

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO HABAKKUK 2

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

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

“the prophet said;”

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

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

And will watch to see what he will say unto me; or “in me”^{f61}; that is, what the Lord would say unto him, either outwardly by an audible voice; or inwardly by impressing things upon his mind; or in a vision by the Spirit of prophecy, as Kimchi; so David, “the Spirit of the Lord spoke by me”, or “in me”, (^{103D}2 Samuel 23:2) he was determined to wait patiently for an answer, and to continue in the present posture, and constantly attend to every motion and dictate of the Spirit of God, and take particular notice of what should be suggested to him:

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

“and what will be returned to my request.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the just shall live by faith; the “just” man is the reverse of the former; he is one that believed in the coming of Christ, and believed in him when come; who has no overweening opinion of himself, and of his own righteousness; nor does he trust in it for his justification before God, and acceptance with him; but in the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, from whence he is denominated a just man: and such an one “shall live”, not merely a corporeal life, for righteous men die as well as others; nor an eternal life, though such shall live this life, and have it now in some sense, for this life is enjoyed not by faith, but by sight; but a spiritual life, begun in regeneration, and maintained by the Spirit and grace of God; such live a life of justification on Christ, of sanctification from him, and of communion with him; they live cheerfully, comfortably, and delightfully, a life of peace, joy, and comfort; which is greatly the sense of the word here, as in (^{<4025>}Psalm 22:26) (^{<251D>}Isaiah 55:2) and this is “by his faith”; his own faith, and not another’s; which though for its kind is the same in all, alike precious faith, yet as to its acting is peculiar to one, and is not another’s: or by the faith of God; that is, by that faith which is the gift of God, and of his operation, and has him for its object; such live by faith upon a promising God, and so live comfortably: or by the faith of Christ, promised to come in the preceding verse (^{<311B>}Habakkuk 2:3); by that faith, of which he is the object, author, and finisher: just men live not upon their faith, but by it on Christ, as crucified for them, as the bread of life, and as the Lord their righteousness; and so have joy and peace in believing. There is a different accentuation of this clause. Some put the stop after “just”, and read the words, “the just, by his faith shall live”; that is, he who is a just man, in an evangelical sense, he shall live by his faith, in the sense before explained; not that he is a just man that lives righteously and unblamably before men; but who lives a life of faith on Christ, and whose hope of eternal life is not founded upon his holy life and conversation, but upon the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Syriac version is,

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

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

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

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

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

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

and let thy foreskin be uncovered; in retaliation for uncovering the nakedness of others, and looking with pleasure on it; by which it will appear that the men here spoken of, that take all the above methods to draw or force others into the communion of their church, are no other than heathens; their religion consisting greatly of Gentilism; or what has a very great likeness to it; hence the Papists are sometimes called Heathens and Gentiles; (see ^{<9106>}Psalm 10:16 ^{<6112>}Revelation 11:2):

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

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

Ver. 17. *For the violence of Lebanon shall cover thee*, etc.] Lebanon was a mountain on the borders of the land of Israel, from whence cedar wood was brought, of which the temple was built, and for that reason is sometimes so called, as in (^{<3106>}Zechariah 11:1) and so the Targum and Jarchi interpret it,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“idols in whom there is no profit.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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