
Thou hast prevented the sight of evil any more, by doing away sin, with all its dreadful consequences, by the sacrifice of thyself! Do thou then, O blessed Jesus, manifest the truth of this precious scripture, by thine indwelling residence in the midst of thy Church and people. Gather every poor follower of thine to thyself. Save her that halteth, and get praise and fame to thy glorious name, in every land where thy redeemed have been put to shame. Yea! blessed Lord, prove by these sovereign acts of grace, that thou takest part in all that concerns thy Church, and that thou art, and ever will be Jesus, for thou wilt save thy people from their sins. And let thy people, as this scripture hath promised, be so completely and fully gathered to thee, that their name, in, and from thine, may be a praise among all people of the earth, when thou hast turned back their captivity before their eyes, and thou hast put thy great name to the truth of it, as the Lord God! Adieu *Zephaniah*! thou art indeed *Zephaniah*, or *Zeph-neth-pauneah*! for thou art a revealer of secrets, and hast faithfully revealed to the Church the wonders of redemption by Jesus. The Lord be adored for thy ministry, and the ministry of all his servants, and their faithfulness in Jesus! Amen

THE

PROPHET H A G G A I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE Prophet *Haggai* is the *tenth* in point of order, among what is called the minor Prophets. It is supposed that he was born in *Babylon* during the captivity. His prophecy is but short, and it should seem to have been but of short duration. According to *Ezra*, *Haggai* and *Zechariah* prophesied much about the same period. See *Ezra* v. 1. And we may conclude from what is said, *Haggai* delivered all his prophecies from the sixth month of *Darius* to the ninth; which was of short duration indeed. His name is remarkable, and is derived from *Chagag*, to dance; meaning a season of joy. The chief purport of his prophecy is, to comfort the builders of the temple in their undertaking with an assurance from the Lord, that by the building, it should be rendered more glorious than all the splendour of Solomon's temple. I only beg the Reader to join me in prayer before we enter upon the book of this prophecy, that the reading of it may be accompanied with divine teaching, to our mutual improvement, and to the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter Haggai reproves the people's negligence, and incites them to the building of the Temple, and God promiseth his assistance therein.

IN the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying,

2 Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.

The text *Haggai* would have chosen to have preached this Sermon from, had he been blessed with it, would have been those sweet words of the Lord Jesus: *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matt. vi. 33. He was stirred up to call the people to the consideration of their ways, and the deplorable state in which the Lord's house laid waste. That awful delay which for the most part forms the character of most men, in providing for their grand concerns, operated with the people of God, after their return from *Babylon*, in respect to the Lord's house. They found *Solomon's* temple in ruins; but none thought of rebuilding it. *Haggai* is informed of this by the word of the Lord; and it should seem that the prophet's mind was greatly excited thereby. What a sad state of putting off it is in soul concerns!

3 Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

4 *Is it* time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house *lie* waste?

5 Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

6 Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages *to put it* into a bag with holes.

7 ¶ Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.

8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.

9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, *it came* to little; and when ye brought *it* home. I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that *is* waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.

10 Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed *from* her fruit.

11 And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the new wine, and upon the oil, and upon *that* which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattle, and upon all the labour of the hands.

Haggai is instructed to rouse the attention of the people to the solemn consideration, how truly awful it was, that the people should be so much alive to build cieled houses for themselves, while the Lord's house lay waste. And the Lord declares by his servant *Haggai*, that he had been punishing them for this in withholding the general influences of heaven; so that nothing did the earth bring forth to them that was profitable, neither did they feel delight in the enjoyment. Reader! it will be no unprofitable improvement, from what is said in this scripture, if you, and I, at any time find vexations, where we had expected comfort; and disappointment in our best schemes, to enquire into the cause. The Lord sometimes damps our enjoyments, and tingeth them with sorrow, to bring our hearts home to the recollection of some neglect, some inattention or misimprovement of the blessings given us, that we may be brought to a sense of our undeservings, and the Lord's glory.

12 ¶ Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Josedech, the high-priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him: and the people did fear before the LORD.

13 Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger, in the LORD's message unto the people, saying, I *am* with you, saith the LORD

14 And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high-priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God,

15 In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.

This *Zerubbabel* is a remarkable name. It means a *stranger*: from Zer and Babel, confusion; alluding to the Old Tower in the plains of *Shinar*. But his father's name is yet more so, *Shealtiel*; a compound word from *Shealtu*, I have asked, and *El*, God. Joshua is well known as being the same name in Hebrew, as *Jesus* in Greek, and both meaning a Saviour. There is somewhat very striking in what is here said, of the Lord's exciting the minds of those men, and all the people to the work. Reader! recollect that scripture, Philipp. ii. 13. And learn from hence, an additional testimony of the truth of sovereign grace. Oh! how certain it is, that *all the good that is done upon earth, the Lord doeth it himself!*

REFLECTIONS.

Who can call to remembrance the desolated state of the Church, in the ruins at the return of the people from the *Babylonish* captivity, but must feel concern at the sad and deplorable visitation! And who that beholds the backwardness of the people to remove the ruins, and to erect a place of worship to the Lord, but must be astonished at a conduct so highly blameworthy? What can be more awful than to see the house of God in ruins, and men's houses built with cedar, and painted with vermillion? In how many instances is it so now? Reader! have you never seen the house of God desolate, and the houses of the priests like palaces? I have. Precious Lord Jesus! happy is it for thy people, that in thee, whatever the *outer buildings* are, they have in thee a temple indeed! Thou art the foundation *Jehovah* laid in Zion; and all new covenant blessings rest upon thee. Lord! cause my soul to be founded in this foundation, that I may be growing up to thee in all things, and be found in thee, and through thee, for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Amen.

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

This is a most blessed Chapter, full of Gospel, and full of Christ. The Prophet speaking by the Spirit of the Lord, encourageth the people to the work of the Temple. There are gracious promises in the close of the prophecy to Zerubbabel.

IN the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

2 Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Josedech, the high-priest, and to the residue of the people, saying,

The Prophet hath been particular in marking down the dates of the word of the Lord coming to him; which may serve to teach God's people in all ages of the Church, the profitableness of their making memorandums of all their Bethel visits also. *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* were both types of the Lord Jesus, and therefore are signally honored in those commissions of the Prophet.

3 Who *is* left among you, that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? *is it* not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?

It is worthy remark that the period from the Church being gathered out of Egypt, to the time of building the first Temple by *Solomon*, was about four hundred and eighty years. And from the children of Israel being delivered from *Babylon*, to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, was about five hundred years. We are told, that on building the second temple, the antient men wept, and the younger shouted for joy. *Ezra* iii. 11, 12, 13.

4 Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high-priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for *I am* with you, saith the LORD of hosts:

5 *According to* the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

I beg the Reader particularly to remark with me, those sweet expressions of the Lord, *I am with you*. And again, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt. And

again, for *my spirit* remaineth among you. I would humbly ask, and but ask, not presume to decide upon a subject so infinitely sublime and mysterious, are there not all the persons of the Godhead here described, in their office-character, in redemption? Is not the presence of God the Father with the Church? Is it not the *Uncreated Word*, with whom the covenant of redemption is, and who is indeed the covenant itself, and the whole sum and substance of it? And hath not God the Holy Ghost constantly been with the Church from the beginning? Reader! do not forget that those blessed privileges of the Church of Christ have never ceased, and never will. Matt. xxviii. 20.

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, *it is* a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry *land*;

7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

8 The silver *is* mine, and the gold *is* mine, saith the LORD of hosts.

9 The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.

The little while is spoken in reference to the Lord's calculation of time, and not of our's. A thousand years in his sight are but as one day. It was now somewhat about five hundred years before Christ would openly tabernacle in substance of our flesh; and yet the Lord calls it but a little while! Think, Reader! of the eternity of his nature and essence, by those distinctions of character! And observe what is to introduce this glorious *Shiloh*; the Lord will shake all nations, yea, the very heavens, and the earth; meaning the raising up and throwing down kingdoms and powers; the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and the *Roman* monarchies, each were to minister, in their turn, and all to this one event. But, Reader! above all, do mark the blessed feature by which Christ is described; namely, *the desire of all nations*. And so he is to every poor sinner upon earth, to whom he is revealed. If he be not so, the reason is, because they know not their own wants, neither his suitability, and all-sufficient fulness, and grace, to supply. But in all nations, all climates, tongues, people, and languages, where sin is felt, and Christ made known, nothing but Christ can satisfy. And I beg the Reader to remark yet further, how contemptibly the Lord speaks of silver and gold. The *first* temple of *Solomon* had a profusion of gold and silver indeed. Whereas this *second* temple had but little ornaments in the days of *Haggai*. But what of that? The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former. And so it was most eminently, when the Son of God in our nature entered it. I do not myself conceive, that the *antient* Jews, who wept in the view of the second temple, did so on

account of the want of things ornamental only. But there were matters of an higher moment, in which it was defective. The Jews confess, that the *second* temple had none of the *five* signs which the *first* temple had; namely, 1st. the Ark, with the Mercy-Seat and Cherubim: 2dly. the Shechinah: 3dly. the Spirit of Prophecy: 4thly. the Urim and Thummim: and 5thly. the Holy Fire on the altar. But, in the presence of the Lord Jesus, they had more than all these; for these were but the type. Christ the substance. So that nothing can be more decisive, in confirmation of this most blessed prophecy of *Haggai*, pointing to Christ, and in Christ being fulfilled. And he is indeed the whole peace of his people.

10 ¶ In the four and twentieth *day* of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,

11 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests *concerning* the law, saying,

12 If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

13 Then said Haggai, If *one that is* unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean.

14 Then answered Haggai, and said, So *is* this people, and so *is* this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so *is* every work of their hands; and that which they offer there *is* unclean.

15 And now, I pray you, consider from this day and upward, from before a stone was laid upon a stone in the temple of the LORD.

16 Since those *days* were, when *one* came to an heap of twenty *measures*, there were *but* ten: when *one* came to the press-fat for to draw out fifty *vessels* out of the press, there were *but* twenty.

17 I smote you with blasting, and with mildew, and with hail, in all the labours of your hands; yet ye *turned* not to me, saith the LORD.

18 Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth

month, even from the day that the foundation of the LORD'S temple was laid, consider it.

19 Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless *you*.

Here is another of *Haggai's* Sermons, and a most striking one it is. I humbly conceive, by the figure of uncleanness here spoken of, the Lord meant to set forth the polluted, and utterly lost state of our whole nature; and that the cleansing can only be in Christ. The smitings, blastings, and mildews, are figurative expressions of the sorrows, disappointments, and troubles, the consequence of sin. But, from the day the temple in Christ is founded, the whole face of things is changed. Temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings, are with the Lord's people. When God the Father comes to bless a soul in redemption by his dear Son, *he blesseth him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Ephes. i. 3. Having Christ for our portion, we have all things in Christ, and with Christ; a portion to live upon in time, and to all eternity.

20 ¶ And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth *day* of the month, saying,

21 Speak to Zerubbabel governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;

22 And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horses and their riders shall come down every one by the sword of his brother.

23 In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and I will make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.

Haggai is commissioned to close his prophecy with a particular and special message to *Zerubbabel*, governor of *Judaea*. And this I apprehend principally, as typical of Christ. For though the Lord in shaking kingdoms and nations, might tell this governor not to feel alarm, yet this could not be intended to hold forth to *Judaea*, or *Judaea's* governour, peace in temporal things in the midst of the commotion; for in fact it was not so. *Judaea* became a province subject

to *Rome*, before the coming of Christ. No doubt therefore, the shaking here spoken of alluded to the overthrow of Satan's kingdom and power; the heathen idolatry, and all that oppose Christ and his blessed gospel. And in this, as a type of the Lord Christ, *Zerubbabel* hath sweet assurances. But, Reader, look at Jesus, and the type is lost in the reality. Is *Zerubbabel* called the servant of Jehovah? Here he became the type of the glorious Mediator. *Behold my servant*, saith Jehovah, *whom I uphold!* Isaiah xlii. 1. Is *Zerubbabel* called the chosen of the Lord? Here again he typified Christ. Is *Zerubbabel* a signet? Surely we discover the type again here representing Him, whom God the Father sealed. John vi. 27. Indeed, is not Christ called *Zerubbabel*, as he is very frequently called David? See Zech. iv. 7. The Targum renders the words in the last verse, *for I have chosen thee: in thee I am well pleased:* which can never be said of any but of Christ, and of him it is repeatedly said, Matt. iii. 17. and Matt. xvii. 5. Precious testimonies of our Lord Jesus Christ!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! pause, and consider, while going over this blessed prophecy, concerning the person, work, character, and offices of the Lord; whether He, who is here said by Jehovah himself, to be the desire of all nations, is the first, and last, and comprehensive object of all thy desire; for life and death, for time and eternity? Behold the Lord Jesus in this most blessed and delightful point of view. Sweetly was it prophesied of Him by another Prophet, that *He should sprinkle many nations*. And when we discover him as the One great and glorious ordinance of heaven for salvation, *neither is there salvation in any other*: When we look at him as Jehovah's gift, for the common, and only remedy, for the sins of a whole world: When we know the suitability, and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus on the one hand, and the freeness, fulness, greatness, and everlasting nature of that rich grace of God the Father on the other; surely the Lord Jesus doth appear so blessedly answering to this character, as the desire of all nations. And did all nations but know him, all nations would be in love with him. As one sun in the heavens answers for all the world; and one ocean supplies all the earth; so one Lord Jesus Christ is enough for all, and answers the wants of all. Reader! bring home the point to your own person, and enquire whether He is so altogether lovely in *your* view, as to be the fairest and chiefest among ten thousand? It is indeed truly blessed, when a man's own experience bears a correspondence to the divine testimony; and Christ is formed in the heart, as the one desire of the heart, and the hope of glory. Precious Lord Jesus! thou, who by thine appearance in our flesh, in thy temple didst fill the latter house with greater glory than the former; do thou fill thy Church now upon earth, as thou art filling thy Church in heaven, with thy presence. Surely, thou thyself, O Lord, art the temple, the altar, the mercy-seat, the propitiation, the High Priest, and the sacrifice! All, all is centered in thee, for all before thee were but types and shadows. Thou, thou art He, whom Jehovah hath chosen, the signet of the Lord of hosts, and the seal of the covenant of peace between heaven and earth! Oh! then precious

Jesus, grant that on thee, as the foundation, thy whole Church being built, all thy redeemed upon earth may be growing up *unto an holy temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, until we join the Church above, when the last stone of the spiritual building is brought home *with shoutings, crying, grace, grace unto it*. Farewell *Haggai!* we thank thy Lord, and our Lord, for thy ministry and testimony concerning our Jesus. Once upon earth, thou didst witness the weeping of some, and the joy of others, in beholding the second temple. Ere long thou wilt behold the whole body of Christ, forming one temple, of his body the Church, in glory. And then, when the Lamb is on his throne, and encircled by the innumerable multitude of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, and all the redeemed out of every nation, kindred, and clime, then will the hymn of salvation be sung amidst the vast host, where all tears are wiped away from all eyes, and the song of redemption to God and the Lamb, will be the everlasting song of heaven! Amen.

THE
PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE book of prophecy we are now entering upon, is not only recommended to our most diligent attention on account of its length, but on account of its great importance in the Church of Christ. The very many rich and precious things contained in it, which point to Jesus, and the blessed testimony it bears to Him, and his glorious character, as mediator, are in themselves ample inducements to make every lover of the blessed Jesus prize this inspired book of God. Over and above the internal evidence it gives of its divine authority, the references made to it by the inspired writers of the New Testament, give it a peculiar claim upon our hearts. I think it is quoted no less than eight times by the Evangelists, and once by our Lord himself. Matt. xxvi. 31. with Zech. xiii. 7.

Zechariah's name (or *Zachariah*, as read by some,) is truly significant. Our pronunciation of it in English differs from the original, and thereby lessens to our recollection its power. It is *Zachar* and *Jah!* meaning *remembrance*, and the Lord. And is not this, when compounded, (I merely ask the question, not determine it,) as an office under the Holy Ghost,