

Habakkuk

The Argument

The prophecy of Habakkuk seems to be an exact stating of that perplexed case, touching the seeming unequalness of the proceedings of God in the government of the world, in which the good suffer evil, and the evil rejoice in prosperity; the more righteous are afflicted, and the more unrighteous prosper; nay, the worst domineer over the best, among men. This case baffled the wise among philosophers, and it much troubled David and Jeremiah, [Ps 73:2-3](#), &c.; [Jer 12:1-2](#); and hath ever been matter of some wonder. to the best and wisest of men, as here it was to Habakkuk, who lived in the times of great impieties against God, and of great injustice amongst men. It is most probable he lived and prophesied in the days of Manasseh, when the wicked devoured the man that was more righteous than himself; and this is the subject of his complaint, [Hab 1:1-4](#). Those grievous sins which then abounded, he declareth shall be punished by the Chaldeans, at which he again wondereth: it grieveth him to see, in Judah, the best afflicted by the worst; and it is as much grief to him to foresee the wicked nation of the Chaldeans prosper in the ruins of a more righteous nation, (from the 5th to the 11th verse of the first chapter,) which God commandeth him to foretell. On this he proposeth the case expressly, from [verse 12](#) to the end of the chapter, and which God resolveth for him in the second chapter, where the sins of Judah and the sins of the Chaldeans are enumerated, and at once both are threatened with punishment; when the Chaldeans have punished Judah's sins, the Medes and Persians shall punish the same sins in the Chaldeans. In all which the unspotted righteousness and the admirable wisdom of God is seen, in the government of his church, chastised for her sins against God; and in his government of the world, sinning highly against God, and with greater wickedness acting the same or worse things than those for which by their means God had before punished his church. In fine, the prophet, with steady faith and fervent prayer, addresseth to God, and in most elegant manner recounting God's mercy and faithfulness to his people, [Hab 3:1-19](#), leaves it both a foundation to our hope and pattern for our practice. He doth resolve, as we should, to wait for, rejoice in, and submit to the Lord, in greatest distresses and darkness of providence. An excellent subject for our meditations at this day, as well as in the days of our prophet, whose name seems to imply his wrestlings with these difficulties, or his laying hold, embracing of God; our safest course in such circumstances being to adhere to God. We can but guess at the time of his prophesying, and that we think is rather in the time of Manasseh, than of Hezekiah, or Josiah, though possibly he might live and be a prophet in the first part of Josiah's reign. What tribe or what family he was of we pretend not to tell you, since we cannot pretend to know; but we are sure he was not the pretended messenger that carried a mess of broth out of Judea into Babylon, for Daniel's dinner; and we think it a wonder any thinking man should now believe it, as it would at that day have been, if really done.

Chapter 1

Unto Habakkuk, complaining of the iniquity of the land, [Hab 1:14](#), showed the fearful vengeance by the Chaldeans, [Hab 1:5-11](#). He complaineth that vengeance should be executed by them who are far worse, [Hab 1:12-17](#).

[Hab 1:1](#)

The burden; see [Na 1:1](#); to which we may here add, as proper to this time and place, that the prophet seems to speak of the grievous things here intended as a burden to himself, a trouble he did feel and groan under.

Habakkuk: here we might, as others, guess at his country, parentage, and tribe; but no certainty appears in these: his name may perhaps intimate somewhat, either actively one that embraceth, or passively one embraced, and so may refer to God, or to his people, and intimate good to a people, whom God will ere long embrace; or it may speak one that is puzzled with the intricacy of affairs, and therefore expostulateth, as [Hab 1:2-3](#).

The prophet; not he that is mentioned in the apocryphal book, but a prophet called and sent of God.

Did see; not only in the future certainty of it on others, but did also feel in the present trouble and perplexity wherewith it affected him.

[Hab 1:2](#)

O Lord: unto God alone he makes his application, as only able to redress all grievances.

How long! it may be some years he had preached, and in preaching had complained and cried out against wickedness.

Shall I cry, unto men in thy name, and unto thee in prayer and supplication.

And thou wilt not hear; give answer by correcting or punishing the bad, and by rescuing and delivering the good; by appearing a just Arbitrator and Judge of both.

Cry out, with submission, not murmuring, not impatient, not distrusting the justice or mercy of God. Unto thee, who art more displeased than I or any one else can be disquieted with that I complain of, who art by office and word bound to restrain violence, &c.

Of violence; the unjust and wicked oppressions which I see, others feel, and all good people are endangered by.

And thou wilt not save; by changing the bad, or restraining them, or by overthrowing them, and setting up just and upright men in their room, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, and every where else.

[Hab 1:3](#)

Why dost thou show me? it is a most displeasing sight, and that which troubles me and every good man, to see unjust and injurious men without control, and unpunished, to act their iniquity; and yet, O God, thou not only permittest it to be done, but to be done in sight, and to the grief of thy servants: thus God showeth it, and it is not without just cause, though the cause be hidden.

Iniquity; men of iniquity and vanity, unrighteous toward men, and vain in their thoughts and practices of religion toward God.

And cause me to behold: this explains the former. Grievance: so it is in regard of the effect it hath upon beholders, and such as suffer by this iniquity; it is grief and sorrow to them, it is a grievance they groan under.

For spoiling, such as wasteth, and undoeth them that fall under it, *and violence*, perverting judgment, and turning it into wormwood; or else it is a Hebraism, spoiling and violence, that is, most violent robbing and spoiling each other.

Are before me; every where I see it, to the breaking of mine heart.

There are that raise up strife; or, and there is strife, that is, little else but strife among men, occasioned by these oppressive practices.

And contention: so it will be a Hebraism, expressing endless contentions. It would bear, *and judgment is taken away*, which suits the next verse.

Hab 1:4

Therefore; because the wicked go on with impunity, and the punishment they deserve is deferred.

The law of God, given to this people by the hand of Moses, the whole law, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Is slacked; is slighted, weakened, and little studied, and less obeyed by all sorts.

And judgment; not only private men neglect the law, but magistrates, judges, and public officers pervert, or divert, or obstruct it also.

Doth never go forth, Heb. *to the end*, or, unto victory, with prevalence to restrain the unjust, and to protect the innocent, which is the end of magistracy, [Ro 13:3](#).

The wicked; the unjust and violent man. Doth compass about; as it were besiegeth, surroundeth, with design to oppress and ruin by false witness, interest, or bribery.

Wrong judgment; perverse judgment, wherein innocence is condemned and the guilty are acquitted: so the judges are swords in the bowels, when they should be shields over the bodies of the righteous.

Hab 1:5

Behold ye: here God begins to answer the prophet, and calls for a very particular and exact consideration of the thing; see and ponder.

Among the heathen; what judgments, what punishments have been executed upon the heathen, for like sins.

Regard; weigh it well in all its tendency and consequence, for it is a warning to you, it assures you judgment will overtake you also. Wonder marvellously; as astonished at judgments, too great to be expressed in words, and so strange that it will seem too much to be believed.

For I, the great and glorious God, the just and supreme Judge, *will work a work*; begin, continue, and finish a work; a work I am working, a work of equal severity and justice.

In your days; it shall no more be deferred, [Eze 7:5](#), &c.

Ye will not believe; you wicked violent oppressors will not believe, though the Lord by his prophets foretell it.

Told you; described how, and by whom, and when.

[Hab 1:6](#)

For lo: now the prophet declares particularly what it is that the Lord will work.

I raise up; awaken to action, animate them in it, and strengthen them to accomplish their design.

The Chaldeans, who had subdued other nations, and had already ruined the Assyrian monarchy.

Bitter; cruel, and without mercy, [Jer 6:23](#); [21:7](#).

Hasty; speedy and quick in executing their merciless purposes, as [Isa 5:26-27](#).

Which shall march, Heb. *walk without fear*, and in order, as a conqueror doth in his conquests.

Through the breadth of the land; through all parts of the land, no corner shall escape his search or cruelty.

To possess; not to spoil and be gone, but to take and keep possession, as lord and proprietor in the right of conquest.

The dwelling-places; houses, towns, cities, Jerusalem itself, which they had no right to, till Jewish sins gave occasion for the dispossessing of the Jews, and the introducing of the Chaldeans.

[Hab 1:7](#)

They are terrible and dreadful: to affect the incredulous Jews with greater fear, it is doubled, they are of all nations most terrible; in the fierceness wherewith they assault, and cruelty with which they use their captives. Their judgment, the law they observe, is their own will, and what they please you must submit unto, nor complain of wrong done, forasmuch as they do it.

Their dignity; their authority and superiority, for which you must reverence them; the lordliness of their deportment toward you, or the right they assume to send you captives; all is from themselves, without respect to any other law or rule whatever. How miserable are you like to be, when enslaved to such a barbarous cruelty, and unbounded pride!

Hab 1:8

Their horses also are swifter; they will be sooner upon you than you think, and when once among you, they will be swifter than you can flee from, [Isa 30:16](#); [La 4:19](#).

Than the leopards; a fierce creature, ravenous as the lion, and much swifter, a watchful and sly beast, from which it is very hard to shift.

More fierce, more eager after, and more cruel to the prey, than the evening wolves; which with long fasting in the day, do come out in the evening more fierce on every thing that may be a prey for them: see [Jer 5:6](#); [Eze 22:27](#); [Zep 3:3](#).

Their horsemen; excellent riders, that can manage the speed and fierceness of these horses.

Shall spread themselves all over the land, so many shall they be, and so active, and all strong and hale, as some think the word implieth.

Shall come from far; as far from liking your customs, pitying your persons, or understanding your language, as they are far remote from your country; men that will make you pay the charge of their long and tedious journey.

They shall fly as the eagle; lest you should dream of escape by flight, your enemies (O miserable Jews) shall be so swift, you will think they flew on wings, on eagle's wings, the swiftest of flight, and quickest in espying her prey.

That hasteth to eat; hunger makes her flight the quicker, and her seizure of the prey more bold and daring, [Job 9:26](#); [Eze 17:3](#): so shall your enemies be to you.

Hab 1:9

They, Chaldeans, and in particular these fierce and swift horsemen, shall come all, with one purpose, on the same design, to enrich themselves by making a prey of all.

Their faces shall sup up as the east wind: either thus, their very countenances shall be as blasting, pestiferous, and dangerous as is the east wind in those countries; or thus, all they can sup up, or lay hold on, they will carry eastward; or thus, when you are devoured, they shall set their faces eastward to devour others in those coasts.

They shall gather the captivity; prisoners or captives, called here the captivity, to express the extremity thereof.

As the sand, both for easiness of gathering, and the multitudes of captives gathered.

[Hab 1:10](#)

They, both the king of Babylon and his soldiers, shall scoff, deride and contemn, *at the kings*, which either confederated with the Jews, or else opposed the designs of the Chaldeans; as the kings of Egypt, of Tyre, &c.; or the kings of the Jews, as Jehoiachin and Zedekiah.

The princes, governors, counsellors, valiant commanders, and officers, shall be a scorn unto them, to the whole army of the Chaldeans.

They shall heap dust, and take it; by mighty mounts cast up, or by filling up the trenches about your cities and fortresses, shall master them.

[Hab 1:11](#)

Then: it notes both the time and cause of what happened; extraordinary successes, and a continued series of them, attending the designs and attempts of the Chaldean kings, at last made them so haughty and proud, as to trample on kings, [Hab 1:10](#); and when their pride was at this height, it stops not here.

His mind; the spirit or wind, as the Hebrew, and so some think the prophet does foretell the change of his prosperous gales, his downfall; but it is more natural to understand it of the change of mind in the prosperous Chaldean, he will think other thoughts of himself. his affairs, and of other men.

He shall pass over; break over the bounds of all sober and modest sentiments, exceed in his value of himself, and of his achievements, as Sennacherib first did, [2Ch 32:17-19](#), and next Nebuchadnezzar, surnamed the Great, [Da 4:29-30](#).

Offend: this pride was a great sin, and highly provoked God; for the insolent tyrant idolized himself.

Imputing this his power, the strength by which he had done all this great exploits, or the might and power to which he had advanced himself, unto *his god*: this at first seems a little tolerable, it seems to savour somewhat of religion, yet it is a great offence thus to ascribe his grandeur to a dumb idol, but it is worse to reckon his strength to be his god, as the words will express it in the Hebrew. See [Da 4:29-30](#).

[Hab 1:12](#)

Art thou not from everlasting? in being, thou art that God who art not like the gods of the nations, upstart and novel, but before the mountains were brought forth thou wast God; thou hast permitted, borne with, restrained, overthrown, and punished such proud, bloody, and sacrilegious wretches. In thy works of old, before this proud Chaldean monarch was thought of, thou wert as now, wonderful, just, and good, and thy saints found support in the remembrance thereof, [Ps 74:12](#); [77:5](#); [143:5](#); [Isa 45:21](#). In covenant with thine Israel, which covenant is not of late years, it is an ancient covenant, and as it hath, it still shall be kept for our good.

O Lord; the Sovereign Lord and Ruler of the world, who only art Jehovah.

My God; Judge and Vindex by office; as Judge, engaged to defend, rescue, and avenge the oppressed; and my God or Judge. Whether the prophet speaks only in his own, or in his people's name, he hath a respect to that peculiar relation he or they had to God, much like that [Isa 63:19](#). He refers to the ancient covenant relation which God had taken them into, and implies his hope and expectation of help from God, their Judge and Vindex.

Mine Holy One; holy in thy nature, law, and government, in thy mercies, and in judgments, who dost intend to make thy holiness appear in due time by saving us; though thou seem to forget, or at least to delay the work, yet thou art the Holy One in the midst of us, [Isa 12:6](#), and we wait for thee.

We, who are thine, and oppressed, threatened, and exposed to the avarice and cruelty of the Chaldean, *shall not die;* be utterly cut off and destroyed, for the death of a nation is the destruction or desolation of it. Thou who hast made us thine by an everlasting covenant of mercy, wilt show us such mercy that we shall outlive the rage of our enemies.

O Lord: with humble veneration he doth look towards God, and discerneth what quieteth his spirit, and confirms his faith and patience.

Thou hast ordained, set up, maintained, and designed, them, the Chaldean kingdom, as [Hab 1:6](#) for judgment; to execute this judgment, which is ever tempered with mercy, which ever better, never destroys thy people: see [Isa 10:5](#), &c. Babylon, as Assyria, was the rod of God's indignation, &c.

O mighty God: this he repeats for confirmation and illustration, and intimateth God to be his people's rock and refuge.

Thou hast established, strengthened and fortified, them for correction; to chastise and discipline, not to destroy.

[Hab 1:13](#)

Thou, O Lord, who hast raised and increased the Chaldean kingdom.

Art of purer; of infinite purity and holiness.

Eyes, ascribed unto God to express his knowledge; so his eyes run to and fro, and his eye is upon the righteous.

Than to behold: his omniscience doth behold all things, and so David expresseth it, *Thou beholdest mischief and spite,* to requite it, [Ps 10:14](#); but he doth not, will not, cannot, see with delight, with approbation, evil, of sin and violence.

And canst not look on iniquity; the same thing repeated to confirm us. All this the prophet doth lay down as most undoubtedly true, and on which he stays himself (though he be amazed with the darkness of providences); and by this he will repress all undue murmurings, when he debates with God about his providences: most just and holy; but why thus or thus?

Wherefore lookest; seest all the violence done, and bearest with them that do it; why doth not thy hand remove and avenge what thine eye is offended at, and thy heart abhorreth?

Them that deal treacherously; the Chaldeans, who were a perfidious nation, and ruined many by their treacheries; fraud and force were both alike to them. And it is likely they dealt very falsely with the Jews.

Holdest thy tongue; seemest unconcerned in such a degree as to be silent and say nothing.

When, or whilst; it might seem a fit season to speak, when the violent are about their violence, when the prey is between the teeth and not swallowed.

The wicked; the Chaldean, an oppressor, bloody and treacherous against men, an atheist or idolater against God.

Devoureth; swalloweth down whole, as the word imports, [Nu 16:30](#); [Ps 124:3](#). The man; the Jew, or almost every one of us, as the phrase imports.

More righteous than he: though the Jews were a very corrupt nation, yet, compared with the Chaldeans, they were the better, and of the two the Jew was the less evil. Now this riddle he desired might be unfolded, Why is the juster oppressed by the unjuster?

[Hab 1:14](#)

Makest; not infusing cruel, ravenous, and unsatiable appetites, but permitting them to act according to such appetite which was already in them.

Men; who should be just to all, and wrong none, who were once framed for mutual help in civil societies, and whose life should be beneficence.

As the fishes; of which the greater live on the lesser, and do greedily and all the day long feed on the smaller fry.

Of the sea; where the devourers are more for number, of greater bulk, and swallow greater numbers of the lesser.

As the creeping things; which in the waters are food for the lesser fry; so the world, like the sea, is wholly oppression.

No ruler; none to defend the weak, to restrain the mighty, and to give law to all.

[Hab 1:15](#)

They; either more generally oppressors every where, or else particularly the Chaldeans.

Take up; draw them out slyly and craftily, when they are taken by his bait.

All of them without distinction, all alike, good or bad.

With the angle: it may refer to the delight these oppressors took in these courses, or to the more private way of destroying.

They catch them in their net; another method of the Chaldean rapine, like catching of fish, not singly and one by one, but destroying many together.

And gather them; as if they could never have enough, these Chaldeans do, fisher-like, drive men into their nets and snares. In their drag: this is a third way of destroying fish. The Chaldeans would use all ways to devour the Jews.

Therefore they, the greedy and cruel Chaldeans, rejoice, both in their own gain and in the Jews' ruin.

And are glad: it is doubled to show the certainty of the thing, and probably to intimate the double joy they took in their prosperous oppression.

[Hab 1:16](#)

Therefore, because they prosper and thrive, in which they should see and acknowledge thy wise and mighty providence, *they sacrifice,* idolize and pay Divine honours, ascribe the praise of their victories and acquired glory, unto their net; to their own contrivances, diligence, and power, as if the fisherman should make his net his god, and offer sacrifice for a good draught of fishes taken to the net that took them.

And burn incense, another part of Divine honour, and mostly used in giving thanks and praises, to their drag; to their policy and power, their own counsel conduct, and arms, expressed in the metaphor of a fisherman's drag.

Because by them their portion, State, condition, or interest, *is fat;* great and flourishing.

Their meat; the revenues of the kingdom in general, and the revenues of particular subjects, especially of the commanders and military officers, those who help to spread, draw, and empty the net.

Plenteous; abundant, that it might seem a sufficient provision, as well as a pleasant mess, sufficient for quantity as sweet in quality. It is likely these self-admirers did not only eat the fat of the land they wasted, but laid up in store for themselves.

[Hab 1:17](#)

Shall they? the Chaldeans, Nebuchadnezzar and his armies.

Therefore; shall former success be pledge of future? they have prospered, and they think they shall; wilt thou confirm this to them?

Empty their net; as fishermen empty the full net to fill it again, and cast out what they had taken to take in more; shall these proud and cruel Chaldeans do so still?

And not spare continually; shall they as endlessly as mercilessly waste?

To slay, murderer-like, kill, *the nations;* not single persons, but whole kingdoms and people at once: wilt thou, O most just and mighty God and Judge, suffer these things always? The prophet by the question intimates to us that God most certainly will not suffer it always. The

Lord will in fit time arise and break the oppressors' arm, and save the oppressed church and people of God.

Chapter 2

Unto Habakkuk, waiting for an answer, [Hab 2:1](#), is showed that he must wait in faith, [Hab 2:2-4](#). The judgment of the Chaldeans for insatiableness, [Hab 2:5-8](#), ambition, [Hab 2:9-11](#), cruelty, [Hab 2:12-14](#), treacherous dealing, [Hab 2:15-17](#), and idolatry, [Hab 2:18-20](#).

[Hab 2:1](#)

I will stand: the first chapter ended with that difficult and perplexed question, why God suffers the wicked so long to prosper in their oppressions of the righteous? This chapter represents the prophet waiting and musing, studying with himself what account he might give to himself, and waiting what account God would give him of it. He will stand in a posture of meditating, observing, and waiting.

Upon my watch: possibly the prophet may have respect to the manner of the Jews, who in their solemn prayers and waiting on God had their stations and watches (as Buxtorf observeth in verbo עִמָּר;) in their synagogues, or at Jerusalem. But I rather think the prophet resolveth to be like one that is to be a watchman, as prophets are, [Eze 3:17](#), for the people of God. Or passively, in my watch, i.e. where my adversaries, like besieging enemies, observe and watch me. It contains his diligent and persevering expectation and observing.

And set me; fixedly and with resolution not to leave my station, as the Hebrew implieth; it is the same thing more emphatically expressed than in the word stand.

Upon the tower; either watch-tower, or besieged tower, or within a circle, out of which I will not stir till I receive an answer.

And will watch, most attentively observe, to see what he, the Lord, [Hab 1:12](#), will say unto me, or signify unto me; waiting for mine own satisfaction, and for the information of others.

And what I shall answer: there are many that are perplexed at the intricacy of providence, and some inquire to be instructed; some propose doubts and fears; and others do quarrel and perversely wrangle with God and his prophets; and how I may answer these from the word of God is that I wait for, saith our prophet.

When I am reproved; when called to give an account of the mysteriousness of providence; when either to satisfy doubters, or to silence quarrellers.

[Hab 2:2](#)

And the Lord, on whom he waited, and who ruleth all affairs, answered me; did hear my desire, and gave direction what I should do.

Write; what is only spoken is soon forgot, but what is written is more lasting, therefore write thou the vision showed to thee.

The vision; the things thou seest, or which thou shalt see.

Make it plain; make the writing very plain, engrave it, as was their manner, upon tables; what was of public concern, and therefore to be published, was anciently written or engraven upon tables, smooth stones, or wood, and then hung up in a public place to be read.

That he may run that readeth it; that none may need to make a stop, but hold on his course; in the greatest haste of business, every one may plainly and clearly discern what is written.

[Hab 2:3](#)

For; the reason why it must be written is because it should not be forgotten, whilst the appointed time is somewhat afar off; write it that it may be preserved in memory.

The vision; the accomplishment of the things showed unto thee, what thou seest is coming, and what thou foretellest to them, will take effect.

For an appointed time; determined and fixed with God, though unknown to men.

At the end; when the period appointed of God shall come, then, and not till then, it will be accomplished.

It shall speak; be accomplished, and fully made good.

Not lie; not disappoint your expectation.

Though it tarry, from the time of the prophet's seeing it, which was about Manasseh's time, or from about the time of captivating the ten tribes, until Cyrus's time.

Wait for it; expect it, then it will speak out, that every one who hath an ear may hear it.

It will surely come, when the ruin of Babylon, never to be more, built, shall proclaim the justice of God against his and his church's enemies, and what difference there is between corrections on his people and destruction upon enemies.

It will not tarry; not beyond the appointed time, which, reckoned from the captivity of the ten tribes, was one hundred and sixty years, or from Manasseh's captivity, was about one hundred and twenty years, more or less, to the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, when the riddle was fully unfolded.

[Hab 2:4](#)

Behold; note it: there are two sorts of persons who concern themselves in this puzzling question of the Divine providence; some object. and quarrel contest with God, proudly, discontentedly, and impatiently; others inquire humbly, submitting themselves to God, and waiting for him.

His soul, the heart and mind of every such one, which is lifted up; that proudly contests with the justice and wisdom of the Divine Providence, that slights promises of deliverance at so great a distance, and provides for his own safety by his own wit; *is not upright;* is very corrupt and wicked, full of (not only distrusts, but) positive conclusions against God's future

punishing the wicked: such a one is so wicked that he thinks God will not punish the violent and bloody, the superstitious and idolatrous Babylonian.

The just; the humble, upright, and comparatively righteous one, who adores the depth of Divine providence, and is persuaded of the truth of Divine promises, and doth approve the season God chooseth.

Shall live; supports himself, and quiets his own heart, whilst he foreseeeth the approaching deliverance of Zion.

By his faith; his well-grounded dependence on a persuasion of the truth of God's promises touching the relief of the faithful servants of God, whose deliverance he believes to be certain, and so waits for the performance of promises made to him and them.

[Hab 2:5](#)

Yea also, or moreover, furthermore, because he, the king of Babylon, or every one of them, *transgresseth by wine;* which vice destroys kings and kingdoms, and in the excesses of luxury the Babylonian king Belshazzar, his city and kingdom of Babylon, fell a prey to Darius and Cyrus.

A proud man; insolent in his behaviour towards all, both retainers, subjects, strangers, and conquered enemies: such pride shall have a fall.

Neither keepeth at home; is ever abroad warring upon some or other, which though it enlarge his countries, it weakeneth his kingdom and gives advantage to malcontents and conspirators, besides that it exposeth him to imminent and continual dangers.

Enlargeth his desire as hell; is most insatiably greedy to devour all, as far from saying It is enough as the grave is.

Is as death; as pernicious and ravenous.

Cannot be satisfied; all is too little for him, and there is no possibility to satiate his appetite. Gathereth, addeth one after another, unto him, to his kingdom, all nations, that are round about him; all he knows are designed upon, and he purposeth to engross them.

Heapeth unto him all people; another expression of the same import. Now all this, foretold of the future temper of the Babylonish kings and kingdoms, is a sure presage of their no long continuance in grandeur, but that shortly Divine vengeance will overtake them. This might be an answer to disputers.

[Hab 2:6](#)

Shall not? the prediction is moulded thus in a question, to give it emphasis, and make it more affective.

All these, who have been oppressed, contumeliously used, and perfidiously deceived; all the people who have feared the power and policy of Babylon.

Take up a parable; turn him and his state into a by-word and scorn.

Against him; the king of Babylon, awhile since the terror, now the scorn of nations.

Taunting; short, but smart, wounding scoffs; and whereas men usually bewail and condole the mishaps of great, brave, and just kings or kingdoms, all people shall exult and triumph in the miseries of this oppressive, luxurious, and base kingdom.

Woe! either it is a threat of like vengeance on all such transgressors, or it may be a publishing the miseries come upon Babylon.

To him that increaseth; by rapine, frauds, and injurious dealings multiplieth his treasures, as the king of Babylon did.

Not his; it was not his though he had it; it was not his right though it was in his possession. Or else thus, one misery of the Babylonians shall be, they increase wealth, but not for themselves, but for the Medes and Persians.

How long? this seems to be the sigh of the oppressed, who think it long ere the oppressor fall.

To him that ladeth himself; woe to him that is a burden to others, while he burdens himself with amassed treasures gathered by extortion and grievous, unjust taxes!

With thick clay; gold and silver, so called to lower the over-value of them, and perhaps to mind the tyrant of a clay-bed.

[Hab 2:7](#)

Shall they not? this question doth more fully ascertain the thing. Rise up; either grow up, or else, as men who resolve to do a thing thoroughly, get upon their feet and stand to it. The Medes and Persians were growing to power, and would ere long rise up to ruin Babylon.

Suddenly; and surprise it in security, so they were down ere they did perceive themselves falling; and such sudden ruin is most dreadful.

Bite thee; devour and eat thee up.

And awake; thou, O Belshazzar, (and Babylon with thee,) wilt in drunken slumbers (unable to resist) fall into the hands of the awakened Medes and Persians.

Vex thee; as thou hast been, O Babylon, vexation to others by thy proud and insolent behaviour, by scoffs and cruelties, so others shall now be a vexation unto thee.

Thou shalt be for booties; not only your lands, houses, and goods, but your persons, and those of your relations, shall be booties, taken and sold for slaves, to the profit of them, Medes and Persians.

[Hab 2:8](#)

The prophet proceeds to give account of the reasons on which the Divine nemesis moves in this affair, and these may convince and confirm us in it.

Thou hast spoiled many nations; slain their people, sacked their cities, robbed their treasuries, led captive the subjects, and deposed kings, and done this to many nations, whose cry is come up to heaven. [Jer 25:9](#), and [Jer 27:3](#), recounts some six or seven nations. It is likely all the nations that lay round about this kingdom were spoiled by it. Now shalt thou be paid in thine own coin. The remnant of the nations unspoiled by thee, shall combine against thee, and execute the Lord's just sentence, and spoil the spoiler.

Thee, O Babylon.

Because of men's blood; either shed by private murders which cried to Heaven for vengeance, or shed by ill application of the sword of justice, or continual needless wars upon her neighbours.

And for the violence, injustice and oppressions, of the land; of the whole land of Chaldea, if you understand it actively, or else, if passively taken, it is the violence done by Babylon to the land of Judea especially.

Of the city; either Babylon, which oppressed Jerusalem, or Jerusalem, oppressed by Babylon.

And all that dwell therein: this also, as understood actively or passively, is applicable to either Babylon's or Jerusalem's citizens and inhabitants.

[Hab 2:9](#)

Woe! it is a general and comprehensive threat against all tyrants and oppressors. To him; every one that is guilty of the sin.

That coveteth an evil covetousness; or driveth a trade of oppression, to gain by what means soever, right or wrong. This is evil of sin, and will end in evil of trouble.

To his house; his family, which he would enrich and greaten by raising it on the ruins of oppressed innocents.

That he may set his nest on high; a proverbial speech, in allusion to birds of prey, which build their nests in the greatest heights, [Ob 1:21](#). Greatness and an advanced estate gotten by rapine and prey may seem, but never can be, a security to any monarch.

On high; higher than God and justice set him.

That he may be delivered; kept secure, and out of danger from all below him.

From the power of evil, Heb. *from the palm of the hand of evil*, that no evil may fasten on, though it may attempt against them.

[Hab 2:10](#)

Thou, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, *hast consulted* shame; hast mistaken thy measures, thoughtest to advance thy glory, and to illustrate thy name; but it is in very deed the shame of thy reign that it hath been bloody.

To thy house; or family, thy royal family.

By cutting off many people; destroying and impoverishing multitudes of men and cities.

Hast sinned; it was thy sin, whatever thou didst think of it.

Against thy soul; or life of thy person, and posterity, this blood and cruelty will surely ruin thy house.

[Hab 2:11](#)

For the stone, the strength of thy house, accuseth thee.

Shall cry out; as if it had a voice, it crieth to God for vengeance.

The beam, on which thy chambers are laid, *shall answer it*; confirms the charge against thee; and that fabric cannot be long a safe or a beautiful habitation, whose stones and beams are shaken with the strong cries of innocent blood, and families ruined by the oppression of the builder.

[Hab 2:12](#)

Whosoever he be that lays foundations in blood, is here threatened, and none so great as to keep Off the woe, deserved and menaced.

A town, Heb. *city*.

With blood; in the guilt and with the cruelty of murdering the innocents it is the worst cement which is tempered with blood of murdered men, women, and children.

And stablisheth; goeth about or thinketh to establish the foundations of a city.

A city; Babylon in particular.

By iniquity; by force and fraud, by riches extorted from the just possessor.

[Hab 2:13](#)

Behold: the prophet calls for attention, and that we observe who it is will execute vengeance on bloody cities and kingdoms. Babylon is a mighty city, and the kingdom is over-match to any kingdom, and perhaps it may be thought none can give Babylon blood to drink, or kindle a fire in her, that shall consume her.

Is it not of the Lord of hosts? though men cannot, the Lord of hosts can; and is not this vengeance his? will not he repay?

The people shall labour in the very fire; either Babylonians and their confederates labour for that the fire shall consume; or the adversaries of Babylon shall be able to endure a service for God against Babylon hot as if they laboured in the fire. Either literally taken or figuratively will well consist with the text.

The people, either Medes and Persians against Babylon, or the Chaldeans for Babylon, shall weary themselves, spend their strength and life, for very vanity; the one to preserve what shall never profit them, which they laid up in vain, the other to destroy all (though they lose their booty by destroying it) in the fire; yet all this from the Lord of hosts, justly punishing Babylon for all her cruelties.

[Hab 2:14](#)

The earth; the land of Chaldea, of the Medes and Persians, and their confederates, the lands oppressed by the Chaldeans, but Judea more particularly.

Shall be filled; every eye shall see, or ear hear, or tongue speak what they know.

With the knowledge, sight and sense, *of the glory,* just and glorious proceedings of God against Babylon; for when God shall appear to execute his just judgments upon his own and his church's enemies, he will appear glorious indeed.

The Lord; the God of Israel, their Holy One, as [Hab 1:12](#).

As the waters cover the sea: it is a proverbial speech, expressing the general notice and deep sense all should have of God's justice, truth, power, and zeal against mighty oppressors, such as Babylon was full of.

[Hab 2:15](#)

Another public and crying sin of this Chaldean kingdom was excessive drinking, and making one another drunk, and for this God will severely punish.

Puttest thy bottle to him; forcing them by importunity or threats to drink by greater measures than they can bear.

Makest him drunken also; never givest over till thou hast made him vile and loathsome, as well as senseless in his drink.

That thou mayest look on their nakedness; designing to put the greatest abuse on them, exposing them to view, scorn, and derision, or to beastly or not to be named uncleanness, which vice the Babylonians are charged with by Herodotus and Ctesias.

[Hab 2:16](#)

Thou, O king of Babylon, *art filled,* shortly shalt be, and it is as sure as if already done, with shame for glory; as much filled with shame by the contempt they shall cast upon thee whom

thou didst once vilify and contemn; thy shame shall be greater than ever was thy glory, as the Hebrew seems to import.

Drink thou also: thy sin was that thou didst drink, and madest others drink to shameless excess too; now thy punishment shall be to drink of the cup of God's wrath, which will fill thee with astonishment and calamities.

Let thy foreskin be uncovered; let thy shame be laid open before all; this retaliation is just and necessary.

The cup; a Scripture phrase, expressing the just judgments and corrections of sinners.

Of the Lord's right hand; it is said to be in his right hand here, and in his hand, [Ps 75:8](#).

Shall be turned unto thee: they turned the cup of pleasure about, God will carry the cup of indignation about also, and make them drink deep of it, they shall not escape.

Shameful spewing shall be upon thy glory; then shalt thou be as much loathed as a shameful drunkard is in his vomit.

[Hab 2:17](#)

The violence of Lebanon shall cover thee: this is added to all the rest, that God's people might know this was the time of recompences for Zion, that the violence by Babylon done to Judea and its inhabitants should be avenged and no longer deferred, but now should overwhelm Babylon, in which should be made as great devastations as ever she made in the fruitful and beautiful mountain Lebanon, supposed, in [De 3:25](#), to express the land of Canaan; or else by Lebanon may be meant the temple, and house of the sanctuary, (as the Chaldee paraphrast,) because it was built of the cedars of Lebanon.

Thee; Babylon.

The spoil of beasts; such spoil as by hunters is made among wild beasts, when they endeavour to destroy the whole kind of them, such havoc, and by all the ways and methods that art and subtlety can invent to extirpate them, such wastes shalt thou suffer; for thou art to be destroyed: Or else thus, such desolations shall thine enemies make in thee as wild, ravenous, and insatiable beasts make where they prevail, they shall tear and devour all they seize, and seize all that peep abroad, and this shall make all men afraid continually.

Because of men's blood, &c.: see [Hab 2:8](#).

[Hab 2:18](#)

Here the prophet removes the confidences of Babylon; she would boast of her gods, and depend on them, but this will be vain and unprofitable, it is not imaginable that these idols should help these persons.

The graven image; carved in wood, or stone, for of such materials did these idolmakers sometimes make their gods.

The maker: it is brutish folly in any one to value, or desire to be helped, by such lifeless idols, but it is greatest folly for him that makes the image, that remember how it was hewed, plead, tumbled about, and all this without the least degree of sense or feeling of what it suffered; and can that be sensible of my sorrows which feels not any thing itself?

The molten image; idols made of gold or silver, or any other rustle metal, were framed out of the metal first melted, and are therefore called molten images.

A teacher of lies; but whether graven or molten, yet all such images are but teachers of lies, [Jer 10:8, 14](#). They withdraw the mind from God, our true and only helper, and bewitch men to trust to idols, in which is no help, which ever proved lies to all that trusted on them.

That the maker; who knows, for he saw that there was no life, strength, or wisdom in one or other; it is shameless in any, but most in him that made the idol, to worship his own work, and rely upon that which he knows hath no eyes, or hands, or ears, but what his tool framed for it.

His work; his own work, and yet his god! the product of his art, and yet the hope of his soul! O brutish folly, self-contradiction!

Trusteth therein; resteth confident of defence, and rescue from evil, by it.

Dumb idols; which neither can answer a question, nor give a direction in a strait; can neither promise good to a friend, nor denounce a threat against an enemy.

[Hab 2:19](#)

In the former verse the prophet declared the uselessness and unprofitableness of the idols of Babylon, now he threatens the idolaters. They sinned greatly by placing their confidence in them, and they should suffer the more for it.

The wood; whatever shape art may give it, or whatever veneration blind idolaters may bear to it, it is still wood, no better; a log, a worthless block.

Awake: this expresseth the idolater's prayer to his idol. Awake; what! is he a sleepy god? No, not so much, it is a lifeless log, and its eyes never did see.

The dumb stone; another sort of their useless idols, senseless as the stones, and still as unable to rise or help as before they were graven and carved; it is a stone, no god.

Arise; another form of praying to this idol; and when the idol can rise Babylon shall be helped, till then it must abide its sorrows.

It shalt teach: sottish men! in misery to hope that lifeless idols shall counsel and direct. What! dumb, and without sense, and yet teach!

Behold; look, ye selfdeceiving idolaters, consult your own senses, see what matter they are made of.

It is laid over with gold and silver; see the facings or plates are different from that which is under, and can that be a god that is made up of such different materials? it were more like men to pull off the gold and silver, and with these to purchase your safety.

There is no breath at all; not so much as the soul of a brute in them.

[Hab 2:20](#)

But the Lord: what idols are. he had already showed, a doctrine of lies, impotent and lifeless statues; but the God of Israel is not like them. He is Jehovah, fountain of being, life, power, and salvation to his people; he can do all he will for or against a people.

Is in his holy temple, or palace of his holiness: he is in his temple and in heaven, every where at all times; though his people be in Babylon, yet he is where he doth hear, see, and discern their state, and whence he promised to relieve and help them.

*Let all the earth; both Chaldea the oppressive, and Judea the oppressed, and Medes and Persians and all their confederates, let all these nations *keep silence before him*; fear, submit, pray, wait for, and depend on him: let his enemies be silent, fear, make their peace, and prevent his displeasure; let his people be silent, reverence, hope, pray, and wait for him. who will arise and have mercy on them, and destroy their enemies; who will make it to be well with the righteous, and again will make it ill with the wicked; who will fully and satisfactorily solve the doubts and unfold the riddles of his own providence.*

Chapter 3

Habakkuk's prayer, [Hab 3:1-2](#). He describeth God's majesty, and wonders wrought in his people's behalf, [Hab 3:3-16](#). He professeth his unshaken trust in God, [Hab 3:17-19](#).

[Hab 3:1](#)

A prayer: the prophet required the earth Should be silent before God, and now gives them example; he waits on and prays to God in his holy temple: some say it is a prayer of intercession, and that the word carrieth it so. Habakkuk the prophet: see [Hab 1:1](#).

*Shigionoth; a musical note, say some, and such note as the Jews have no certain knowledge of. Others say *Shigionoth* is ignorances, which the prophet doth confess, and sueth for the pardon of; both he and the people had erred, were offended at the darkness of Divine providences, and needed pardon as well as instruction: or it may be a prayer on occasion of the many and great changes Providence wrought in the affairs of the world and the church.*

[Hab 3:2](#)

I have heard; received answer to the inquiry made [Hab 1:13-17](#), whether by voice from heaven, or by inward illumination or irradiation of the mind, or any other way of impression from the prophetic Spirit, needs not be inquired.

Thy speech; the report or declaration God made to him concerning the future corrections of his own people, and the devastations Babylon would make among them; and next, the

destruction which should fall upon the Babylonians by the Medes and Persians, which is summarily set down, [Hab 2:1-20](#).

Was afraid; trembled at the apprehension of these sad things, which both we and they were to suffer; he saw them as certain and grievous.

Revive; not only keep alive, but somewhat refresh, renew, give some new strength to thy church and people, who wait for thee.

Thy work; thy church, called, [Isa 45:11](#), as here, God's work, in an eminent manner, above other people; so the apostle, we are his workmanship, [Eph 2:10](#): or else by work may be meant, the returning of the captivity, and restoring them to their own land, which was the great thing God did promise to do for them; and the prophet prays for some kindness from the Lord, that may be a revival of the hope, assurance, and joy of it.

In the midst of the years: it is not needful we report the different account of these years, and the precise midst of them assigned by some; perhaps it may point to that time when Evil-merodach exalted Jehoiachin out of prison, which, [2Ki 25:27](#), was in the 37th year of their captivity; but I rather think it is more vulgarly to be taken for any time within the term of the sad and troublesome days which would last seventy years.

Make known: it is an affectionate request, and (as such often are) somewhat abrupt; make known either thy truth, or wisdom, or power, or compassion, or all; make it known that thou art our God, and we thy people, that thou still hast a care of us: or what next follows makes the sense full.

In wrath, whilst thy just displeasure burns against us for our sins, *remember mercy*; make it appear thou hast not forgotten to be gracious, let thy people see thou rememberest mercy towards them.

[Hab 3:3](#)

God, the God of our fathers, our God, came; appeared, discovered himself, for that is his coming, who, since he fills all places at all times, cannot be said to come by any change of place.

Teman; either appellatively, the south, or else as a proper name of a mountain or country. so called from Teman, son of Eliphaz, and grandson of Esau. It is also called Seir, or is one particular hill among those many which make up Mount Seir. It was not far from Mount Sinai, where the law was given, and the prophet hath respect to that [De 33:2](#), where God appeared in a manner equally glorious and terrible, *The Holy One of Israel*.

Mount Paran; which was a name to wilderness, plains, and a mountain, of which the prophet here speaketh, and in [De 33:2](#) it is said God shined thence. This the prophet mentions as a support of his faith, as an encouragement to others, as a motive why God should renew his work among them, since he so gloriously appeared among their fathers, and made a covenant with them.

Selah: to the argument he addeth this to awaken us to attention.

His glory; lightnings and thunders, and fire and smoke, tokens of the power, majesty, and greatness of God, at the sight whereof Moses himself trembled. Covered, overspread, intercepted, and obscured, the heavens; that part of the visible heavens under which Israel then encamped.

The earth, that part of the earth where this was done, *was full of his praise*; of works which deserved then, and still do deserve, to be had in remembrance, with praise to God who did them.

Hab 3:4

His brightness, that lustre in which God appeared, that unparalleled splendour which shined from him, was as the light; pure, clear as the sun, but much more dazzling and overcoming.

Horns: some read it beams or rays of light, and so the Hebrew will bear, and thus it is plain.

Out of his hand: our God is all glory and light; Moses's face shined; the face, yea hands, of our God shine with glorious light; he dwelleth in light.

There; either in that place where he thus appeared, or in that light wherewith he appeared.

Was the hiding of his power: one would think his brightness should have discovered, not hid his power; it did both, it discovered much of it, but hid much more; it was light inaccessible, and therefore a hiding light.

Power; strength or might: by what was there done it did evidently appear, God, who was there, could do much more, but it could not appear how much he could do.

Hab 3:5

Before him: when God was leading the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan, he made the pestilence to go before him, so preparing room for his people.

The pestilence, which wasted the inhabitants of Canaan, swept them out.

Burning coals; burning fevers, and other distempers of fiery and destructive nature, which destroyed the accursed nations.

Went forth; as sent, and observing the way he directed.

At his feet; kept even pace, or waited on him, were his immediate forerunners. All this mentioned as arguments to prevail for somewhat like these for Israel, and against Israel's enemies. O God, revive some such work amidst us.

Hab 3:6

He stood; gave his presence with Joshua and others, as one that stood by while the work was done.

Measured: he divided to them their inheritance, and did this without toil or difficulty, his very presence with his people was enough to make it known what he allotted to them. The earth; the Promised Land.

He beheld; looked with a frowning countenance, with anger in his eye.

Drove asunder; cast them out, or caused them to flee, as many did out of that country; his eye did this, for he looked on them and did this.

The nations; the cursed nations.

The everlasting mountains were scattered; either literally understood, as [Na 1:5](#), and may relate to that the psalmist minds, [Ps 114:4](#), [6](#), when the whole mount, all the mountainous parts of Sinai, tremble, [Ex 19:18](#), &c.; or figuratively, the state of these nations, seeming as immovable as mountains, yet soon shook and dissolved, before the rebuke of the Lord.

The perpetual hills did bow; an elegant immutation of the phrase, to illustrate and confirm the same thing.

His ways are everlasting; the wisdom, goodness, justice, holiness, faithfulness, and power of God, which he showeth in the methods of his governing his church and people, are everlasting, they are the same, and where the same circumstances concur the same effects of his power may be hoped for. So the prophet pursueth the argument; they are everlasting loving-kindnesses with which he embraceth his church.

[Hab 3:7](#)

I saw; not with the eye, but with his mind and understanding, in reading the history of Israel's travels.

The tents, for the people that dwelt in them. *Of Cushan*; some say of Cushen-rishathaim, in Othniel's time, and under his victories over them; but I rather think it is meant of the Ethiopians, on the confines of Arabia, that land of Cush, near whose borders Israel's march through and encampings in the wilderness had very often lain.

In affliction; in fear and pain, lest that mighty people, under the conduct of their general, (famed for miracles,) should, as a violent storm, fall on them and despoil them.

The curtains, for those that dwell within them; these people dwelt in tents, and these made up on the sides with curtains.

The land; people of the land. Midian; a people sprung from one of Abraham's sons by Keturah, who gave his name Midian to the land, as well as to the people.

Did tremble; were sore afraid of the arms of Israel, which at last, by God's express direction, were employed against Midian, and cut off five kings, and destroyed the country. These terrible things our God, whose ways are everlasting, hath done to carry our fathers from Egypt to Canaan: let him, who is our God, still revive his work, &c.

[Hab 3:8](#)

The prophet recalls to memory the miraculous dividing of the Red Sea and Jordan, when God divided them to make a passage for his people, when by a miracle he made the devouring element to be a safeguard to his people, when it was not displeasure against the sea or the river, but favour to Israel, that moved him to do this. The prophet repeats the question, to impress the mind of the captive Jews with deeper apprehensions of the mercy of their God.

The rivers: see [Na 1:4](#).

The sea; the Red Sea.

Didst ride, as a general at the head of his army, leading them forward on some great exploit. Upon thine horses; alluding to the manner of men, with whom horses are of greatest, strongest, and stateliest preparations against an enemy; but these were not designed against the sea as against an enemy.

Thy chariots of salvation: but with these horses are joined (for the decorum of the figure) chariots, that are chariots of salvation for his people: cheer up then, the Lord hath the same love and power still.

[Hab 3:9](#)

Thy bow; one part of armour put for the whole; or else the Lord here is represented as armed, in readiness to smite through all enemies, having his bow in his hand.

Was made quite naked; the case taken off, that when it was to be used there might be no delay.

According to the oaths of the tribes; in pursuance of his oath made to our fathers: he promised, and confirmed the promise by oath, that he would drive out the Canaanites, and this oath is here called *oaths*, because repeated and renewed at several times; and it is *oaths of*, i.e. to, the tribes, to raise their hope in their present low condition not Abraham here mentioned, lest they should be upbraided with degenerating and losing the right to the promises; but it is *tribes*, the right is in them.

Even thy word of promise.

Selah; note it well.

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers: when they were to march through a dry and thirsty land where no water was, how should they subsist? What good to be defended from perishing by the sword of an enemy, and be left to perish for want of refreshing waters? This then is added to complete the mercy; our God made rivers in the desert for them, and satisfied them with streams out of the flinty rock.

[Hab 3:10](#)

The mountains; literally taken, it is an elegant hyperbole, expressing to us the glorious effects of God's power and presence; and thus Sinai and the contiguous hills, the whole mount, [Ex](#)

[19:18](#), are intended: or if you take it figuratively, these are kings and states, whose hieroglyphics in Scripture are mountains.

Saw; were sensible of, showed they were sensible of his approach and presence.

Trembled; were grieved; so it will well suit to mountains metaphorically taken, it was grief to the kings and states to see God own, conduct, and prosper Israel, [Nu 22:3](#); [Josh. 2:9-11](#): or *trembled*, i.e. were shaken as with an earthquake, [Ex 19:18](#); [Ps 68:8](#); [114:4](#), [6](#); so it suits the letter of the text.

The overflowing; the inundation, which at that season was wont to be very great, the mighty floods on Jordan.

Passed by; passed away, i.e. at the word of God the waters below flowed and ran away from those above, which stood on a heap, to make a path for Israel.

The deep; either the deep channel in which Jordan flowed, the very bottom of the river, appeared; or the deep, i.e. the Red Sea.

Uttered his voice; with dreadful roaring, like a mighty voice, parted its waters; divided, but with great and terrible noise, in this unusual commotion.

Lifted up his hands; testified its obedience to the command of God, as by lifting up the hand one doth at distance signify his ready compliance with the command, or direction: or *hands*, i.e. sides; so when the upper waters stood on a heap, both in Jordan and the Red Sea, they appeared as with sides or flankers unto the Israelites.

On high; like a mountain, visible and conspicuous to all.

[Hab 3:11](#)

The sun and moon stood still: though the sun rejoice as a giant to run his race, and had constantly come out of his chamber to run it about two thousand five hundred years past, yet now he stops his course, and with his stay puts stop to the motion of moon and stars, at the command of God's minister and Israel's captain, [Jos 10:12-13](#).

Habitation; so the psalmist, [Ps 19:4](#), speaks of a pavilion or tabernacle pitched for the sun, where at Joshua's word, seconded with the word of Joshua's and Israel's God, he makes a halt as it were, stands at the door of his tabernacle to behold and forward the strange work, the miraculous overthrow of the five conspiring kings.

At the light of thine arrows they went: as we read the words they seem somewhat obscure and perplexed, yet very intelligible in this paraphrase: at the light, according to the light which thine arrows gave by their glittering heads, polished shafts, and bright feathers; in their flight thine arrows, O God, for these were the arrows of Israel and thine arrows too, as the sword of Gideon was the sword of the Lord.

They, i.e. sun and moon, went, directed their course, and took their way compliant with the flights of these arrows, not hastening to the place of their going down whilst Israel had arrows to shoot, or enemies that day to discomfit, whilst they were to lift up a spear against

any enemy that day. The marginal reading of these words is much plainer: *thine arrows walked in the light*, (which was miraculously continued,) and thy spears walked in the brightness of the lightning (as I venture for once to read the words from the Hebrew); so dreadful was that day to the enemy, so joyful to Israel. O let some such day arise on captive Jews, revive thy works of old: so the prophet prays.

[Hab 3:12](#)

Thou, our God, *didst march*, as the victorious Conqueror leading still thine armies, the tribes of Israel, through the land of Canaan, to subdue the remainders of thine enemies and theirs, and to give thine Israel possession of the Promised Land.

In indignation against them for their sins.

Thou didst thresh, break to pieces, *the heathen*, the nation: devoted to destruction; these were cut in pieces by the sword of Israel.

[Hab 3:13](#)

Thou wentest forth: pursuant of his metaphor, the prophet speaks of God as marching on before his people; or it may refer to the ark, a token of God's presence before the people.

For the salvation; to complete the salvation begun in bringing them out of Egypt, and carrying them through the wilderness, and to be finished in settling them in Canaan.

Of the people; thy chosen people, the tribes of thine inheritance.

Even for salvation: it is repeated for confirmation, and to affect us with the greatness of the mercy.

With thine anointed; or, for thine anointed, i.e. all Israel; or under the conduct of thine anointed, Joshua, type of the Messiah, by whose hand all these great things were done.

Thou woundedst the head; gavest a deadly wound to the princes and kings of Canaan, enemies to Israel, who were cut off, and their families utterly destroyed.

Out of the house; royal palaces, or ancient dwellings, and settled habitations; of which slaughter of Canaanitish kings, see [Ps 136:17-20](#).

Of the wicked; the courts of these kings were houses of greatest wickednesses, for which they were destroyed.

By discovering the foundation unto the neck: razing the foundations of their power, and destroying all from foot to head.

Selah: all which is to be heeded, and well minded.

[Hab 3:14](#)

Thou, O God, didst strike through with his staves; either meant of the staves or arms of the Canaanitish kings which they lifted up against Israel, thereby provoking Israel to fight, in which being overcome, they perished by their own arms taken from them; or it may be meant of the weapons of Joshua and Israel, called staves, for that they were arrows and spears, which are armed staves: or it might be translated tribes; so with the tribes of Israel, the tribes of God's anointed, or by them, were these Canaanites destroyed.

The head of his villages; all the cities, and all the unwalled towns; for so Israel destroyed the daughters with the mothers, i.e. the villages with the cities.

They; the inhabitants of Canaan, but particularly the five kings, [Hab 3:11](#); of whose conspiracy you read [Jos 10:1-43](#), which see.

Came out as a whirlwind; with violence invading every side; a tempest made up of contrary winds and exhalations, moving as violently as irregularly.

To scatter; to disperse and drive away from the earth.

Their rejoicing was as to devour; the joy they took was such as is the joy of men who take the spoil of enemies, and come to feast, not fight; they dreamed of nothing else but eating up God's people as they would eat bread.

The poor; helpless and friendless as they seemed to be, poor Israel.

Secretly; either by secret conspiracy, or by secret execution of the plot they laid against Israel.

[Hab 3:15](#)

Thou, O God, or thou, O Israel, notwithstanding all plots and opposition, didst walk; heldest on thy way, and walkedst from thy entering on the east of the land to the west thereof; from Beth-el, Jordan, and Jericho on the east, where they entered the land that lay within Jordan.

Through, rather to, (as Junius, Tremellius, and Grotius,) *the sea,* the most western parts Of all the land God gave; they took possession from east to west, to the great sea, the western sea, the mightiest sea the Jews of that time knew, called here by way of eminency *the heap of great waters;* called *the great sea,* [Eze 47:10, 15, 19, 20](#), as [Jos 9:1](#). So was fulfilled what was promised, and they took possession of that was estated on them, [Jos 1:3-4](#). I rather refer this 15th verse in this manner, than, with most interpreters, to the Red Sea, which is to me a repetition unseemly for so short and elegant an enumeration of God's wonderful deliverances and blessings to Israel, from their leaving Egypt to their settling in Canaan.

[Hab 3:16](#)

When I heard, what dreadful desolations God threatened against Israel, [Hab 1:5-11](#), for of those he now speaketh and meditateth, having finished his elegant description of God's wonderful works of mercy toward Israel of old, and left them as a foundation of comfort and hope.

My belly, or heart, or bowels, or inward parts, [Pr 20:27](#), trembled; another effect and sign of surprising fears and astonishment.

At the voice; at the mere report. Rottenness entered into my bones; a consumption and decay of all my strength; a languishing of my spirits, and a declining of my rigour: a very usual effect of great fears.

I trembled in myself; I was all shaken, as with an earthquake, no part was free or unshaken. That I might rest in the day of trouble; these fears awakened my remembrance of that God, and those wonders which I have recounted; these fears have occasioned my search into this mystery of Providence, that, understanding it I might, as I do, betake myself to God, and his covenanted mercies, that I may rest in him, who will make it go well with the righteous, even with those righteous who shall live to see and feel the troubles of those days.

When he cometh up; the king of Babylon, with all his bitter and cruel nations, bent on violence and rapine.

Unto the people; against the Jews, my people, saith the prophet.

He will invade them with mighty force, and cut in pieces, make most bloody work among them.

With his troops; with numerous armies, and spoil in troops, where what one leaves another will take; where none escape the fury of some or other in the troops: see this accomplished [2Ki 25:1-30](#).

[Hab 3:17](#)

To war foreseen the prophet supposeth famine, and describeth the most grievous, as indeed it fell out.

Although the fig tree, which was in that country a very considerable part of their provision to live upon, *shall not blossom;* not give the least sign of bringing forth fruit.

Neither shall fruit be in the vines, which were also the riches and provision of those countries.

The labour of the olive; either labour bestowed upon the olive, or the fruit which the olive brings forth, called here labour by an allusion to our labour.

Shall fail; disappoint the expectation of both dresser and eater.

The fields, ploughed and sown, shall yield no meat; corn for bread.

The flock of sheep, kept out in the field, shall be cut off, either by wolf, murrain, or by the wasting Babylonians, *from the fold;* where they were wont to be safe. now they are in greatest danger, and that because they may be swept away all at once.

No herd in the stall; greater cattle kept in the stall for labour, or for feeding.

[Hab 3:18](#)

As for my part, I will, saith the prophet, rejoice; look for joy, expect matter of rejoicing *in the Lord*, who will preserve a remnant and redeem them, who will rebuke Babylon, and will very strangely destroy it.

I will joy in the God of my salvation: the prophet renews his own faith, and confirms ours. All shall end in salvation to him and believers.

[Hab 3:19](#)

The prophet had in his own, and in the name of all the godly, made a full profession of his faith, and resolution to behave himself with joy in midst of troubles, [Hab 3:17-18](#); now he gives us account on what ground he speaks so, it is not in his own strength he can do it, but it is because the Lord God is his strength.

He will make my feet like hinds' feet; that I may escape to God my refuge to that safe mountain of salvation, that I may at last flee from Babylon to Judea, to Jerusalem.

He will make me to walk upon mine high places; to my native country, to my beloved city, and thy more beloved temple, which were built like high places to that munition of rocks, &c., [De 32:13](#); [Isa 33:16](#). My God will return my captivity, and when I am set at liberty, as I shall be, by Cyrus, my God will be my strength, that, as a hind let loose, I may hasten to the mountains of Israel.

To the chief singer; let this be kept on record for public use, this be a pattern for others as well as it is a declaration of my faith, hope, desire, and prayer.