

An Appeal for a More Complete Criticism of the Book of Habakkuk

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AN APPEAL
FOR A MORE COMPLETE CRITICISM
OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK.

THE subject of the Book of Habakkuk has of late been taken up with fresh zeal and energy. A favourite question is, whether this short prophetic writing, together with the psalm (chap. iii) which forms an appendix to it, possesses literary unity? Professor Duhm¹, who has done so much for Isaiah, has discussed this question, on the basis of a critically revised text, and returned an answer in the affirmative. He considers Professors Wellhausen and Marti to be self-condemned as critics of Habakkuk by their want of logical consistency. Were they consistent they would have to go much further, till at last nothing would be left but the utterance, "Behold, I stir up the Chaldaeans" (i. 6). This result, he says, they are only able to avoid by violent treatment of the traditional text. For as that text stands, not even the immediate context in i. 5-11, much less the remainder of chaps. i and ii, and lastly chap. iii, can be made to agree.

But the truth is, according to Duhm, that not a single passage in the whole book compels us to think of the Chaldaeans as the invaders and oppressors, while on the other hand there are a great many which absolutely forbid it. I am of opinion that Duhm's objections to the reading "Kasdim" deserve consideration. Indeed, it seems to me fatal to "Kasdim" that the adherents of this reading frankly admit that some of the characteristics assigned to the "Chaldaeans" were borrowed from another people (according to them, the Scythians). But to emend "Kasdim" into

¹ *Das Buch Habakuk: Text, Übersetzung und Erklärung.* Tübingen, 1906.

“Kittim,” i. e. the Greeks and their kinsfolk in the European empire of Alexander the Great, seems to me as arbitrary here as in Isa. xxiii. 13. Altogether, Duhm’s criticism is in a high degree provisional, and to be told by an American writer¹ that his theory will not only “command attention” but even “win adherents,” seems to me to be no happy augury for the future.

In fact, the investigation of Hebrew proper names is still, comparatively speaking, in its infancy, and this is as injurious to the study of the prophets as to that of the narrative books. Take, for instance, Duhm’s treatment of the name Ḥabakkuk, or as this scholar prefers to vocalize, Ḥabbakuk. With several recent scholars, he explains it as “a garden-plant,” on the ground that this is the sense given by Friedrich Delitzsch to the Babylonian ḥambakuku (cp. LXX, Ἀμβაკουμ). This explanation seems to him to favour an exilic or rather post-exilic origin of the name. But is it very much easier to suppose that such a name existed in the post-exilic than in the pre-exilic age? One might understand and accept “cedar,” or “cypress,” or “oak,” as a personal name, but that an Israelite should be named after some obscure garden-plant is not less improbable than that benê Baḥbuk (Ezra ii. 51 = Neh. vii. 53) is to be explained “the pitcher-clan,” or benê Par’osh (Ezra ii. 3 = Neh. vii. 8) “the flea-clan,” or benê Haḳkoṣ (Ezra ii. 61 = Neh. vii. 63) “the briar-clan².” Peiser, it is true, supposes³ that the name Ḥabbakuk may be a *nom de plume* of the author, who was probably a royal prince of Judah—a son or grandson of Manasseh (see below). I cannot myself find any *nom de plume* probable, and would suppose that the original portion of the prophet’s traditional name is baḳḳuk, and that the letter ḥ(a) was prefixed to suggest

¹ *American Journal of Theology*, Jan., 1907, p. 147.

² Into the question whether “Shoshannah” (lily) and “Tamar” (palm-tree) are the original forms of certain Hebrew women’s names, I need not now enter.

³ *Der Prophet Habakuk*, in *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1903, 1.

the meaning "embrace" or "ardent embrace," for which, with Davidson, we may compare the use of ḤBK in 2 Kings iv. 16, unless indeed the initial ḥa should rather be ḥam. At any rate [Ḥa]bakkuk may very plausibly be grouped with Yabboḳ, Ya'aḳob, and 'Aḳḳub, which certainly have nothing to do with any garden-plant.

Another point relative to proper names in which Duhm appears to me to have been somewhat unfortunate is connected with i. 9 a, where the text has מְנַמַּח פְּנֵיהֶם קְדִימָה. Wellhausen, Nowack, and even Marti give this up in despair. It is true Duhm is able to recognize that the impossible מְנַמַּח covers over a proper name. His view is that מְנַמַּח is miswritten for מְגֹמֵר "from Gomer," and קְדִימָה "forward (?)" for קֶרְבָּה "eastward." "Gomer" is considered to mean Cappadocia; one of the sons of Gomer (Gen. x. 2) is Yawan (= "Ionia"). But if גֹּמֵר were at all manipulated by a scribe, is it likely that it would have become such an untranslatable word as נַמַּח (in מְנַמַּח)? And then, how can גֹּמֵר be safely identified with Cappadocia¹ till the Table of Nations has been much more thoroughly examined? It seems to me rather too bold to assert with Duhm that the prophecy must refer to Alexander the Great, because the foreign conquering people is described as marching eastward, whereas the progress of the Chaldaeans was from west to east. For the question (cp. Marti) cannot be evaded whether the corruption in the line quoted from i. 9 is not more deeply seated than Duhm has supposed.

That Marti's criticism of Habakkuk amounts to a *reductio ad absurdum* of his whole system is another assertion of Duhm's which appears to me a great mistake. Giesebrecht has, I venture to think, long since shown² that i. 5-11 cannot be the sequel of i. 2-4, nor have been originally followed by vv. 12-17, since it presupposes a situation entirely different from that in either of those

¹ See the present writer's *Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel*, p. 157.

² *Beiträge zur Jesaiakritik* (1890), pp. 196-8.

prophetic sections. In i. 12-17 the cruelty of the wicked (רשע), i. e. the foreign oppressor of Israel, is presupposed as going on, but in i. 5-11, which is an oracle complete in itself, the Chaldaeans are pointed to as the power which is to appear on the scene, and are represented with characteristic features borrowed from the Scythians. (I am here a reporter, not a defender of my own views.) That i. 12-17 is the continuation of i. 1-4 cannot (cp. Marti) be doubted. In both passages (probably exilic) the oppressor is the Chaldaean power; the name of this power is unmentioned because the Jewish readers knew it only too well. It was in the beginning of the oppression that vv. 1-4 and 12-17 were written. The conditions of the critical problem are therefore satisfied if we place i. 5-11 as the introduction to the (on the whole) consolatory passage, i. 1-4 and i. 12-ii. 8. Giesebrecht further remarks that the word תמיד "continually," implies that when i. 12-17 was written the barbarous tyranny spoken of had lasted for a considerable time.

From Wellhausen and Nowack not much help can be had. Prof. Budde, however, is fresh and interesting. He places i. 5-11 at the end of the section after ii. 4. "The divine response waited for begins indeed in ii. 2, but after ver. 4 we find an unaccountable hiatus¹." According to Budde, the prophecy in i. 5-11 is excellently adapted to fill up the hiatus, for it calls by name the mighty warrior-nation which is destined to conquer the oppressor. The enemies are not, he thinks, the Chaldaeans, but the people which was vanquished by the Chaldaeans, i. e. the Assyrians. The "law" (חורה) in ver. 4 is that of Deuteronomy, and the "righteousness" is "the will for good produced by this law." The "righteous" community feels that it has a claim for a recompense, and is shocked at Yahweh's inaction. Then the prophet is divinely commanded to

¹ Budde, "Habakkuk," *Encyclopaedia Biblica*. Cp. *Theol. Studien und Kritiken*, 1893, pp. 383 ff., and article in *Expositor*, May, 1895.

write legibly on a tablet that deliverance is on the way, but must be waited for (ii. 2, 3). It is the will of Yahweh to dispatch the Chaldaeans as his instruments, and thus the might of Assyria will vanish. The language used in i. 4 fixes the date as subsequent to Josiah's reformation in 621, but prior to the death of that pious king in 609. The enemy of whose sins we have a catalogue in ii. 6-20 (apart from some editorial additions) is Assyria. This theory, as a whole, does not appear to me acceptable, but in one respect at least (see below, on ver. 11) points in the right direction, equally with Duhm's emendation of a word in i. 9. A modification of it has been put forward by Prof. W. R. Betteridge¹. According to this scholar the "righteousness" referred to was that produced by the state-reformation under Josiah; he dates the book of Habakkuk in 701 B. C., the year in which Sennacherib was summoned home from Palestine on the news of the revolt in Babylonia. Like Duhm, he assigns the whole book to Habakkuk.

Reference has already been made to the theory of Peiser, the Assyriologist, who thinks that the obscurity of Habakkuk may be removed by supposing that the violence complained of in the book was committed not in the land of Judah but in Nineveh. Habakkuk is merely the *nom de plume* of a Judahite prince detained as a hostage in the guilty city, who is the author of the book including even the third chapter. The divine vengeance will be executed upon the Assyrians by the Chaldaeans. Peiser endeavours to support his hostage-theory by a correction of iii. 16, where for יְהוָה יְהוָה he reads יְהוָה (cp. LXX, *παροικίας μου*). I must confess that I am not myself attracted by his Assyriological illustrations, and thus far have got no help from his theory that mistakes arose in the text owing to the plan of writing in columns². The theory is not in itself

¹ *American Journal of Theology*, Oct., 1903, VII, 644-61.

² Peiser, however, deserves some credit for seeing that the Assyrians are *not* referred to in Isa. v. 25-30. So also Winckler.

unplausible, but the results thus far are not at all helpful to a critical exegesis.

I will next make due mention of Prof. G. A. Smith, who has done so much to help forward the study of the Twelve Prophets in this country. He is of opinion that "the prophet in i. 2-ii. 4 appeals from oppression by a heathen power which is not the Chaldaean, but upon which the Chaldaean shall bring the just vengeance of God." "The tyrant," he adds, "is either Assyria up to about 618 or Egypt from 608 to 605, and there is not a little to be said for the latter date ¹."

Prof. A. S. Peake ² thinks differently. He holds that i. 2-4 and i. 12-ii. 4 originated during the Exile, probably between 560 and 550, and that ii. 5-20 (19) is also exilic, and may belong to Habakkuk. The outrages of which, both in i. 2-4 and in i. 12-17, the prophet complains, were committed by a foreign oppressor. And since in these two passages the oppression is of no recent date, i. 5-11 must be an older pre-exilic prophecy which has somehow been misplaced. Chap. iii is regarded as probably post-exilic.

Prof. Duhm, as we have seen, thinks but little of the criticism of his Berne colleague. I am sorry for this, because Marti's commentary ³ seems to show a greater command of sound critical methods, and to arrive at more satisfactory results than that of Duhm. He divides the book thus:—(a) a psalm of post-exilic origin, closing, like some of our canonical psalms, with a divine oracle; (b) a prophecy announcing the appearance of the Chaldaeans on the scene of history, written in 605 B. C.—the year of the battle of Carchemish; (c) a series of "woes" directed against the Chaldaeans, written a good while after the establishment of the Chaldaean empire, about 546 B. C.;

¹ *Twelve Prophets*, II, 124 (1898).

² *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament* (1904), pp. 4-11, 151-71.

³ In the *Dodekapropheten*, vol. II (1904), which will in due time be supplemented by the critical edition of the Minor Prophets in Prof. Haupt's Bible.

(d) a psalm taken, as the superscription and subscription show, from a collection of psalms, and belonging to the Maccabean period. The passages respectively are—(a) i. 2-4, 12 a, 13, ii. 1-4; (b) i. 5-10, 14-16 (17); (c) ii. 5-20; (d) chap. iii. This critic thinks that in the first of the two psalms “the righteous” and “the wicked” are class-names referring to members of the Jewish community. Prof. Marti’s work, as it seems to me, represents at the present time the high-water mark of Habakkuk criticism.

But before taking a side in the critical discussions of the day, it seems to me necessary to consider the chief textual and exegetical questions, with the view of ascertaining how far we really understand the text of this difficult book. I will take such account as my space permits both of Duhm’s and of Marti’s emendations, though the former in my opinion takes a much too favourable view of the state of the text, nor does he show as much critical resource and insight as Prof. Marti. I cannot, however, doubt that it is possible to surpass Marti in this respect as much as this scholar has surpassed his colleague. By this I intend no disparagement either of these or of any previous critics. Each scholar has his own place, his own merit, but names and reputations are nothing in comparison of truth. Let us not mind changing our views and rewriting our lectures, however “despised and rejected” the discoverer of new avenues to truth may chance to be.

We will begin with the first of the two psalms, pausing at i. 2-4. This little section is composed of two tetrastichs, each composed of lines of three and two beats respectively. Such at least is my own view, though it may seem to be opposed by the fact that what should be the last line of the second tetrastich (ver. 3), as it stands, is rather a tetrameter than a dimeter. The truth is that the existing last line is not the line which originally existed. Let us first look at the troublesome words ייהי and ישא. Marti omits them as being unintelligible, but fails to explain how they came into the text. Further, according to Marti, ריב and מרון are

parallel to שר and חמס. But how can we venture to admit this? One may indeed refer to Ps. lv. 10, "for I behold חמס וריב in the city." But surely before we do this a thorough textual criticism needs to be applied. I ask then whether the text of the psalm-passage referred to is correct. If it is, one may at any rate say that none of the extant commentaries has proved it. The problems must, of course, be considered together, on the basis of the experience gained by a wide study of textual phenomena. Prof. Duhamm coolly omits חמס in Habakkuk, and rather audaciously supposes ריב to refer to the great "strife" which in 334-331 raged among the nations in nearer Asia. מרון he ventures to alter into בידון, and ויהי into היה or והיה. Thus the following distich emerges:—

And destruction arises before me,
And strife lifts up the javelin.

It is difficult however to deny that ויהי has again and again come out of והוא "that is," and ריב (like ירב in Hos. v. 13) from ערב, and that ישא probably belongs to a group of words which are corruptions of ישמעאל. The fact that this is denied by prejudiced critics does not make it really deniable. מרון, too, can be accounted for much more satisfactorily. Both here and in Joshua xi. 1 it has most probably come from רמון = רחמן. Thus we get:—

Why causeth thou me to see wrong,
And (why) must I look (אביט) on wickedness?
Destruction and outrage are before me,

* * * *

An early glossator inserted, "that is, Arabia of Rahman; Ishmael¹."

I can imagine that such an explanation of ver. 3 b may not please every one. But is it not both methodical and plausible? And where are the corrections which more adequately remove the textual difficulties? Will any

¹ The original fourth line has been displaced by the glosses in a highly corrupt form.

uncommitted scholar seriously advocate either Prof. Duhm's reading, as given above, or Prof. G. A. Smith's arrangement in his *Twelve Prophets*¹? Can we say that these are more than provisional makeshifts, resources of despair? Surely sound method compels us to admit that the clause at the end of ver. 3 is corrupt, and further that it covers over two glosses which mark out the violence and oppression spoken of as wrought by the peoples of North Arabia. This result will become, I think, still more probable if confirmed by similar results elsewhere in the book.

In the very next verse (4) such a confirmation appears to be found. All will, I hope, admit that *תפוג*, *מכחיר*, and *מעקל* are troublesome and questionable words, and that the repetition of the words *על־כן*, *יציא*, and *משפט* makes us doubt the text, also that *לנצח*, in usage, refers to the future², and therefore does not suit in this context. For *תפוג* Nowack proposes *תפיר* (Ps. cxix. 126), and for *מכחיר*, *מכריח*. I am not prepared with anything better, but in some other points think I can see somewhat better than Nowack. For is it not obvious that, omitting *מעקל* (to which we will return), the line is simply a corruption of *ולא יציא משפט*, which is in fact the true reading of line 2, *לנצח* being a redactor's emendation of an ill-written *יציא*? Lastly, *מעקל*, like *קמואל*, must surely come from *ירחמאל*. We thus obtain the tetrastich:—

Therefore law is made void,
 And the right does not go forth;
 For the wicked cuts off the righteous,

* * * *

As a gloss on *רשע* ("the wicked") a redactor or scribe has inserted a corrupt form of *ירחמאל* (*מעקל*).

Passing on to vv. 12 a, 13, which, as is most reasonably held, are the continuation of vv. 2–4, we have now to ask, what confirmation, if any, does this passage supply to the new theory? Well, of course the passage must be read and

¹ "Why make me look upon sorrow and trouble? Why fill mine eyes with violence and wrong? Strife is come before me, and quarrel arises."

² See Davidson, *Cambridge Bible, Nah., Hab., and Zeph.*, p. 66.

interpreted critically. According to Wellhausen, Nowack, and Marti nothing can be made of **לֹא נִמּוֹת** at the end of ver. 12 a. Marti therefore removes 'נ' ל', together with ver. 12 b, from its present context. His impression is a correct one except as regards **לֹא נִמּוֹת**. There can be no rashness in affirming that these strange words have no sense in either of the available contexts. But we may safely go further and ask, Did they originally exist anywhere? Prof. Duhm, as a refuge against the hyper-criticism (as he judges it) of Marti, actually changes 'נ' ל', or (an old reading) **לֹא תִמּוֹת**, into **לֹא יְמִיִּית**, rendering the stichus in which he places the phrase "my holy immortal God." This is surely a most violent procedure, and of the two rival readings, both of which he rejects, one can hardly doubt that the older and better one is **לֹא נִמּוֹת** (LXX and MT.). Not that even this can be the original reading. The sense is far too improbable; and any one who has noticed the many instances of metathesis elsewhere will at once see the reading underlying **נִמּוֹת**, viz. **אֶתְמַעַל** or **אֶתְמַאֵל**, i. e. **יִשְׁמַעְאֵל** (cp. **תְּמַוֵּל** and **אֶתְמַוֵּל** often for **יִשְׁמַעְאֵל**). **לֹא** in this case will have come from **לֵא**. The sense produced is clear—"Is it not Ishmael?" This is a gloss on a doubtful word in ver. 11.

And what does ver. 11 mean? According to Nowack it concludes the description of the terrible and impious Chaldaean people? Marti, however, thinks that vv. 11 and 12 b form an interpolation due to some one who looked on the doings of the Chaldaeans in Judah as long-past events. The text, however, is full of difficulties, which neither Wellhausen, nor Marti, nor Budde, nor G. A. Smith, nor Duhm has been able to account for. How, for instance, can we translate with Marti, "then they (the Chaldaeans) changed (their) mind and transgressed, and made their might their God"? In fact, even this poor result is only attained by emending **וַיִּשְׁמְדוּ** into **וַיִּשְׁמְדוּ** (after Wellhausen in 1892, but not in 1898), and cancelling ו. Prof. G. A. Smith is hardly more fortunate. He gives, "then the

wind shifts, and they pass! But doomed are those whose own strength is their god." Budde and Duhm strike out new plans. The former gives, "Then will he vanish like the wind and pass by—Asshur, whose might became his god." Here the emendations are *פָּרוּחַ יחלף*, *וַיַּעֲבֹר* (points), *אֲשׁוּר* (for *וְאִשָּׁם*), *לְאֱלֹהֵיוֹ* (so all recent critics). The latter on the other hand changes *חלף* into *חָלַף* ("whirled"), *רוּחַ* into *בְּרוּחַ*, *וַיַּעֲבֹר* into *וַיִּשָּׁם*, and *לְאֱלֹהֵיוֹ* into *לְאֱלֹהֵיוֹ*; no objection is taken to *וַיַּעֲבֹר*. The sense produced is, "Then he (the Macedonian) whirled onward as a storm-wind, and made his might his god." According to Prof. Peake (p. 157) Budde's proposal deserves consideration, but, for all that, he does not see his way to accept it. Nor can I myself find it acceptable, though Budde certainly deserves credit for recognizing that *וַיִּשָּׁם* covers over the name of some foreign people. But a far more penetrating textual criticism seems to me to be required. The whole piece of Hebrew which now figures as Hab. i. 11 is in the highest degree questionable; the first half is senseless, and the second contains a statement which as it now stands is most improbable. It is usual no doubt to remark that ver. 11 b is parallel to ver. 16 a. But how can any people be said to "sacrifice to their net," a phrase which would never have been used simply in a figurative sense (see G. A. Smith)? And, returning to ver. 11, how can a Hebrew writer have asserted that in the excess of his boasting the oppressor of the nations had made his energy his god? Such an abstract conception of the Deity is not in harmony with the mode of speech of the Hebrew writers elsewhere.

Prof. Budde would, I am sure, have produced a more methodical and a more satisfactory correction of *וְאִשָּׁם* if he could have seen what a large part was played by Arabian peoples in the affairs of Palestine. That *כִּישָׁן* and *כִּישָׁע* have again and again been produced out of *יִשְׁמַעְעָל*, can hardly be doubted; nor is it rash¹ to assign a similar origin to *אִמְשׁ* in 2 Kings ix. 26, Job xxx. 3, and *אֱלֹהֵי־אִשָּׁם* in Hos. iv. 15. Does

¹ *Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel*, p. 387.

it not at once become highly probable that אַשּׁם in Hab. i. 11 is really a corruption of the same widespread ethnic? And looking more closely into the rest of the verse we shall see that Hab. i. 11 is really a collection of glosses. Probably these glosses were derived by the redactor from the margin of various manuscripts, and were designed to emphasize the fact that the oppressing people was North Arabian. The true reading may have been like this, — עַרְבַּ הַלֵּם יִרְחַ הוּא עֵרַב, “Arabia of Yerahme’el, Yerahme’el, that is Arabia of Ishmael.”

Of חוּ כְחוּ לְאֱלֹהֵי זוּ no emendation has been offered. And yet זוּ (= זה) may very well introduce a gloss (cp. חַיִּי זֶה, Judges v. 5), while כְחוּ may be fitly illustrated by כָּלָח (Gen. x. 11), כָּחַל (Gen. xxii. 17), חִכִּילָה (1 Sam. xxiii. 19), and חִכִּילִי¹ (Gen. xlix. 12). It is in fact a corruption of some popular form of יִרְחַמְעַל which had obtained an independent existence², while אֱלֹהֵי, like אֱלֹהִים (frequently), is also a corruption of the same ethnic term. We thus obtain the gloss, “this is Kelaḥ of Yerahme’el,” a supplement to the glosses noted above.

On ver. 13 not much needs to be said. Ver. 13 a is clearly the continuation of ver. 12 a; at least, so it appears to me as well as to Marti, though Duhm dissents, and makes both v. 12 and v. 13 into tetrastichs. I cannot, however, go with Marti when (following Wellhausen) he inserts בְּבִגְדֵי before בּוֹגְרִים. To me Duhm appears to judge better when he reads—

מָה תְּבִיט בּוֹגְרִים תְּחַרֵּשׁ
בְּבִלְע רָשָׁע צְדִיק

I do not, however, find that Prof. Duhm accounts for the מְמוֹנֵי which closes ver. 13 in MT. (not in LXX). Why, pray, should a foolish scribe have inserted it? On the other hand Marti, who retains מְמוֹנֵי, seems rather violent in trans-

¹ On the Genesis passages see *Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel*, pp. 188 f., 330, 503 f.

² I mean that the origin of the popular form had been forgotten.

lating it "over against him" (literally, "away from him"); ממו occasionally covers over an ethnic inserted in a corrupt form by a scribe. The ethnic might be either שמעון (שמו) or רמאן (ירחמי).

We now come to ii. 1-4 (i. 14-17 being out of its context), which, according to Marti, makes two tetrastichs and a distich. Duhm, however, combines vv. 1-3 in three tetrastichs, and makes ver. 4 the first half of the first tetrastich of a new poem. This hangs together with the view that the vision or prophecy which is to be written down is contained in ver. 3. But surely the vision is given us in ver. 4, the first half of which refers to the fate of the wicked oppressor, the second to that of righteous Israel.

In ii. 1 and 3 there is no serious or unsurmountable difficulty, and in ver. 2 the difficulty begins with the passage which follows the command to "write the vision." Peiser has already remarked (p. 4) that whoever connects על-הלוחות with כתב must grapple with the syntactic harshness of the intervening ובאר. This is most true, nor am I aware that באר has been adequately explained. The verb באר only occurs twice besides (Deut. i. 5, xxvii. 8), and in neither passage is the meaning quite clear, or indeed the reading quite certain. In our present passage it is probable that ובאר is a corruption of הוא ערב (cp. באַר, Judges ix. 21), probably from ערב, a gloss upon ירחמאל, underlying בו קורא¹.

Peiser also remarks that למען ירוץ ונו' is a startling expression. We expect the "vision" to contain the name of a people, for "Maher-shalal-hash-baz" in the parallel passage really contains two double ethnics, viz. "Yarham-Ishmael" and "Ashhur-Şibe'on." It is probable that we ought to read here, instead of למען ירוץ קרא בו, "in order that Yerahme'el may be broken." The meaning is that prophecy has a self-fulfilling power (Isa. ix. 9, lv. 11; Zech. ix. 1), and in order that this particular prophecy may

¹ Cf. *Crit. Bib.*, p. 14, which presents nearly, but not quite, the right explanation.

be fulfilled, it is to be imprinted on tablets (perhaps in different localities). It is thus more fully objectified.

The first part of ver. 4 is also difficult. It runs thus in MT. : *הנה עפלה לא ישרה נפשו*. Of *עפלה* Marti declares that "a secure correction has not yet been reached¹." But surely, if ver. 4 a is to be strictly parallel to ver. 4 b, *עפלה* has most probably come from *נבלע* and *ישרה* should be *ישיע*, while *בו* will be a fragment of *רכבו* (see above on *בו קורא*), i. e. *Yerahme'el*, an explanatory gloss². The closing distich therefore is :—

Lo! he is swallowed up—cannot save his soul,
But the righteous liveth on by his faithfulness.

It is now time to consider the prophecy (i. 5-10, 14-16). It will be noticed that vv. 11, 12, which are combined with vv. 5-10 by Wellhausen, are not here included. This is, I think, sufficiently justified both by what has been said already and by Marti's commentary. In ver. 5 *בגרים* (LXX, Pesh.) for *בגויים* scarcely needs defence; the persons intended are primarily Jews. So *גויים* for *בגרים* in Ps. ix. 6, &c., lix. 6. In ver. 6 we meet with the fateful announcement :—

For behold, I stir up the * *
The fierce and impetuous nation,
Which marches into the broad spaces of the earth,
To occupy dwelling-places not its own.

The two asterisks indicate the present uncertainty of the text. MT. gives *את־הַכַּשְׁדִּיִּים* "the Chaldaeans." But was there, asks Duhm, anything so astounding in the successes of the Chaldaeans? And, granting that a Judahite might call the Chaldaeans "bitter" (*מר*), yet how could he possibly call them "hasty" (*נמהר*)? That is precisely what Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar were not in their relation to Judah. Duhm also insists that in ver. 9 the conquering people presses on towards the east. He

¹ Wellhausen's *רַעַל* is a poor colourless word.

² See on *בכרו*, Gen. x. 15; *רכבו*, Exod. xv. 1, in *Traditions and Beliefs*.

therefore corrects into כתיים, which would mean here the European empire of Alexander the Great. I have already rejected this (see above). It is as violently wrong as the same critic's corrections of Isa. xxiii. 13, where, not only is כשדים altered into כתיים, but the important word אשור is emended into אֲשֶׁר (the scribes' plan is just the opposite—to alter אֲשֶׁר into אֲשֶׁר).

It is perhaps worth mentioning that LXX (A) gives *τοὺς Χαλδαίους τοὺς μαχητάς*. The latter phrase is surely wrong; it is not nearly distinctive enough for a gloss on *τοὺς Χαλδαίους*. But can we not get behind *μαχητάς*? Certainly; *μαχ.* = גְּבָרִים, and גב' may easily have come from גמרים (corrupted in Ezek. xxvii. 11 into גמרים, A. V., "the Gammadims"). And who are the גמרים? Clearly, the "Gomerites," i. e. virtually the Gogites (Ezek. xxxviii. 3-6), are a group of Arabian peoples. We may therefore consider it probable that כשדים in this passage, precisely as in Gen. xi. 28¹ (Ur-kasdim), has come from כשרם, which is equivalent to אֲשֶׁהוּר אָרָם. By a curious accident Duhm actually represents the invading people as coming "from Gomer" (see on i. 9), and by another, כתיים or כתיים (according to a theory not held by Duhm) is the designation of an Arabian region. This, of course, is only important as showing that the names of countries in Genesis and elsewhere need a much more careful examination, and that none of our critics can help forwarding the Arabian theory, however much against the grain.

Several fresh confirmations follow. In ver. 7 the second stichus is too long. Peiser and Marti take the "unintelligible" שאתו for a miswritten gloss, belonging properly to ישאו in ii. 6. Duhm on the other hand, inferring from LXX² that משפנו and שאתו are variants, omits the former, and deletes the ו in שאתו, which he would read יֵשֶׁת "desolation" (Lam. iii. 47). It should be plain however that words

¹ On this and on the next Genesis passage see the same work.

² LXX (A) has *ἐξ αὐτοῦ τὸ κρίμα αὐτοῦ ἔσται, καὶ τὸ λῆμμα αὐτοῦ ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἐφελεύσεται.*

meaning respectively ‘judgment’ and ‘desolation’ cannot possibly have been variants; Duhm has, I fear, made a great mistake. The true reading is plainly **קִמְוֹנוֹ מִשְׁפָּט יִצְחָא**. **וּשְׂאֵרוֹ** is a corrupt gloss; for explaining it I must refer to my (presumed) preliminary study of **שֵׁת** in Num. xxiv. 17¹ and **וּיִשָּׁת** in Gen. xxv. 34², from which it appears that **שֵׁת** may represent **אֲשֵׁתֵר** just as **שָׁם** represents **יִשְׁמַעְאֵל** and **חָם** represents **יִרְחֻמָּאֵל**. I hold therefore that, in the absence of any other satisfactory theory, and considering that there is abundance of textual evidence in Habakkuk itself for an Arabian (Hebraized) regional name Ashtar, we have to correct **וּשְׂאֵרוֹ** into **הוּא אֲשֵׁתוֹ**, “that is, Ashtor (Ashtar).” As the prefixed **ו** *explicativum*, or perhaps (the original reading?) **הוּא**, sufficiently shows, “Ashtar” is a gloss on some other word, most probably **כְּשָׂרִים** or rather **כְּשָׂרָם** (see above). We thus get an accurate trimeter line.

In ver. 8 every one seems well content with “wolves of the evening,” but **עֶרְבֵי** is so often mispointed for **עֶרְבֵי**, that we can hardly help following LXX (*τῆς Ἀραβίας*), unless indeed we prefer (and the present writer does prefer) **עֶרְבוֹת**. **וּפְשׁוֹ** and **פְּרִשׁוֹ** are, of course, superfluous. **חֹשׁ** is best regarded as a fragment of **אֲשַׁחֵר**, a gloss (like **חֹשׁ** in **חֹשְׁבֵנוֹ**, Isa. viii. 1). But more important are the corrections in ver. 9: **מְנַמַּת פְּנִיָּהֶם**: **קְרִימָה**, as we have seen already, baffles the resources of the prevalent criticism. It is however transparent to those who are not prejudiced. Grätz long ago pointed out that **פְּנִי** is sometimes miswritten for **בְּנִי**, and my own researches fully corroborate this. Let us pass on to the very difficult **מְנַמַּת**. No exceptional penetration is required to emend this into **מִתְמַן**. **תְּמַן** or **חִימָן** does not, as the lexicons say, mean “south-land,” but represents **יִתְמָן**, i. e. Ishmael. **פְּנִיָּהֶם** has been produced by transposition (parallels abound) from **בְּנֵי הֵם**, and **קְרִימָה** (like **קָרָם** often) comes from **יִרְחָם**. Thus we get a fresh gloss, “they are the benê Yarham.”

The prophetic passage concludes with i. 14–17 (Marti, 16).

¹ In Jer. xlviii. 35 the place of **שֵׁת** is taken by **שִׂמְעוֹן**, i. e. שמעון (= ישמעאל).

² See *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 110, 362.

This statement, of course, involves reading in ver. 14, not ותעשה (which improperly ascribes to God the details of the process of invasion), but וַיַּעֲשֶׂה (Marti), the subject of which is the same as in ver. 10. As to ver. 15 we must, I think, agree with Marti, who only recognizes the first two clauses, the rest being glossatorial.

Verse 16 is very strange. How and why do the invaders "sacrifice to their net and send a sweet smoke to their drag"? Are "net" and "drag" figures for weapons? and if so, is there a reference to the sacrifices of sheep and horses offered by the Scythians to the scimitar (Herod. iv. 62)? Wellhausen, indeed, suggests that this feature may have been transferred from the Scythians to the Chaldaeans, and Giesebrecht, who holds the same view, actually changes מכמרתו, "his net," into מִכְרָתוֹ (*seinen Krummsabel*), without proving that מִכְרָת in Gen. xlix. 5 is correctly read or understood.

I know well how popular the idea of transformed prophecies on the Scythians has become among critics, but it is only the product of a deep-lying uncertainty as to the meaning of certain prophecies. Davidson (*Nah., Hab., Zeph.*, p. 74) does well to reject it, but he has nothing really better to offer in its place. Surely ובה and קבר imply some deities as the recipients of the sacrifices, and, if the people referred to are North Arabians, surely Yarḥam or Yerahme'el and his consort must be the deities referred to. Now, that ירחם might easily become הרמו, can hardly be denied, and I shall be greatly surprised if all the evidence for various titles of the great Mother Goddess furnished elsewhere¹ should, by any one, be pronounced worthless. Consequently I have no great hesitation in emending למכמרתו into לרכמית (cp. כמרים, Hos. x. 5, &c.); כמר, רכם, and רקם are all from ירחם = ירחמאל². The two corruptions

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 18-22.

² Yarḥam or Yerahme'el is at once the name of a race and of the chief god of that race. Kemārīm (כמרים = רכמים or רכמיים) are 'Yerahme'elite priests.' Cp. *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 27 ff., 62, 376.

here assumed are certainly easy ones; they would be suggested by the occurrence of הרמו and מכמתו in ver. 15. It should be noted that הרמו is again corruptly read in ver. 17, where Giesebrecht is right in reading הרבו. This scholar also reads העל־בן for העלם. Probably הקייר should be omitted as an early gloss on עלם; להרג for יהרג (Wellh.) is also a probable emendation.

The series of "woes" in ii. 5-20 next claims our attention. The woes properly begin at ii. 6 b; ver. 6 a is a redactional prefix. And what as to ver. 5? It seems to be made up partly of glosses; the central part, "who enlarges his desire as Sheol, and like Death cannot be satisfied," may be a genuine passage out of its context (cp. Isa. v. 14). One of the glosses, however, is of some importance. It should perhaps run thus:—

וְאֶרְכִּי הַיּוֹנִי בְּיָד
בְּיָד יִרְחַמְאֵל יִמְנָה

Of היין, no use can be made. The correction here adopted (for which cp. Hos. iv. 11, היין from ימן) has been proposed by H. W. Robinson and Prof. Duhm. Paul Ruben (in a letter to the writer dated Nov. 20, 1898) objects to הייני on the ground that the prophet does not elsewhere speak of the Greeks, but of a king of Babylonia or Assyria. He had not observed that both here and elsewhere in this Book the power spoken of is most probably Arabian.

Turning to the first "Woe," we notice first (ii. 6 b) the unsuitable question ער מתי "how long?" I do not think that any critic has really explained it. And yet, only give up prejudice, and the solution of the problem is clear. ער מתי and עבטיט both represent the same phrase. The latter is the earlier of the two; in fact, the phrase underlying ער-מתי was probably inserted as a correction of עבטיט. Does any one doubt that a correction was required? What says Marti? "Signification uncertain." Gesenius: "Pignora capta." Duhm: "a debt for which one has deposited a pledge." Kelly¹: "A mass of pledges." None of these

¹ *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, Jan., 1902, p. 109.

writers has acquired the habit of a sufficiently keen textual criticism. Almost certainly עבטים has come from עבתים, and this from תמוי ; ערב תמוי ; תמול, as we have seen already, represents אתמאל = ישמעאל¹. As for ער-מתי, it has no doubt come from ער' תמוי, i. e. ערב תמול. Then, for המכביר read המרחיב. ער' probably comes from יעל = ישמעאל, another variant. Thus we get, "That widens Arabia of Yerahme'el."

To give a full commentary is unnecessary; I can limit myself here to essentials. In ver. 17 the riddle of הָעֵרֶל can now, perhaps, be solved. Not by reading הָרֵעֵל "reel"; the Nifal of רעל is not found. Read rather ירחמאל (for which elsewhere ערל, אריאל and אראל occur). The same explanation may be given of הרעלי (no word for the movements of horses) in Nahum ii. 4. In ver. 17 "violence to Lebanon" and "destruction of beasts" are not completely parallel, nor do they come at all naturally into a prophecy of South Israel. But what is the true remedy? The answer is 1. (as to Lebanon) that a southern Lebanon² is intended, and 2. (as to the beasts) that in compound names the popular speech often drops all but one or two letters in the first element. Hence, just as בצלאל probably comes from ערב ישמ', so בהמות (which can have nothing to do with "beasts") very possibly represents ערב-המות, though for המות we should most probably read הַמָּת. The cruelty of the Arabian invaders at the capture of some well-known North Arabian city or region called "Hamathite Arāb" seems to be meant (cp. Hos. x. 14). I may mention here that Dr. P. Ruben has privately suggested חמן as a substitute for בהמות; by חמן he supposes Mons Amanus to be meant. At any rate, he deserves credit for suspecting a place-name.

This, however, is not all that demands to be said. Must we not insist that if חמס and שר are right, יחיתן and יכבך cannot possibly be so. Doubtless the more impossible of

¹ We may perhaps compare the phrase עץ ענה (Lev. xxiii. 40, &c.), i. e. either עץ עב-חמול or עץ אתננאל.

² On the origin of "Lebanon" and the "Laban" clan see *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 123, 457, and *Crit. Bib.* on Jer. xxiii. 20-3.

the two is the latter. But, if we reflect on the matter, must we not admit that, though "shame" may, "violent dealing" cannot be said to "cover" a man. Perhaps יסבלך is the true reading, and if so, יהיתך (ך for ך is obvious) should be emended into ישחיתך.

And then, what can we make of ver. 17 b (= ver. 8 b)? Duhm naturally takes offence at the repetition of חמס, and boldly changes חמס into ומס, "and the forced labour (of the land)." But surely this is most unnatural. The error is not in חמס but in ארץ, which must come from ארו. In fact, ver. 17 b is a gloss on ver. 17 a. ארם should be אָרם, and קריה represents אֲשַׁחֲרֶהָ¹, synonymous with אֲשַׁחֲרֶהָ (or אֲשַׁחֲרֶהָ), and also a permissible equivalent of אָרם. Thus בהמות, i. e. עֲרֵב חַמָּה, is replaced in the gloss (ver. 17 b) by ארם and אשחרת.

Marti seems right in regarding ver. 19 as the last of the "woes," and ver. 18 as the gloss upon this. Still the text of both verses deserves examination. In ver. 19 הוא יורה, according to Marti, is a gloss, because inaccurate, the object of making the idol-god being, not that he may teach, but that he may help and deliver. Hence the "wood" is called upon, not to speak, but to awake. But what a miserable gloss it would be! Surely the meaning of הוא יורה is plain—"that is, Yarham (or Yerahme'el)." Similarly in ver. 18, according to Marti, מורה שקר is a second name for the idol-god, and means "a teacher of lies"; Marti compares the use of מורה in מ' אלן מ', Gen. xii. 6. But how, I ask, can "teacher of lies" be parallel to "molten image"? The true solution of the problem is evident; ומורה שקר is a corruption of (or at any rate equivalent to) אֲשַׁחֲרֶהָ הוּא יִרְחַמְאֵל "that is, Yerahme'el Ashhur²."

It remains to consider the meaning and character of the appended psalm (chap. iii). In spite of Duhm's opposite opinion, I am still obliged to hold that it is of post-exilic origin, and that it is not by Habakkuk. The ascription in

¹ See *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 335, 337.

² Cp. *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 23, 276.

the heading of the psalm seems to me parallel to the ascription of certain psalms to prophets in the Septuagint. But the most important thing is to comprehend the psalm, and this cannot, I think, be done as long as one refuses to admit even the possibility of an Arabian captivity. Let us take ver. 2. Can we account for the present form of the text as long as we persist in our preconceived opinion? The opening words are, no doubt, sufficiently intelligible, and furnish us with two good parallel lines, provided that we read ראייתי for יראתי, which is indeed supported by the original Septuagint¹. The two lines are:—

O Yahweh! I have heard a report of thee,
I have seen, O Yahweh, thy doing.

The speaker, who shares the pious belief that the captivity is a sign of God's anger, has heard a report of a change in the circumstances of Israel, and has even himself seen some of the events which point in that direction. But then we encounter a difficulty. What does חייהו "revive it," mean? and how comes the imperative to be followed by an imperfect? Marti would read הַיְיָהוּ "announce it," and excise the whole stichus as a gloss; but the rare poetical word חייהו is surely not to be expected in a gloss. Duhm, on the other hand, keeps חייהו, and renders "carry it out," i. e. "realize the visionary announcement, which has been granted, of the deliverance of Israel." He then proceeds to excise the last stichus, ברגו רחם תזכור, which he thinks unsuitable to the context, and assigns to a liturgical editor. To me both Marti and Duhm appear not quite keen enough in their criticism. A fresh solution has, in my opinion, to be devised.

I would begin with בקרב שנים. Can this phrase be satisfactorily explained? Marti, Duhm, and Davidson reply in the affirmative. The first explains, "in the course of the

¹ In LXX notice the accumulation of readings. We can choose between *ἐφοβήθη*, *κατενόησα*, and *ἐξέσθη*. But the preferable reading is *κατενόησα* = ראייתי (so Marti and Duhm).

years, in the next years"; the second, "in the years which now are, or which are coming, in this or the next year, in whichever year thou wilt, so long as we are permitted to see it"; the third, "at this late time in our history." None of these explanations is quite natural. On the other hand, if the text ran, "in the land of Egypt make thyself known"—or, better still (see ver. 7), in the land of Arabia, make thyself known; "in wrath remember mercy"—this would be exceedingly natural.

Now is it not worth considering whether this exceedingly natural reading may not be really and truly in existence and only waiting for recognition at the hands of unprejudiced critics? We have seen that בקרב שנים and חייהו are both troublesome to the critics. Now, may not שנים cover over a regional name, and חייהו be made up out of הוא "that is," and חי, a corrupt form of ירה, i. e. ירהמאל (for it is not uncommon for the introductory הוא of glosses to get transferred to the other side of the gloss)? And what may be the original of שנים? In my opinion there can be no reasonable doubt. The affinities of שנים and שמן are as clear as anything in textual criticism can be. ש[ן]נים "S[on]nem," and שמן in the phrase עץ שמן, not less than שמעון, belong to the same group of formations as ישמעאל, and שנים in בקרב שנים may, without audacity, be corrected into בקרב ישמן, where the second element plainly represents "Ishmael." Thus the second part of ver. 2 becomes:—

In the midst of Ishmael make thyself known,
In wrath think upon mercy.

It will be noticed that with Marti and Duhm I read תִּדְרַע (LXX γρασθήσῃ), and that the second line beginning בקרב שנים becomes "In the midst of Ishman. That is, Yerahme'el." In fact, "Ishmael" and "Yerahme'el" are constantly used as synonyms, according to the unsought results of a keen textual criticism.

At the end of ver. 4 occur some of the most difficult words in the whole book—ושם חבין עזה. A recent American

scholar¹ explains, "and there (i. e. in his long hair) is the depository of his strength." It is vastly more probable that the words are an interpolated gloss. But to render them "a mysterious expression for his strength" (Duhm) is surely assuming a lateness of phraseology which is not to be paralleled even in glosses. I can only suggest a not impossible correction of the text which throws the context into stronger relief. It seems to me that Debher (דבֿר) and Resheph (רשֿף), who are mentioned in ver. 5 as satellites of Yahweh², must originally have been the attendants of another divine potentate, viz. the power which (as I have sought to show) was displaced by Yahweh—the North Arabian deity Yerahme'el³. They must, in fact, have originally been among those "helpers of Rahab" of whom we read in Job ix. 13. I conjecture, then, that שֵׁם חֲבוּן עִזָּה has come from שֵׁם עֲוִרֵי יָוָן "there were the helpers of Yavan." יָוָן, as can easily be shown, comes from יָמָן, which is a contraction of יִהְמָן, i. e. יִרְחֵמָאֵל, the name by which the great North Arabian deity was chiefly known among the Israelites. Prefixed to יוֹן we find חֶב, possibly a shortened form of רַחֵב, which is probably a more correct form of the name commonly called רַהַב. The clause, if rightly read, is a gloss on the distich relating to Debher and Resheph, the old satellites of Rahab (Rahab?) or Yerahme'el.

At the end of ver. 6 occurs a fresh difficulty; הִלְכוּ עִלָּם לוֹ. That these words overload the description is undeniable; the repetition of עִלָּם is particularly displeasing. Have they any suitable meaning, even as a gloss? Is the phrase "the ancient walks" an explanation of "the everlasting mountains"? Surely the latter phrase is plain enough, and would only be obscured, not illustrated, by the substitution of "walks" for "mountains," and this in spite of

¹ W. R. Arnold, *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*, April, 1905, p. 171.

² Nearly so Gressmann, *Eschatologie*.

³ For details of this theory see my *Traditions and Beliefs of Ancient Israel*.

Mic. i. 3, Amos iv. 13. Surely, too, it is much the most natural theory that here, as well as in ver. 4 b, corruption has been much concerned in the matter. What, then, may we most reasonably suppose to be the word underlying הלכות? It has to be a word which will describe the actions just now ascribed to Yahweh. Can there be a more probable word for this purpose than מלאכות (cp. Ps. lxxiii. 28)? Thus the gloss, as restored, will have this meaning, "His ancient works."

In ver. 7 פחת און is emended by Perles (*Analekten*, p. 66) into פחת און "On is dismayed." This is ingenious; but how can a city in Egypt ("On" is taken to mean the Egyptian Heliopolis) be parallel to Cushan and Midian? And even if we take "On" to be the North Arabian region called On or Ono¹, we can hardly feel quite satisfied, nor can we acquit Perles of arbitrariness when he changes ראיתי into יראתי. At the very least, I would point out that such a change can only serve our purpose provisionally. The true reading, out of which ראיתי is a corrupt development, must be ארמנות, and a fragment of the same word (dittographed?) has evidently become און, while פחת retains its proper meaning, "instead of." אהלי and ירעיות still remain. If we are bent on "moderation," there may be no absolute necessity to object to them. But it is more probable that the former word is a corruption of היכלי², and the other (cp. ראיתי) of ארמנות. Ver. 7 will then become—

The palaces of Cushan trembled,
The castles of the land of Midian;

and a scribe has inserted, in error, a marginal gloss on "palaces," viz. "instead of castles." The gloss means to say that היכלי "palaces," is a substitute for ארמנות "castles." If, however, any one prefers he can adopt Duhm's explanation

¹ See *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, "On."

² Cp. Cheyne, *Psalms* (1904), I, 94, crit. note on Ps. xv. 1, for other instances of this corruption.

of the three opening words pronounced by Marti to be "unintelligible," viz. "under (the walls of) Heliopolis have I seen them (the people of Cushan)." A very strange statement, and an equally extraordinary form of expression!

Verses 8 b and 15 are various forms of the same text. The truest restoration seems to me to be—*כי הרכה בימן סוס־ך* "that thou didst direct thy horses against Yaman, thy chariots against Asshur." In this I partly follow Gunkel¹ and Marti, who however have missed the North Arabian references, and consequently cannot adequately explain the co-existence in vv. 8 and 15 of two various forms of the same text. They can see indeed that *חרכב* (ver. 8) and *דרכה* (ver. 15) have both come from *הדרכה* (cp. LXX, ver. 15, *ἐπιβιβῆς*), but they do not perceive that *ישועה* (ver. 15) comes from *אשור* (the North Arabian Asshur), that *בים* (as in Isa. xxvii. 1) may, with strong probability, be traced to *בִּימָן*, that *חמר* (ver. 15) is not = "mire" (Duhm after Vg.), but comes from *ירחם* (Yarḥam, i. e. Yerahme'el), and that *מים רבים* probably represents *ימן ערבים*. "Asshur" is in fact equivalent in usage to "Yarḥam" or to "Yaman of Arabia."

The opening distich still waits to be explained—"Was thy wrath kindled against the rivers? or thy fury against the sea?" As Gunkel has seen, the reference most probably is to some mythic description of the primaeval conflict between Yahweh and the dragon of chaos. The destruction wrought by Yahweh in the land of Israel's oppressors is so complete that one might well suppose the conflicts of the olden time to be renewed. In fact, the mythic dragon is expressly identified by Ezekiel (xxix. 3) with that great North Arabian potentate—the king of Mišrim. Mišrim being a part of the larger Yerahme'elite region², it might well be said that in rescuing Israel from its latest oppressors,

¹ *Schöpfung und Chaos*, p. 105, note 5.

² Cp. Ps. cvi. 21, 22, "They forgot God their deliverer, | Who had done great things in Mišrim, | Wondrous things in the land of Yarḥam, | Terrible things by the sea of Suph. ||

Yahweh delivered his people from the dragon. Cp. Isa. li. 9, 10.

On ver. 9 not much need be said here. One stichus however must be referred to—"Thou didst cleave the earth into streams." As Duhm has pointed out, the streams are probably caused by the breaking forth of the subterranean water, as the Priestly Writer (Gen. vii. 11) supposes to have taken place at the Deluge. But then, if this be the case, we must suppose an inconsistency in the mode of representation adopted by the psalmist. For in ver. 8, Yahweh is supposed to have repeated the primaeval conflict with the sea; it is the transformed myth of Cosmogony which supplies the basis of the poetic description. Here, however, as Duhm evidently holds, it is the Deluge myth which is in the psalmist's mind. Yet, strange to say, he confesses himself baffled by the parallel passage, Ps. lxxvii. 17-20. I venture therefore to propose the theory given in my own commentary on the Book of Psalms (1904, II, 15).

"The idea of both psalms (i. e. that in Hab. iii, and that preserved in part in Ps. lxxvii⁽²⁾) appears to be that Yahweh, in the midst of his wrath remembering mercy (Hab. iii. 2 b), will renew that great catastrophe of old time—the overwhelming of the guilty Yerahme'elites by a deluge¹."

In ver. 10 occur the difficult words נָרַם מִיָּם עָרַב, which have to be considered in connexion with the form of text in Ps. lxxvii. 17. It appears to me most probable that names of North Arabian peoples underlie at any rate the first two words, probably also the last word. We shall thus get מעררים ימיים ערב, a triplet of geographical glosses. It is possible, however, to regard the עבות of Ps. lxxvii⁽²⁾ as more correct than the עבר of Hab., and to modify this into נבעתי.

I pass on to ver. 13, which, with Marti, I regard as a tetrastich. The difficulties occur in the second half.

¹ See *Traditions and Beliefs*, pp. 229 f.; *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, "Sodom and Gomorrah."

That no help is given by LXX¹, is recognized by Marti; the text was already in disorder when the version of Habakkuk was made. Marti rightly sees that ראש מ is superfluous, but omits to account for its insertion. And yet there are cases enough in which ראש and רשע have arisen out of אֲשֶׁר; prejudice alone can fail to see that ראש and רשע are competing corruptions of אֲשֶׁר, i. e. the North Arabian Asshur. The מ before מבית is either accidental (influence of מ in מרצת) or redactional.

In the last stichus a problem is caused by ער־צואר. Duhm supposes that this is a popular expression, like the German *mannshoch*. Very strange! Oort and Marti, however, would emend צואר into צור, i. e. the rock which is the foundation of the "house." But, as Duhm remarks, צור would surely not have been altered into צואר. Let us consider the present passage in connexion with Isa. viii. 8 and xxx. 28, where the same phrase occurs, assuming the North Arabian theory, and recollecting the recurrent types of textual corruption. In all these passages it is possible to read, for ער־צואר, ערב־צבען; the linking form would be ער־צאון². All this gives the following sense in the passage before us:—

Thou didst smite in pieces the house of Asshur,
Laying bare the foundation of 'Arab-šib'on³.

Ver. 16 describes the effect of the signs of the coming theophany which present themselves to his ears. Ver. 17 follows very strangely; probably it is a marginal quotation⁴. Verses 18 and 19 a are a liturgical appendix which

¹ Βαλ εἰς εἰς κεφαλὰς ἀνόμων θάνατον.

² In Isa. xxx. 28 יְהִיָּה may come from some North Arabian place-name, such as יהצה.

³ A place-name like "Arab-Hamath" in ii. 17.

⁴ I do not agree with Duhm that the substitution of סמך "wine-blossom," for שרמח, and אשכל "grape-cluster," for אכל involves the transposition of the third and fourth stichi, and I dispute the legitimacy of rejecting a correction of an impossible text without considering the reasons for this correction. See *Enc. Bib.*, "Grapes," col. 1917, note 1; "Isaiah," in *Sacred Books of the O. T.*, critical edition, pp. 198 f.

may have supplanted the genuine close of the psalm (Wellhausen, Marti).

Looking back on the whole book we perceive in all its parts the shadow of the Arabian invasion of Judah, followed by an Arabian captivity of some part of the people of Judah. The result is more startling than I could have wished, but it is unavoidable. That the unity of the book is not thereby proved, is obvious. It would be interesting to follow up our study of Habakkuk by a similar study of Nahum. I may have made many mistakes, but can hardly fail to have pointed out some problems which have been overlooked, and many solutions which a methodical critic may rightly put forward when all attempts at more conservative solutions have failed. This is my justification for having put forward an appeal for a more complete criticism of Habakkuk than either Duhm, or Budde, or even Marti has offered.

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