

can only be learned in a sense of their own insufficiency, that, "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

This is the great lesson which the prophet Zechariah brings out; and in doing it he takes up the work of this poor remnant in building the house, and shows that it is so in a line with God's counsels that He can connect it with all those bright pictures of hope which beam through the vista of prophecy, and point to the time when the enemies of Israel will all be destroyed, and the glory of Messiah's reign will fill the whole earth with joy and the gates of Jerusalem with praise. The temple had been once builded and the city had been once established, though both were now in ruins. It was in the counsels of the Lord to build the house again and to fill it with His glory; and also to establish Jerusalem again and make her a joy and praise in the whole earth. Between these two points, in the Lord's counsels, this remnant, by the voice of prophecy, is encouraged in its work.

The Church also has been once manifested on earth in grace—and it has failed to maintain its position and the witness of the grace in which it was set;—but is the final purpose of the Lord to exhibit it again gathered in glory.

Christians now, like this remnant, live in the middle history; and what, it may be asked, should be their aim? The counsel of the Lord is clear. The word of the Lord by Haggai, which encouraged the remnant of Israel to build the house, is incorporated with an epistle in the New Testament; and now it is said to believers, "But now hath he promised, saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore, we, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved," &c.

Hence the importance of looking well to it, whether our objects are God's objects, and our efforts and aims are so coincident with the counsels of the Lord, that whatever be the result on earth, we shall see them established in heaven. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

There was no cloud now, as in former days, to guide this remnant, nor outstretched rod of power to protect them; neither was there any ark of the covenant to precede their march, nor manna to fall around their tents. All these were gone, and their absence told of departure from the Lord; yet in divine mercy God's Spirit remained among them—remained among them as the source of all the power which led them forth from Egypt, and now to be counted on in all their need.

Outward tokens of strength there were none; but there was a secret, divine resource for faith, wherever there was a heart set on doing the present work of the Lord. Outward tokens of strength cannot be given when the purpose of the Lord is to witness against departure from Himself. In such case the people must be "stripped of their ornaments," and God's holiness must be vindicated, even when He acts in grace. Moreover, in His dealing with a remnant in the midst of apostacy, His purpose is to draw out their faith; and, consequently, He takes away all that the flesh can rest upon, which has been the occasion of the evils He would correct. "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength and hast not denied my name . . . Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." *"Behold, I come quickly! hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."*