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ISAIAH 46: 1 Bel bows down, Nebo stoops; their idols are on the animals, and on the livestock: the things that you carried about are made a load, a burden to the weary.

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The idols of Babylon represented as so far from being able to bear the burden of their votaries, that they themselves are borne by beasts of burden into captivity, Isa 46:1, Isa 46:2. This beautifully contrasted with the tender care of God, in bearing his people from first to last in his arms, and delivering them from their distress, Isa 46:3, Isa 46:4. The prophet, then, with his usual force and elegance, goes on to show the folly of idolatry, and the utter inability of idols, Isa 46:5-7. From which he passes with great ease to the contemplation of the attributes and perfections of the true God, Isa 46:8-10. Particularly that prescience which foretold the deliverance of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, with all its leading circumstances; and also that very remote event of which it is the type in the days of the Messiah, Isa 46:11-13.

#### Verse 1

Their carriages were heavy laden "Their burdens are heavy" - For נשאתיכם nesuotheychem, your burdens, the Septuagint had in their copy נשאתיהם nesuotheyhem, their burdens.

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ISAIAH 46: 2 They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves have gone into captivity.

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#### Verse 2

They could not deliver the burden "They could not deliver their own charge" - That is, their worshippers, who ought to have been borne by them. See the two next verses. The Chaldee and Syriac Versions render it in effect to the same purpose, those that bear them, meaning their worshippers; but how they can render משא massa in an active sense, I do not understand.

For לו lo, not, ולו velo, and they could not, is the reading of twenty-four of Kennicott's, sixteen of De Rossi's, and two of my own MSS. The added I vau gives more elegance to the passage.

But themselves "Even they themselves" - For ונפשמם venaphsham, an ancient MS. has כי נפשמם ki naphsham, with more force.

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ISAIAH 46: 3 "Listen to me, house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, that have been borne from their birth, that have been carried from the womb;

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#### Verse 3

Which are borne by me from the belly "Ye that have been borne by me from the birth" - The prophet very ingeniously, and with great force, contrasts the power of God, and his tender goodness effectually exerted towards his people, with the inability of the false gods of the heathen. He like an indulgent father had carried his people in his arms, "as a man carrieth his son," Deu 1:31. He had

protected them, and delivered them from their distresses: whereas the idols of the heathen are forced to be carried about themselves and removed from place to place, with great labor and fatigue, by their worshippers; nor can they answer, or deliver their votaries, when they cry unto them.

Moses, expostulating with God on the weight of the charge laid upon him as leader of his people, expresses that charge under the same image of a parent's carrying his children, in very strong terms: "Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them? that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swarest unto their fathers;" Num 11:12.

ISAIAH 46: 4 and even to old age I am he, and even to gray hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear; yes, I will carry, and will deliver.

ISAIAH 46: 5 "To whom will you liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?"

ISAIAH 46: 6 Some pour out gold from the bag, and weigh silver in the balance. They hire a goldsmith, and he makes it a god. They fall down—yes, they worship.

ISAIAH 46: 7 They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it, and set it in its place, and it stands, from its place it shall not move: yes, one may cry to it, yet it can not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

#### Verse 7

They bear him upon the shoulder - and set him in his place - This is the way in which the Hindoos carry their gods; and indeed so exact a picture is this of the idolatrous procession of this people, that the prophet might almost be supposed to have been sitting among the Hindoos when he delivered this prophecy. - Ward'S Customs.

Pindar has treated with a just and very elegant ridicule the work of the statuary even in comparison with his own poetry, from this circumstance of its being fixed to a certain station. "The friends of Pytheas," says the Scholiast, "came to the poet, desiring him to write an ode on his victory. Pindar demanded three drachms, (minae, I suppose it should be), for the ode. No, say they, we can have a brazen statue for that money, which will be better than a poem. However, changing their minds afterwards, they came and offered him what he had demanded." This gave him the hint of the following ingenious esordium of his ode: - Ουκ ανδριαντοποιος ειμ' Ωστ' ελινυσοντα μ' εργαζεσθαι αγαλματ' επ' αυτας βαθμιδος Έσταοτ. Αλλ' επι πασας Όλκαδος εν τ' ακατω γλυκει' αι ο δ α Στειχ' απ' Αιγινας διαγγελ- Ιοις' ότι Λαμπωνος υιος Πυθεας ευρυσθενης Νικη Νεμειοις παγκρατιου στεφανον.

Nem. v.

Thus elegantly translated by Mr. Francis in a note to Hor. Carm. 4:2. 19. "It is not mine with forming hand

To bid a lifeless image stand

For ever on its base:

But fly, my verses, and proclaim  
 To distant realms, with deathless fame,  
 That Pytheas conquered in the rapid race."

Jeremiah, Jer 10:3-5, seems to be indebted to Isaiah for most of the following passage: - "The practices of the people are altogether vanity:

For they cut down a tree from the forest;  
 The work of the artificer's hand with the axe;  
 With silver and with gold it is adorned;  
 With nails and with hammers it is fastened, that it may not totter.  
 Like the palm-tree they stand stiff, and cannot speak;  
 They are carried about, for they cannot go:  
 Fear them not, for they cannot do harm;  
 Neither is it in them to do good."

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ISAIAH 46: 8 "Remember this, and show yourselves men; bring it again to mind, you transgressors.

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#### Verse 8

Show yourselves men - התאששו hithoshashu. This word is rather of doubtful derivation and signification. It occurs only in this place: and some of the ancient interpreters seem to have had something different in their copies. The Vulgate read התבששו hithbosheshu, take shame to yourselves; the Syriac התבוננו hithbonenu, consider with yourselves; the Septuagint στεναξετε perhaps התאבלו hithabbelu, groan or mourn, within yourselves. Several MSS. read התאוששו hithosheshu, but without any help to the sense.

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ISAIAH 46: 9 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is no one else; I am God, and there is none like me;

ISAIAH 46: 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;

ISAIAH 46: 11 calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country; yes, I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it.

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#### Verse 11

Calling a ravenous bird from the east "Calling from the east the eagle" - A very proper emblem for Cyrus, as in other respects, so particularly because the ensign of Cyrus was a golden eagle, ΑΙΤΟΣ χρυσεος, the very word אַיִט ayit, which the prophet uses here, expressed as near as may be in Greek

letters. Xenoph. Cyrop. lib. 7 sub. init. Kimchi says his father understood this, not of Cyrus, but of the Messiah.

From a far country "From a land far distant" - Two MSS. add the conjunction I vau, וּמֵאֶרֶץ umeerets; and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate.

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ISAIAH 46: 12 Listen to me, you stout-hearted, who are far from righteousness:

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Verse 12

Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted - This is an address to the Babylonians, stubbornly bent on the practice of injustice towards the Israelites.

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ISAIAH 46: 13 I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not wait; and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

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