THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK AS A WHOLE.

For the CANONICAL order and place of the Prophets, see Ap. 1, and pp. 1206 and 1207.
For the CHRONOLOGICAL order of the Prophets, see Ap. 77.
For the Inter-relation of the Prophetio Books, see Ap. 78.
For the Formulae of Prophetic Utterance. See Ap. 82.
For References to the Pentateuch by the Prophets, see Ap. 92.
For the Inter-relation of the Minor (or Shorter) Prophets, see pp. 1206 and 1207.

Of Habakkuk (pronounced Habak'-kuk) nothing can be really known beyond what he says of himself. From this it is clear that he lived in evil days, and was perplexed with the silence and forbearance of a holy God in permitting the evil to continue. Cp. Ps. 73.

His prophecy takes the form of a colloquy with Jehovah; and Jehovah answers his cry by revealing the fact that a time will come when the evil will be visited upon Judah by the Chaldean successors of Assyria (1. 6), and by the Dispersion of Judah (1. 5-11).

The prayer in chap. 3 is very important as being a summary of Jehovah's dealings with His People from the passage of the Red Sea to the prophet's own time.

The prophecy is undated; but we have a clue afforded in 1. 5, 6. It is given to Habakkuk before the fall of Nineveh, which placed Babylon at the head of the Gentile world. According to traditional or "received" dating, this took place in 625 B. C, but, according to the chronology given in Ap. 50, it was 515 B. C, or 110 years later.

If the hints given in 1. 3, 11 are to he accepted on the above lines, we may date the prophecy of Habakkuk as being given (as a whole), or at any rate commenced, in the year with which Jeremiah begins: viz. in the thirteenth year of Josiah, 518 B. c, i.e. three years before the destruction of Nineveh.

In this case, supposing one among those Habakkuk addressed to be twenty years old, he would he forty-two in Jehoiakim's fourth year and Nebuchadnezzar's first. At the carrying away to Babylon he would be forty-nine; and at the destruction of Jerusalem he would be sixty-one.
1 The burden which he saw, Habakkuk the prophet.  
2 O LORD, how long shall I cry for help in distress, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry with a loud voice unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save!  
3 Why dost Thou shew me trouble, and cause me to behold injustice? for spoiling and violence are before me: and I had to endure strife, and contention.  
4 Therefore the law is benumbed, and justice doth never go forth: for a lawless one doth compass about the just one; therefore perverted judgment goeth forth.  
5 Look ye among the nations, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.  
6 For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not his.  
7 It is terrific and dreadful: his decision and his elevation shall proceed of itself.  
8 His horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are keener than the evening wolves: and his horsemen shall spread itself, and his horsemen shall come from far; it shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.  
9 It shall come all for violence [for destruction]: his intent shall swallow up, as the Palestine burning east wind withers up and destroys all green things, and he shall gather the captivity as the sand.  
10 And he shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto it: he shall deride every strong hold; for he shall heap up mounds, and capture every stronghold.  
11 Then shall his spirit change, and he shall pass through, and offend, imputing this his power unto his object of worship.  
12 Art Thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, Thou hast ordained it for judgment; and, O Rock, Thou hast established it for correction.

1: 1–2; 20. The Burden of Habakkuk.

1 burden. See note on Nah. 1. 1.
did see. The Heb. accent places the chief pause on this verb, to emphasize the fact that the giving of the vision was of more importance than what was revealed by it. A second and lesser pause is placed on "burden", leaving "Habakkuk" as being less important. The verse therefore should read, "The burden which he saw, Habakkuk the prophet".

cry = cry for help in distress; as in Pss. 18. 6, 41; 22. 24. Cp. Job 19. 7. Jer. 20. 8. Showing that the cry is not personal, but made in the name of all who suffered from the evil times.
cry out = cry with a loud voice, implying the complaint.
iniquity. Heb. 'evert. (Ap. 44. vii) = trouble, having special reference to the nature and consequences of evil-doing.
grievance = oppression, or injustice. Heb. 'amal. Ap. 44. v.
there are that raise up. A reading is found in some codices (named in the Massorah), "I had to endure".

strife and contention. There should not be a comma after "strife", as in the R.V. The Heb. accents indicate the one act, "and contention rising up", like "spoil and violence are before me" in the preceding clause.

wrong = perverted. procedure = goeth forth.

Behold . . . regard . . . wonder. Note the Fig. Anabasis (Ap. 6).
heathen = nations. which ye -will not believe. Some codices read "yet ye will not believe".

1 I raise up, &c. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 28. 49, 5). Ap. 92.

2 more fierce = keener. shall fly as the eagle. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 28. 49, 50). Ap. 92.

3 against . . . eager. 

4 all for violence: i.e. not for conquest, but for destruction.

sup up, &c. = swallow up (as in Job 39. 24), as the Palestine burning east wind withers up and destroys all green things.

as the sand. Fig Paroemia. Ap. 6.

10 them = it, as above (v. 6). heap 

dust = heap up mounds.
take it = capture it: i.e. every stronghold.
13 ¶ Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on wrong: wherefore lookest Thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest Thy tongue when a lawless one devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?

14 And maketh men as the fishes of the sea, as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?

15 For [takes] up all of it with the hook, it [catches] them in his net, and gather it in his fish-net: therefore [rejoices] and are glad.

16 Therefore [sacrifices] unto his net, and burn incense unto his fish-net; because by them his portion is fertile, and his meat fat.

17 Shall it therefore empty his net, and not spare continually to slay the nations?

2 I will stand upon my watch-tower, and take my station upon the fortress, and will keep outlook to see what He will say in me, and what I shall get back because of my complaint.

2 And the LORD answered me, and said, ¶ "Write the vision [which I am about to reveal to thee], and make it plain upon boxwood tables smeared with wax, that he that readeth it may run as a messenger.

3 For the vision is deferred for a fixed time appointed by Jehovah for its fulfillment, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and will not tarry."

4 ¶ Behold [the proud one], his [the lawless one’s] soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but a righteous one shall live by his faith.

5 Yea also, because he is acting deceitfully by wine, he is a proud strong man, neither keepeth at home, who en largeth his soul as Sheol, and he is as death, and cannot be satisfied, but gathereth unto him all nations, and heareth unto him all peoples:

6 Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting proverb against him, and say, [Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his! how long? and to him that ladelth himself with pledges!]

7 Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall exact usury on thee, and awake that shall shake thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?

8 Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all the remnant of the peoples shall spoil thee; because of men’s blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

9 Woe to him that extorteth an evil gain to his house,
that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power exercised by evil!

10 Thou hast devised a shameful thing to thy house by cutting off many peoples, and hast sinned against thy soul.

11 For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.

12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!

13 Behold, is it not of Jehovah of Hosts Himself that the peoples shall labour in the very fire, and the peoples shall weary themselves for very vanity?

14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that pourest thy venom thereto, and makes him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

16 Thou art filled with shame for glory: drink thou also, and be as one uncircumcised: the cup of the LORD's right hand shall be turned unto thee, and shameful spewing shall be on thy glory.

17 For the violence done to Lebanon by felling its trees shall cover thee, and the spoil of beasts, shall make thee afraid, because of men's blood, and for the violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein.

18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that made him drunken, &c.

19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no spirit at all in the midst of it.

20 But the LORD is in His holy temple: let all the earth hush! Be still! before Him.

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard Thy fame, and was in Awe: O LORD, renew Thy doings in the midst of the years of wrath. in the midst of the years make Thyself known; in wrath remember compassion I will meditate on Thy doings of old: —

3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from what Thou hast done in the past. wrath. As manifested in present affliction; showing what is meant by "years", above.

Supply here the logical Ellipsis "I will meditate on Thy doings of old: —"]".

3: 3-19. THE PRAYER OF HABAKKUK.

1. The Superscription.

2. "I have heard" Consequent effect, "fear".


16. "I have heard." Consequent effect, "trembling".


-19. The Subscription.

1 Shigionoth. The pl. of Shiggaiyon (cp. Ps. 7), a crying aloud. See Ap. 65. XX.

2 LORD. Jehovah. Ap. 4. II.

heard Thy speech = heard Thy hearing. Fig. Polyptoton. Ap. 6.

speech = hearing. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Subject), Ap. 6, for what was heard. Here = Thy fame, as in Num. 14. 15. 1 Kings 10. 1. Isa. 66. 19.

afraid. = in awe; as in Ex. 14. 31.

revive = renew, in the sense of repeating, doing over again.

work. Some codices, with Aram., Sept., and Syr., read "works": i.e. doings.

years. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Adjunct), for the afflictions suffered in them, or "wrath" manifested in them.

in the midst, &c. Out of 273 occurrences, this is the only place where it refers to time. Had Habakkuk learnt, like Daniel? Note the Fig. Anadiplosis (Ap. 6), for emphasis. make known = make [Thyself] known. The Heb. accent places the logical pause on this verb: i.e. by repeating now

3 GOD. Jehovah Eloah. Ap. 4. V. Occurs in the prophets only here, and Isaiah, and Daniel.

came from Teman. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 33. 2.). Ap. 92.

3.3. HABAKKUK. 3.14.

mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.
4 And His brightness was as the light; He had two rays of power from His hand: and there was the concealing of His full power.
5 [As He went forth to conquer for His People] before Him went the pestilence, and lightning went forth at His feet.
6 He stood, and caused the earth to tremble: He looked, and caused the nations to shake; and the everlasting mountains were shattered, the ancient hills did bow: His ways are everlasting.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan brought low by affliction: and the hanging tents of the land of Midian did tremble.
8 Was the LORD displeased against the rivers? was Thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that Thou didst ride upon Thine horses and Thy chariots of salvation?
9 Nay Thy bow was made quite bare, (according to the oaths of the tribes, even Thy word). Selah. Thou didst cleave the earth [and the waters gushed out] with rivers.
10 The mountains saw Thee, and they trembled: the overflowing of the water [of Jordan] passed by: the deep uttered his voice [at Thy presence], and lifted up his hands [in amazement and submission] on high.
11 The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: like light Thine arrows flew, and like lightning was Thy glittering spear.
12 Thou didst march through the land in indignation, Thou didst tread down the nations of Canaan in anger.
13 Thou wentest forth for the salvation of Thy People, even for salvation with Thine anointed People: Thou hast in pieces the head from the house of the lawless one, by discovering the foundation unto the neck. Selah.
14 Thou didst pierce with his own weapons the chief of his leaders: when they came forth as a whirlwind

Selah. Connecting His coming forth with the glorious effects of it. See Ap. 66. II. Note the three "Selahs" in vv. 3, 9, 13.
His glory. Cp. Isa. 6. 3.
4 horns = power. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Effect), Ap. 6, for the power put forth by them. Heb. dual = two rays.
coming out of = from: i.e. power from [His] hands [is] His. the hiding, &c. = hiding (or concealing) of [His] full power.
5 Supply the logical Ellipsis: [As He went forth to conquer for His People] before Him went", &c. See Ex. 28. 27. Ps. 68. 1. 2. burning coals: or, lightning Cp. Ps. 18. 8; 76.3; 78.48.

3: 6-11. HIS DOINGS.
6. At, and after creation.
7. Among Israel's enemies.
8. At the Exodus.
9. In Israel's Deliverances.
11. At the Conquest of Canaan.
6 measured the earth: or, caused the earth to tremble. So the Targum and the requirement of the "correspondence" with the next line.
beheld = looked.
drove asunder the nations = caused the nations to shake, or start.
scattered = shattered.
perpetual = ancient, or primeval.
7 in affliction = [brought low] by affliction.
curtains = hangings. Put by Fig. Metonymy (of Cause), Ap. 6, for the tents formed by them.
8 Was . . . ? Fig. Erotesis. Rightly supplied in following clauses.
Thou didst ride. Ref. to Pent. (Deut. 33. 26, 27). horses = horses [of power].
and. Some codices, with three early printed editions (one Rabbinic), Sept., Syr., and Vulg., read this "and" in the text.
naked = bare. according to the oaths of the tribes . . . Selah. This second "Selah" (see Ap. 66. II) is to connect the remarkable parenthetic statement with the continuation of the details of Israel's deliverances, which it interrupts, and might otherwise have disturbed. The text of this clause is not "corrupt", as alleged by some modern critics. The oaths are the promises sworn to the fathers or the tribes [of Israel] when still in the loins of the patriarchs.
with rivers = [and the waters gushed out] with rivers. See Pss. 74. 15; 78. 15; 16; 105. 41.
the overflowing, &c. Referring to the Jordan. Cp. Josh. 3. 15, 16.

3: 12-13. JEHOVAH'S GOINGS.
12. For the subduing of Israel's enemies.
13. For the salvation of Israel.
11. For the subduing of Israel's enemies.

heathen = nations: i.e. the nations of Canaan woundedst = dashest in pieces.
13 out of = from. the wicked = [the] lawless one. Heb. rasha'. Ap. 44. viii. Looking forward to the final destruction of Israel's enemy in the person of the Antichrist. The Targum (or Paraphrase) of Jonathan is remarkable: "the kingdom of Babylon will not remain, nor exercise dominion over Israel. The Romans will be destroyed, and not take tribute from Jerusalem; and therefore, on account of the marvelous deliverance which Thou wilt accomplish for Thine Anointed, and for the remnant of Thy People, they will praise the LORD."
by discovering, &c. i.e. overturning the house from the top (the neck) so completely as to lay bare the foundations. Such will be the final overthrow of Israel's great enemy.
Selah. This third Selah connects this final overthrow and its magnitude, when contrasted with the enemy's previous proud boasting and exaltation in v. 14. It connects Jehovah's doings also (v. 14) with Jehovah's goings (v. 15). See Ap. 66. II.
14 strike through = pierce. his staves = his own weapons. Cp. Judg. 7. 22. head = chief. villages = leaders. Heb. text = "leader"(sing); but margin "leaders" (pl.), with some codices and five early printed editions.

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to scatter me [who am Thy People]: their rejoicing was in very deed to devour the poor secretly.

15 Thou didst walk through the sea with Thine horses of power, through the foaming of great waters.

16 When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice saying: restlessness entered into my bones, and I trembled in myself: O that I might find rest in the day of trouble: when the invader cometh up against the people, he will overcome them with his troops.

17 Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:

18 Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The LORD God is my might, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places. To the chief singer on my stringed instruments.

me: i.e. me [who am Thy People], rejoicing. Cp. Ps. 10. 8, 9.
as = in very deed. Kaph (K) veritatis.
poor. Heb. 'anah. See note on "poverty", Prov. 6. 11.
15 heap = foaming.
16 When I heard. See the Structure (p. 1269).

belly = body.
voice = voice [saying].

rottenness = decay. Some codices, with Aram., Sept., and Syr., read "restlessness".

myself. Place a full stop here, and commence a new sentence.
that I might = O that I might find (or be at) rest, &c. he: i.e. the invader.
unto = against.

he will invade= he will overcome. Heb gud. Occurs only here, and Gen. 49. 19.

17 Although. Heb. ki, as in 2 Sam. 23. 5; but must be understood not as being hypothetical, but as bringing out the antithesis with v. 18 (cp. Job 8. 7).

fig tree . . . vines . . . olive. See note on Judg. 9. 8-12.
blossom. The edible fig, which is the blossom: i.e. the receptacle containing a large number of minute unisexual flowers growing to a succulent. The Heb. text therefore and the A. V. rendering are both scientifically correct.

18 God of my salvation. Cp. Pss. 18. 46; 24. 5; 25. 5; 27. 9.


my stringed instruments. Heb. neginoth. Referring to the smitings of Jehovah on the enemies of Israel (v.16). See Ap. 65. XV.