

RATHMINES BIBLE SCHOOL - 1962  
(Magnetic Island)

HAGGAI

Speaker: Brother H.P. Mansfield

Class #2

My dear brethren and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Before getting directly down to the prophecy of Haggai, I want to try and impress upon each of our minds, the importance of the thing that we are doing this morning. We're gathered together to study the Word of God, to learn of those things that Yahweh has revealed for our learning and admonition; and following on the talk of brother John Martin, I want to try and impress upon each one of us, the solemn and important thing that we are doing. He has directed our attention to the law of jealousy, and how under such circumstances, the woman in Israel was caused to drink certain holy water that would determine whether she had been false to her husband or true to her love. That water determined that; and what we are doing in this camp this morning, is drinking of that water. That water is going to discriminate whether we have been loyal or otherwise, and it is the Word that does that! That is why it is so vitally important, b&s, that we as a community become in fact and in truth, the people of the book. This book can help us, it can build us up, it can determine for us the way of life, it can lead us onto life. This book alone will nurture and nourish us unto the kingdom of God. I want to impress that upon you; that's the message I bring; Haggai is really a means to an end, I'm frankly out for a little propaganda, and the propaganda is on bible study, back to the bible! In these closing days of the Gentiles, we need to come back to the Word of God as never before; that the understanding of that Word might be in our hearts and our minds, and that was the purpose of such a gathering, I believe, as this!

Listen to the words of Moses in the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy, as he spake for the last time to Israel, just prior to his death. He had delivered to them the last of his discourses, he had drawn them to him, now he speaks his last message. Deuteronomy 32 verse 46, we read these words, "He said unto them, set your heart unto the words which I testify unto you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you because it is your life'. And those things which we have been listening to this morning constitute our life and so Moses said, 'Set your hearts upon these words; meditate and think upon them'. If you are thinking about marking your bibles, b&s, you can do as I have done here. and underline the words, set your heart and the words of verse 47, for it is not a vain thing for you because it is your life. I can stand back here and although I'm a little bit short-sighted, I can see those words because I've got them underlined in red, and they stand out in the whole of that page in the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy, and they're telling me to set my heart upon this matter, because it's not a vain thing, it constitutes my life'.

From there I want you to go over to the Acts of the apostles and to the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter, to hear an exhortation from brother Barnabas; brother Barnabas is coming to this bible

school and he's going to exhort us now and we're going to get to listen to his exhortation. It's contained in Acts 11 verses 22 and 23, and we read that 'tidings of these things, came into the ears of the ecclesia which was in Jerusalem and they sent forth Barnabas that he should go as far as Antioch. Who when he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad; and he exhorted them all (and then we have the exhortation) (he's possibly like your study leaders and speaks too much) and here it's all condensed down to one statement, and the whole of his exhortation was compacted in one statement, and here's the exhortation of brother Barnabas this morning; he exhorted them all **that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord**'. Purpose of heart means that we have an objective and we aim for it, purpose of heart means that we can't just drift along into the kingdom of God; purpose of heart means that we have to have an objective to what we are aiming. Therefore, when we come to the Word of God we must come therefore, with purpose of heart, we must have an objective!

You've come to this bible school for what purpose? To listen to some speakers? or to go away with this matter and make it your own. That is what we desire, and that is why when I said yesterday if we want to learn to mark our bibles, this is what I had in mind, that you set yourself a purpose of heart, that you set yourself an objective; that you say to yourself, 'I'm going to master the book of Jonah, and master these beautiful principles in the law of Moses; I'm going to master the prophecy of Haggai. That is the purpose of heart when I leave this bible school. I go home determined as far as I am concerned to set my heart upon these things, because it is my life! I'm going to have that as the objective in the next few months, that as far as I'm concerned, I'm going to be an expert on Jonah, on these principles out of the law of Moses and out of the prophecy of Haggai. So that we can use the inks that we've supplied, we're going to use the well trusted works of the pioneers and see what they've got to say about this subject as well; The Law of Moses, the Elpis Israel, Eureka and these other works.

Now let us open at Haggai chapter 1. I'm going to suggest to you, b&s, that if you desire a little more time for questioning, by all means, interject if you want to, don't wait till we hear this bell rung with the craftiness that it's got, but if you desire to do so, at any stage, if I'm not making everything perfectly clear, and I will stop and answer the question concerning the matter that you set before me. So we open at the 1st chapter of the prophecy of Haggai. We look at the name of the prophet, and the name of the prophet means 'the festal one' It comes from the Hebrew word meaning 'a feast or a sacrifice' and the word means 'a gathering together, a holy convocation; and a holy convocation was a gathering together of the people of God, for a special purpose. Now in a sense, this is a holy convocation; we have gathered together to understand the Word of God. It is a holy convocation!! and the name 'Haggai' means that! and he stood in Israel for that; he called the people together to him. He called them together as one that they might dedicate themselves anew to the work of God. It was a holy convocation or a holy gathering together, and he stood as a caption of all that! He lived in the time of Darius we learn in the first verse, (I'm not going to concern myself with that, because in the notes that you have provided for you, you have the historical background, and in those names I have set out the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius and how Haggai in the 6<sup>th</sup> month

prophesied on the 7<sup>th</sup> month he prophesied again; on the 8<sup>th</sup> month Israel heard the voice of Zechariah; and on the 9<sup>th</sup> month again, the voice of Haggai was heard.

But I want to make this one point, that while you're looking at those notes, notice that I have under the heading 'chronology' a sub heading the second year of Darius, BC.519 in the 11<sup>th</sup> month; just get your ballpoint pens out and cross that out and put BC.520. Also whilst you are on that job, also in BC.599 further up in the chronology, I've got a reference there to 2 Chronicles 36 and verse 23 (I've crossed that out, It should be verse 21) and an additional reference you can put there is Jeremiah 39 verses 1 and 2.

Now we learn in verse 1 of Haggai 1, that it was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius the king, in the 6<sup>th</sup> month on the first day of the month, that the Word of Yahweh came by means of Haggai'. In the 6<sup>th</sup> month, now if you turn to the first chapter of Zechariah and verse 1, we read 'that in the 8<sup>th</sup> month, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Darius came the Word to him'. So first of all, there's the 6<sup>th</sup> month and Israel heard the words of Haggai, then 2 months later the voice of Zechariah was joined with the voice of Haggai. And you'll remember how we quoted yesterday the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ezra concerning the work of these two prophets in Israel. In Ezra 5 and at verse 1, we read that the prophet Haggai and Zechariah prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, even unto them, and they stirred the people up to work', and they commenced to labour. Now this was a call to Israel to dedicate themselves, it was a call to consider their ways, it was a call to work in the things of God and a very powerful exhortation was presented in this wonderful prophecy.

Now we read that 'the Word of Yahweh came to him' and if you look at these two short chapters, you'll be surprised how often that statement was made. It's also stated again in verse 2, 'thus speaketh Yahweh'; then verse 3, 'then came the Word'; in verse 5, 'thus saith He'; in verse 7, 'thus He saith again'; in verse 13, 'thus spake Haggai, Yahweh's messenger.

In chapter 2 verse 1; in verse 4; in verse 6; in verse 7; in verse 8; in verse 9; in verse 10. Constantly through the 2 chapters these are not my words, these are the words of Almighty God, and when a prophet spake in words like that there was a power behind those words; they weren't ordinary words, here was power. This wasn't something to challenge, this was something to accept; there was power in those words. We read in 55<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah in verse 11 concerning this Word. The prophet Isaiah speaks concerning the Word and he says, 'So shall my words, (Yahweh's words), that goeth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it'. So when the voice of Yahweh is heard, it is not only authoritative but it is a voice that will accomplish that which He determines. It is not a voice to be challenged, it's not a voice to be disputed, but it is a voice to be reverently considered and accepted! Because whatever that voice says, it shall do and the words of Haggai were not his words, but were the words of Almighty God.

From there you can turn over to the 2<sup>nd</sup> epistle of Peter chapter 1 and at verse 20, and Peter speaks of the same language, the Word of God that was spoken by the prophet of old; at verse 19 Peter says, 'we also have a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place; until the day dawn and the daystar arise in your hearts. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation'. Now I've heard those words being quoted time and time again, I've heard people say that we should not have any private interpretation of scripture and they quote the words of Peter, but Peter doesn't mean that at all. The words that he uses here are better rendered as Weymouth renders it, 'that no prophecy of the scriptures is of the prophet's own prompting', or as McKnight renders it, 'of the prophet's own invention' or as brother Roberts renders it, 'of the prophet's origination'. The prophecy didn't come from the prophet, that's what Peter says, he's not dealing with private interpretation, he's dealing with the word of truth and he's telling us that none of his prophecy has come from himself, but God was speaking through the prophet. So it is not from the prophet's own prompting but from Almighty God. So we read in verse 21, 'For the prophecy came not in old times by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved, by the Holy Spirit'. It wasn't from the prophets own prompting, not by private interpretation of the prophet, but it was the voice of God in the midst of Israel.

There was one prophet who endeavoured to suppress that voice; he thought that it was useless; he wondered why he should continue to speak in the name of his God; who listened to him anyway? It seemed to him to be completely useless, not only useless but it brought down upon him the adverse comments of his contemporary, and he determined that he would no longer speak in the name of the LORD; that prophet was Jeremiah, and we read in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of his prophecy and at verse 9, what happened when he had endeavoured to do that; he had a message to speak and he had to speak it, and it didn't matter whether the people hearkened to that message or not, that message still had to go out. Jeremiah was told that the people would not hearken to him, God told him not to pray for the people, because He didn't want to hear their prayers, but you continue to prophesy to them. It was the taste of jealousy showing Israel what Israel would do, and Jeremiah thought, 'well, I'm not going to speak anymore in the Name', but in verse 9 we read, 'That His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones and I was weary with forbearing and I couldn't stay'. He found that there was in him a fire burning, he was the burnt offering and the Word was a fire in him burning him, and he couldn't stay, he had to speak, he had to give forth that Word. So it was with Haggai the prophet!

So we read, 'The word of Yahweh came to Haggai the prophet; and it came unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest'. Now to these two men the Word came, firstly, to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest; when Cyrus issued his decree that the Jews should go back home, Zerubbabel was the leader who lead them back from Babylon back to Jerusalem; he was a descendant of king David which I told you yesterday, he was an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ and he stood as a leader of the people. But he was more than that! he was a man of sign unto the people of Israel, we are told that in the prophecy of Zechariah,

'that these were men of sign', so that Zerubbabel and Joshua comprised 'men of sign'. One was the civil leader, the other was the religious leader; one was the governor, the other was the high priest and both were men of sign.

Zechariah speaks of those two men and their functions as welded together as one in the future age. He says of both those men that they typified the Lord Jesus Christ in two offices, 1. as the governor and leader and king of Jerusalem, and 2. the other as high priest. The Lord Jesus Christ is a king-priest and in Zerubbabel and Joshua we have the work of a high priest and the work of Christ's rulership combined. The word 'Zerubbabel' signifies 'a shoot of Babylon', he is the son we are told here of Shealtiel, and the word 'Shealtiel' comes from a word that signifies, 'I have asked or enquired of God', and when we put those two words together, Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, they make a sentence and the sentence is, 'the seed of promise sown in Babylon'. So Zerubbabel's name was 'the seed of promise sown in Babylon', that's what his name means. In the bible, names have significance than they have in ordinary circumstances, for example, I don't know what the word 'Martin' means, I should say 'an ass'; but whatever it means it has no relationship to John, but in the scriptures, names did have a significance, they were a caption of the person that bore that name, that is why we have the name of Deity as Yahweh because that name expresses the purpose of Deity. That name points out to us, what we as the children of God can receive from He who is our Father; that name is as a voice of a Father expressing to the world that He is going to have a family and we are His sons. So in all these names there is a spiritual significance, take as a matter of fact, the first verse of the prophecy of Zechariah and you will find within the name of the prophet, a message which epitomizes the whole of his prophecy. In Zechariah 1 verse 1, we read of Zechariah as, 'Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet'. Now these names, Zechariah, Berechiah and Iddo, they have a full significance; the word 'Zechariah' signifies 'that Yahweh hath remembered'. the word 'Berechiah' means 'Yahweh hath blessed', and the word 'Iddo' means 'at the appointed time'. When you put those three words together, the message is 'Yahweh hath remembered and He hath blessed at the appointed time', and the message of Zechariah was that now was the day of opportunity, now is the time appointed. The very man stood as a caption of his message the same as Haggai did! When Haggai faced Zechariah the son of Shealtiel, the people would see in that man, they would see in that man, the seed of promise sown in Babylon. They would see in that man, the man Zerubbabel, they would see in him as it were, the withered stem of Jesse, growing out of the dry ground. The seed of promise sown in Babylon! He also spoke to Joshua the son of Jehozadak the high priest; the word 'Joshua' is the Hebrew form of the Greek, Jesus, and the word 'Jesus' is a compound word 'Jehoshuah' and it is compounded by two words, Yah and Shuah. Yah is the contraction of the name of God 'Yahweh' and 'Shuah' is the Hebrew word 'salvation'; Jesus or Jehoshuah signifies, **Yahweh will save**. And when the Lord walked through the streets of Jerusalem and the people saw Him, they spake of Him and said, 'there is the **salvation of Yahweh**'. They said the word '**Jesus**' but it meant to them, there is the salvation of Yahweh.

Now here we have 'Joshua' or 'Jesus' the son of Jehozadak, and we have him spoken to as the high priest. And the word 'Jehozadak' means '**Yahweh hath cleansed**', so

when we put Joshua and Jehosadak together, you have this sentence, that Yahweh shall save, for Yahweh shall cleanse!; and here are two men whom Zechariah says are men of sign, they were men of sign unto the people of Israel; they were men of sign unto the people of Judah. One man, his name signifies that the seed of promise hath been sown in Babylon, and the other man, his name signifies that Yahweh shall save for Yahweh hath cleansed. So those two men were selected and to them the message came.

What was the message? Look at it, b&s, and apply it personally; it is given in verse 2, 'This people say that the time has not come, the time that Yahweh's house should be built'. That was the attitude of the Jews at that time; the time has not come, they said. In Jeremiah's prophecy, Jeremiah, when Zechariah was taken into captivity, he told the people that 70 years would continue, that they would be in Babylon for 70 years. They had returned at a certain period of time; 70 years had passed, but the time had not come according to the people that the LORD's house should be built. They claimed that the fulfilment of Jeremiah's prophecy had not been complete, the time had not come that His house should be built. You see, there were several invasions of Palestine by Nebuchadnezzars; one was in the year BC.606, the second was in the year, BC. 589 to 587 (you have them in your notes) and from that period of time, the 70 years of Zechariah, Jeremiah had to be dated. From BC.606, 70 years marked off means 536; in the year 536 the decree of Cyrus was proclaimed and the Jews went back to Jerusalem. But it wasn't until the subsequent invasion of Palestine that the temple had been destroyed, and therefore, the people reasoned that whilst the decree of Cyrus had occurred exactly in the time recorded, at the same time, the temple was not restored until later; therefore, the time had not come, they said, that Yahweh's house should be built!

Then comes the words of rebuke in verses 3 and 4 of the first chapter of Haggai. 'Is it time for you, O ye that dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste? Now therefore, saith Yahweh of hosts, consider your ways! and that is the theme of this prophecy! **consider your ways**; you say the time has not come that the LORD's house should be built, but He says, I see that you are living in your ceiled houses; you have not only made yourselves dwellings in Judah, but you've got them beautifully panelled. The ceiled houses, you're lavishing all your attention on yourself, you're letting the things of God to lie into disregard, the house of the LORD is not being built. Your own concerns are being well attended to, and as a never reflection on the materialism of this age, if ever there was a prophecy of God's Word that has a message for today, it is the prophecy of Haggai, because he was living in the times of materialism. He was living in times exactly as our own times, and I will show you, a little way on, that he was living in a time of acute inflation; and the people were excusing themselves, they were saying, 'it is not time to build Yahweh's house. They were giving all their attention to their own things, and aren't we similar to that, b&s? Go around the world and look at the pitifully poor way in which the work of the service is conducted. Have a look at the homes of brethren, have a look at the way in which we lavish upon ourselves in this age of materialism, all that this world can give! We demand the comforts of life, we're not prepared to sacrifice for the things of Almighty God. The LORD's house can fall into

ruins for all we care! so long as we are not personally affected by it! We have the appearance of brethren tearing one another to pieces and Yahweh's house in the dust and the stranger without mocking at what he sees in a people who claim to have the truth, the same as in the days of Haggai, the enemies were there to mock at this pitiful work in the midst of Judah. That's the message of Haggai and it comes echoing down the corridors of time to our own day, and he speaks to us and he uses those words, consider your ways.

If you are going to mark your bible, buy a little packet of coloured pencils and use them on

those words, consider your ways; notice how frequently he uses those words, in verse 5, consider your ways; in verse 7, consider your ways; in verse 15 of the second chapter, consider; in verse 18 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter, consider-twice uttered. So constantly this man, Haggai, who only prophesied for 4 months, was constantly exhorting the people to consider their ways! For 4 months he was before the public view, that's all, and then we hear no more of Haggai, but his words are with us today and they tell us as he told them, to consider our ways.

What were they to consider? He told them, look in verse 6, he says, 'you sow much and bring in little; you eat but you have not enough; ye drink but you are not filled with drink; ye clothe you but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put in a bag with holes'. We get good wages, don't we? good money! When I was a boy my father used to give thruppence to clean the cow shed; then he used to come out and look at the cow shed and would say it had to be done again because it wasn't worth thruppence! But today, if you wanted to give someone thruppence, they would just look at you and would want to know when the rest was going to come. That is the difference in attitude today, and we get good money, but where does the money go? It goes into a bag with holes and doesn't go anywhere, that was the state of things in the days of Haggai; it was a time of acute inflation, materialism was an illusion, it wasn't really there; they weren't really wealthy at all. They didn't really have anything of this world's goods because it didn't go anywhere; they worked hard enough, they served much, but there wasn't much to eat. They were clothed but none were really warm; no one was satisfied with their lot, and he that earned wages put in a bag with holes. All their labour resulted in little profit! they looked around and they explained it all; they said, 'we had a bad harvest', 'we didn't get any rain; there was a frost', and they explained it all in that fashion! But the prophet goes on to show that these harvests are bad, because Yahweh has made them bad; you are not profiting, he said, because you're not being blessed by God. He's telling them not to look

at the external circumstances of life and excuse themselves that way, because the curse of God is on all their ways. The saying can be true of us today, you know, b&s, we desire pleasure and happiness, but what greater pleasure and happiness is there than when we are around the Word of God? What can the world give us equal to what the Word of God can give us in pleasure; in unadulterated happiness? In all this sophistication we see about us, a world not happy at all, it's miserable! But when we come about the Word of God and shut the world out from us, we can reach to the true realms of

happiness and peace of mind. This is what the Jews did not understand, and in that first message to them, the prophet spake and told them that!

Now I told you, b&s, don't take it up with me and tell me I've been speaking too long, I told you that you can interject at any time, and so if I'm not making this perfectly clear or there is any point at all, that you want to ask me about, don't hesitate to do it, do it straight away; stand up at any time and interject if you want to do that! and we will answer it. But there was the first message, 'consider your ways'; he looked at the state of Israel, he found that the state of Israel was one in which they gloried in the material possessions that they possessed and they allowed the things of God to lie waste. So he said, 'consider your ways'.

He goes on in verse 7, 'Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified', saith Yahweh'. He said, 'go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house', what sort of a temple is that? They wanted one with hewn stones and plenty of gold and silver; they wanted a beautiful erection, a beautiful building, they wanted something they could glory in! God wasn't interested in that! He said, to them, 'go up to the mountain and chop down wood, bring it down and make a house from that wood and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified', saith Yahweh. What did He mean? He meant this, that if they were prepared to labour themselves in the things of God, He would find pleasure in it! He meant this, that it doesn't matter how humble our labour might be, if we are working ourselves in this work, God will take pleasure in it. That is the lesson that comes down to us, we can labour in the things of God, it doesn't matter how humble our work might be, If we do it ourselves, if we put ourselves out for God, if we labour with our hands in the things of God, He will take pleasure in it! and who do we care what other people might consider? Why do we worry or concern ourselves with what the world might think of our meeting? so long as we are labouring in that fashion. They didn't want to go out of their way, they didn't want to worry at all about what they should do; He said to go up the mountain and chop wood, do it yourself, come down and I'll take pleasure in it!

Now that's the study of this Word, b&s. Don't think for one moment that you can appoint leaders that are going to educate you in this Word. You've got to get this Word in your mind, that's what Moses said, the man appointed by God over the people of Israel, 'set your heart on these things', now we must do that. It's your responsibility and my responsibility; I can't lean upon anyone nor can you and we build best when we build a character fit for the habitation of God. We do that, in the means that God has provided, the

Word itself, therefore, we've got to do it ourselves. I know it's difficult- people say, 'oh, you can read and you can take things in easily'; don't think that for a moment. You don't think that I'd go to all the trouble of marking my bible closely like this, if I've got such a brilliant mind that I just have to look at a word and out pops the Hebrew derivation and all the related words and wonderful thoughts flow through my mind. That's not the case with anyone; we're all flesh as brother Martin has told us, and we're worth about a king size bottle of Coca-cola - we're not worth much! As our chairman said, '5 foot 10" and



clay as brother Martin is concerned, half price! But that is the point, b&s, we've got to do it ourselves, we've got to labour in the things of God ourselves and we can become a source of strength in the ecclesia with which we are associated. You know, the influence of every individual is great, greater than they can imagine and we can exert an influence in our particular environment that is for the good of the community. I believe, that is why we're here, we're here on the serious business of life, not here for pleasure as the world understands it, but the serious business of life, and we go forth as pioneers to exert an influence for good in our particular community wherever we might be found.

So said the prophet, 'go to the mountain, build the house, I will take pleasure in it', not because of the magnificent appearance of the house, but because you laboured with your hands to do it in that fashion. So he says, 'I will be glorified' saith Yahweh. He will be honoured, and you know, b&s, that is very, very true of the circumstances of life. Now I have got to give you a little anecdote of a brother that I know back in Adelaide; I've been associated with him since he came into the truth. When he came into the truth, he could hardly read a word of English; he was excellent on the football field, but a proper clown when it came to read English. He couldn't read but he joined an Elpis Israel class, and in those days we used to read around the class and it was a great embarrassment to him, when the time would come for him to read a paragraph of Elpis Israel. He would look around the class, he told me this, in those days, he said, I looked around that class and I would be the 6<sup>th</sup> person, and I would look up the 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph and would be studying it all the time the discussion and reading was going on. Then he said, what happened some ass read my paragraph! Now he can hardly read, that brother, and today he takes his place on the platform as a presiding brother. Today he is foremost in proclaiming the truth; he works with his hands, he's not a brilliant brother but he is a solid, sound, expounder of faith. And that is what we find in this Word here, and you know, b&s, the Word of God changed that man completely, and I've seen that happen, but it will only happen in the way he did it, because he got down personally to the Word of God and he attempted something that was more than he could possibly do. People outside said he was fool, he'd never learn these things, but he did and he aimed high, and because he aimed high, he attained it! The lesson is that God is honoured in that! because people look at him now and say that something has moved that chap; something had changed him from a fellow who could kick his companions off the football field, to one who is ready to speak upon the Word of God.

Something's changed him? what's changed him? oh, it's the Christadelphians! what's a Christadelphian? a brother of Christ! Christ has changed him! and God is honoured in that, and yet when he gets on the platform he's by no means a brilliant presiding brother, I know this as a fact, but he's a very humble and not at all fluent, but there's something there that stands for solidity and determination and faith; and God is honoured in it! and that's the point! His was presiding on one occasion when brother Martin was speaking, by the way, and as he got up on the platform, he was really nervous, because we had a special occasion and a full hall, and this brother got up and said, 'I'll call upon my mother to address you', and that was brother Martin, of course, but what he meant was that John Martin is a bit of an old woman! but he didn't express it in that fashion!

Well, in verse 9 the prophet says, 'Ye looked for much and lo, it came to little; when you brought it home, I did blow upon it'. Why? You looked for a lot, you have very little; when you brought it home, I did blow upon it, why? because of my house which is waste and ye went every man unto his own house; because you are neglecting the things of God for your own personal advantage! You're not prospering, you're not prospering in your material life and you're not prospering in your spiritual life! Have you ever found that in ecclesial life too? Why? because God is not honoured and you know, even in ecclesial life we can dishonour God; we can do things for our own honour and glory; there's some glory in standing upon a platform and that can get us in the end if we're not careful! If we're not prepared to honour God in all our ways, ecclesially as well as else wise, well, then, He will blow upon us; we'll find that we don't prosper! That's the message of Haggai! 'because that my house is waste and ye run every man unto his own house; therefore He says, 'the heaven over you is stayed from dew and the earth is stayed from its fruit. I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains; upon the corn and upon the new wine, and upon the oil and upon the ground which bringeth forth; upon men and upon cattle and upon all the labour of the hand'. You thought it was a bad harvest, you thought it was natural conditions; you thought it was just unfortunate that the rains didn't come! 'That was my action that was doing that; I was bringing you under the rod', saith Almighty God, 'that you might learn a lesson'. You know, b&s, in the affairs of life that can be the same too! God disciplines those whom He loves, He will chasten us if He loves us, He will bring us unto circumstances of life that we can explain away as natural circumstances, but as brother Roberts shows powerfully in *The Ways of Providence*, 'they are nonetheless the actions of Almighty God in our lives, guiding us that He may fit us for the kingdom'. We can explain it all away as natural reasons, but God is behind it; God is overshadowing our lives, God is interested in our welfare and therefore, as Haggai the prophet has pointed out. We go out and labour and do it in faith, seeking to glorify God, and He will be honoured in that which we do!