theatrum Terrae Sanctae, p. 116.
- ft123 -- Ibid. p. 123.
- ft124 -- Ut supra, (Hiller. Onomastic.) p. 431, 477, 908.
- ft125 -- Paschii Dissertatio de Selah, p. 670. in Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. par. 1.
- ft126 -- **ðah hal m wtl ht** “et lux ejus implevit terram”, Junius & Tremellius; “et splendoris, [vel] fulgoris ejus plena terra”, Vatablus, Drusius; so Kimchi, Ben Melech, and R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 3. 1.
- ft127 -- **wl wdy m μynrq** “e lateribus utrinque emicabant cornua”, i. e. “radii”, Drusius.
- ft128 -- So R. Joseph Albo interprets them of sparks of spiritual light, which come from God himself, and not another. Vid. Sepher Ikkarim, l. 2. c. 29.
- ft129 -- **wxxpty** “contriti sunt”, Pagninus, Montanus; so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 95. 1.
- ft130 -- **μl w[twkyl h** “itinera mundi”, Vatablus, Tigurine version.
- ft131 -- **^wa tj t** “propter iniquitatem”, V. L. Calvin, Tigurine version.
- ft132 -- “Subjecta vanitati”, Heb.; “sub vanitate”, Piscator, Cocceius, Van Till.

- ft133 -- **μρζ** “nimbus”, Tigurine version; “impetus”, Munster; “imber aquosus”, Cocceius, Van Till; “inundatio aquarum”, Burkius.
- ft134 -- **αϸν whydy μwr** “altitudo manum suam sublevavit”, Munster; “tudo manus suas tulit”, Burkius.
- ft135 -- **hl bz** “intra habitaculum”, Cocceius, Van Till, “[vel] in tugurio”, ib.
- ft136 -- **wkl hy** “ambulent ad lucem”, etc. Van Till.
- ft137 -- **d[xt** “progredlaris”, Van Till.
- ft138 -- **ϸwdt** “tritures”, Van Till.
- ft139 -- **Æj yϸm ta [ϸyl Æm[[ϸyl** “ad salutem populi tui, ad servandum unctum tuum”, Deuteronomy Dieu.
- ft140 -- **taxy** “egredieris”; so some in Vatablus. **txj m** “transfiges”; so some in Drusius.
- ft141 -- **μybr μym rmj** “in luto aquarum multarum”, Tigurine version; “calcasti lutum aquarum multarum”, Cocceius, Van Till; “lutum, aquae multae”, Burkius.
- ft142 -- **ytj t** “subtus me”, Drusius, Deuteronomy Dieu; “subter me”, Cocceius, Van Till.
- ft143 -- Ebr. Concord. Part p. 108. No. 550.
- ft144 -- **wndwgy** “ut excidat eum”, Calvin; “succidet eum”, Vatablus.
- ft145 -- **ϸj k θευσεται**, Sept.; “mentietur”, V. L. Piscator; “mentiebatur”, Pagninus.
- ft146 -- **μϸw κ ταξει**, Sept.; “et ponet”, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Burkius; “qui disponit”, Junius & Tremellius; “et possuit”,
- ft147 -- “Fixerit acripedem cervam licet----” Virgil. Aeneid. 6. prope finem. “Vincunt acripedes ter terno Nestore cervi.” Ausonii Idyll. 11.
- ft148 -- Comment. in Psal. xviii. 34.