

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying thicknesses, extending diagonally from the top right corner towards the center of the page.

HAGGAI

*The Lord's Messenger and His
Message*

HAGGAI

The Lord's Messenger and His Message

THERE are no dull nor uninteresting chapters in the written Word. Whether prophet, apostle, or evangelist, these God-given communications have their own peculiar functions assigned to them in contributing to one grand whole. And moreover, in the compilation of these messages the same Spirit of God energizes the various penmen, supplies the material, leaving a divine impression inherent in the prophecy, epistle, or gospel which establishes its own authority over the one who bows to its teaching. Every section, therefore, of the Holy Scripture is of surpassing interest and importance to those desiring to listen to the Spirit's voice. Having this settled conviction in the soul, the devout reader is at once fully equipped and enrolled as a scholar in God's school.

While this is so, our spiritual sensibilities need to be exercised continually, having the Psalmist's prayer ever upon our lips, "*Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.*" (Psa. 119:17-18). Imbued, we trust, with these holy desires, may we approach with reverent enquiring minds, our consideration of Haggai's prophecy, as it relates to the returned captives after their seventy years of checkered history in Babylon under the heel of their Gentile conquerors. Then we, "*upon whom the ends of the world are come,*" may learn through their experiences, some lessons of considerable value to ourselves.

I

Before we touch the salient features of our prophet's ministry, and by way of introduction, it might be well to recall the history of this movement which resulted in a remnant of Benjamin and Judah — with a few others — returning to the land of their fathers with the ostensible object of rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. They had been carried away captive when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, had pillaged the city, breaking down its walls, as the instrument under the hand of Jehovah, for administering a much-deserved punishment upon the guilty nation for their manifold sins. But the land had now enjoyed her sabbaths: the threescore and ten years foretold by Jeremiah had at last been fulfilled, and the Lord was ready to fulfill His word and bring them again to their own land.

Under the aegis of Cyrus, the Persian monarch — *“the righteous man from the east,”* so designated in Isa. 41, who called for men and material for the house of God — they left behind them their second house of bondage. They never took kindly to their serfdom in Babylon. How could they? The faithful among them could not forget their despoiled inheritance. Ever and anon their hearts reverted to the *“pleasant land.”* Their own Mount Zion claimed their affections. *“Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”* (Psa. 48:2). Their earnest longings are suitably voiced in that plaintive wail of Psa. 137, *“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. ... How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.”* The Lord never forgets His people, and these fervent utterances found response in the heart of their covenant-keeping God, who sent deliverance for them speedily.

The book of Ezra presents the historical side of this touching story, and should be read in conjunction with Haggai which grapples with the moral condition of the people subsequent to their return to the land. The initial start in the accomplishment of their mission was a good sign towards a successful finish. With great enthusiasm the leaders of the people set themselves for service at the house of God. They offered willingly of their substance. One of their first acts was to build an altar to the God of Israel. Thus, they put Jehovah's claims first. And established in this way communion with the One who had called them to their great task. This is as it should be. The next move was to commence operations at the temple. The priests, Levites and the sons of Asaph, occupying their respective stations, contributed to the general chorus of approval as the people shouted with a great shout when the foundation of the house was at last laid. There was, however, a more restrained and sober element which viewed matters somewhat differently. Many of the priests, Levites and the chief of the fathers could not restrain their emotions, and wept with a loud voice while the shouting of the multitude proceeded. What was the burden upon their hearts which occasioned this sorrow? Ah! they remembered the first house, and were conscious that the contrast was so great that they could not enter into the festive emotion of the young men, but found an outlet for their surcharged hearts in a flood of tears. We take our leave of this mingled scene of mirth and melancholy that we may continue our enquiries as to what real progress was made with the appointment for which they were called.

II

Fourteen years elapse ere Haggai's challenge reached them. Had a tithe of the energy survived their youthful exuberance, the Lord's house had been finished long years previous to this. But alas; spiritual inertia supervened, and the work of the Lord languishes until Haggai makes his appearance in their midst.

Two questions we propose here. Who is Haggai? and, What is a prophet? We know nothing of his lineage. Unlike nearly all the other prophets whose family house is given before their messages are delivered, absolute silence prevails as to whence he came. One thing is certain, he is of the returned captives. Burning brightly in his soul was the fervent desire that work in the house of the Lord should be resumed forthwith. Lest any should question his commission, seeing we only know him by the brief appellation, Haggai the prophet, a very effective method has been taken to silence the curious; we seem to hear the prophet, guided by the Spirit, say, "Never mind the man, his message is all important; but if you will have it, he is *'the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message'*" (Hag. 1:13). Can higher credentials be given?

The word "messenger" confers the highest form of official dignity. "*The messenger of the covenant*" in Malachi 3:1, is another instance of its use. The Hebrew word with its Greek equivalent is more frequently translated "angel" as in the "angel" of the Lord, Again, "*I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.*" The knowledge of this, as it relates to an otherwise unknown prophet, gives interest and high importance to this short prophecy of two chapters.

In this description of the Lord's messenger, we have largely anticipated our answer to the second question, What is a prophet? A prophet is one who brings God in. He is raised up for the moment to witness the mind of God as it

relates to any particular situation. Than Haggai, a better example of a prophet could scarcely be found. He is more concerned with the present state of the people than in portraying their future, although he predicts a latter day of glory to which we hope to give our attention before laying down the pen. A minor prophet in the ordinary sense of the term, the results achieved bring him on to a major platform, if measured by that standard. We trust it will be seen that the ministry of Haggai was not only for his day, but that it has a living voice to saints of every day, being especially applicable to the conditions which are appearing at the close of this dispensation.

It has been asserted in things relating to this life that history repeats itself. Whether this is true or otherwise, it cannot be doubted that the history of the Church is that of Israel over again. In its failures and accomplishments, the Church of God has as its prototype Jehovah's ancient people over whom *Lo-ammi* has long since been pronounced. In the history of their journey from Egypt to Canaan, no less than in the typical system, we have been told that "*all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition.*" Keeping this in mind we shall be prepared to take encouragement from the remnant in Haggai's day. And whether in the shape of rebuke or approbation, may we take heed to the lesson they would teach.

III

Three great thoughts come into prominence in this book, which, more or less, give character to the whole. These are, the House of God, the Presence of the Lord, and the Glory of God in Christ. A very wide range of Christian truth spreads itself before us as we survey this vast prospect. Are we prepared for what is involved here? Haggai's ministry was first corrective before things of a more positive nature could be given. This always is the line along which progress is possible. Paul would not unveil the wealth and grandeur of the truth as it unfolds itself in his second epistle to the Corinthians until he sent a messenger in the person of Timothy to recall them to the word of the cross. "*For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ.*" With perfect aptitude his first letter to that assembly might be epitomized thus, "*Consider your ways*"; while over his second epistle could be inscribed the words, "*I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.*" (Haggai 1:5; 2:7).

IV

“...*This people say, the time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.*” (Haggai 1:2). Had we looked at the seeming outward prosperity of the people, we should scarcely be prepared for the stern exposure of their moral state in the rebuke which reached them through the prophet. They had no time for the Lord's house, they were so busy with their own houses. “*For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*” was the apostle's lament to the Philippians in his day. We have a shining contrast to this in the only One of whom it could be said, “*The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*” It is always a sad sight when worldly prosperity in the house of a saint can only be secured at the expense of impoverishing God's house. David strikes a true note in Psalm 132, “*I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the LORD, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.*” Why was David so solicitous, and so urgent in his desires? The answer to that query supplies the key by which are unlocked the many secrets revealed to us when we become dwellers in that house.

Before He said to Israel, “*Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them,*” although not in such precise terms, He had signified His intention of taking up His abode in the midst of His people. In Eden He came down and communed with the man. Before sin came in there was no disturbing element to impose itself, or deny the right of the Creator to the adoration and worship which was His due. Consequently, there was no call for a special place in His creation, in which should be conserved all His interests and where His glory should remain inviolate. Yet even in Eden God had had a center. The Tree of Life was to be found “*in the midst*” of the garden. Likewise in the heavenly city the order established thus early has been perpetuated. God has never retracted any thought connected with His eternal purpose. The “*midst*” in Gen. 2, and in Rev. 22 is given as the Tree of Life.

When the serpent gained the ear of the woman, and before the act of rebellion for which she and her fallen head were expelled from that earthly paradise, a rival center was set up in the woman's mind. Compare Gen. 2:17; 3:3, with that of Gen. 2:9. The Word of God was early attacked, and the first higher critic makes her bow to humanity, having the devil as her audience. There and then was established a system with which we are familiar in the twentieth century, whose special labor is to change "*the truth of God into a lie,*" in response to the devil's question, "*Yea, hath God said?*"

The necessity of the House of God will thus be apparent. Like the British Embassy in a foreign land, where nationals of Great Britain resident there may apply for counsel and direction if such be required, where all its activities relate to their homeland beyond the sea, the house of God is here in this world guarding His interests and whatever relates to the glory of Christ: a circle of fellowship for His people, wherein is exercised a holy priesthood, and out of which a royal priesthood operates, showing forth the virtues of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Locality is all important in viewing the house of God. The site of the temple had to be identified with death and resurrection. The idea of "place" is never overlooked. In Gen. 22, the story of Abraham's faith in the offering up of Isaac is recorded. He set out at the behest of Jehovah to offer his son upon one of the mountains later to be revealed to him. "*And Abraham rose up... and went unto the place of which God had told him.*" Then on the third day he saw the **place** afar off. It was there on Mount Moriah where Isaac was offered up and where his father received him back, in figure, although nine centuries still in the distance, the temple was to be reared.

To continue the thought connected with the location of God's house, Moriah again comes into prominence when David had numbered the people, coming under the censure

of the Lord for acting so foolishly. At the suggestion of Gad, the king's seer, he went up to the threshing floor of Ornan and raised an altar on the Jebusite's holding. There God answered by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. Now Ornan's threshing floor was situated upon Mount Moriah. *"Then David said, this is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of burnt offering for Israel."* (1 Chr. 22:1). Canaanite though Ornan was, he entered with enthusiasm into David's suggestion for acquiring his property. The Spirit has seen fit to give two separate accounts of this transaction. Where the critics have discovered a seeming discrepancy between the two records, the humble believer has found a gem of the purest description. We have been told that in the purchase of the "place," 2 Sam. 24, is made to say that David paid in the first instance fifty shekels of silver for the threshing floor, whereas in 1 Chr. 21, the sum of money is put at six hundred shekels of gold. Now there is no confusion in the Word, the confusion is in men's minds and is the result of careless reading. From 2 Sam. 24 we do not learn what David paid for the place, nor are we told in the latter scripture the sum at which it was bought. The buying, and the buying only, is given in 2 Sam. 24. While the paying and not the buying is disclosed in 1 Chr. 21. Both accounts are needed, and both are true.

Ornan is a faithful man. He is ready to part with his goods. David will not consent to take it without cost. On being pressed he puts a merely nominal value — fifty shekels of silver upon the threshing floor and hands it over to the king. Most seek to cry up their stock, this man writes his down. At its face value fifty shekels of silver: placed to his credit six hundred shekels of gold. What an increase! David pays as a king, and in this way illustrates the character of the God by whom actions are weighed. A divine principle underlies this transaction. What is your contribution and mine to the house of God, my reader? How does He value our offering? In His sight will it be less or more than our estimate?

When the Lord Jesus was here, He took note of those who threw their offerings into the treasury of the temple. He found one who was a hundred percent contributor to the house of God. Her whole fortune represented two mites which make one farthing. These she cast in without the slightest reserve. The rich were there also; they contributed out of their abundance, she out of her penury. In spite of this she topped the list that day, and the true value of her contribution shall stand to her credit (Luke 21). Oh! for these wealthy contributors, not of material things but of moral worth to the service of God!

Solomon erected the house on Mount Moriah, on the place that David his father had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chr. 3:1) Not only do we see magnificence associated with gold, silver and stately timber with which the house was lavishly decorated, but the whole fabric was pervaded by the glory of the Lord. "*For the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God*" (2 Chr. 5:14). The place which is called Calvary was upon the same eminence we believe — and, shall we add, that in the very world where Jesus died the house of God composed of living stones is being raised today, through which will shine in the New Jerusalem the full blaze of the glory of God.

V

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. 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.” (1:8-9).

A scripture such as this should mightily affect each one of us. It has just as assuredly a voice for us today as it had to the remnant to whom it was addressed. Do we sufficiently realize the humbling situation with which we are confronted? We may bewail the lesser evils which have assailed the testimony of God; but there are greater and deeper sorrows than that which relates to one's own individual path. The Church has failed! Ruin and desolation we meet on every hand. What must this be to the heart of Christ?

We have a moving picture of Nehemiah's concern when the report reached him as to the state of the people in the land, their great affliction and reproach. Jerusalem was in ruins: the wall of the city was broken down and the gates burned with fire. He wept, mourned, fasted and prayed. He carried this burden, as his own, on his soul before the Lord, confessing the sins of the children of Israel. *“Both I and my father's house have sinned,”* were his words. His return to Jerusalem and his inspection by night of the ruinous condition of all the prominent features of its ancient greatness might well suggest an appropriate attitude for those who feel the dishonor done to Christ in our day.

Does the state of the Church so weigh upon our spirits that we enter into her exercises making her sorrow our own? It was their ways which were at fault with this people. Their ceasing to build the house was but an outward indication which witnessed to a corrupt inward state. They might have pleaded that enemies in the land had occasioned the cessation of their labors. This we should find to be true, if Ezra be consulted. But the deeper reason had

to be looked for in another direction, because “*When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him*” (Prov. 16:7).

With us too, we fear, the art of building has been sadly discontinued. The word comes with power, “*Consider your ways.*” We must turn our backs upon things of earth, and bring ourselves to the “mountain” where abundance of material is to be had, eminently suitable for the house of God. Now moral condition is the true elucidation of the problem as to why the work of the Lord languishes. In Ephesus, first love was left; thereafter decline became rapid, culminating in the Laodicean condition of things with which we are confronted at the end of the Church period. Does not Jehovah's estimate of the people in Haggai 1:6 read like a paragraph from the letter to Laodicea in Rev. 3?

We pass on to what is most blessed to observe, the response accorded to Haggai's faithful word.

VI

“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.” (1:12).

This at once prepares us for the further intimation in the following verse where the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message again speaks words, not of reproof, but of blessed import, *“I am with you, saith the LORD.”* The presence of the Lord thus becomes a reality to them. He could not attach His name or vouchsafe His presence to a people in their backsliding state. Obedience to the word of the Lord and walking in the fear of the Lord secures the glory of the Lord and assures the presence of the Lord. It must, however, be realized in that order. This illustrates the truth to us. It is futile for any to claim His presence if these conditions are not fulfilled.

Moral state very quickly became a determining factor for eligibility to show oneself before the face of God. Adam and his fallen associate in Eden hid themselves from the presence of the Lord (Gen. 4:16). *“That no flesh should glory in His presence.”* (1 Cor. 1:29). We get great help in working this out in a practical way when we come to verses 4-5, of chapter 2. The Lord refers to His covenant with them when they came out of Egypt. *“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.”* (Ex. 25:8). Do we apprehend the significance of such a desire in Haggai's day, and in our own day? He takes them back to His promise to Moses, and in effect says to them, *“I am to prove the reality of that word in your experience.”* Could anything more encouraging be given to a feeble remnant in whatever day they may be found?

There were two men here who responded immediately to the call of Haggai. The word of the prophet to them was the

voice of the Lord. Whatever others were thinking or doing they resolved to return to their original fidelity to the testimony with which they were identified on their deliverance from Babylon. What was the result? The remnant of the people was ready to follow their lead, and they came with cheerful hearts and willing hands to labor in the house of God. Such a picture should come as a stimulating example to those who have only "*a little strength*," but who desire to keep His word and not deny His name: who have left the corruptions of Christendom that they may answer to His desires in the place where He is not.

This prophecy appeals to us in a very special way. The mass professing Christ's name have become careless and indifferent to that which connects itself with His glory. This day was in contemplation when Matt. 18:20 was uttered by our Lord. When the fact of His presence in the midst is recognized, it has a very powerful bearing upon the conduct of those so gathered. This does not only apply to the actual time when they meet in assembly, but has a moral control over their every action. If we have gone forth unto Him, He and all that His name implies becomes a regulating force in our lives. Gathered with Him, or going without the camp to where He is, is an act done once, and there will be no going back if faithfulness and fidelity are to characterize those who have professedly taken that step. There is the danger of weakening the truth if we accept anything less. Holiness, faithfulness, truth, these are qualities which in any day may prove a sufficient test to all who seek to walk with God. It is most important that we take this to heart, and that we do not pass over in silence verses 10 to 14 in chapter 2 of Haggai.

VII

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, 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.”

Whatever is holy cannot by contact change the character of that which is common. The skirt of one's garment would suggest associations. Some would plead extenuating circumstances and differentiation, where faithfulness to Christ would urge neither the one, nor the other. The priests' lips should keep knowledge. They did so in this instance. The impression is sometimes created that, provided one can impart an atmosphere reflecting a certain positional holiness, associations in which Christians are found in concert with the world, are thereby changed as to their nature. If there be divine intelligence to follow up the principle established here, we are assured that not only will the truth be considerably amplified on consulting the general trend of scripture, but definite teaching will be found in the New Testament regulating the associations of believers in consonance with Haggai 2:12.

The positive side of the same truth is emphasized in the following verse: *“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.”* While that which is holy cannot impart the same quality to anything common, one unclean through contact with a dead body immediately renders unclean everything that is touched (see Num. 19). Every article so affected is reduced to the same state in which the person found himself after defilement. A question not of recent date only but asked with a sense of the gravity of the position years ago was this, “Association with evil, does it defile?” Nowhere in scripture is the “Yea, verily” more fully emphasized than in this portion of the Word. The fact that it emerges in remnant times such as these, when

full identification with the Levitical law might have been excused, is noteworthy, and finds the prophet and the priest most emphatic in their testimony.

Coming again to the new dispensation the presence of the Lord has been and is a very great and blessed reality to His people. When the Lord Jesus sojourned in this world the beloved apostle John could write of Him, "*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*" (John 1:14).

"The Godhead glory shone through the human veil." But neither the earth nor man could retain that glory. Like the glory in Ezekiel's prophecy which left the house and departed hence, so God manifest in flesh finished His work here then left by the same way. But before He was received up, He more than once after His resurrection gave signal proof of His presence with them, which presence was to continue even if corporeally, He should during the dispensation of grace, be seated upon the Father's throne. Privately He appeared to the two on their way to Emmaus. He was made known to them in the breaking of bread. And as these two were telling their story publicly to those gathered at Jerusalem, He Himself stood in their midst.

The shewbread in Ex. 25 is really the bread of the presence. These twelve loaves upon the pure table within the holy place set forth Christ in relation to the twelve tribes; If these twelve loaves represented the unity of the twelve tribes in this setting, the one loaf is expressive of the unity of the Body of Christ. "*For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.*" (1 Cor. 10:17) Here, therefore, in the fellowship of the Lord's Table may His presence be known and enjoyed. "*I am with you*" can be realized in its blessed fulness by all His own, when the conditions upon which He will be with them are fulfilled.

VIII

“I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:7-9).

How thankful one is to be directed to the complete victory and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ as a worthy climax to Haggai’s labors. They had reached that point when he could disclose this to their hearts and eyes. It was to the faithful of Judah, a day of small things. Their sober view of everything outward was in keeping with the spirit which should actuate a remnant. There is the conscious sense of the failure, but to faithful ones what encouragement? *“Be strong, O Zerubbabel... and be strong all ye people of the land”* (verse 4). To Timothy the apostle addresses that heartening word, *“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”* And then there are the faithful men, who partaking of the same desires, should be prepared to carry on apostolic teaching. Haggai speaks of the latter glory of the house transcending that of the former glory. Paul in the same epistle to that young servant points forward to the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Was there one solitary survivor among them who could remember the house in her first glory? How the present condition suffered by comparison! Yet there was a day still distant which would utterly eclipse the glory and the majesty of the house in Solomon's reign. David's greater Son would invest the house with its latter glory which would far outshine anything the nation had known in its greatest of days. Before that can take place what a shaking there must be in every realm of the universe of God. Man is not more dissatisfied with the appalling state in which humanity groans than God is. The believer, in harmony with the Creator of all things, finds in revelation the final solution of the problem, which has baffled the most gigantic intellects that have ever appeared on this planet. He,

however, would trace the evil to a different source than the most conscientious politician. The cause of all the evil in which the nations find themselves enveloped is not political, but rather moral. It can be explained in one word, **Sin**. And the remedy can be put with equal brevity, — **Christ**.

Glory is an attractive theme. We started with shame and dishonor, now we end with glory. For Israel and Judah, also the Church, the end is to be glorious. The purpose of God can never be frustrated. There must be a serious displacement of the present system of things ere Christ gets the supreme place. Consequently, this shaking of the heavens, where the prince of the power of the air is in control, and earth, where man would establish himself, must take place before the Desire of all nations shall come. Who shall say if this upheaval shall be long delayed? Overturn! overturn!! overturn!!! is Jehovah's decree in regard to all this.

Haggai's contemporary as a prophet to the remnant is Zechariah. He has been termed the "Prophet of Glory." While it is fitting that the former should initiate revival connected with the resumption of labor at the building of the temple, and thus be honorably remembered therewith, it is left to the latter to show us the house in its completeness after the top stone is laid upon the structure. At the close of his prophecy the prophet passes beyond the situation as it then existed at Jerusalem. Zerubbabel is introduced as a striking figure of Christ. He is an interesting personality: a prince of the house of David, being grandson of Jehoiakim, king of Judah. His name appears in the genealogy of Christ in Matt. 1. It is most blessed to see his faithfulness rewarded. Haggai closes his prophecy with his ultimate exaltation. The last three verses run parallel with the second Psalm.

When we think of Christ there is no place too high for Him. His voluntary humiliation took Him lower than any, and now His seat of authority is higher than the heavens.

The shouting of the young men was premature in Ezra 3. But in Zechariah these exultations will be timely and thoroughly in keeping with the day. He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting, crying, grace! grace!! unto it, — grace and glory!

As already indicated, Ezekiel, to his dismay, saw the glory taking its departure from his first temple. As if hesitating to leave, it removed from before the cherubims within the holiest to the threshold of the house, thence from the house and the city to the mountain on the east side of Jerusalem. But over the house in its latter glory “Ichabod” shall never be written. In the millennial reign of Christ, the house of God shall be sought after with greater persistency than men seek for fame or gold today. Jerusalem shall be the metropolis of the earth. There shall be no temple in the heavenly city. Its walls great and high are a complete barrier against the inroad of evil, and its gates shall be ever open that blessing may flow forth. It shall be all temple. Lord, hasten that day, is our fervent desire!

No power can ever say nay to Christ. His day is coming and with it the complete subjugation of every authority to the supremacy of Jehovah. There have been oppositions in the past, great and serious. But the great mountain shall become a plain before Zerubbabel. The hand which laid the foundation of all pertaining to the glory of God shall put in position the topmost stone, for they shall rejoice to see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel. Wondrous day of glory that will be when Christ comes back to reign.

Simultaneously with His coming as the Desire of all nations, the temple in its last and greatest glory shall be brought into prominence. We have seen how the glory left the house; the same prophet Ezekiel describes its return to take up its lasting abode in the millennial kingdom. It disappeared via the Mount of Olives. On its being again brought into view it comes by the very same way. *“And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east:... So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the*

inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.” (Ezek. 43:2-5).

The prosperity of the remnant was to undergo a mighty change when the Lord's claims were acceded to. The four and twentieth day of the ninth month was to be a red-letter day in their history. By a process of inflation, they had over-estimated their success in life. Like some merchant on the verge of bankruptcy, their assets had been manipulated to give an appearance of solvency. When the realization came, down their values went (Hag. 2:16). But hear now what He says, *“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.”* (Hag. 2:19).

Blessing with a lavish hand was to be theirs, after they had returned to the path of obedience. May we not count upon prosperity of a spiritual kind when there is response to the claims of the Lord? There has been sad declension since that remarkable movement of the Spirit of God nearly one hundred years ago, when modern Babylon was forsaken by thousands of God's saints, that they might find themselves in His company as gathered to His name, (*“in my name”* of Matt. 18:20). Have the features which marked them been retained by those who still outwardly stand associated with the distinctive truths which brought them out? Alas! alas!! To ask that question is to answer it. What is the remedy? *“Thus saith the Lord; consider your ways.”* *“He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”*

The ways of God in relation to Israel shall never suffer defeat. They will be carried into full fruition. Nevermore shall she require a second redemption: for Ezekiel informs us that *“the name of the city from that day shall be (Jehovah Shammah) the Lord is there.”* Do we not learn the same of the heavenly city, New Jerusalem?

May writer and reader alike accept the corrective and positive ministry of the Lord's messenger, taking it to heart for the glory of God and our own eternal gain.

THE VIGIL

"And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch" (Mark 13:37)

The vigil keep!

For night's dark pall has covered all things here,
Earth's siren songs thy heart no longer cheer,
Be thou a witness to Christ's glory there,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!

Faint not although thine enemies may roar,
Thy well-loved Lord hath trod the way before,
There shines in prospect home for evermore,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!

Just over yonder waits for thee the prize,
To meet thy longing gaze there shall arise
A world of glory bright, beyond the skies,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!

Though others languid grow, and faithless prove,
The wanton glare of Babel claims their love,
Thy joys are heavenly: sent thee from above,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!

Earth's mirth and music? Lights of turgid glow,
Their lurid gleams but phantom pleasures show,
There's nothing last'ing — nothing here below,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!
Watch till thou hear the Bridegroom's welcome call,
Death never could God's ransomed saints appall,
Broken shall forever be his awful thrall,
My soul the vigil keep!

The vigil keep!
The Bright and Morning Star's athwart the sky,
Sure token that the Day is drawing nigh,
Prepare to bid the world its last good-bye,
My soul the vigil keep!

October 24th, 1925

JOHN R. STEPHEN