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**COMMENTARY**

**COMMENTARY  
ON THE PROPHET  
HAGGAI**

*by John Calvin*

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# THE COMMENTARIES

## OF JOHN CALVIN

### ON THE PROPHET

## HAGGAI

### CALVIN'S PREFACE TO HAGGAI

AFTER the return of the people, they were favored, we know, especially with three Prophets, who roused their fainting hearts, and finished all predictions, until at length the Redeemer came in his appointed time. During the time of THE BABYLONIAN EXILE the office of teaching was discharged among the captives by EZEKIEL, and also by Daniel; and there were others less celebrated; for we find that some of the Psalms were then composed, either by the Levites, or by some other teachers. But these two, Ezekiel and Daniel, were above all others eminent. Then Ezra and Nehemiah followed them, the authority of whom was great among the people; but we do not read that they were endued with the Prophetic gift.

It then appears certain that three only were divinely inspired to proclaim the future condition of the people.

DANIEL had before them foretold whatever was to happen till the coming of Christ, and his Book is a remarkable mirror of God's Providence; for he paints, as on a tablet, three things which were to be fulfilled after his death, and of which no man could have formed any conjecture. He has given even the number of years from the return of the people to the building of the Temple, and also to the death of Christ. But we must come to the other witnesses, who confirmed the predictions of Daniel. The Lord raised up three witnesses — HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, and MALACHI.<sup>f1</sup>

The first<sup>f2</sup> condemned the sloth of the people; for, being intent on their own advantages, they all neglected the building of the Temple; and he shows that they were deservedly suffering punishment for their

ingratitude; for they despised God their Deliverer, or at least honored him less than they ought to have done, and deprived him of the worship due to him. He then encouraged them to hope for a complete restoration, and showed that there was no reason for them to be disheartened by difficulties, and that though they were surrounded by enemies, and had to bear many evils, and were terrified by threatening edicts, they ought yet to have entertained hope; for the Lord would perform the work which he had begun — to restore their ancient dignity to his people, and Christ also would at length come to secure the perfect happiness and glory of the Church.

This is the sum of the whole. I now come to the words.

# CHAPTER 1

## <370101> HAGGAI 1:1

1. 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,

1. Anno secundo Darii regis, mense sexto, die primo mensis, datus fuit sermo Jehovae in manum Chaggai Prophetae ad Zerubbabel, filium Sealtiel, ducem Jehudah, et ad Jehosuah, filium Jehosadak, sacerdotem magnum, dicendo—

THE Prophet mentions here the year, the month, and the day in which he began to rouse up the people from their sloth and idleness, by the command of God; for every one studied his own domestic interest, and had no concern for building the Temple.

This happened, he says, *in the second year of Darius the king*. Interpreters differ as to this time; for they do not agree as to the day or year in which the Babylonian captivity began. Some date the beginning of the seventy years at the ruin which happened under Jeconiah, before the erasing of the city, and the destruction of the Temple. It is, however, probable, that a considerable time had passed before Haggai began his office as a Prophet; for Babylon was taken twenty years, or little more, before the death of king Cyrus; his son Cambyases, who reigned eight years, succeeded him. The third king was Darius, the son of Hystaspes, whom the Jews will have to be the son of Ahasuerus by Esther; but no credit is due to their fancies; for they hazard any bold notion in matters unknown, and assert anything that may come to their brains or to their mouths; and thus they deal in fables, and for the most part without any semblance of truth. It may be sufficient for us to understand, that this Darius was the son of Hystaspes, who succeeded Cambyases, (for I omit the seven months of the Magi; for as they crept in by deceit, so shortly after they were destroyed;) and it is probable that Cambyases, who was the first-born son of Cyrus, had no male heir. Hence it was that his brother being slain by the consent of the

nobles, the kingdom came to Darius. He, then, as we may learn from histories, was the third king of the Persians. Daniel says, in the fifth chapter <sup><270501></sup> Daniel 5:1, that the city of Babylon had been taken by Cyrus, but that Darius the Mede reigned there.

But between writers there is some disagreement on this point; though all say that Cyrus was king, yet Xenophon says, that Cyaxares was ever the first, so that Cyrus sustained only the character, as it were, of a regent. But Xenophon, as all who have any judgement, and are versed in history, well know, did not write a history, but fabled most boldly according to his own fancy; for he invents the tale that Cyrus was brought up by his maternal grandfather, Astyages. But it is evident enough that Astyages had been conquered in war by Cyrus.<sup>f3</sup> He says also that Cyrus married a wife a considerable time after the taking of Babylon, and that she was presented to him by his uncle Cyaxares, but that he dared not to marry her until he returned to Persia, and his father Cambyses approved of the marriage. Here Xenophon fables, and gives range to his own invention, for it was not his purpose to write a history. He is a very fine writer, it is true; but the unlearned are much mistaken who think that he has collected all the histories of the world. Xenophon is a highly approved philosopher, but not an approved historian; for it was his designed object fictitiously to relate as real facts what seemed to him most suitable. He fables that Cyrus died in his bed, and dictated a long will, and spoke as a philosopher in his retirement; but Cyrus, we know, died in the Scythian war, and was slain by the queen, Tomyris, who revenged the death of her son; and this is well known even by children. Xenophon, however, as he wished to paint the image of a perfect prince, says that Cyrus died in his bed. We cannot then collect from the *Cyropaeda*, which Xenophon has written, anything that is true. But if we compare the historians together, we shall find the following things asserted almost unanimously: — That Cambyses was the son of Cyrus; that when he suspected his younger brother he gave orders to put him to death; that both died without any male issue; and that on discovering the fraud of the Magi,<sup>f4</sup> the son of Hystaspes became the third king of the Persian. Daniel calls Darius, who reigned in Babylon, the Mede; but he is Cyaxares. This I readily admit; for he reigned by sufferance, as Cyrus willingly declined the honor. And Cyrus, though a grandson of Astyages, by his daughter Mandane, was yet born of a father not ennobled; for Astyages, having dreamt that all Asia would be covered by

what proceeded from his daughter, was easily induced to marry her to a stranger. When, therefore, he gave her to Cambyases, his design was to drive her to a far country, so that no one born of her should come to so great an empire: this was the advice of the Magi. Cyrus then acquired a name and reputation, no doubt, only by his own efforts; nor did he venture at first to take the name of a king, but suffered his uncle, and at the same time his father-in-law, to reign with him; and yet he was his colleague only for two years; for Cyasares lived no longer than the taking of Babylon.

I come then now to our Prophet: he says, *In the second year of Darius* it was commanded to me by the Lord to reprove the sloth of the people. We may readily conclude that more than twenty years had elapsed since the people began to return to their own country.<sup>15</sup> Some say thirty or forty years, and others go beyond that number; but this is not probable. Some say that the Jews returned to their country in the fifty-eighth year of their captivity; but this is not true, and may be easily disproved by the words of Daniel as well as by the history of Ezra. Daniel says in the ninth chapter <sup><270901></sup> Daniel 9:1 that he was reminded by God of the return of the people when the time prescribed by Jeremiah was drawing nigh. And as this happened not in the first year of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, but about the end of the reign of Belshasar before Babylon was taken, it follows that the time of the exile was then fulfilled. We have also this at the beginning of the history, ‘When seventy years were accomplished, God roused the spirit of Cyrus the king.’ We hence see that Cyrus had not allowed the free return of the people but at the time predicted by Jeremiah, and according to what Isaiah had previously taught, that Cyrus, before he was born, had been chosen for this work: and then God began openly to show how truly he had spoken before the people were driven into exile. But if we grant that the people returned in the fifty-eighth year, the truth of prophecy will not appear. They therefore speak very thoughtlessly who say that the Jews returned to their country before the seventieth year; for thus they subvert, as I have said, every notion of God’s favor.

Since then seventy years had elapsed when Babylon was taken, and Cyrus by a public edict permitted the Jews to return to their country, God at that time stretched forth his hand in behalf of the miserable exiles; but troubles did afterwards arise to them from their neighbors. Some under the guise of friendship wished to join them, in order to obliterate the name of Israel; and that they might make a sort of amalgamation of many nations. Then

others openly carried on war with them; and when Cyrus was with his army in Scythia, his prefects became hostile to the Jews, and thus a delay was effected. Then followed Cambyzes, a most cruel enemy to the Church of God. Hence the building of the Temple could not be proceeded with until the time of this Darius, the son of Hystaspes. But as Darius, the son of Hystaspes, favored the Jews, or at least was pacified towards them, he restrained the neighboring nations from causing any more delay as to the building of the Temple. He ordered his prefects to protect the people of Israel, so that they might live quietly in their country and finish the Temple, which had only been begun. And we may hence conclude that the Temple was built in forty-six years, according to what is said in the second chapter of John <sup>f6</sup> (<430201> John 2:1); for the foundations were laid immediately on the return of the people, but the work was either neglected or hindered by enemies.

But as liberty to build the Temple was given to the Jews, we may gather from what our Prophet says, that they were guilty of ingratitude towards God; for private benefit was by every one almost exclusively regarded, and there was hardly any concern for the worship of God. Hence the Prophet now reproves this indifference, allied as it was with ungodliness: for what could be more base than to enjoy the country and the inheritance which God had formerly promised to Abraham, and yet to make no account of God, nor of that special favor which he wished to confer — that of dwelling among them? An habitation on mount Sion had been chosen, we know, by God, that thence might come forth the Redeemer of the world. As then this business was neglected, and each one built his own house, justly does the Prophet here reprove them with vehemence in the name and by the command of God. Thus much as to the time. And he says in the *second* year of Darius, for a year had now elapsed since liberty to build the Temple had been allowed them; but the Jews were negligent, because they were too much devoted to their own private advantages.

And he says, that *the word was given by his hand to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech*. We shall hereafter see that this communication had a regard without distinction to the whole community; and, if a probable conjecture be entertained, neither Zerubbabel nor Joshua were at fault, because the Temple was neglected; nay, we may with certainty conclude from what Zechariah says, that Zerubbabel was a wise prince, and that Joshua faithfully discharged his

office as a priest. Since then both spent their labor for God, how was it that the Prophet addressed them? and since the whole blame belonged to the people, why did he not speak to them? why did he not assemble the whole multitude? The Lord, no doubt, intended to connect Zerubbabel and Joshua with his servant as associates, that they three might go forth to the people, and deliver with one mouth what God had committed to his servant Haggai. This then is the reason why the Prophet says, that he was sent to Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Let us at the same time learn, that princes and those to whom God has committed the care of governing his Church, never so faithfully perform their office, nor discharge their duties so courageously and strenuously, but that they stand in need of being roused, and, as it were, stimulated by many goads. I have already said, that in other places Zerubbabel and Joshua are commended; yet the Lord reproved them and severely expostulated with them, because they neglected the building of the Temple. This was done, that they might confirm by their authority what the Prophet was about to say: but he also intimates, that they were not wholly free from blame, while the people were thus negligent in pursuing the work of building the Temple.

Zerubbabel is called the son of Shealtiel: some think that son is put here for grandson, and that his father's name was passed over. But this seems not probable. They quote from the Chronicles a passage in which his father's name is said to be Pedaiah: but we know that it was often the case among that people, that a person had two names. I therefore regard Zerubbabel to have been the son of Shealtiel. He is said to have been the governor<sup>f7</sup> of Judah; for it was necessary that some governing power should continue in that tribe, though the royal authority was taken away, and all sovereignty and supreme power extinguished. It was yet God's purpose that some vestiges of power should remain, according to what had been predicted by the patriarch Jacob,

‘Taken away shall not be the scepter from Judah, nor a leader from his thigh, until he shall come;’ etc. (<014910>Genesis 49:10.)

The royal scepter was indeed taken away, and the crown was removed, according to what Ezekiel had said, ‘Take away the crown, subvert, subvert, subvert it,’ (<262126>Ezekiel 21:26, 27;) for the interruption of the government had been sufficiently long. Yet the Lord in the meantime



preserved some remnants, that the Jews might know that that promise was not wholly forgotten. This then is the reason why the son of Shealtiel is said to be the governor of Judah. It now follows —

<b>&lt;370102&gt; HAGGAI 1:2-4</b>	
<b>2.</b> 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.	<b>2.</b> Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, dicendo, Populus isti dicunt (hoc est, dicit,) Non venit tempus domui Iehovae ad aedificandum.
<b>3.</b> Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,	<b>3.</b> Et datus fui sermo Iehovae in manu Chaggai Prophetae, dicendo,
<b>4.</b> Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?	<b>4.</b> An tempus vobis, ut habitatis vos in domibus vestris tabulatis, et domus haec deserta?

They who think that seventy years had not passed until the reign of Darius, may from this passage be easily disproved: for if the seventy years were not accomplished, an excuse would have been ready at hand, — that they had deferred the work of building the Temple; but it was certain, that the time had then elapsed, and that it was owing to their indifference that the Temple was not erected, for all the materials were appropriated to private uses. While then they were thus taking care of themselves and consulting their own interest, the building of the Temple was neglected. That the Temple was not built till the reign of Darius, this happened, as we have said, from another cause, because the prefects of king Cyrus gave much annoyance to the Jews, and Cambyses was most hostile to them. But when liberty was restored to them, and Darius had so kindly permitted them to build the Temple, they had no excuse for delay.

It is however probable that they had then many disputes as to the time; for it may have been, that they seizing on any pretext to cover their sloth, made this objection, — that many difficulties had occurred, because they had been too precipitate, and that they had thus been punished for their haste, because they had rashly undertaken the building of the Temple: and we may also suppose that they took another view of the time as having not yet come, for easily might this objection occur to them, — “It is indeed true that the worship of God is deservedly to be preferred to all other

things; but the Lord grants us this indulgence, so that we are allowed to build our own houses; and in the meantime we attend to the sacrifices. Have not our fathers lived many ages without a Temple? God was then satisfied with a sanctuary: there is now an altar erected, and there sacrifices are offered. The Lord then will forgive us if we defer the building of the Temple to a suitable time. But in the meantime every one may build his own house, so that afterwards the Temple may at leisure be built more sumptuously.” However this may have been, we find that true which I have often stated, — that the Jews were so taken up with their own domestic concerns, with their own ease, and with their own pleasures, that they made very little account of God’s worship. This is the reason why the Prophet was so greatly displeased with them.

He declares what they said, *This people say, The time is not yet come to build the house of Jehovah.*<sup>f8</sup> He repeats here what the Jews were wont to allege in order to disguise their sloth, after having delayed a long time, and when they could not, except through consummate effrontery, adduce anything in their own defense. We however see, that they hesitated not to promise pardon to themselves. Thus also do men indulge themselves in their sins, as though they could make an agreement with God and pacify him with some frivolous things. We see that this was the case then. But we may also see here, as in a mirror, how great is the ingratitude of men. The kindness of God had been especially worthy of being remembered, the glory of which ought to have been borne in mind to the end of time: they had been restored from exile in a manner beyond what they had ever expected. What ought they to have done, but to have devoted themselves entirely to the service of their deliverer? But they built, no, not even a tent for God, and sacrificed in the open air; and thus they wilfully trifled with God. But at the same time they dwelt at ease in houses elegantly fitted up.

And how is the case at this day? We see that through a remarkable miracle of God the gospel has shone forth in our time, and we have emerged, as it were, from the abodes below. Who does now rear up, of his own free-will, an altar to God? On the contrary, all regard what is advantageous only to themselves; and while they are occupied with their own concerns, the worship of God is cast aside; there is no care, no zeal, no concern for it; nay, what is worse, many make gain of the gospel, as though it were a lucrative business. No wonder then, if the people have so basely

disregarded their deliverance, and have almost obliterated the memory of it. No less shameful is the example witnessed at this day among us.

But we may hence also see how kindly God has provided for his Church; for his purpose was that this reproof should continue extant, that he might at this day stimulate us, and excite our fear as well as our shame. For we also thus grow frigid in promoting the worship of God, whenever we are led to seek only our own advantages. We may also add, that as God's temple is spiritual, our fault is the more atrocious when we become thus slothful; since God does not bid us to collect either wood, or stones, or cement, but to build a celestial temple, in which he may be truly worshipped. When therefore we become thus indifferent, as that people were thus severely reproofed, doubtless our sloth is much more detestable. We now see that the Prophet not only spoke to men of his age, but was also destined, through God's wonderful purpose, to be a preacher to us, so that his doctrine sounds at this day in our ears, and reproves our torpor and ungrateful indifference: for the building of the spiritual temple is deferred, whenever we become devoted to ourselves, and regard only what is advantageous to us individually. We shall go on with what follows tomorrow.

## **PRAYER**

Grant, Almighty God, that as we must carry on a warfare in this world, and as it is thy will to try us with many contests, — O grant, that we may never faint, however extreme may be the trials which we shall have to endure: and as thou hast favored us with so great an honor as to make us the framers and builders of thy spiritual temple, may every one of us present and consecrate himself wholly to thee: and, inasmuch as each of us has received some peculiar gift, may we strive to employ it in building this temple, so that thou mayest be worshipped among us perpetually; and especially, may each of us offer himself wholly as a spiritual sacrifice to thee, until we shall at length be renewed in thine image, and be received into a full participation of that glory, which has been attained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son. Amen.

## LECTURE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH

WHEN the Prophet asks, whether the time had come for the Jews to dwell in splendid and well furnished houses, and whether the time had not come to build the Temple, he intimates, that they were trifling in a very gross manner with God; for there was exactly the same reason for building the Temple as for building the city. How came they to be restored to their country, but that God performed what he had testified by the mouth of Jeremiah? Hence their return depended on the redemption promised to them: it was therefore easy for them to conclude, that the time for building the Temple had already come; for the one could not, and ought not to have been separated from the other, as it has been stated. He therefore upbraids them with ingratitude, for they sought to enjoy the kindness of God, and at the same time disregarded the memorial of it.

And very emphatical are the words, when he says, *Is it time for you to dwell in houses?*<sup>f9</sup> For there is implied a comparison between God, whose Temple they set no value on, and themselves, who sought not only commodious, but sumptuous dwellings. Hence the Prophet inquires, whether it was consistent that mortal men, who differ not from worms, should possess magnificent houses, and that God should be without his Temple. And to the same purpose is what he adds, when he says, that their *houses* were *boarded*; for ספונים, *saphunim*, means in Hebrew what we express by *Cambrisees*.<sup>f10</sup> Since then they were not satisfied with what was commodious, without splendor and luxury being added, it was extremely shameful for them to rob God at the same time of his Temple, where he was to be worshipped. It now follows —

**<370105> HAGGAI 1:5, 6**

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

**5.** Et nunc sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Adjicite cor vestrum ad vias vestras;

**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.

**6.** Seminastis multum, et intulistis parum; comedere, et non ad satietatem; bibere, et non ad ebrietatem; vestire, et non ad calorem cuique; et qui colligit mercedem, colligit mercedem in sacculum perforatum.

Here the Prophet deals with the refractory people according to what their character required; for as to those who are teachable and obedient, a word is enough for them; but they who are perversely addicted to their sins must be more sharply urged, as the Prophet does here; for he brings before the Jews the punishments by which they had been already visited. It is commonly said, that experience is the teacher of fools; and the Prophet has this in view in these words, *apply your hearts to your ways*,<sup>f11</sup> that is, “If the authority of God or a regard for him is of no importance among you, at least consider how God deals with you. How comes it that ye are famished, that both heaven and earth deny food to you? Besides, though ye consume much food, it yet does not satisfy you. In a word, how is it that all things fade away and vanish in your hands? How is this? Ye cannot otherwise account for it, but that God is displeased with you. If then ye will not of your own accord obey God’s word, let these judgements at least induce you to repent.” It was to apply the heart to their ways, when they acknowledged that they were thus famished, not by chance, but that the curse of God urged them, or was suspended over their heads. He therefore bids them to receive instruction from the events themselves, or from what they were experiencing; and by these words the Prophet more sharply teaches them; as though he had said, that they profited nothing by instruction and warning, and that it remained as the last thing, that they were to be drawn by force while the Lord was chastising them.

He says that they had *sown much*, and that *small was the produce*. They who render the clause in the future tense, wrest the meaning of the

Prophet: for why did he say, apply your heart to your ways, if he only denounced a future punishment? But, as I have already stated, he intimates, that they very thoughtlessly champed the bridle, for they perceived not that all their evils were inflicted by God's hand, nor did they regard his judgement as righteous. Hence he says, that they had sowed much, and that the harvest had been small; and then, that they *ate* and *were not satisfied*; that they *drank* and had not their *thirst quenched*; that they *clothed themselves* and were *not warmed*. How much soever they applied those things which seemed necessary for the support of life, they yet availed them nothing. And God, we know, does punish men in these two ways either by withdrawing his blessings, by rendering the earth and the heavens dry; or by making the abundant produce unsatisfying and even useless. It often happens that men gather what is sufficient for support, and yet they are always hungry. It is a kind of curse, which appears very evident when God takes away their nourishing power from bread and wine, so that they supply no support to man. When therefore fruit, and whatever the earth produces for the necessities of man, give no support, God proves, as it were by an outstretched arm, that he is an avenger. But the other curse is more frequent; that is, when God smites the earth with drought, so that it produces nothing. But our Prophet refers to both these kinds of evils. Behold, he says, *Ye have sown much and ye gather little*; and then he says, Though ye are supplied with the produce of wine and corn, yet with eating and drinking ye cannot satisfy yourselves; nay, your very clothes do not make you warm. They might have had a sure hope of the greatest abundance, had they not broken off the stream of God's favor by their sins. Were they not then extremely blind this experience must have awakened them, according to what is said in the first chapter of <sup><290101></sup> Joel 1:1.

He says at the end of the verse, *He who gains wages, gains then for a perforated bag*. By these words he reminds them, that the vengeance of God could not only be seen in the sterility of the earth, and in the very hunger of men, who by eating were not satisfied; but also in their work, for they wearied themselves much without any profit, as even the money cast into the bag disappeared. Hence he says, even your work is in vain. It was indeed a most manifest proof of God's wrath, when their money, though laid up, yet vanished away. <sup>f12</sup>

We now see what the Prophet means: As his doctrine appeared frigid to the Jews and his warnings were despised, he treats them according to the perverseness of their disposition. Hence he shows, that though they disregarded God and his Prophets, they were yet sufficiently taught by his judgements, and that still they remained indifferent. He therefore goads them, as though they were asses, that they might at length acknowledge that God was justly displeased with them, and that his wrath was conspicuous in the sterility of the land, as well as in everything connected with their life; for whether they did eat or abstained from food, they were hungry; and when they diligently labored and gathered wages, their wages vanished, as though they had cast them into a perforated bag. It follows —

<div>&lt;370107&gt;HAGGAI 1:7, 8</div>	
7. Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.	7. Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Ponite cor vestrum super vias vestras;
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.	8. Ascendite in montem et afferte lignum, et aedificate domum ( <i>vel</i> , hance domum;) et propitius ero in ea ( <i>vel</i> , mihi placebit in ea;) et glorificabor, dicit Iehova.

The Prophet now adds, that since the Jews were thus taught by their evils, nothing else remained for them but to prepare themselves without delay for the work of building the Temple; for they were not to defer the time, inasmuch as they were made to know, that God had come forth with an armed hand to vindicate his own right: for the sterility of which he had spoken, and also the famine and other signs of a curse, were like a drawn sword in the hand of God; by which it was evident, that he intended to punish the negligence of the people. As God then had been robbed of his right, he not only exhorted the people by his Prophets, but also executed his vengeance on this contempt.

This is the reason why the Prophet now says, *Apply your heart*, and then adds, *Go up to the mountain, bring wood*, etc. And this passage strikingly sets forth why God punished their sins, in order that they might not only perceive that they had sinned, but that they might also seek to amend that

which displeased God. We may also, in the second place, learn from what is said, how we are to proceed rightly in the course of true repentance. The beginning is, that our sins should become displeasing to us; but if any of us proceed no farther, it will be only an evanescent feeling: it is therefore necessary to advance to the second step; an amendment for the better ought to follow. The Prophet expresses both here: He says first, *Lay your heart on your ways*; that is, “Consider whence comes this famine to you, and then how it is that by laboring much ye gain nothing, except that God is angry with you.” Now this was what wisdom required. But he again repeats the same thing, Lay your heart on your ways, that is, “Not only that sin may be hated by you, but also that this sloth, which has hitherto offended God and provoked his wrath, may be changed into strenuous activity.” Hence he says, *Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and let the house be built*.

If any one is at a loss to know why the Prophet insists so much on building the Temple, the ready answer is this that it was God’s design to exercise in this way his ancient people in the duties of religion. Though then the Temple itself was of no great importance before God, yet the end was to be regarded; for the people were preserved by the visible Temple in the hope of the future Christ; and then it behaved them always to bear in mind the heavenly pattern, that they might worship God spiritually under the external symbols. It was not then without reason that God was offended with their neglect of the temple; for it hence clearly appeared, that there was no care nor zeal for religion among the Jews. It often was the case that they were more sedulous than necessary in external worship, and God scorned their assiduity, when not connected with a right inward feeling; but the gross contempt of God in disregarding even the external building, is what is reprehended here by the Prophet.

He afterwards adds, *And I will be propitious in it*, or, I will take pleasure in it. Some read, It will please me; and they depart not from the real meaning of the verb: for רצוה, *retse* — is to be acceptable. But more correct, in my view, is the opinion of those who think that the Prophet alludes to the promise of God; for he had said, that he would on this condition dwell among the Jews, that he might hear their prayers, and be propitious to them. As, then, the Jews came to the Temple to expiate their sins, that they might return to God’s favor, it is not without reason that God here declares that he would be propitious in that house.



‘If any one sin,’ said Solomon, ‘and entering this house, shall humbly pray, do thou also hear from thy heavenly habitation.’  
(<sup><110830></sup> 1 Kings 8:30.)

We further know that the covering of the ark was called the propitiatory, because God there received the suppliant into favor. This meaning, then, seems the most suitable — that the Prophet says, that if the Temple was built, God would be there propitious. But it was a proof of extreme impiety to think that they could prosper while God was adverse to them: for whence could they hope for happiness, except from the only fountain of all blessings, that is, when God favored them and was propitious to them? And how could his favor be sought, except they came to his sanctuary, and thence raise up their minds by faith to heaven? When, therefore, there was no care for the Temple, it was easy to conclude that God himself was neglected, and regarded almost with scorn. We then see how emphatically this was added, *I will be propitious there*, that is, in the Temple; as though he had said, “Your infirmity ought to have reminded you that you have need of this help, even of worshipping me in the sanctuary. But as I gave you, as it were, a visible mirror of my presence among you, when I ordered a Temple to be built for me on mount Sion, when ye despise the Temple, is it not the same as though I was rejected by you?”

He then adds, *And I shall be glorified, saith Jehovah*. He seems to express the reason why he should be propitious; for he would then see that his glory was regarded by the Jews. At the same time, this reason may be taken by itself, and this is what I prefer.<sup>f13</sup> The Prophet then employs two goads to awaken the Jews: When the Temple was built, God would bless them; for they would have him pacified, and whenever they found him displeased, they might come as suppliants to seek pardon; this was one reason why it behaved them strenuously to undertake the building of the Temple. The second reason was, that God would be glorified. Now, what could have been more inconsistent than to disregard God their deliverer, and so late a deliverer too? But how God was glorified by the Temple I have already briefly explained; not that it added anything to God; but such ordinances of religion were then necessary, as the Jews were as yet like children. It now follows —

**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.

**9.** Respexistis ad multum, et ecce parum; et intulistis ad domum, et sufflavi in illud: cur hoc? dicit Iehova exercituum: Propter domum meam quae est deserta, et vos curritis (vel, addicti estis quisque domi suae) quisque in domum suam.

Here the Prophet relates again, that the Jews were deprived of support, and that they in a manner pined away in their distress, because they robbed God of the worship due to him. He first repeats the fact, *Ye have looked for much, but behold little*. It may happen that one is contented with a very slender portion, because much is not expected. They who are satisfied with their own penury are not anxious though their portion of food is but scanty, though they are constrained to feed on acorns. Those who are become hardened in enduring evils, do not seek much; but they who desire much, are more touched and vexed by their penury. This is the reason why the Prophet says, Ye have looked for much, and, behold, there was but little; that is, “Ye are not like the peasants, who satisfy themselves with any sort of food, and are not troubled on account of their straitened circumstances; but your desire has led you to seek abundance. Hence ye seek and greedily lay hold on things on every side; but, behold, it comes to little.”

In the second place he adds, *Ye have brought it home*. He farther mentions another kind of evil — that when they gathered wine, and corn, and money, all these things immediately vanished. *Ye have brought it home, and I have blown upon it*. By saying that they brought it home, he intimates that what they had acquired was laid up, that it might be preserved safely; for they who had filled their storehouses, and wine-cellars, and bags, thought that they had no more to do with God. Hence it was that profane men securely indulged themselves; they thought that they were beyond the reach of danger, when their houses were well filled. God, on the contrary, shows that their houses became empty, when filled with treasures and provisions. But he speaks still more distinctly — that he had blown upon them, that is, that he had dissipated them by his breath: for

the Prophet did not deem it enough historically to narrate what the Jews had experienced; but his purpose also was to point out the cause, as it were, by the finger. He therefore teaches us, that what they laid in store in their houses did not without a cause vanish away; but that this happened through the blowing of God, even because he cursed their blessing, according to what we shall hereafter see in the Prophet Malachi.

He then adds, *Why is this? saith Jehovah of hosts.* God here asks, not because he had any doubts on the subject, but that he might by this sort of goading rouse the Jews from their lethargy, — “Think of the cause, and know that my hand is not guided by a blind impulse when it strikes you. You ought, then, to consider the reason why all things thus decay and perish.” Here again is sharply reprov'd the stupidity of the people, because they attended not to the cause of their evils; for they ought to have known this of themselves.

But God gives the answer, because he saw that they remained stupefied — *On account of my house,* he says, *because it is waste.*<sup>f14</sup> God here assigns the cause; he shows that though no one of them considered why they were so famished, the judgement of his curse was yet sufficiently manifest, on account of the Temple remaining a waste. And you, he says, run, every one to his own house. Some read, You take delight, every one in his own house; for it is the verb **רָצָה**, *retse*, which we have lately noticed; and it means either to take pleasure in a thing, or to run. Every one, then, runs to his house, or, Every one delights in his house. But it is more suitable to the context to give this rendering, Every one runs to his house. For the Prophet here reminds the Jews that they were slow and slothful in the work of building the Temple, because they hastened to their private houses. He then reproves here their ardor in being intent on building their own houses, so that they had no leisure to build the Temple. This is the hastening which the Prophet blames and condemns in the Jews.

We may hence learn again, that they had long delayed to build the sanctuary after the time had arrived: for, as we have mentioned yesterday, they who think the Jews returned in the fifty-eighth year, and that they had not then undergone the punishment denounced by Jeremiah, are very deluded; for they thus obscure the favor of God; nay, they wholly subvert the truth of the promises, as though they had returned contrary to God's will, through the permission of Cyrus, when yet Isaiah says, that Cyrus

would be the instrument of their promised redemption. (<234505> Isaiah 45:5.) Surely, then, Cyrus must have been dead before the time was fulfilled! and in that case God could not have been the redeemer of his people. Therefore Eusebius, and those who agree with him, did thus most absurdly confound the order of time. It now follows —

<370110> HAGGAI 1:10, 11	
10. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.	10. Propterea prohibiti super vos sunt coeli a rore, et terra a proventu suo prohibita est.
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 labor of the hands.	11. Et vocavi siccitatem super terram, et super montes, et super triticum, et super mustum (aut, vinium,) et super omne quod profert terra, et super hominem, et super animal, et super omnem laborem manuum.

He confirms what the last verse contains — that God had made it evident that he was displeased with the people because their zeal for religion had become cold, and, especially, because they were all strangely devoted to their own interest and manifested no concern for building the Temple. Hence, he says, *therefore the heavens* are shut up and *withhold the dew*; that is, they distil no dew on the earth; and he adds, that the earth was closed that it produced no fruit; it yielded no increase, and disappointed its cultivators. As to the particle **על-כן**, *ol-can*, we must bear in mind what I have stated, that God did not regard the external and visible Temple, but rather the end for which it was designed; for it was his will then that he should be worshipped under the ceremonies of the law. When, therefore, the Jews offered mutilated, lame, or diseased sacrifices, they manifested impiety and contempt of God. It is yet true, that it was the same thing as to God; but he had not commanded sacrifices to be offered to him for his own sake, but that by such services they might foster true religion. When, therefore, he says now, that he punished their neglect of the Temple, we ought ever to regard that as a pattern of heavenly things, so that we may understand that the coldness and indifference of the Jews were reprov-

because it hence evidently appeared that they had no care for the worship of God.

With respect to the withholding of dew and of produce, we know that the Prophets took from the law what served to teach the people, and accommodated it to their own purposes. The curses of the law are general. (<051117>Deuteronomy 11:17.) It is therefore the same thing as though the Prophet had said, that what God had threatened by Moses was really fulfilled. It ought not to have been to them a new thing, that whenever heaven denied its dew and rain it was a sign of God's wrath. But as, at this day, during, wars, or famine, or pestilence, men do not regard this general truth, it is necessary to make the application: and godly teachers ought wisely to attend to this point, that is, to remind men, according to what the state of things and circumstances may require, that God proves by facts what he has testified in his word. This is what is done by our Prophet now, *withheld have the heavens the dew and the earth its produce.*<sup>f16</sup>

In a word, God intimates, that the heavens leave no care to provide for us, and to distil dew so that the earth may bring forth fruit, and that the earth also, though called the mother of men, does not of itself open its bowels, but that the heavens as well as the earth bear a sure testimony to his paternal love, and also to the care which he exercises over us. God then shows, both by the heavens and the earth, that he provides for us; for when the heavens and the earth administer and supply us with the blessings of God, they thus declare his love towards us. So also, when the heaven is, as it were, iron, and when the earth with closed bowels refuses us food, we ought to know that they are commissioned to execute on us the vengeance of God. For they are not only the instruments of his bounty, but, when it is necessary, God employs them for the purpose of punishing us. This is briefly the meaning.

## PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou kindly and graciously invites us to thyself, we may not wait until thou stimulates us with goads, but cast aside our sloth and run quickly to thee. And when our torpor so possesses us as to render punishment necessary, permit us not to harden ourselves; but being at length effectually warned, and we return to the right way, and strive so to render all we do

approved by thee, that we may find a door opened to thy grace and favor: and being made partakers of those blessed, by which thou affordest a taste of that goodness which we shall enjoy in heaven, may we ever aspire thither, and be satisfied with the abundant blessings which we daily and even continually receive from thine hand, in such a manner as not to be detained by this world; but may we, with minds raised up to heaven, ever tend upwards, and labor for that perfect happiness which is there laid up for us by Christ our Lord. Amen.

## LECTURE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH

### <370112> HAGGAI 1:12

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.

12. Et audivit Zerubbabel, filius Sealtiel, et Jehoasua, filius Jehosadak, sacerdos magnus, et omnes reliquiae populi vocem Iehovae Dei sui, et ad verba Chaggai Prophetarum; quemadmodum miserat ipsum Iehova Deus eorum; et timuerunt populus a conspectu Iehovae.

THE Prophet here declares that his message had not been without fruit, for shortly after the whole people prepared themselves for the work. And he names both Zerubbabel and Joshua; for it behoved them to lead the way, and, as it were, to extend a hand to others. For, had there been no leaders, no one of the common people would have pointed out the way to the rest. We know what usually happens when a word is addressed indiscriminately to all the people: they wait for one another. But when Joshua and Zerubbabel attended to the commands of the Prophet, the others followed them: for they were dominant, not only in power, but also in authority, so that they induced the people willingly to do their duty. One was the governor of the people, the other was the high priest; but the honesty and faithfulness of both were well known, so that the people spontaneously followed their example.

And this passage teaches us that though God invites all to his service, yet as any one excels in honor or in other respects, so the more promptly he ought to undertake what is proposed by the authority of God. Our Prophet, no doubt, meant to point out this due order of things, by saying, that he was heard first by Zerubbabel and Joshua, and then by the whole people.

But as all had not returned from exile, but a small portion, compared with that great number, which, we know, had not availed themselves of the

kindness allowed them — this is the reason why the Prophet does not simply name the people, but *the remnant of the people*, שְׁאֵרִית הָעָם, *sharit eom*. As also the gift of prophecy had been for a long time more rare, and few appeared among the people who had any decided evidence of their call, such as Samuel, Isaiah, David, and others possessed, the Prophet, for this reason, does here more carefully commend and honor his own office: he says that the people attended to *the voice of Jehovah* — How? By attending, he says, *to the words of Haggai the Prophet, inasmuch as Jehovah their God had sent him*. He might have said more shortly that his labor had not been without fruit; but he used this circuitous mode of speaking, that he might confirm his own call; and he did this designedly, because the people had for a long time been without the opportunity of hearing God's Prophets, for there were none among them.

But Haggai says nothing here but what belongs in common to all teachers in the Church: for we know that men are not sent by divine authority to speak that God himself may be silent. As then the ministers of the word derogate nothing from the authority of God, it follows that none except the only true God ought to be heard. It is not then a peculiar expression, which is to be restricted to one man, when God is said to have spoken by the mouth of Haggai; for he thus declared that he was God's true and authorised Prophet. We may therefore gather from these words, that the Church is not to be ruled by the outward preaching of the word, as though God had substituted men in his own place, and thus divested himself of his own office, but that he only speaks by their mouth. And this is the import of these words, *The people attended to the voice of Jehovah their God, and to the words of Haggai the Prophet*. For the word of God is not distinguished from the words of the Prophet, as though the Prophet had added anything of his own. Haggai then ascribed these words to himself, not that he devised anything himself, so as to corrupt the pure doctrine which had been delivered to him by God, but that he only distinguished between God, the author of the doctrine, and his minister, as when it is said,

“The sword of God and of Gideon,” (<070720> Judges 7:20,)

and also,

“The people believed God and Moses his servant.”  
(<021431> Exodus 14:31.)



nothing is ascribed to Moses or to Gideon apart from God; but God himself is placed in the highest honor, and then Moses and Gideon are joined to him. In the same sense do the Apostles write, when they say, that “it had pleased the Holy spirit” and themselves. (<441522> Acts 15:22.)

And hence it is evident how foolish and ridiculous are the Papists, who hence conclude that it is lawful for men to add their own inventions to the word of God. For the Apostles, they say, not only alleged the authority of the Holy Spirit, but also say, that it seemed good to themselves. God then does not so claim, they say, all things for himself, as not to leave some things to the decision of his Church, as though indeed the Apostles meant something different from what our Prophet means here; that is, that they truly and faithfully delivered what their had received from the spirit of God.

It is therefore a mode of speaking which ought to be carefully marked, when we hear, that the voice of God and the words of Haggai were reverently attended to by the people. — Why? *Inasmuch*, he says, *as God had sent him*; as though he had said, that God was heard when he spoke by the mouth of man. And this is also worthy of being noticed, because many fanatics boast, that they allow regard to the word of the Lord, but are unwilling to give credit to men, as that would be even preposterous; and they pretend, that in this way what belongs to the only true God is transferred to creatures. But the Holy spirit most easily reconciles these two things — that the voice of God is heard when the people embrace what they hear from the mouth of a Prophet. Why so? because it pleases God thus to try the obedience of our faith, while he commits to man this office. For if the Lord was pleased to speak himself, then justly might men be neglected: but as he has chosen this mode, whosoever reject God’s Prophets, clearly show that they despise God himself. There is no need of inquiring here, why it is that we ought to obey the word preached or the external voice of men, rather than revelations; it is enough for us to know that this is the will of God. When therefore he sends Prophets to us, we ought unquestionably to receive what they bring.

And Haggai says also expressly, that he was sent by the God of Israel; as though he had said, that the people had testified their true piety when they acknowledged God’s Prophet in his legitimate vocation. For he who clamorously objects, and says that he knows not whether it pleases God or

not to send forth men to announce his word, shows himself to be wholly alienated from God: for it ought to be sufficiently evident to us that this is one of our first principles.

He afterwards adds, that *the people feared before Jehovah.*<sup>f17</sup> Haggai confirms here the same truth — that the people received not what they heard from the mouth of mortal man, otherwise than if the majesty of God had openly appeared. For there was no ocular view of God given; but the message of the Prophet obtained as much power as though God had descended from heaven, and had given manifest tokens of his presence. We may then conclude from these words, that the glory of God so shines in his word, that we ought to be so much affected by it, whenever he speaks by his servants, as though he were nigh to us, face to face, as the Scripture says in another place. It now follows —

<370113>HAGGAI 1:13, 14	
13. Then spake Haggai the LORD's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.	13. Et dicit Chaggai, legatus Iehovae in legatione Iehovae, dicendo (vel, dicens) populo, Ego vobiscum sum, dicit Iehova.
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,	14. Et excitavit Iehova spiritum Zerubbabel, filli Sealtiel, ducis Jehudah, et spiritum Jehosuae, filii Jehozadak, sacerdotis magni, et spiritum omnium reliquiarum (hoc est, totius residuae multitudinis) populi; et venerunt et fecerunt opus in templo (in domo, ad verbum) Iehovae exercituum Dei sui.

The Prophet tells us here, that he had again roused the leaders as well as the common people; for except God frequently repeats his exhortations, our alacrity relaxes. Though then they had all attended to God's command, it was yet necessary that they should be strengthened by a new promise: for men can be encouraged, and their indifference can be corrected, by no other means, to such a degree, as when God offers and promises his help.

This, then, was the way in which they were now encouraged, *I am with you*. And experience sufficiently shows, that we never really and from the heart obey, except when we rely on his promises and hope for a happy success. For were God only to call us to our work, and were our hope doubtful, all our zeal would doubtless die away. We cannot then devote our services to God, except he supports and encourages us by promises. We also see, that it is not enough that God should speak once, and that we should once receive his word, but there is need that he should rouse us again and again; for the greatest ardor grows cold when no goads are applied.

And the Prophet makes known again his vocation, for he says, that *he spake in the message of Jehovah*, for he was his messenger. The word מלאך, *malak*, means a messenger; and as angels are called מלאכים, *melakim*, some foolish men have thought that Haggai was one of the celestial angels, clothed with the form of man: but this is a most frivolous conjecture; for priests, we know, are honored with this title in the second chapter of Malachi, <sup><390201></sup> Malachi 2:1, and God in many other places calls his Prophets messengers or ambassadors. There is, therefore, no doubt but that Haggai meant simply to testify, that he brought forward nothing presumptuously, but was a faithful dispenser of the word; for he knew that he was sent by God; and that he might attain attention, he was able justly to testify that his message came from heaven.

Hence he says, that he spake as a *messenger of Jehovah in the message of Jehovah*; that is, he spoke according to his calling, and not as a private individual, but as one who derived his authority from heaven, and could call to order the whole people; for he was to give way neither to the chief priest nor to Zerubbabel the ruler of the people, inasmuch as he was superior to them on this account, because he had a message which had been committed to him by God.<sup>f18</sup> We now then understand the design of the Prophet.

And we hence learn that there is no dignity which exempts us from obedience common to all, when God's word is addressed to us. Doubtless Joshua the high priest was superior to all the rest in matters of religion, and he was the chief angel or messenger of the God of hosts; and yet he refused not to submit himself to God's Prophet, for he understood that he was in a special manner appointed by God to this office. Zerubbabel, the governor

of the people, followed also his example. Let us, then, know that God's word is proclaimed under this condition, that no eminence, either in honor or in dignity, exempts us, as it were, by a sort of privilege, from the obligation of receiving it.

The Prophet at length adds, that the people hastened quickly to the work, because God had given encouragement to them all. He had lately spoken of the fruit of his doctrine; but he now declares that his voice had not so penetrated into the hearts of all, as though it had been of itself efficacious, but that it had been connected with the hidden influence of the Spirit.

And this passage is remarkable; for the Prophet includes both these things — that God allows not his word to be useless or unfruitful — and yet that this proceeds not from the diligence of men, but from the hidden power of the Spirit. The Prophet, then, did not fail in his efforts; for his labor was not in vain, but brought forth fruit. At the same time, that that saying might remain true,

‘He who plants and he who waters is nothing,’  
(<sup><460307></sup> 1 Corinthians 3:7,)

he says, that the Israelites were ready for the work, because the Lord roused them; *Jehovah*, he says, *stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the spirit of Joshua, and of the whole people*. It is not right to restrict the influence of the Spirit to one thing only, as some do, who imagine that the Israelites were confirmed in their good resolution, as they say, having before spontaneously obeyed the word of God. These separate, without reason, what ought to be read in the Prophet as connected together. For God roused the spirit of Zerubbabel and of the whole people; and hence it was that they received the message of the Prophet, and were attentive to his words. Foolishly, then, do they imagine that the Israelites were led by their own free-will to obey the word of God, and then that some aid of the Holy Spirit followed, to make them firmly to persevere in their course. But the Prophet declared, in the first place, that his message was respectfully received by the people; and now he explains how it was, even because God had touched the hearts of the whole people.<sup>f19</sup>

And we ought to notice the expression, when it is said that the *spirit* of Zerubbabel and of all the people was *stirred up*. For much sloth, we know, prevailed, especially among the multitude. But as to Zerubbabel and

Joshua, they were, as we have said, already willing, but delayed until the coldness under which they labored was reprov'd. But the Prophet here simply means, that they became thus obedient through the hidden impulse of God, and also that they were made firm in their purpose. God does not form new souls in us, when he draws us to his service; but changes what is wrong in us: for we should never be attentive to his word, were he not to open our ears; and there would be no inclination to obey, were he not to turn our hearts; in a word, both will and effort would immediately fail in us, were he not to add his gift of perseverance. Let us, then, know that Haggai's labors produced fruits, because the Lord effectually touched the hearts of the people; for we indeed know that it is his special gift, that the elect are made disciples, according to that declaration,

‘No one comes to me, except my Father draw him.’  
(<sup><430624></sup> John 6:24.)

It is therefore said that they *came and did the work in the house of Jehovah.*

We may also hence learn, that no one is fit to offer sacrifices to God, or to do any other service, but he who has been moulded by the hidden operation of the Spirit. Willingly, indeed, we offer ourselves and our all to God, and build his temple; but whence is this voluntary action, except that the Lord subdues us, and thus renders us teachable and obedient? It is afterwards added —

<div>&lt;370115&gt;HAGGAI1:15</div>	
15. In the four and twentieth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king.	15. In die vicesimo quarto mensis sexti, anno secundo Darii regis.

The Prophet mentions even the time when they commenced the building of the temple. Three-and-twenty days interposed between the first message and the beginning of the work. It hence appears how ignorant he was who divided the chapters, having begun the second chapter at this verse, where the Prophet shows, as it were by his finger, how much was the distance between the day in which he began to exhort the people, and the success of which he speaks. He then simply tells us here when the Temple began to

be built — that is, in the second year of Darius the king, and in the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month. He had previously said that a message was given to him in the second year of Darius the king, and in the sixth month, and on the first day. Then from that day to the twenty-fourth the people delayed; not that they disregarded the command of the Prophet, but because it was not so easy a thing to persuade them all, that they might unanimously undertake the work. Though then the promptitude of the people is commended, we must yet observe that there was some mixture of weakness; for the effect of the doctrine did not appear till the twenty-fourth day. <sup>f20</sup> It afterwards follows —

# CHAPTER 2

## <370201> HAGGAI 2:1-5

**1.** 1 In the seventh *month*, in the one and twentieth *day* of the month, came the word of the LORD by the prophet Haggai, saying,

**1.** In septimo et vicesimo uno mensis (*hoc est*, septimo mense, vicesima prima die mensis) fuit sermo Iehovae in manu Chaggai Prophetetae, dicendo.

**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,

**2.** Dic nunc ad Zerubbabel, filium Sealtiel, ducem Jehudah, et ad Jehosuah, filium Jehosadak, sacerdotem magnum, et ad reliquias populi, dicendo.

**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?

**3.** Quis in vobis superstes (*vel*, residuus, *ad verbum*) qui viderit domum hanc in gloria sua priore, et quam vos videtis hanc nunc, annon prae illa sicut nihilum in oculis vestris?

**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:

**4.** Et nunc (*vel*, nunc tamen) fortis sis Zerubbabel, dicit Iehova, et fortis sis Jehosuah, fili Jehosadak, sacerdos magne, et fortis sis omnis populus terrae, dicit Iehova, et operamini, quia ego vobiscum, dicit Iehovah exercituum,

**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.

**5.** Secundum verbum quod pepigi vobiscum dum egressi estis ex Egypto; et spiritus meus stabit (*vel*, perseverabit) in medio vestri, ne timeatis.

The Prophet now states another reason why he had been sent by God, in order that he might obviate a temptation which might have hindered the work that was begun. We have seen that they were all stirred up by the celestial spirit to undertake the building of the Temple. But as Satan, by his many arts, attempts to turn back the godly from their course, so he had devised a reason by which the desire of the people might have been checked. Inasmuch as the old people, who had seen the splendor of the former temple, considered this temple no better than a cottage, all their zeal evaporated; for, as we have said, without a promise there will continue in men no ardor, no perseverance. Now we know what had been predicted by Ezekiel, and what all the other Prophets had testified, especially Isaiah, who had spoken highly of the excellency of the Church, and shown that it was to be superior to its ancient state. (<233321> Isaiah 33:21.) Besides, Ezekiel describes the form of the Temple, and states its dimensions. (<264101> Ezekiel 41:1.) As then the faithful had learnt from these prophecies that the new Temple would be more splendid than the ancient, they were in danger, not only of becoming cold in the business, but also of being wholly discouraged, when they perceived that the new Temple in no respect reached the excellency and grandeur of the ancient Temple. And these things are described at large by Josephus.

But we may easily conclude, from the words of the Prophet, that there was then a danger lest they should lay aside the work they had begun, except they were encouraged by a new exhortation. And he says that this happened in the seventh month, and on the first day of the month.

Here arises a question, How was it that they so soon compared the new with the old building. Seven or eight days had passed since the work was begun: nothing, doubtless, could have been then constructed, which might have afforded a ground of comparison. It seems then strange, that the Prophet had been so soon sent to them. An answer to this will be easily found, if we bear in mind. that what I have stated at the beginning of the first chapter, that the foundations of the Temple had been previously laid, but that there had been a long interruption: for the people had turned to their own private concerns, and all had become so devoted to their own advantages, that they neglected the building of the Temple. For it is wholly a false notion, that the people had returned from exile before the appointed time, and it has been sufficiently refuted by clear proofs; for scripture expressly declares, that both Cyrus and Darius had been led by a divine



impulse to allow the return of the people. Hence, when the Jews returned to their country, they immediately began to build the Temple; but afterwards, as I have said, either avarice, or too anxious a desire for their own private benefit, laid hold on their minds. As then the building of the Temple had been for some time neglected, they were again encouraged, as our Prophet has shown to us. They had now hardly applied their hands to the work, when, through the artifice of Satan, such suggestions as these crept in — “What are ye doing, ye miserable men! Ye wish to build a Temple to your God; but what sort of Temple will it be? Certainly it will not be that which all the Prophets have celebrated. For what do we read in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel? Have not all these testified that the Temple which would be rebuilt after our return from Babylonian exile would be more splendid than the other? But we now build a shed. Surely this is done without authority. We do not then fight under the guidance of God; and it would be better for us to leave off the work; for our service cannot be approved of God, except it be founded on his Word. And we see how far this Temple comes short of what God has promised.”

We now hence learn, that it was not without reason that Haggai was sent on the eighth day to recover the people from their indifference. And hence also we may learn how necessary it is for us to be constantly stimulated; for Satan can easily find out a thousand impediments, by which he may turn us aside from the right course, except God often repeats his exhortations to keep us awake. Eight days only have elapsed, and the people would have ceased from their work, had not Haggai been sent to encourage them again.

Now the cause of this cessation, which the Prophet designed to obviate and to remove, ought to be especially noticed. The people had before ceased to work, because they were immoderately devoted to their own interest, which was a proof of base ingratitude and of profane impiety: for those who had no care for building the Temple were most ungrateful to God; and then their impiety was intolerable, inasmuch as they sought boarded houses to dwell in, being not content with decent houses without having them adorned, while the Temple was left, as it were, a wilderness. But the cause was different, when Haggai was sent the second time; for their indifference then arose from a good principle and a genuine feeling of religion. But we hence see what a subtle contriver Satan is, who not only draws us away openly from God’s service, but insinuates himself in a

clandestine manner, so as to turn us aside, under the cover of zeal, from the course of our vocation. How was it that the people became negligent after they had begun the work? even because it grieved the old men to see the glory of the second, so far inferior to the first Temple. For though the people animated themselves by the sound of trumpets, yet the old among them drowned the sound by their lamentations. Whence was this? even because they saw, as I have said, that this Temple was in no way equal to the ancient one; and hence they thought that God was not as yet reconciled to them. Had they said, that so great an expense was not necessary, that God did not require much money to be laid out, their impiety should have been openly manifested; but when they especially wished that the splendor of the Temple would be such, as might surely prove that the restoration of the Church was come, such as had been promised by all the Prophets, we doubtless perceive their pious feeling.

But we are thus reminded, that we ought always to beware of the intrigues of Satan, when they appear under the cover of truth. When, therefore, our minds are disposed to piety, Satan is ever to be feared, lest he should stealthily suggest to us what may turn us aside from our duty; for we see that some leave the Church because they require in it the highest perfection. They are indignant at vices which they deem intolerable, when they cannot be corrected: and thus, under the pretext of zeal, they separate themselves and seek to form for themselves a new world, in which there is to be a perfect Church; and they lay hold on those passages in which the Holy Spirit recommends purity to the Church, as when Paul says, that it was purchased by Christ, that it might be without spot or wrinkle. As then these are inflamed with a zeal so rigid that they depart from God himself and violate the unity of the Church; so also there are many proud men who despise the Church of God, because it shines not forth among them in great pomp; and they think that God does not dwell in the midst of us, because we are obscure and of no great importance, and also because they regard our few number with contempt.

In all these there is some appearance of piety. How so? Because they would have God to be revered, so that they would have the whole world to be filled with the fear of his majesty; or they would have much wealth to be gathered, so that sumptuous offerings might be made. But, as I have already said, Satan thus cunningly insinuates himself; and hence we ought to fear his intrigues, lest, under plausible pretences, he should dazzle

our eyes. But the best way of caution is to regard what God commands, and so to rely on his promises as to proceed steadily in our course, though the accomplishment of the promises does not immediately correspond with our desires; for God designedly keeps us in suspense in order to try our faith. Though then he may not as yet fulfill what he has promised, let it yet be our course to attempt nothing rashly, while we are obeying his command. It will then be our chief wisdom, by which we may escape all the crafts of Satan, simply to obey God's word, and to exercise our hope so as patiently to wait the seasonable time, when he will fulfill what he now promises.

### **PRAYER**

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are not only alienated in mind from thee, but also often relapse after having been once stirred up by thee, either into perverseness, or into our own vanity, or are led astray by various things, so that nothing is more difficult than to pursue our course until we reach the end of our race, — O grant that we may not confide in our own strength, nor claim for ourselves more than what is right, but, with our hearts raised above, depend on thee alone, and constantly call on thee to supply us with new strength, and so to confirm us that we may persevere to the end in the discharge of our duty, until we shall at length attain the true and perfect form of that temple which thou commandest us to build, in which thy perfect glory shines forth, and into which we are to be transformed by Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## LECTURE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST

THE Prophet, after having declared why it was necessary to add new stimulants, now exhorts Zerubbabel and Joshua, and also the people, to be courageous, and thus to proceed with the work. And he again repeats what he had said, that the Lord was with them; *I am with you*, he says. Now this one thing is enough for us, that is, when God declares that he is with us; for his aid, we know, is stronger than the whole world, however Satan may on every side attempt to resist us.

He also adds, that his *Spirit would be in the midst* of them; and then he says, that there was no reason for them to *fear*. By his Spirit God means the power by which he strengthened their minds, that they might not give way to their trials, or, that fear might not hinder them. And what is particular is joined to what is general; for God is present with his own in various ways: but he especially shows, that he is present when, by his Spirit, he confirms weak minds. He then bids them all to be of a courageous mind. This is one thing. But he also shows whence this courage proceeded; for he sustained them by his Spirit when they were growing faint, or when they were not able to resist fears. The Prophet reminds them by these words, that courage was to be sought from God.

We hence learn that what belongs to our calling and duty is not required from us as though we were able to perform everything; but when the Lord, according to his own right, commands, he offers the help of his Spirit; and thus we ought to connect the promise of grace with the precept, of which foolish men take no notice, who deduce free will from what is commanded: for they thus reason — that it is in vain to require from us what is above our ability, and that as God requires us to form our life according to the rule of the highest perfection, it is therefore in our power to perform the highest justice. But the Prophet here, in the first place, exhorts Joshua and Zerubbabel, and the whole people, to be courageous, and then, he immediately adds, that the *Spirit of God would be in the midst of them*; as though he had said, that there was no reason for them to despond, though they had not sufficient strength in themselves; for courage was to be sought from the Spirit of God, who would dwell among them. In short, the Prophet teaches us that the faithful are so to strive as not to arrogate anything to themselves, but to offer themselves to be ruled by the Lord,

that he may supply them with weapons as well as with strength, and thus conquer in them; for though the victory is ascribed to us it is yet certain that God conquers in us.

He then adds, *According to the word*; for so I render the particle אִתְּ, *at*. They who think that the Jews are here reminded that it was their duty to obey God, and purely to serve him, and truly to keep his law, according to what he had commanded them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, far depart from the design of the Prophet; for the Prophet pursues the same subject; and in the latter clause he confirms what I have just mentioned — that the *Spirit* of God *would be in the midst of them*. He therefore shows that he promises nothing new, but what God had formerly engaged to give to their fathers. If any one prefers taking the particle אִתְּ, *at* in an explicative sense, I do not object; for the meaning would be the same — that this is the word which he had promised. The object of the Prophet is by no means doubtful; for he means to teach us that God is faithful and constant in his promises, and that the Jews would find this to be the case, for he would perform what he had formerly promised to their fathers. *The word*, he says, *which I had covenanted with you when I brought you out of Egypt*. For the Prophets were wont to remind the faithful of the ancient covenant, that they might gain more credit to their special prophecies. We indeed know that whatever God had promised to the Jews, was founded on their first adoption. When, therefore, the Prophets brought forward the ancient covenant, it was the same as though they led the Jews back to the fountain itself; for the promises, which now and then occurred, were like streams which flowed from the first spring, even their gratuitous covenant.

We now then see why an express mention is made of the ancient compact which God had made with the chosen people at their departure out of Egypt.

It must also be observed, that God became then the Redeemer of his people, in order to be their eternal Father, and thus to be the perpetual guardian of their safety. Hence the design of what the Prophet says is to show that their fathers were not formerly redeemed, that their children might reject God, but that he might continue his favor to his people to the end. But the ultimate issue is to be found in Christ, that is, the full accomplishment; for God does not cease to show kindness in him to his chosen people, but performs much more fully and abundantly what he had

previously exhibited under types and shadows. For whatever he conferred on his ancient Church, was, as it were, a prelude of his vast bounty, which was at length made known by the coming of Christ.

We now clearly apprehend what the Prophet meant: For he upbraided the Jews for their stupidity, because they did not consider that their fathers were formerly delivered from Egypt, that God might defend them to the end. Hence he bids them maturely to examine the design and character of the covenant which God made at their departure from Egypt; for he entered into covenant with them, that he might be their Redeemer, and confer on them the fullness of all blessings. Since it is so, he says, the time is now come when God will perform what he then promised to your fathers; and whatever faithfulness ye have hitherto found in God, ought to be applied for this end — that ye may feel assured that ye have been now restored to your country, in order that he might re-establish his Church, and that ye might not continue in that low condition, which now depresses your minds. As then ye ought to look for that fullness of happiness which God formerly promised, either his covenant is void and he unfaithful, or ye ought with cheerfulness and alacrity to proceed with the work. It follows

<370206>HAGGAI 2:6-9	
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;	6. Quia sit dicit Iehova exercituum, Adhuc unum modicum hoc, et ego commovebo coelos et terram et mare et aridam;
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.	7. Et commovebo omnes gentes, et venient, desiderium omnium gentium; et implebo domum hance gloria, dicit Iehova exercituum.
8. The silver <i>is</i> mine, and the gold <i>is</i> mine, saith the LORD of hosts.	8. Meum argentum, et meum aurum, dicit Iehova exercituum.
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.	9. Major erit gloria domus hujus secundae (posterioris, ad verbum,) quam prioris dicit Iehova exercituum: et in loco hoc dabo pacem, dicit Iehova exercituum.

Here the Prophet expresses more clearly, and confirms more fully, what I have said — that God would in time bring help to the miserable Jews, because he would not disappoint the assurance given to the fathers. This declaration, then, depends on the covenant before mentioned; and hence the causative particle is used, *For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, as yet a small one it is, or, yet shortly, I will fill this house with glory.* The expression a small thing, most interpreters aptly to time. Yet there are those who think the subject itself is denoted. The more received opinion is, that it means a small duration, a short time, because God would soon make a change for the better. “Though then there does not as yet appear the accomplishment of the promises, by which ye have hitherto supported your faith and your hope, yet after a short time God will really prove that he has spoken nothing falsely to you.”

There are yet some, as I have said, who think that the matter itself is denoted by the Prophet, even that the Temple did not yet appear in splendor before the eyes of men, *a small one it is*, that is, Ye see not indeed a building such as that was, before the Assyrians and the Chaldeans took possession of the city; but let not your eyes remain fixed on the appearance of this Temple. Let then *this small one as yet* pass by; but in a short time *this house will be filled with glory.*

With regard to the main object, it was the Prophet’s design to strengthen the minds of the godly, that they might not think that the power of God was inefficient, though he had not as yet performed what they had hoped. In short, they were not to judge by present appearances of what had been previously said of their redemption. We said yesterday that the minds of the godly were heavily depressed, because the Prophets had spoken in high terms of the Temple as well as of the kingdom: the kingdom was as yet nothing; and the temple was more like a shed than what might have been compared in glory with the former Temple. It was hence necessary for the Prophet to meet this objection; and this is the reason why he bids them to overlook the present appearance, and to think of the glory which was yet hidden. As yet, he says, it is a small one; that is, “There is no reason for you to despair, though the grandeur of the Temple does not as yet appear to be so great as you have conceived; but, on the contrary, let your minds pass over to that restoration which is still far distant. *As yet then a small one it is; and I will move the heavens and the earth.*”<sup>f22</sup>

In a word, God here bids them to exercise patience, until he should put forth the ineffable power of his hand to restore fully his Church; and this is what is meant by the shaking of the heaven and the earth.

But this is a remarkable passage. The Jews indeed, who are very absurd in everything connected with the kingdom of Christ, pervert what is here said by the Prophet, and even reduce it to nothing. But the Apostle in <sup><581201></sup>Hebrews 12:1 reminds us of what God means here. For this passage contains an implied contrast between the law and the gospel, between redemption, just mentioned here, and that which was to be expected, and was at length made known by the coming of Christ. God, then, when he redeemed his people from Egypt, as well as from Babylon, moved the earth: but the Prophet announces here something greater — that God would shake the heaven and the earth. But that the meaning of the Prophet may appear more evident, each sentence must be examined in order.

He says first, *this once, shortly*. I am inclined to apply this to time, that I may not depart from what is commonly received. But there is no reason for us to contend on the subject, because it makes little or no difference as to the main point. For we have said that what the Prophet had in view was to show that the Jews were not to fix their eyes and their minds on the appearance of the Temple at the time: “Allow,” he says, “and give place to hope, because your present state shall not long remain; for the Lord will shake the heaven and the earth; think then of God’s power, how great it is; does he not by his providence rule both the earth and the heaven? And he will shake all things above and below, rather than not to restore his Church; he will rather change the appearance of the whole world, than that redemption should not be fully accomplished. Be not then unwilling to be satisfied with these preludes, but know what God’s power can do: for though it may be necessary to throw the heaven and the earth into confusions, yet this shall be done, rather than that your enemies should prevent that full restoration, of which the Prophets have so often spoken.” But the Apostle very justly says, that the gospel is here set in contrast with the law; for God exhibited his wonderful power, when the law was promulgated on mount Sinai; but a fuller power shone forth at the coming of Christ, for then the heaven, as well as the earth, was shaken. It is not, then, without reason that the Apostle concludes that God speaks now to us from heaven, for his majesty appears more splendid in the gospel than formerly in the law: and hence we are less excusable, if we despise him



now speaking in the person of his only begotten Son, and thus speaking to show to us that the whole world is subject to him.

He then adds, *I will move all the nations, and they shall come*. After having mentioned the heaven and the earth, he now shows that he would arrest the attention of all mortals, so as to turn them according to his will, in any way it may please him: *Come*, he says, *shall* all nations — How? because I shall shake them. Here again the Prophet teaches us that men come not to Christ except through the wonderful agency of God. He might have spoken more simply, I will lead all nations, as it is said elsewhere; but his purpose was to express something more, even that the impulse by which God moves his elect to betake themselves to the fold of Christ is supernatural. Shaking seems a forcible act. Lest men, then, should obscure the power of God, by which they are roused that they may obey Christ, and submit to his authority, it is here by the Prophet expressed by this term, in order that they might understand that the Lord does not work in an usual or common manner, when they are thus changed.

But it must be also observed, that men are thus powerfully, and in an extraordinary or supernatural manner influenced, so that they follow spontaneously at the same time. The operation of God is then twofold; for it is first necessary to shake men, that they may unlearn their whole character, that is, that forgetting their former nature, they may willingly receive the yoke of Christ. We indeed know how great is our perverseness, and how unnameable we are, until God subdues us by his Spirit. There is need in such a case of a violent shaking. But we are not forced to obey Christ, as lions and wild beasts are, who indeed yield, but still retain their inward ferocity, and roar, though led in chains and subdued by scourges and beatings. We are not, then, so shaken, that our inward rebellion remains in us; but we are shaken, so that our disposition is changed, and we receive willingly the yoke of Christ. This is the reason why the Prophet says, *I will shake all nations, and they shall come*; that is, there will be indeed a wonderful conversion, when the nations who previously despised God, and regarded true religion and piety with the utmost hatred, shall habituate themselves to the ruling power of God: and they shall come, because they shall be so drawn by his hidden influence, that the obedience they shall render will be voluntary. We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

He afterwards adds, *The desire of all nations*. This admits of two explanations. The first is, that nations shall come and bring with them everything that is precious, in order to consecrate it to the service of God; for the Hebrews call whatever is valuable a desire; so that under this term they include all riches, honors, pleasures, and everything of this kind. Hence some render the passage thus, I will shake all nations, and come shall the desire of all nations. As there is a change of number; others will have כֹּהֵן, *beth*, or מֶלֶךְ, *mem*, to be understood, They shall come with what they desire; that is, the nations shall not come empty, but shall gather all their treasures to be a holy oblation to God. But we may understand what he says of Christ, *Come shall the desire of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory*. We indeed know that Christ was the expectation of the whole world, according to what is said by Isaiah. And it may be properly said, that when the desire of all nations shall come, that is, when Christ shall be manifested, in whom the wishes of all ought to center, the glory of the second Temple shall then be illustrious; but as it immediately follows, *Mine is the silver, and mine is the gold*, the more simple meaning is that which I first stated — that the nations would come, bringing with them all their riches, that they might offer themselves and all their possessions as a sacrifice to God.

It is, then, better to read what follows as an explanation, *Mine is the silver, mine is the gold, saith Jehovah*; that is, “I have not through want of money deferred hitherto the complete building of the Temple; for what can hinder me from amassing gold and silver from all quarters? Should it so please me, I could in a short time build a Temple by all the wealth of the world. Is it not indeed in my power to create mountains of gold and silver, by which I might erect for myself a Temple? Ye hence see that wealth is not wanting to me to build the Temple which I have promised; but the time is not arrived. Therefore they who believe the preceding predictions, ought to wait and to look forward, until the suitable time shall come.” This is the import of the passage. <sup>f23</sup>

He at length declares that *the glory* of the second *Temple* would be *greater* than that of *the first*, and that there would be *peace in that place*. As to the words there is nothing obscure; but we ought especially to attend to what is said.

It must, indeed, be first observed, that what is said here of the future glory of the Temple is to be applied to the excellency of those spiritual blessings which appeared when Christ was revealed, and are still conspicuous to us through faith; for ungodly men are so blind that they see them not. And this we must bear in mind, lest we dream like some gross interpreters, who think that what is here said was in part fulfilled when Herod reconstructed the Temple. For though that was a sumptuous building, yet there is no doubt but that it was an attempt of the Devil to delude the Jews, that they might cease to hope for Christ. Such was also, probably, the craft of Herod. We indeed know that he was only a half-Jew. He professed himself to be one of Abraham's children; but he accommodated his habits, we know, to those of the Jews, oddly for his own advantage. That they might not look for Christ, this delusive and empty spectacle was presented to them, so as almost to astound them. Though this, however, may not have entered into the mind of Herod, it is yet certain that the Devil's design was to present to the Jews this deceptive shade, that they might not raise up their thoughts to look for the coming of Christ, as the time was then near at hand.

God might, indeed, immediately at the beginning have caused a magnificent temple to be built: as he had allowed a return to the people, so he might have given them courage, and supplied them with materials, to render the latter Temple equal or even superior to the Temple of Solomon. But Cyrus prohibited by an edict the Temple to be built so high, and he also made its length somewhat smaller: Why was this done? and why also did Darius do the same, who yet liberally helped the Jews, and spared no expense in building the Temple? How was it that both these kings, though guided by the Spirit of God, did not allow the Temple to be built with the same splendor with which it had been previously erected? This did not happen without the wonderful counsel of God; for we know how gross in their notions the Jews had been, and we see that even the Apostles were entangled in the same error; for they expected that the kingdom of Christ would be no other than an earthly one. Had then this Temple been equally magnificent with the former, and had the kingdom become such as it had been, the Jews would have acquiesced in these outward pomps; so that Christ would have been despised, and God's spiritual favor would have been esteemed as nothing. Since, then, they were so bent on earthly happiness, it was necessary for them to be awakened; and the Lord had

regard to their weakness, by not allowing a splendid Temple to be built. But in suffering a counterfeit Temple to be built by Herod, when the manifestation of Christ was nigh, he manifested his vengeance by punishing their ingratitude, rather than his favor; and I call it counterfeit, because its splendor was never approved by God. Though Herod spent great treasures on that building, he yet profaned rather than adorned the Temple. Foolishly, then, do some commemorate what Helena, queen of Adiabianians, had laid out, and think that thus a credit is in some measure secured to this prophecy. But it was on the contrary Satan who attempted to deceive by such impostures and crafts, that he might draw away the minds of the godly from the beauty of the spiritual Temple.

But why does the prophet mention gold and silver? He did this in conformity with what was usual and common; for whenever the Prophets speak of the kingdom of Christ, they delineate or describe its splendor in figurative terms, suitable to their own age. When Isaiah foretells the restoration of the Church, he declares that the Church would be all gold and silver, and whatever glittered with precious stones; and in [236001](#) Isaiah 60:1 he especially sets forth the magnificence of the Temple, as though nations from all parts were to bring for sacrifice all their precious things. But Isaiah speaks figuratively, as all the other Prophets do. So then what we read of gold and of silver ought to be so explained as to be applied mystically to the kingdom of Christ; as we have already observed respecting [390111](#) Malachi 1:11 —

‘They shall offer to me, saith the Lord,  
pure sacrifices from the rising to the setting of the sun.’

What are these sacrifices? Are heifers yet to be offered, or lambs, or other animals? By no means; but we must regard the spiritual character of the priesthood; for as the gold of which the Prophet now speaks, and the silver, ought to be taken in a spiritual sense; for since Christ has appeared in the world, it is not God’s will to be served with gold and silver vessels; so also there is no altar on which victims are to be sacrificed, and no candlestick; in a word, all the symbols of the law have ceased. It hence follows that the Prophet speaks of the spiritual ornaments of the Temple. And thus we perceive how the glory of the second Temple is to be greater than that of the first.

It then follows, that God *would give peace in this place*; as though he had said that it would be well with the Jews if they only waited patiently for the complete fulfillment of redemption. But it must be observed, that this peace was not so evident to them that they could enjoy it according to the perception of the flesh; but it was that kind of peace of which Paul speaks, and which, he says, exceeds all understanding (<500407> Philippians 4:7.) In short, the people could not have comprehended what the Prophet teaches here respecting the future splendor of the Temple, except they leaped over all the obstacles which seemed to obstruct the progress of complete redemption; and so it was ever necessary for them to have recourse to this truth — *yet a little while*; as though he said that they were patiently to endure while God was exercising their faith: but that the time would come, and that shortly, when the Lord would fill that house with glory that is, when Christ would bring with him all fullness of glory; for though they were to gather the treasures of a thousand worlds into one mass, such a glory would yet be corruptible; but when God the Father appeared in the person of his own Son, he then glorified indeed his Temple; and his majesty shone forth so much that there was nothing wanting to a complete perfection.

## PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are by nature extremely prone to superstition, we may carefully consider what is the true and right way of serving thee, such as thou dost desire and approve, even that we offer ourselves spiritually to thee, and seek no other altar but Christ, and relying on no other priest, hope to be acceptable and devoted to thee, that he may imbue us with the Spirit which has been fully poured on him, so that we may from the heart devote ourselves to thee, and thus proceed patiently in our course, that with minds raised upwards we may ever go on towards that glory which is as yet hid under hope, until it shall at length be manifested in due time, when thine only-begotten Son shall appear with the elect angels for our final redemption. Amen.

## LECTURE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND

<370210> HAGGAI 2:10-14	
<b>10.</b> 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,	<b>10.</b> Vicesimo quarto noni (mensis, <i>subaudiendum</i> ,) anno secundo Darii, fuit sermo Iehovae ad Chaggai Prophetam, dicendo.
<b>11.</b> Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying,	<b>11.</b> Sic dicit Iehova exercituum, Interroga Sacerdotes de Lege, dicendo,
<b>12.</b> 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.	<b>12.</b> Si sustulerit vir (quispiam) carnem sanctam in ala vestis suae, et tetegerit ala sua panem, et coctionem, et vinum, et olcum, et quodvis edulium, an sanctificabitur? Et responderunt Sacerdotes et dixerunt, Non.
<b>13.</b> 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.	<b>13.</b> Et dixit Chaggai, Si tetegerit pollutus in anima omne hoc, an polluetur? Responderunt Sacerdotes, et dixerunt, Polluetur.
<b>14.</b> 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.	<b>14.</b> Et respondi Chaggai et dixit, Sic populus iste, et sic gens ista in conspectu meo, dicit Iehova: et sic omne opus manuum ipsorum, et quod obtulerint illic, pollutum erit.

THOUGH interpreters seem to perceive the meaning of the Prophet, yet no one really and clearly expresses what he means and intends to teach us: nay, they adduce nothing but what is jejune and frigid; for they refer all these things to this point, — that sacrifices were not acceptable to God

before the people had begun to build the Temple, but that from that time they were pleasing to God, because the people, in offering sacrifices in a waste place, proved by such negligence that they disregarded the command of God: but when their hands were applied to the work, God was appeased, and thus he began to accept their sacrifices which before he had rejected. This is, indeed, a part of what is meant, but not the whole; and the Prophet's main object seems to me to be wholly different. He has been hitherto exhorting the people to build the Temple; he now exhorts them to build from a pure motive, and not to think that they had done everything when the Temple assumed a fine appearance before the eyes of men, for God required something else. Hence, I have no doubt but that the Prophet intended here to raise up the minds of the people to the spiritual worship of God.

It was, indeed, necessary diligently to build the Temple, but the end was also to be regarded; for God never cared for external ceremonies; nor was he delighted with that building as men are with their splendid houses. As the Jews absurdly ascribed these gross feelings to God, the Prophet here shows why so strict a command had been given as to the building of the Temple; and the reason was, — that God might be worshipped in a pure and holy manner.

I will repeat again what I have said, that the explanation may be more familiar to you. When the people neglected the building of the Temple, they manifested their in-piety and their contempt of Divine worship: for what was the cause of their delay and tardiness, except that each of them regarded nothing but just his own private interest? Now, when all of them strenuously undertook the work of building the Temple, their industry was indeed laudable, for it was a proof of their piety: but when the people thought that God required nothing more than a splendid Temple, it was manifest superstition: for the worship of God, we know, is corrupted when it is confined to external things; for, in this manner God is transformed into a nature not his own: as he is a Spirit, so he must be spiritually worshipped by us. Whosoever then obtrudes on him only external pomps in order to pacify him, most childishly trifles with him. This second part, in my view, is what the Prophet now undertakes to handle. From the seventh to the ninth month they had been diligently engaged in the work which the Lord had commanded them to do: but men, as we know, busy themselves with external things and neglect spiritual

worship; hence it was necessary to join what is said here, that the people might understand, that it was not enough to satisfy God, though they spared neither expense nor labor in building the Temple; but that something greater was required, even to worship God in it in a pure and holy manner. This is the design of the whole passage. But we must first examine the Prophet's words, and then it will be easier to gather the whole import of his doctrine.

He says then that he was ordered by God, *on the twenty fourth day of the month, in the same year, in the second year of Darius, to ask the priests concerning the law.*<sup>f24</sup> Haggai is not bid to inquire respecting the whole law, but only that the priests should answer a question according to the Word of God, or the doctrine of the law according to what is commonly said — What is law, is the question: for it was not allowed to the priests to allege anything they pleased indiscriminately; but they were only interpreters of the law. This is the reason why God bids his Prophet to inquire what the law of Moses defines as to the ceremony mentioned here. And the design was, that the people, being convinced as to the legal ceremonies, might not contend nor glamour, but acknowledge that all socks are condemned as sinful which flow not from a pure and sincere heart.

Haggai asks first, *If a man takes holy flesh* — that is, some part of the sacrifice, — if any one takes and carries it in a sleeve or skirt, that is, in any part of his vestment, and then touches bread, or oil, or any eatable thing, will anything connected with that holy flesh be sanctified by mere touch? *The priests answer, No.* Here also interpreters grossly mistake: for they take sanctified as meaning polluted, altogether falsely; for there is here a twofold question proposed. Whether holy flesh sanctifies anything it may touch? and then, whether an impure and a polluted man contaminates whatever he may touch? As to the first question, the priests wisely and truly answer, that there is no such efficacy in sacrifices, as that they can sanctify what they may touch: and this is true. The second definition is also most proper, that whatever is touched by an unclean man is polluted, as the law everywhere declares.

The Prophet then accommodates this to his present case, *So*, he says, *is this people, and this nation, and the work of their hands.* For as long as they are polluted, however they may spend money in sacrifices, and greatly weary themselves in worshipping God, not only is their labor vain,



but whatever they offer is polluted, and is an abomination only. We now understand the words of the Prophet, and so we may now consider the subject.

But before I speak generally of the present subject, I shall first notice what the Prophet says here, that he *inquired respecting the law*; for it was not allowed to the priests to allege anything they pleased. We indeed know, that they had advanced into such licentiousness, as arbitrarily to demand what God had never commanded, and also to forbid the people what was lawful, the use of which had been permitted by God's law. But Haggai does not here allow such a liberty to the priests; he does not ask what they thought, but what was required by the law of the Lord. And this is worthy of being noticed; for it is a pernicious evil to exercise an arbitrary control over the conscience. And yet the devil has ever corrupted the worship of God, and the whole system of religion, under the pretense of extolling the authority of the Church. It is indeed true, that the sacerdotal office was very honorable and worthy of respect; but we must ever take heed lest men assume too much, and lest what is thoughtlessly conceded to them should deprive God of what belongs to him; as the case is, we know, under the Papacy. When the Pope seeks to show that all his commands ought without any dispute to be obeyed, he quotes what is found in <051708>Deuteronomy 17:8 —

‘If a question arises about the law,  
the high priest shall judge between what is sacred and profane.’

This is indeed true; but was it permitted to the high priest to disregard God's law, and foolishly to allege this or that according to his own judgement? Nay, the priest was only an interpreter of the law. Whenever then God bids those pastors to be heard whom he sets over his Church, his will is, as it has been before stated, that he himself should be heard through their mouth. In short, whatever authority is exercised in the Church ought to be subjected to this rule — that God's law is to retain its own pre-eminence, and that men blend nothing of their own, but only define what is right according to the Word of the Lord. Now this is by the way; I come now to the main point.

*The priests answered*, that neither flesh, nor oil, nor wine, was sanctified by touching a piece or part of a sacrifice. Why? because a sacrifice sanctifies not things unclean, except by way of expiation; for this, we

know, was the design of sacrifices — that men who were polluted might reconcile themselves to God. A right answer was then given by the priests, that unclean flesh or unclean oil is not sanctified by the touch of holy flesh. Why? because the flesh itself was not dedicated to God for this end — to purify what was unclean by a mere touch. Yet, on the other hand, it is most true, that when a man was unclean he polluted whatever he touched. It is commonly thought, that he is said to be unclean in his soul who had defiled himself by touching a corpse; but I differ from this. The word soul is often taken in the law for man himself. —

‘The soul that eats of what died of itself is polluted;  
the soul that touches a corpse is polluted.’  
(<sup><031715></sup>Leviticus 17:15.)

Hence he is here said to be polluted in his soul, who had an outward uncleanness, as we say in French, *Pollu en sa personne*. Whosoever then is unclean pollutes by touch only whatever might have been otherwise clean; and the conclusion sufficiently proves that this is the purport of this passage.<sup>f25</sup> I have said enough of what the design of the Prophet is, but the subject must be more fully explained.

We know how heedlessly men are wont to deal with God; for they trifle with him like children with their puppets. And this presumption has been condemned, as it is well known, even by heathens. Hardly a Prophet could have inveighed more severely against this gross superstition than Persius, who compares sacrifices, so much thought of by all, to puppets, and shows that other things are required by God, even

*A well ordered condition and piety of soul, and an inward purity  
of mind, and a heart imbued with generous virtue.*<sup>f26</sup>

He means then that men ought to be imbued with true holiness, and that inwardly, so that there should be nothing fictitious or feigned. He says that they who are such, that is, who have imbibed the true fear of God, do rightly serve him, though they may bring only a crumb of incense, and that others only profane the worship of God, though they may bring many oxen; for whatever they think avails to cover their filth is polluted by new and repeated filth. And this is what has been expressed by heathen authors: another poet says, -

*An impious right hand does not rightly worship the celestials.*<sup>f27</sup>

So they spoke according to the common judgement of natural knowledge. As to the Philosophers, they ever hold this principle — that no sacrifice is rightly offered to God except the mind be right and pure. But yet the Philosophers, as well as the Poets, adopted this false notion, by which Satan beguiled all men, from the least to the greatest — that God is pacified by ceremonies: hence have proceeded so many expiations, in which foolish men trusted, and by which they thought that God would be propitious to them, thought they obstinately continued daily to procure for themselves new punishments, and, as it were, avowedly to carry on war with God himself.

They admit at this day, under the Papacy, this principle that the true fear of God is necessary, as hypocrisy contaminates all the works of men; nor will they indeed dare to commend those who seek feignedly and triflingly to satisfy God, when they are filled with pride, contempt, and impiety. And yet they will never receive what the Prophet says here — that men not only lose all their labor, but also contract new pollution, when they seek to pacify God by their sacrifices, unaccompanied by inward purity. For whence is that partial righteousness which the Papists imagine? For they say, that if one does not keep the whole law, yet obedience in part is approved by God; and nothing is more common among them than this expression, partial righteousness. If then an adulterer refrains from theft, and lays out in alms some of his wealth, they will have this to be charity, and declare it to be acceptable. Though it proceeds from an unclean man, it is yet made a covering, which is deemed sufficient in some way or another to pacify God. Thus the Papists seek, without exercising any discrimination, to render God bound to them by their works, though they may be full of all uncleanness. We hence see that this error has not sprung up today or yesterday for the first time; but it is inherent in the bones and marrows of men; for they have ever thought that their services please God, though they may be unclean themselves.

Hence this definition must be borne in mind — that works, however splendid they may appear before our eyes, are of no value or importance before God, except they flow from a pure heart. Augustine has very wisely explained this in his fourth book against Julia. He says, that it would be an absurd thing for the faithful to judge of works by the outward appearance; but that they ought to be estimated according to the fountain from which they proceed, and also according to their design. Now the fountain of

works I consider to be integrity of heart, and the design or end is, when the object of men is to obey God and to consecrate their life to him. Hence then we learn the difference between good and evil works, between vices and virtues, that is, from the inward state of the mind, and from the object in view. This is the subject of the Prophet in the first clause; and he drew an answer from the priests, which was wholly consistent with the law; and it amounted to this, that no work, however praised and applauded by the world, is valued before God's tribunal, except it proceeds from a pure heart.

Now as to the second part, it is no less difficult to convince men of its truth — that whatever they touch is contaminated, when they are themselves unclean; and yet this is what God had plainly made known to the Jews: and the priests hesitated not nor doubted, but immediately returned an answer, as though the matter was well known — that an unclean man contaminates whatever thing he touches. But when we come to apply the subject, men then reject what they had been clearly taught; nay, what they are forced to confess, until they see the matter brought home to them, and then they begin to accuse God of too much rigour: “Why is this, that whatever we touch is polluted, though we might leave some defilement? Are not our works still deserving of some praise, as they are good works?” And hence also is the common saying, That works, which are in their kind good, are always in a measure meritorious, and though they are without faith, they yet avail to merit the gift of faith, inasmuch as they are in themselves praiseworthy, as chastity, liberality, sobriety, temperance, beneficence, and all alms giving. But God declares that these virtues are polluted, though men may admire them, and that they are only abominable filth, except the heart be really cleansed and purified. Why so? because nothing can flow from an impure and polluted fountain but what is impure and polluted.

It is now easy to understand how suitably the Prophet had led the priests and the whole people to see this difference. For if he had abruptly said this to them — that no work pleased God, except the doer himself had been cleansed from every defilement, there would have arisen immediately many disputations: “Why will God reject what is in itself worthy of praise? When one observes chastity, when another liberally lays out a part of his property, when a third devotes himself wholly to promote the good of the public, when magnanimity and firmness shine forth in one, when another

cultivates the liberal arts — are not these such virtues as deserve some measure of praise!” Thus a great glamour would have been raised among the people, had not Haggai made this kind of preface — that according to the law what is unclean is not sanctified by the touch of holy flesh, and also that whatever is touched by an unclean person is polluted. What the law then prescribed in its rituals silenced all those clamours, which might have immediately arisen among the people. Moreover, though ceremonies have now ceased and are no longer in use, yet what God has once declared still retains its force — that whatever we touch is polluted by us, except there be a real purity of heart to sanctify our works.

Let us now inquire how our works please God: for no one is ever found to be pure and perfect, as the most perfect are defiled with some vices; so that their works are always sprinkled with some spots and blemishes, and contract some uncleanness from the hidden filth of their hearts. In answer to this, I say first, that all our works are corrupt before God and abominable in his sight, for the heart is naturally corrupt: but when God purifies our hearts by faith, then our works begin to be approved, and obtain praise before him; for the heart is cleansed by faith, and purity is diffused over our works, so that they begin to be pleasing to God. For this reason Moses says, that Abel pleased God with his sacrifices,

“The Lord had respect to Abel and to his gifts.”

(<sup><010404></sup> Genesis 4:4.)

Had Moses said only, that the sacrifices of Abel were approved by God, he would have spoken unadvisedly, or at least obscurely; for he would have been silent on the main thing. But he begins with the person, as though he had said, that Abel pleased God, because he worshipped him with an upright and sincere heart. He afterwards adds, that his sacrifices were approved, for they proceeded from the true fear of God and sincere piety. So Paul, when speaking of the real keeping of the law, says, that the end of the law is love from a pure heart and faith unfeigned. (<sup><540105></sup> 1 Timothy 1:5.) He shows then that no work is deemed right before God, except it proceeds from that fountain, even faith unfeigned, which is always connected with an upright and sincere heart. This is one thing.

Secondly, we must bear in mind how God purifies our hearts by faith. There is indeed a twofold purification: He first forms us in his image, and engraves on us true and real fear, and an obedient disposition. This purity

of the heart diffuses itself over our works; for when we are imbued with true piety, we have no other object but to offer ourselves and all we have to God. Far indeed are they who are hypocrites and profane men from having this feeling; nay, they are wholly alienated from it: they offer liberally their own things to God, but they wish to be their own masters; for a hypocrite will never give up himself as a spiritual sacrifice to God. We hence see how faith purifies our hearts, and also purifies our works: for having been regenerated by the Spirit of God, we offer to him first ourselves and then all that we have. But as this purgation is never found complete in man, it is therefore necessary that there should come an aid from gratuitous acceptance. Our hearts then are purified by faith, because God imputes not to us that uncleanness which remains, and which defiles our works. As then God regards with gracious acceptance that purity which is not as yet perfect, so he causes that its contagion should not reach to our works. When Abel offered sacrifices to God, he was indeed perfect, inasmuch as there was nothing feigned or hypocritical in him: but he was a man, we know, encompassed with infirmity. It was therefore necessary for his remaining pollution to have been purified by the grace of Christ. Hence it was that his sacrifices were accepted: for as he was accepted, so God graciously received whatever proceeded from him.

We now then see how men, while in a state of nature, displease God by their works, and can bring nothing but what is corrupt, filthy, and abominable. We farther see how the children of God, after having been renewed by his Spirit, come pure to him and offer him pure sacrifices: they come pure, because it is their object to devote themselves to God without any dissimulation; but as this devotedness is never perfect, God supplies the defect by a gratuitous imputation, for he embraces them as his servants in the same manner as though they were entirely formed in all righteousness. And in the same way he approves of their works, for all their spots are wiped away, yea, those very spots, which might justly prevent all favor; were not all uncleanness washed away by the blood of Christ, and that through faith.

We hence learn, that there is no ground for any one to deceive himself with vain delusions, by attempting to please God with great pomp: for the first thing of which the Prophet treats here is always required, that is, that a person must be pure in his heart, that inward purity must precede every work. And though this truth meets us everywhere in all the Prophets, yet

as hypocrisy dazzles our eyes and blinds all our senses, it ought to be seriously considered by us; and we ought to notice in an especial manner not only this passage but other similar passages where the Prophets ridicule the solicitude of the people, when they busied themselves with sacrifices and outward observances, and neglected the principal thing — real purity of heart.

We must also take notice of what the Prophet says in the last verse, that *so was every work of their hand and whatever they offered.*<sup>f28</sup> It seems apparently a hard matter, that the very sacrifices were condemned as polluted. But it is no wonder that fictitious modes of worship, by which profane men dishonor God, should be repudiated by him; for they seek to transform him according to their own fancy, as though he might be soothed by playthings or such trifles. It is therefore a most disgraceful mockery when men deal thus with God, offering him only external ceremonies, and disregarding his nature: for they make no account of spiritual worship, and yet think that they please him. We must then, in a word, make this remark — that the Prophet teaches us here, that it is not enough for men to show obedience to God, to offer sacrifices, to spend labor in building the Temple, except these things were rightly done — and how rightly? by a sincere heart, so there should be no dissimulation, no duplicity.

## PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as we come from our mother's womb wholly impure and polluted, and afterwards continually contract so many new defilements, — O grant that we may flee to the fountain, which alone can cleanse us. And as there is no other way by which we can be cleansed from all the defilements of the flesh, except we be sprinkled by the blood of thy only begotten Son, and that by the hidden power of thy Spirit, and thus renounce all our vices, — O grant that we may so strive truly and sincerely to devote ourselves to thee, as daily to renounce more and more all our evil affections, and to have nothing else as our object, but to submit our minds and all our affections to thee, by really denying ourselves, and to exercise ourselves in this strenuous effort as long as we are in this world, until we attain to that true and perfect purity, which is laid up for us in thine only-

begotten Son, when we shall be fully united to him, having been transformed into that glory into which he has been received. Amen.



# LECTURE ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD

## <370215> HAGGAI 2:15-19

**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:

**15.** Et nunc ponite quaeso (*vel*, *agedum*) super cor vestrum a die hac et supra, antequam poneretur lapis super lapidem in templo Iehovae:

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

**16.** Ante haec quum veniret quis ad acervum viginti, fuit decem; quum veniret ad torcular ut hauriret quinquaginta e torculari, fuit summa viginti.

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

**17.** Percussi vos orientali vento (*vel*, *urente*) et rubigine, et grandine in omni opere manuumstrarum (*alii vertunt*, et omne opus, *sed male*, et *potius hic debet resolvi quemadmodum dictum est*, in omni *ergo* opere) et vos non ad me, dicit Iehova.

**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.

**18.** Ponite quaeso super cor vestrum a die hac et supra, a die vicesimo quarto noni mensis, a die quo fundatum fuit templum Iehovae, ponite super cor vestrum.

**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.

**19.** An adhuc semen in horreo? et adhuc vitis, et ficus, et malusgranata, et arbor olivae non protulit; a die hac benedicam vobis.

I AM under the necessity of joining all these verses together, for the Prophet treats of the same thing: and the import of the whole is this — that the Lord had then openly punished the tardiness of the people, so that every one might have easily known that they acted very inconsistently in attending only to their private concerns, so as to neglect the Temple. The Prophet indeed speaks here in a homely manner to earthly men, addicted to their own appetites: had they really become wiser, or made greater progress in true religion, he might have addressed them differently, and would have no doubt followed the rule mentioned by Paul,

‘We speak wisdom among those who are perfect.’

(<460206> 1 Corinthians 2:6.)

But as they had their thoughts fixed on meat and drink, and were intent on their private advantages, the Prophet tells them what they could comprehend that God was angry with them, and that the proofs of his curse were evident, as the earth did not produce fruit, and they themselves were reduced to want. We hence perceive the object of the Prophet: but I shall run over the words, that the subject may become more evident.

*Lay it*, he says, *on your heart*. Here the Prophet indirectly condemns their insensibility, as they were blind in things quite manifest; for he does not here direct their thoughts to heaven, nor announce deep mysteries, but only speaks of food and daily support. Since God, then, impressed clear marks of his wrath on their common sustenance, it was an intolerable stupidity in them to disregard these. And the Prophet often repeats the same thing, in order to shame the Jews; for their tardiness being so often reproved, ought to have made them ashamed. *Lay it on the heart*, he says; that is, Consider what I am going to say; *from this day and heretofore*,<sup>f29</sup> he says, *before a stone was laid on a stone*; that is, from that day when I began to exhort you to build the Temple, consider what has happened to this very day.

Then he adds, Before ye began, he says, to build the Temple, was it not that every one who came to a heap of twenty measures found only ten? that is, was it not, that when the husband men expected that there would be twenty measures in the storehouse or on the floor, they were disappointed? because God had dried up the ears, so they yielded not what they used to do; for husband men, by long experience, can easily conjecture what they may expect when they see the gathered harvest; but this

prospect had disappointed the husband men. God, then, had in this case given proofs of his curse. Farther; when any one came to the vat, and expected a large vintage, had he not also been disappointed? for instead of fifty casks he found only twenty.

He afterwards adds, *I have smitten you with the east wind*: for שִׁדְפוֹן, *shidafun*, is to be taken for a scorching wind; and the east wind proved injurious to Judea by its dryness. So also יִרְקוֹן, *irkun*, is mildew, or a moist wind, from which mildew proceeds; for we know that corn, when it has much wet, contracts mildew when the sun emits its heat. As to the meaning of the Prophet there is no ambiguity, for he intended to teach them that they were in various ways visited, that they might clearly perceive that God was displeased with them. He then mentions the hail: for when famine happens only from the cold or from the heat, it may be ascribed to chance or to the stars: but when God employs various scourges, we are then constrained to acknowledge his wrath, as though he were determined to awaken us. This is the reason why the Prophet records here various kinds of judgements. And he says, *In every work of your hands*. Some read, And every work, etc., which is improper; for they were not smitten in their own bodies, but in the produce of the earth. Then he adds, *And you returned not to me*, that is, “During the whole of that time I effected nothing, while I was so often and in such various ways chastising you. And yet what good has the obduracy of your hearts done you? ye have not returned to me.”

*Lay it*, he says, *on your heart from this day, and heretofore*, etc. He repeats what he had said, even from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month. We have seen before, that the Prophet was sent on that day to reprove the people for their sins. *Lay it* then *on your heart*, he says, *from this day*, etc. We see how emphatical is this repetition, because in things evident the Jews were so insensible that their want and famine could not touch them: and we know that there is no sharper goad to stimulate men than famine. Since then the Lord snatched away their food from their mouth, and they remained inattentive to such a judgement, it was a sure evidence of extreme stupidity. It is on this account that the Prophet often declares, that the Jews were extremely insensible; for they did not consider the judgements of God, which were so manifest. He now subjoins, *Is there yet seed in the barn?* Jerome reads, in the bud; and the probable reason why he thus rendered the word was, that he thought that the clauses would not

correspond without giving the meaning of bud to **מגורה**, *megure*; but, as I think, he was mistaken. The Hebrews propose what I cannot approve, for some of them read the sentence as an affirmation, For there is seed in the barn; because they dared not to commit the seed to the ground in their state of want. And others read it as a question, as though he had said, that the time of harvest was far off, and that what they had remaining was so small that it was not enough to support them. But, in my judgement, the seed refers not to what had been gathered, but to what had been sown. I therefore doubt not but that he speaks of God's blessing on the harvest which was to come after five months, to which I shall presently refer. Some, indeed, render the words in the past tense, as though the Prophet had said, that the Jews had already experienced how great the curse of God was; but this is a forced view. The real meaning of the Prophet is this, *Is there yet seed in the barn?* that is, Is the seed, as yet hid in the ground, gathered?

He then adds affirmatively, *neither the vine, nor the fig tree, nor the pomegranate, nor the olive had yet produced any thing*; for it was the ninth month of the year; and the beginning of the year, we know, was in the month of March. Though then they were nearly in the midst of winter, they remained uncertain as to what the produce would be. In the month of November no opinion could be formed, even by the most skillful, what produce they were to expect. As then they were still in suspense, the Prophet says, that God's blessing was in readiness for them. What he had in view was, to show that he brought a sure message from God; for he speaks not of a vintage the prospect of which had already appeared, nor of a harvest when the ears had already made their appearance. As then there was still danger from the hail, from scorching winds, and also from rains and other things injurious to fruit and produce of the land, he says, that the harvest would be most abundant, the vintage large, that, in a word, the produce of the olive and the fig tree would be most exuberant. The truth of the prophecy might now be surely known, when God fulfilled what he had spoken by the mouth of his servant. I now return to the subject itself

As I have before observed, the Prophet deals with the Jews here according to their gross disposition: for he might in a more refined manner have taught the godly, who were not so entangled with, or devoted to, earthly concerns. It was then necessary for him to speak in a manner suitable to the comprehension of the people, as a skillful teacher who instructs

children and those of riper age in a different manner. And he shows by evidences that the Jews were unthankful to God, for they neglected the building of the Temple, and every one was diligently and earnestly engaged in building his own house. He shows by proofs their conduct, — How? Whence has it happened, he says, that at one time your fruit has been destroyed by mildew, at another by heat, and then by the hail, except that the Lord intended thus to correct your neglect? It then follows, that you are convicted of ingratitude by these judgements; for you have neglected God's worship, and only pursued your own private advantages. This is one thing.

The latter clause contains a promise; and by it the instruction given was more confirmed, when the people saw that things suddenly and unexpectedly took a better turn. They had been for many years distressed with want of sustenance; but, when fruitfulness of a sudden followed, did not this change manifest something worthy of their consideration? especially when it was foretold before it happened, and before any such thing could have been foreseen by human conjectures? We see then, that the Prophet dwells on two things, — he condemns the Jews for their neglect, and proves that they were impious and ungrateful towards God, for they disregarded the building of the Temple; and them, in order to animate them and render them more active in the work they had begun, he sets before them, as I have said, what had taken place. God had, indeed, abundantly testified, by various kinds of punishment that he was displeased with them: but when he now promises that he would deal differently with them, there hence arises a new and a stronger evidence.

But some one may here raise an objection and say, that these evidences are not sure or unvaried; since it often happens, that when people devote themselves faithfully to the service of God they are pressed down by adverse events; yea, that God very often designedly tries their faith by withholding from them for a time his blessing. But the answer to this may be readily given: I indeed allow that it often happens that those who sincerely and from the heart serve God, are deprived of earthly blessings, because God intends to elevate their minds to the hope of eternal reward. God then designedly withdraws his blessing often from the faithful, that they may hunger and thirst in this world; as though they lost all their labor in serving him. But it was not the Prophet's design to propound here an evidence of an unvarying character, as he counted it sufficient to convince

the Jews by experience, that nothing prevented them from acknowledging that their avarice displeased God, except their extreme stupidity. The Prophet then does here reprove their insensibility; for, while they greatly labored in enriching themselves, they did not observe that their labor was in vain, because God from heaven poured his curse on them. This then might have been easily known by them had they not hardened themselves in their vices. And what the Prophet testifies here respecting the fruitful produce of wine, and corn, and oil, and of other things, was still, as I have said, a stronger confirmation.

Now, if any one objects again and says — that this was of no value, because a servile and mercenary service does not please God: to this I answer — that God does often by such means stimulate men, when he sees them to be extremely tardy and slothful, and that he afterwards leads them by other means to serve him truly and from the heart. When therefore any one obeys God, only that he may satisfy his appetite, it is as though one labored from day to day for the sake of wages, and then disregards him by whom he has been hired. It is certain that such a service is counted as nothing before God; but he would have himself to be generously worshipped by us; and he loves, as Paul says, a cheerful giver. (<470607>2 Corinthians 6:7.) But as men, for the most part, on account of their ignorance, cannot be led at first to this generous state of mind, so as to devote themselves willingly to God, it is necessary to begin by using other means, as the Prophet does here, who promises earthly and daily sustenance to the Jews, for he saw that they could not immediately, at the first step, ascend upwards to heaven; but it was not his purpose to stop short, until he elevated their minds higher. Let us then know, that this was only the beginning, that they might learn to fear God and to expect whatever they wanted from his blessing, and also that they might shake off their stupor, under which they had previously labored. In short, God deals in one way with the rude and ignorant, who are not yet imbued with true religion; and he deals in another way with his own disciples, who are instructed in sound doctrine. When I say that the Prophet acted thus towards the Jews, I speak not of the whole nation; but I regard what we have observed at the beginning of this book — that the Jews cared for nothing then but to build their own houses, and that there was no zeal for religion among them. As then the recollection of God was nigh buried among them, the Temple being neglected, and every one's anxiety being

concentrated in building his own house, we hence learn how grossly earthly their affections were. It is therefore no wonder that the Prophet treated them in the manner stated here. Let us proceed -

<b>&lt;370220&gt; HAGGAI 2:20-23</b>	
<b>20.</b> And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the four and twentieth day of the month, saying,	<b>20.</b> Et fuit (postea fuit) sermo Iehovae secundo ad Chaggai vicesimo quarto mensis, dicendo,
<b>21.</b> Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth;	<b>21.</b> Dic ad Zerubbabel, ducens Iehudah, dicendo, Ego concutiam coelos et terram;
<b>22.</b> 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.	<b>22.</b> Et evertam solium regnorum, et perdam robur regnorum gentium; et evertam quadrigam et sessores ejus evertam quadrigam et sessores ejus; et descendent equi et sessores eorum, quisque in gladio fratris sui.
<b>23.</b> In that day, saith the LORD of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hosts.	<b>23.</b> In die illa, dicit Iehova exercituum, sumam te Zerubbabel, fili Sealtiel, serve mi, dicit Iehova; et ponam to quasi annulum, quia elegi te, dicit Iehova exercituum.

The Prophet now proceeds still farther; for there is here a really gratuitous and spiritual promise, by which God affirms that he will have a care for his people to the end. He does not now speak of wine and corn, in order to feed the hungry; but he shows that he would be an eternal Father to that people; for he could not and would not forget the covenant he made with their fathers. There is no doubt but he points out Christ in the person of Zerubbabel, as we shall presently see. So that it is right to distinguish this prophecy from the last; for God has before shown, that the worship which the Jews had for a time disregarded was pleasing to him, as a reward was in readiness, and also that he was offended with the negligence previously reproofed, as he had inflicted manifest punishment, not once, nor for a short

time, but for many years, and in various ways. What then does follow? In this second prophecy he addresses Zerubbabel, and promises to be a Savior to the people under his authority.

With regard to these words, some think that a continued act is signified when he says, I shake the heavens and the earth; and they give this explanation — That though it belongs to me to shake the heaven and the earth, and I am wont to subvert kingdoms, yet I will render firm the sacred kingdom which I have raised among my people. But this view is very frigid: and we see even from this chapter what is meant by the shaking of the heaven and of the earth, of which mention is made. The Apostle also rightly interprets this passage, when he teaches us, that this prophecy properly belongs to the kingdom of Christ. (<581226> Hebrews 12:26.) There is therefore no doubt, but that the Prophet means here something special, when he introduces God as saying, Behold, I shake the heavens and the earth. God then does not speak of his ordinary providence, nor simply claim to himself the government of the heaven and of the earth, nor teach us that he raises on high the humble and the low, and also brings down the high and the elevated; but he intimates, that he has some memorable work in contemplation, which, when done, would shake men with fear, and make heaven and earth to tremble. Hence, the Prophet no doubt intended here to lead the Jews to the hope of that redemption, some prelude of which God had then given them; but its fullness could not as yet be seen — nay, it was hid from the view of men: for who could have expected such a renovation of the world as was effected by the coming of Christ? When the Jews found themselves exposed to the wrongs of all men, when so small a number returned, and there was no kingdom and no power, they thought themselves to have been as it were deceived. Hence the Prophet affirms here, that there would be a wonderful work of God, which would shake the heaven and the earth. It is therefore necessary that this should be applied to Christ; for it was, as it were, a new creation of the world, when Christ gathered together the things scattered, as the Apostle says, in the heaven and in the earth. (<510120> Colossians 1:20.) When he reconciled men to God and to angels, when he conquered the devil and restored life to the dead, when he shone forth with his own righteousness, then indeed God shook the heaven and the earth; and he still shakes them at this day, when the gospel is preached; for he forms anew the children of Adam after his own image. This spiritual regeneration then is such an evidence of God's power



and grace, that he may justly be said to shake the heaven and the earth. The import of the passage is, that it behaved the Jews to form a conception in their minds of something greater than could be seen by their eyes; for their redemption was not yet completed.

Hence he subjoins — *I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariot and him who sits in it; come down shall the horses and their riders; every one shall fall by the sword of his brother.* He confirms here the former sentence — that nothing would be an hindrance that God should not renew his Church. And rightly he adds this by way of anticipation; for the Jews were surrounded on all sides by inveterate enemies; they had as many enemies as they had neighbors; and they were hated even by the whole world. How then could they emerge into that dignity which was then promised to them, except God overturned the rest of the world? But the Prophet here meets this objection, and briefly shows that God would rather that all the nations should perish, than that his Church should remain in that dishonorable state. We then see that the Prophet here means no other thing then that God would overcome all those impediments, which Satan and the whole world may throw in the way, when it is his purpose to restore his Church.

We now perceive the Prophet's designs, and we also perceive the application of his doctrine. For whenever impediments and difficulties come in our way, calculated to drive us to despair, when we think of the restoration of the Church, this prophecy ought to come to our minds, which shows that it is in God's power, and that it is his purpose to overturn all the kingdoms of the earth, to break chariots in pieces, to cast down and lay prostrate all riders, rather than to allow them to prevent the restoration of his Church.

But in the last verse the Prophet shows why God would do this — even that Zerubbabel might prosper together with the whole people. Hence he says — *In that day saith Jehovah, I will take thee, Zerubbabel, and will set thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee.* As we have before said, God addresses Zerubbabel here, that in his person he might testify that he would bless the people whom he intended to gather under that sacred leader; for though Zerubbabel never had a kingdom, nor ever wore a crown, he was yet of the tribe of Judah; and God designed that some spark of that

kingdom should exist, which he had raised in the family of David. Since, then, Zerubbabel was at that time a type of Christ, God declares here that he would be to him as a signet — that is, that his dignity would be esteemed by him. This comparison of a signet is found also in other places. It is said in <sup><242224></sup> Jeremiah 22:24 — “Though this Coniah were a signet on my right hand I would pluck him thence.” But here God says that Zerubbabel would be to him a signet — that is, Thou shalt be with me in high esteem. For a sealing signet is wont to be carefully preserved, as kings seek in this way to secure to themselves the highest authority, so that more trust may be placed in their seal than in the greatest princes. The meaning, then, of the similitude is, that Zerubbabel, though despised by the world, was yet highly esteemed by God. But it is evident that this was never fulfilled in the person of Zerubbabel. It hence follows that it is to be applied to Christ. God, in short, shows, that that people gathered under one head would be accepted by him; for Christ was at length to rise, as it is evident, from the seed of Zerubbabel.

But this reason is to be especially noticed — *Because I have chosen thee*. For God does not here ascribe excellencies or merits to Zerubbabel, when he says that he would hold him in great esteem; but he attributes this to his own election. If, then, the reason be asked why God had so much exalted Zerubbabel, and bestowed on him favors so illustrious, it can be found in nothing else but in the goodness of God alone. God had made a covenant with David, and promised that his kingdom would be eternal; hence it was that he chose Zerubbabel after the people had returned from exile; and this election was the reason why God exalted Zerubbabel, though his power at that time was but small. We indeed know that he was exposed to the contempt of all nations; but God invites here the attention of the faithful to their election, so that they might hope for more than what the perception of the flesh could conceive or apprehend; for what he has decreed cannot be made void; and in the person of Zerubbabel he had determined to save a chosen people; for from him, as it has been said, Christ was to come.

## PRAYER

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are still restrained by our earthly cares, and cannot ascend upward to heaven with so much readiness and alacrity as we ought — O grant, that since thou extendest to us daily so liberal a supply for the present life, we may at least learn

that thou art our Father, and that we may not at the same time fix our thoughts on these perishable things, but learn to elevate our minds higher, and so make continual advances in thy spiritual service, until at length we come to the full and complete fruition of that blessed and celestial life which thou hast promised to us, and procured for us by the blood of thy only begotten Son. Amen.

A TRANSLATION OF

CALVIN'S VERSION OF

THE BOOK OF HAGGAI

CHAPTER 1.

- 1** IN the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, came the word of Jehovah by Haggai the Prophet, to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, saying —
- 2** Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, saying — This people say, “The time is not come To build the house of Jehovah.”
- 3** Then came the word of Jehovah, By Haggai, the Prophet, saying —
- 4** “Is it time for you To dwell yourselves in your boarded houses, And this house a waste!”
- 5** And now thus saith Jehovah of hosts, — Apply your heart to your ways:
- 6** Ye have sown much, and brought in little; Ye have eaten, and were not satisfied; Ye have drank, and were not replenished; Ye have clothed yourselves, and were not warmed; And he who gains wages, Gains wages for a perforated bag. (330)
- 7** Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, — Apply your heart to your ways;
- 8** Ascend unto the mountain and bring wood, And build the house; And I will be *to you* propitious in it, And glorified shall I be, saith Jehovah. (333)

- 9** Ye have looked for much, but behold little! And ye brought it home, and I blew on it: Why is this? saith Jehovah; On account of my house, because it is waste, And ye run, each of you to his own house.
- 10** Therefore restrained over you Are the heavens from dew; And the earth from producing is restrained:
- 11** Yea, I have called for drought On the land and on the mountains, And on the corn and the wine and the oil, And on everything which the earth produces, On man and on beast, And on every labour of the hands. (338)
- 12** And Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and all the residue of the people, attended to the voice of Jehovah, their God, and to the words of Haggai, the Prophet, as Jehovah their God had sent him; and the people feared Jehovah.
- 13** Then said Haggai, the messenger of Jehovah, according to Jehovah's message, saying to the people, "With you am I," saith Jehovah.
- 14** And Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the people; and the came and carried on the work in the Temple of Jehovah of hosts, their God,
- 15** on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of Darius the king. <sup>F30</sup>

## CHAPTER 2.

- 1** In the seventh month, and on the twenty-first day, came the word of Jehovah to Haggai, the Prophet, saying, —
- 2** Speak now to Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, and to all the residue of the people, saying, —

- 3** Who among you is alive, Who saw this house in its former glory, And how do ye see it now? Is it not to that as nothing in your eyes?
- 4** Yet now strong be thou Zerubbabel, saith Jehovah; And strong be all the people of the land; And work, for with you am I, Saith Jehovah of hosts,
- 5** According to the word I covenanted with you, When ye came forth from Egypt, And my Spirit shall be In the midst of you, fear ye not. (354)
- 6** For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, — Yet for a little while shall be this,
- 7** And I will shake the heavens and the earth, Also the sea and the dry land: Yea, I will shake all nations, And come shall the choice things of all nations; And I will fill this house with glory, Saith Jehovah of hosts:
- 8** Mine the silver and mine the gold, Saith Jehovah of hosts:
- 9** Greater shall be the glory Of this latter house than that of the former, Saith Jehovah of hosts; And in this place will I give peace, Saith Jehovah of hosts.
- 10** On the twenty-fourth of the ninth *month*, in the second year of Darius, came the word of Jehovah to Haggai, the Prophet, saying, —
- 11** Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, Ask the priests respecting the law, saying, —
- 12** If a man carry holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any eatable, shall it be made holy? And the priests answered and said, No.
- 13** Then said Haggai, If any one polluted in his person touch any of these things, shall it be polluted? The priests answered and said, It shall be polluted.

- 14** Then answered Haggai, and said, — So is this people, and so is this nation, In my sight, saith Jehovah; And so is every work of their hands, And what they offer, — it is polluted.
- 15** And now I pray, lay it to heart, — From this day and beyond it, Before a stone was laid on a stone In the temple of Jehovah, —
- 16** Before this time, when one came To a heap of twenty, there were but ten *measures*, When he came to the vat to draw fifty, There were from the vat but twenty *vessels*:
- 17** I smote you with blasting and mildew and hail, As to every work of you hands; And ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah.
- 18** Lay it, I pray, to your heart, — From this day and beyond it, From the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, From the day the temple of Jehovah was founded; — Lay it to your heart, —
- 19** Is there now seed in the barn? And as yet the vine and the fig tree, And the pomegranate and the olive, Have produced nothing; — From this day will I bless you. (378)
- 20** And the word of Jehovah came again to Haggai, on the twenty-fourth of the month, saying, —
- 21** Speak to Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, saying, —
- 22** I will shake the heavens and the earth, And will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, And destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; Yea, I will overthrow chariots and their riders, And down shall come the horses and their riders, Every one by the sword of his brother:
- 23** In that day, saith Jehovah of hosts, I will take the Zerubbabel, The son of Shealtiel, my servant, saith Jehovah, And I will make thee as a signet, For I have chosen thee, saith Jehovah of hosts.

# FOOTNOTES

## PREFACE TO HAGGAI

- <sup>ft1</sup> “Prophecy ceased with these Prophets until the time of Christ. For it was God’s purpose, by this *famine of the word*, (according to the prophetic language,) to render the Jews more desirous (*appetentiores*) of the Messiah, who was to surpass all the Prophets in the power of doing miracles.” — *Grotius*.
- <sup>ft2</sup> “We know nothing of the parentage of Haggai. He was probably born in Babylon during the captivity. He was sent particularly to encourage the Jews to proceed with the building of the temple, which had been interrupted for about *fourteen* years.” — *Adam Clarke*.

## CHAPTER 1

- <sup>ft3</sup> According to the opinions of Plato and Cicero, the Cyropaedia of Xenophon was a moral romance; and these venerable philosophers suppose, that the historian did not so much write what Cyrus had been, as what every true, good, and virtuous monarch ought to be.” — *Lempriere’s Class. Dict.*
- <sup>ft4</sup> The account of the Magi is briefly this: — Cyrus had two sons, Cambyses and Smerdis. When Cambyses ascended the throne, suspecting the fidelity of his brother, he caused him to be secretly put to death. This was known to some of the Magi. On the death of Cambyses, one of them, named Smerdis, who resembled the deceased prince, was by the Magi declared king, under the pretense of being the brother of Cambyses. The imposition was detected, and seven of the nobles of Persia dethroned him after six months’ reign, and on themselves, Darius Hystaspes, was made king, in the year before Christ 521. — *Ed.*
- <sup>ft5</sup> *Adam Clark* says, that it was in the *sixteenth* year after their return from Babylon. — *Ed.*



Ft6 The reference in <sup><430219></sup> John 2:19,20, seems to have been made not to the time in which it was built then, but to the time in which it was built or rebuilt by Herod the Great. For this temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius (see <sup><150615></sup> Ezra 6:15,) and about twenty-one years after the temple was finished in 515. It was about four years in building under Darius. — *Ed.*

Ft7 [פחה]; it is a word current in several languages, Chaldee, Persic, etc. *Parkhurst* derives it from [פה], to extend. *Theod. Aq. and Syn.* render it ἡγούμενον, governor. He is called Sheshbazzar in <sup><150514></sup> Ezra 5:14; and Cyrus is said to have made him [פחה], governor or deputy. It is the name of a person endued with authority by a sovereign. Zerubbabel, [זרבבל], has been derived from [זר], a stranger, and [בבל], Babylon, a stranger or sojourner at Babylon. It deserves to be noticed, that the civil governor is put here before the chief priest; and we find from Ezra that it was to the civil governor that Cyrus delivered the holy vessels of the temple. See <sup><150514></sup> Ezra 5:14. — *Ed.*

Ft8 The words literally are, —

*This people say, Not come is the time,  
The time for the house of Jehovah to be built. — Ed.*

Ft9 There is a double pronoun, [העת לכם אתם], “Is it time for you, *even* you,” or, “you yourselves?” The Welsh often use two pronouns in this way, for the sake of emphasis. The rendering is very flat, as in our version, and adopted by *Henderson*, “Is it time for you, O ye?” etc. *Houbigant*, who always amends, proposes [אתה], to come, “Is the time come for you?” etc. This is suitable, but without authority. *Dathius* suggests the place, but it is no more than a conjecture. There is no doubt an emphasis is intended by the repetition. — *Ed.*

Ft10 It is rendered “wainscoted” by *Henderson*; “κοιλοσταθμοις — ceiled,” by the *Sept.*; “ωροφωμενοις — roofed,” by *Aquila*. It was the custom in the east, says *Parkhurst*, to cover or line the roof with boards or wainscot. — *Ed.*

Ft11 Literally it is, “Set your heart on your ways.” An idiomatic phrase, but very expressive. They were to fix their attention on their conduct, not merely to take a glance, but seriously and steadily to reflect on their ways.

<sup>ft12</sup> There seems to be an irregularity in the construction of the whole verse. Literally it is as follows —

*Ye have sown much, but the coming in is little;  
There is eating, but not to satisfaction;  
They drink, but not to fullness;  
There is clothing, but there is no warmth in it;  
And earn does the earner for a perforated bag.*

This change in the mode of construction takes away the monotony which would have otherwise appeared. The word [הבא], [אכול], and [לבוש], are not infinitives, as some suppose, but participles used as nouns; which is often the case in Hebrew, as well as in Welsh, and often to in English, such as teaching, drinking, clothing, etc. — *Ed.*

<sup>ft13</sup> The whole verse may be thus rendered —

*Ascend the mountains, for ye have brought wood;  
And build the house, that I may delight in it,  
That I may be glorified, saith Jehovah.*

The [ו], *vau*, here in two instance may have the meaning of *ut*, that; but before [הבאתם], a verb in the perfect tense, it must be rendered “for,” or, “as;” and the clause seems to be a parenthesis. The [ו], *vau*, is not conversive when preceded by a verb in the imperative mood, as it appears from the end of the verse. The mount was not Libanus, as many have supposed, but Sion, where wood had been previously brought, but was not used. See <sup><150307></sup> Ezra 3:7. As to the verb [רצה], followed by [ב], it means to approve, to be pleased with, or to take pleasure or delight in, a thing. See <sup><142903></sup> 2 Chronicles 29:3; <sup><19E710></sup> Psalm 147:10; <sup><330607></sup> Micah 6:7. Probably the best rendering of the two last lines is the following —

*And build the house, and I shall delight in it  
And render it glorious, saith Jehovah.*

To take the last verb in a causative sense is more consistent with the tenor of the passage. This is the meaning given by the Targum, and is adopted by *Dathius*. — *Ed.*

<sup>ft14</sup> This is the literal rendering — “On account of my house, because it is waste.” [אשר] is not “which” here, for it is followed by [הוא], “it;” but a conjunction, “because.” The word *quod*, in Latin, admits of two similar meanings. — *Ed.*

<sup>ft15</sup> The first word in this verse, [פנה], is evidently a participle noun; similar instances we find in verse 6. The verse, literally rendered, is as follows —

*Looking for much, and behold little!  
And you brought it home, and I blew upon it;  
On what account this, saith Jehovah of hosts?  
On account of my house, because it is waste,  
And ye are running, each to his own house.*

The first line is put in an absolute form, as is sometimes the case in Hebrew; “There has been,” or some such words being understood. Both the Targum and the Septuagint read [היה] instead of [הנה], which would be more suitable to the word which follows, which has [ל] before it. The line would then be —

***There has been looking for much, but it came to little.***

The “blowing” seems to be a metaphor taken from scorching wind, blowing on vegetation, and causing it to wither. The last line may be thus rendered —

***And ye are delighted, each with his own house. — Ed.***

<sup>ft16</sup> Calvin seems to have overlooked [עליכם], “on your account.” The verse is —

***Therefore, on your account, withheld have the heavens from dew,  
And the earth has withheld its produce.***

The verb [כלא], to restrain, to keep back, to withhold, is used here twice, and in the first line in an intransitive sense, and in the second in a transitive sense, as it is often the case in other languages, when the same verb is both neuter and active.

The 11th verse is passed by without any particular remarks. The word [חרב] is rendered “Siccitas — drought,” as *Jerome* does, and also our version, as well as *Newcome* and *Henderson*; but *Grotius* and also *Marckius* very justly observe, that it means here “waste,” or “desolation,” it being the same word as is applied to God’s house in verse 9. They left his house a waste; by a just retribution he had brought or called for a waste on the land, etc. The contrast is so evident that it cannot be denied. The ideal meanings of the word is to be waste or desolate: it is then applied to various things which produce

desolation, the sword, drought, pestilence, etc.; but it is used here in its primary sense, and the contrast is very striking: “My house has been left waste; I have caused a waste to come upon every thing else.” The verse may be thus rendered —

*And I have called for a waste  
On the land and on the mountains,  
And on the corn and on the wine and on the oil,  
And on whatever the ground produces,  
And on man and on the cattle,  
And on all the labor of the hands. — Ed.*

ft17 This clause may be thus rendered, —

*And fear him did the people on account of Jehovah.*

This comports better with the previous clause, that Jehovah had sent him. The [י] affixed to “fear” is a pronoun, otherwise the verb is plural; and “people” seldom, if ever, has a verb in the plural number. To fear sometimes means to respect, to reverence: the people honored him as God’s servant, by obeying his message. — *Ed.*

ft18 The verse literally is —

*Then said Haggai, the messenger of Jehovah in the message of  
Jehovah to the people, saying,  
I am with you, saith Jehovah.*

The word for “messages” is in the plural number, preceded by the preposition [ב]. Why commentators have generally rendered it in the singular number, does not appear. Haggai is expressly said to be God’s messenger in, or with regard to, the messages or communications he made to the people. To connect the word, as some do, with “said,” hardly gives a meaning, except the clause be rendered, as it is done by *Newcome*, “by the message of Jehovah,” that is, by his command; but then a plural word is made singular. — *Ed.*

ft19 It is sometimes the case, that a doctrine is illegitimately drawn from a passage, and then that it is unfairly opposed. The building of the Temple had nothing to do with the first movement of the spiritual life: and therefore to draw an argument from the willingness of the people to undertake that work in favor of free-will in the great business of salvation, is by no means legitimate. It would have been, then, better to deny the application, than to turn the passage from its regular course. But we shall not do violence to the passage, if we render the [י] at the

beginning of this verse, “Thus,” and refer “the stirring up” to the threatening and the promise previously announced. The object seems not to have been to set forth the direct influence of the Spirit on the minds of the people, but to show the effect produced on them by the message conveyed to them from the Lord by the Prophet. God stirs up the minds of men both by his word and by his Spirit, both outwardly and inwardly. The former may more properly be meant here. — *Ed.*

**ft20** The reasons assigned here for a different division is by no means satisfactory. The fact is that this verse necessarily belongs to the last of the previous chapter, as it specifies the time when the people began the work as there mentioned; and what follows this verse is another message, and at another time. The usual division is no doubt the best.

## CHAPTER 2

**ft21** This is the most approved manner. There is no instance in which it means “according.” It may be rendered — “This *is* the word,” etc. There were two things which were intended to dispel their fear — the covenant made with the fathers, and the Spirit of God — the spirit of prophecy, “standing,” or existing among them. The Chaldee Paraphrase is — “My Prophets are teaching among you.” The verse may be thus translated —

*This is the word which I covenanted with you  
At your coming forth from Egypt,  
And my Spirit is continuing among you; fear not.*

*Junius* and *Tremelius* render the [כִּנְסָה], “with,” and the verse thus —

*With the word (i.e., having the word) which I covenanted with you  
When ye came forth from Egypt,  
And with my Spirit standing among you, fear not.*

*Henderson* considers “the word,” and “my Spirit,” to be nominatives to the particle “standing,” or rather to the auxiliary verb which is to be understood before it, and that “standing” is in the singular number, on account of the nearer nominative “my Spirit.” *Newcome* follows our version, and views [כִּנְסָה] as a preposition — “according to.” — *Ed.*

**Ft22** Our common version is no doubt the best, and is materially followed by *Newcome*, *Henderson*, and many others. Retaining the tense of the passage, I would render the clause thus,

*Yet once, shortly will it be,  
And I will shake, etc.*

“Shortly will it be,” [מַעַט הֵיאָ] (shortly it) may be taken as a parenthesis.

*Yet once more, in a short time — Newcome.*

*Yet once, within a little, — Henderson.*

The shaking of the heavens, earth, sea, and dry land is explained, according to the common manner of the Prophets, in the next verse, by shaking of all nations: the material world is named in the first instance, while its inhabitants are intended. So *Henderson* very properly renders the [וְ] at the beginning of the seventh verse, “Yea.” — *Ed.*

**Ft23** Many have been the criticisms on this clause, both as to its grammatical construction and as to the import of the word rendered “desire.” The verb “come” is plural, and the word for “desire” is singular. The easiest solution, and countenanced by the Septuagint, where the word is rendered τὰ ἐκλεκτὰ — “choice things,” is to consider [חַמְדוֹת] as a plural, the [וְ] being omitted. This would remove the grammatical anomaly, and the sentiment, as *Calvin* says, would be more consonant with the context.

*And come shall the choice things of all nations.*

There is no ground for the objection which *Bishop Chandler* states, that to “come” is in this case an improper expression; for there are other similar instances. See <060612> Joshua 6:12; <236005> Isaiah 60:5. It is also applied to trees, <236013> Isaiah 60:13; and to incense, <240620> Jeremiah 6:20.

*Newcome* takes the word as a plural, but applies it as *deliciae* in Latin to a person, and refers to <270923> Daniel 9:23; where Daniel is called [חַמְדוֹת], rendered in our version “greatly beloved.”

The version of *Henderson* is the following —

*And the things desired by all nations shall come.*

He considers that they are the blessings of the kingdom of Christ, and thinks that the Prophet refers to the general expectation which pervaded the world of some better state of things, and especially of some deliverer.

But the most tenable is the view of *Calvin*, which has been held by *Kimchi*, *Drusius*, *Vitranga*, and others. — *Ed.*

**Ft24** This clause is literally rendered by *Newcome* — “Ask now the law from the priests;” or, according to the order of the words, “Ask now from the priests the law.” — *Ed.*

**Ft25** The words are [מָאֵל-נֶפֶשׁ], polluted of soul, or polluted soul. When pollution by a carcase or a dead body is meant, the preposition [לְ] is put before [נֶפֶשׁ]. See <sup><040502></sup>Numbers 5:2; 9:6,7,10. A polluted person seems to be intended here, without any reference to the way in which he became so; and this is sufficient for the purpose of the Prophet. *Theodoret* takes this sense — ἀκάθαρτόν τινα — “an unclean person.” But most agree with our version; so do *Jerome*, *Dathius*, *Newcome*, *Henderson*, and others — “the polluted by a dead body.” — *Ed.*

**Ft26** Compositum jus, fasque animi, sanctosque recesssus  
Mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto. — *Per. Sat. 2. 74.*

**Ft27** Non ben celestes impia dextra colit.

**Ft28** The literal rendering of the verse would be as follows, —

*Then answered Haggai and said, —  
Such is this people and such is this nation,  
Before me, saith Jehovah;  
Yea, such is every work of their hands,  
And what they offer there, polluted it is.*

The Prophet seems to have pointed to the altar on which they offered their sacrifices, when he says, “What they offer there.” Both *Newcome* and *Henderson* are evidently wrong in rendering the passage in the past tense. The last verb is future, used, as it is often, as a present. So we render it in Welsh, *yr hyn a aberthant yna*; but we understand it as a present act. We may notice here what is often the character of the Prophetic style; the two last lines explain more particularly what the two first contain. — *Ed.*

**Ft29** *Supra*, [מַעְלָה]; “upward,” *Newcome*; “backward,” *Henderson*; “forward,” *Secker*. The last refers to <sup><091613></sup> 1 Samuel 16:13, and 30:25, as the only places besides here and in verse 18, where it is applied to time: and clearly in Samuel it means “forward,” or hereafter. It means the same when applied to age, <sup><040120></sup> Numbers 1:20, and when applied to place, <sup><052843></sup> Deuteronomy 28:43.

If we retain this meaning, we must consider this verse, and its repetition in verse 18, as the commencement of a sentence, which is completed at the end of verse 19, as intervening clauses. Then the passage would be as follows —

*15. And now take, I pray, notice;  
From this day and forward,  
From the time of setting a stone on a stone  
In the Temple of Jehovah,*

*16. From the time you came to a heap of twenty,  
And it was ten,  
And came to the vat to draw fifty measures,  
And there were twenty;*

*17. I smote you with blight, and with mildew,  
And with hail, even all the work of your hands;  
But ye turned not to me, saith Jehovah; —*

*18. Take, I pray, notice;  
From this day and forward,  
From the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month,  
From the day in which was founded  
The Temple of Jehovah; — take notice;*

*19. Is yet the seed in the granary? —  
And as yet the vine and the fig tree,  
And the pomegranate and the olive, it hath not borne; —  
From this day will I bless you.*

I prefer “Take notice,” or, “mark,” to “consider,” as the meaning of [לִבְכֶם שִׁמּוֹן], “set or fix your heart.” In favor of “your” instead of “their” in verse 16, there are three MSS.; and it is more consistent with the context. The expression literally is, “From your being to come,” *i.e.* from the time in which you came, and found out the deficiency. “Fifty measures;” [פִּזְרוֹהַ] is rendered by the Septuagint μετρητὰς — “baths;” by *Jerome*, “Lagenas — flagons.” The word means here evidently a vessel to measure the wine from the vat; what quantity it



contained is not known. It is here in the singular number, while the numeral, “fifty,” is in the plural; *deugain*, which literally in English is, “ten measure and forty.” In verse 17, “even all the work of your hands,” is in apposition with “you,” and explanatory of it, according to what we often find in the Prophets; for by “you” was meant their “work,” and not themselves personally. “But ye *turned* not to me,” literally, “But ye not to me;” perhaps the meaning is, “Ye ascribed it not to me,” that is, the judgment previously mentioned, or, “Ye attended not to me:” but the verb [שבתם] is commonly thought to be understood. See <300409> Amos 4:9. The question in verse 19 is to be taken negatively, to correspond with the negative declaration in what follows. — *Ed.*

**Ft30** What is said in a Note in p. 347 does not apply to what *Calvin* says. He refers not, as I inadvertently apprehended, to the present division of the chapter, but to that adopted in the Septuagint; for this verse in that version forms the beginning of the next chapter. — *Ed.*