

HABAKKUK

Chapter 1

Verse 1. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:1]]{{field-on:Bible}}**The burden.** The prophetic burden, saith the Chaldea paraphrast; the burdensome prophecy, saith Tremellius. (*See Trapp on "Malachi 1:1"*)

Which Habakkuk the prophet did see. *Amplexator ille*, That embracer (so some interpret his name), yea, *Optimus Amplexator* (as they gather from the last radical emphatically doubled), That best embracer. *Et carte omen habet nomen*, He hath not his name for nought; for (as Luther writeth) in this prophecy he loveth and huggeth his afflicted countrymen; he helps and solaces them, as the mother doth her crying babe, to still it. Jerome and others make Habakkuk to signify *Luctatorem amplex stringentem*, a wrestler, that, by closing, strives to prevail; that, by might and slight, seeks to get the better. Such a one was Jacob, whose wrestling was by weeping, and his prevailing by praying, **Hosea 12:4**. Such another was Habakkuk, who argueth earnestly with God about the state of his people, and prayeth ardently for them; not doubting but that the Lord would "preserve the faithful, and plentifully reward the proud doer," **Psalms 31:23**. A prophet he is here styled, and a seer, and that is all is said of him; nothing of his pedigree, or time of prophesying; that the word (and not the man) might be glorified, **Acts 13:47**. *Regis epistolis acceptis*, saith Gregory; when a king's letters are brought to his subjects, it is a ridiculous thing for them to inquire with what pen they were written; it is the matter must be minded: so here. A prophet Habakkuk was; and is therefore to be received into our hearts, if we look for a prophet's reward. He received heavenly visions, whereunto therefore we must not be disobedient, **Acts 26:19**. That memorable sentence of his, "The just shall live by faith," is more than once made use of by St Paul, in that weighty business of justification, **Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11**, which proves the canonical authority of this prophecy. The precise time when it was uttered is not known. In the days of Manasseh most think; but some are of the opinion in Josiah's time rather, or not long before; because he foretellet the Babylonish captivity, and seemeth to agree with Jeremiah in many things. Sure it is, that this prophet lived not after the captivity, (**Habakkuk 1:6, 7**) as Epiphanius and Jerome would have it; grounding upon those Apocryphal additions to Daniel, which either are false, or else there were two Habakkuks. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 2. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:2]]{{field-on:Bible}}**O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear?** Lo, this is the confidence of a good conscience towards God, **1 Peter 3:21**, when it is parleying with him by prayers and bold intercessions (**ΕΝΤΕΥΞΙΣ**), **1 Timothy 2:1**, it dare plead, as **Jeremiah 12:1**, and interrogate, as **Romans 8:33-35; Isaiah 63:15**, and expostulate, as David often: when God seems to be asleep, he wakes him; when to delay, he quickens him; when to have lost his wonted kindness, he finds it for him; so doth Habakkuk here; for he knew he might do it. See his holy boldness beneath, **Habakkuk 1:12**, and learn to continue instant in prayer, **Romans 12:12**, crying, *Quousque Domine?* How long, Lord? This was Mr Calvin's motto, ever in his mouth, as *Deo gratias* grace to God, was in Austin's.

Even cry out unto thee of violence. *i.e.* Of all sorts of heinous sins, which I have long cried out upon, and sought by preaching and prayer to redress, but cannot; so incorrigibly flagitious are they grown, that I have now no other way left, but to turn them over to thee, with a *Non convertentur*, They will not be converted. Shall they still "escape by iniquity? in thine anger cast down the people, O God," **Psalms 56:7**, and let them feel the power of thy wrath that will not submit to the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thus the holy prophet (*Elijah-like*, **Romans 11:2**) maketh intercession to God against Israel (when once incorrigible, incurable), for whose souls' health he would have spent and been spent, *Impendam et expendam*. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 3. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:3]]{{field-on:Bible}}**Why dost thou show me iniquity? &c.** These were Hazael's to Habakkuk's eyes, he could not see them with dry eyes, he could not but

vex his righteous soul from day to day, as Lot did at Sodom, with their unlawful deeds, **2 Peter 2:8**, privately committed (as here in their common commerce), and publicly, as in the next words, in courts and consistories; for all was out of order.

And cause me to behold grievance. Molestation and mischief done to those that would live peaceably in the land, (*Psalm 7:14, 16; 94:20; 55:11*) to the poor that are fallen into their nets, debts, bonds, and mortgages, *Psalm 10:9*. It is as if the prophet should say, Why dost thou not punish these enormous practices, but suffer evildoers to abuse thy longsufferance, to thy dishonour? Averroes, the philosopher, drew an argument from God's patience to deny his providence. But what saith Austin? Some wicked God punisheth here, lest his providence, and but some, lest his patience and promise of judgment, should be called in question.

For spoiling and violence are before me. *E regione mei vastatio et violentia*, so that I cannot look beside them, I cannot but complain of them. Elijah and Jeremiah were more passionate, **1 Kings 19:4, 10, 14; Jeremiah 15:10; 20:14**.

And there are that raise up strife and contention. These are Satan's seeds men, and kindling coals. He is an unquiet spirit, and strives to make others so; loves to fish in troubled waters, doth all he can to set one man against another, that he may prey upon both; as the master of the pit suppeth upon the bodies of those cocks whom he hath set to kill one another. Be not mischief maker, seeds men of sedition. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 4. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:4]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Therefore the law is slacked.** *Defluit lex*. An elegant metaphor from the pulse, which, in a dying man, beateth faintly. The law is the pulse of the commonwealth. If it stir not at all, the commonwealth is dead. If it have but slow motion, the commonwealth is weak. But if it keep an equal course, the commonwealth is in good constitution. *Lex lux*, the law is a light, saith Solomon; but the deluge of sin had well nigh put out this light in Israel; who was now grown in a manner lawless, through long impunity.

And judgment doth never go forth. Or, it goeth not forth to the utmost, to victory; it is not carried on to a right upshot, as the Septuagint and Latin render it, *Usque ad finem*, εἰς τέλος.

For the wicked doth compass about the righteous. As a crown compasseth the head; he surroundeth and circumventeth him to his hurt. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation," &c. The Midianites outwitted the Israelites, **Numbers 25:18**. The Pharisees hemmed in our Saviour to insnare him; but were disappointed.

Therefore wrong judgment proceedeth. Distorted judgment. So **Ezekiel 9:9**, the city was full of *Mutteh*, that is, of (*mishpat din mitteh*, as Kimchi expoundeth it, κατὰ πρόσκλισιν), judgment turned from the bias; the balance of justice was tilted on the one side, **1 Timothy 5:21**. A judge is to retain the decency and gravity of the law; to do nothing of partiality or popularity; to proceed, not according to opinion or appearance; but as a just law is a heart without affection, an eye without lust, a mind without passion, &c., so should he. Else wrong and wrested judgment will soon proceed, to the prejudice of the righteous. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 5. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:5]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously.** Heb. Wonder, wonder. This is God's answer to the former expostulation, which he disliketh not, but encourageth the rest of his people to the like holy boldness. It containeth a promise to the prophet and the rest that were like affected, that he would shortly vindicate his glory and be avenged of the wicked, though he bore long with them. This that he may the better assure, he proceedeth by an elegant climax, wherein his speech getteth ground and ariseth higher and higher, that the despisers might be the more affected. "Behold, ye despisers," so St Paul after the Septuagint (whose translation he here followeth as most received, and most making for his purpose), **Acts 13:41**, the sense being one and the same.

For I will work a work in your days. This phrase noteth the strong intention of God upon it; as **Jeremiah 18:18**, to devise devices, noteth strong plotting to mischief the prophet. So Christ is said to work a work, **John 5:36**. Many do rather play their works than work them. This is not God-like. He is serious and thorough in his works.

Which ye will not believe, though it be told you. But put off all, as those in the Gospel did, with a God forbid; and so go on in sin, till wrath come upon you to the utmost. To this day we cannot get men to believe the truth of God's judgments, while they hang in the threatenings; but one put-off or another they get, through self-delusion, or obstinace of heart, **Lamentations 3:65**, next unto which followeth, Thy curse upon them. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 6. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:6]]{{field-on:Bible}}**For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation.** The Chaldeans were anciently the philosophers of the Babylonians: Babylon was a province of the Assyrian empire; but not the same with Nineveh (only walled about by Semiramis, and by her called Babylon), as Suidas noteth. Nineveh was the metropolis, Babylon ruled by prefects. One of whom, viz. Merodach-Baladan, rebelling against Esarhaddon, King of Nineveh, translated the whole kingdom to the Babylonians, using the help and counsel of the Chaldeans, famous for their wisdom and authority; which yet was not done without the Lord, who then stirred them up, and now sent them against the Jews, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant. In like manner God hath in these last times raised up the Turks, "that bitter and hasty nation," bitter and bloody, hasty and headlong, υηδὲν ἀναβαλλομένην, pursuing their victories and subduing in a short time many nations and kingdoms to their empire. Hence the Jews are in the former verse called upon to view among the heathen what havoc the Chaldeans had made; that is, should shortly make by overrunning Syria, the greater part of all Asia, and some part also of Africa. In the greatness of the Turkish empire is swallowed up at this day both the name and empire of the Saracens, the most glorious empire of the Greeks, the renowned kingdoms of Macedonia, Peloponnesus, Epirus, Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, Armenia, Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, Judaea, Tunis, Algiers, Media, Chaldea, with a great part of Hungary; as also of the Persian kingdom, and all the Churches and places so much spoken of in Scripture (the Roman only excepted, which yet he daily threateneth), and, in brief, so much in Christendom, as far exceedeth that which is thereof at this day left. In fine, no part of the world is left untouched by the Ottoman monarchy but America only; not more happy in her rich mines than in that she is so far from so great and dangerous an enemy. The King of Spain, of all other princes, Mahometan or Christian, that border upon the Turk, is best able to wage war with him. How far and with what bitterness and haste he hath carried on his Catholic monarchy is better known than that it need here to be related. Queen Elizabeth put a stop to him. Captain Drake and his soldiers, when they took Saint Domingo, A.D. 1585; (where his arms were to be seen in the townhall with this inscription, *Non sufficit orbis* The world is not enough), derided his avarice and ambition; but the poor Indies groan heavily under his cruelty: and Grynaeus commenting upon these words, "that bitter and hasty nation," *Tribuuntur illis duo*, saith he, Two things are here attributed to the Chaldees' bitterness and swiftness in undertaking and despatching conquests: *quibus dotibus Iberos nostra aetate praeditos, proh dolor, experimur*, this by woeful experience we find today too much verified of the Spaniards. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 7. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:7]]{{field-on:Bible}}**They are terrible and dreadful.** Or horrible, such as were those giants called Emims, **Deuteronomy 2:10, 11; Genesis 14:5**, and far more formidable than that disputant at Paris, who would needs be styled *horribilis Sophista*, the horrible Sophister, *non minorem eam appellationem ratus* (saith Vires) *quam Africani aut Asiatici*, taking it for as great an honour as to be a conqueror.

Their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves. *i.e.* They shall do as they list; their lust shall be their law, *Pellitur e medio sapientia, vi geritur res*. See **Psalms 12:4, 5**;

Exodus 5:2. These Chaldeans will be their own carvers; ministering law according to their own pleasures. The honour also and dignity of this nation (now base and obscure) shall grow up and appear. *Ipsa sibi iudicabit, et decretum suum exequetur: vel ex decreto sue exequetur.* So Symmachus. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 8. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:8]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Their horses also are swifter than the leopards.** Or panthers, famous for their swiftness; whence the proverb, *Panthera velocior* (see Plin. i. 10, viii. 17). The horse is so swift in service that the Persians (as Pausanias hath it) dedicated him to their god, the Sun; as the swiftest creature to the swiftest god, ὥσπερ τὸ τάχιστον τῷ ταχυτάτῳ θεῶν. See **Job 41:20; Proverbs 21:31.**

And are more fierce than the evening wolves. Heb. More sharp-set, after that they have been held hunger bitten and empty all the day long. See Virg. Aeneid. ix. 59, &c.; Oppian. i. 3. *Homo homini lupus*, One man (left to himself) is a wolf, nay, a devil to another. The metaphor is here taken from sharpest swords, which quickly cut.

And their horsemen shall spread themselves. With incredible swiftness, which in war is most necessary and useful, as Julius Caesar experienced, and we in our late commotions.

And their horsemen shall come from far. The Jews were secure of the Chaldeans, as being far remote; but that shall be no hindrance.

They shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat. *In singulis verbis pondus est*, saith Drusius, here each word hath its weight; for he that hasteth on his way is said to fly, and the eagle is swifter of flight than any bird, and especially when she hasteth to eat, **Job 9:26.** Of the eagle's swiftness why and whence, see Ambrose, Hexam. l. i. c. 14. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 9. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:9]]{{field-on:Bible}} **They shall come all for violence.** That by force and violence they may carry all before them. *Fit via vi, Cedit viribus aequum.* They are set upon it, and will have it so.

Their faces shall sup up as the east wind. That *ventus urens et exsiccans*, they shall blast all they look upon; Euroclydon-like, they shall overturn all, **Acts 27:14.** *Navigantium pestem*, the mariner's misery, Pliny calleth this wind, for the hurt it doeth by sea. Some read it, their faces shall look towards the east, viz. towards Babylon, whither they carry the booty they get.

And they shall gather the captivity as the sand. So many shall be their captives, and so little accounted for as the dust or sand they tread upon. Thus the Turks carry out of Hungary and other Christian countries near unto them innumerable booties and captives, fifteen thousand at a time. And so the Spaniards, when they had taken the island Hispaniola, in the Indies, within a few months they rid it clean of the inhabitants and natives, while they gathered unto themselves captives and slaves. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 10. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:10]]{{field-on:Bible}} **And they shall scoff at the kings.** Heb. He shall scoff, *i.e.* Nebuchadnezzar shall, and that not once only, but often; shall make a practice of it, as the Hebrew word signifieth. *Hithpael notat assiduam illusionem.* Thus Adonibezek dealt by the kings he took, the Philistines by Saul, **1 Samuel 31:8-10**, Nebuchadnezzar by Zedekiah, **Jeremiah 25; Jeremiah 29; 2 Kings 25**; as also by the kings of Egypt, Tyre, Arabia, and others whom he had taken, and used them, haply, as Tamerlane did Bajazet, or those other captive kings whom he caused as horses to draw his chariot. How much better Evilmerodach, who (mindful of the instability of all human affairs) lifted up the head and spoke to the heart of his prisoner, Jehoiachin, King of Judah, **Jeremiah 52:31**; Cyrus, who honoured his captive Croesus, and made him of his council (neither was he less enriched by the good counsel Croesus gave him, than by all the wealth he had from him); our Edward III, who having the King of Scotland and the French king his prisoners here in England both

together at one time, gave them stately entertainment, and made them princely pastime, by holding royal jousts in Smithfield for their delight!

And the princes shall be a scorn unto them. Through the just judgment of God, "who scorneth the scorers," **Proverbs 3:34**, that is, saith Rabbi Levi, *facit ut aliis sint ludibrio*, he maketh others mock them in their misery who in prosperity scoffed at those that were better than they. "Now therefore be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong," &c., **Isaiah 28:22**.

They shall deride every stronghold. As that which cannot long hold out against their assault. How should they, when God breaketh the bars and setteth open the gates to them? **Amos 1:5; 9:3; Proverbs 21:30**.

For they shall heap dust, and take it. *i.e.* By casting up mounts and ramparts, take it with as much ease as if they were in sport. The Turks have their *Asapi*, or common soldiers, of whom they make no great reckoning, but to blunt the swords of their enemies and to fill up ditches with their dead bodies, that they may the better come at the town or fort which they would take. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 11. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:11]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Then shall his mind change.** For the worse, *in peius proficiet*; his good and his blood shall rise together, as the proverb hath it; he shall be puffed up with his victories.

"Luxuriant animi rebus plerunque secundis."

Pride compasseth prosperous persons as a chain, **Psalms 73:5, 6; Job 15:25-27**; their hearts are lifted up with their successes, as a boat that riseth with the rising of the water. Evagrius noteth it for a special commendation of Mauricius the emperor, that notwithstanding his great prosperity he retained his ancient piety.

And he shall pass over. Or transgress all the bounds of modesty. Pride was anciently portrayed with three crowns on her head. Upon the first was written *Transcendo*, upon the second *Non obedio*, upon the third *Perturbo*. David calleth wicked men *effractores*, breachmakers.

And offend, imputing this his power to his god. Bel, or Jupiter Belus. This was a wickedness with a witness; thus to transfer the glory of victory due to God alone upon an idol. When Nebuchadnezzar offended in this sort God turned him a grazing till he had learned better, **Daniel 4:37**. For, be the gods of the heathen good fellows, saith one; the true God is a jealous God, and will not share his glory with another, **Isaiah 42:8**. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 12. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:12]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God.** Art thou not Jehovah the unchangeable, and shall we, poor sons of Jacob, be utterly consumed by these Chaldees? **Malachi 3:6**. Art not thou my God, my *Iudex et Vindex*, who hast hitherto judged and revenged my cause? and wilt thou now abandon me to the fury of such an enemy? Art not thou mine Holy One, whom I have hitherto sanctified in mine heart and life, **Isaiah 5:16**, and whom I have avouched for mine, **Deuteronomy 26:17**, devoting myself wholly to thy fear and service? Art thou not all this, and more than this, saith the prophet, in the name and behalf of the Church here? Well, then,

We shall not die. I am confident, and dare be bold to say it. Lo, here the triumph of faith and the top gallant of it, "We shall not die" (saith she), abruptly, but sweetly, that is sure enough. She drinks to the disconsolate soul in a cup of Nepenthes, and saith, Courage, my heart! Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God. If he be everlasting, so shalt thou; if he be thy God, and thine Holy One, thine in an inviolable covenant, in a league defensive and offensive, shalt thou die? *Lo tamuth*, Thou shalt not die (so some say

this text was anciently read), *Lo Namuth*, We will not die. So the Church promiseth herself upon the former promises; and such an answer she receiveth in her own heart to her former prayers. And whereas it might be objected that they were likely to be little better than dead in the Babylonish captivity (for *Morris habet vices quae trahitur vita gemitibus*, an afflicted life is a lifeless life), the prophet answereth:

O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment. *i.e.* The Chaldeans (our oppressors), for punishment, for destruction, to burn thy rod, when thou hast therewith whipped thy children. See *Exodus 9:16*.

And, O mighty God (Heb. O rock), thou hast established them for correction. Heb. Thou hast founded them, *sc.* thy people Israel; thou hast thereunto appointed them, **1 Thessalonians 3:3**, thou hast both founded and fitted them for thy fatherly chastisements, who are therefore chastened of the Lord, that they may not be condemned with the world. See here the different kinds and ends of good and bad men's sufferings. It hath been noted before that Almighty God, as he is *Piorum rupes*, a rock of refuge to the truly religious, so he is *Reorum scopulus*, a rock of revenge to dash in pieces the impenitent; as Valerius. Maximus saith of Lucius Cassius's tribunal. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 13. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:13]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil.** *sc.* With patience, and without punishing it. This I am right sure of; and therefore cannot but conclude that thou wilt take an order with our oppressors, thou wilt one day pay them home, for the new and the old, though for a time they ruffle and revel in our ruins. God, as he is ολοφθαλμος, All-eye, neither can we be at any time from under his view; so ἔχει θεὸς ἑκδικὸν ὄμμα, he hath a holy eye that cannot behold evil and bear with it. Hence that of *Joshua* to the people, **Joshua 24:19**, "Ye cannot serve the Lord," *sc.* unless ye first throw all your lusts out of service: "for he is a holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins." Now, therefore, if *Cave, spectat Cato*, was such a forcible watchword among the Romans, and a retentive from evil; Take heed, Cato sees you, and will punish you; how much more should this prevail with Christians, *Cave, videt Dominus*, Take heed, the Lord beholdeth!

"Nehemiah pecces, Deus ipse videt, bonus Angelus astat."

Surely, as they were wont to say at Rome concerning cowards, that they had nothing Roman in them; so may it be said of such as stand not in awe of God's pure eyes and dreadful presence, that they have nothing Christian in them, whatever they pretend; since it is every godly man's care and comfort to be in the fear of the Lord all the day, to walk evermore in the sense of his presence and light of his countenance.

And canst not look on iniquity. Heb. And to look on iniquity thou canst not do it. Lo, this is one of those things that God cannot do; as he cannot lie, he cannot die, he cannot deny himself; so here, he cannot look on iniquity, *sc.* with approbation or delight. He cannot but hate it; and (as the next thing to hatred is revenge) he cannot but punish it, such is the holiness of his nature, **Psalms 5:4-6**. He hateth sin naturally, as we hate poison for itself; and therefore let it be in a toad or in a prince's cabin, we hate it still. Nevertheless, it must be remembered for our comfort, that, like as we hate poison in a toad, but pity it in a man, because in the one it is their nature, in the other their disease; so sin maketh wicked men the object of God's hatred, but the saints of his pity; and accordingly, he chastiseth the one, but plagueth the other.

Wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously. And yet, such is thy tolerance, seemest to take no notice of their trespasses and treacheries; which I am sure thou hatest with a perfect hatred. Here then the prophet, *disceptat potius secum, quam cum ipso Deo*, saith Calvin, contesteth rather with himself than with God about the ordering of things here below. He doth not question the Divine providence, because good men suffer, bad men prosper, as

Aristotle did. He doth not say with Pompey, when discomfited by Caesar, that there was a mist, at least, over the eye of providence; so blaming the sun because of the soreness of his own bleary eyes. He doth not impatiently cry out with Brutus, defeated, ὦ τλήμων ἄρετή, O wretched virtue, or, O hard fortune. But he modestly expostulated with the Lord about his proceedings, having before justified him; and now dareth not reprehend what he cannot yet so fully comprehend; but, putting his mouth in the dust, concludeth with David, after some conflict with his own doubtings, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness" (*non ad exitium, sed ad exercitium*, not for destruction but for discipline, and that thou mightest be true to my soul) "hast afflicted me," **Psalm 119:75**.

And holdest thy tongue. And so, by silence, seemest to consent (as the civilian's rule is *qui tacet, consentire videtur*), but thou seemest so only, **Psalm 50:21** Or, art thou deaf? Not so neither, **Psalm 50:3**.

When the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he. *i.e.* The Chaldees destroy the Jews, which were some of them better than they; and the rest were therefore the worse, because they ought to have been better. The truth is, none are so bad as they that either have been good and are not; or that might have been better, but would not. **{{field-off:Bible}}**

Verse 14. **[[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:14]]{{field-on:Bible}}** **And makest men as the fishes of the sea.** That are easily drawn out with hook or net. So doth Nebuchadnezzar, with little ado, bring whole nations under his power and pleasure. Here, therefore, saith Drusius, Nebuchadnezzar is the fisher, the world is the sea, men are the fishes, the armies and arts of the Chaldees are called the net, drag, hook, to the which Nebuchadnezzar ascribed his victories, and not to God. Whereas he should have written upon them, as the ancients did upon their greatest exploits, Θεὸς, Θεός, and have said, as Titus did, when some cried him up for his sacking the city of Jerusalem; I only lent mine hand to God, who did the work by me (Pausan.).

As the creeping things. Or, the lesser fishes; for in the sea also are creeping things innumerable, **Psalm 104:25; Leviticus 11:46**.

That have no ruler over them. To right and revenge them; and are therefore devoured, the lesser by the greater, without remedy. And what will men imagine, but that thy people have no ruler over them, no God to take care of their comfort, or to protect them from their enemies? How will they conclude them to be in as bad condition as those of Brazil, who are said to be *Sine rege, sine lege, sine fide*, &c. Or, the old Nomades, *sub regno Cyclopico*? **{{field-off:Bible}}**

Verse 15. **[[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:15]]{{field-on:Bible}}** **They take up all of them with the angle.** No less than all will serve their turns or satisfy their ambition; as we read of Alexander, who wept that there was but one world for him to conquer; Julius Caesar, who would be *aut Caesar, aut nullus*; either Caesar or nothing, this Nebuchadnezzar in the text, fitly compared to a greedy fisherman, who could wish to enclose and catch all the fishes in the river. Covetousness is boundless; and ambition rideth without reins. The curse of unsatisfiability, the disease of a spiritual dropsy, is upon all carnal hearts; so that though one man should engross a monopoly of all the wealth in the world, and heap up his hoards and his honours to the stars, yet would his heart be as hungry after more as if he had nothing.

Therefore they rejoice and are glad. This is worse than all the rest, that they please and applaud themselves in their wickedness, that they hug and stroke themselves on the head, as Doeg did, **Psalm 52:2**, and those Sodomites, **Isaiah 3:9**. This shows that men are arrived at that dead and dedolent disposition spoken of **Ephesians 4:19**, and are even straddling over hell's mouth, which gapeth for them. **{{field-off:Bible}}**

Verse 16. **[[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:16]]{{field-on:Bible}}** **Therefore they sacrifice to their net.** Thus wicked men grow worse and worse; their sin is infinite; what marvel, then, if their

punishment be also infinite in hell? To all other their iniquities these Chaldeans add this of abominable idolatry, they sacrifice to themselves, as Sejanus did, *Seianus sibi sacrificabat* (Dio), to their net, drag, &c., that is, to their weapons, as Ajax called his sword his god; and thanked it for all his brave achievements. And as Mezentius (another atheist) is brought in, saying;

"Dextra mlhi Deus, et telum quod missile libro."

So Sesostris, King of Egypt (in Samson's days), would needs be called [κοσμοκράτωρ](#), lord of the whole world; and when he had conquered any country he caused these words to be engraven there upon marble pillars, This country I gained by mine own strength ([τοῖς ὤμοισιν ἑμοῖσιν ἐκτησάμην](#). Herod. l. 2). So Antiochus (that little antichrist) is said to worship his god Mauzzim, that is, his forces and armies, ***Daniel 11:38***. It was Nebuchadnezzar that was here pointed at; and how he deified himself and his own doings, see ***Isaiah 10:13; Daniel 4:26***.

And burn incense to their drags. While they ascribe to the instrument that which is due to God alone, the chief agent. Hold out, net, said they; well done, drag, &c. *Hoc ego primus vidi*, said Zabarell, *Hoc ego feci*, saith another. But what saith Luther? By men's boasting in this sort, *Haec ego feci, haec ego feci*, they become nothing better than mere *faeces*, dregs and lees.

Because by them their portion is fat. "By them," that is, by their net and drag, they think that their condition is well mended, and their meat is fat, *opimus et optimus*, abundant and good. God (the giver of all this) is not in all their thoughts; but as the moon, the fuller it is of light the further it gets from the sun, the fountain of her light, so deal men with God. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 17. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 1:17]]{{field-on:Bible}}**Shall they therefore empty their net.** That they may fill it again anew, and so draw to themselves, as to a pond or pool, the wealth and power of the whole east? *Interrogatio precationis speciem habet*, saith Gualther. This question is an effectual prayer; and it is as if the prophet should thus say, If, as hitherto, thou go on to wink at their wickedness, O God, will they not grow more audacious every day, and mischievous to mankind? Arise, therefore, O Lord of recompences, to the help of thy people. Set up and show thyself above the heathen, that they may know themselves to be but men.

And not spare continually to slay the nations. *q.d.* This cannot hold long; and that it may not, is mine earnest suit and supplication. Lord, when thou makest inquisition for blood, remember their blood guiltiness, and forget not the cry of the humble, ***Psalms 9:12***. These cruel Chaldeans do not only subjugate, but slay, not a few, but whole nations and that continually, and that without mercy. Is it not high time for thee to set to thy hand, O preserver of men, &c. Note the prophet's ardency in prayer; and learn of him to get upon the battlements, and look up, to see what comes of it, ***Habakkuk 2:1***. This was also David's practice, ***Psalms 5:3***, where he useth the selfsame military word, *atsappeh*; importing that he would be as a spy upon a tower, to see whether he prevailed with God, whether he got the day. {{field-off:Bible}}

Chapter 2

Verse 1. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:1]]{{field-on:Bible}} **I will stand upon my watch.** To see what becomes of my prayer, and what will be the issue of my doubts and temptations about God's providence, ruling the affairs of the world. See the note on **Habakkuk 1:17**. There are spaces between our prayers and God's answers. God hearkens what Habakkuk speaks; and Habakkuk must hearken another while what God speaks. This he had learned from David, **Psalms 85:8**. Prayer is a Christian's angel, seed, dove, messenger; and must be looked after. Who shoots an arrow, or casts a bowl, and takes not notice where it lights? They that observe not the answer of their prayers do as scoffing Pilate, who asked in scorn of Christ what is truth? but stayed not for an answer.

And set me upon the tower. Heb. Set me firm and fast (as a champion that will keep his ground) upon the tower or fortress of Divine meditation, upon God's word, which alone hath *virtutem pacativam*, a settling property to compose the soul when distempered, and to lodge a blessed calm, a sabbath of rest in it, far above all philosophical consolations; whereunto when Cicero had ascribed very much, yet he is forced to conclude, that the disease was too hard for the medicine, *Nescio quomodo imbecillior est medicina quam morbus*. And this well appeared both in Socrates, who died doubtingly, and Cato, who desperately slew himself, after he had first read Plato's discourse concerning the immortality of the soul. So foolish a thing it is to fly in distress of mind *ad consolatiunculas creaturulae*, as Luther speaketh; and not to run to the name of the Lord, that strong tower, **Proverbs 18:10**. R. Kimchi reads the text thus, I have set me in a circle, *q.d.* I will not quit till I have an answer, why thou deferrest to punish the wicked.

And will watch to see what he will say unto me. Or, in me, viz. by a prophetic spirit, by internal revelation, **2 Samuel 23:1**; **Zechariah 1:9**; **2:2**. Preachers must still hearken what the Lord God saith unto them and in them; speaking as the oracles of God, **1 Peter 4:11**, and able to say with St Paul, "I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver unto you," **1 Corinthians 11:23**. For, *ut drachmam auri sine imagine Principis, sic verba Praedicantis sine auctoritate Dei, contemnunt homines*, saith Lipsius. Bring Scripture, or else you do but throw forth words without wisdom, and to little purpose, because they come not *Cum privilegio*.

And what I shall answer, when I am reproofed. Heb. Upon my reproof or arguing. *Increpationis nomine tentationes intelligit*, saith Gualther. Under the name of reproof he understandeth those temptations whereby his faith was assaulted, when he saw bad men prosper, good men suffer. Satan and the weed do usually set upon God's servants with this weapon, to unsettle their faith, and to make them fall from their own steadfastness. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity?" said Job's wife to him. Seest thou not how little good there is to be got by God's service? that all things are in a huddle here below, that they run on wheels, and have no certain course? Thus the devil and his imps suggest to the godly, and thereby greatly disquiet them; setting their thoughts all on a hurricane. It was the case of David, **Psalms 73:2, 3**, of Jeremiah, **Jeremiah 12:1, 5**, of Basil, under the heat of the Arian persecution: *An Ecclesias suas prorsus dereliquit Dominus?* saith he; What? hath the Lord cast off all care of his Churches? Is it now the last hour? &c. Of many good people in Salvian's time, for whose satisfaction he was forced to write those eight excellent books, *De Gubernatione Dei*; as likewise Austin (upon a like occasion) did those two-and-twenty elaborate books, *De Civitate Dei*; and as the prophet Habakkuk here doth the following vision which he had for some time waited for, and now receiveth as a gracious answer to his prayer, **Habakkuk 1:2-4**, for his own and others' settlement in the doctrine of Divine providence. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 2. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:2]]{{field-on:Bible}} **And the Lord answered me, and said.** Wisdom he had sought of God, who giveth liberally, **James 1:5**; and wisdom is granted him without hitting him in the teeth with his bold expostulations and contestations about

providence. Faithful prayer never miscarrieth, but is sure of an answer, either before, as the prodigal, see **Isaiah 65:24**, or in the act, as **Daniel 10:12**, "I am come for thy words," with an answer thereunto. Or soon after, as here. If it come not all out so soon as we would have it, know that there is water enough in the spring, but the pipes are stopped or broken.

Write the vision. That is, the following admonition; write it for the use of all posterity. Note this against those opinionists, that say that the word of God was not written by his command; or that it was written only for the use of the present ages, and of those particular Churches to whom it was directed or declared.

And make it plain upon tables. Boxen tables (as the Seventy render it), for on box, for the firmness of the matter, were the ancients wont to write.

That he may run that readeth it. That though he be no great clerk, or in never so great haste of business, yet he may read it, being written in great letters and very legible. See **Deuteronomy 27:8; Isaiah 8:1; 30:8; Galatians 6:11**, "you see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand," the Greek signifieth with what good great text letters I have written (πηλικοις γράμμασιν). God hath written for us the great things of his law, **Hosea 8:12**, and with much perspicuity and plainness in things needful to be known: he hath written them, as it were, with the beams of the sun; that none may plead difficulty or obscurity; see **Psalms 19:9; 119:105; Proverbs 6:23; 2 Peter 1:19**. Of the Scripture it may be said *et latet et lucet*; both hidden and clear, the knowledge thereof doth even bow down to us as trees do that are laden with fruits, so that a child may gather them. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 3. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:3]]{{field-on:Bible}}**For the vision is yet for an appointed time.** This he is commanded to write, that God's people may learn to wait. He that believeth maketh not haste, he can both wait (as knowing that many of God's promises bear a long date) and also want, go without the good he desireth; being well content that God is glorified, though himself be not gratified. And this is the work of effectual faith, which is herein like unto crystal, of which it is reported that the very touching of it quickens other stones, and puts a lustre and loveliness upon them.

But at the end it shall speak. *Effabitur*, It shall speak confidently, boldly, and freely, to the great comfort of those that antedate not God's promises, but patiently abide the accomplishment thereof. If any ask when this shall be? it is answered, In the end, that is, in God's good time. Shall he lose his right because he hath it not by the day set down in our calendar? Possibly the calendar of heaven hath a postdate to ours. Sure it is, that as God seldom comes at our time; so he never fails at his own. God's expectants shall shortly clap their hands for joy; and cry out with that holy martyr, He is come, Austin, he is come, he is come (Mr Glover. Act. and Mon.).

And not lie. That is, not disappoint; as the earth is said to lie when it yields not her expected increase. God is faithful, and cannot lie. Christ hath a rainbow on his head, **Revelation 10:1**, to show that he is faithful and constant in his promises, and that tempests which blow over the sky shall be cleared. He hath hitherto kept promise with nights and days, that the one shall succeed the other, **Jeremiah 33:20, 25**, and shall he break with his people? How then should he be Amen, the faithful and true witness? **Revelation 3:14**. Every man is a liar either by imposture, and so in purpose, or by impotence, and so in the event deceiving those that rely upon him, **Psalms 62:9**. But God is "a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he," **Deuteronomy 32:4**.

Though it tarry wait for it. This is the duty, wait; and because it is a very difficult duty (the Hebrews found it easier to bear evil than to wait for the promised good, **Hebrews 10:36**), therefore is the promise here not delivered only, but doubled and trebled. It shall speak, it will

come, it will surely come; nay, doubled again for more surety; It shall not lie, it will not tarry. It is as if God had said, Do but wait, and you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall be delivered, you shall, you shall. Oh the rhetoric of God! and oh the certainty of the promises!

It will not tarry. *sc.* Beyond the time appointed of God.

"In se non tardat, carni tardare videtur."

God's help seems long, because we are short. A short walk is a long journey to feeble knees. But that God tarries not beyond his appointed time, see **Exodus 12:40, 41**; at midnight were the firstborn slain, because then exactly the four hundred and thirty years were up. And **Daniel 5:30**, "In that night was Belshazzar slain"; because then exactly the seventy years were ended. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 4. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:4]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Behold, his soul which is lifted up.**

Ebulat, protuberat, which swelleth like a bubble, and reacketh through its own weakness; he that by unbelief or carnal security withdraweth from God, and confideth in the creature; (**ὑποστείλῃται, Hebrews 10:38**) seeking to shift and save himself some other way, as he is a proud and presumptuous person, so let him know that,

His soul is not upright in him. That is, it is very corrupt and crooked, stark naught; and God's soul can take no pleasure in him; but he will punish him as a runaway, as one that hath fled from his colours, forsaken his captain, revolted to the enemy, **Hebrews 10:37, 38**. *Transfugas ubicunque inventi fuerint, quasi hostes interficere licet*, was the old law of arms. What God will do to such, see **Psalms 125:5**.

But the just shall live by his faith. This is an answer to those that would ask what shall we do till the vision speak? how shall we hold out till it come? till the seventy years of captivity be expired? "The just shall live by faith," saith he, and shall make a good living of it too; he shall live and be safe by the same faith whereby he is just. He shall feed upon faith, as some read that **Psalms 37:3**. And whereas we find in those Apocryphal additions to Daniel, that Habakkuk brought a mess of pottage to that prophet in the lions' den; as it seems to be but a Jewish fable, so the Jew that invented it, grounding his conceit upon this text, would express thus much, that as pottage (that *succus benignus*, as Keckerman calleth it) preserveth this natural life from perishing, so doth faith's acting upon the promises, and extracting nourishment from the same, maintain life spiritual; and thereby it was that Daniel stopped the mouths of the lions, **Hebrews 11:33**. How Habakkuk taketh out his own lesson of living by faith, and not by sense. *Although the flg tree shall not blossom.* (**Habakkuk 3:17**) See here the life of faith, in the fail of outward comforts, so true is that of Solomon, **Proverbs 2:7**, "The Lord layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous": when he is in greatest straits, then he hath such quietness, soundness, and presence of mind, as bears him up above all troubles; like as blown bladders do the body aloft all waters. Faith furnisheth him with strongest and most satisfying joys; such as the flames cannot dry up, nor rivers of blood drown; faith, actuated upon the promises, maketh the believer walk above the middle region of the air (as it were) in a continual serenity, as Enoch did; and seaeth him a double charter of privative and positive privileges. See it set down **1 Corinthians 3:21-23**. Faith makes him live in the mouth of death, by strengthening him against the horrors of it, **Psalms 23:4; Romans 8:38; Hebrews 11:31; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57**, and by showing him heaven beyond it, **Hebrews 11:13**, and therein freedom from all evil, fruition of all good. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 5. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:5]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Yea, also because he transgresseth by wine.** Or, How much more because he is a wine bibber, perfidious, proud, neither keepeth at home. These four faults the prophet here layeth to the charge of the Babylonian, and therehence inferreth for the comfort of the distressed captives, that his destruction cannot be

far off; and therefore the just should meanwhile live by faith, and bear up under affliction. For if those that believe not the promises, but shift and shank for help and comfort elsewhere, shall smart for their unbelief, as **Habakkuk 2:4**, where shall those appear that are here described? shall these *bipedum nequissimi*, worst of men, escape by iniquity? Never think it. First, their drunkenness alone would undo them; as it did Amnon, Elah, Nabal, Belshazzar, Bonosus, &c. Aristotle saith, that double punishments are due to drunkards (Τοῖς μεθύουσι διπλᾶ τὰ ἐπιτιμία): first for their drunkenness, and then for other sins committed in and by their drunkenness. Nebuchadnezzar (or, as some will have it, Belshazzar) is here called, wine, or (by an ordinary elipsis) a man of wine; not only *Meribibulus*, but a deep and desperate drunkard, a very tundish ¹ (as Diotimus of Athens was called), a hogshead, as young Cicero. No wonder therefore though he were all the rest that followeth. 1. Perfidious, to those that committed themselves to his trust, or made leagues with him, which he kept no longer than stood with his profit. 2. Proud, or arrogant, **Proverbs 21:24**. See **Daniel 4:30**, how he spreads his peacock's tail, and prides himself in it: his great wealth tumoured him up with great swellth.

3. **He keepeth not at home.** *Non habitabit*, his own country will not contain him, but he encloseth all nations in his dragnet, **Habakkuk 1:15**.

4. **He enlargeth his desire as hell.** Which hath its name (Sheol) in Hebrew, from its unsatiableness, **Proverbs 30:15, 16**, and in Latin it is called *Inferuus ab inferendo*, say some, from the devil's continual carrying in souls thither, and yet it is not filled.

And is as death. Which is the end of all men, **Ecclesiastes 7:2**; the way of all flesh, **1 Kings 2:2**; of all the earth, **Joshua 23:14**; the house appointed for all living, the great congregation house, **Job 30:23**.

And cannot be satisfied. Lust is unsatisfiable, and whatsoever it getteth is but as fuel to the fire. Ambition groweth as the crocodile doth, as long as he liveth. It rideth without reins, and there is no ho with it.

But gathereth unto him all nations, &c. All that he could come at; all Asia, and a great part of Africa; and could never have enough, till his mouth was filled with a spade full of mould. Therefore he shall not keep home (so some read the words above in this verse), *Ideo non manebit in habitaculo*. His kingdom shall not long continue, but after a few years be overturned by the Persians: this golden head (as Daniel calleth the Babylonish monarchy) held not up over 170; years, if we reckon from Merodach Baladan, the first founder, to Belshazzar, slain by Cyrus, who translated the kingdom to the Persians, **Daniel 5:30, 31** {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 6. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:6]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Shall not all these take up a parable against him?** Shall not the Babylonian, who is now a terror, be ere long a scorn? shall he not inherit with ignominy, reproach?

And a taunting proverb against him. Heb. An interpretation, and riddles. For example, Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his, that is both a proverb (because in many men's mouths) and an interpretation, because it is plain and perspicuous. But that which followeth is a riddle. "That ladeth himself with thick clay!" This nut must be broken up ere the kernel can be come at. See **Judges 7:15**.

Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! Heb. Lo, lo. Some render it he, he that multiplieth not for himself but for another, *sc.* for the Medes and Persians, not woe, but he, a note of insulting and upbraiding, answerable to the Latin *Vah, Vah, tunc ille es*, &c. Ah sirrah, are you he that increaseth that which is not yours, &c. Eugo, εὐρι θεὸς τὸν ἀλιτρὸν.

¹ A wooden dish or shallow vessel with a tube at the bottom fitting into the bung-hole of a tun or cask, forming a kind of funnel used in brewing. ÆD

How long? This is the common complaint of the oppressed nations, groaning out their grievances, and longing for deliverance from those troublers of the world. Neither is this *usque quo* in vain; for God is gracious, and may better style himself, than the Great Turk, *Awlem Penawh*, that is, The world's refuge: the poor man's king, as James IV of Scotland was called.

And to him that ladeth himself with thick clay! With gold and silver, that guts and garbage of the earth, fitly called clay, because of the clogging and polluting property, and said to load people as a sumpter horse laden with treasure all day, but at night turned into a stinking stable, with his back full of galls and bruises. He that first called riches *bona*, goods, was mistaken; the Scripture calleth them thorns, snares, thick clay, &c., a great burden to the owner, according to the proverb, *Magna navis, magna cura*, a great ship is a great care, and the lading oft proves no better than that which Captain Frobisher brought back with him after his voyage to discover the Straits, viz. a great quantity of stones, which he thought to be minerals, from which, when there could be drawn neither gold nor silver, nor any other metal, they were cast forth to repair the highways. This was labour in vain, pressure to no purpose; and no less is theirs that heap up riches without right, **Jeremiah 17:11**, or, if by right means, yet set their hearts upon them, **Psalms 62:10**, still striving (as they say the toad doth) to die with as much earth in their mouths as may be, till at length their never enough be requited with fire enough in the bottom of hell. Necessan the lawyer was wont to say, He that will not venture his body shall never be valiant, he that will not venture his soul never rich. *O curvae in terras animae, et coelestium inanes*. Is it nothing to lose an immortal soul? to purchase an everlasting death? to sink into the bottomless lake under this thick clay? {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 7. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:7]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee?** Rend and tear thee as hunting dogs do the beast they pursue. See **Isaiah 13:14, 21; Jeremiah 51:58**. The interrogation here used importeth both the certainty of the thing and their security, as if no such thing could possibly befall them. Suddenly, therefore, saith the prophet, shalt thou be surprised and spoiled by the Persians, when thy city Babylon is held impregnable, and boasteth of provision enough laid in for twenty years' siege. Security is the certain usher of destruction, as we see in Benhadad's army, and those Midianites, **Judges 7:12, 20-23**, and the Amalekites, **1 Samuel 30:16, 17**; and Pompey's marching against Caesar; and the French at the battle of Agincourt; so confident they were of a victory, that they sent to our King Henry V, who was then in the field against them, and got the day, to know what ransom he would give. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 8. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:8]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Because thou hast spoiled many nations.** God loves to retaliate (as hath before been often observed), to spoil the spoilers by a remnant of the people, by such as were of no note, and much unlikely to do such exploits. Thus he spoiled these Babylonians by Cyrus and his Medes; the Persians, by Alexander and his Macedonians (whom they so slighted, that Darius, in his proud embassy to him, called him his servant, but himself the king of kings, and cousin of the gods). So the Roman empire was miserably rent and torn by the Goths, Vandals, Huns, Lombards, people not before heard of, and the Greek empire by Turks, Tartars, Saracens, Scythians, &c., that it might the better appear, *haec non sine numine fieri*, these events happen not without divine intervention, that it was the Lord's own doing, who often suffers his enemies, like Adonijah's guests, to feast and frolic in a jocular security and promise of continued prosperity. But at last, when they are at the height of their joys and hopes, he confounds all their devices, and lays them open to the scorn of the world, and the spoil of the remnant of the people whom they vilified.

Because of men's blood. Heb. Bloods, every drop whereof had a tongue to cry to God for vengeance, saying, Give them blood to drink, for they are worthy, Oh let not bloody and deceitful men live out half their days, **Revelation 16:6; Psalm 55:23**. That soldier can never answer it to God that hath not a good cause, and striketh not rather as a justicer than as a

soldier.

And for the violence of the land. Heb. Of the earth, though principally of that land of desires, the promised land, and the inhabitants thereof, whom he that touched, touched the apple of God's eye, that little man in the eye (*Ishon*) that may not be meddled with, ***Zechariah 2:8***.

Of the city. Jerusalem, called the city by an excellence, and by a better right than ever Rome was. See ***Lamentations 1:1***, and Jeremiah's elegy there over it, when captivated by these Chaldees. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 9. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:9]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness.** For there is a good covetousness (which few are guilty of), ***1 Corinthians 12:31***, "Covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way." Covet earnestly the best graces, such as are faith, hope, and charity, these are better than gifts. A shop full of barrels enrich not unless they be full of commodities. Gifts (as to heaven) are but the lumber of a Christian; it is grace makes him rich toward God, and of that he cannot be too covetous. But the covetousness of the Chaldeans here threatened and thundered against was of another nature. It is called an evil covetousness and hath its name in the original of piercing or wounding, as ***Joel 2:8***, and fitly, both in respect of a man's self, ***1 Timothy 6:10***, and others, ***Proverbs 1:19; Amos 9:1***, and here. Woe to such, and destruction too, as ***Hosea 7:13***. The Lord, to show his just indignation against covetous persons, smiteth his fists at them, as Balak did at Balaam, ***Numbers 24:10***. See ***Ezekiel 22:13***, "Behold, I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee." Now, lest people should object or conceive that those were but great words, and that the Lord would not do so as he said, or that they should deal well enough with him, therefore it followeth ***Habakkuk 2:14***, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken, and will do it."

To his house. *i.e.* To his family and posterity, which he intends to advance, but indeed undoes them, by leaving them a cursed hoard of ill-gotten goods, wherein they do them a greater displeasure than Joab and Gehazi did in leaving their children the leprosy for a legacy. Job speaketh, ***Job 15:34***, as though the wicked, when they set up their houses by pilling and polling, by getting riches without right, did but make a stack of wood, and then comes a spark of God's wrath, and makes an end of all. As in another place, "Brimstone," saith he, "shall be scattered upon his habitation," ***Job 18:15***, so that if the fire of God's displeasure do but light upon it, &c. Thus Dioclesian, that cruel persecutor, had his house wholly consumed with lightning and a flame of fire that fell from heaven upon it, as Eusebius tells us (*De Vita Constant. lib. 5*). Add hereunto that many times there comes a son that is as good with a fork as his father was with a rake; as great a spend-all as his father was a get-all.

That he may set his nest on high. And there feather it at his pleasure, (***Obadiah 4***) and secure his children like as the eagle builds on high, to save her young from the serpent that seeks to destroy them.

That he may be delivered from the power of evil. Which he hath cause to fear from others, to whom he hath been so injurious and oppressive. But how will he be hid or freed from the terrors of his own guilty conscience; well he may build cities with Cain, and set up high towers with Phocas, but what said the oracle to him? Though thou set up thy strongholds as high as heaven, yet sin at the foundation thereof will soon overturn all, and lay it level with the ground. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 10. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:10]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou hast consulted shame to thy house,** &c. Thou hast taken a wrong course both for thy house of the kingdom (so the Persians called the king's palace, ***Daniel 4:27***), which shall be blown up; and for thine own private

family and posterity; it is not all thy care, pains, plotting, and practising that can preserve it from ignominy and utter ruin. God will turn thy glory into shame, and make thy name to rot and stink as putrified flesh, **Proverbs 10:7, 9**, "He that perverteth his ways shall be known." And when such a man is raked up in the dust his evil courses shall be cast as dung in the faces of those whom he leaveth behind him. What fools, then, are extortioners, muckworms, and cormorants, that live miserably and deal unjustly, opening the mouths of all to cry out upon their craftiness, covetousness, and cruelty, and yet think to raise up their houses and advance their names, and adorn their children with glory and estimation?

By cutting off many people. A poor glory it was to Sulla to have made such a merciless massacre at Athens (σφαγή ἀνηλεής), and after that, to have proscribed and slain 4700; citizens of Rome, as he caused it to be publicly recorded, *videlicet ne memoria tam praeclarae rei dilueretur*, saith mine author. So for Julius Caesar to have been the death of a million of men, Mahomet, the Great Turk, of 800, 000. So for Stokesly, Bishop of London, to boast upon his deathbed that he had in his time brought to the fire 50; heretics, as he called them; or, for the bloody Spaniards, that they have murdered 50, 000, 000; of Indians in 42 years, as Acosta the Jesuit testifieth.

And hast sinned against thy soul. The worth whereof is incomparable, the loss irreparable, as Christ (who only went to the price of souls) telleth us, **Matthew 16:26**. It was therefore no ill counsel that Francis Xaverius gave John III, King of Portugal, to meditate every day a quarter of an hour on that Divine sentence, What shall it profit a man to win the world, and lose his soul? Neither was it any evil answer that Maximilian (King of Bohemia, afterwards emperor) gave the Pope, who persuaded him to be a good Catholic with many promises of profits and preferments; the king answered, I thank your Holiness, but my soul's health is dearer to me than all the things in the world. This pleased not the Pope, who said that it was a Lutheran form of speech; and yet that of Lewis, King of France, about the year 1152, pleased him much worse, who cast his bulls (whereby he required the fruits of vacancies of all cathedral churches of France) into the fire, saying, I had rather the Pope's bulls should roast in the fire than that my soul should fry in hell. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 11. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:11]]{{field-on:Bible}}**For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.** Here are woeful echoes; screech owls of woe cry aloud from the beams of the oppressors' chambers, and make most hideous noises in the ears of their consciences. So that although none other should dare to mute against them, or accuse them of wrong dealing; yet their very houses, built by rapine and blood, shall testify against them; so shall other creatures that groan under their abuses, **Romans 8:19-22**. They seem all to say unto us those three words, saith Hugo, *Accipe, Redde, Fuge; Accipe beneficium, Redde Officium, Fuge Supplicium* (Lib. 2, de Ar. cap. 3). Receive, Return, Flee, Receive the favour, Return the honour, Flee Punishment. Now, if we hearken not to them, but do the contrary, they shall be one day as so many swift witnesses against us.

And the beam out of the timber shall answer it. *Tignum e ligno respondet ei*. An allusion to responders, as in choirs and music; and perhaps the prophet here tacitly taxeth the Babylonian luxury in keeping choristers and musicians for their sinful delight. God, saith he, will fit you with other Song sters shortly, that shall twit you by turns with your murders and ravages; for the stone shall cry out of the wall, Woe to him that buildeth a town with bloods! and the beam out of the timber shall answer it, And woe to him that stablisheth a city by iniquity! {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 12. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:12]]{{field-on:Bible}}**Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood.** This seemeth to be the senseless creatures, black *Cantus Song*, (as they call it), chanted out against the wrong doer, by God's own appointment, *cui obscura clarent, muta respondent*,

silentium confitetur, saith an ancient (Juvonal),

—“*cui servi ut taceant, iumenta loquentur,*”

The very beasts have a verdict to pass upon oppressors; as the dumb ass did upon Balaam: yea, the lifeless creatures shall ring a doleful knell of woe and alas in their ears, and cry them guilty; as the earth did Cain, and the heaven did Phocas; and as the *tignum e ligno* logs of wood, doth here Nebuchadnezzar. His town of Babylon was built in blood by Semiramis, who slew her husband, so was Rome by Romulus, so was Alexandria, in Egypt, by Alexander, that great manslayer, the founder of populous No, of whose woe read **Nahum 3:8, 10.** (See Trapp on “Nahum 3:8”) (See Trapp on “Nahum 3:10”) And for Alexander himself, he lay unburied thirty days together, neither did his bloody conquest above ground purchase him any title for a habitation underground. The like befell our conqueror William, who laid his foundation here upon fireworks; and was punished in his posterity for his depopulations at New Forest and elsewhere.

And stablisheth a city by iniquity. That thinketh so to establish it, but it proveth otherwise. Josephus telleth us that Nebuchadnezzar set three different walls of brick about his Babylon, one within another; but all would not do when once God took it to do. Oppression is a bony sin, **Amos 5:12, 13.** {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 13. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:13]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labour in the fire.** Labour in vain to quench the fire, wherewith Babylon shall be burnt, **Jeremiah 51:58.** Or have laboured to no purpose in building that city and enlarging that empire, which now God will have down. Is it not evident, that they have lost *oleum et operam*, oil and work, yea, hazarded their own lives, as those do that strive against a flame. What profit hath he that laboureth for the wind, **Ecclesiastes 5:16**, much less he that laboureth in the fire, that devouring element, see **Isaiah 33:14.** Possibly he may be saved himself, yet so as by fire, but his work shall be burnt, that loss he shall suffer, **1 Corinthians 3:15.** As they that seek after the philosopher’s stone labour in the very fire to as little purpose as may be; for they must use so much gold, and spend so much gold, and then perhaps they can turn as much into gold by it as they have spent in making of it. Hence one calls alchemy a multiplying of something by nothing; another an *Omne, Aliquid, Nihil* all things, some things, nothing, another, an art without art, never taught by Moses and Miriam, as some have doted, and delivered, that this was a piece of their Egyptian learning. But it is certain that those holy souls never either learned or taught any such laborious loss of time and money. Demetrius Phalereus complaineth of these alchemists long gone not without indignation, *quod certis consumptis incertorum gratis, quae se capturos sperabant, non ceperunt, quod vero habebant abiecerint*, that they cast away certainties for uncertainties, that they attained not what they hoped for, but cast away what they had (Athenaeus). Julius Scaliger also, *Fornaculas istas odi*, saith he, *odio plus quam Vatiniano. Sunt enim noctuae ad aucupia crumenarum.* I cannot abide those furnaces; indeed, they are pick purses, &c.; know there is a true alchemy called by some the Spagirick art, being in great use in medicine. This I condemn not, so it be warily and wisely dealt in. But this by the way only. It seemed to some an impossible thing that Babylon should so suddenly be destroyed as was foretold, **Habakkuk 2:7.** It will be done *certo, cito, penitus*, suddenly, surely, severely, saith the prophet, for the Lord of hosts hath undertaken the doing of it. *Annon ecce a Domino exercituum* (so the Hebrews hath it by an emphatic aposiopesis ⁽²⁾ device)? Is it not, look you, of the Lord of hosts? The people shall labour in the very fire.

The nations also shall weary themselves for very vanity. viz. In seeking to save Babylon, which by a Divine decree is to be destroyed without remedy, **Psalms 137:8.** So is Rome, that other Babylon, **Revelation 18:2**, *cito itidem casura, si vos essetis viri*, said Petrarch long since

² A rhetorical artifice, in which the speaker comes to a sudden halt, as if unable or unwilling to proceed. (ED

(De rein. ut. fort. dial. 118). It would soon be down would you but stand up as men. Neither shall the Jesuits (that *ultimus diaboli crepitus*) be able to uphold it; there is a cold sweat upon all the limbs of antichrist already. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 14. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:14]]{{field-on:Bible}} **For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, &c.** He shall make himself a glorious name among the nations of the earth, by executing vengeance upon Babylon, and so pleading the cause of his oppressed people (whom he seemed, during their captivity there, to neglect), that men shall have cause to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth," *Psalm 58:11*.

As the waters cover the sea. The channel of the sea; that is, plentifully and abundantly; see a like promise *Isaiah 11:9*, but to another purpose. That is a famous promise of the coming and kingdom of Christ; and so some interpreters apply this. Wherein though they seem to be mistaken, considering the context; yet the ancients rightly here hence argued, that Christ would certainly come again to judgment, because many wicked men escape in this world without condign punishment, which then they shall be sure of, *2 Thessalonians 1:6, 9*. Then all shall be set to rights, though now they may seem less equally carried; and the reason of God's proceedings with men shall be cleared up, which now also we are bound to believe (sometimes secret, but) ever just. At the day of judgment we shall see an excellent harmony in this discord of things; and all obscure passages shall be made as plain to us as if they were written with the most glittering sunbeam upon a wall of crystal. Then shall this sweet promise have its full accomplishment: "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," in greatest abundance, and redundancy. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 15. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:15]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink.** The Babylonians (among other their flagitious practices afore mentioned) were much addicted to drunkenness, as is recorded by Herodotus, Ctesias, and others. Their land was sick of drink, and would therefore spue them out: themselves were men of wine, *Habakkuk 2:5*; (see the note), and should therefore drink deep of the wine of God's fierce wrath. They drank to their neighbours or companions, not in a way either of courtesy or charity, but purposely to intoxicate them, to make them drunk, that they might either deride them or abuse them to filthy pleasure, or both; they bucked them with drink, and then laid them out to be shunned and scorned, as Noah was by his graceless son. Therefore as he cursed Canaan (though Scaliger excuse him), and it stuck to his posterity for ever, so doth God here denounce a woe to drunkards, and so sets it on, as no creature shall ever be able to take it off.

That putteth thy bottle to him. Not thy bowl only, but thy bottle, that he may drink, and be drunk, and spue, and fall, *Jeremiah 25:27*. This is ordinarily practised by our roaring boys (as they will needs be called by a woeful prolepsis, here for hereafter), in their Cyclopal, κυκλοποσσαι. Either by persuasions or threats the bottle is set to the mouth, and must be emptied ere it come thence. The civil, sober, and temperate man is urged, and, it may be, forced to swallow down long and needless draughts, as a horse doth a drench, by domineering drunkards, that they may see his nakedness, triumph over him, as laid up, or (as the new term is), satisfied. Their vile courses are here graphically, and in lively colours, described by the Holy Ghost; to set forth the hatefulness thereof, and how woeful will be the issue. There are those who read the words thus, That putteth thine anger to him, thy fervour, and thy fury, viz. if he pledge thee not whole ones, and drink not all the outs, as they call them. Domitius, the father of Nero, slew Liberius, an honest Roman, because he refused to drink so much as he commanded him. Others read it, That putteth thy poison to him; and indeed, *Ebrietas eat blandus daemon, dulce venenum, suave peccatum*. Drunkenness is a fair spoken devil, a pleasant poison, a sweet sin, which he that hath in him hath not himself, and which he that runs into runs not into a single sin, but is wholly turned into sin. How often (saith a grave

divine) have I seen vermin sucking the drunkard's blood, as fast as he that of the grape or malt, yet would he not leave his hold or lose his draught? Gualther reads it, *Coniungens fervorem tuum*, Joining thine heat, inflaming thyself, that thou mayest drink him under the board. This was great Alexander's sin and ruin; so it was Mark Antony's (who wrote a book of his abilities to drink down others, *De sua bibacitate librum conseripsit, seu potius evomuit*), and before them both Darius's, as Athenaeus hath left recorded. How much better his successor, Ahasuerus, who made a law at his great feast that every man should drink according to his pleasure, **Esther 1:8**. So Minos, King of Crete, ordered that his subjects should not drink one to another, *εἰς μέθην*, unto drunkenness.

*"Quinetiam Spartae mos est laudabilis ille,
Ut bibat arbitrio pocula quisque sue."*

Among the old Germans, diem noctemque continuare potando, nulli probrum, saith Tacitus, It was no disgrace to drink night and day together. It is still the sin of that nation, as Gualther upon this text heavily complaineth; and it is grown to a proverb, the drunken Dutchman. Of them the English, much commended for their sobriety, learned, in the Netherland wars, to drown themselves by immoderate drinking; and by drinking to others' healths, to impair their own; so that in our days came forth the first restraint thereof by severity of laws, saith Camden; who yet, being so great an antiquity, could not but know that in the year 959; Edgar, king of this land, made an ordinance for putting pins in cups, that none should quaff whole ones.

And makest him drunk also. Robbest him of himself, and layest a beast in his room. The same Hebrew word, *Zolel*, signifieth a drunkard and a vile person: filthy venomous creatures breed in those fennish grounds, **Job 40:21**. Behemoth lieth in them; which Gulielmus Parisiensis applieth to the devil in drunken hearts; whereas in dry places, sober souls, he walketh about seeking rest but findeth none, **Matthew 12:43**. The very heathen, in hatred of this sin, feigned that Cobali (a harmful and pernicious kind of devils) accompanied Bacchus; and that Acratus, or the intemperate devil, was their captain. Seneca calleth it a voluntary madness, another a noonday devil (*daemon meridianus*), no more a night walker, as once, **1 Thessalonians 5:7**. The Lacedaemonians punished it severely; so do the Turks to this day, pouring ladlefules of boiling lead down their throats sometimes; and at least thrashing of them on the bare feet, till they are disabled for walking in haste again to their societies of good fellowship. Morat Bassa commanded a pipe to be thrust through the nose of a Turk which was found taking tobacco; and so in derision to be led about Constantinople. Let men shun this shameful sin, and be far from drawing others to it; for have they not sins enough of their own to answer for? Must they needs go to hell in company? *Dives* desired that his brethren and companions in sin might not come to that place of torment, **Luke 16:28**. This he did not out of any goodwill to them, but because he knew if they were ever damned, he should be double damned.

That thou mayest look on their nakedness. Those parts that nature would have covered are called nakedness, *per Antiphrasin*. To look on them with delight is by some held a sin against nature; the ground of their opinion is **Genesis 3:7**. To make men drunk for that purpose is worse. But if for further abuse of their bodies to uncleanness (as Attalus, the Macedonian, dealt by Pausanias, a young courtier, who afterwards slew King Philip, because he would not punish Attalus for so doing), that is worst of all; and hath a woe, woe, woe, hanging at the heels of it, *Pausaniam solutum mero Attalus non suae tantum verum et convivarum libidini, velut scortum vile subiecit, ludibriumque omnium inter aequales reddidit.* {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 16. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:16]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou art filled with shame for glory.** Or, more with shame than with glory. That is, thou shalt be filled shortly with ignominy for

that glory wherein thou presently primest thyself; thy drunkenness shall redound to thine utter disgrace, as it was to Darius, Alexander, Antoninus, Bonosus, Trajan (a good emperor otherwise, but a drunkard, and a sodomite, as Dio Cassius reporteth him). Yea, Cato, that most severe censurer of other men's manners, to whom it was sometime objected (how deservedly I know not), *quod nocturnis potationibus indugeret*, that by night he would drink soundly. This is a blur to him, if true, and confutes that eulogium given him by Paterculus, that he was *omnibus humanis vitiis immunis*, free from all vices, and as like virtue herself as might be, *Homo virtuti simillimus, et rigidae innocentiae*. In Scripture the drunkard's style begins in lawlessness, proceeds in unprofitableness, ends in misery; and all shut up in that denomination of his pedigree, A son of Belial.

Drink thou also. Since thou art so able at it, since thou hast so well deserved that infamous epitaph of a certain drunkard,

*"Heus, hic situs est Offellius Buratius Bibulus,
Qui dum vixit, aut bibit aut minxit, abi praeceps."*

Drink another while of the cup of shame and sorrow; take thy part of all manner of miseries, **Jeremiah 25:26; Obadiah 16**. "Snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, shall one day be the portion of thy cup: For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," **Psalms 11:6, 7**. Yea, he loveth to retaliate, and will therefore make these drunkards drink also; and those that made others drunk that they might look on their nakedness, to lie with their foreskins uncovered to their perpetual reproach. Uncircumcision was a shameful spectacle indeed among that people.

The cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned to thee. Heb. Turned about, or shall turn itself, quia rerum omnium vicissitudo; thy turn is now come to take off the dregs of God's cup of calamity, **Jeremiah 25:15**, that hath eternity to the bottom.

And shameful spewing shall be on thy glory. *Kikalon*, a compound word, the vomit of ignominy; a fit punishment for filthy drunkards, who break their heads, as swine do their bellies, over charge their stomachs, as dogs do their gorges, and then disgorge themselves in a Shameful sort; as Antonius did at Narbon amidst his guests at a feast; and as Eccius, Luther's great adversary, whom he merrily called *leccius*, from his casting; as Tiberius was nicknamed *Biberius*.

Shall be on thy glory. The Hebrew word for glory properly signifieth weightiness; as the word twice here used for shame signifieth lightness; an elegant opposition, showing that whatsoever the Babylonians gloried in, and held themselves honourable for, should be lightly accounted of, and lie buried in the sheet of shame, as in a dunghill of filthy vomit.

{{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 17. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:17]]{{field-on:Bible}}**For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee.** Here, for the comfort of God's people (which is the main scope of this prophecy), he repeateth the chief causes of Babylon's calamity; viz. her cruelty to Lebanon, that is, to all Judaea (a part being put for the whole). Or else he speaketh of the violence done to the temple, which was built of the cedars of Lebanon; as was likewise the temple of Diana at Ephesus made of cedar wood. The devil loves to be God's ape. This violence in firing the temple and desolating the country shall cover thee all over as a garment doth the body; yea, it shall be as the shirt, made for the murdering of Agamemnon, where the head had no issue out.

And the spoil of beasts which made them afraid. Men are here called beasts, as the land, Lebanon; these were spoiled and terrified, these were murdered and massacred by the Chaldeans, who shall therefore be severely punished, and this written, as it were, over their heads, to signify for what they suffer,

Because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein. (*See Trapp on "Habakkuk 2:8"*) {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 18. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:18]]{{field-on:Bible}} **What profiteth the graven image.** The Chaldees promised themselves much help against their enemies from their idols; and were ready to say, as that Roman emperor, Antoninus, the philosopher, did, when he was to meet his enemy, *Non sic deos coluimus, ut ille nos vinceret*: We have not so served the gods as that he should overcome us. The prophet here rejecteth their confidence, and layeth open their folly. See the like *Jeremiah 10:8, 14, 15; Zechariah 10:2; Isaiah 44:16, 17*, &c. Confer *Jeremiah 51:47, 52; Ezekiel 20:30, 32*.

That the maker thereof hath graven it. And can he hope for help from the work of his own hands? can the image give that to others which it hath not for itself? In Henry VIII's time one Mr Cotismore was accused of heresy, for saying that images were but carpenter's chips; and that when men go to offer to them, they did it to show their new gear. The men of Cockram, not pleased with their new rood, quarrelled with the joiner, and refused to pay him; he complained to the mayor of Doncaster, who gave them this counsel: Pay the poor man his money, and go your ways home, and look on it, and if it will not serve for a god, make no more ado, but clap a pair of horns on his head, and so he will make an excellent devil. This the parishioners took well in worth; the poor man had his money, and various laughed well at itt; but so did not the Babylonish priests, saith Mr Fox. Horace brings in Priapus, that ridiculous garden god, saying thus,

"Olim truncus cram ficulnus, &c."

He thought no otherwise of the images of Jupiter, and the rest; but durst not say so, for fear of the people. So that of him it might be said, as Augustine doth of Seneca, who wrote a book against superstitions, but *colebat quod reprehendebat, agebat quod arguebat, quod culpabat, adorabat*, he reproveth them, but yet used them (De Civ. Dei, lib. 6. c. 10).

The molten image, and a teacher of lies. *Pictura falsa veritas est*, saith one. It is but a shadow of the person that it representeth. God cannot be pictured or expressed by any image. Images of Christ are not only defects, but also lies, saith the homily against peril of idolatry, set forth in Queen Elizabeth's days. Ireneus reproveth the Gnostics for carrying about the images of Christ, made in Pilate's time, after his own proportion. Lactantius saith that there is no religion where there is an image. Varro had said the same long before him, as Austin reciteth him. Plutarch saith it is sacrilege to worship by images, and telleth us that Numa forbade the Romans the use of images in temples; neither had they any for the first 170; years together; no more had the Persians, saith Strabo, nor the old Germans, saith Tacitus. The old Britons indeed had their idols, *Portenta diabolica* (so Gildas calleth them), *pene numero Aegyptiaca vincentia*, ugly for shape, and almost as many as the Egyptians for number. These all fell down together, when Christ was first known here (as they say the Egyptian idols did, when Christ with his parents fled thither, for fear of Herod), but antichrist soon set up others in their stead, and taught the people that they were laymen's books. But if they be lying teachers (as here they are called) they must be lying books too; and therefore not to be read by any that would receive the love of the truth, that they may be saved. Bern, in Switzerland, was the first town that, after the Reformation, was purged of images; making a bonfire of them on an Ash Wednesday. The like was done here in England, in King Edward VI's reign, on that very day wherein the victory was gotten at Mussleborough, in Scotland; and now I hope we are rid of them for ever. The Turks will not endure them, no, not upon their coins; because of the second commandment; for they also do so honour piece of paper wherein anything of his is written, and do exceedingly hate Papists for their abominable idolatry; as do likewise the Jews.

That the maker of his work trusteth therein. Which he would never do, if not bewitched

and bereft of his right mind. To trust in a god of a man's own making is a prodigious error, a stupendous stupidity.

To make dumb idols. In the Hebrew there is an elegant alliteration, *Elilim illemim*, speechless, No-gods, that give no answer to their suitors, and

“quorum sunt numina nomina tantum.”{{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 19. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:19]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake.** It is wood still, and yet he saith to it, Awake, Arise, &c., as if he would deny his own reason, and unman himself. When Hezekiah saw that such was the venom of the Israelitish idolatry, that the brazen serpent stung worse than the fiery, he pulled it down, and in contempt called it Nehushtan, that is, a piece of brass, **2 Kings 18:4**. Pagnine rendereth it, *aenusum*. Marinus, *aeniculum*, that is, *parum quid aeris*, a little piece of sorry brass (Thes. Ling. Sanct.). The Jews to this day say that as long as they see the preacher direct his speech and prayer to that little wooden crucifix, that standeth in the pulpit by him, to call it his Lord and Saviour, to kneel to it, to embrace it, to kiss it, to weep upon it (as is the fashion of Italy), this is preaching sufficient for them; and persuadeth them more with the very sight of it to hate Christian religion, than any reason that the world can allege to love it. Woe, therefore, to those Popish idolaters, because of offences; destruction to them, that thus say to the wood, Awake, and

to the dumb stone, Arise. A prayer, fit to be preferred to God only, (as **Psalms 35:23**) who giveth not his glory to any other, nor his honour to graven images, **Isaiah 42:8**. He that is the right object of men's prayers must be omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, a God also in covenant with us, &c. Is any wood or stone so? Is it not *inutile lignum*, useless wood, a dead stock? *Eben dumam*, a dumb stone? Our English seems to come of the Hebrew.

It shall teach. Dumb, and yet teach? Others read it as a question, *Ipse doceat*? Can it teach? What better lesson can ye learn from it than a lie? as **Habakkuk 2:18**. Bid adieu to it, therefore, as King Henry VIII did to the Pope (if he had done so to Popery too, it had been better for him) in his protestation against him. England is no more a babe, to be led and fed with lies—. Surely, except God take away our right wits, not only the Pope's authority shall be driven out for ever, but his name also shortly shall be forgotten in England. We will from henceforth ask counsel of him and his when we wish to be deceived, when we covet to be in error, when we desire to offend God, truth, and honesty.

Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver. *q.d.* Come and see, believe your own eyes at least, behold the matter, form, workmanship of this newly made god, and grow wiser. The rood of grace with all its trinkets, the blood of Hales (that notable impostor) was laid open at Paul's Cross by Cromwell, and there viewed and torn in pieces by the people.

There is no breath at all in the midst of it. No soul, not so much as that of a beast. *O pulchrum caput, sed cerebrum non inest*, said the ape in the fable, coming once into a carver's shop. The best thing that an image can teach a man is, that itself is dumb and dead; and that the maker thereof cannot give life and breath to it, much less a deity. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 20. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 2:20]]{{field-on:Bible}} **But the Lord is in his holy temple.** It is not enough to condemn superstitions; but we must know and serve the true God in a true manner. Cicero wished that he could as easily find out the true religion as disprove the false ones. Cambyses destroyed the Egyptian idols, rather in scorn of all religion than hatred of idolatry. Lucian jeered the heathen gods; and yet was an enemy to Christianity. Erasmus was no Papist, nor yet good Protestant. Henry VIII despised the old religion, and yet envied the

new. There are many (said he in parliament) that are too busy with their new Sumpsimus: ⁽³⁾ and others that dote too much upon their old Mumpsimus. ⁽⁴⁾ Hence it is that the prophet here to those dunghill deities of the heathens, those dead idols, opposeth the living and only true God. Jehovah, saith he, "is in his holy temple"; that Essentiator who hath his being of himself, and gives being to all things else, ζῶν καὶ πνοὴν, as St Paul elegantly expresseth it, **Acts 17:25**. He is in his holy temple, sc. in heaven, by his power and glory, and in his Church on earth, by his grace and goodness. The use of which doctrine followeth.

Let all the earth keep silence before him. Heb. sc. Or be still, all the earth, &c. *Reverentiae causa silete*, tremble at his judgments, trust in his promises, wait upon him in his ordinances, walk before him in obedience, speak not of him or to him, but as knowing your distance, your infancy. In speaking of God our best eloquence is silence, saith Mr Hooker. In speaking to him, *quanta cum reverentia, quanto timore, quanta humilitate, accedere debet e palude sua procedens et repens villa ranuncula*, saith Bernard: with what reverence and godly fear, with what humility, should a poor small frog, creeping out of his mud, draw near unto this great God, before whom angels appear with greatest self-abasements! What abhorrence then and self-annihilation can be sufficient to accompany our approaches to this great God of heaven? And how should the enemies of the Church stand in awe, and even quake before him, wriggling into their holes, as worms do when it thundereth, and being all hushed, as sheep are before the wolf, birds before the hawk, all the beasts of the field before the lion when he roareth. {{field-off:Bible}}

³ A correct expression taking the place of an incorrect but popular one (*mumpsimus*). *OED*

⁴ One who obstinately adheres to old ways, in spite of the clearest evidence that they are wrong; an ignorant and bigoted opponent of reform. *CED*

Chapter 3

Verse 1. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:1]]{{field-on:Bible}} **A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.**

Habakkuk signifieth a wrestler, that by closing striveth to get the better, as hath been before noted on **Habakkuk 1:1**. To close with the adversary is the best way to supplant him, or to avoid the blow: so is running into God the way to escape him. The prophet had heard God's speech and was afraid, **Habakkuk 3:2**. He saw his wrath ready to break forth, and therefore gets in with him by this prayer. He knew that,

"Flectitur iratus voce rogante Deus" (Ovid).

God suffereth himself often to be overcome by the prayers of his people; and yieldeth much unto them when most bitterly bent, **Matthew 24:20**; he therefore sets shoulders and sides to work, and wrestles lustily in this chapter. He knew it was a prophet's work to pray as well as preach; and between these two to divide his time. "God forbid" (saith Samuel, who is reckoned the first of prophets, **Acts 3:24**), "that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: I will also teach you the good and right way," **1 Samuel 12:23**. So doth this prophet; he both preferreth a prayer (the word הלפת say some, signifieth such a prayer as is made by a mediator before a judge; we have an advocate with the Father, **1 John 2:1**), and dedicated the same to the people, to be used by them in the time of the captivity: which yet they shamefully neglected to do, as Daniel acknowledgeth, **Daniel 9:13**; or if they did anything towards it, they merely sought themselves in it, and so lost their labour, **Zechariah 7:5**; whereas had they prayed as here is prescribed, confessing their sins, and beseeching God not to deal with them after their deserts, but according to his ancient lovingkindnesses, that never fail, they might have found mercy, **Lamentations 3:22**. The altar of incense stood against the mercy seat; and, **Revelation 9:13**, the prayers of the saints from the four corners of the earth sound and do great things in the world, make it ring. It was the speech of a learned man; If there be but one sigh come from a gracious heart it fills the ears of God, so that God hears nothing else.

Upon Shigionoth. *Vocabulum musicum est, cuius ratio Hebraeis ignota*, saith Buxtorf; it is a musical term, the reason whereof is unknown to the Hebrew doctors to this day. Yet Rabbi Salomon (and with him most interpreters) rendereth it *pro ignorantibus*, for ignorances, or as touching his own and his people's errors; which the prophet here (convinced by God's former answer to his expostulation) confesseth with confusion of face. Ignorance surely is a blushful sin; especially if affected and delighted in (as the Hebrew word seemeth to imply, confer **Proverbs 5:1; 20:1**). Private ignorance, though it do somewhat excuse a man (*sc. a tanto* from so much not *a tote*, from everything, **Luke 12:47**), yet is it a sin to be confessed and bewailed; for Christ died for the not knowing of the people, **Hebrews 9:7**, ἀγνοῦματα, and destruction is threatened, *pro nonscientia*, or lack of knowledge, **Hosea 4:6**. But Calvin well observeth here, that the prophet by begging pardon for ignorances, doth not omit his own and the people's more grievous sins; but sheweth that men must also be sensible of their lesser lapses, and cry out with David (after whose example this whole Song is framed), "Who can understand his errors" (or ignorances, unwitting and inconsiderate sins)? "O cleanse thou me from secret faults," **Psalms 19:12**. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 2. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:2]]{{field-on:Bible}} **O Lord, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid.** *Audivi auditionem tuam*. I have heard (not thy *fume* or thy report, as some render it, unless it be in the prophet Isaiah's sense, **Isaiah 53:1**, but) thy preceding discourse, in answer to my disceptation. I have heard that the Babylonians will come, and that my people must go into captivity. This was no pleasant hearing; for we all naturally shrink in the shoulder when called to carry the cross; but those that do what they should not must look to hear and feel too what they would not.

And was afraid. Fear is *constrictio cordis ex sensu mali instantis*, a passion of the soul shrinking in itself from some imminent evil. The wicked hear and jeer: or their fear driveth them from God, as it did guilty Adam. Contrarily, the godly tremble at God's judgments while they hang in the threatenings; and draw nigh to him with entreaties of peace. In this fear of the Lord is strong confidence, "and his children have a place of refuge," **Proverbs 14:26**.

O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years. *i.e.* Preserve alive thy Israel, that work of thine hands, **Isaiah 45:11**, together with thy work of grace in their hearts; keep that spark alive upon the sea of tribulations and temptations. The angels (saith a reverend man) are kept with much less care, charge, and power, than we; because they have no bias, no weights of sin hung upon them, &c. There is not so much of the glory of God (saith another) in all his works of creation and providence as in one gracious action that a Christian performeth.

in the midst of the years make known. *sc.* Thy power in perfecting thy glory, and not forsaking the work of thine own hands, **Psalms 138:8**. It was Luther's usual prayer, Confirm, O God, in us that thou hast wrought; and perfect the work that thou hast begun in us, to thy glory. So be it. So Queen Elizabeth, when prisoner at Woodstock, prayed thus: Look, Lord, upon the wounds of thine hands; and despise not the work of thine hands. Thou hast written me down in thy book of preservation with thine own hand: O read thine own handwriting, and save me, &c. But what meant the Seventy here to translate, In the midst of two beasts: which while Ribera striveth to defend, he tells us a tale of the babe of Bethlehem, born in a stable, and laid in a manger between two beasts, an ox and an ass (*ἐν μέσῳ δύο ζώων*). It may very well be that the Church here prayeth for God's grace and favour during the time of her captivity.

In wrath remember mercy. *In commotione irae*: when thou art most moved against us, and hast as much ado to forbear killing of us as thou hadst to forbear Moses when thou mettest him in the inn, then remember to show mercy, call to mind thy compassions which fail not. "Look then upon us, and be merciful unto us, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name," **Psalms 119:132**. The wicked are threatened with an evil, an only evil, without any mixture of mercy; this the prophet here deprecate, and beggeth mercy, **Ezekiel 7:5**. *Per miserere mei, tollitur ira Dei*. through mercy to me, the wrath of God is born away.

{{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 3. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:3]][{field-on:Bible}]**God came from Teman.** The prophet alludeth to that of Moses in his swan-like Song, **Deuteronomy 33:2**, and allegeth God's benefits of old, for his own and their present confirmation of faith; without which prayer would be to no purpose; hence effectual prayer is called the "prayer of faith," **James 5:15**. Whatsoever ye ask believing ye shall receive, saith our Saviour, **Mark 11:24**. "Cast thy burden" (or thy request) "upon the Lord," saith David, **Psalms 55:22**. To help us so to do it is of singular use to consider what God hath done heretofore; for thou hast, thou wilt, is an ordinary medium of Scriptural logic, see **Psalms 85:1-4**. There be six hast's drawing in the next, Turn us again, &c., **Psalms 85:4**; see also **2 Corinthians 1:10**. God's majesty and might when he gave the law in Sinai is here set forth, to show how easily he can, if he please, turn again the captivity of his people, as the streams in the south, **Psalms 126:4**.

And the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. He that is holiness itself (a title far too good for that man of sin, that *Merum Scelus* pure wickedness, the Pope, Philip the Fair of France did him right in writing to him thus, *Sciat tua maxima Fatuitas*, &c., Be it known to your foolishness, not to your holiness), and that must be sanctified in righteousness, **Isaiah 5:16**. Mount Paran was contiguous to the mountains Sinai and Teman, otherwise called Seir for its roughness, **Deuteronomy 33:2**. Selah. This the Seventy make to be a musical notion, rendering it *Diapsalma*. a pause in music. It seemeth to import an asseveration of a thing so to be, and an

admiration thereat. The Jews to this day use it in their prayers for *Legnolam*, i.e. For ever, or Amen. It is probable, that when the singers of the temple came to a Selah (which word is used ninety-two times in Scripture, and only in Psalms and Song s) they made a pause, that the hearers might stay their thoughts awhile upon the preceding matter, worthy of more than ordinary observation. Hence Tremellius and Junius express Selah by the adverbs *Summe, Maxime, Vehementissime, Excellenter*. It was doubtless a singular mercy of God to his people of Israel, that he came from Teman, &c., to speak with them from heaven; and there to give them "right judgments and true laws, good statutes and commandments," **Nehemiah 9:13, 14**. This when he did,

His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. The law was given in a most majestic manner, (**Exodus 19:17-25**) partly to procure reverence to the doctrine of it, partly to set forth the nature and office of it, which is to terrify offenders, and to drive them to Christ; and partly also to show that God hath power and weapons enough to defend those that keep his law, and to punish such as would draw them off from their obedience thereunto. That is a pious meditation of a reverend writer (Dr Hall), if the law were thus given, how shall it be required? If such were the proclamation of God's statutes, what shall the sessions be? I see and tremble at the resemblance. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 4. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:4]]{{field-on:Bible}}**And his brightness was as the light.** The glory of the Lord was as a devouring fire on the top of the mountain, **Exodus 24:17**; the noonday light, the sun in his strength was nothing to this incomparable brightness, which was as the light, or as the sun, see **Job 31:26; 37:20**. Hence the heathens called Apollo or the sun Orus (which is the word here used), hence also the Greek ὀράω, to see (αἷν).

He had horns coming out of his hand. Or, bright beams out of his side, as the sun hath: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place," **Proverbs 16:3**, and every man before him is all window, **Job 34:22**; the whole world is to him as a sea of glass, **Revelation 4:6**, a clear transparent body, he shines and sees through it. God's hand or side is said to be horned in the sense that Moses's face was, **Exodus 34:30**.

And there was the hiding of his power. Not the revealing of it, but *velamen, symbolum, integumentum*, the veil, the cover, such as God put over him when he showed Moses his glory. He could see but his back parts, and live; we need see no more that we may live. God is invisible, incomprehensible, and dwelleth in light unapproachable. How little a thing doth man here understand of God, **Job 26:14**; the greatest part of that which he knoweth is but the least part of that which he knoweth not. Surely as a weak eye is not able to behold the sun, no, nor the strongest eye without being dazzled; we cannot look upon it *in rota*, in the globe but only *in radiis*, into the rays; so here we cannot see God in his essence, but only in his effects, in his works, and in his Word, where also we have but a show, but a shadow of him, we see but his train in the temple, as Isaiah; the holy angels cover their faces with their wings as with a double scarf before God's brightness, which would put out their eyes else, **Isaiah 6:2**; see **Psalms 104:2; 1 Timothy 6:16**. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 5. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:5]]{{field-on:Bible}}**Before him went the pestilence.** *Dever*, the word signifieth such a disease as cometh by a Divine decree, θεῖλατον. So Hippocrates call the pestilence τὸ θεῖον, because sent by God in a spiritual manner, a stroke of his own bare hand as it were. Here it is made one of his *apparitors* or *pursuivants*, sent before him to destroy the Canaanites, as it had done the Egyptians.

And burning coals went forth at his feet. Or, the carbuncle burning bile, **Deuteronomy 32:24**. The Vulgate translate it the devil; others ἄνθραξ, a deadly inflammation, whereof good Oecolampadius died, and was lamented by Melancthon. But Luther very uncharitably (the best have their failings) wrote that he believed *Oecolampadium ignitis Satanae telis et hastis*

confossum, subitanea metre periisse (Lib. de Missa privat.), that Oecolampadius died suddenly, being stabbed to death with the fiery darts of the devil. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 6. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:6]]{{field-on:Bible}} **He stood, and measured the earth.** Not Joshua, but God, brought his people into the promised land, and divided it among them, *Psalm 78:55*. Like as also he had divided the whole earth by bounds and borders to the various nations, *Psalm 74:17*, and doth still appoint men the bounds of their habitations, *Acts 17:26*.

He beheld, and drove asunder the nations. He did it with his looks, as it were; that is, with very little ado. Let the Lord but arise only and his enemies shall be scattered, let him but frown and they fall before him. If Augustus could frown to death Asinius Pollio, and Queen Elizabeth her chancellor Hatton, what shall we think of God's bended brows?

And the everlasting mountains were scattered. *i.e.* Those kingdoms of the Canaanites that were held firm and immoveable as the mountains, yea, riveted as it were upon eternity, see *Numbers 13:28, 29, 33*. These were scattered, *dissilierunt*, fell in pieces, and leaped this way and that way, as stones broken with a great hammer. God threshed these mountains, and beat them small, he made the hills as chaff, *Isaiah 41:15*. No worldly height could stand before him. By mountains here some understand kings and princes, as by hills those of inferior rank.

His ways are everlasting. Heb. His walks or journeys, that is, his government of the world by his power and wisdom, is perpetual, he never casteth off the care thereof. There are those who refer the word his to the Canaanites, who had of old possessed the land without disturbance (αὐτόχθονες); but the former sense is the better. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 7. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:7]]{{field-on:Bible}} **I saw the tents of Cushan.** King of Mesopotamia, who tyrannized over Israel eight years after Joshua's death; God selling his people to him for nought, and not increasing his wealth by their price, *Psalm 44:12; Judges 3:8*. But delivering them in the end by that valiant Othniel, who brought the tents of Cushan under affliction or vanity. Some render it *propter iniquitatem*, because of iniquity, and set this sense upon it; It was for sin that God sold his people into the hands of Cushanrishathaim, and yet afterwards sent them a Saviour; why then should they now despair of a seasonable return out of captivity, though by their sins they have provoked the Lord to wrath; since if they return unto him and seek his favour, there is yet mercy with the Lord, that he may be feared? Lo, this is the right use of histories: and this is our duty, to make observations to ourselves, as did the prophet here: I saw the tents of Cushan; I considered the thing that hath been, it is the same which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, &c., *Ecclesiastes 1:9*. *Historiae fidae monitrices dicuntur* παρὰ τὸ ἰστάναι τὸν ποῦν.

And the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. *Cortinae vel pelles*, &c. When by the sword of the Lord and of Gideon they were cut off and discomfited, *Judges 7:7*. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 8. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:8]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Was the Lord displeased against the rivers?** As Xerxes, that brutish man, was against the Hellespont, for battering his bridge of boats, beating it and casting a pair of fetters into it? Was God thus angry against Jordan and against the Red Sea? No such matter. If God seem angry at any time against the reasonless or lifeless creatures, it is for a punishment of man's sin. But here his end and purpose was to show that he did ride upon those horses and chariots (the rivers and sea) for the salvation of his people. He did so when time was, and that he will do so again, when time shall serve, this question in the text shows that there is no question to be made of it. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 9. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:9]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thy bow was made quite naked.** *sc.* Out of the case. He meaneth, thy power was clearly manifested and powerfully exerted against the nations above mentioned; so that all men might see plainly that thou wert that man of war,

Exodus 15:3, which shootest thine arrows at a certainty, and never missest thine enemies, thy buttmark, see **Job 16:12**.

According to the oaths of the tribes, even thy word. *i.e.* According to thy promises to thy people, confirmed with oaths, even those sure mercies of David, or assured to David. Some render it, according to the oaths, those props of thy word. His word is sure and sufficient of itself; but, for our better settlement, and as a prop to our faith, he hath bound it with oaths; "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation," **Hebrews 6:18**. For now we may say with Solomon, "For thy word's sake," nay, more, for thine oath's sake, "and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this," **2 Samuel 7:18, 21**. Thy love moved thee to make promise, yea, to give oath; and now thy truth bindeth thee to perform. All thy paths to thy people are mercy and truth, **Psalms 25:10**; not mercy only, but mercy and truth; not by a providence only, but by virtue of a promise ratified with an oath: this is sweet indeed; this deserves a *Selah* to be set to it.

Thou didst cleave the earth with rivers. **Exodus 17:6; Psalm 78:15, 16; Deuteronomy 8:15; Nehemiah 9:15**. This cleaving the hard rock, and setting it abroach, this turning of the flint into a fountain, **Psalms 114:8**, was a work of omnipotence, and is therefore so much celebrated. It maketh much to the miracle that the earth was cleft with rivers; this importeth both the plenty and the perennity thereof; for the rock, that is, the river out of the rock, followed them, **1 Corinthians 10:4**, lest in that dry and barren wilderness they should perish for want of water. The same God also who had given his people *petram aquatilem*, gave them *pluviam escatilem* (as Tertullian phraseth it), manna from heaven, quails in great abundance, and never was prince better served in his greatest pomp. He also defended them from the fiery serpents, and delivered them from a thousand other deaths and dangers; all which mercies are here implied, though one only be instanced; and all to ascertain the saints how much God setteth by them, and what he will yet do for them, as occasion requireth. As he made the world at first, that he might communicate and impart himself to his elect; so for their sakes doth he still preserve and govern it, ordering the world's disorders by an over ruling power, for his own glory and their eternal good. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 10. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:10]]{{field-on:Bible}} **The mountains saw thee, and they trembled.** *sc.* At the promulgation of the law, **Exodus 19:17; Psalm 114:4, 6**, when God came with ten thousand of his saints, **Deuteronomy 33:2**; and so terrible was the earthquake, that it wrought an earthquake, even in Moses himself, **Hebrews 12:21**. It is the office of the law to do so; and happy is he who, terrified and thunder struck by the threats thereof, runs to Christ for refuge, as to One who is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God by him, **Hebrews 9:25**. Some take mountains metaphorically, for the mighties of the earth, and read it thus, The mountains saw thee, and they grieved, see **Numbers 22:3; Joshua 2:9-11**.

The overflowing of the water passed by. The inundation of Jordan passed into the Dead Sea, the lower part of it, I mean, like as the upper stood, and rose up upon a heap, **Joshua 3:13**, being bounded and barred up by the almighty power of God.

The deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high. *i.e.* *Summo consensu suffragatus est*. It voiced, and voted for God's judgments; helping forward the execution thereof. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 11. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:11]]{{field-on:Bible}} **The sun and moon stood still in their habitation.** *viz.* In the days of Joshua, and upon his prayer, **Joshua 10:12, 13**, whereupon one crieth out, *O admirabilem piarum precum vim ac potentiam quibus etiam coelestia cedunt, &c.* Oh the admirable power of prayer, that worketh wonders in heaven! and oh the heroic faith of Joshua, the trophies whereof he set in the very orbs of heaven.

At the light of thine arrows they went. By these shining arrows and glittering spears, some understand that terrible lightning, mixed with that horrible hail, *Joshua 10:11* with *Exodus 10:23*, and then it is *figura plane poetica*, a poetic expression; for the poets call lightning *Διὸς βέλος*, Jove's arrow. See the like *Psalms 18:14*. The huge hail stones were God's glittering spears, wherewith he slaughtered his enemies. Others suppose that these things are meant of the arms and weapons of the Israelites, called God's arrows and spears, because used at his command and ordered by him (as the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, *Judges 7:18*). This sense Gualther liketh better, as most comfortable to Christian warriors, who fight the Lord's battles. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 12. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:12]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou didst march through the land in indignation.** Heb. Thou didst walk in pomp, as a conqueror, through the land, *sc.* of Canaan, in contempt of the opposite forces, treading upon the necks of thine enemies, *Joshua 10:24*.

Thou didst thresh the heathen in anger. See *Amos 1:3; Micah 4:13*. God, by the hands of Joshua, did all this. The most of the old inhabitants were destroyed. Some few fled into Africa, and left written upon a pillar for a monument to posterity, We are Phoenicians, that fled from the face of Joshua, the son of Nave. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 13. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:13]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou wentest forth for the salvation of thy people.** *q.d.* Thou wast *Generalissimo* grand general in our expeditions, in the days of the judges, who therefore were so successful. How could they be otherwise, when God came with them into the field? If Queen Elizabeth could take for her motto, *Cui adhaereo, praeest*, He to whom I adhere prevaleth, how much more may Almighty God say as much?

Even for salvation with thine anointed. *i.e.* With David, *1 Samuel 16:12, 13; 2 Samuel 5:3, 17; 19:22; 22:51; Psalm 20:7*; a lively type of Christ, that Messiah the prince, the mystery of which promised Saviour the ancient Jewish doctors confessed to be contained in this text. It is not altogether unlikely that the prophet might intend here to point at Jesus Christ, when he saith, for salvation (*Jeshang*, whence Jesus) for thine anointed, or thy Christ. There are those who read the words in the future tense, thus: Thou shalt go forth for the salvation of thy people, *sc.* when Messiah, the great *Sospitator*, preserver cometh: thou shalt wound the head of the wicked, *sc.* of the devil, *Romans 16:20*. Thou shalt make naked the foundation of his kingdom, unto the neck. *Selah*: thou shalt utterly destroy sin, death, and hell. A remarkable mercy indeed, a mystery of greatest concernment, and most worthy to be considered. Gualther carries the sense this way; and yet addeth, that if any please to refer the words to the history of the Old Testament, they must be understood as those tyrants that persecuted the true Church, and whom God, for Christ's sake, subdued and subverted, together with their kingdoms. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 14. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:14]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou didst strike through with his staves, the heads of his villages.** Heb. Thou didst pierce, or bore through, as with an auger, with his staves (a metaphor from shepherds, according to that, *Psalms 23:4*, "thy rod and thy staff"), or, with his tribes (the *Δωδεκάφυλον*, *Acts 26:7*), that entered the land of promise; with these men, or with these weapons, though never so unlikely, thou didst, by the hand of David, wound the hairy scalp of thine enemies, those pagans and persecutors; and much more wilt, by the Son of David, subdue Satan and his complices.

They came out as a whirlwind to scatter me. Heb. They tempested, they raised a hurly-burly, being turbulent spirits, as the devil is, to disperse me, as the dust of the mountains is scattered before a whirlwind.

Their rejoicing was as to devour the poor. *i.e.* Poor me, they devoured in secret, as if God had been nothing aware of their doings; and this was their exultation, or rejoicing; they took

pleasure in their cruelty, and promised themselves impunity. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 15. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:15]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Thou didst walk through the sea,** &c. *q.d.* Shall they thus prevail by iniquity? and did they carry the ball upon the foot till they had gotten the goal? Hath ever any waxed fierce against God, and prospered? **Job 9:4.** I think not. Thou that of old didst walk through the Red Sea, didst tread it, or foot it, and that most swiftly, as if thou hadst had thy change of horses.

Through the heap of great waters. Which thou laidest on heaps for thy people's sake, so that, instead of being swallowed up, they were preserved thereby. Thou, Lord, I say, hast many times since (when all hope failed) opened a fair way for thy servants to escape out of greatest dangers; and so I trust thou wilt again, when they most stand in need of thine heavenly help. *Cum res est in acie novaculae,* God will be seen of his in the mount. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 16. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:16]]{{field-on:Bible}} **When I heard, my belly trembled,** &c. Heard what? That speech of thine, **Habakkuk 3:3**, whereunto the prophet now returneth, after a long digression for the people's support and comfort. Digressions in Divine discourses are not always and absolutely unlawful. God sometimes draweth aside the doctrine, to satisfy some soul which the preacher knows not; and, sparingly used, it quickeneth attention. "O Lord, I have heard thy speech" (touching Israel's captivity, **Habakkuk 1:6-11**, and after that, the Chaldeans' calamity, **Habakkuk 2:5-18**), "and was afraid," **Habakkuk 3:2**. Neither was this a slight or sudden pang, and soon put over; but such as soaked to the very roots, so that my belly, or my heart in my belly, trembled; see **Proverbs 20:27**.

My lips quivered. Through want of natural heat, which in this fright was gone inward to succour the heart; as soldiers upon the approach of an enemy run into the castle.

At the voice. At the dreadful denunciations of judgments.

Rottenness entered into my bones. *Poetico more ex signis describit*, saith Gualther. The prophet, in manner of a poet, describeth his great fear by the gracious effects and signs thereof in his body.

That I might rest in the day of trouble. This was the fruit of his holy fear of God's imminent judgments, and that contrition of spirit that followed thereupon; viz. that both he, and all that took part with him in those pious practices of sensibleness and self-abasement, should have peace with God, and be able to call their souls to rest in the evil day.

When he cometh up, &c. *i.e.* The Chaldean spoiler.

He will invade them with his troops. Or, cut them in pieces. And that this was done see **2 Kings 25:4-11**. and the Book of Lamentations throughout. Howbeit in judgment God remembereth mercy, as the prophet had prayed; for, besides the favour that the Jews found at Babylon by means of Daniel and others, Cyrus, having taken that city, gave commandment that no Jews, or any that spake the Syrian tongue, should be harmed, as Xenophon relateth; and after this he gave them free leave to return home. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 17. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:17]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Although the fig tree shall not blossom.** Here the prophet sheweth a well settled and a sedate mind indeed; that he had attained, and, by prayer, waded unto a blessed composedness and sabbath of spirit, such as the cock on the dunghill meddled not with, neither knoweth the worth of; it being the most precious and peerless jewel that ever the heart of man came acquainted with. It hath been before noted, that the prophet here taketh out his own lesson of living by faith in the fail of outward comforts. Origen's teaching and living were said to be both alike. Habakkuk's were so. Divinity is practical: If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them; as lessons of music must be practised, and a copy not read only, but imitated, so is it here. It is a blushful thing,

quando dicta factis erubescant, as Tertullian hath it; when men's lives put their words to the blush, when *Sanctiores sunt aures plebis quam corda sacerdotum*, there are more heavenly doctrines in the people's ears than ever were in the preacher's heart, as Hilary hath it; when, as one said of Erasmus's Enchiridion, there is more holiness in an author's book than in his bosom (*Plus sanctimoniae conspicitur in ipso libello, quam in libelli Authore*):

"Exemplis sane qui docet, ille docet."

Aristotle requireth in a teacher that he show himself a pattern of his own rules; and it is a good thing to teach (saith Ignatius), *ἐὰν λέγεις ποιῆς*, if thou practise the same that thou teachest. That is an excellent commendation indeed that is given to a late eminent divine among us, that his life was but one continued commentary upon his doctrine, and an exemplary sermon, consisting of living words, or of words translated into works. "The just shall live by faith," saith Habakkuk; and that I do so, it shall well appear by my living upon God when I have nothing else to subsist with; by believing him upon his bare word, and that against sense in things invisible, and against reason in things incredible.

Although the fig tree, &c. *q.d.* Let war come on, and with war famine; as it befell Jerusalem at the last siege in the days of Zedekiah, **2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 52:6; Lamentations 2:11, 12**, there was no relief left for the people, the enemy had eaten up all, as **Joel 1:4**, and made clean work, so that faithless men were woebegone, and ready to run mad for the sight of their eyes, **Deuteronomy 28:24, 51**, and to devour their own fingers, as Pope Boniface VIII did, when shut up close prisoner in St Angelo and sorely straitened. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 18. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:18]]{{field-on:Bible}} **Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.** This joy of the Lord was the prophet's strength, and kept his head above all waters of affliction, **Nehemiah 8:10**. So it was David's at the sack of Ziklag, **1 Samuel 30:6**, when Saul at the same time for want of it ran first to the witch, and thence to the sword's point. A good man hath God for his portion; and if any occasion of discontent or trouble befall him he retireth into his counting house, and there seeth himself so well stored with unlosable graces and invaluable privileges that he cannot be greatly moved, **Psalms 62:2**. His soul in greatest straits can magnify the Lord, and his spirit rejoice in God his Saviour. Disquieted he may be sometimes for a season, till he hath recollected and better bethought himself. We are staggering, saith the apostle, but not wholly sticking, **2 Corinthians 4:8**, for not the evenest weights but at their first putting into the balance do somewhat sway both parts thereof, not without some show of inequality, which yet after some little motion do settle themselves in a meet poise and posture. {{field-off:Bible}}

Verse 19. [[@Bible:Habakkuk 3:19]]{{field-on:Bible}} **The Lord God is my strength.** And hence his joy of faith, and ability to bear up under pressures of afflictions, as a man that is well lined within, and hath abundance of good blood and fresh spirits, can endure to go with less clothes than another.

And he will make my feet like hinds' feet. As these do swiftly and suddenly run up to the top of inaccessible rocks, so shall I quickly escape out of trouble and walk upon mine high places again in the holy land; yea, as Jacob, after he had conversed with God at Bethel, lifted up his feet and went lustily on his way to Padanaram, **Genesis 29:1**, so shall I go lightly on my long journey to heaven; and, having my soul supplied with the oil of spiritual joy, I shall find it made more lithe, nimble, and ready to every good work.

To the chief musician on my stringed instruments. This is David-like indeed, as in the whole prayer or Song he resembleth that sweet singer of Israel; and the verse hath caused a cloud. Euthymius saith of David, that he was *Primi regis et lingua et cor et calamus*, the tongue, heart, and pen of Almighty God. In the primitive times happy was he held that could repeat

aliquid Davidicmn, anything of David's doings. Our King Alfred translated the Psalter himself into his own Saxon tongue. Andronicus, the Greek emperor, made it his manual, his *Vade mecum*. It appeareth by the context of this wholeChapter that the prophet *Habakkuk* was well versed in the Psalms, which is a sweet field and rosary of promises, a summary of the Old Testament, saith Luther; the good soul's soliloquy, saith another, wherein are amulets of comfort more pleasant than the pools of Heshbon, more glorious than the tower of Lebanon, more redolent than the oil of Aaron, more fructifying than the dew of Hermon. Most worthy to be laid up in that Persian casket embroidered with gold and pearl, which Alexander reserved for Homer's Iliad. Our prophet, as he partly imitated, and partly transcribed them in this Canticle, yea, in this verse, (*confer Psalms 18:33, 34*) so he concludeth as David many times beginneth, To the chief chanter or music master, or, To him that excelleth in the art of singing and playing on instruments, those holy Levites, whose charge it was, **1 Chronicles 9:33**, and for whom he doubted not but God would afford and provide new matter of psalmody, by compassing his people about with Song s of deliverance. Selah. **Psalms 32:7.** {{field-off:Bible}}