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"And he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes."

Haggai 1:6b

Nebuchadrezzar, the Babylonian king captured Jerusalen and destroyed it in the year 586 B.C. For a half century the Jews remained in exide in paylon. Forty-eight years after the fall of Jerusalem, paylon in turn was conquered by Persia, the new power of the East. Cyrus, who was king of Persia, tolerated all religions and very soon after he came into power he permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalen. Not very many took advantage of the opportunity. They had become settled in Banylon; their homes were built; their lot was not hard, and they were perfectly content to remain where they were. The few that did return started immediately to repuild the temple. At once they set up the altar of the Lord and in the following year they laid the foundation for the Temple, but opposition appeared which stopped the work. The Samaritans did not like it because the Jews would not let them help to build the Temple so they actively opposed the efforts of the returned exiles To tell the truth, the Jews themselves were not very enthusiastic about the project, and this opposition soon discouraged them.

Fifteen years later the temple was still in ruins. The condition of the people had not been all that could be desired.

They suffered want. They knew what it was to be hungry. They were persecuted. They did not find their life easy. Their lot, however, was inproving for we find that they were building expensive houses for themselves, houses with cedar paneling and other expensive trappings. But still the temple of the hord remained a ruin.

Then a new king came to the fire the persia. Following the death of twrite the still the death of the hord remained a ruin.

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had been a dispute over who should be king. After considerable time had elapsed a new, powerful figure appeared, Darius. He seized the power and proceeded to reorganize the empire. Some of the provinces had revolted, he had to establish his authority in all of them, so that it appeared that he would look with favor upon any request that a loyal province might make. It was an opportune time to repuilt God's house, yet the people remained indifferent.

This was the situation that called forth the message of the prophet Haggai. We do not know just who Haggai was, how old he was, or anything about him except that he gave four prophecies covering a period of a very few months during the second year of the reign of Darius the great. His first three prophecies relate to the work of restoring the temple, the fourth concerns the governor of Jerusalen, Zeruphapel. It is a book with one single purpose, that of promoting the rebuilding of the Temple. Haggai thought that the Temple was essential to the religion of Israel. So firmly did he believe this that he started out to create a sentiment to bring it to pass. He not only started out, but he succeeded in accomplishing his purpose. 0

We cormonly think that the prophet or preacher appeals only to people's enotions and never to their reason. Isiah, however, is typical of the prophets when he says, "Come, let us reason together." Likewise Haggai says, "Now therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Haggai asks the people to draw conclusions from the facts which he surnits. The prophet does not ask them to take his word. He does not even ask them to take God's word. He asks them to look at their own lives, and then to decide on the question he is

putting effore them.

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What are the facts of their lives. One writer descripes the sixth verse of the first chapter of Haggai as a 'vivid picture of alluring hopes and baffling disappointments. 11 1'Ye have sown much, and ring in little; ye eat, but he have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, out there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a lag with holes. ! . In spite of the great efforts that they were putting forth in their lives they were getting meager returns. Day after day men went out to work. At night they returned with their wages, but at the end of the year when they looked to see what they had, they found to their sorrow that they had nothing. They had eaten, yet they were hungry; they drank, yet they were thirsty: they had teen putting their money into ags with holes. What a picture it is! Can you not see the tired worker returning at night carefully carrying a little lag which is supposed to hold his wages. Each day he puts his hard earned money into that lag and then one day he discovers that the lag has a number of tig holes in it and that his savings have all leaked out.

Haggai does more than to simply paint the picuture. Too many references paint a clack picture in order that they may sit down and admire their work of art. Haggai called the attention of the people to the situation. Then he showed then how they could make the situation etter. He gives the solution in the ninth verse. !'Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye crought it home, I did flow upon it. Why? saith the lord of hosts. ecause of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.'' The reason for the famine, the hard times, the lack of satisfaction with life is that the temple

remains in ruins. wild the house of the Lord and the holes in the lag will le closed. There had een a day when the nation was the glory of God. The nation was no more. Judah was no longer a kingdom, she was a religious community and the temple was needed at the heart of that community. They were neglecting their purpose in life. Every man was turning to his own affairs while the affairs of God were neglected. Out of this neglect and indifference came the voice of Haggai awakening the people to their o'ligations, showing them the futility of their lives, and pointing the way to a satisfactory solution. 'He that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a ag with holes. Why? saith the Lord ofhosts, |ecause of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. 11

Haggai might well stand refore us and reapeat, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways." Look at Haggai and you see a keen critic of the modern world, for no finer analysis of the futility of our life today could re given than that of the prophecy of Haggai, "And he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a rag with holes." The church, the nation, the world, you and I are putting our wages into a rag with holes.

The size of our tusiness enterprises today is almost eyond comprehension. It is estimated that there are some eleven thousand millionaires in this country. That means that there are eleven thousand people who have at least a million. Most of them have a good many millions. The value of the manufactured products in New York State in 1925 totaled nearly nine tillion dollars. No longer is tusiness done in terms of hundreds and thousands tut rather in terms of millions and tillions.

Crime increases. During 1926 the police (ill for New York City alone was over forty-one million dollars. You can judge from this figure what the police (ill of the State and country would (e. The reported prison population of the United States five years ago was 109,619 people. Two years ago there were 75,962 people convicted of crime in New York State. It would to interesting to find out how much these people cost the country, to arrest them, to convict them, and to maintain them. It is appaling to consider the loos in energy and in money due to crime.

We can find other illustrations of the fact that we are putting our wages into a tag with holes. The National Foreign Trade Council has estimated that the recent war caused a loss in world exports to the amount of two hundred ten dillions of dollars. Mind you this is no group of academic pacifies tut a group of hard headed usiness men dealing with facts. We know that the war cost our government over thirty-five dillion dollars. Just so long as we telegrate war we shall to putting our money into tags with holes. For years the world

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workds to wild up wealth and then in a few months all of this accumulation is wasted and generations yet to come are furdened with the cost of war. If it were possible to place all of the money, and energy, and rains, and man power that was used in the World War in use for the enefit of humanity what a different world we should have today. ut no, Christ's way is impractical. You can't put into everyday life the sermon on the mount. The golden rule isn't horse sense. Don't other with this Christ stuff it doesn't get you anywhere. So men go on 'leing practical' and putting their wages into lags with holes. Think of the irony of it! People willing to give their money and their flood for a war that only means loss. Ye have sown much and tring in little. All we need to do is to read the foreign news today to see the situation into which our old policies have driven us. China at last rising and striking tack at those who have made sport of her for years. Central America voicing a protest against our own policies. The whole world a foiling crater ready to low up and shatter our civilization. All this ecause the world has put its wages into a lag with holes. We might expend the illustration and look at the disappointment and dissatisfaction among certain industrial groups; we might look at our politics which seem to le increasing their output of sline for the news columns dach year. Jut we must leave all this and look at our own lives. As I consider my own life and the lives of those a out me 1 see that we must apply the words of naggai to our own personal lives. We have teen putting our wages into a lag with holes.

The average individual is dissatisfied with something. This outward dissatisfaction is only the evidence of a mental condition men and women do not feel that they are getting the most out of life. The have sown

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much, and ring in little. We eat and are still hungry. We drink and we arestill thirsty. We earn wages to put it into a jag with holes. We must learn that to give ourselves to pleasure or to riches or to power or to selfishness of any kind is to waste ourselves. I telieve that the solution of the projem of the world's discontent and disappointment is the solution given ly maggai twenty-six hundred years ago. When we cease juilding ourselves panelled houses and rejuild the temple of the bord we shall find the satisfaction for which we seek. Each of us should consider his life a temple to Almighty God.

There is one thing that we can never avoid doing. We can never avoid wilding a character. Every day that we live adds something to our fuilding. Our ideals determine what the wilding shall e. I call upon you to fuild a temple to God. If you do this you are not putting your life into a lag with holes. Today's need is for the man and the woman and the loy and the girl who will dedicate his life to God. Who will say, not my will out Thine; who will forget self; who will raise his eyes to the skies and aspire to all that is good and leautiful; who will live a life of helpfulness; who will live a life of sacrifice and service; who will dedicate his life to the worship of God and to the service of God. such a life will to a temple to our Father in Heaven. May we on this day realize that the time is ripe to wild. And may we now as we low at the feet of our King pledge him our lives that they may not go into a ag with holes, ...

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