

The Book of Habakkuk

from the book

Minor Prophets: Major Messages

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How To Use This Study Guide

1. A slow unhurried reading of *Habakkuk* is essential. Reading the chapter before looking at the notes, while working with the notes, and after finishing with the notes will give each researcher a powerful sense of the series of meanings within each chapter. It is important to be comfortable with all the names and places in the prophecy and to understand the announcements the prophet makes on behalf of the Lord. When possible, historical information will be included in the notes to increase reading comprehension and enhance application.
2. Our study of each chapter of Habakkuk will begin with quotes from a work of the Writings called Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms. This work includes a verse-by-verse overview of all three chapters of Habakkuk that provides general information about the internal sense. Our research will help move us from the generals to the particulars of the internal sense.
3. Another important reference tool is Searle's General Index to Swedenborg's Scripture Quotations. This reference is used to find passages in the Writings where a verse(s) from the Word is either explained specifically or used to illustrate a doctrinal point that we can use in our study. There is also another use of this work. As we study, each researcher will be led by the Lord's Providence in myriad ways, according to specific needs or states. Knowing how to use this book will help each of us to explore relevant topics and look up related passages to increase our knowledge of the three-fold Word.
4. You will soon discover that not every verse, word, name, etc. is directly quoted in the Writings. But there are often other references to the same name, place, or thing in the explanation of a different verse of the Word. The hope is that reflection on these other doctrinal explanations will help us see possible applications to our study of Habakkuk. We will need to use "derived doctrine" often. Please don't run away from this maligned term. If we use it properly and admit openly that it is derived doctrine, we bring no harm to the internal sense.
5. Keep some kind of notebook handy during your study times. Write out insights, questions, and any summaries you find helpful in organizing your thoughts about each chapter. The goal of this study guide is not to give a detailed summary of the internal sense but to start each researcher's quest for deeper insight.
6. At the end of each chapter in the study guide, you will find a study review. The review includes a summary of each section to help you reinforce and build on your understanding of several of the key points.
7. Begin each study unit with a devotional prayer asking the Lord to guide and direct your thoughts. Certainly beginning in this sphere has the power to inspire and open our minds with a higher spiritual priority that will keep us in the company of the Lord's angels. As the Writings teach, we must seek to love truth for truth's sake. Such an approach will free each reader from preconceived ideas that might limit his or her ability to "see" the intent and message of the Lord's Word.

Introduction

What the Lord said to the disciples was “said to all who are of the church, for the twelve disciples represented all such...” (*Arcana Coelestia [AC] 3354*) ““The twelve disciples’ signify all who are of the church, and in an abstract sense all things of the church, which are truths from good.” (*Apocalypse Explained [AE] 851*)

Why begin this introduction to the book of *Habakkuk* with these quotes about the representation of the disciples? Each disciple represents some aspect of the quality of the spiritual life within us. The disciples are **a complex** of our spiritual life. Their complex seeks to reach out and touch us at some level of our spiritual development. The states and activities of this development are not static; they are ever changing. So, too, I believe, the prophets form a complex to touch our state. Each prophet we study has a unique prophetic style and message. The Lord inflows into that uniqueness and unfolds His plan to overcome the falsification and adulteration of His Word, and **calms us** with the news of the birth of the New Church. What we need to do is listen to the message of each prophet without getting caught up in his personage. “Unless the internal sense were to teach what these words signify and unfold within them, **the investigators and interpreters of the Word might be led away and fall into opinions altogether foreign to the truth**; or it might even happen that those who at heart deny the holiness of the Word might come to the conclusion that...” (*AC 3651, emphasis added*)

Habakkuk’s prophetic style is one of not talking to the people. He, like Job, asks the Lord hard questions. His questions are complaints. Listen to the “woes” he addresses:

- Injustice is rampant.
- The righteous are surrounded by the wicked.
- The law is powerless to stop the wicked.
- The Lord appears to be allowing evil to go unpunished.

With anguish Habakkuk cries out, “How long, O Lord, will I call for help, and You will not hear?” Habakkuk continues his list of woes:

- Woe to the proud. (2:4-5)
- Woe to the greedy. (2:6-8)
- Woe to the dishonest. (2:9-11)
- Woe to the violent. (2:12-14)
- Woe to the sensual. (2:15-17)
- Woe to the idolater. (2:18-20)

The Lord responds to Habakkuk, “Look among the nations **and watch—be utterly astounded!** For **I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.**” (*Habakkuk 1:5, emphasis added*)

So, like Job, Habakkuk complains, argues, challenges, and questions the Lord's methods of bringing order to the church. But in the end, Habakkuk comes full circle, confidently praising the Lord's providence and looking forward to the establishment of the New Church.

Is there some part of our spiritual life in which we can identify with Habakkuk's argumentative approach to the Lord? When we read, watch, and see things going on in the world, don't we want to cry out, "How long, Lord, will it be before you do something with this world of ours? Our laws are being made a mockery. Our politicians are misusing their offices for personal gain. Political correctness is pulling down the Ten Commandments from buildings. Displaying crèche scenes is being found unacceptable and offensive. Murders, pillage, and attacks are perpetrated with minor penalties."

Habakkuk's name means "to embrace" or "to wrestle." He seems to be representative of our worrisome feelings. He wants to **talk with** the Lord and not the people. Isn't Habakkuk's style a great example for us? We need to talk more with the Lord and have less concern about public opinion.

Let's pause again with the Lord's answer to Habakkuk's doubting state.

- **Watch.** Like a watchman on a tower, we are to be alert and look intently for answers from the internal sense of the Word.
- **Be utterly astounded.** Can we ask ourselves a question? Are we in a state of anticipation? Or are we in a spiritual rut going around in circles with little hope or belief in the reality of the New Church? Can we be astounded, or are we somewhat jaded in our philosophy of life?
- **I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.** I don't know about you, but these words fire me up to believe the Lord. I want to come into a state that will open my eyes to see things that the doubter and nay-sayer will never see or believe. May the Lord help us learn truth through the continuous degree so that we will be found worthy to have the Lord lift us to the see the beauty and enlightenment of discrete degrees.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HABAKKUK?

We know almost nothing about Habakkuk's life. He gives us no clue to his parentage. No home village is mentioned. Was he from the northern or southern kingdom? He gives us no clue about his work. We don't know who was reigning over Israel during his lifetime. The only clue historians note is in *Habakkuk 1:6*, where the Lord says: "I am raising up the Chaldeans." The Chaldeans are the Babylonians. On the basis of this reference, historians offer an approximate date of 620 B.C.

Once again, we need to ask the question, "Why does the Word of the Lord give so little information about the prophet?" The answer comes back each time that the

Lord wants us to study His Word apart from the person conveying it to us. “Unless the internal sense...were to teach...the investigators and interpreters of the Word might be led away and fall into opinions altogether foreign to the truth...” (AC 3651). What the Lord does for our salvation is by far more important than background information about Habakkuk’s life.

With this teaching as our beacon, may the Lord guide and direct our study of *Habakkuk*. We pray that He will hear our concerns and that He will speak those wonderful words of advice to us: Watch. Be astounded. You are about to be astonished by My work of salvation; even if you have doubts and fail to see it all, the Lord’s New Church will come to fruition. SELAH!

Chapter One

HABAKKUK 1:1-5

*“The burden [oracle] which the prophet Habakkuk saw.
O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear? Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ and
You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble? For
plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises. Therefore
the law is powerless, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the
righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Look among the nations and watch
—be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days which you would not
believe, though it were told you.”*

Passages From The Writings

Prophets and Psalms (P&P)

- “Justice and truth perish. Grief on the part of the Lord, and directed to the Lord.”

Coronis 56

- “From all these passages [*Habakkuk 1:3* being one of them] it may be seen what ‘vastation’ and ‘desolation’ are; and that it is not a vastation and desolation of the peoples of a land, and of cities, but of the goods and truths of the church, whence there is nothing but evils and falsities.”

Derived Doctrine

“The burden [oracle] which the prophet Habakkuk saw.”

- *AE 208 [7]* explains what is meant by to “bring in no burden through the gates of this city.” It means to “not admit [permit] that which is from man’s own [proprium], but that which is from the Lord.”
- *AC 9254* explains that “‘burden’ signifies falsity not agreeing with the good of the church by reason of which they were about to perish.”
- *AE 172* explains that “burden” is a person’s proprium, “which is to love self above God and the world above heaven, [and which] offers resistance.”
- *Apocalypse Revealed (AR) 144* explains that “burden” means or represents “what they should be aware of.”
- To understand the word “oracle,” as it is used in some passages of the Word, we must refer to a description of Solomon’s temple and the word “adytum.”

The adytum, or oracle, was the place where the ark was, and it represented “where the Lord is” as to His Divine Truth. (*AE 638 [8] and 700 [39]*)

“...which the prophet Habakkuk saw.”

- *AC 7268* defines what a “prophet” of the Lord does. A prophet is “one who utters in a form adapted to the understanding the Divine truth which proceeds immediately from the Lord, and which transcends all understanding...a ‘prophet’ also denotes the doctrine of the church...”
- The name “Habakkuk” means to “embrace” or “ardent embrace.” Does the name “Habakkuk” have anything to do with the spiritual message? There are no references in the Writings that say what “Habakkuk” signifies or represents or denotes.
- *AC 937* has a wonderful explanation of the Word and what the Lord “sees.” The Word has such great arcana as to be “inexhaustible even as to the one ten-thousandth part of it...the angels—from the Lord—can see, in illimitable variety, the whole process of regeneration, and the state of the man who is to be and who has been regenerated, while man can see scarcely anything.” Did the Lord help the prophet Habakkuk to “see” the illimitable process the people needed to experience in regeneration?

“O Lord, how long shall I cry, and You will not hear?”

- What is the prophet expressing here? Impatience, fear, anxiety, confusion, and doubt? Is Habakkuk questioning the Lord’s providential care and concern for Israel? After all, hundreds of years had passed since the prophecy of the Lord’s advent had been given, and there was no sign of the Messiah yet. Was the prophecy of the Messiah a reality? *John 10:24* tells of a time when “...the Jews surrounded Him and said...‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’” *Revelation 6:9-10* quotes the words of those “under the altar...who had been slain for the word of God...” crying “with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’”
- *AR 327*, explaining the meaning of *Revelation 6:10*, says that this “signifies, why is the Last Judgment delayed...and why in justice are they [who do violence to the Word] not condemned...?”
- The Lord employed the “How long” question, too. “How long, O sons of men, will you turn my glory to shame? How long will you love worthlessness and seek falsehood?” (*Psalms 4:2*)

“Even cry out to You, ‘Violence!’ And You will not save.”

- “A ‘voice crying’ and ‘the voice of a cry’ are common forms of expression in the Word, and are applied to every case where there is noise, tumult, or disturbance...[or] accusation.” (*AC 375*) To “cry” out to the Lord has a

“signification of...imploration, and also interior lamentation...consequently it also denotes supplication from grief.”

- *AE 734 [17]* describes “a man of violence” as those who “from a depraved intention” pervert the truths of the Word by “thinking evils in the heart...”
- “The earth is said to be...‘filled with violence’ because of...foul cupidities...‘Corrupt’ is predicated of the things of **the understanding** when it is desolated; ‘violence,’ of the things of **the will**, when vastated. Thus ‘to corrupt’ is predicated of persuasions; and ‘violence,’ of cupidities.” (*AE 734 [17], emphasis added*)
- The phrase “You will not save” is an appearance the prophet believed to be true. However, we know and can cite many passages from the Word that tell us of the Lord’s perpetual care. If the Lord, for the least of moments, were to ignore or care less for anyone, it would be all over for that person. (*AC 2410*) We have to see Habakkuk’s statement for what it is: a moment of finite internal anguish in which the prophet sees no hope and is grieved by his blinded understanding.

“Why do You show me iniquity, and cause me to see trouble?”

- In the positive sense, we can see “the signification of ‘showing,’ when by Jehovah, that is the Lord, as being to give perception, and as this is affected by means of influx, it denotes to inspire...” (*AC 8354*) We can surmise that the prophet’s being shown iniquity may represent humanity’s momentary lack of perception and lack of influx.
- “Iniquity” comes about when there is a state of lawlessness (wickedness). *AC 3488 [6]* describes for us how iniquity multiplies. When the falsities of faith grow cold, this denotes “the expiring of charity, for they keep pace together; where faith is not, there charity is not, and where charity is not, faith is not; but charity is that which receives faith, and no charity is that which rejects faith; this is the origin of every falsity and every evil.”
- The prophet speaks of seeing trouble. What does this represent? “Trouble” in the positive sense “denotes labor...because it is predicated of temptations, for in these they who are tempted have labor against falsities and evils, and the angels also have labor with them to keep them in the faith, and thus in the power of conquering...” (*AC 8670*) For the hells, “trouble” would seem to represent their loss of power and the Lord’s conquering victory over evils and falsities.

“For plundering and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention arises.”

- “Plunder” or “plundering” has a positive and negative meaning. When the Word talks about the Lord “plundering,” it means “the rescue and deliverance of the good by the Lord.” (*AC 6442*) “Plundering” by the hells signifies “to destroy the doctrine.” (*AC 4503*) “...the cupidity of gain and avarice has within

- it the desire not only to possess the whole world but also to plunder and even kill everyone for the sake of gain.” (AC 4751 [2])
- “Violence” signifies “offering violence to the good of charity.” (AE 175 [10]) “Violence” in the “internal sense is bearing hatred against the neighbor.” (AC 1010)
 - “Strife” occurs when the internal and external aspects of a person disagree about the ends of worship. “...for when in worship the internal man desires to regard the ends that belong to the kingdom of God, and the external man desires to regard the ends that belong to the world, there thus arises a disagreement which manifests itself in the worship...The smallest bit of such disagreement is noticed in heaven...This is what is signified by...strife...” (AC 1571)
 - AC 3425-7 illustrates the nature of “contention.” What a person acknowledges for the sake of gain is denied in the external and debated in the internal. The opposites of the external and internal become involved in “contention.” Note this teaching in AC 3427: “...‘contention’ or ‘dispute’...is derived from a kindred word which means oppression and injury.”

“Therefore the law is powerless and justice never goes forth.”

- As we turn our attention to the words “law” and “power,” let’s first consider these words in the positive sense. “...all precepts, indeed the Law and the Prophets, are founded on **the one Law**, to love the Lord above all things and the neighbor as one’s self...” (AC 1038, *emphasis added*)
- If this “one Law” is voided in the will or heart, does it not make sense that “the law is powerless”? If this “one Law” is ignored in the will, does it not make sense that “justice never goes forth” from the heart? Until the internal person worships the Lord and leads the external person, law and justice are powerless forms of the one Law.

“For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore perverse judgment proceeds.”

- Hold fast to the terms “wicked” and “surround” when reading AC 830. “They, who beguile men by subtle deceit, wearing a pleasant face and manner of speech, but concealing evenenomed guile within, and thus captivating men for the purpose of ruining them, are in a hell more dreadful than the hells of others, even more dreadful than the hell of murderers. They seem to themselves to live among serpents; and the more pernicious their deceit has been, the more dreadful and venomous and the more numerous the serpents appear which **surround** and torment them.” Wickedness hates the Lord and the neighbor. Wickedness “burns” to destroy the Lord and all those who follow Him.
- From the wicked we can expect warped judgment. The wicked cannot think clearly. The wicked twist and turn truth to their own ends.

“Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded!”

- AC 622 has a short, but important, explanation of the meaning of “nation.” “Here, as in other places, ‘nation’...denotes evils which are of the will or of cupidities...” Is the Lord giving us an insight as to how many evils reside in the will?
- “Watch”; “keep awake”; “be alert.” These are words used to urge us to live life according to the precepts of faith. AC 4638 [10] prefaces this teaching with “assiduous application of life in accordance with the precepts of faith, which is ‘to watch.’”
- What revelation from the Lord will “utterly astounded” the watchful? Is it, as AC 231 describes, the great number of “nations” that “do not believe the Lord or the Word, but themselves and their own senses”? AC 232 continues, “At this day, however, it is much worse than in former times, because men can now confirm the incredulity of the senses by memory-knowledges...and this has given birth to an indescribable degree of darkness. If men knew how great the darkness from this cause is they would be astounded.”

“For I will work a work in your days which you would not believe though it were told you.”

- The “I” in this verse is the Lord. What work will the Lord do? AC 88 notes, “Hence it is evident that the new creation, or regeneration, is **the work of the Lord alone.**” (*Emphasis added.*) AC 9965 states, “the work of the Lord is salvation.” *Spiritual Experiences [SE]* 1639 says, “The **work of the Lord** is turning evil into good.” (*Emphasis added.*) *True Christian Religion [TCR]* 640 states that knowing the merit and righteousness of the Lord is impossible. But “what His merit and righteousness are must be known. The merit of the Lord...is redemption...it is described as the subjugation of the hells, the orderly arrangement of the heavens, and the subsequent establishment of a church, and thus as being **a work purely Divine.** It is also there shown that the Lord by means of redemption took to Himself the power to regenerate and save those who believe on Him and do His commandments; also that without this redemption no flesh could have been saved. As redemption therefore was **a work purely Divine, and a work of the Lord alone,** and constitutes His merit, it follows that His merit can no more be applied, ascribed, or imputed to any man than the creation and preservation of the universe.” (*Emphasis added.*)
- If we were able to see the full “work” of the Lord, we would be amazed. His care and detail for each moment, even the least of moments, and the series of those moments on to eternity would overwhelm us. It would be a staggering task for our finite minds to comprehend the “work” of the Infinite. And yet, we must try to grasp a piece or portion of that Divine work.

Putting It All Together

The work of regeneration seems like an awesome burden. There are so many things to watch for and to work on. The battle against hell pits us against forces that enjoy cunning and deceit. There are subtle nuances we fall prey to. Do things that seem like harmless choices turn back on us in devastating ways? We do things, for what reason, we have no idea. Our inclination is to wish for an easier way. Why doesn't the Lord take the upper hand and simplify the whole process? Why couldn't He make the hells go away and leave us alone? If He would only "forcefully" slap down the evil, all would quickly come around to His way of life. But He doesn't do it that way, and consequently, strife and contention enter into our spiritual decisions. Because inequities exist, hell tempts us to believe there must not be a caring God. Evil spirits suggest that He cares little for our confusion and pain. Whatever happened to the promises in the Word that said, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."? So the temptation arises to "numb out" on spiritual issues and go with the necessities of natural living.

Our lesson from *Habakkuk* instructs us that ignoring our spiritual burden is not the answer. "Where faith is not, there charity is not, and where charity is not, faith is not." (AC 3488 [6]) The church within every person needs growing goods and truths. Every stage of our life needs new and larger insights from the Lord. We cannot live with the goods and truths we had as children. Truth is organic and not static. Hell wants to bring us strife and contention. Hell wants to surround us with the impression that it is invincible and mightier than the Lord. Hell counts on the fact that we might wilt in the day of conflict. Hell seeks to strip us of every truth so we capitulate in the warfare against the plundering violence of disorder.

"Look among the nations and watch—be utterly astounded..." The Lord promises that He will sort through all of the affections of our lives and that He will work a work that will astound us. He will "disconnect" the maze of proprial loves that support and strengthen hell's resolve to resist the Lord.

The work of the Lord is a work that He alone can do. His is a work of new creation (regeneration). His work is the work of salvation. The Lord's work is to turn evil into good. The Divine work is to subjugate hell and to bring an orderly arrangement of the heavens.

There is so much more involved in the work of the Lord. We will never perceive the extent of His care and benefactions. Hell will try to discourage us. Why not? It did the same thing to many of the heroes in the Word. The Psalmist had his moments of doubt. Read *Psalms 73:1-17*. Listen to his words about being envious of the boastful. He speaks of the successes of the proud. He notes how their tongues speak against the Lord. He tried to be good and faithful. For his efforts, he felt plagued. When he was almost at the point of giving up, he went into the sanctuary of God; "Then I understood their end."

The list given above about the work of the Lord is a start, and it is enough to “embrace,” to “hold on to tightly,” and to use in our “wrestling” over weighty issues. “Watch” and “be utterly astounded” with what the Lord can do and is doing for us in the burden of our spiritual growth.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:1-5*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Is Habakkuk over-stating the violence, plundering, and imagined power of hell?
2. With all due respect, did you feel the urge to tell Habakkuk to get over it? We may think that things were not as bad then as they are now. He saw things regionally. With television and other instantaneous news reports, we get a global picture of how bad things are in the world.
3. Are we in bigger trouble than Habakkuk?
4. How easy is it to “numb out” the importance of spiritual growth? Do you believe that putting off spiritual growth hurts and destroys one’s inner church? How?
5. Have you experienced any astounding work of the Lord? How many more works of the Lord can you add to the partial list given in our study?

Habakkuk 1:6-11

“For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation which marches through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling places that are not theirs. They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves. Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar; they fly as the eagle that hastens to eat. They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind. They gather captives like sand. They scoff at kings. And princes are scorned by them. They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it. Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense, ascribing this power to his god.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Jewish church profaned all the truths and goods of the Word and of the church.”

AC 1613

- "...in Habakkuk...‘the Chaldeans’ denote those who are in falsity; ‘to walk in the breadths of the land,’ denotes to destroy truths, for this is predicated of the Chaldeans.”

AC 4482 [2, 3]

- “In Habakkuk...where by ‘breadths’ nothing else is signified than the truth of the church. The reason why ‘breadth’ has this signification is that in the spiritual world, or in heaven, the Lord is the center of all things, for He is the sun there. They who are in a state of good are interior in proportion to the quality and quantity of the good in which they are, and therefore ‘height’ is predicated of good. They who are in a like degree of good are also in a like degree of truth, and therefore are as it were at a distance, or, so to speak, in the same circumference, and hence ‘breadth’ is predicated of truths; and therefore when a man is reading the Word this is what the angels who are with him understand by ‘breadth.’”

AC 9487 [3]

- “That by ‘breadth’ is signified truth, is very manifest in the following passages...Habakkuk 1:6...‘to walk in the breadths of the land,’ when said of the Chaldeans, denotes to destroy the truths of faith.”

Heaven and Hell (HH) 197 [3]

- “Because ‘the New Jerusalem’ here signifies a new church these measures signify the things of the church, ‘length’ its good of love, ‘breadth’ truth from that good, ‘height’ good and truth in respect to degrees...That ‘breadth’ in the Word signifies truth is evident...in Habakkuk 1:6...”

AR 861

- “The reason why the ‘breadth of the earth’ signifies the truth of the church, is because in the spiritual world there are four quarters, east, west, south, and north, and the east and west constitute its length, and the south and north its breadth; and because they dwell in the east and west who are in the good of love, and thence by ‘east’ and ‘west’ is signified good, therefore the same is meant by ‘length;’ and because they dwell in the south and north who are in the truths of wisdom, and thence by ‘south’ and ‘north’ is signified truth, therefore the same is meant by ‘breadth;’...” *Habakkuk 1:6* is cited among many passages from the Word.

AE 799 [19]

- “That a ‘tent’ [dwelling place] signifies the church in respect to the truths of doctrine is evident from passages in the Word where a ‘tent and tents’ are mentioned (as in...Habakkuk 1:6...)”

AC 1368 [4, 5]

- “In Habakkuk...1:6-9...The Chaldean nation is here described by many representatives that are significant of the profanations of truth in worship. Moreover, Babylon and Chaldea are described in two entire chapters in Jeremiah (chapters 50 and 51), where what is signified by each is plainly evident, namely, by Babylon the profanation of celestial things, and by Chaldea the profanation of spiritual things, in worship. From all this therefore it is evident what is signified by ‘Ur of the Chaldees,’ namely, external worship in which there is inwardly profane idolatry.”

AC 3901 [7, 8]

- “That in the opposite sense an ‘eagle’ signifies rational things that are not true, and thus false...In Habakkuk...1:6, 8...By ‘eagles’ in these passages is signified falsity induced by reasonings, which is induced from the fallacies of the senses and external appearances. That by ‘Chaldeans’ in the Prophet last cited are signified those who are in a holy external, but interiorly in falsity... also that they who vastate the church are like Babylon...that the ‘breadths of the land’ denote truths...Vastation is signified by ‘marching through the breadths of the land.’ Their ‘horses’ are their intellectual things...What the ‘eagle hastening to devour’ signifies, is evident, namely, the desolation of man in respect to truths; for the desolation of the church is there treated of...”

AC 6534 [6]

- “...in Habakkuk...1:6, 8...the ‘Chaldeans’ denote those who are in falsities, but in externals appear to be in truths, thus the profanation of truth, and ‘Babylon’ the profanation of good...‘Going into the breadth of the earth’ denotes to destroy truths...‘the horsemen who spread themselves and come from far’ denote the things that belong to perverted understanding, thus falsities.”

AR 298

- “That ‘a horse’ signifies the understanding of the Word...‘horses’ in the opposite sense signify the understanding of the Word and of truth falsified by reasonings, and likewise destroyed...Habakkuk 1:6, 8-10...in the spiritual world...‘a horse’ signifies the understanding of truth from the Word...”

AE 355 [24]

- “In Habakkuk...1:6, 8-10...‘The Chaldeans’ mean those who profane truths and thus vastate the church, therefore they are called ‘a bitter and hasty nation, that marcheth into the breadths of the land,’ ‘breadths of the land’ meaning the truths of the church...Their lust for and dexterity in perverting truths and destroying them by reasonings from falsities altogether remote from truths are signified by, ‘her horses are lighter than leopards, and more fierce than wolves of the evening, so that her horsemen spread themselves; yea, her horsemen shall come from afar; they shall fly as an eagle that hasteth to eat.’ Lust is signified by ‘her horses are lighter than leopards,’ and dexterity by ‘her horses are more fierce than the wolves of the evening,’ and both by ‘they fly as an eagle.’ Because the lust and dexterity are for destroying truths therefore it is said, ‘she shall come wholly for violence;’ their scoffing at truths and goods is signified by ‘she shall mock at kings, and rulers shall be a derision unto her;’ ‘kings’ signifying truths, and ‘lords’ and ‘rulers’ goods.”

AE 811 [7]

- “In Habakkuk...1:6, 9, 10...‘The Chaldeans’ signify those who destroy the truths of the church; ‘the breadths of the land’ signify the truths of the church; that they will destroy all truths by falsities is signified by ‘it shall gather captivity like the sand;’ that the truths and goods of the Word will be derided and blasphemed is signified by ‘that nation shall mock at kings, and rulers shall be a derision unto it,’ ‘kings’ signifying the truths of the Word, and ‘rulers’ its goods.”

AE 780 [8]

- “In Habakkuk...1:8...the devastation of the church by the adulteration of truth, which is signified by the Chaldean nation, of which these things are spoken. ‘Whose horses are lighter than leopards’ signifies the eagerness to seduce by reasonings, and a consequent expertness in seducing; such eagerness and expertness are signified by their ‘lightness’ or ‘swiftness;’ ‘horses’ here signifying reasonings from the natural man. And as ‘horses’ and ‘leopards’ have a like signification it is said, ‘whose horses are lighter than leopards.’ ‘More fierce than the wolves of the evening’ signifies craftiness in deceiving by fallacies; the fallacies of the senses are here signified by ‘the wolves of the evening’ because the fallacies are from the sensual man, which in darkness sees falsities as truths. ‘So that her horsemen spread themselves’ signifies that the truths of the Word by adulteration become heresies; ‘horsemen’ signify heresies because ‘horses’ mean reasonings by which falsities are confirmed.”

AR 244

- "...eagles in the opposite sense signify the knowledges of what is false, from which the understanding is perverted...Habakkuk 1:8, 9..."

AE 281 [11]

- "...in Habakkuk...1:8, 9...'eagle' stands for the reasoning from falsities against truths, which is from self-intelligence."

Derived Doctrine

Please note that *AE 780 [8]* and *AE 811 [7]* give us the most comprehensive insight into the overall spiritual meaning of *Habakkuk 1:6-11*. And yet, we need to turn to derived doctrine to help us focus on certain words and phrases not explained.

"For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, a bitter and hasty nation..."

- The literal sense seems to imply that the Lord was calling the Chaldeans to "punish" the Israelites. It appears He was calling a bitter and nasty nation to smash their self-esteem. Let's consider three teachings in the *Arcana* regarding the meaning of "I am raising up."
- *AC 1999*: "True adoration or humiliation of heart, carries with it prostration to the earth upon the face before the Lord, as a gesture naturally flowing from it. For in humiliation of heart there is the acknowledgment of self as being nothing but filthiness, and at the same time the acknowledgment of the Lord's infinite mercy toward that which is such; and when the mind is kept in these two acknowledgments, the very mind droops in lowliness towards hell, and prostates the body; nor does it uplift [rise up] until it is uplifted by the Lord. This takes place in all true humiliation, with a perception of being uplifted by the Lord's mercy." Question: Is the Lord describing the whole process of humiliation Israel will face through the Chaldeans that will enable Him to raise Israel up?
- *AC 2857*: "...the signification of 'rising up,'...when mentioned in the Word, being some elevation...the elevation of the rational after temptation...Every temptation in which a man overcomes, elevates his mind..."
- *AC 2913 [3]*: "...the new church that the Lord sets up anew when the former church expires...the raising up by the Lord of the spiritual church in general, after the former ceases or is consummated...in the process of time a church decreases and is contaminated...it recedes from charity, and produces evils and falsities...then the church is said to be laid waste and desolate..." Can we not see why the Lord needed to start the "raising up" of the church through a process of sincere humiliation and restoration?
- "...a bitter and hasty nation" refers to what was done to the Word. "Bitter (or bitterness) signifies what is undelightful because of adulterated truth, and

therefore ‘to make bitter’ signifies to render undelightful, because what is sweet becomes bitter and thus undelightful by a mixture with something offensive...” (AE 618)

- The word “hasty” is described in AE 455 [19] as meaning “those who readily seize upon and **believe whatever is said**, thus also falsities...” (*Emphasis added.*) *Conjugal Love (CL) 305 [2]* teaches about the need for an unhurried building of conjugal love from the lowest to the highest regions so that it can be cleansed of unchaste thoughts. A “hasty” premature union may bring coldness and distaste for a partner.

“...to possess dwelling places that are not theirs.”

- “It was customary among the ancients to speak of ‘journeying’ and ‘dwelling in tents,’ by which was signified in the internal sense holy worship... Hence...‘to dwell’ signified in the internal sense to live.” (AC 1102)
- Like many of the enemies who attacked Israel, the Chaldeans picture a spiritual problem that Israel was confronting. We can conclude that Israel introduced things into the holy worship that were not from the Lord but from themselves. Their lives were not from the Lord but from themselves. The idea of possessing that which was not theirs is quite clear in the meaning of the literal sense.

“They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.”

- AC 9348 gives us a vivid picture of the “terrible” and “dreadful” things that happen to the person who is in the love of self. “...these loves, like the unseen currents of a river, continually draw the thought and the will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven to the world, thus away from the truths and goods of faith to falsities and evils. Reasonings from the fallacies of the senses are then of especial force, and also the literal sense of the Word wrongly explained and applied...‘Dread’ and ‘fear’ denote a disturbance and commotion of the mind when it hesitates between evils and goods, consequently between falsities and truths...”
- “Dignity” in the positive sense means to attribute all things to the Lord, from whom alone holy things originate. (AR 854) “Dignity” is serving the Lord and not self. (*Charity 172*)

“Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and more fierce than evening wolves.”

- What is meant by “horses” being “swifter” or “lighter” than leopards? The answer seems to be in degrees of intensity with which the Word is falsified. Correspondentially, swift horses signify **an eagerness** to seduce by reasonings; **an expertise** in seducing by misusing the things of the Word. (AE

355, 780 [8])“Leopards,” on the other hand, signify reasonings that are **discordant and yet appear as if they cohere**. (AE 779, 780, 781)

- Their “horses” are more “fierce than evening wolves.” What does this teach us? “Evening” signifies “a state of waning faith and charity, which is man’s state when he comes into the exercise of his own judgment, and is extinguishing in himself the things that he imbibed in childhood...” (AE 187 [20])
- “Wolves” signify “those who are against innocence.” (AC 2130, 3994, 10132 [4]; AE 314 [4]) A “wolf” is one “who seizes and scatters.” (AC 6441)
- AE 780 [8] explains that “wolves of the evening” signifies “the subtlety of deceiving by fallacies; the fallacies of the senses being here signified by the wolves of the evening because they are fallacies from the sensual man, who, being in darkness, sees falsities as truths.”
- “Wolves” are spirits who infuse despair and fear of being carried away from the rescue of the Lord. (AC 2130)
- SE 699 gives us a larger picture of the kind of despair and fear infused by “wolves.” “When I awoke, certain societies of spirits, one after another, began to declare in a singing loud voice, that the wolf had wanted to steal them away, but the Lord snatched them from the wolf, and they were restored to the Lord. On this account they rejoiced from the depths of their heart. For they had been in despair, extremely afraid that the Lord had rejected them, and that the wolves would therefore seize them and the Lord no longer wanted to keep them. They feared that there was an overabundance of spirits or angels in heaven, so that no room was left to receive more. This was the generally shared thought, which I perceived clearly.”

“Their chargers charge ahead; their cavalry comes from afar...”

- The *King James Version* renders this verse as “and their horsemen shall spread themselves and their horsemen shall come from afar...” This is also what the Writings have in AE 780 [8], and this number explains the signification as the adulteration of the Word and the spreading of heresies.
- Armies of horsemen (cavalries) signify “reasonings concerning faith alone, with which the interiors of their minds were filled, from the abundance of mere falsities of evil.” (AR 447)

“...the eagle that hastens to eat...”

- AC 3901 [7, 8] teaches us that this signifies the desolation of truths with people and the desolation of the church.

“They all come for violence; their faces are set like the east wind.”

- AC 621 teaches the following things about corruption and violence. The word “violence” has reference to “the things of the will.” The word “corruption” has

reference to the desolation of “things of the understanding.” “Thus ‘to corrupt’ is predicated of persuasions; and ‘violence,’ of cupidities.”

- The “face signifies the affections...” (AC 9049) The “face signifies the interiors...” (AE 64) The “face signifies the interiors of the mind...” (HH 457)
- “East wind” has both a positive and negative sense. In the positive sense, it signifies “the good of love and of charity, [and is most gentle] because in the supreme sense the Lord is signified...but when it sinks down to the hells, it becomes harsh and severe, because it is turned into this by those who are there.” (AC 7679) This number also describes the negative “east wind” as “dry and tempestuous,” bent on destruction and eager to break things into pieces.

“They gather captives like sand.”

- Consider the meaning of being led away “captive.” AC 9164 teaches “to be led away captive” is predicated in the following circumstances: “When a man is in truth from good, then that truth in which he has the greatest faith is in the middle, next follow the truths in which he has less faith, and finally those which are of doubtful faith...**But when falsity usurps the place of truth, the order is inverted**, and the truths pass off to the sides, and form the circumference, while the falsities of evil occupy the middle.” (*Emphasis added.*)
- “...like sand” has an interesting meaning in AE 644 [24]. “...‘sand’ signifies Divine truth received only in the memory, and somewhat therefrom in the thought, and thus in a scattered and disconnected way, because intermixed with falsities, and falsified by notions.”
- When falsity usurps the place of truth, is it any wonder that the “sand” with its scattered and disconnected notions of truth in the memory gets gathered and carried away captive?

“They scoff at kings. And princes are scorned by them.”

- Scoffing at “kings” and scorning “princes” signifies mocking the good and truths of the Word. (AE 355 [24]; AE 811 [7])

“They deride every stronghold, for they heap up earthen mounds and seize it.”

- AE 717 [18] offers us this explanation of what “strongholds of fortresses” signify. They “signify the things of self-intelligence confirmed by the sense of the letter of the Word, which is such that when it is not interiorly understood it may be so drawn as to confirm any heresies whatever.”
- The meaning of “deride” is explained in AC 1080. “For with those who are in no charity, there is continual contempt for others, or continual derision, and on every occasion a publishing of their errors...hatred lurks in every word they utter...”

- Heaping up “earthen mounds” is perhaps captured in Bruce Rogers’ translation of *CL 126 [7]*: seeking to put truth over charity (the intellect over the will) is like burying the will “in a mound of earth, so to speak, and some have...thrown dirt on them, as though on dead men, to keep them from rising again. The good of charity is...the primary thing in the church...” In *AC 5567*, Swedenborg describes a spirit who was bound by “no principles” approaching him with “an earthen jug in his hand...there was in the jug, from phantasy, something that would take away the understanding of those who drank.”
- *AE 177* describes “earthen vessels” as signifying “the things in the natural man that are from self-intelligence, in matters of heaven and the church, and that these things are falsities...”

“Then his mind changes, and he transgresses; he commits offense, ascribing this power to his god.”

- Do we not feel and see what this closing portion of our passage means? When the mind seeks to change the true order of things—usurping truth for falsity—the mind changes. It falls into a state of derision and fault-finding. Disorder causes transgressions, offenses, and eventually the unregenerate proprium offers itself as the substitute “god.” Such is the spirit that is bound by “no principles” that brings its “earthen jug” of fantasies for us to drink. And what is the outcome? The **understanding is taken away** and **the will buried in the mound of earth** with the hope that it will never rise again.

Putting It All Together

Picture in your mind a messy liquid spill on a table top. The liquid has an acidic content and could peel the finish off the table. You quickly get a paper towel and lay it over the liquid. The absorption process begins immediately and continues until the entire paper towel is filled with the liquid. But if the towel remains on the table, it will add to the problem. The dangerous liquid now threatens a larger portion of the table top. Instead of quickly removing the problem, the paper towel has compounded the problem.

Such is the example that comes to mind regarding Israel’s profanation of “all the truths and goods of the Word and of the church.” (*P&P*) Their misuse of the Word and the conclusions they drew about it were spreading rapidly throughout the land, and the hearts of the people were in an “evening state,” a state “of waning faith and charity, which is man’s state when he comes into the exercise of his own judgment, and is extinguishing in himself the things that he imbibed in childhood.” (*AE 187 [20]*) The people were being led away into captivity. Spiritual truth that should have been in the center of their hearts was being pushed to the side. Evil and falsity usurped the centrality of truth, bringing the presence of “swift horses” and “evening wolves.” These spiritual enemies had a plan of “seizing and scattering” the goods and

truths of the Word. The horses represent “an eagerness to seduce by reasonings” that misuse the truths of the Word. They were not only eager to seduce, they were experts in such tactics. The intent was to disconnect the Lord’s truth so that people would hastily accept and believe whatever they were told by human authority.

The swiftness of the seduction brought the people into areas that were not theirs. They were convincing themselves that they were clever, dignified, and god-like. The will was being “buried” in earthen mounds. The old ways were believed to be dead and useless. The “new” ways wanted to bury the “will” with the hope that it would not come back to life. The priests and leading thinkers offered the concept of “Out with the old ways of the Lord, and in with the new concepts of human prudence.”

To illustrate how serious Israel’s profanation of the Word was, the Lord called to their attention the Chaldeans, “a bitter and hasty” nation. The “bitter and hasty” is an important beginning in this prophecy. Israel was not honoring the conjugal principles of the conjunction of good and truth. They were forming premature unions of falsities that seemed to cohere but were dangerously discordant. Their hasty unions were bringing a coldness and distaste for the chaste ways of the Lord.

What was happening to the people of Israel? Their minds were being changed. They were becoming transgressors of the laws of the Lord. They were deriding every stronghold of spiritual truth. They were scoffing at the love of the Lord and scorning the wisdom of the Lord. Finding fault with everything the Lord did was quite prevalent among the people. Their hearts were harboring hatred toward the Lord. Israel’s offenses were dangerous, and worst of all, they ascribed all power to the “god” of their self-love.

The Lord wanted to act to save Israel. As Habakkuk continues, how will the Lord save His people? As we read on, we can be assured of one thing. His way will be loving, thorough, and saving. The preparation and the ultimate birth of the New Church is His end. What happened yesterday affects today and is a great part of eternity. The “bitter and hasty” Chaldean nation has to be exposed and overcome. That’s to be part of the process of our regeneration, too. So let’s listen, learn, and fight against the eager, expert deriders and seducers who misuse the Word. They want to bury the will in earthen vessels that take away the understanding of the Lord’s love for each one of us.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:6-11*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. *AE 355 [24], AE 811 [7], and AE 780 [8]* are key passages for understanding *Habakkuk 1:6-11*. You might have to read them over several times and make some notes, but if you do this, the spiritual sense will shine forth. What did you find when you read them carefully?
2. What struck you in the points made about the Chaldeans, the horses, leopards, and evening wolves? They represent dexterity, expertise, lust, craftiness in deceiving by fallacies. The sensual person is “smooth” and easily led. Sensual people are in danger of believing whatever is said if it is immediately pleasing and rewarding. Don’t we do battle with these tendencies every day?
3. What insights did you have regarding the scoffing, scorning, and burying of spiritual things in earthen mounds? Did you see how the natural person in us wants to bury the spiritual “will” so that it will not rise again? I felt some of this with Swedenborg’s experience of the earthen jug. To drink from it numbed the “understanding” and took away any sense of the holiness of the Word.
4. Another point made in our study is the danger of “halting” between good and evil. “Limping” is another way of expressing this action. The world is pushing us to be accepting of all kinds of questionable ideas. Political correctness has taken a toll on stating convictions. We waffle on things that call for internal restraint. Divine Providence (DP) 81 and 134 are important numbers regarding the importance of developing strong and healthy internal restraints. How strong are we on internal convictions? What strengthens or weakens us?
5. I know many of you are not ministers, but did you see a sermon outline pushing itself to the forefront of our attention? Could you see a lesson that you might share with a friend, students, or grandchildren?

HABAKKUK 1:12-17

“Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One? We shall not die, O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment; O Rock, You have marked them for correction. You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness. Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he? Why do You make men like fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with a hook, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet. Therefore they rejoice and are glad. Therefore they sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their dragnet; because by them their share is sumptuous and their food plentiful. Shall they therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The Lord’s grief continued, that the evil prevail over the good, and destroy them.”

AC 991 [2]

- “In Habakkuk...1:14...where ‘making man as the fishes of the sea’ means that he is altogether sensuous.”

AR 405

- “‘Fishes’ here are for those who are in general truths, and in faith separated from charity.” This quote follows a citation of *Habakkuk 1:14-16*.

AE 513 [13]

- “In Habakkuk...1:14, 15, 17...This was said of the Chaldean nation wasting and destroying the church; and the Chaldean nation signifies the profanation of truth, and the vastation of the church. ‘To make men as the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping thing that hath no ruler,’ signifies to make man so natural that his knowledges (scientific) are devoid of spiritual truth, and his delights are devoid of spiritual good; for in the natural man there are knowledges by which come thoughts, and delights by which come affections; and if the spiritual is not dominant over these, both thoughts and affections are wandering, and thus man is destitute of the intelligence that should lead and rule. That then every falsity and every evil has power to draw them over to their side, and thus wholly destroy them, is signified by ‘Let him draw out all with the hook, and gather into his net, and afterwards slay,’ ‘to draw out’ meaning out of truth and good, ‘into his net’ meaning into falsity and evil, and ‘to slay’ meaning to destroy.”

Derived Doctrine

“Are You not from everlasting, O Lord my God, my Holy One?”

- Is the purpose of this question to have us reflect on the Infinite nature of the Lord? Are we being called to think about His “everlasting” qualities so that we will remember Him as the “always,” so we might reflect that He has no beginning or end? Will the question open for us the perpetual, indestructible, and eternal essence of the Lord? This paragraph uses a repetitious format, but it is a repetition well worth presenting to the finite mind. How often does hell attempt to convince us that our “God is too small”? We need the “bigger” everlasting concepts of the Lord to quiet hell’s felonious representations of a powerless Lord.

“O Lord my God, my Holy One...”

- If you are willing to read more about the meaning of names, I'd like to recommend the following passages.
- *AC 144* tells us that “...to ‘call by name’ signifies to know the quality’...”
- *AC 2009* states that “...in heaven no attention is paid to any one’s name; but when any one is named, or when the word name is spoken, there is presented the idea of the person’s quality, that is, of **all things...that are connected with him, and that are in him; hence in the Word ‘name’ signifies quality.**” (*Emphasis added.*) Read this whole number. It is helpful to our understanding of the Lord’s name.
- *AC 2724* notes, “For it was a common thing for the ancients to add something to the name of Jehovah, and thereby call to mind some benefit or attribute of His...”
- *AC 7091 [4]* teaches that “From all this it is also evident that by ‘Jehovah’ in the Word of the Old Testament, no other is meant than the Lord, for He is called Jehovah God and the **Holy One of Israel**, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Maker...” (*Emphasis added.*)

“We shall not die, O Lord, You have appointed them for judgment...”

- *AC 198* defines what is meant by “lest ye die” as a state when “faith, or all wisdom and intelligence, would perish.” *AC 494* describes death as a state when “perception” ceases to be such as it has been.
- *AR 429* explains that those who “desire to die” signify those who wish to have the will and understanding closed, or shut up.
- “We shall not die, O Lord...” gives testimony that the Lord will prevent spiritual death or dying for the faithful remnant.
- For the evil, “judgment” refers to the visitation of Divine Truth to examine the quality (or lack thereof) of doctrines in their life. (*AC 9905*) Divine Truth will not cause “the righteous to die with the wicked...” Why? Because good cannot die. Evil can be separated from good within those who love the Lord. (*AC 2254*) The Lord will not let the righteous die with the wicked. Here is another quote worth remembering when we feel threatened by the hells. Those in the stream of Providence are survivors. Our life is drawn into the protecting sphere of the Lord’s love and wisdom.

“...O Rock, You have marked them for correction.”

- *AC 10580* defines “rock” as signifying a “state of faith in God...”
- *AC 795 [3]*: “The ‘mountain of Jehovah’ denotes the Lord with reference to the goods of love; the ‘Rock of Israel,’ the Lord with reference to the goods of charity.”
- *AC 3703 [3]* notes that the Lord as “to Divine truth is called a ‘rock’...”
- *AC 2832 [2]* explains that “rock” is “significative of the power of truth.”

- To gain insight into what it means to “mark them,” let’s turn to *AC 396*. When Jehovah set a mark on Cain, it signified “that the Lord distinguished faith in a particular manner in order that it [faith] might be preserved...”
- *AE 838* describes “...the signification of a ‘mark,’ as being a sign or attestation of acknowledgment...that they are of that church...A ‘mark’ signifies a sign of acknowledgment...”
- *AC 4749* has this very interesting teaching regarding “correction.” Truths from the memory-knowledges, as represented by the Ishmaelite, “cannot be corrected and made sound by any other means than by the memory-knowledges of the genuine church, thus by instruction in these.”

“You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.”

- “Pure” signifies that which is “free from evil.” (*AC 10289*)
- ‘Pure’ signifies that which “has been clarified from the falsities of evil.” (*AC 10296*)
- “...the eyes signify the Divine intellectual of the Lord.” (*AC 9052*)
- “By ‘eyes’ in the Word is meant the understanding, and thence, by the sight of the eyes, intelligence; therefore, when spoken of the Lord, the Divine wisdom is meant...” (*AR 48*)
- “Eyes” signify the understanding. (*AE 68, 152*)
- The Lord’s “purer eyes” could not possibly see evil. Evil has nothing to do with that which is infinite and eternal. *DP 52* teaches, “The Infinite and Eternal...must needs look to what is infinite and eternal from itself in things finite.” Evil does not seek nor want infinite and eternal things. In essence, because the evil reject the Lord and His ways, they have nothing within them that would reflect the truths of the Lord. Their lives are shallow/invisible entities that thrive on finite time-and-space values.
- The same principle applies to the Lord not looking on “wickedness.” *AE 653* teaches that “wickedness signifies to persist in the evils and falsities of doctrine.” *AE 730 [18]* teaches that “wickedness signifies the falsification of the truths of the Word by evils that have come to be of life.” The Lord is not in, nor can He compromise with, the person who delights in the falsification of doctrine and the Word. Wickedness separates and removes itself from the presence of the Lord. It is wickedness that does not want to see the Lord.

“Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?”

- Those who “deal treacherously” with the neighbor are thoroughly described in *AC 9013*. Their minds are filled with deceit. They have “malice from the will with forethought or premeditation, thus from set purpose.” They do what they do from “enmity, or from hatred, or from revenge...and take delight in...destroying everything...which belongs to life from the good of faith and of charity.”

- The literal sense speaks to the attitude the natural sensual person has regarding the disasters and hardships of the world. It appears to such people that the Lord tolerates and “looks on” treachery with a sense of indifference. The natural person assumes that the Lord is cruel, unconcerned, or too busy with other things to care about the plight of the righteous. The natural person queries why bad things happen to good people. With this negative attitude, the natural person never seeks or finds answers and so solidifies his or her antagonism toward the Lord. Natural people never read or hear that the Lord is in each and every least moment of the events of our lives. Missed is the picture of Him lifting, modifying, and bringing good out of each ripple of disorder hell sends out to thwart our journey through life.
- Let’s read the literal sense again to see if a calming voice of the Lord might give us an answer. “Why do hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?”
- A “tongue” in the internal sense “signifies opinion, thus principles and persuasions...” (AC 1159)
- AE 455 [2, 3]: “In the Word, the lip, mouth, and tongue are frequently mentioned; and the lip signifies doctrine, the mouth thought, and the tongue confession...tongues signify confessions from religion and according to the tenants of religion...”
- AR 282 [4] tells us that the “...tongue signifies doctrine...”
- What is involved in the act of devouring is explained in AC 9348. Evils are alluring and deceptive. Like an “unseen current,” they continually “draw the thought and will of man away from the Lord to self, and away from heaven to the world, thus away from the truths and goods of faith to falsities and evils.” In section 4 of AC 9348, we are taught “devour denotes to destroy truths and goods...”

“Why do You make men like fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? They take up all of them with a hook, they catch them in their net, and gather them in their dragnet.”

- Please go back to the Passages From The Writings section and read AC 991 [2], AR 405, and AE 513 [13].
- To these numbers, let’s add AE 802 [3]. A “dragnet” is like a giant web, a weaving of strong twine fishermen use to allow water to pass through but not fish. “This is their web by which they induce the simple to believe that out of the treasures of wisdom or interior perception, that are **stored up only with the teachers and the learned**, they have brought forth clear evidences to establish the doctrine of faith separated from any manifest endeavor of man (which is the will) to do what is good. Thus for themselves and all the people of the church they **give license and free rein to acting and living according to the bent and trend of all lusts**; and as this dogma is **pleasing to the flesh and to the eyes, the common crowd gladly receives it...**[but these

ideas are] conjunctions fallaciously contrived...that gush forth...in a constant stream." (*Emphasis added.*)

- What do we get from this teaching? The great dragnet web of deception described here reflects the tendency to go with the crowd and end up in the web of popular opinion because it is pleasing to the flesh and the eyes.

"Therefore they sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their dragnet; because by them their share is sumptuous and their food plentiful."

- Is there any question about what is meant by "they sacrifice to their net"? The web of deception is so appealing to the natural person because it offers license to do whatever is pleasing and rewarding to self.
- The verse says they burn incense to their dragnet. "Burning incense upon bricks" denotes "worship from things fabricated and false..." (*AC 1296*)
- Their perception that they were dining sumptuously and had plenty of food was only true of the physical aspect of their lives. Spiritually, they were starving and lacking the true "bread of heaven."

"Shall they therefore empty their net, and continue to slay nations without pity?"

- Will the sensual people get rid of their eye-pleasing and self-gratifying beliefs? Will they see and give up the worthless self-contrived concoctions of good and truth?
- Will the falsified church continue to slay nations without pity? Pity and compassion are what the Lord seeks to offer. The compassion of the Lord will be directed toward "those who are in need of good and who...long for it; and His 'compassions,' toward those who are in ignorance of truth and...long for it." (*AC 9182 [7]*)

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with the teaching that the Lord's "grief continued, that the evil prevail over the good, and destroy them." In His great love, the Lord worried and cared about what was going on in the church and in His people. Our Lord is committed to saving the lost and the confused. This is a story about His great love.

Through the words of Habakkuk, questions were posed to help the church sort through its convoluted thinking. Striking images were offered in detail. The prophecy talked about fish of the sea and creeping things with no ruler over them, of hooks, dragnets trapping people, and offerings of incense in celebration of such entrapments. Could they not look into the ways of their heart and worship and see how far they had strayed from the Lord?

The sensual church was not pursuing the good and truths of the Word. They were interested in establishing a church of comfort and simplistic ease. The hard sayings

of the Word—those things that were intended to help them fight and overcome inherited tendencies toward evil—were seen as impractical, hard, threatening, and unfair teachings.

The Word of the Lord was being tailored to the popular views. Teachings were not given with the Lord in mind but were for the adulation and consensus of teachers and leaders instructing the people. The Lord grieved over this evil and the effect it was having in His church. There was no interest in the infinite and eternal things of heaven.

In the minds of the people, God was reduced to ineffective stature, and they believed He was unconcerned with the plight of the common folk and the simple-hearted. The Lord put this concept right before their eyes. He said in Habakkuk's prophecy what was hidden within their hearts. They blamed the Lord for things that were of their own choosing.

But placed in all of these negative representations was a shining truth: **"We shall not die."** Divine Truth will not cause "the righteous to die with the wicked..." Good cannot die, and it will be separated from evil. In the end, as always, the Lord and His New Church will prevail. The mission of the New Church is eternal, and nothing will stop its fruition. Those called to the Lord and His church can say with joy: "We shall not die" in the dragnet and on the hooks of hell. We have a Leader who will not leave us nor forget us in our moments of peril. He is our eternal rock, and He has pure eyes that can see through the thickest and darkest plans of the wicked.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 1:12-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you grasp a sense of how great the Lord's grief is for the church? What brought this home to you?
2. What did the images of the hooks and dragnets show you about what hell seeks to do?
3. Popular consensus can be a powerful net or web. Have you ever heard someone give in and be swayed by the thinking of someone they respected? "So-and-so is so much more educated in these matters than I am." We have a doctrine warning us against the "persuasive faith."
4. Are there some hard teachings in the Word that bother you? Do you look for some "smooth" way to get around those "hard" doctrines?
5. Have you dealt sufficiently with the world's stated view that God is indifferent to the hurts and injustices of the innocent? Have you had a

- conversation with someone who wants to know why bad things happen to good people? What did they say? What did you say?
6. "We will not die" is a rallying cry. Such a statement will strike terror in the heart of the hells. It seems right and useful that we carry these words in our heart when we do battle with hell. What do you think?

Chapter Two

HABAKKUK 2:1-3

"I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the Lord answered me and said: 'Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.'"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "The coming of the Lord: what will then take place."

AC 9416 [3]

- "Moreover, 'writing' and 'engraving' on 'tables' signify in the Word those things which must be impressed on the memory and on the life, and which are therefore to be lasting, as in the following passages...Habakkuk 2:2, 3..."

Doctrine of the Lord 4

- "...I shall in this first chapter merely adduce passages from the Word which contain the expressions...'in that time,' in which by...'time' is meant the Lord's advent." Among the many citations given, *Habakkuk 2:2-3* is quoted as an example.

Coronis 60

- "Now follow some passages concerning the Coming of the Lord, collected from the prophecies of the Old Word; which are these..." *Habakkuk 2:3* is cited.

Derived Doctrine

"I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart..."

- "Watch therefore...signifies an assiduous application of life in accordance with the precepts of faith, which is 'to watch.'" (*AC 4638 [10]*)

- To “‘be watchful’ signifies that they should be in truths and in a life according to them. By ‘watching’ in the Word, nothing else is signified; for he who learns truths and lives according to them, is like one who is awakened out of sleep and becomes watchful. But he who is not in truths...is like one who sleeps and dreams.” (AR 158)
- To “stand over Moses...signifies to consult truth Divine, to await an answer from it, and to do according to this, that is, to obey.” (AC 8686)
- “...the expressions ‘to walk,’ ‘to stand,’ and ‘to sit,’...‘to walk’ pertains to the life of thought from intention, ‘to stand’ to the life of the intention from the will, and ‘to sit’ to the life of the will, thus it is life’s being (esse).” (AE 687 [6])
- “By ‘standing before God,’ is signified to hear and do what He commands...” (AR 366)
- “Ramparts” in the Potts translation of the *Arcana* is rendered “outworks.” The *King James Version* calls “ramparts” “towers.” *Webster’s Dictionary* adds the words “tower,” “bulwark,” and “protective barrier” as possible synonyms. In Elliot’s translation of AC 5149 [3], the word “ramparts” is used: “For falsity attacks the truths which are defenders of good, those truths being so to speak the ramparts behind which good resides.”
- AE 278 describes a “tower” as signifying “the Lord’s guard and providence.”
- AE 922 describes a “tower” as signifying “interior truths from...good which look to heaven.”
- AC 8581 describes a “bulwark” as “the truth of faith, for combat is waged from this truth both against falsities and against evils.”

“And watch to see what He will say to me...”

- Can we see what is being said here? Habakkuk is preparing himself to take directions from the Lord.
- The emphasis is on listening. There is not a dialogue going on at this moment. Habakkuk is showing obedience to the Lord and readiness to follow the precepts of the Lord’s Word.

“...and what I will answer when I am corrected.”

- AE 471 gives the meaning of “answering and saying” as “being influx and perception, ‘to answer’ meaning influx...”
- To be “corrected” involves the maintenance of equilibrium. “...no evil can befall anyone without being instantly counterbalanced; and when there is a preponderance of evil, the evil or evil-doer is chastised by the law of equilibrium...for the end that good may come. Heavenly order consists in such a form and the consequent equilibrium; and that order is formed, disposed, and preserved by the Lord alone, to eternity.” (AC 689)
- “I will answer when I am corrected” illustrates a heart willing to be corrected by the Lord’s law of equilibrium.

“Then the Lord answered me and said: ‘Write the vision and make it plain on tablets...”

- *AC 8620* teaches that the command to write a memorial in a book “signifies... perpetual remembrance...”
- To write the words of the Lord signifies “truths Divine impressed on the life by the Lord.” (*AC 9386*)
- To “write to teach...signifies for remembrance and for instruction...” (*AC 9418*)
- *AR 63* teaches that “writing” signifies that the things being revealed are for posterity.
- *AC 1784* teaches that “‘a vision’ denotes inmost revelation, which is that of perception.”
- *AE 684 [21]* describes a vision as prophetic arcana concerning the Lord.
- Why must the writing be “plain” on the tablets? Consider this passage from *AC 39*: “That man cannot even think what is good, nor will what is good, consequently cannot do what is good, except from the Lord, **must be plain** to every one from the doctrine of faith...” (*Emphasis added.*)
- The meaning of “tablet” was given in *AC 9416 [3]* above.

“...that he may run who reads it.”

- *AE 558* explains the positive meaning of “running to battle” as being “the ardor in fighting...for which they must fight ardently...from a series of arguments and conclusions...” In other words, when the Word is given and understood, we are to “run” with the Lord and fight ardently using the truths of the internal sense.

“For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.”

- *AC 2620* teaches that “the appointed time” signifies “when the rational was such as to receive...”
- *AC 2625[3]* teaches the “appointed time” means “the state when the rational was such that it was receptive...”
- “...it will speak and it will not lie...” Do we not see what is being taught here? The Lord’s Word is truth, and it never teaches that which is false. The Lord promises us that we shall know the truth and the truth shall set us free.

“Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come. It will not tarry.”

- As you read these words, did *Psalm 27:14* come to mind? “Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord.”
- “Wait” signifies to long for the Lord’s coming. (*AE 514 [11]*) “Wait” signifies a sense of expectation that truth will be given. (*AE 526 [11]*)

“Waiting” for the Lord’s knock on the door of our heart “signifies that the Lord is present to every one in the Word, and is there pressing to be received, and teaches how.” (AR 217)

Putting It All Together

P&P’s summary focuses our attention on the message of the Lord’s advent and what will then take place.

What do we note in the content of Habakkuk’s words? There is respect, dignity, an active sense of obedience, quietude, and a readiness to listen and make amends. Habakkuk is called by the Lord to be a faithful scribe. He is to write plainly what is good and true. The words he was to write were for the purpose of running with the Lord’s Word “into battle” with a series of arguments and conclusions to overthrow evil and falsity.

Patience, waiting on the Lord, being of good courage is required. For the advent of the Lord will come about. When it comes at the “appointed time,” the rational mind will be ready and receptive. How do we know this will happen? The Lord says so, and He does not lie. So, be of good courage. Don’t tire or grow weary waiting for the completion of the prophecy. “It will not tarry.” So, too, will be the fulfillment of the promise that the Lord’s New Church will be the crown of all churches.

The summary is “The coming of the Lord: what will then take place.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:1-3*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

1. Did you appreciate the word-image of Habakkuk standing watch on the tower, rampart, and bulwark?
2. Did his words, “I will watch and see what He will say,” inspire you to adopt the same attitude? How can you do this?
3. Asking for correction, for equilibrium from the Lord, for balance is a worthy prayer to have in the heart. Have you sensed or experienced the Lord bringing equilibrium to your life?
4. Getting the plain facts from the Lord requires a sustained effort. We need to read and reflect on the things of the Word regularly. Without this dedication,

the “appointed time” of the rational mind becoming receptive will be delayed. Can we inspire ourselves and friends and family to read more often?

5. “Running with the Lord”: what a concept! Picture doing battle with evil and hell from sound principles and conviction. What example comes to mind that might explain the meaning of running with the Lord’s Word?
6. *Psalm 27:14* contains wonderful words. Have you heard Lori Odhner’s song using these words? “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait I say, on the Lord!”
7. Patience carries with it a sense of trust in the Lord’s providence that all things will work toward a good end. “Be patient” is easier said than done in some cases. But when it comes to the Lord, His way is best for us. Like Habakkuk, we are called to obedience and a readiness to comply with what is good and true. We need to pray for patience so we can run with the Lord to fight off evil and hellish ways.

HABAKKUK 2:4-5

“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith. Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man, and he does not stay at home. Because he enlarges his desire as hell, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “The love of self: it grows, and man grows vile therefrom.”

Derived Doctrine

“Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him...”

- The “proud” and those who have a negative pride are described as “drunkards” or those who are steeped in the “crown of pride.” *AE 376 [31]* illustrates them as “insane in things spiritual because they believe themselves to be intelligent of themselves, and glory in it...in the other life [they] become like drunkards...and to confirm oneself in falsities is to confirm from oneself and not from the Lord.”
- “Pride” in the external man rises up “against the goods and truths of the internal [man].” (*AC 1585 [5]*)

- The “waters of the proud’...signify falsities favoring the love of self and confirming it, also the falsities of doctrine from self-intelligence...” (AE 518 [35])
- “...his soul is not upright...” A soul not being upright reminds us of the “upside down” person. There are many references in the Writings describing such a state. AC 9128 is one that represents that teaching: “...with those who are in evil and thence in falsity, the internal man is closed above and open beneath. From this it is that they see all things upside down; the world as everything, and heaven as nothing. It is also for this reason that before the angels they appear upside down; with the feet upward, and the head downward.”
- Not being “upright” is another way of saying they were not honest, moral, just, conscientious, straightforward, or fair and honorable with the truths of the Lord.

“...but the just shall live by his faith.”

- The “just” are also called the “righteous.” AE 458 [6] describes the “righteous,” or the just, as signifying “those who are in good, for by the ‘righteous’ in the Word those who are in the good of love are meant...”
- To “live” or to have life signifies to have the Lord within one’s spiritual life. (AC 6672, 9124) In AR 1 and 60, we read that the Lord is “He that is living... who alone is life, and from whom alone life is...”
- There are many passages in the Writings defining “faith.” What one would you pick? I’d like to share my favorite passage from AC 3863 [12]:
- “...‘seeing’ signifies having faith, for the Lord is seen only by faith, because **faith is the eye of love, and love being the life of faith...**” (Emphasis added.)

“Indeed, because he transgresses by wine, he is a proud man...”

- To understand the meaning of “transgresses by wine,” let’s first look at the meaning of “wine.” In the good sense, “wine” represents **a wish** to investigate what belongs to faith. (AC 1071) “Transgression,” we are taught, is to be in evils that are contrary to truth. (AC 6563) Combining these teachings, we get a sense of a proud, self-centered person, wishing to twist the things of faith for self-advantage. Pleasing self and ignoring the Lord is a transgression of faith.

“...and he does not stay at home.”

- AC 9481 speaks of the meaning of “home” or “habitation” as denoting “heaven where the Lord is...”
- We get a picture of a restless soul who goes on a hunt to find other “gods” to serve. That journey away from the Lord is wayward and impetuously fickle in the choices of life.

- Now, look at what happens, in the remaining portion of this verse, to the wayward heart moving away from heaven and the Lord.

“Because he enlarges his desire as hell, and he is like death, and cannot be satisfied, he gathers to himself all nations and heaps up for himself all peoples.”

- This person “enlarges his desire **as hell.**” Hell wants to take everything from the Lord.
- Hell is a skeleton, a lifeless form that truly is death.
- Hell is never satisfied with what is given by the Lord. It desires everything and wants to take from and plunder the Lord.
- Recall the lot of those in hell who hoarded things. They sit in their dingy quarters counting out their gold. It is “fool’s gold” of no actual value but so very important to them, heaps of worthless nuggets representing the sum total of what they did with their lives.
- *AE 724 [27]* speaks of the “nation from afar” as signifying “the falsity of evil, which is the falsity of the sensual man, destroying truths...”
- The image of heaping up “all peoples” gives us a view of the persuasiveness of sensual people as they wander restlessly from their home—heaven and the Lord.
- How did *P&P* sum it up for us? “The love of self: and man grows vile therefrom.”

Putting It All Together

This portion of the prophecy of Habakkuk paints for us a picture of the desires of love of self. Love of self begins with pride; the transgression of wine; the loss of a zeal to study and follow the Lord; the absence of interest in staying at home with the Lord; a deep unhappiness with what is available from the Lord; a restless, wandering quest that has no end in view except the enlarging desire to “heap up” things; an attempt to legitimize personal beliefs with the gathering of other people who share these opinions. Thus, the sensual person pits human prudence against the Divine Prudence.

What does the Lord see within this “proud” person? He sees spiritual death, unhappiness, and the insatiable desire for things that will bring no satisfaction to the “soul.” Habakkuk’s prophecy provides us with a powerful contrast to call our heart and mind to a state of humility and change so we can “stay at home” and be content with the Lord and heaven.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:4-5*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- This portion of our study has the words “**the just shall live by his faith...**” But these words can be missed or forgotten with the detailed description of the proud man. As with so many things in life, our eye is pulled to the negative. Do you see the importance of taking the affirmative “just faith” with us when we visit and consider the ways of the proud man?
- Impatience, intolerance, and dissatisfaction with our lot in life can be fodder for the sensual side of our being. A feeling of restless can set in if we allow the “proud” hells to lead our thoughts. Looking for satisfaction elsewhere causes us to “leave home.” Does this description strike a responsive chord? Have we done this kind of mental wandering? Wanting to get out on our own may call us to leave town and home. Jobs might call us from home. On that level, it is necessary to leave home. But our lesson is dealing with the spiritual distancing of heart and mind from the Lord and heaven. Such a decision does not work well for the care and health of our soul. What are your thoughts on this last point?
- In our lesson, transgressing by wine refers to the loss of that sense of discovery and curiosity about the things of faith. Has that been an experience of yours? How have you dealt with this problem?
- Justification of action and choices is a daily occurrence with the sensual person. How do sensual people quiet their consciences? They turn to the world and other people to validate their choices. They seek out morose examples that seem to overwhelmingly prove their point. “The just shall live by his faith” is the attitude that keeps us from “heaping up” falsities. Keeping true to the faith of the Lord keeps us “upright” and focused. Can you picture the “upside down” person? Their head is in hell and their feet pointing upward toward earth. The upright have their head in heaven and feet on the earth. This is the way the Lord wants His people to live. Hell wants the opposite. Habakkuk’s message calls us to be “upright.” As we hear Habakkuk’s words, are we motivated, and cheered on, to keep an upright spirit and a “just heart”?

HABAKKUK 2:6-7

“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, and a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges?’ Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “He is held in contempt by others...”

AC 6669 [2]

- This passage refers to *Habakkuk 2:6-7* and notes that “‘to lade himself with clay’ denotes with evil.”

Derived Doctrine

“Will not all these take up a proverb against him, and a taunting riddle against him...”

- Who are “all these” who will take up a “proverb and riddle” against the proud? Will there be a turning of popular opinion within the nations against the “proud”? Or is it a teaching regarding the vulnerability of falsity to the corrective nature of the Lord’s infinite truths? The latter appears to be closer to the heart of what the spiritual sense would want us to know and believe. The lies of hell will catch up with the proud. They will be exposed before all people who love the Lord and seek His New Church. The Lord will use a myriad of truths to combat the falsity of the sensual person. The diversity of the Lord’s truth will be within “the just” who live by their faith. It will be a network of truths forged by the Lord to stand up against the enemies of the Lord, an arsenal so well suited for battle that hell will not know how to defend itself. There will be many minds, many truths, and outstanding order within the Church of the Lord.
- *AC 7236 [3]* offers us this thought regarding the countless variety of truths. “Seeing then that truths are so countless, it can be seen that by means of the conjunctions so many varieties arise that one thing can never be the same as another...What then may not arise from thousands and myriads of various things such as truths. And this is confirmed by the common maxim, ‘many men many minds,’ that is, there are as many diversities of ideas as there are men.”
- A “proverb” is a profound maxim. It is truth couched obscurely. But like a medicated time-release capsule, the truths within the epigrammatic saying release their spiritual antidotal remedies to overcome all the diseases of falsity the proud had believed invincible or incurable. One after another of their lies will be exposed in the presence of Divine truth. Spiritual health will be restored within the Lord’s New Church.
- The unfolding and dismantling of falsity is a simple task in the ways of the Lord. Hell will see the Lord’s truth as a “taunting riddle.” Why a riddle? *Webster’s Dictionary* sheds some light on the meaning of the word “riddle.” Consider this interesting explanation: A **riddle** is a “sieve with coarse

meshes...to separate, as grain from chaff, with a riddle; to sift..." How could a riddle be like a sieve? What would it separate? To answer our questions, let's look at how Swedenborg uses this word (*chiydah*, in the original language) in the Writings. It is translated as "enigma" in many places, and less frequently as "subtle," "mocking," and "interpretive" in discussion of verses from several books of the Word. When we consider this word in connection with the internal sense explained to us in the passage from *P&P*, it seems to mean a way of speaking that is indirect, somewhat like the Lord speaking in parables to the children of Israel so that they would not do harm to truth they were not prepared to receive. This leads us back to the word "riddle," which we use to refer to words that are indirect, that have a hidden, "enigmatic" meaning. A riddle can separate those who understand its inner meaning from those who are puzzled by it or misinterpret it. Where an angel might see evidence of the Lord's love, evil spirits will see only a "taunting riddle."

"Woe to him who increases what is not his—how long?"

- The signification of the word "woe" is manifold. In *AC 3755*, we are taught: "Woe' is a form of expression signifying the danger of eternal damnation..." *AR 416* teaches, "By 'woe' is signified lamentation over the evil with any one and thence over his unhappy state..." *AE 1165* explains that "'woe, woe, that great city'...signifies lamentation over their doctrine and religious persuasion..."
- "Increasing," in the positive sense, means to "ask for nothing but what contributes to the Lord's kingdom and to himself for salvation..." (*AE 815 [10]*) In the opposite sense, we can see that the disorderly do not wish for the increase of the Lord and His kingdom. Instead, the self wants everything to serve its worldly ambitions to "increase" in power, wealth, and prestige. Underlying the increase of self is a wish to be "godlike." There is only one God, and we cannot take from Him that which is rightfully His.
- "How long?" The Lord is Infinite. We are finite. The Lord "is," and mankind "is not." There is no ratio between **what is** and **what is not**. Therefore, the question "how long" is easy to answer. A person's ambitions for self are not something that has any extension into eternity. The sensual person's choices are like a blink of the eye in comparison to the infinite choices of the Lord.

"...And to him who loads himself with many pledges? Will not your creditors rise up suddenly? Will they not awaken who oppress you? And you will become their booty."

- We have three questions to consider. What does it mean to load self with many pledges? What does it mean to have creditors that rise up suddenly? And who awakens to oppress?
- To understand the answers to these questions, let's begin with an understanding of the "conjugal principle." The "conjugal principle" is present in the tiniest details of each human being, both male and female...The

- male's conjugal principle is designed to be linked with the female's and vice versa, even in the tiniest details...The reason for this duality is that one belongs to the will, and the other to the intellect, and they work together so wonderfully that they act as a one." (CL 316 [4]) See also AC 3610 [4]. This reference teaches that those who are to be "born again" have this conjugal principle hidden within them, but it is necessary for the endeavor to be vivified and made anew in the process of regeneration.
- "Pledges" in the positive sense are given as "memorials" to be "suspended in sight" to help remind conjugal love of its promises of everlasting faithfulness; to help the mind to be exhilarated at the sight of the pledges; to remind one that the favors of the conjugal are "dearer and more precious than all other gifts...**pledges are stabilizers of conjugal love...**" (CL 300 [3], *emphasis added*) In the negative sense, one can see that the overloading of **empty** words, memorials, promise of faithfulness, and fake zeal would be a sad weighting down of the heart and mind so that the tiniest hidden conjugal principle would fail to elevate the person into the spiritual process of regeneration. Instead of vivifying the heart and mind, the negative deadens promises and cuts off a person's spiritual life. In place of a free-will offering of heart and mind to bring about spiritual conjunction, there is an emphasis on external praise and pomposity that leads to the disjunction of heart and mind.
 - A "creditor" is someone who lends. In our world, a creditor is essentially someone who lends money or materials. On a deeper level, a "creditor" is someone who communicates and shares truth. A teacher, preacher, parent, or peer may be a gifted communicator of ideas and may inspire those who listen to or read their words. As individual and unique as the presentation of truth may be, none of us may lay claim to being the originator of a truth. The inspiration and originality of all truth is from but one source. The Lord alone is truth. Our text makes a profound point. Will not the Lord, as our Creditor, rise up suddenly to bring us to accountability? Will not the Lord judge us according to what we have done with what we have known? His judgment is not based on what we have not yet mastered. His demand for accountability will come from what we did with what He loaned us. How often did we come to the source of all truth? Did we hunger and thirst for His Word, or did we satisfy the longing of our souls with the words of temporal and finite things?
 - Hell sees itself as a "creditor." Hellish spirits remind us often of how indebted we are to their imagined power. If any truth of the Lord comes into our love system, these spirits become uncomfortable. Combats and temptation are inspired by hell. War is declared with the goal to oust any truth of the Lord's. The goal of hell is to take away our "booty." What is the meaning of "booty"? Consider these teachings. AC 576 describes "booty" as "remains in the internal man...because they are insinuated as by stealth among so many evils and falsities, and it is by these remains that all blessing comes." Is it any wonder then that hell wants to do away with our booty? TCR 117 describes hell as an "army of robbers or rebels which invade a kingdom or a city...set

fire...plunder...divide the spoil...rejoice and exult..." But redemption "...may be compared to the lawful king who advances against these rebels...recovers the booty, and restores it to his subjects, thereafter establishing order...and [rendering the kingdom or city] secure against like assaults."

- The message here is that hell, the sensual person, the unregenerate will be held up in contempt by those who follow, and everyone will see a glimpse of reality through the eyes of the Lord. The contemptuous feeling is not from a state of being uncharitable. Instead, it comes from a clear-sighted view of the attempt of hell to make truth seem like falsity and falsity seem like truth.

Putting It All Together

To grow spiritually, we need the Lord's parables, proverbs, and riddles. Why? Only those who seek the meaning of the inner sense will find the truth. Insincere efforts to study the Word will offer little help in fighting off falsities. The hidden and profound spiritual sense has a power to find hell's weak spots. The "riddle" of the Word—the coarse meshes and sieves—separates the sand from the gold. Sand represents the falsities of hell, and gold represents the pure love of the Lord.

- "Woe" to the person who prefers the unhappy state of hell.
- "Woe" to the person who wants to replace the Lord with self. Such a choice has little life or extension into heaven.
- "Woe" to the person who loads empty platitudes in the mouth and follows through with none of the pledges or covenants made with the Lord.
- "Woe" to those who make the human traditions of greater importance than the words of the Lord. Popular consensus will not sway the ways of the Lord and heaven. The Word of the Lord will rise up "suddenly." The Lord, as a Creditor, will rise up and make the determination as to who was sincere in the gathering of truths for the use of heaven and the Lord.
- "Woe" to the hellish spirits who want to suppress and carry away the "booty" of remains. Remains are hidden and are the source of happiness. The Lord as a "legal king" will rally His truths to advance against hell. He will recover all "booty" and restore it to His subjects. His army will establish order. He will render all remains secure against like assaults. *(TCR 117)*

The spiritually secure will feel contempt toward hell. They will feel a loathing and distaste for the twisting of truth into falsity and the attempt to make falsity seem like truth.

The Lord says "Woe" to the ways of hell.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:6-7*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- How well are you able to look at the literal sense of these verses and draw out the spiritual sense to apply it to life situations?
- Are the “woes” powerful as you look at them from the Lord’s perspective?
- How about the meaning of the word “riddle”? Had you ever heard or thought of a riddle being a coarse sieve to separate the grain from the chaff?
- How well do you picture the “booty” as remains? Note that the Writings also define our “booty” as the source of all happiness.
- The description of the Lord as a “legal king” of His subjects and of His return of the “booty” was quite comforting. What was not said, but felt, was that His work is selfless. He returns every one of the stolen goods. He does not claim a “finder’s fee.” In addition, He restores order and confidence, and He guarantees that hell will not return to plunder again.
- How strong is your contempt for hell’s disorder? The Writings teach us that the “greater the horror that is conceived for evils and falsities...the less do evil spirits dare to approach, for they cannot endure aversion and horror...” (*AC 1740 [3]*) It is necessary to take a stand for the way of the Lord and disavow the ways of hell.
- Read once again the explanation of “pledges” in *CL 300 [3]*:
 - Pledges are memorials.
 - Pledges are “suspended in sight” to remind us of and help us to keep our promises of everlasting faithfulness to the Lord.
 - Pledges are to help exhilarate the mind.
 - Pledges are to remind us that the conjugal principles are “dearer and more precious than all other gifts.”
 - Pledges are “stabilizers of conjugal love.”Don’t these points cause us to look at our pledges more carefully?
- When are we loading too many pledges? When we are doing things for show? When we are doing things to fulfill empty tradition?

HABAKKUK 2:8

“Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you, Because of men’s blood and the violence of the land and the city, and of all who dwell in it.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "...and they pervert the goods and truths of the church."

Derived Doctrine

"Because you have plundered many nations, all the remnant of the people shall plunder you..."

- *Jeremiah 30:16* teaches, "Those who plunder you shall become plundered, and all who prey upon you I will make a prey."
- "Nations" represent goods that stem from charity. (*AC 1259 [4]*)
- "Plunder" or plundering represents "taking away." (*AC 6920*) But taking away what? Those who seek to take away the goods that stem from charity are skilled in the art of "mussitation." (*AR 655*) Mussitation, or sophistry, is a purposeful blurring of facts. It is turning things this way and that way to prove a point. Loyalty to truth is not a goal of this activity. "Mussitators" want to show how clever they are by proving whatever suits their fancy. This is more important to them than finding the Lord's truth. When the Lord plunders the perverted, His purpose is to remove, or take away, "from those steeped in falsities and evils arising from them..." (*AC 6920*)
- The remnant, or residue of truth stored up by the Lord in the interior person, will be the means by which He will expose and take away the crafty and twisted sophistry of the false and evil. Their tricks and deceptions will no longer hold together. Falsity and evil will be thoroughly taken away.

"...Because of men's blood and the violence of the land and the city, and all who dwell in it."

- "Blood" in the positive sense has reference to charity, or love of the neighbor, and love to the Lord. (*AC 1001 [2]*) To do violence to the land: "'Land' signifies the man of the church...it also signifies that which is essential, namely, love to the Lord and charity toward the neighbor, for on this they all hang." (*AC 2571*)
- Does everyone do violence to the land and the city? These words are directed to the violators who **dwell in the land and city**. Those dwelling outside of the land and city are not included. Why should we make a point of this? A dwelling represents where one's heart resides. The Lord is seeking to get us to consider what kind of dwelling place we have. Is our dwelling place a place where spiritual good carefully nurtures the truths of the church? Is the dwelling place of our inmost natural mind a place where memory-knowledges dwell to serve the Lord? (*AC 6101*) Is our dwelling place full of discordant things, in which Divine good is, that are not in any agreement with the Lord's truths? (*AC 3154 [2]*) The dwelling place of the evil is an active love

that is dedicated to doing violence to the things of charity (blood) to the Lord and the neighbor.

Putting It All Together

Those who pervert the goods and truths of the church will be “taken away.” Those who sought to plunder and drain the life’s blood of the church and its doctrines of charity shall not prevail.

These words must be stored in the remnant of our dwelling places. Our heart needs to hold fast to the Lord’s promise regarding the ultimate outcome of hellish efforts. How diligently is hell trying to convince us that it is more powerful than the Lord? With its “mussitations”—its bag of tricks and insane reasoning—black is made to look like white, and white is made to look black. Hell brags of its versatility, its ability to prove both with equal zeal. Hellish spirits care little for the propriety of truth, so within their dwelling place, there is a sad and dismal discordant sphere. The Lord and His order have no standing in their value system.

We have been given a vision from the Lord that He will “take them away.” Those who wish to plunder will be plundered. Those who wished to make others their prey will become the prey. The Lord’s remnant will victoriously be the last ones left standing in the day of battle against evil and falsity.

“And all the people shall answer and say, ‘Amen!’” (*Deuteronomy 27:15*)

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:8*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever been dazzled by someone’s ability to form “logic” that will allow them to get what they want? It is amazing how quickly we can conjure up “legitimate” reasons why we did what we did. It doesn’t matter that it had overtones of selfishness; we can still find a way to justify it.
- What hell wishes upon the Lord and the neighbor returns to hell’s self. We have looked at this law of retaliation before. Do you think it is a “fair” law?
- Having confidence in the Lord is essential in our regeneration process. Can we build up that confidence with the reading of *Habakkuk*? Do you think you might share some of this story with a friend or family member?

HABAKKUK 2:9-10

“Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of disaster! You give shameful counsel to your house, cutting off many peoples, and sin against your soul.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They are in their own intelligence, owing to which they are puffed up.”

Derived Doctrine

“Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high...”

- To “covet” is to have an inordinate desire for things that belong to someone else. It could be a desire for someone’s wife or husband, or for possession of wealth, reputation, and standing within the community. Instead of feeling joy for the successes of others, as angels would, people who covet feel sadness that they do not have what their neighbors have.
- *AC 7374* describes coveting, noting that “Those are in the love of the world who desire to possess themselves of the goods of others **by artful devices**, and still more those who do this **by cunning and deceit.**” (*Emphasis added.*)
- *AC 8909* warns that “one must beware of the love of self and the world...lest the evils [of coveting]...become of the will...” This same teaching appears in *AC 8910 [3]*, where it is noted that by “‘thou shalt not covet’ is signified that **one must beware** lest evils become of the will...” (*Emphasis added.*)
- “Gain” is described in *AC 8711* as “the falsity and evil which persuade and draw away from truth and good. By ‘gain’ in general is signified **all the falsity from evil that perverts the judgments of the mind...**” (*Emphasis added.*)
- A “house” signifies remains in the internal person. (*AC 576 [3]*) A “house” signifies the things that are of the will, and a “house” signifies the church. (*AC 710*) A “house” signifies that which has been collected; a “house” is accumulated memory-knowledges. (*AC 1486, 1488*)

“...that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of disaster!”

- Setting one’s nest “on high” is explained in *AC 10582* as representing “those who exalt themselves above others, believing that they are more learned than all others, when yet they are in falsities, and even cannot see truths...”
- What could appear more calamitous or disastrous to the proud, who have exalted themselves above others, than to be pulled down from their lofty heights by the Lord? All of their falsities are then exposed and shown for

what they “are not,” and the Lord’s truth is shown for “what it is.” We get from the literal sense the sadness of the evil position. They imagined themselves secure from any “pulling down” by the Lord.

“You give shameful counsel to your houses, cutting off many peoples, and sin against your soul.”

- This verse sums up the spiritual problem of a “puffed-up” self-intelligence. It gives shameful counsel to your houses. Instead of helping people find conjunction with the Lord, it severs this conjunction, and lastly, it brings harm to the soul.
- Israel’s choices portray the antithesis of the Lord’s wish for His church and the people within His Church. He longs to give good counsel for each and every soul. The self-centered ignore and devalue the importance of eternal ends. The Lord seeks out souls to be conjoined eternally to Him. “Behold all souls are mine, says the Lord.” (*Ezekiel 18:4*) Hell doesn’t want the Lord to have any part of its soul; it wants to cut Him out—permanently.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes the verse under study with these words: **“They are in their own intelligence, owing to which they are puffed up.”**

Hell and its legion of falsifications become forms of covetousness and gain. Hellish spirits want everyone to bow down to them. Their greatest desire is to get the Lord to fall before them. They want to dominate others so that they may be served. To accomplish this feat of ultimate self-love, they construct lofty systems of thought that justify their position. They become so enamored with their thoughts that they insanely believe they are “untouchable.” They have no fear about the “day of the Lord.”

As always, the Lord gets the last word. He will bring down the lofty nests. He will deliver truth from the disastrous path of hell. The Lord, rightfully, points to the shameful counsel a “puffed-up” self-intelligence gave to the internal person, to the church, to the collection of memory-knowledges. The people in the church languished under such leadership. Instead of a church that cared for and loved the souls of the people, there was the presence of hell working to sever the conjunction between the Lord and His people. Falsity and evil perverted “the judgments of the mind.”

The resounding good news from the Lord is that the efforts of hell will not work; hell will not succeed. Such words have to be heard, repeated, and believed so that the Lord can use us in the battle of regeneration. Hell can’t stand such convictions of confidence in the power of the Lord.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:9-10*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you ever confronted someone with a “puffed-up” self-intelligence?
- If people are wrapped up in the pride of self-intelligence, do their forms of clever reasoning make them skillful at justifying their own ends?
- Is self-intelligence, in your experience, sure of its safety from disaster?
- Do you see self-intelligence as a form of covetousness and a desire for gain?
- What examples might you cite of “shameful counsel”?
- What examples might you use to show how self-intelligence could cut off the relationship of the people with the Lord?
- How does a person sin against the soul? The soul is indestructible. Only the Lord knows where the soul is. Do we sin against the soul by allowing a hard core of resistance and neglect to be built around the soul to keep the Lord from touching our remains? What do you think?
- Nests are a series of individual twigs interlaced with great care and patience. What does a nest mean in the positive sense? What does a nest represent in the negative sense? To answer these questions, read *DP 317* about thinking analytically and forming conclusions.

HABAKKUK 2:11

“For the stone will cry out from the wall, and the beam from the timbers will answer it.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “They judge from externals alone.”

AC 643 [2]

- “The ‘stone’ denotes the lowest degree of the understanding; and the ‘wood’ the lowest of the will, which ‘answers’ when anything is drawn from sensuous knowledge (scientifico sensuali).”

AR 774

- “...that ‘wood’ signifies good...may be in some degree evident from these passages...Habakkuk 2:11...‘wood’ in the opposite sense [signifies] what is evil and cursed...”

AE 746 [16]

- “That ‘wood’ signifies good, and in the contrary sense evil, may be seen in the Arcana Coelestia, numbers 643, 3720, 4943, 8354, 8740...Moreover, in some passages ‘beam’ is mentioned, and it signifies the falsity of evil (as in... Habakkuk 2:11...)...”

AE 1145 [8]

- “In Habakkuk...2:11...This means that evil confirms and incites falsity; the ‘wall out of which the stone crieth’ signifies man devoid of truths, and thus wishing to be taught falsity; ‘the beam that answereth from the wood’ signifies man destitute of good, ‘wood’ signifying the evil that confirms falsity and agrees with it.”

Derived Doctrine

“For the stone will cry out from the wall...”

- “That a ‘cry’ denotes falsity, and ‘sin’ evil, is evident from the signification in the Word of a ‘cry.’ That a ‘cry’ signifies falsity can be evident to no one unless he knows the internal sense of the Word. The word sometimes occurs in the Prophets, and when vastation and desolation are there treated of, it is said that men ‘howl and cry,’ by which is signified that goods and truths have been vastated...by which in the internal sense falsity is described...” (AC 2240)
- A “wall” in the positive sense signifies “the Word in the sense of the letter from which is the doctrine of the New Church...for that sense protects the spiritual sense...as the wall does a city and its inhabitants...” (AR 898) A “wall” in the negative sense “signifies falsity assumed as a principle, and by application of the Word from the sense of the letter made to appear as truth...” (AE 237 [5])

Putting It All Together

The key to pulling this verse together is found in the combination of teachings from P&P and AE 237 [5].

P&P calls us to notice how the proud and self-centered make decisions: “they judge from externals.” These are quick decisions based on appearances and the expediency

of the moment. Such people look to what works for the short term and ignore the decisions that work toward eternity. In a word, they are people who are governed by effects and not ends.

To describe what spiritual effects come from external judgments, a wall is mentioned. Why a wall? A “wall” in the negative sense is described as “falsity assumed as a principle, and by application of the Word from the sense of the letter made to appear as truth...” A “stone” crying out from the “wall” denotes the lowest degree of understanding and the “wood” (timbers) answering denotes the “lowest of the will which ‘answers’ when anything is drawn from sensuous knowledge.” (AC 643 [2])

Can we put some kind of example in place to illustrate how we can understand and use the spiritual meaning of this passage? Each reader will be able to draw an example when they consider how easy it is to pull whatever we want from the Word to prove a point. Jacob skillfully stole, with his mother’s help, Esau’s first-born rights. Jacob got even with his father-in-law, Laban, by subtlety building and enriching his wealth through clever breeding techniques. David stole another man’s wife. Abraham lied about his wife being his sister. Lot had children with his daughters. Using these external examples, one could work up a case for clever deception, lying, adultery, and incest. If Biblical heroes employed these tactics for their own ends, the external wall-builders ask, why can’t we do the same when the immediate moment calls for lying, stealing, deception, and self-preservation?

Or, one could cite all of these examples to question the holiness of the Word. After all, the Word repeatedly describes war, killing, cruelty, and failure in its teachings. The hells try to convince us to devalue the Word with the idea of “Who wants to fill their mind with such depressing topics? Healthy minds must shun depression and failure.”

False principles made to look like truth will build walls between people and the Lord. When the walls are in place, it is only “logical” that there would be a cry from the “wood” or “timbers,” the lowest things of our will (affection), to justify falsified external reasoning.

What does the Lord want us to do with this passage?

- Tear down all mental and spiritual altars at which we worship and justify falsity.
- Build spiritual altars with stones not hewn (cut or shaped) with human tools.
- Use that which is internal, spiritual, and eternal as a positive wall against hell and its insane falsities.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:11*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Thinking and judging from externals alone happens often in our lives. Without being morose, I'm sure we can recall a time when we made an impetuous and poor decision. With our pride at stake, we probably did our best to tenaciously defend the mistake. Do you recall erecting "walls" to defend decisions? It is a common tendency to build "walls" of excuses to justify ourselves and to erect "timbers" of emotions to support our reasoning. It isn't easy to admit to others our errors. Is it any easier to admit them to the Lord? Do we take the time to ask the Lord to help us with our choices?
- Our country just experienced two devastating storms. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita catastrophically leveled homes and businesses and took lives. New Orleans was on its way to recovering from Katrina when Rita hit, tearing open the temporary levee and re-flooding streets and homes. Amid the confusion and contamination, one of the residents was interviewed while standing in his house filled with toxic mud and the chaos of lost personal goods. He remarked to the reporter: "I have tried to live a good life. I have always treated my neighbors with honesty and respect. What did I do wrong to deserve these two floods?" Implied in his question was a belief in God's anger and punishment directed at him. He seemed to be asking, "Why is God punishing me, a good man, for something I didn't consciously do wrong?" Many people in hard circumstances experience this feeling. Why do you think this happens? What might be the source of the belief implied in this man's statement?
- A false wall is under construction in the interview quoted above. How can we tear this negative wall down in the face of the obvious emotional and personal distress? The loss of life and personal belongings offer apparent evidence to support this man's view. What will build a positive wall based on eternal ends? Is it a matter of "time heals all wounds"?
- Lastly, what important message is this portion of the prophecy giving about the building up of the New Church? The Holy City of the New Jerusalem has walls. The walls are adorned with precious jewels. The walls are for the protection of all within.

HABAKKUK 2:12-13

"Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, who establishes a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire, and nations weary themselves in vain?"

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "A curse rests upon those who hatch doctrine out of falsities."

Derived Doctrine

In a slight departure from our usual format, let us first consider some derived doctrine concerning the meaning of "curse" and "hatching" (mentioned in P&P, above) so that the verse in Habakkuk 2:12 can come more fully into our understanding.

"A curse..."

- "A 'rain' in general signifies a blessing, and in the opposite sense a curse; when a blessing, it signifies the influx and reception of...truth that is of faith and of the good that is of charity...but when it [rain] signifies a curse, it signifies falsity that is contrary to the truth of faith, and evil that is contrary to the good of charity, for these are a curse." (AC 7553)
- "...eminence may be a blessing or may be a curse, and that eminence as a blessing is from the Lord, and eminence as a curse is from the devil." (AE 1188)

"...rests upon [resting, ideas based on] those who hatch doctrine out of falsities."

- "...those who, from their own intelligence, have hatched for themselves dogmas from the Word...[and who] excel in cleverness from natural light (lumen), hatch dogmas for themselves...This is the origin of all heresies and all falsities in the Christian world. Intelligence from man's proprium is from himself, but the intelligence which is not from his proprium is from the Lord...those...in the love of self who read the Word and collect dogmas [do so] for the sake of fame, glory, and honors. And as they are unable to see any truths, but can see falsities only, they collect and hatch such things from the Word as favor their loves and evils..." (AE 714 [10])

“Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed...”

- “Woe signifies lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...as the aversion from good and truth becomes successively more grievous in the church.” (AE 531)
- “Woe signifies grievous lamentation over misfortune, unhappiness and damnation.” (AR 769)
- “In the spiritual sense of the Word, a city and town signifies doctrine.” (*The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine* [NJHD] 6)
- “...those who from the evil of the love of self...confirm...from the sense of the letter of the Word, then whatever evil they do from this false doctrine and others built upon this as a foundation...destroys the internal man, preventing any conscience from ever being formed...These are they spoken of in the Word who are said to be ‘in bloods,’ [bloodshed] for they are in cruel rage against the whole human race...” (AC 4818 [4])

“...who establishes a city by iniquity!”

- AE 1057 [3] provides us with a possible insight into the meaning of this verse. The Lord establishes a covenant with His church and people. He desires to plant within heaven and earth internal and spiritual things, and to earth He wants to give the stability of external or natural order. His covenant and laws are to “establish” a basis upon which truth can lead and govern the will of His people toward spiritual happiness. The opposite of this would be an endeavor to “disestablish” and destroy the Lord’s covenant and order by “hatching” and by supplanting divine truth with human prudence.

“Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire and nations weary themselves in vain?”

- “Behold” means keep in sight, look at, watch, survey, discern, consider.
- It is not the Lord of hosts who feeds the fire of self love. Instead, He desires to keep such fires from raging within our hearts and minds.
- The “Lord of Hosts” signifies all the goods and truths fighting against falsities and evils. (AE 453 [6])
- It is not the Lord of hosts who wearies the mind and soul of the disobedient.
- Who then is to blame? The “hatchers”; those who seek the eminence of self; those who trust human prudence above Divine order. It is the “themselves” who stoke the oven fires of disorder.
- To take the Lord’s name “in vain” means “to profane and blaspheme...to turn truth into evil...” (AC 8882)

Putting It All Together

AE 714 [10] provides the key to the summation of this verse with this thought: Those who “hatch” dogmas for themselves from their own intelligence are “the origin of all heresies and all falsities in the Christian world.” And how do they hatch dogma for themselves? With “cleverness from natural light,” using passages from the Word, collecting what “favor[s] their loves and evils.”

Innovation, like so many other things in life, can be positive or negative. One’s intentions will determine whether innovation will lift up or pull down, whether it will lead to worship of the Lord or self. Self-examination is a hard process to undergo. We don’t like finding fault with ourselves. If anything, we like self-validation, praise, compliments. Hell knows this. Hellish spirits and people who are allowing themselves to be influenced by hell will quote others and will quote (misquote) Scripture skillfully in order to get what they want. This is what the evil spirits did with the Lord in the wilderness. So, why wouldn’t they do the same with us?

Do you recall a story in *II Kings 4:38-41*? Elisha returned from a trip to be with the sons of the prophets. There was a famine in the land. Elisha told them to put on the “large pot” and brew some stew. One of the prophets went out into the field and gathered a lapful of “wild” gourds, sliced them up, and put them into the pot of stew. When the stew was served, the sons of the prophets cried out, “Man of God, there is death in the pot!” What brought on the death in the pot? “...an ill-assorted mass of memory-knowledges” hatched in such a way from the wild gourds as to bring death into the pot. Elisha saved the pot of stew. He added a meal to it—truth from good—and nourishment returned to the stew. See *AC 3316 [4]* for further explanation of this passage.

Did the one son of the prophets go out into the field to purposely “poison” the stew? Didn’t he go out with the goal of adding some flavor to the contents? Didn’t he want to put some “body” into each bowl-full? Although we are not told what his intent was, we do know the results. There was death in the pot. The Lord had to make it right. The contents of the large pot were not thrown away; it was purified with the love of doctrine as drawn from the Lord’s Word. Innovation—hatching—the ill-assorted mass of memory-knowledges, all of these things can be cured and saved by the Lord alone. I think I am getting the message of our text. What ideas has it brought to you?

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:12-13*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Does this lesson cause you to worry about being innovative in your life of worship?
- What innovative things have you seen come into the life of the church?
- Are there safeguards one can point to that will keep the “large pot” from becoming a pot of death?
- Traditional forms of worship can be just as deadly as innovative ones. How can we get the “meal” thrown in the pot to keep it spiritually healthy and nourishing?
- What are your thoughts about the son of the prophet going out into the field and gathering wild gourds? Do you identify with him, or do you find yourself suspecting his motives?
- There was a famine. There was a scarcity of foods. Any similarity of this to our day?
- Woe to him that builds a town with bloodshed.” What does this represent?
- *AC 1408 [3]* gives us a principle that must be remembered and applied **whenever we study the Word**: “...many things in the Word are said according to appearances, and indeed according to the fallacies of the senses, as that the Lord is angry, that He punishes, curses, kills, and many other such things; **when yet in the internal sense they mean quite the contrary**; namely, that the Lord is in no wise angry, and punishes, still less does He curse and kill...those [who] from simplicity of heart believe the Word...no harm is done...therefore with them the fallacies taken from the sense of the letter are easily dispelled.” (*Emphasis added.*) We need this quote to correct the impression given in our text that the Lord inspired the people to “feed the fire” and to “weary themselves in vain.” Looking at this verse again, were you able to read and then make the proper (contrary) interpretation of the literal sense?
- We will always need to overcome the “appearances” of the literal sense. Hell loves to seize such quotes from the Word to worry us about the “Lord’s anger and spirit of retribution.” Hell wants us to view the Lord as volatile and unfair in His dealings with people. The simplicity of heart of a believer can be inspired to overcome such false appearances. Therefore, it might help each of us to memorize *AC 1408 [3]*. Without the spiritual sense, we too might “labor to feed the fire” and “weary ourselves in vain.” What do you think about this important doctrinal point?

HABAKKUK 2:14

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “When the Lord comes...”

Derived Doctrine

“...the earth will be filled...”

- “The ‘earth’ is a term very often used in the Word; and by it is signified the ‘land’ where the true church of the Lord is...” (AC 620) “Earth” is used to denote the whole human race with respect to **their state as a church, or not as a church.**(AC 1066)
- When the earth is spoken of as being “empty and void,” it signifies a person before regeneration. (AC 17) Filling the earth, then, would seem to signify endowing a person with the necessary goods and truths to regenerate. In place of emptiness and darkness, the Lord bestows delight and power to regenerate. It is a “conatus,” a striving, an endeavor to become an earth (church) that values the spiritual realities of the Lord.

“...with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord...”

- AE 513 defines what a “living” knowledge is: it is “a knowledge that derives life from spiritual affections; for that affection gives life to truths, and gives life to knowledges, for knowledges are containants of spiritual truths...”
- The “glory of the Lord” represents the Word in its spiritual sense. (AR 24) “Glory” signifies to make the Human Divine known. (AC 10655 [2]; AE 224, 226 [2]) “Glory” signifies the conjunction of good and truth, and it also signifies the expelling of hereditary evils the Lord had received from Mary (the wonderful story of glorification). (AC 1603 [2])

“...as the waters cover the sea.”

- “It is a very common thing in the Word for ‘waters’ to signify knowledges (cognitions et scientifica), and consequently for ‘seas’ to signify a collection of knowledges.” (AC 28) What this teaching implies is that the collection of spiritual and natural knowledges in the memory will be called into use by the Lord.

Putting It All Together

Our selection from *P&P* begins a sentence, and we now must finish it within the context of what the literal sense just unfolded. “When the Lord comes...”

- The church will be filled and enlivened with His presence.
- The church will be His church because of His revealed knowledge.
- The church will be given “living” knowledges that will be Dynamic and Powerful tools for its spiritual life.
- The church will be glorious and happy because its message will make known the story of, and importance of, the glorification of His Divine Human.
- The Lord will collect and order the “waters” that cover “the sea.” In other words, the goods and truths in the memory-knowledges of the church will be ordered by the Lord so that the implementation of them will bring the elements of worship to a state of honesty and integrity.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:14*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- The above statements somewhat complete the *P&P* sentence. As you read the explanation, did you wrestle with some “but” questions?
- “But” when will the Lord institute these things?
- “But” what will it take to make the news of the Lord’s second coming so interesting that it will be heard and believed by all the churches on earth?
- “But” we have had the news of these things in the Writings for over 200 years, and it just doesn’t seem to be catching on. What is keeping the news from being accepted?
- The organized New Church has four major branches, and we have trouble trusting and agreeing with one another. How can we become more cooperative so we can grow into a dynamic and powerful force for the Lord’s New Church?
- What will it take to unify the waters and seas of our memory-knowledges?
- Our numbers are not increasing. We are in a downward state of membership. More and more, we are talking about strategic planning to make the church more user-friendly for newcomers. Is this planning part of the Lord’s enlivening the church with His presence? Will He use this as a way to present the world with the story of His Divine Human?
- Or do we need to do that strategic planning as an aside while we read and study the Word as our main focus?
- What has kept you loyal to and enthusiastic about New Church doctrines?
- Has the Lord’s glorification of His Divine Human been one of your interests?

HABAKKUK 2:15-17

“Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor, pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk, that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory. You also—drink! And be exposed as uncircumcised! The cup of the Lord’s right hand will be turned against you, and utter shame will be on your glory. For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, and the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, because of men’s blood and the violence of the land and the city, and of all who dwell in it.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...he who leads others astray, will then be ashamed...”

AC 1073

- “In this verse, because it is said that he lay uncovered, it is signified that he stripped himself of the truths of faith by desiring to investigate them by means of the things of sense and by reasonings therefrom.” *Habakkuk 2:15* is cited.

AR 721

- ““To be made drunk with...wine’ signifies to be insane in spiritual, that is, in theological things...” *Habakkuk 2:15* is one of many passages cited.

AC 9960 [15]

- “Again...[in] *Habakkuk 2:15*...by ‘being drunken,’ by ‘being made naked,’...and by ‘the foreskin’...these expressions are to be spiritually understood...spiritually, ‘drinking’ denotes to be instructed in truths, and in the opposite sense in falsities...‘being drunken’ denotes to be insane...And ‘being made naked’ denotes to be destitute of truths...‘to uncover the foreskin’ denotes to defile celestial goods by these loves. (...Consequently ‘circumcision’ denotes purification from these loves...)”

AE 235 [6]

- “In *Habakkuk*...2:15, 16...“To drink even making him drunken’...signifies to drink in truths and mix them with falsities; the ‘nakednesses’ upon which they look, signify the deprivation of truth and of intelligence therefrom...The ‘foreskin that shall be uncovered’ signifies the defilement of good...‘glory’

signifies Divine truth, thus the Word...which shows what is meant by 'disgraceful vomiting upon their glory.'"

AE 240 [9]

- "In Habakkuk...2:15, 16...'To make a companion drink, and drunken,' signifies to so imbue one with falsities that he does not see the truth; 'to look on nakedness' means so that falsities which are of the understanding and evils which are of the will are seen; 'that the foreskin may be uncovered' means so that filthy loves are seen...That 'to be made drunken' means to become insane from falsities, thus to not see truths...'the foreskin' signifies corporeal and earthly loves..."

AC 5120 [11]

- "In these passages [*Habakkuk 2:16* is cited.] also a 'cup' denotes insanity from falsities and the evils thence derived. It is called...also 'of the right hand of Jehovah,' for the reason that the...people, believed evils and the punishment of evils and falsities to come from no other source than Jehovah, when yet they are from the man himself, and from the infernal crew with him."

AE 960 [5]

- "In Habakkuk...2:16...'Cup' stands for falsified truth, which in itself is falsity, and of this 'shameful vomiting' is predicated; therefore it is said 'upon thy glory,' signifying the Divine truth in the Word."

AE 650 [64]

- "In Habakkuk...2:17...The 'violence of Lebanon' signifies the violence done to the truths perceived by the rational man from the Word, for 'Lebanon' signifies the church in respect to the perception of truth from the rational man; 'the devastation of the beasts' which shall dismay them signifies the destruction of truths by the cupidities of evil; 'bloods' signify the violence offered to the truths of the Word by evils; and 'violence of the land, of the city, and of all that dwell therein' signifies violence done to the truths and goods of the church and to its doctrine from the Word by falsities."

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor..."

- *AR 531* teaches us that "woe" signifies "lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...as the aversion from good and truth becomes

successively more grievous in the church.” AR 769 teaches that “woe” signifies “grievous lamentation over misfortune, unhappiness and damnation.”

- To “drink” in the positive sense signifies to receive instruction in spiritual things.(AC 2704) To receive a drink in the negative sense means to care nothing for the Word and to be unwilling to know anything about faith; it represents those who think themselves wiser than others and who deny the first principles of faith. (AC 1072 [6])

“...pressing him to your bottle, even to make him drunk...”

- “Pressing” indicates forcing, being persuasive, using popular opinions apart from the truths of the Word. “Your bottle” signifies the human mind. (AE 376 [34])
- Pressure to follow human prudence can lead to but one end—drunkenness, spiritual insanity, and the falsity of an evil life.
- “...that you may look on his nakedness! You are filled with shame instead of glory, you also—drink!”
- When innocence is gone, “...nakedness is a scandal and disgrace because it is attended with a consciousness of thinking evil.” (AC 213)
- Looking at another’s nakedness indicates having a delight in seeing others lose their innocence. (AC 5433)
- Delighting in the ruination of others comes back on the self. **“You are filled with shame instead of glory...”** A sad commentary on a person’s life and choices.

“And be exposed as uncircumcised!”

- Exploring the meaning of **exposing** oneself causes us to revisit the “law of retaliation” as explained in AC 8214: it is the “return upon them of the falsities from evil which they were endeavoring to inflict on those who were in truth and good.”
- Circumcision signifies purification from filthy loves. (AC 2041) Circumcision signifies the removal of what defiles celestial love. (AC 2039) Thus, we can see and understand what is meant by “exposing” their “uncircumcised” spiritual state.

“...violence done to Lebanon will cover you...”

- “Violence” has some interesting meanings in the spiritual sense. “Violence” signifies a condition in which there is no longer an interest in good will. (AC 632) “Violence” signifies a coalition of falsity and evil against goods and truths. (AC 4502 [2]) “Violence” signifies the end of disagreement between the natural and spiritual person. (AE 365 [41]) “Violence” signifies those who purposely pervert the truths of the Word. (AE 734 [17])

- “Lebanon” denotes the spiritual church. (*AC 5922 [12]*) *AE 650 [64]* teaches that when violence is done to Lebanon, it represents **force being inflicted** by the rational person on truths perceived from the Word.
- “Cover you” is a description of what happens to those who are committed to violence. The negative meaning represents the extinguishing of charity. (*AC 795*) Covering with a fake adornment signifies the dissipation of interior truths because of pride. (*AR 90*)

“...the plunder of beasts...”

- *AE 650* has some 80 references to the word “beast.” The correspondence of “beast” is defined as the love or affection of the natural person. The word “plunder” signifies the intent of that natural love, which is to kill and harm all of the remains of good and truth.
- And how much does the beast intend to plunder? It wants an end to all who dwell in the land and the city.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes this section with these words: “...he that leads others astray will be ashamed...” What follows in the passage from *Habakkuk* we are studying is an expansion of insights (reflection) into the nature of the deeds of deceivers: those who **purposely** lead others astray enjoy doing it. When they convince someone to abandon the Lord, they sit back and laugh at the duped neighbor’s spiritual nakedness. With a disguised smirk on their faces, they outwardly do and say things in a convincing way to bring harm to others. They picture themselves as being so clever. The truth of the matter is that they are spiritually insane, drunk, destitute of truth, and pathetic. How do we know this? The Lord announces His “Woe.” He reveals to us what their end is: what they wished upon the neighbor will come back on them. Their nakedness and drunken state will be exposed. The Lord will do this so that all may see the folly and futility of hell’s imagined power and cleverness.

As we read this summary, can you picture people who knowingly mislead others? Let’s do so by moving from generals to particulars. News reports tell us of those who use “smooth talking” scams to rob elderly people. There are those predators who use “chat rooms” to meet victims and lure them out of the security of their home and away from the supervision of parents. Popular opinions (trends) have led some people along perilous and treacherous physical and mental paths. That first cigarette, the first drink, and the first use of a chemical substance: deceivers offer some apparently rational or emotional idea to support the beginning of that “recreational” habit. A false idea is submitted to convince or give compelling reasons why it would be OK to do it. An attendant, as-of-self idea bolsters the temptation with the belief that this new experience will not be harmful. People giving into such temptations begin to feel that they are strong enough to control things, so no harm will come to them. Sadly, those who become dependent find that is not the case.

Freedom and rationality may become weakened and impaired. Anyone trying to give up a “habit” will attest to the struggle that is involved in breaking a dependency.

Hell, the great promoter of disobedience to the order of heaven, loves to neutralize our remains. Hell uses the ploy that we are only human. “Look around you; everybody is doing what is pleasing in their own eyes. Why not? Have fun! Loosen up.” As the Psalmist wrote, the evil love to say, “How does God know...is there knowledge in the Most High?” (*Psalm 73:11*)

So the Lord speaks the truth. “Woe to those who love to lead others astray.” They will be shown that they are drunk, insane, naked, and without substance. Their thinking is exposed, and they are unclean in their failure to adhere to conjugal principles.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:15-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Have you met and dealt with someone who loved to deceive others?
- Was this person a “smooth talker” whose logic seemed overpowering?
- If we use tobacco, alcohol, or chemical substances, are we doing any spiritual harm to ourselves? This question is not taking issue with prescriptions. Instead, it is taking aim at those things that we choose that are known to harm us, especially those things that harm freedom and rationality. I don’t think there is a smoker or drinker who started out saying to themselves, “I am going to do this so that I can get cancer of the throat or cirrhosis of the liver.” The abuses of these things are what finally catch up with us. So will health abusers rue the day they started a habit?
- Do you think the Lord will have us face the results of our abuses? How about those who manufacture, distribute, and advertise things that hurt our physical and spiritual capacities?
- Will the casual use of profanity be exposed for its insidious effects within the mind? A passage in the *Spiritual Experiences (Spiritual Diary)*, number 2307, indicates that in the spiritual world, profanity will slip out at inappropriate times and will cause embarrassment for the “habitual” user. Is that scary?
- What other applications of these verses can we bring into the discussion?

HABAKKUK 2:18-20

“What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it, the molded image, a teacher of lies, that the maker of its mold should trust in it, to make mute idols? Woe to him who says to wood, ‘awake!’ To silent stone, ‘Arise! It shall teach!’ Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, yet in it there is no breath at all. But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “...falsities will then profit him nothing. This, when the Lord is in His Human.”

AC 586

- “...in Habakkuk...2:18...a ‘graven image’ signifies false persuasions originating in principles conceived and hatched out by one’s self; the ‘fashioner’ is one who is thus self-persuaded, of whom this ‘imagination’ is predicated.”

AC 9424 [8]

- “...‘graven image’ and ‘molten image’ denote doctrinal things from man’s own intelligence, which in the external form, because from the external sense of the Word, appear like truths, but in their internal form are falsities; therefore such a man is said to be ‘foolish from knowledge, and his molten image a lie,’ and that ‘there is no breath in them;’ they are also called ‘vanity,’ and ‘a work of delusions.’” *Habakkuk 2:18* is cited.

AC 10406 [8]

- “In Habakkuk...2:18...it is evident that by a ‘graven image’ and a ‘molten image’ are not meant a graven and molten image; but falsity which is invented, and evil which falsity defends; for it is said ‘the maker of his invention,’ and ‘the teacher of a lie.’”

AC 8869 [3]

- “In Habakkuk...2:18, 19...the ‘graven image’ denotes those things which are hatched from self-intelligence, wherein there is nothing of life from the Lord.”

AR 459

- “By ‘idols’ in the Word, are signified the falsities of worship, and therefore to adore them signifies worship from falsities...All these falsities exist in those

who do not do the work of repentance, that is, shun evils as sins against God. These things are signified in the spiritual sense by idols which were graven images and molten images, in the following passages..." *Habakkuk 2:18-19* is cited as an example of this in *AR 459 [2]*.

AE 587 [8]

- "In *Habakkuk...2:18-20*...As a 'graven image' means the falsity of doctrine, of religion, and of worship, in which there is nothing of spiritual life because it is from self-intelligence, it is said 'What profiteth the graven image? For the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image and the instructor of a lie? In which the former of the lie trusteth;' a 'lie' signifying falsity, and 'the instructor and former of a lie' signifying him who frames it; that there is no intelligence or life in it or from it is signified by 'he maketh dumb gods, and there is no breath in the midst of it;' that every truth of doctrine, of the church, and of worship, is from the Lord alone is signified by 'Jehovah is in the temple of His holiness;' 'temple of holiness' meaning heaven, where and from which is Divine truth."

Derived Doctrine

"Woe to him who says to wood, 'awake!'"

- Reminder: *AE 531* teaches "That 'woe' signifies lamentation over calamity, danger, hardship, destruction...**as the aversion from good and truth becomes successively more grievous in the church.**" (*Emphasis added*)
- "Woe to him who says" as opposed to "Him who says." The "woe" then draws our attention to the problem: human self-intelligence or prudence is and was falsely hatching finite spiritual concepts.
- "Wood" signifies "good conjoined to truth in the natural man." (*AE 1145 [2]*) "Awake" signifies enlightenment in the natural person. (*AC 5208*) A man saying "awake" to the wood clearly implies that the natural person is trying to direct the Word to say what the sensual person wants it to say over and above what the Lord requires for spiritual enlightenment.

"...a teacher of lies...mute idols..."

- When we allow the Lord to be our "teacher," He intends to liberate us by removing ignorance. He works toward enlightenment through the Word, so that good and truth can bring us freedom. A "teacher of lies" does not care about infinite things, nor does the "teacher of lies" want to help us experience liberty or freedom.
- A pupil who confirms the things learned from the "teacher of lies" seems to be captured in this quote from *CL 233*: "When they are alone [they] are not able to think anything nor thence to speak, but that they stand dumb as

machines and as if in profound sleep...Heavenly light cannot flow into them from above, but only a somewhat spiritual through the world..."

"...to a stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!'"

- In the positive sense, a "stone" signifies truth. (AE 655) In the positive sense, "arise" signifies the elevation of the mind to more interior things. (AC 3050)
- Now we must ask ourselves, are these the goals of the "teacher of lies"? Not really. Instead, like the builders of the Tower of Babel, a "teacher of lies" lives in a world of fantasy and illusions. Such people truly believe they can construct a tower whose top "is in the heavens; [to make]...a name for ourselves..." (Genesis 11:4)
- The "teacher of lies" imagines that it is possible to be god-like through one's own efforts and prudence. Such an idea is contrary to the doctrine of continuous and discrete degrees. The Writings emphasize clearly that all growth into a higher degree (a discrete degree above the original state) is a gift from the Lord to those who sincerely love Him and seek truth and good from Him alone. Human prudence and human educational systems cannot force the elevation of heart and mind into the realm of heavenly light. It is a gift from the Lord alone.

"...overlaid with gold and silver, yet in it there is no breath at all."

- "Gold" signifies that which is founded on good. (AC 9484)
- "Silver" signifies the truth of good. (AC 5731, 5950) Overlaying something with gold and silver therefore represents that all aspects of worship will be founded on good and truth. Is that the case with those who are "teachers of lies"? Our answer is given in the Word. With the idol-makers, it is all a facade. There is "no breath [life] at all" underneath the overlay. This describes something that is bright and gaudy in external ways but with no substance, no eternal values.

***But** the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.*
(Emphasis added.)

- AE 587 [8] brings meaning to the word "**But**." In spite of the work of those who love to deceive; in spite of those who want to make people naked and then mock them; in spite of those who deceive themselves and make idols of stone and wood; in spite of all of the spiritual insanity and spiritual drunkenness—the Lord is in His holy temple. He will fill every truth of doctrine of the church and of worship with life and vitality. There is stability amid the chaos caused by hell. Those who trust and believe in the Lord's promises will stand in awe of His order and majesty. His care and protection of His church and His people are magnificent. Sensing this, His church will

feel no need to worry. Confidently, His flock of believers will stand—radiantly silent—in His presence.

Putting It All Together

P&P summarizes these verses with the words “...**falsities will profit... nothing.**” (*Emphasis added.*) The “teacher of lies” will build idols of wood and stone. Such idol-makers will cover their idols with an overlay of gold and silver. They will cry out to them “awake” and “arise.” But their idols will remain mute and lifeless in the presence of the Lord. Why? The idols represent the inventions of falsity in their mind. Their idols were wood and stone without a will and understanding to participate in uses. These forms will profit a person nothing.

But the Lord is alive. He will sit in His holy temple, directing infinite uses toward His church and people. His actions will not be mute and lifeless. There is no need to cry out to Him “awake” and “arise.” He knows and sees everything even before it happens. Everything He does is profitable to the whole of His universe. The least of the least things He does has an impact on all facets of the universe. There are no wasted motions, no gaudy things without value, no actions just for showing off. His Love and Wisdom bring vital returns.

Recall the words of *Isaiah 55:11*:

“So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

Those who believe this with all of their heart stand in awe before Him. They don’t feel the threat of hell nor the need to defend the ways of the Lord. In respectful and assured silence (calm), we, as a church, will honor our Heavenly Father and praise His name continuously.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 2:18-20*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Please note that in this portion of the prophecy, there is a shift in the “woes.” The first sets of woes were directed to those who enjoy deceiving others. In this section, the woes are directed to those who deceive themselves. Which form of deception do you think we are vulnerable to the most?

- Can we put a modern face on the idols that are called to awake and arise? What might it be?
- Recall for a moment a story in *I Kings 18*. Elijah and the prophets of Baal had a show-down. The call went out from the prophets to Baal to consume the altar with fire. They cried, wailed, leapt, cut themselves, but no response came from Baal. Elijah called for 12 water pots to be poured on the wood and sacrifice dedicated to the God of the Israelites. A fire from heaven fell and consumed everything on and near the altar. Elijah said, "Choose you this day whom you shall serve..." Wouldn't you love to have a clear-cut shown-down today with hell and its lying teachers? How do you imagine that happening?
- Having studied this section, do you feel that you will have a new reaction to the words "The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him."?
- I can picture hell quaking before the person who believes that the Lord is in His temple and speaks such words in holy worship. Can you?

Chapter Three

HABAKKUK 3:1-4

“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.

O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years! In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy. God came from Teman, the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise. His brightness was like the light; He had rays flashing from His hand, and there His power was hidden.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Prediction that the Lord will come into the world, to whom belongs Divine truth and good.”

AC 482 [2]

- “In Habakkuk...3:2...the ‘midst of the years’ signifies the Lord’s advent. In lesser intervals it signifies every coming of the Lord, as when man is being regenerated; in greater, when the church of the Lord is arising anew. It is likewise called the ‘year of the redeemed,’...”

AC 893 [2]

- “...in the Word a ‘year’ is continually used with the meaning of a time and a state. As in...Habakkuk...3:2...where ‘years’ denote a time and state.”

AC 2906 [7]

- “That a ‘year’ and ‘years’ denote the full time of a church, is plain in Habakkuk...3:2, 3...This is said of the Lord’s advent; ‘in the midst of the years’ denotes in the fullness of times...”

AC 2714

- “That ‘Paran’ is illumination from the Lord’s Divine Human, is evident from the signification of ‘Paran,’ as being the Lord’s Divine Human, which is

manifest from the passages in the Word where it is named, as in the prophet Habakkuk...3:2-4...Where the Lord's advent is plainly treated of, which is signified by 'reviving in the midst of the years,' and by 'making known in the midst of the years.' His Divine Human is described by 'God coming from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran.' He is said to 'come from Teman' as to celestial love, and 'from Mount Paran' as to spiritual love; and that illumination and power are from these is signified by saying that there shall be 'brightness and light,' and by His having 'horns going out from His hand;' the 'brightness and light' are illumination, and the 'horns' are power."

AC 1675 [4, 6]

- "...Mount Paran, signifies neither mountains nor their inhabitants, but Divine realities, thus the celestial things of the Lord's Human essence...[and] in the opposite, the love of self."

TCR 93

- "...it will be shown by the following passages from the Word that the Lord in respect to His Human is called the Holy One of Israel..." *Habakkuk 3:3* is cited.

AC 2832 [6]

- "In Habakkuk...3:3, 4...Where the Lord is treated of; that 'He had horns out of His hand, and there was the hiding of His strength,' plainly denotes the power of truth; that 'Mount Paran' is the Divine Spiritual or the Divine Truth of the Lord's Human, may be seen above (n. 2714), which also is the 'brightness' and the 'light'."

AR 270

- "A horn' is frequently mentioned in the Word, and by it is everywhere signified power; therefore when 'a horn' is predicated of the Lord, it signifies omnipotence...That 'a horn' signifies power, and when applied to the Lord, omnipotence, may appear from the following passages..." *Habakkuk 3:4* is one of the many passages offered.

AE 316 [7]

- "In Habakkuk...3:4...Because 'horns' signify Divine truth with power, it is said, 'the brightness of Jehovah God shall be as light,' and 'in the horns is the hiding of His strength;' 'the brightness of Jehovah' and 'light' signify Divine truth; and 'the hiding of His strength in the horns' signifies the omnipotence of Divine good through Divine truth, for all power of good is through truth, and in Divine truth lies concealed the omnipotence that is of Divine good."

Derived Doctrine

"A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth."

- Let's begin our derived doctrinal study with the word **Shigionoth**. We have no mention of its spiritual meaning in the Writings. Biblical dictionaries offer us the following explanations.
- "Shiggaion is from the verb shagah, 'to reel about through drink'...the plural form, Shigionoth...denotes a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion; a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode." (*WebBible Encyclopedia*. www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/home.html)
- "Shiggaion from the verb shagah, 'to reel about through drink,' occurs in Psalm 7. The plural form, Shigionoth, is found in Hab 3:1. The word denotes a lyrical poem composed under strong mental emotion; a song of impassioned imagination accompanied with suitable music; a dithyrambic ode." (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*. www.sacred-texts.com.)
- We need to exercise some caution with the above references. Since the Word is authored by the Lord, I cannot accept Habakkuk "reeling due to strong drink" as an explanation. Revelation does not occur through someone who is intoxicated. Habakkuk might not have fully understood the words. He might have received these words in such a way that he "reeled" in a sense because of their "staggering" importance, but I don't think these words came to him while under the influence of "drink." A lyrical poem composed under "strong mental emotion" pushes the reader also to think more about Habakkuk's human emotions than of Divine emotions. "Impassioned imagination" focuses on Habakkuk's mental state and away from heavenly correspondences. Could we not picture the Lord's omnipotence inspiring a deep emotional influence within the prophet's soul that took on a poem-like expression and also lent itself to a song? Singing signifies the glorification of the Lord on account of liberation from slavery. (*AC 8261*) Isn't that really what this book of the Word is revealing to us? The "teacher of lies" is being exposed and overcome with the news of the advent of the Lord and the establishment of the New Church. This news could definitely cause reeling and staggering; it is strong emotional news to the insanely drunken residents of hell.

"O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years!"

- Why would Habakkuk become afraid of the Lord's speech? He had been talking with the Lord from the beginning. Why have fears now?
- To "hear" signifies to understand (perceive) truth and to obey it. (*AR 356*) *AE 588* explains to "hear" as signifying perception from the will of good. *AE 808* adds this insight: to "hear" signifies both to understand truth and to perceive good.

- To be **afraid** of the Lord's speech, or voice, represents many things. "Speech" or voice represents the enunciation of the Lord's precepts from the Word. (AC 8360) A voice from the throne signifies instruction from the Lord. (AR 236)
- AC 6849 explains what being afraid to look upon the Lord means. "That this signifies lest they should be injured by the presence of the Divine Itself is evident from the signification of 'being afraid' as being fear lest they should be injured, namely, the interiors, for this was the cause of the fear...Lest therefore the angels in heaven should be injured by the influx of heat from the Lord as a sun, they are each of them veiled over by a certain thin and suitable cloud, whereby...that sun is tempered."
- Is the source of Habakkuk's fear an overwhelming sense of what he saw the Lord was about to do? Were the "word-pictures" of Divine instruction so awesome that the prophet trembled with fear and anticipation of what he had to give in prophesy? Was he wondering when these things might come about? Did he have a holy fear about who might be left standing in the presence of the Lord? "If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3)
- "...revive' Your work in the midst of the years!" is a prayer for enlightenment. It is a specific request that the Word, Divine truth, might vivify the church. It also signifies every coming of the Lord and to have a longing for the Lord's Advent.(AC 2714)

"...in wrath remember mercy..."

- The word "wrath" in the literal sense can be misleading. One could be led to imagine anger, indignation, and retaliation coming **from** the Lord toward His people. Instead, it represents **people** turning away from truth. (AC 6359) "Wrath" represents human opposition (AC 5798 [6]), the fury of the hells to inflict violence on those whom the Divine protects (AC 8284), and the advent of the Lord to bring judgment (Divine Love and Wisdom 5). This petition for mercy is a prayer for Divine protection to help us (rescue us) when we err and stray from His order.

"God came from Teman...the Holy one from Mount Paran..."

- These words (Teman and Paran) in their spiritual and celestial sense are meant to call our attention to the mission of the Lord's Divine Human. AE 400 [10] teaches us that "Teman" in the negative sense represents the change in the church brought about by evils and falsities. "Teman" represents the church perishing. The Lord, in order to correct this "death", assumed the Divine Human to rescue, vivify, and redeem the church. "Paran," we are taught in AC 2711, signifies the Lord's illumination from the Divine Human to bring us out of obscurity.

“Selah.”

- The correspondential meaning of the word “Selah” is not given in the Writings. The *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (volume three, page 460) gives a glimpse of its use as follows: “Selah...is probably a direction for the conductor that now a signal of the cymbals should interrupt the even flow of chant. Probably Selah was originally a marginal gloss...It [Selah] occurs seventy-one times in thirty-nine psalms and in Hab. 3:3, 9, 13...Most expressive [at]...the end of the main thought by a soft whispering of strings, followed by a clash of cymbals.”

“His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise.”

- The petition for His glory to cover the heavens and the earth to be full of His praise is a prayerful anticipation of the Lord’s Divine Truth proceeding from Him in fullness and in judgment. All of this glory will come from the Word as the internal sense is revealed. There are approximately 49 passages in the Writings that speak of this when explaining the meaning of “glory.” Here are but a few citations to point the way for anyone wanting to check out the fuller explanation: *AE 235 [6], 253 [5], 270 [3], 282 [7], 288 [4]; TCR 780; NJHD 260.*
- “Praise” signifies the love of truth. (*AC 3880 [5]*) “Praise” signifies to worship the Lord from internals and externals. (*AE 406*)

“...He had rays flashing from His hand, and there His power was hidden.”

- This passage speaks of the infinite power of the Lord’s Divine truth. The “rays flashing from His hand” signify the strength that is involved in Divine Uses and the omnipotence of His Divine Good and Divine Truth. The fullness of these Divine attributes is hidden from human comprehension. *AC 3854* gives us this clue: “**...it is impossible by any thought to comprehend as much as one out of a hundred millions of them [the Lord’s minutest involvements in our lives]...a series extending to eternity...each moment being as a new beginning...**” All of His love, care, and attention to the tiniest details of our life escape our comprehension. “His power was hidden.” It is hidden from us, hidden from the angels, and wonderfully hidden from the hells so they can do no harm to the Lord’s infinite plan for the New Church as promised in the book of *Revelation*.

Putting It All Together

“A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on Shigionoth.” (*Habakkuk 3:1*)

“Predication that the Lord will come into the world...” (*P&P*)

What do these quotes reveal? Every prophet, at some point in his prophecy, had the privilege of predicting the Lord's advent. When the revelation came to each prophet, there was invigorating excitement, anticipation, and humbleness. Not one of them acted as if this was old news. They were overwhelmed with what their spiritual eyes saw. They trembled in the presence of the Lord's awesome power. "O Lord, I have heard Your speech and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work..." All thought of human prudence and power was removed, and a full reliance on the Lord brought Habakkuk to his knees.

"Shigionoth" means having a strong mental and emotional reaction. Like reeling and staggering visionaries, all the prophets couldn't wait to tell everyone about the Lord's advent. This was news too good not to share. And yet, what will it take to get people to listen and amend their ways? How can this prophecy teach the people to sing a new song unto the Lord? How can the church be made to see the power and brightness of the Lord with wonderful things coming from His hand? We can't comprehend fully one out of one hundred millions of the Lord's ways. The Lord is involved in the minutest matters of our life. He is working new beginnings for everyone. To those who speak of the Lord as being beyond comprehension, the message of the prophet must say, you err if you think He is indifferent and uninvolved in your life.

When it was revealed to John the Baptist who the Lord was, he uttered these words: "He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all..."
(*John 3:31*)

The Lord is coming to rescue, vivify, and redeem the church. To this prophetic reality, let the people of the church, with great joy and trembling anticipation, say "Amen." The word "Amen" carries with it a prayer of consent: "so may it ever be."

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:1-4*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Are you able to identify with Habakkuk, with his reeling and staggering experience of seeing the meaning and effect of the Lord's advent?
- The Lord's New Church is so important in overcoming the death experience of falsity. What would your life be like if you didn't know the doctrines of the Second Coming?
- Can you envision the teaching about the Lord being involved in our lives? What about the one out of one hundred millions of things He does for us to bring about new beginnings? Doesn't that teaching bring hope for our minute

happenings? A new beginning out of the mundane events of our life is an impressive truth to offset times when we think we are in a rut.

- The Lord hiding His ways—is this OK with you? A certain amount of trust frees us. Trusting that the Lord will give us insights when we are ready to use them is comforting. On the other hand, if the Lord revealed too many of His ways to us, don't you think it would weigh us down with more than we could handle?
- Have you ever questioned how much of the Lord's good and truth is enough for you?

Habakkuk 3:5-7

“Before Him went pestilence, and fever followed at His feet. He stood and measured the earth; He looked and startled the nations. And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills bowed. His ways are everlasting. I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction; the curtains of the land of Midian trembled.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “He will examine the church; it is not a church.”

AC 6435 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:6...the ‘mountains of eternity’ denote the good of love of the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial; the ‘hills of an age,’ the mutual love that belonged to that church; the former being its internal, the latter its external. When that church is meant in the Word, seeing that it was the most ancient one, ‘eternity’ is sometimes added, as here the ‘mountains of eternity,’ and elsewhere the ‘days of eternity’ (n. 6239); and an ‘age’ also is added, as here the ‘hills of an age,’ and also in the prophetic utterance of Israel: ‘to the desire of the hills of an age.’ Hence it is evident that by the ‘hills of an age’ are signified the goods of mutual love, which are of the celestial church, or of the Lord’s celestial kingdom.”

AR 486

- “...by ‘measuring’ it and the things which are of it, is signified to know the quality.” *Habakkuk 3:6* is cited as an example.

AE 629 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:6 [it] is said of visitation and the Last Judgment by the Lord when He should come into the world. ‘He stood and measured the earth’

means exploring at that time of what quality the church is, 'to measure' signifying to explore, and 'the earth' the church; 'He saw and drove asunder the nations' signifies the casting down into hell of all who are in evils and falsities therefrom, 'to drive asunder' signifying to cast into hell, and 'nations' those who are in evils and in falsities therefrom; 'the mountains of eternity were scattered' signifies that the celestial church, such as was with the most ancient people, who were in love to the Lord, had perished, 'the mountains of eternity' signifying that church and that love; 'the hills of the age did bow' signifies that the spiritual church perished, such as was with the ancient people after the flood, who were in love towards the neighbor, 'the hills of the age' signifying that church and that love; 'His goings are an age' signifies according to the state of the church at that time, which was a perverted state."

AC 3242 [5]

- "In Habakkuk...3:6, 7...the advent of the Lord is treated of. The 'tents of Cushan' denote a religiosity from evil; the 'curtains of the land of Midian,' one from falsity."

AC 9595 [4]

- "In Habakkuk...3:7...'the curtains of Midian' denote truths with those who are in simple good (n. 3242, 4756, 4788, 6773, 6775)."

AC 1566

- "...in the opposite sense 'tents' signify worship not holy...[as in] Habakkuk 3:7, 8..."

Derived Doctrine

"Before Him went pestilence, and fever followed at His feet."

- "Him" signifies the Lord. The things mentioned as going "before Him" represent the state of disorder the church had fallen into prior to His advent.
- "Pestilence" signifies the vastation and consummation of good and truth. (*Last Judgment 73*)
- "Pestilence" signifies total devastation. (*AC 7536*)
- "Pestilence" signifies those who by the Word and those who by knowledges (scientifica) have confirmed themselves in falsities and evils. (*AE 388 [19]*)
- Every disease signifies some evil that destroys the life of the will of good, and falsities that destroy the understanding of truth. Thus, disease means destruction of the spiritual life which is of faith and charity. (*AC 8364*) A "burning fever" denotes the cupidity of evil. (*AC 8364 [3]*)

- “At His feet” signifies the natural. It signifies instruction. (AC 2714 [2]) “Feet” represent the lowest part of the body, externals that were to be under the Lord’s watchful care. (AR 470)

“He stood...”

- AE 407, explaining the meaning of Revelation 6:15-17, addresses the question “who is able to stand” in the presence of the Lord. The answer is given: “no one.” Evil runs and hides in caves and under rocks. With His advent and the Last Judgment, the Lord alone stands above all else. He Stands for Good and Truth in the midst of the fallen evil and falsity.

“...the tents of Cushan...”

- AC 3242 explains that this stands for a religion raised up out of evil.
- “Tents” signify holy worship (or not holy). (AC 1102, 1566)
- “Tents” signify the goods of love and of worship. (AE 365 [40])

“...land of Midian trembled.”

- “Midian,” in the negative sense, represents the perversion of good and evil. This representation grows from the fact that they made for themselves dens in the mountains and caverns. The sons of Israel were possessed by the spiritual example and ways of the Midianites. (AE 410 [11])

Putting It All Together

Is there any question about the meaning of our lesson? The Word gives us a review of the demise of the Most Ancient Church, the Ancient Church, and now the Jewish Church. In each case, the people of the church lost that which was celestial, spiritual, and natural. A “pestilence and fever” swept through and consummated everything of the church. The Word was being used for self-promotion. Knowledges were crafted to advance the goals of self-love. P&P summarizes these passages this way: “**[The Lord] will examine the church; it is not a church.**” (Emphasis added.)

What spiritual failings cause a church to be “not a church”? The external church was not engaged in worship that was holy. It was not measuring up to the Lord’s standards of good and truth. Nor were its acts of charity and faith acceptable. It had a fever of self-love that was burning away the core of its spiritual health. The Lord’s advent was absolutely necessary. He had to come and stand before His people to save and redeem them. Hell and its legions were responsible for the demise of the church. So the Lord came to “bow” and subject all things to His will and understanding. *The Doctrine of Faith* 34 sums it up this way: “The Lord from eternity...came into the world to subdue the hells and to glorify His Human; and

without this no mortal could have been saved; and they are saved who believe in Him.”

The church to be a church must have a balanced grasp of holy worship and humility. It needs to have within its tents a passionate voluntary response of love, wisdom, and use to keep its faith and charity free of pestilence and burning fevers. Put another way, we need to be passionate about the church and the doctrines. Lukewarm approaches will not work. A teaching of the church states that we must let truth be truth. The essence of this teaching is that we need to not play games with the Lord’s Word. Compromising, equivocating, deleting teachings we don’t like from the truth of the Word, all make a church “not a church.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:5-7*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Do the churches in our times seem to be going through states of pestilence and fever?
- If pestilence and fever-like conditions exist in any church, do we understand why “it is not a church”?
- The Lord coming to measure the earth reminds me of the book of *Amos*. Amos was sent with a “plumb line” to measure the church, and it was found deficient. What valuable tools do we have to measure the health of our church? Are size and growth, doctrinal classes, home study (reading) of the Word, or educational enrollment statistics good measuring tools?
- The scattering of the mountains and the bowing of the perpetual hills are representative of humbling self-love and overcoming conceit. What kinds of self-love and conceit exist in the church that we might have to do battle against every day?
- Have you ever heard someone say, or indicate, that a given teaching from the Word is no longer valid or applicable in our lives? The Lord did abrogate certain Levitical requirements for us. He did the abrogating. Popular opinion votes did not. So the church, to be a church, must be alert to the dangers of man-made prudence deciding questions of faith and worship.
- When we think about some issues, where there are no direct teachings to guide us, what do we do? We can’t put our head in the sand and hope the issues will go away. Can you picture making a tentative decision with a prayerful attitude of “I’m willing to change my mind if I see that I am wrong and the Lord shows me how to rectify my thoughts”?
- In question 5, it was mentioned that the Lord abrogated certain Old Testament requirements. Do you know which ones were abrogated? Check

out AC 2180 [7], AC 4489 [3], AC 10637, AC 9349 [4], AC 10360 [8], and TCR 670 [2]. But after you read these, consider this teaching: "Although abrogated they are still holy things of the Word." (AC 8972 [2], 9349 [2])

HABAKKUK 3:8-9

"O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers, was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation? Your bow was made quite ready; Oaths were sworn over Your arrows. Selah. You divided the earth with rivers."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil."

AC 5321 [6-8]

- "...by 'horse and chariot,' [are signified] the things of the understanding and of the doctrine of good and truth." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited in section 8.

AR 409

- "That 'rivers' signify truths in abundance may be evident from the following passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited.

AR 437

- "...'chariots' signify doctrinals...'horses' signify the understanding of the Word...and 'many horses,' what is plenary...That 'a chariot' signifies doctrine, is plain from these passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8* is cited.

AE 518 [25]

- "In Habakkuk...3:8...[there is] a supplication that the church may be guarded and not perish; the 'rivers' and 'the sea' signify all things of the church, because they are its ultimates...'to ride upon horses,' in reference to Jehovah, that is, the Lord, signifies the Divine wisdom which is in the Word; and 'chariots' signify doctrinals therefrom."

AC 2686 [3]

- "In Habakkuk...3:8, 9...the 'bow' is the doctrine of good and truth."

AR 299

- "...by 'a bow' is signified the doctrine of truth and good from the Word fighting against evils and falsities. To fight against falsities and evils is also to fight against the hells, because evils and falsities are from thence...That 'a bow,' in the Word, signifies doctrine combating...may appear from these passages..." *Habakkuk 3:8-9* is cited.

AE 357 [7]

- In Habakkuk...3:8, 9..."Thy bow shall be made bare' signifies that the doctrine of truth shall be laid open."

Derived Doctrine

"O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers..."

- Can the Lord ever be displeased, angry, furious, irritable, or annoyed with any of His children? Our heart and mind needs to respond with a resounding "No!" Does He act to correct, remove, and lift His church out of falsities and mistakes? Yes! Will He calmly, lovingly overcome and defeat the work of the hells? Yes!
- Please note that we will have to deal with the appearance that the Lord is displeased, angry, and wrathful, and that He swore an oath to undo Israel. To fully understand these things, we must note that these words have a positive sense and a negative sense. Only the positive things represent the Lord. The negative sense comes from hell, and hellish spirits attempt to project the negative as coming from the Lord.
- *AC 6288* gives us a clue about the true meaning of this image of the Lord being "displeased." "What is higher can perceive how the case is with what is done in what is lower, thus also whether it is truth that is being thought there, or not. For as what is higher sees from the light of heaven, it sees the things that are below...thus the internal celestial which is 'Joseph,' saw that the spiritual good from the natural...was in error, and therefore it displeased him." Seeing the lower choose what will separate it from Divine ends is displeasing in the sense that this choice will turn what is lower away from the Lord. The Lord doesn't want that to happen. He wants all to enter heaven. He is not satisfied that one soul should be lost. So the Divine in His compassion is unhappy, saddened, or displeased with the straying of His sheep.
- In the **positive sense**, "rivers" signify truths in abundance. In the **negative sense**, "rivers" represent falsities in abundance. So the answer to the question "O Lord, were You displeased with the rivers, was Your anger against the rivers..." depends on which spiritual state Israel was living.
- The perception of the Lord's "anger" against the rivers comes from hell's point of view. Evil wants its falsity to prevail and be free from disapproval.

The least opposition from the Lord is perceived by hell as anger, and hell sees nothing of His zeal or love to protect and save.

"...was Your wrath against the sea, that You rode on Your horses, Your chariots of salvation?"

- *AE 887* offers this insight: "...anger and wrath are mentioned in many passages of the Word...**anger** means the love and desire for evil in man and **wrath** the love and desire for falsity..." (*Emphasis added.*)
- *AR 532* explains that "wrath signifies a lamentation over those in the churches who are in untruths of faith and consequently are in evils of life..."
- *AR 558* explains that "wrath signifies a lamentation over those who are in things internal and external of the doctrine concerning faith alone, and are consequently in evil."
- *AE 518 [25]* summarizes this passage as "a supplication that the church may be guarded and not perish; the 'rivers' and 'the sea' signify all things of the church, because they are its ultimates...'to ride upon horses,' in reference to Jehovah, that is the Lord, signifies the Divine wisdom which is the Word; and 'chariots' signify doctrinals therefrom."

"...Oaths were sworn over Your arrows."

- "Oaths" that are sworn by the Lord signify that which is divinely irrevocable. (*AC 2842*)
- "Arrows" imply the necessity of a bow. *AR 299* explains that "...by the 'bow' is signified the doctrine of truth and good from the Word fighting against evils and falsities..."
- "Arrows" signify selected truths to be used to combat evils. (*AE 684 [15]*)

"Selah."

- Picture in your mind the ringing sound of cymbals. They crash, breaking or interrupting the flow of the words so as to alert all listeners to the importance of what is about to be said.

"You [the Lord] divided the earth with rivers."

- "Dividing" signifies the Lord distinguishing between the internal person and the external person. (*AC 24*) "Earth," in many of passages in the Writings, signifies the church. The dividing of the earth with rivers indicates the Lord setting boundaries between spiritual and natural truths (the internal and external person). This prophecy announces that the Lord's abundant truths (rivers) will illustratively distinguish that which is from the Lord from that which comes from human beings. The "Selah" announces the truth that "He (the Lord) will dissipate the falsities of evil." (*P&P*)

- *Isaiah 55:8* speaks of such boundaries: “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways...My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- The Selah cymbals need to dramatically chime this message so that all will sit up and listen alertly.

Putting It All Together

Falsity will be dissipated. The sound of the Selah cymbals needs to clash loudly to catch our attention with this important Divine announcement. The showy, pompous veneer of the natural person will be peeled off. The Lord’s Word will establish clear and precise spiritual boundaries. The Word will provide the bow and arrows necessary to combat falsity. When will all of this happen? The slow but sure ways of the Lord’s Providence have started the cleansing of the church with the Lord’s abundant rivers of revelation. Years of proprial resistance have built up the walls of ignorance. These must be knocked down. Evil and falsity will thoroughly be emptied and cleansed. Only the Lord is able to unravel the widely spreading tentacles of evil. Each connection, each subtlety, each evil appearance of acceptance and propriety has to be brought to the Lord’s light. These things will happen under the Lord’s direction. Can we wait and trust in the Lord’s timing?

With the gift of the Writings, the process has begun. We need to cooperate with the Lord and hone the use of the spiritual “bow and arrows” He provides to fight and overcome the legion of hellish ideas. Our prayers need to supplicate the Lord for help so that our aim is sure and steady. We need to ask for His help so that our church may be guarded; we need to ask Him to bless us so that we will be useful vessels in the growth of His church.

When will the work of the Lord’s New Church begin and be completed? We don’t know. This lesson emphatically says, “**He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil.**” Hell hopes that we will not read and believe these words. Hell hopes we become lethargic and negative about the coming of the New Church. But if we gain confidence and become resolute in the promises of the Lord, hell will tremble and flee from our presence. The hellish spirits flee, not because of us, but because of the Lord’s power and thorough justice.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:8-9*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Are you familiar with the propaganda hell uses to try to convince us why and how the Lord and His church are failing? Some of the usual points are declining membership, declining participation in Friday doctrinal classes, and low attendance in church each Sunday morning. What positive things will we use to counterbalance the views of hell?
- What “bow and arrows” of faith can we use in the fight against hell and its disorders?
- What are some of your favorite spiritual arrows? David, with his bag of stones, picked one that was “smooth” and probably well-suited to do battle against Goliath. Do we carry around stones or arrows every day to maintain our spiritual safety?
- Do you recall the historical explanation of “Selah” as the notation of the effective use of cymbals to call attention to something extraordinary in worship services? In other words, a “Selah” was a kind of wake-up call to arouse people from their spiritual lethargy. What teachings act as a “Selah” for you?
- The Word calls us to trust in the Lord; He calls us to be of good courage, to wait on Him, to be still and know that He is God. These are some fundamental requirements. We could add many more. But let’s close with this one from the *Psalms*. “Let me not be ashamed of my hope. Hold me up, and I shall be safe.” (*Psalm 119:116*) What other quotes might you add to this list?
- “He will by His Divine truth dissipate the falsities of evil.” (*P&P*) That sounds positive. There are no conditional words in that quote. Might you hear the clash of the cymbals? Selah! The Lord has spoken. He will win, and hell will lose. Does this teaching get our attention and build our confidence?

HABAKKUK 3:10-15

“The mountains saw You and trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by. The deep uttered its voice, and lifted its hands on high. The sun and moon stood still in their habitation; at the light of Your arrows they went, at the shining of Your glittering spear. You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger. You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed. You struck the head from the house of the wicked, by laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah. You thrust through with his own arrows the head of his villages. They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret. You walked through the sea with Your horses, through the heap of great waters.”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Judgment upon them, combat with them, their destruction, and their being cast into hell.”

AR 53 [5-6]

- “This is said of the Jewish church, which was ‘to breathe out its soul,’ that is, would perish; ‘the sun shall set,’ signifies that there will be no longer any love and charity...something similar is also said in Habakkuk...3:10, 11...”

AE 401 [17]

- “In Habakkuk...(Hab. 3:10, 11). This chapter treats of the Lord’s coming and of the Last Judgment then accomplished by Him; ‘the mountains were moved, the overflowing of waters passed by,’ signifies that those who were in the love of self and the world were cast out by the falsities of evil into which they were let; ‘mountains’ signifying the loves of self and the world, and ‘the overflowing of waters’ to be let into falsities from these loves, ‘waters’ meaning falsities, and ‘overflowing’ to be let into them. That by those in that state genuine truths and goods are not seen, but instead of these, fatuous truths and goods, which in themselves are falsities and evils, is signified by, ‘Thine arrows go forth in light, the lightning of Thy spear in brightness;’ ‘arrows’ or ‘lightning’ signifying fatuous truths, which in themselves are falsities, and ‘the lightning of the spear’ signifying fatuous goods, which in themselves are the evils of falsity...those who are in falsities from the loves of self and the world, when the Last Judgment takes place, and these are cast out.”

AC 2709 [3]

- “...a ‘quiver’ denotes the doctrine of good and truth. In Habakkuk...3:11...The arrow of salvation...signifies arcana concerning the doctrine of good and truth.”

AC 3542 [3]

- “In Habakkuk...3:13...where ‘smiting the head out of the house of the wicked’ denotes destroying the principles of falsity; ‘laying bare the foundation even unto the neck’ denotes intercepting the conjunction thereby.”

AR 258

- “That ‘a horse’ signifies the understanding of the Word, may also appear from the following passages...Habakkuk 3:8, 15...”

AC 9954 [10]

- It “...is evident from many passages in the Word (as...Habakkuk 3:13...and elsewhere)...The reason why they anointed the kings was that these might represent the Lord in respect to judgment from Divine truth; therefore in the Word by ‘kings’ are signified truths Divine...”

AR 779

- “That they anointed the kings with it [oil], and therefore the kings were called ‘the anointed of Jehovah’...Habakkuk 3:13...because they thereby represented the Lord as to the Divine Human.”

AE 375 [16]

- It “...is evident from many passages in the Word (as...Habakkuk 3:13...and elsewhere)...Kings were anointed that they might represent the Lord in relation to judgment from Divine truth; therefore in the Word ‘kings’ signify Divine truths...”

AR 485

- “‘A staff’ signifies power, because wood, of which staffs were made among the ancient people, signified good; and because it is instead of the right hand, and supports it, and by ‘right hand’ is signified power; hence it is, that a scepter is a short staff and by ‘a scepter’ is signified the power of a king...That a staff signifies power, is evident from these passages...Habakkuk 3:14...”

AE 727 [7]

- “‘...the rod of Jehovah’s mouth’ signifies Divine truth or the Word in its natural sense; and ‘the breath of His lips’ signifies Divine truth or the Word in the spiritual sense, both destroying the falsities of evil in the church, which is signified by ‘smiting the earth and slaying the wicked’...(Habakkuk 3:14)... [has] a like signification.”

Derived Doctrine

Please go back and read **AE 401 [17]**. That number gives us direct teachings regarding the general meaning of the internal sense of *Habakkuk 3:10-11*. We will focus here on the rest of *Habakkuk 3:12-15*.

“You marched through the land in indignation; You trampled the nations in anger.”
(*Emphasis added.*)

- Marching involves organization, order, cooperation, a willingness to follow a similar cadence and to be in step. Disorganized marching is called “rout step,” in which each marcher follows a different cadence so that the cadence of the group is dissimilar or chaotic. Rout step is useful for safety when an army walks across a bridge, but once the army is over the bridge, it returns to its organized marching cadence.
- The Lord organized the “tents” of Israel in a specific Divine order and told them they were also to “march” in that order. These commands show that obedience, order, cooperation, and following the Lord’s truths were to be extremely important as they “marched” through the desert on their way to the Promised Land.
- Apparently, the church was spiritually in “rout step” in Habakkuk’s time, marching to its own man-made rules that were full of self-love and evil. When the Lord’s Last Judgment neared the church, they perceived His way as a way of “indignation.” The church had a sense of resentment. Those who thought they were wise did not want to be told about their disorder. As usual, they tried to turn the blame for their self-centered “rout step” on the Lord. “You marched through the land in indignation.”
- The church was “trampling,” perverting goods and truths, with the light of their natural intelligence. (*AC 250 and 2162 [16]*) The Lord’s pure zeal and love for His people and church was misdiagnosed by the church. They didn’t see love. They projected the opposite on Him. The church saw none of the Lord’s softness, care, and concern. So they cried out: “You trampled the nations in anger.”
- *AC 249* mentions that the word “nations” in the negative sense represents “those who trust in their Own (proprium)...” From the perspective of the evil proprium, the Lord is believed to be out of control with His anger. What is sad is that the people believed this.

“You went forth for the salvation of Your people, for salvation with Your Anointed.”

- *The Doctrine of Sacred Scriptures 12* gives us a clue as to what “went forth” might signify. The Lord “went forth” for what purpose? To look at and examine the successive states of the church, “from its beginning to its end...”
- Salvation is a process of putting off (shunning) evils as sins against the Lord. To accomplish this, each person needs to actively pursue the Lord. With His

guidance and inspiration, we are to engage our heart and mind in the goals of repentance, reformation, and regeneration. *AE 340 [4]* explains salvation as signifying “to glorify the Lord from spiritual truths...and spiritual good...” Salvation is not an utterance of faith alone. It is a life-long work in process—a going hand-in-hand with the Lord to fight and to rid our life of evil, falsity, and sin.

- Note that the first part of this verse speaks of the Lord’s mission as going forth “***for the salvation of Your people...***”
- This next portion speaks of the Lord’s mission as “***salvation with Your Anointed.***” Why did the Lord specify the **for** and **with** missions of salvation?
- Let’s note first the words “salvation **with** Your Anointed.” This calls our attention to the Lord assuming our nature. It points us to the Lord as the Divine Human. Doing what? Facing hell and subduing it all **for us** while glorifying His human and uniting it with the Divine. His infinite mission was to make that which had become invisible, in the hearts and minds of people, visible again so that the church might worship the Lord God Jesus Christ as the one and only God of Heaven and earth.

“You struck the head from the house of the wicked, by laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah.”

- To unfold the meaning of the spiritual sense, let’s look at the word “head.” In the positive sense, we read that the “head” signifies the whole Human of the Lord. (*AC 10011*) In the opposite sense, the “head” signifies the whole of the person. (*AC 10044*) The “head” signifies intelligence. So our text deals with a question. What will prevail—the intelligence of the Lord or the intelligence of people? We know the answer. The Lord’s will and understanding has no equal; therefore, there is no chance that it would lose to (the head of) human prudence.
- In the earliest prophecy of the Lord’s coming (*Genesis 3:15*), the trampling on the “head” of the serpent is mentioned. This signifies overcoming the dominion of evil in general and self-love in particular. Our lesson then teaches us that “the house of the wicked” (hell) and its disorderly conditions will be subdued by the coming of the Lord. (*AC 250*)
- “...‘smiting the head out of the house of the wicked denotes destroying the principles of falsity...” and “‘laying bare from the foundation to the neck’ denotes intercepting the conjunction” (desolation) of falsity so that it will “no longer [be] admitted into the rational man.” (*AC 3542 [3-4]*) A “neck” signifies influx and communication of higher things with lower things, such as the communication of people’s interiors with their exteriors as the head communicates with the body through the neck. (*AC 3695*)
- **Selah.** Please recall what we read regarding the use of a “Selah.” It probably signaled the clashing sound of cymbals to mark a dramatic event. It was a way to call everyone’s attention to an important teaching. Wake up and listen!

Things are about to change! The Lord is going to prevent evils from polluting the interior of His Word and church.

“You thrust through with his own arrows the head of his villages.”

- “Villages” mean the external aspects of the church. (AC 3270) “Villages” denote natural cognitions and knowledges. (AE 405 [12])
- The thrusting through “**with his own arrows**” clearly illustrates how falsity contributes to its own end. Those who oppose the Lord fall prey to their fallacious external cognitive doctrinal arrows. We can put this into the adage: He who lives by the sword (of falsity) will die by the sword (of falsity).
- Note once again the appearance that the Lord is angrily doing this. The truth is just the opposite. Falsity has no love, concern, or unity. Like cowards, lovers of falsity flee at the presence of the Lord. Do you recall the number of stories in the Word where a multitudinous enemy of Israel, fleeing in panic from the angels of the Lord, fell on their own swords? So, too, evil falls victim to its own doctrinal arrows of falsity.

“They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me; their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.”

- A “whirlwind” has an interesting correspondence. Picture vain and inconsequential things swirling around, disturbing the peace of the church. (AC 9147 [2]) Do any present whirlwinds come to mind that are sweeping or scattering us? The whirlwind wants to “blow” us away from the essentials of the Word and leave us confused and separated from one another and the Lord. If we face such stormy threats, we must remember we love a Lord who calmed the boisterous winds and steadied the course of our doctrinal boats of faith.
- “Feasting” in the positive sense signifies being nourished by the good of charity. Such a feast gladdens the heart and mind and nourishes (enriches) the soul with good things. (AC 2371 [4]) In the opposite sense, “feasting” signifies the adulteration of good and truth, thus making one’s soul poor.
- The poor spirit, the poor feast, always happen in secret. How did the Lord put it? “Everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest their deeds should be exposed.” (John 3:20) The darkness of evil rejoices with a plan to feast on the poor in secret.

“You walked through the sea with Your horses, through the heap of great waters.”

- “Horses” in the positive represent a love of understanding the Word. (AR 298) A horse signifies the love of learning or intellectual things. (AC 3727) The opposite sense (like the red horse, pale horse, and black horse in *Revelation*) signifies the varying degrees of the understanding and the will being destroyed by self-love and falsity.

- The horses mentioned in our text are the Lord's. His horses are in the highest sense the perfect blending of the celestial, spiritual, and natural levels of the Word walking through the sea. Walking represents living (and applying) the Word according to the doctrine of truth and faith. What are some of the adjectives that come to mind when thinking about the Lord's horses? Genuine, forthright, honest, pure, caring, powerfully useful, unselfish, and everlasting/eternal concepts for heavenly living.
- The Lord's horses cut right through the "heap of great waters." In the Lord's sight, there is no "red-tape" nor profoundly unanswerable issues. He is able to sort through and resolve things that confound us. Our text shows that the great heap of water cannot knock His horses off stride.
- We need to take comfort in the Lord's mercy sorting through and resolving things. Good and truth will have dominion over all things. Human prudence will not stump Him nor slow down His restoration of the New Church.

Putting It All Together

Let's pull up several direct teachings in the Writings to put us on the path to understanding the internal sense. Like a powerful story, let's follow the thread of continuity from beginning to end so we can remember the theme in our own times of struggles and doubts. To do so will help us be strong and very courageous.

- *P&P* sums up the meaning of *Habakkuk 3:10-15* this way: "Judgment upon them [the Jewish Church/hells], combat with them, their destruction, and their being cast into hell."
- *AE 401 [17]*: "This chapter treats of the Lord's coming and of the Last Judgment...those who were in the love of self and the world were cast out by the falsities of evil into which they were let..."
- The church was chaotically out of step with the Lord's truth. They marched to their own cadence and cared little for others. To excuse themselves, they blamed the Lord for the mistakes, the pain, and the trampling of the things of the church.
- The Lord answered by telling them that the head of the house of the wicked would be struck. The intelligence of human beings was faulty. It could not stand in the presence of the Lord. To prevent the inflowing of evil into the spiritual rational person, the "neck" of the church was going to be closed off. The disorderly conditions of the church were to be subdued by the coming of the Lord.
- The evil were going to be thrust through by their faulty doctrinal arrows. As hard as the evil sought to stir things up with the whirlwind of controversy, the Lord was not going to be blown off course. He steadied the ship of doctrine, and the winds obeyed His voice.
- The horses of the Lord will be surefooted in the heap of great waters. Nothing said, thought, or implemented by evil reasoning will ever knock the Lord's

horses over. His Word is everlastingly sure. His Word will be studied to eternity and will never be exhausted.

- The former mocking of the Lord and the feasting on the poor will be over. That evil which was being done in secret will be brought to light. The Lord will expose the intent of evil; everything will be overcome by His advent and Last Judgment, and hell will be cast out.
- **Selah.** Let the reader of this prophecy hear the clash of the cymbals. Let the heart and mind hear the Lord's message clearly. The true church of the Lord will be established. The church of the evil will flee in panic when it faces the Lord. There will be combat. There will be destruction. Hell will be cast out. The enemy will be thrust through by its own arrows.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:10-15*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Was there a favorite scriptural image in this lesson that will help you with your fight against the hells and the dead church of self-love? What was it?
- How do you think we are doing, as a church, in the cadence of our march toward the Promised Land? Are we together or in rout step?
- What kind of whirlwind of vain and inconsequential thinking is disturbing the peace of the church in our times?
- Isn't it useful to think about evil falling on its own arrows of doctrinal deceit? Did you ever pick up on this point in stories such as the one about Gideon's fight with the Midianites? Three hundred men with pitchers and candles caused a whole army to run and cry out in fear while fleeing.
- Blaming the Lord is a constant theme. How do you deal with the plethora of accusations that the Lord is insensitive and unfeeling in the lives of the unfortunate?
- Do you have a positive feeling for the important use of the word "Selah" as found in our text and the *Psalms*?
- The steady horses, the balanced progress against hell are encouraging themes in the books of the prophets. The Lord will not be deterred. The chicanery of the hells will be dealt with, and the spiritually poor will be fed and nourished by the Lord. Do we hear this theme loud and clear?
- Are there any other points you want to add to this summary?

HABAKKUK 3:16-17

“When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice; rottenness entered my bones; and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble. When he comes up to the people, He will invade them with his troops, though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls...”

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- “Grief on account of their state, that there is no longer anything of the church.”

AE 622 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:16...‘My belly trembled’ signifies grief of thought, therefore it is added, ‘My lips quivered at the voice,’ which signifies a consequent stammering of the speech...”

AC 5113 [13]

- “As in the genuine sense a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the intellectual part; and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the natural man, or what is the same, that a ‘vine’ signifies the good of the interior man, and a ‘fig-tree’ the good of the exterior man, therefore a ‘fig-tree’ is often mentioned in the Word at the same time as a ‘vine;’ as in the following passages...Habakkuk 3:17...”

AC 9277 [3]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...where ‘the fig-tree’ denotes natural good; ‘the vine,’ spiritual good; ‘the olive,’ celestial good; and ‘the field,’ the church.”

AC 9780 [9]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...neither fig-tree, nor vine, nor olive, nor fields are meant, but heavenly things to which they correspond; as also every one is able to acknowledge from himself who acknowledges that the Word treats of such things as belong to heaven and the church, thus as belong to the soul. But they who think of nothing but worldly, earthly, and bodily things, do not see the internal things, and even do not wish to see them, for they say within themselves, What are spiritual things? What are celestial things? And so, What is heavenly food? That these are such things as belong to intelligence

and wisdom they indeed know when it is so said; but that they belong to faith and love, they do not desire; for the reason that they do not imbue their life with such things, and therefore do not attain to the intelligence and wisdom of heavenly truths and goodness.”

AC 10261 [8]

- “...the ‘vine’ and the ‘olive’ are mentioned...as in these passages...Habakkuk 3:17...The ‘fig-tree’ also is here mentioned because the ‘fig-tree’ signifies the good of the external...but the ‘vine’ the good of the internal spiritual church, and the ‘olive’ the good of the internal celestial church...”

AE 375 [37]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...here fig-tree, vine, olive, and fields, are not meant, but heavenly things, to which they correspond. ‘The fig-tree’ corresponds to and thence signifies natural good; ‘the vine’ corresponds to spiritual good, which in its essence is truth; the ‘olive’ as the fruit from which oil is derived, corresponds to the good of love in act; and ‘fields’ correspond to all things of the church; ‘produce’ and ‘foods’ thence signify all things pertaining to spiritual nourishment; from which it is clear what these things signify in their order.”

AE 403 [10]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...‘The fig-tree shall not blossom’ signifies that there shall be no natural good; ‘neither shall there be produce on the vines’ signifies that there shall be no good; ‘the labor of the olive shall dissemble’ signifies that there shall be no celestial good; ‘the fields shall yield no food’ signifies that there shall be no spiritual nourishment.”

AE 638 [21]

- “In Habakkuk...3:17...The ‘fig-tree’ signifies the externals of the church, ‘vines’ its internals; the ‘olive-yard’ its goods; and the ‘field’ the church itself with man.”

Derived Doctrine

“When I heard, my body trembled; my lips quivered at the voice...”

- *AC 2691* explains what is meant when the Lord hears the voice of a child “as being in the internal sense to bring help [because Ishmael]...was in a state of the greatest grief on account of the privation of truth...” Is it possible that something of this teaching applies also to the vision that Habakkuk saw?

Perhaps the Lord was telling him how needy the Jewish church was? As the Lord opened his eyes to see the coming of the Last Judgment, was Habakkuk overwhelmed with the sense of the church's spiritual void and its need for obedience and compliance? The state of the church at that time was not open to the order of the Lord. Seeing what was coming could cause one's body (belly) to tremble in fear and anticipation. How could his lips not quiver with the awesome task of giving this prophecy? His lack of words to explain these things to the indifferent church could have caused him to wonder, "Where do I begin to make them understand what spiritually lies ahead?" *AE 622 [9]* explains that quivering lips represent a "stammering of the speech." Why are the lips mentioned? "Lips" signify confession and thanksgiving from the heart. (*AE 279 [3]*) "Lips" signify the doctrine of good and truth. (*AE 391 [8]*) Do these quotes help us see why the lips quivered at the prospect of delivering this Divine message to a dead church?

"...rottenness entered my bones; and I trembled in myself, that I might rest in the day of trouble."

- "Bones" signify truths in the ultimate, thus truths in the whole complex. (*AE 364[5]*) "Bones" signify the falsity which is from a person's own (proprium). (*AC 3812 [8]*)
- "Rottenness" signifies a vital perishing. (*AE 637 [17]*) "Rottenness" signifies that in which there is nothing of life. In place of perception, there is an affection of falsity from evil. (*AC 10254 [4]*) "...in various places in the Prophets, a kind of reciprocity is expressed, which is such that one finds evil in place of truth, meant by 'rottenness' instead of 'judgement,' and falsity in place of good, meant by 'a cry' instead of 'righteousness'..." (*AC 2240*)
- Why did Habakkuk's prophecy speak of rottenness entering his bones? Could it have been inspired by the message of the Lord's Last Judgment? Did that vision cause a sense of reflection so that a truly humble state caused him to feel inadequate or worthless? Seeing the Lord's power and plan to purify and redeem the church had to have been breath-taking. Examining his role in the whole process of reciprocity, he saw that his proprium and evil had a place in his telling of the truth when they shouldn't have.
- "Trembling" signifies a great alteration and change of state when truth gives place to good. (*AC 3593*) "They who are in good do indeed tremble at the presence of the Divine, but it is a holy tremor which precedes reception...The evil are in terror at the presence of the Divine, and therefore flee away..." (*AC 8816*)
- "...in the day of trouble" seems to represent being in a state of temptation. The word "trouble" "denotes labor...because it is predicated of temptations." (*AC 8670*) The plea, and hope, is that rest may be found in the day of trouble. "Rest" signifies finding a state of peace. (*AC 9279*)

“When he comes up to the people, he will invade them with his troops.”

- Who is the “he” in this quote? The fact that the “he” is in the lower case suggests that it is not the Lord coming up to the people. Is it referring to the invasion of the Chaldean nation? If so, that would tend to put this prophecy in a time-and-space lock. The Word is written for eternal purposes.
- Most likely, the reference to “he” represents the hells marshaling an all-out attempt to intimidate the church and drive away the truth that the Last Judgment was at hand. We have examples of hell using this battle plan. In *Genesis 2:4*, when Adam and Eve were tempted to eat of the forbidden fruit, the wily serpent used the argument: “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- See also *AC 6405* where “A troop shall ravage him” is explained as truth being driven away by illusions, and with respect to truth, an attempt to obscure the understanding.

N.B. Verse 17 deals with **the fig tree; the vines; the olive tree; and the field**. These correspondences are explained in seven quotes cited in the Passages from the Writings section. Please review them as they deal with the demise of natural good, spiritual good, and celestial good within the church. With the lack of spiritual fruit and their failure to provide food, we are taught such things relate to heaven, the church, and the soul. This revelation is a summation of what led to the demise of the Jewish Church. But this verse is like the dark cloud behind which is seen a great silver lining. Verses 18 and 19 end the prophecy of Habakkuk with a glimpse of what lies ahead. There are given “words to live by” regarding the bright future of the New Church after the Last Judgment.

So what we will look at now are the portions of verse 17 not explained above.

“...though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls...”

- A “flock” signifies those who are led and taught. (*AC 343*) A “flock” signifies the church and those who are in truths of simple good. (*AC 6828*)
- A “fold” signifies good from celestial things of love, in which innocence may rest. (*AC 415*)
- A “herd” signifies goods in general. (*AC 3154 [2]*) A “herd” signifies interior and exterior goods of truth. (*AC 6108*)
- A “stall” signifies to imbibe the knowledges of external good, and to do violence is to live contrary to charity. (*AE 279 [4]*)
- What then is the summary of these things? The church as to its simple good was not being fed, that is, taught and led. This neglect led to a process of separation from the fold of celestial good. The violence of self-love did great harm to the “stalls.” Such an attack on the goods of truth caused there to be “no herd in the stalls.”

Putting It All Together

As we have consistently done before, let's begin our summation with the overview *P&P* gives us regarding the meaning of the spiritual sense. The Church will have "Grief on account of their state, that there is no longer anything of the church."

What kind of reaction does this summary elicit? It sounds like pretty glum stuff, downright depressing; is there anything that can come from this that will lift our spirits and inspire us?

Look again at the literal sense:

- Habakkuk reports that his body (belly) trembles and quivers at the voice of the Lord.
- In comparison to the Lord, Habakkuk feels like rotteness has entered his bones. While trembling with this thought, he wishes, indeed longs for the day of temptation to be over so that he might feel at rest, or peace, again.
- Hell doesn't want to hear of the Lord's Last Judgment, so its "army" invades the mind to offer up contrary, illusional information. While hell was boasting of the improbability of a judgment happening, there were clear signs all around the people of the spiritual demise of the church. The Lord spoke about hell's determination to not see spiritual reality in *Matthew 13:15*: "...their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears...so that I should heal them."
- What was the evidence? The fig tree (natural good) was not blossoming. There was no fruit (spiritual good) on the vines. The olive tree (celestial good) failed. The crops of the fields (the church) gave no food. And lastly, the flock had been cut off from the fold, and there was no herd to be found in the stalls.

Can we put a specific illustration into this lesson? As a reader of this study guide, it would be more powerful if you were able to focus on a personal issue. To get some reflective thought going in this process, let's pick a universal issue. As hard as we try to be open and honest with our life, do we find times when it seems impossible to be totally honest? Backed into a defensive corner, has telling a "white lie" ever seemed not only prudent but absolutely necessary? What effect does that white lie have on our natural good? Does the lie momentarily prevent the "fig-tree" from blossoming? In turn, what does the lie do to the "vine"? Does it keep fruit, or spiritual good, off of the vine? Like a chain reaction, the lie causes us to lose a degree of our natural good, spiritual good, and celestial good. The lie separates us from the flock. A flock signifies those who are led and taught. A flock signifies affections of innocence.

Hell with its "army" of illusive thoughts will try to convince us that the Lord will not judge us for these minor offenses. We are human, and to be human means to err, and erring means telling harmless lies. Is that what the Lord taught? What was the

ending in the lesson? The church had no fruit and produce, and the stalls were empty. No herd was to be found. How can we learn from this so that we can have some spiritual maintenance to keep our growing productive?

It seems that our lot is to be open with the Lord by doing self-inspection. We need to willingly confess our indiscretions to the Lord, ask (supplicate) the Lord for help, and seek (expect) to attain a new life. These things keep our fruit growing, our fields full of produce, and the stalls with a herd present.

Don't let despair settle in. Wait and read the closing two verses of this prophecy. Be prepared to listen to the joy and conviction they express regarding the total victory the Lord will give to those who trust in Him and His power.

In the opening chapters, Habakkuk argued with the Lord. He asked hard questions and made assumptions that the Lord was being unfair and indifferent to Israel. Habakkuk assumed the Lord was using the enemy to persecute His church. Each question, each charge was answered, and the message was and is awesome. The Lord will establish His New Church.

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:16-17*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- Trembling, quivering, and feeling as though our bones are full of rotteness seem like an overwhelming theme. Do such states, if experienced with a degree of humility, bring us to bended knee or being prostrate before the Lord?
- The quivering of the lips touched me somewhat. How many times have we had the experience where we just don't know how to talk about the church? Think about telling people about the Second Coming; telling them about the Writings; telling them about things seen and heard in heaven and hell by Swedenborg. Does it seem to you that we hesitantly pick and choose our time to speak of such things? We try to ascertain whether this is the right person and time to speak about spiritual pearls. What success have you had in deciding such matters?
- Looking forward to the day and hoping for peace in matters of temptation is necessary. Will we ever have full peace, or will we have intermittent, alternating states of temptation and peace?
- These verses have great illustrations of natural, spiritual, and celestial good. The trees, the vines, the fields, and the stalls are easy to remember. How

about thinking through the process with specific issues? Will we use these Divine parables in our fight to enliven the New Church within?

- Before moving to the last two verses of Habakkuk's prophecy, what things might we do to prepare adequately for the ending? Prayer? Reaching inward to prepare ourselves to see and hear what the Lord is promising?

HABAKKUK 3:18-19

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments."

Passages From The Writings

P&P

- "Then those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved."

AE 660 [4]

- "...exultation, like joy, is predicated of good, because it relates to love, to the heart, and to the will; as in the following passages...Habakkuk 3:18...In all these passages, 'exultation' signifies delight from love and from the affection of good, and 'gladness' signifies pleasure from the love and affection of truth."

AC 6413 [2]

- "...in Habakkuk...3:19...'to make the feet like those of hinds' denotes the natural in the freedom of the affections...to make the feet nimble and active to run like those of hinds is not anything spiritual; and yet that something spiritual is involved, is plain from what immediately follows, that 'Jehovah will set him and cause him to march upon his high places,' whereby is signified spiritual affection, which is above natural affection."

Derived Doctrine

"Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

- *AC 7093 [3]* defines rejoicing as a "joy from good and truth from man's inmost to his external."

- AC 8672 explains that “rejoicing” is a state when Divine good (love) in all things succeeds. This goes well “beyond [human] comprehension, because it belongs to the Infinite...there is infinite joy on account of the reception of good by those who are in heaven and the church...from the Divine love, which is infinite toward the human race...for all joy, is of love.”
- “...the God of my salvation” signifies “that He must be worshiped by means of truths from good, from which is salvation.” (AE 411 [9])
- “Salvation” signifies “conjunction with Him by truths and by a life according to them, for thereby there is salvation.” (AE 365 [30])

“The Lord God is my strength...”

- AC 3921 [3] teaches that when “God” is mentioned, the regeneration of the spiritual person is the subject. When Jehovah or the “Lord” is mentioned, the subject is the good of love of the celestial person.
- AE 689 teaches us “the signification of ‘the Lord God,’ as being the Lord in respect to Divine good and truth; for where Divine good is meant in the Word the names ‘Lord’ and ‘Jehovah’ are used, and where Divine truth is meant the name ‘God’ is used, therefore ‘the Lord God’ and ‘Jehovah God’ means the Lord in respect to Divine good and Divine truth.”
- “Strength” signifies the Divine truths fighting. (AC 9809 [4])
- Putting these teachings together, we get the picture of the Lord God uniting His Divine Love and Divine Truth for the salvation of humanity and the angels, and that His omnipotence will bring those mighty force to bear for our rescue. His Divine Truths will fight off any and all of what hell seeks to marshal.
- We need to confidently spread the good news: Victory is at hand because “the Lord God is my strength.”

“He will make my feet like deer’s feet, and He will make me walk on my high hills.”

- The Writings use the word “hind” in place of “deer.” A “hind” is a “red deer.” Could this distinction be of importance to the spiritual meaning? Red signifies the good of love and of life. (AC 3300) A “hind” signifies natural affections. Giving the hind a fleetness of feet, that is, making it nimble and active, denotes a freedom of the affections. (AC 6413 [2]) The word “spontaneous” brings to mind a kind of child-like openness to the Lord, acting and worshipping with a state of innocence instead of hidden selfish agendas. Boredom is gone. Excitement comes into the heart and mind. How may we know this? The words “**nimble and active**” speak to the liveliness of the heart in responding to the Lord.
- He will “make me walk” sounds forced and demanding. Instead of this image, think of the word “make” as meaning: He will enable, allow, permit, and encourage me to walk. With this insight, a sense of freedom comes back into the prophecy.

- To “walk” signifies to live according to the doctrines of the Lord. (AC 519) To “walk” signifies to view and perceive the nature of the Lord’s heavenly kingdom.(AC 1613)
- Where will our nimble, active, and lively feet take (walk) us? “...to my high hills.” The reference from AC 6413 [2] explains that “my high hills” represents walking in a place of “spiritual affection which is above natural affection.” Please note that the word “my” is not capitalized. Could this denote that the Lord will leave us in an “as-of-self” state of freedom during this period of new discoveries?

“To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.”

- We have no explanation in the Writings as to why we have these seemingly fragmented sentences following the end of the prophecy. Can we make sense of their placement?
- A skilled musician knows how to make proper use of various kinds of musical instruments to highlight the theme and stir the affections of the audience. He will use the wind, percussion, and stringed instruments masterfully. AC 418 gives us a long quote illustrating this plan. Please read it.
- Harpers and musicians relate to spiritual affections and spiritual truth and good, and they represent interior and exterior joys. (AE 1184)
- “To the Chief Musician.” Should we note the capitalization of “Chief” and “Musician”? If so, are we considering the Lord as the Chief Musician? It makes sense to do so when we consider that He is the one who wrote the “musical score” and that He knows best how to arrange the sequencing of instruments to touch the affections of the listening church (audience). He directs the tempo, the level of sound, and the timing of when the brass, reeds, cymbals, drums, and strings make their entrance in harmony or in solo.
- Do you recall the word “Selah”? It is believed that the Chief Musician would call for the clashing noise of cymbal or chime to get everyone’s attention so they might alertly note an important transition. The Last Judgment certainly was emotional, and it required the church to pay attention. The new transition, the New Church, is a reality. Selah.

“With my stringed instruments.”

- AE 323 and AE 1185 teach that “stringed instruments” signify such things as belong to the affection of truth and wind instruments to affections of good.
- Do the “stringed instruments” called for by the Chief Musician harmonize with the “Nunc Licet” message found in TCR 508 [3]? “It is now permitted to enter understandingly into the mysteries of faith.” Such words touch our deep innocent remains that belong to our affections of truth. Only the Lord knows where these remains reside. But at His direction, they will come forward and play their “strings” with a clarity and a beauty that will stir us into performing better than we ever imagined possible.

- May we, as the Lord’s children, stand and clap cheering: Bravo! Encore! For the Lord has produced, directed, and provided us with a heart-felt message of eternal care and love. Praise to the “Lord God of our salvation.”

Putting It All Together

“Then those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved.” (*P&P*)

I do believe there is little need to pull these verses together. The above exposition in the light of doctrine is quite moving and provides us with a melody that we can robustly sing together:

“The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns! This is the hour He comes with power to loose our captive chains. Hell’s legions reel before Him. The victor’s crown He gains.”

Read and Review

Read the selection from *P&P*.

Read *Habakkuk 3:18-19*.

Questions To Stimulate Reflection

- “I will joy in the God of my salvation” are words that lift one’s spirit. To yourself, or within a study-group setting, speak about your joy for the Lord. How many blessings can you recount?
- “The Lord is my strength.” Do you feel the Lord’s strength frequently, occasionally, or just sometimes? There is no doubt from this section that we need to feel and use the Lord’s strength often. “Those who at heart acknowledge the Lord **will be saved.**”
- Are you at a point in your spiritual life where you feel your feet are nimble, active, and free to climb the high hills?
- What musical pieces stir your heart? Are there any hymns that lift you?
- Can we picture the Lord as our Chief Musician conducting the orchestra of our heart? Reflecting on the melody of your life, can you see times when He called for stringed instruments to be played? How about wind instruments? Were there any cymbals called for?
- We visited many spiritual states in *Habakkuk*. There were ponderous questions. There were those states of nagging doubts. Now that we have come to the uplifting conclusion of *Habakkuk*, do you feel that a day of peace has been given to us by the Lord? Following temptations, the Lord gives us rest so that we get invigorated enough to face the next obstacle. May we rest a “day” and recuperate with our Chief Musician to be ready when the call comes for us to play our strings or wind instruments for the Lord.

Epilogue: A Summary of the Book of Habakkuk

The following summary draws and expands on the outline given in the Summary Exposition of the Prophets and Psalms.

CHAPTER ONE

The Jewish Church was in serious spiritual trouble. Interest in the things of the Lord had been replaced by superficiality. The church had become sensual. The people were interested in their own comfort and security. Justice and truth perished. The Lord grieved over their choices. Instead of the church coming to its senses to see that their problems were of their own choosing, they turned to find “compelling” ways to blame the Lord.

While blaming the Lord for all misfortunes, the church continued to actively profane all the truths and goods of the Word. To illustrate the depth of Israel’s choices, “a bitter and hasty nation” of Chaldeans rose up against Israel. The Chaldeans came with horses swifter than leopards and more fierce than wolves. The Chaldeans’ pride caused them to scoff at kings. They took many captives. The attitude of the Chaldeans reflected that which resided in the hearts and minds of Israel.

Israel didn’t get the message. They failed to see the application of what they were doing to the spiritual things of the church. The Lord’s grief continued because their evil prevailed over the good, and they were destroying the last vestiges of good.

CHAPTER TWO

Israel’s disregard for spiritual things necessitated the Lord’s coming. The Lord spoke through Habakkuk to tell the Jewish Church what kind of battle would take place with His advent. The Lord spoke about spiritual issues from what other nations saw. In reality, the other nations represented how distanced the Jewish Church had become from Him. The love of self was growing. Alongside of this growth, the people of the church were growing vile. Other nations (the Lord) noted these changes, and it caused them to hold Israel in contempt. What did the other nations see? They saw Israel’s pride puffing up their own intelligence. The other nations saw that the church judged from externals alone. They noted that Israel was hatching doctrine out of falsities.

When the Lord comes, He tells the church that those who lead others astray will be made ashamed. The Lord tells them that the self-serving falsities will profit the evil nothing. What will last to eternity? The Divine Human.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three continues with the prediction that the Lord will come into the world. When the Lord comes, He will bring with Him the things belonging to Divine truth and good. He will examine the church. In the light of His judgment, it will be shown that the Jewish Church was no longer a church because of its actions and choices.

The Lord's presence will dissipate the dead church's falsities of evil. Judgment will come upon those who hate and oppose Him. Those whose hearts are intent on self-love will suffer spiritual destruction, and they will cast themselves into hell.

Did the Lord enter into this combat with anger? He maintained His grief on account of their state. He grieved because there was no longer anything of the church left.

When evil is overcome, the Lord will rebuild His church. "Those who at heart acknowledge the Lord will be saved." What church will come out of this combat and disorder? The New Church will rise up out of the ashes of falsity and evil. In the words of Habakkuk, that new church will sing: "rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."