

GRACIOUS WILSONS BLDG

The SCRIPTURE STANDARD

*Pleading for a complete return to Christianity
as it was in the beginning.*

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God's Purpose for His Church

IN his book *The Christian Ecclesia* Bishop Hort points out that there are no fewer than eleven senses in which the words 'church' or 'churches' are used by the apostle Paul. It is essential, therefore, that we be clear as to just what is meant when we use these words.

To many people the Church means the Church of England; to others the Roman Catholic Church; whilst the Ecumenical Movement seeks to bring into being the 'Universal Church' by fusion of or association with the many denominations. At the same time these denominations are proud of their separateness and distinctness, and all claim to be grounded upon the teaching of the New Testament. Yet their very existence is a clear contradiction of Christ's prayer 'that they may all be one' that believe on Him, and an ignoring of Paul's warning in 1 Cor. 1:10-13 against Christians calling themselves by any other name than Christ's.

In none of the above senses is the church spoken of in the New Testament. There we look in vain for the church as an organisation or institution. We find instead that it is a *fellowship*, 'the fellowship of God's Son' (1 Cor. 1:9). The very word 'church' has come to have a meaning never suggested by the inspired writers, not only in its being applied to a building erected by men's hands, but as an elaborate organisation, with its hierarchy of 'clergy' as distinguished from the 'laity' or common members. Indeed, Emil Brunner, the Swiss theologian, in his recent book *The Misunderstanding of the Church* shows that this misunderstanding consists not only of the meaning of the word but of the nature and purpose of the church.

Many Churches—One Body

By the grace of God we are privileged to have a place and share in the church of God. Through faith in Christ, repentance towards God, confession of the Lordship of the Son of God, and baptism into Christ we have been added to the New Testament church. But we need to be sure ourselves that we understand rightly the various ways in which the church is spoken of. Especially do we need to be clear as to when the inspired writers mean the church as a local assembly and the church as the whole body of Christ. In many cases the meaning is obvious. For instance, a single local assembly is meant in such passages as Rom. 16:1, 1 Cor. 1:2, Col. 4:16, 1 Thes. 1:1, whilst Paul's letter to the Ephesians brings out the holiness, beauty and oneness of the church as the Body of Christ.

A study of Eph. 3:10 reveals some glorious truths. The passage reads (Bishop Wand's *New Testament Letters*): 'The purpose of the concealment

was that now at last, through the instrumentality of the Church, even the angelic Rulers and Powers in the heavenly sphere might learn fresh lessons in the intricate pattern of the Divine Wisdom revealed in the plan of the ages, which He had made in Jesus Christ our Lord.'

Now we have often taken these words to mean that the gospel is to be made known to the world, and all Christian work to be done, through the church. We have stressed those words 'through the church' as being the operative and effective clause, and very often we have meant by the church the local assembly. It is true that each individual, and indeed each Christian, has a responsibility to make known 'the wisdom of God' to those around. But the passage means much more than that.

What is meant is best set out in the words of Paul himself. Beginning at verse 2 he writes of 'the dispensation of the grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery . . . which in other generations was not made known . . . as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit . . . that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel . . . Unto me was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see . . . the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages hath been hid in God . . .'

The Church in Heaven

We are here shown what had been a mystery hitherto—that God's purpose is to make Gentiles equal sharers with Jews in His blessings. This mystery was explained by revelation, and this revelation was the gospel. It is glorious enough that the gospel preached to men, here and now, should win them into Christ's Body, His church. But God's purpose, His 'intent,' for the church is far more glorious. It is (v. 10) 'that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God.' In other words, not only is the 'wisdom of God' to be preached to men but to the heavenly creation; not only here and now but in heaven and through eternity! And the agency to carry out this purpose of God is not archangels nor angels, but the church.

This is a staggering thought. And the closer the passage is examined the more amazing it becomes. For what is the church to make known to the heavenly powers? The wisdom of God. With this text we can link that in 1 Cor. 1: there Paul tells us that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men' (v. 25). In verse 21 the apostle writes that this so-called foolishness of God is the gospel. 'The foolishness of the preaching' here means that which is preached, the message itself, the gospel.

The gospel is not only the 'wisdom of God' but the 'manifold wisdom of God.' God's wisdom is richly variegated, has many facets, many folds—fold after fold, each revealing new beauty and glory. The books we have in page form are not so printed on the machine. A sheet may consist of 32, 64 or even more pages printed in one process. The sheet is then folded many times and cut into page form. When we look at the page we see only a small part of the sheet, and only when the sheet is unfolded can we appreciate the full sweep of the work. So we see now only a little at a time of the 'manifold wisdom of God,' but when we are no longer limited by the finite, when 'we shall know even as also we are known,' we shall realise the full glory of God, a glory which shall not be exhausted throughout eternity.

The Testimony of the Church

The wisdom of God is not yet fully revealed to the church. But we see His wisdom in choosing His church to reveal His love in redemption. Re-

demption can be understood only by those who know its glories. There is a significant statement in Revelation 14. John hears a new song being sung in heaven, and he says that song could not be learned except by 'those who had been purchased out of the earth.'

Only the redeemed could sing it. Surely this is the song of redemption in praise of the Lamb 'who was slain and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe and tongue and people and nation' (Rev. 5:9). In that song even the heavenly host, who sang at the birth of the Redeemer 'Glory to God in the highest' cannot join, for

'They have never, never known
A fallen world like this.'

Again, Peter (1 Pet. 1), in speaking of God's great salvation in Jesus Christ, brings out the same thought. 'Into this salvation' he says, 'the prophets searched diligently.' These things are ministered to us, he continues, and then adds, 'which things angels desire to look into.'

Truly those in the church of Christ have a 'high calling.' If we are to make known, in heaven, 'the manifold wisdom of God' let us prepare for that glorious work by making known on earth the wonders of God's love.

'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? . . . For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory for ever. Amen.' (Rom. 11:33-36).

EDITOR.

Salvation is of the Jews

(John 4:22)

(Notes of a Sermon by Clyde P. Findlay)

THE much-married woman of Samaria preferred to discuss religious matters with Jesus rather than her moral life. Jesus replied to her question about where men should worship by telling her, 'Ye worship what ye know not. We know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.' By this statement Jesus did not mean that salvation was for the Jews in any exclusive sense (Rom. 1:16; Gal. 3:26-29). In what way is salvation of the Jews?

1—It is true that physical preservation is for the Jews

1. *The Problem of the Jew.* He is a problem to the atheist. Frederick the Great asked his chaplain to show him a miracle and was answered, 'Sire, the Jew.' Like Midian's burning bush the Jew is never consumed. Let the atheist explain the Jew's continuous existence. The Jew is a problem to the nationalist. Be the Jew an American financier, a German scientist, a French philosopher, or a Russian general, he remains identified as a Jew. Even Hitler could not destroy the Jew.

2. *The Prophecies Concerning the Jews.* The Gentile prophet Balaam and the Hebrew Moses prophesied their separation and desolation (Num. 23:9; Deut. 28:47-57). The 'weeping prophet' foretold their humiliation and physical preservation (Jer. 23:40; 24:9; 30:11).

3. *The Prophecies Concerning the Jews have been Fulfilled.* Josephus and Eusebius record the final breaking up of the Jewish nation on August 10th, 70 A.D., fulfilling the prophetic warning of Jesus (Luke 21:20-21). Let no one be misled by the present Zionist accomplishments in Palestine. It is not Biblical Zionism. It is not religious but political. It is not spiritual. It is established not by gospel preaching but by terror gangs.

God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 15 : 8) was fulfilled (2 Sam. 8 : 3 ; 2 Chron. 9 : 26). 'The Jews rejected God and God ejected them'—M. T. Rouse. They will never be made whole again (Jer. 19 : 10).

4. *The Preservation of the Jews as a People is a Prophetic Proof and Pre-warning to Us.* Scattered, yet distinctly preserved, not as a proof that they are the pets of God (Acts 10 : 34 ; 15 : 9) but of the sureness of God's prophetic word concerning them. Moreover, whether Christians or not, physically they are a monument of warning to the present people of God (Rom. 11 : 22).

II—And it is also true that salvation is from the Jews

(1) Paul declares that the oracles of God are from the Jews (Rom. 3 : 1-7) and Peter declares that this is our standard in religion (1 Pet. 4 : 11). With the exception of Job and Luke it is likely that the entire Bible was written by Jews. Luke always put the answer to 'What must I do to be saved?' in the mouth of Jewish Christians. The best-known Psalms, Isaiah 53, Jeremiah 31 : 31-34, Daniel 2 : 44, 7 : 12-13 etc. were all written by Jews. (2) Paul forever sets the standard of the gospel we must preach and obey to be saved. It is the gospel that a Jew, Paul, preached (Gal. 1 : 8-9). We have a sure standard by which to judge true and false religions.

2. The Son of God is from the Jews (Heb. 7 : 14 ; Mt. 1 : 1). Recall the many Jewish types of Jesus : the Passover Lamb (John 1 : 39 ; 1 Cor. 5 : 7), the prophet like Moses (Acts 3 : 17-26), the Great High Priest (Heb. 8 : 1-2), a King greater than David (Acts 2 : 29-31), etc.

3. The Church of God is from the Jews. (1) It had its beginning in a Jewish city (Luke 24 : 47-49 ; Acts 1 : 8), on a Jewish Holy Day (Acts 2 : 1), with Jewish sinners repenting (Acts 2 : 5, 37) and Jewish preachers giving Heaven's prescription (Acts 2 : 38), and was built on Jewish prophets and apostles as foundation, with Jesus the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2 : 20 ; 1 Cor. 3 : 11). (2) It was typified by the Israel of God (Gal. 4 : 16), City of God (Mt. 5 : 14 ; Ps. 46 : 4), Temple of God (1 Cor. 3 : 16), Jerusalem (Isa. 66 : 8 ; 54 : 1-3), etc.—all Jewish types. (3) It fulfilled the prophecies of inspired Jews. Isaiah 2 : 1-4 is fulfilled in Acts 2. Isaiah 28 : 16 is fulfilled in Acts 4 : 11. Isaiah 58 : 8 is fulfilled in Acts 4 : 32. Isaiah 62 : 2 is fulfilled in Acts 11 : 26, and Psalm 118 : 22 in Luke 20 : 17.

And thus salvation is from the Jews because the Word of God, the Son of God and the Church of God are from the Jews.

III—While salvation is for the Gentiles, it is in no sense from the Gentiles.

1. Many years ago this sermon was inspired by the Bible scholar, C. A. Westapher, in his statement :—

'In our country there are about two hundred and seventeen kinds of religion, which is two hundred and sixteen too many, nearly all of which originated by Gentile men and women after the days of the apostles, in Gentile countries and established under presumptuous Gentile leadership. But no Divine institution has come from Gentile creation. Those religious institutions whose doctrines were first preached elsewhere than at Jerusalem, lack the seal of genuineness. Any gospel or system of faith that was not first preached by our Lord's chosen witnesses—Peter, Paul and others, Jews according to the flesh—is a spurious and perverted gospel.'

2. Men, then, are trusting in Gentile-originated creeds and churches, not yet knowing that salvation is from the Jews.

(1) Any church beginning at any other place than Jerusalem, or at any other time than the Pentecost following Jesus' ascension, cannot bring

us salvation. Any creedbook, manual, confession of faith, book of discipline or catechism, written by Gentiles does not instruct us as do the oracles of God. If they are less than the Bible they are not enough—if more than the Bible they are too much—if the same as the Bible, they are unnecessary because we already have the Bible.

(2) The church of Christ began at Jerusalem on Pentecost. Fulfilling the Word of God which was from the Jews, and believing and obeying the Son of God, who was from the Jews, they became members of the church of God, which is from the Jews.

Conclusion

1. How shall we obtain this salvation which is for Jew and Gentile alike? Do as they did on Pentecost; repent and be baptised into Christ. The very acts of obedience that save your souls make you members of Christ's church. To become a member of a Gentile-originated denomination you must do something instead of, or in addition to those commanded in Acts 2:38. Have you already obeyed the gospel but have become unfaithful? Then remember Romans 11:22.

2. Jesus wept over Jerusalem's certain fall. 'Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! that stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto you. How often would I have gathered you unto myself as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. But ye would not.' 'If thou hadst known the day of thy visitation. Henceforth your house is left unto you desolate.'

3. Jesus is likewise concerned over you. Jerusalem would not obey Him. Will you?

Expediency-I

THE Greek word *sumphero* is defined in the lexicons, 'to be expedient, profitable or advantageous.' In Matthew 5:29-30 it is twice translated 'profitable.' Jesus is pointing out that it is better to deprive ourselves of one offending member than to have our whole body thrown into gehenna.

From the Jews' point of view it was better that one man, Jesus, be removed than that the whole nation should suffer at the hands of the Romans. God saw that it was profitable for the whole of His children that Jesus should die: hence the words of Caiaphas in John 11:49-52. Though the disciples sorrowed at the thought of Jesus' departure, it was better for them that He should go, in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit (John 16:7).

Therefore that which is expedient is that which is profitably beneficial.

The Realm of Expediency

Let us not conclude that anything we think is profitable is necessarily right or lawful. Ends do not justify means, but when there is a choice of two courses of action the ends should be considered. For example: Paul informs us (Rom. 1:16) that the Gospel is God's power to bring every believer to salvation; therefore we must use the Gospel, and that only, to save souls. We must not add other powers and attractions, such as whist drives, bazaars and other forms of second-rate entertainment.

God's example of expediency for us

When God gives us an example of how a command or work is to be carried out, as followers of Christ we should follow the example. Jesus commanded us to assemble and remember Him often (1 Cor. 11:23-26), but He did not say how often, in the form of a command. Instead He gave us an example—Acts 20:7: 'The disciples came together to break bread.'

When? 'Upon the first day of the week.' So we, as disciples, follow this example, and break bread every first day of the week. We do not try to improve on the example by breaking bread oftener or by taking the emblems to sick folks' homes.

God does not always request obedience in the form of demands. He prefers that we serve Him in love rather than in terror. So He often sets an example before us that it would be profitable (expedient) for us to follow. In 2 Cor. 8 Paul sets the self-sacrifice of the Macedonians (who gave beyond their power, having devoted themselves wholeheartedly to the Lord) and the sacrifice of Jesus ('Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich') as examples to the Corinthians, that out of love they might give. It was not a command (verse 8) : Paul was requesting them to do something for their own spiritual benefit and upbuilding (verse 10 : 'expedient for you').

Now, if the examples that God gives for doing His will are profitable, expedient, we cannot improve on them. He would not set a second-rate example before us. Therefore it would be folly to follow our own devices.

Our scope for applying expediency

If God has not left us a guide for carrying out various aspects of a command, then we choose what we think to be the most beneficial way in effecting that command, since the command must be obeyed. This is *only* when we have no instruction or example in the Scriptures. Yet this principle is not taught in the Scriptures by the use of the word *sumphero* (expedient). On the contrary, New Testament teaching on what is expedient mainly tells us when we may and may not use things which in themselves are lawful.

No object is sinful in itself

Inanimate objects are not sinful. They can do neither right nor wrong. To look on inanimate objects as though they had some peculiar good or evil in them is superstition. The ground that Moses stood on was holy, not because of some peculiar property in the soil, but because God chose to separate that place in order to reveal Himself to Moses. That spot is now no more holy than any other ground.

The word holy means 'set apart,' particularly for God's use. The water used in baptism is holy, not because there is any magical charm or supernatural power in the water, but because it is separated for God's use. After baptism the water has served its purpose. Read 1 Cor. 10 : 15-22 : 'I speak as to wise men : judge ye what I say.' The bread and the fruit of the vine we use in the Lord's supper have no virtue or vice of their own, but they are separated (sanctified) that we might remember the Lord. Meat offered to idols is nothing : it is demon-worship associated with it that is evil. In the breaking of the bread the blessings obtained are not from the bread but from the true worship. No object of itself is right or wrong. It is the way we use it that is right or wrong.

Application, to our profit

There is nothing wrong in money, but the *love* of money is wrong 1 Tim. 6 : 10. There is no evil in food (1 Tim. 4 : 4) but gluttony is wrong. In Christ we have liberty, but once we enslave ourselves to anything we are not expedient. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly and the belly for meats : but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.' (*Things* here refers to objects such as 'meats,' 'belly,' 'body,' not to actions. This passage does not give free licence in actions, as many think, for one action, 'fornication,' is condemned).

There is nothing sinful in having a wireless set, but if it becomes a mania and hinders our spiritual development it is not profitable, expedient, to have one. It is better to get rid of it than to be overcome and condemned (Matt. 5 : 29-30). It would not hurt us as much to be rid of the set as it would for our souls to be eternally tormented.

A Christian's body is holy, not because it is different in nature or formation from anyone else's body, but because it is bought with a price, a tremendous price. The Holy Spirit dwells in it, therefore it must be used to God's glory (1 Cor. 6 : 19-20). A Christian has no right to practise any distasteful habit, or to participate in anything which will defile his body or is detrimental to his spiritual well-being or harmful to Christ's cause in any way at all. Such things, though they might be legitimate, are not expedient. 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.' (1 Thes. 5 : 22). 'Providing for honest things, *not only* in the sight of the Lord, *but also* in the sight of men.' (2 Cor. 8 : 21). 'Let not your good be evil spoken of.' (Rom. 14 : 16).

Application, to others' profit

'Am I my brother's keeper?' 'Must I govern my life by another person's weakness?' 1 Cor. 10 : 29 : 'Why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?' Selfish questions! Paul's answer is, 'Give none offence, *neither* to the Jews, *nor* to the Gentiles, *nor* to the church of God : even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit (expediency), but the profit of many, that they may be saved.' (1 Cor. 10 : 32-33). This does not mean that Paul did evil to please everybody. It means that he refrained from doing honest and lawful things so as not to offend anyone, because offence would make people harder to reach with the Gospel.

(To be concluded)

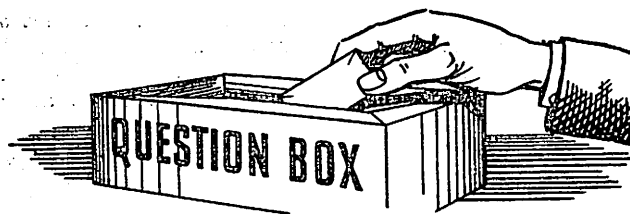
ALLAN ASHURST

Beatitudes for Preachers

Blessed is the preacher who

- Fights sin, not the sinner ; for he has attained the divine standard.
- Has convictions and stands by them. Around him the weak shall rally.
- Makes the Bible his daily meditation. His sermons shall never grow stale.
- Builds the people around the Lord, not himself ; for his work shall endure.
- Often speaks with the Lord. He shall have power with God and influence with his fellows.
- Proclaims Jesus, not himself ; for he shall not lead the people into idolatry.
- Relates his Lord's experiences, not his own. His message shall never be despised.
- Can take criticism with meekness and turn it to his own good. He shall be called a Christian.
- Who can see his own mistakes as well as those of others.
- He shall be humble toward himself and sympathetic toward all men.
- Makes no compromise with error and at the same time offends not by rudeness. He shall grow in favour with God and man.

The men who move the world are the men whom the world cannot move.



CONDUCTED BY
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Q. How could Cain go so early into a strange land and unoccupied country, and find a wife?

A. This question may be described as a 'classic.' It is continually being asked as one of the stock questions of doubters and sceptics.

To answer it, we must first realise that the Bible does not say that Cain found his wife in the land of Nod, as is so often asserted. Gen. 4:16-17 says, 'And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod (literal meaning, *wandering*), on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch.' All this passage states is, that Enoch was born after Cain's departure from the vicinity of Eden.

But who could Cain have married? The answer is, that since only one family occupied the earth at that time, Cain married his sister. Genesis mentions only three of the sons of Adam and Eve, because they have a special place in the narrative, but we must not conclude from this, that they did not have other children. This would particularly apply to their daughters, for true to Hebrew custom women would not be mentioned unless there was some special reason for doing so. We are in fact plainly told that, at least after the birth of Seth, Adam and Eve had 'sons and daughters' (Gen. 5:4) and we are not told the exact time at which Cain married. That there were at that time other children of the family of Adam, is also implied in Cain's statement, 'and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.' (Gen. 4:14). Add to this the fact that the Lord's curse upon Eve was, 'I will greatly *multiply* thy sorrow and thy conception' (Gen. 3:16), and we see that Adam might have had many children at this time. Adam Clarke gives an interesting calculation that demonstrates this possibility. Assuming that Adam had only two sons and two daughters at this time, and that they and their families each had about eight children, by the 128th year of Adam's life, that is two years before the birth of Seth, the number of Adam's progeny would have been 421,164 men of marriageable age, besides women and children.

Again, there was no moral reason at that time against Cain marrying his sister. To-day there are grave dangers involved in near relations marrying, which seems to be one reason why the moral law prohibits such marriages. But at that time the physical results of sin in the world had not accumulated, and therefore not only could near relations safely marry, but men could live to great ages.

Q. Why the Right Hand of Fellowship into the church after baptism?

A. There is absolutely no scriptural basis for a church practising any ritual involving the giving of the 'right hands of fellowship' at the Lord's Table, or anywhere else, to anyone who has recently been baptised.

In the first place, the scriptures never connect this action with the receiving of new members into fellowship. Just as to-day, from early times the custom of shaking hands was in wide use, as a formal sign of an agreement made, or a pledge given. A number of instances of this are found in the Old Testament, such as 2 Kings 10:15, 1 Chron. 29:24, marg;

Ezra 10:19, Ezek 17:18. In the New Testament, the only instance is found in Gal. 2:9: 'And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go into the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.' Bro. Alexander Brown in his booklet *Paul's Defence of Himself and His Gospel* gives a very clear paraphrase of this passage: 'And when men of repute—James, Cephas, and John—discovered how God had gifted me for a special work, they shook hands with me and Barnabas in recognition of us as co-workers. Our field of labour was recognised as among the Gentiles; these pillars were still to remain with the Jews.'

Paul and Barnabas were not new members of the church, neither were they being welcomed into the fellowship of the church at Jerusalem. They were already members of the church at Antioch. Nor can we infer that this action took place publicly, with the whole church gathered together. There is no proof that anyone else but the five mentioned in the narrative were present at the time. This action was simply an expression of approval, on the part of the leaders of the church at Jerusalem, of the work that Paul and Barnabas had accomplished amongst the Gentiles, and a pledge to continue to recognise and support that work.

In the second place, the whole question is seemingly based on a misconception. No congregation can by any formal ceremony bring a person into the church of Christ, neither can the individual himself *join* the church; but upon his obedience to the gospel, the Lord *adds* him to His church (see Acts 2:47). If upon faith, repentance, and confession he is baptised, then he is already in the church, for that which brought him into the Lord also brought him into the Lord's Body, the church. All a particular congregation can do is to welcome the new Christian into its local fellowship, taking care to point out that they are not welcoming him into the church of the Lord, but merely into membership of that congregation. It should also be clearly understood that such a welcome is given because it is courteous, brotherly, and therefore desirable, *and not because it is imperative*. To insist upon it as essential, and accompany it with some formal ceremony, connected with, or based upon 'the right hands of fellowship,' is a misapplication of scripture, and entirely unlawful.

Points for Preachers

2—Preparation of addresses

('... a workman that needeth not to be ashamed') (2 Tim. 2:15)

I WOULD make it a rule that any young preacher should concentrate on quality rather than on quantity in his sermon preparation. Remember what the Lord said about the Pharisees and their wanting to be 'heard for their much speaking.' This quality will not be attained without adequate preparation. Here is the advice of Paul to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:13): 'Give attention to reading, to exhortation and to doctrine.'

Reading: the absorbing of knowledge.

Exhortation: the exposition of knowledge.

Doctrine: the foundation of knowledge.

Doctrine pertains to the foundation principles of the Christian faith. One needs to be well-read in these principles before one can adequately explain them to others. In all these cases it is the knowledge of God's Word that is before us.

Ways of presenting the Message

There are nine ways in which the Word of God can be conveyed to others: (1) Reading; (2) Talks; (3) Discourses; (4) Expositions; (5) Exhortations; (6) Edifications; (7) Sermons; (8) Addresses; (9) Lectures.

The young disciple should learn to read well in public. The art of public reading of God's Word is of equal importance with its proclamation. Nothing is more disheartening to the reverent mind than to hear God's Word carelessly read. The opposite is the case when it is reverently and thoughtfully read, so give 'Give attention to reading.'

Talks on Scripture are an ideal way of beginning in the public ministry of the Word of God. In the writer's case it was a quarter of an hour's discourse on baptism. These talks given in class (and every church should have a Bible class) in a conversational manner, and upon a favourite or well-read passage of Scripture, give the young preacher confidence, and with the gaining of experience he will soon want to discourse on the Word of God.

In Discourses on Scripture one begins to draw outlines: our talks take on pattern and design. It is here that we should begin to learn principles of sermon-building. May I suggest a few? (1) Theme; (2) Collect your facts; (3) Set them in order; (4) Work to a climax, avoiding at all costs that bugbear of preaching—too many finishes!

Let us imagine your theme is the Love of God. From Scripture get the facts you require to demonstrate that love. Next, set them in order of presentation, keeping if possible a connecting thought to avoid the 'too many finishes' referred to. Then have a closing thought to centralise the minds of your hearers.

The golden rule of all public speakers is to interest your audience. If you do not succeed in this, whatever else you do you are a failure. Here we must seek to interest them in the Word of God, so keep your subject matter interesting, try to avoid boring repetition and platform catch-phrases; otherwise your hearers know what is coming and lose interest.

We now come to Expositions. As the word suggests, these are addresses designed to 'expose' or bring to light truth otherwise hidden. A study of word meanings and historical background is a help in the presentation of expositions. At first this type of address should be confined to class-work and the Lord's Day meeting, although often in gospel addresses there is need for exposition. The experienced teacher combines both discourse and exposition as the occasion demands.

The preacher will readily note the progressive nature of these types of addresses and experience will soon fit him with adaptability in their presentation. Always keep before you this thought: only the best is good enough, and whether you are speaking to a small class or to a large congregation always give of your best.

Another aim in your public speaking should be to speak with conviction. Brother Walter Crosthwaite often urges, 'Let your message grip you. If it doesn't, don't expect it to grip your audience.' Believe what you preach: if you only half believe it don't preach it. Let all your public utterances bear the hallmark of conviction.

The most common forms of address at the Lord's Table are exhortations and edifications. Some presiding brethren make a point of inviting the speaker to 'edify' or 'exhort' the church. Briefly, Exhortations are addresses designed to encourage and urge on the brethren in their Christian work. Whilst not difficult to present they require care and thought in preparation. Choose a good text, say Psalm 1:1 and 2. Here you have excellent material for exposition, which you can give by way

of introduction; or by comparing the first three verses with the last three you can exhort on the advantages of a God-fearing life.

The Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians and to Timothy make excellent material for Edifications—addresses designed to build up the faith of the brethren. Ephesians 4 makes a good lesson on personal conduct and faith; 2 Timothy 2 on good soldiers and workmen. James 3 makes an excellent exhortation on how to control the tongue. All these are suitable passages for beginners to work upon before attempting the weightier matter of, say, Romans and Hebrews.

Before proceeding further with thoughts on Sermons, Addresses and Lectures, which we hope to do in our next article, just a few thoughts on Preparation of Your Notes. It is not good enough just to scribble a few thoughts on the back of a postcard and expect from them to give a lengthy and informative discourse. Whilst you can over-prepare it is equally unwise to under-prepare. One sympathises with a well-meaning and earnest brother with copious notes who, getting his pages mixed up, finds himself in a hopeless tangle half-way through an address. He should try a note-book: it is handier, especially one of pocket size. Next, have a system of address-building, which should be in three or four sections: Introduction; the Address proper; the Finish or Application. There is no hard-and-fast rule. Most speakers devise their own. I pass on mine for what it is worth: it is based on the word I D E A—Introduction; Delivery; Enlargement; Application.

The Introduction will take anything from one to five minutes. The Delivery of the general outline, designed to give one's hearers an idea what to expect, from five to ten minutes. The Enlargement is the Address proper, the length of which is governed by (1) the time available and (2) the subject matter to be dealt with. Finally the Application, no longer than five minutes. This method gives an address of between twenty-five and forty minutes, and is suitable for most meetings.

The text at the head of this article exhorts us to be good workmen. A good workman does things 'decently and in order,' is not slovenly in his work, but takes a pride in it. Be a good workman in God's Word and work.

HAROLD BAINES.

[All who know of the serious illness of Bro. Baines will be thankful to God to hear of his wonderful recovery and return home from hospital.—Ed.]

The Pilot Psalm

(No doubt our fisher brethren in the North of Scotland will appreciate the thoughts of this variation of the Shepherd Psalm, and re-echo it as a prayer.)

The Lord is my Pilot: I shall not drift.
 He lighteth me across the dark water;
 He steereth me in deep channels.
 He keepeth my log.
 He guldeth me by the star of holiness
 For His name's sake.
 Yea, though I sail 'mid the thunders and tempests of life,
 I will dread no danger: for Thou art with me:
 Thy love and Thy care they shelter me.
 Thou preparest a harbour before me
 In the homeland of eternity.
 Thou anointest the waves with oil:
 My ship rideth calmly.
 Surely sunlight and starlight shall favour me on the voyage I take,
 And I will rest in the port of my God for ever.

—(Capt. J. H. Roberts, 1874, from *My Pocket Companion*, 1957, Protestant Truth Society).

SCRIPTURE READINGS

FEBRUARY, 1957

3—Ex. 5:1 to 6:1.	Rom. 9:14-33.
10— „ 6:2-13.	2 Cor. 6.
17— „ 6:28 to 7:25.	Matt. 10:2-23.
24— „ 10:21 to 11:10.	Rev. 19:4-24.

HARDNESS OF HEART

Our readings during this month take us from the first appearance of Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh to the final threat and plague. We should note the number and development of the plagues which indicated to Pharaoh in particular and to the whole of the people of Egypt, that Jehovah the God of Israel and of all the earth was requiring the release of His people from slavery. We must bear in mind that an Israelite saved Egypt from destruction by famine, and this would be known generally as national history, and that the Egyptians—not only Pharaoh—'made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field; all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.' It is a wicked thing for man to oppress man, and the 'rigour' means very arduous labour. The effort of the Egyptians was to enslave and destroy an inoffensive people.

We observe that Pharaoh is given due notice by God through His servants. The opportunity of doing right to the people of Israel was offered. The name 'LORD' (capital letters) in our Bibles stands for the title 'Jehovah,' or 'Yahweh' (as rendered by Rotherham), or 'I am that I am,' or 'I am because I am,' or 'I am who I am,' or 'I will be that I will be.' Perhaps that is not easy for us to understand, and yet it must mean the self-existent being—a claim of absolute sovereignty (Ex. 3:14). It is a pity that the A.V. and R.V. do not use the name Jehovah for the equivalent Hebrew word instead of hiding it under the words LORD or GOD—so printed. The Hebrews themselves were at first easily persuaded of God's concern for them, but their confidence was shaken by Pharaoh's defiance of Jehovah by whose power the signs were performed (4:30). The confidence of Moses and of Aaron must at first be won, as with every gospel preacher—he must be sure of his message and of God who gave it him.

Much courage was necessary to make the appeal and threat to so great an authority, and we are not surprised at the attitude of Pharaoh for we know something of his cruelty and oppression. We marvel rather that Moses and Aaron

escaped death, but they were under the guidance and protection of Jehovah. Pharaoh had tasted already of the reaction of the Hebrews to his harsh measures—they were increasing mightily. God blessed the midwives (1:20), and they disobeyed Pharaoh. Moses faced a different ruler after his 40 years' preparation in the desert of Midian (2:23-25). He also was discouraged by the first reaction of Pharaoh and turned to the right place for help (5:23).

He received in reply repeated assurances that in spite of appearances Pharaoh would drive out the Israelites, whom he was now determined to keep. We are reminded of the cry of God's people under persecution, 'How long, O Lord?' (Rev. 6:10). They had to exercise patience while He worked out His purposes, which are invariable and infallibly best. It was better for them to see the signs, and understand more fully the power of Jehovah before they went out into a new life of complete dependence upon Him.

The plagues surely served this vital need. They increased in intensity and wonder so that every man, woman and child in Egypt felt the power and understood the reason for them—most of all, perhaps, Pharaoh, as his realm bore the suffering which his obstinacy brought upon it. The plagues left no possible excuse for defying the power of God. Pharaoh must have known before the first plague came that he was in the wrong in relation to the Hebrews, but it was against all his interests—so he thought—to release the nation which was serving some useful purpose of his. This could no longer be the case when their remaining under his dominion caused such universal distress in the land. While magicians might work some wonders, whether genuinely miraculous by spiritism of some kind, or mere jugglery, they had nothing to compare with the wonders of the divine judgments. The seventh plague brought Pharaoh to confession (9:27), and the eighth brought his servants to him with fervent appeal (10:7), but with temporary relief Pharaoh returned to his refusal or compromise; and so the final plague came upon him and his—the first-born throughout the land of Egypt died in one night.

Do these things prove God to be a cruel God? They do prove beyond doubt His power, and that it is fatal to defy His authority. They also prove man's ability to defy Him, and man's propensity to remain unrepentant in spite of all sufferings—something which continues to the end of time (Rev. 9:21). We answer first that God is the giver of life and is the only one who has the complete right to take it any time He chooses to do so. Every person alive must die by reason of sin. How they die depends in some degree upon circumstances out-

side their control. They can control many points. They have choice in many circumstances to do right or wrong, and in this way they often lengthen or shorten their time on earth, and make that sojourn happy or unhappy. They have also the capacity to worship God and, humbly walking with Him, to have assurance of pardon of sin, and an eternal destiny. It is certain that everything God does will prove to be eternally right but, as we are not in a position to judge either the facts or true justice, it is useless to speculate about it.

The critics who are ready to pick holes in the Bible and stand in judgment upon it, of course do not accept the miraculous, and endeavour to explain it away. Obviously we can only make matters more difficult by denying the miraculous in the narrative before us. The whole release from Egypt is miraculous. It is the interference, so to speak, of God in the world's history to forward His plans for the redemption of the race: so is the virgin birth. To deny either of these is to deny God and Christ.

God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. Pharaoh hardened his heart. These statements are all in the narrative, and they are therefore all true. How can this be possible? Many times in scripture God is stated to do what is the direct work of others. There is the famous contradiction (?) between 2 Samuel 24:1 and 1 Chronicles 21:1, and the whole question of the permission of sin is involved. We are assured that God seduces no-one to sin, but in the sense that the whole universe, spiritual, mental and physical is under His presidency, sin must be possible by His permission. Calvin says in relation to Job that on the part of the Chaldean robbers the motive was greed, on the part of Satan the motive was to make man disobey God, and on the part of God to test Job's faith. This does not solve the problem but perhaps gives a helpful view of it. We are shut up to what Paul wrote to the Romans (11:33-36), trusting where we cannot trace.

A very salutary and necessary lesson is, however, implicit in our present study. I quote from Professor James Macgregor: 'The fact is clear, that Pharaoh was a bad man, who made himself worse and worse by obstinate persistence in evil action. . . the man did not by his hardness dethrone God. . . the Almighty retained command of the situation, and carried out His own purposes in His own way. . . The religious rulers of Christ's day defied the truth in like fashion. The miracles of Jesus, and his teaching, were quite as effective in stamping Him as God's prophet as those in Egypt in authorising Moses. All who reject the Word of God put themselves into line with Pharaoh and the enemies of Jesus

while He lived on earth—and all in all ages who have rejected God when His evidence is before them (but see Rom. 1:18-23).

We also, if we know what is right and persist in going against it: and, to emphasise the point, that we who are parents and provoke our children to wrath, or children and disobey our parents, or servants and work against the interests of our masters, or wives and disobey our husbands, or husbands and fail to love our wives—we are guilty of hardening our hearts. The process goes on whether we are conscious of it or not, until we (to quote Professor Macgregor again) 'may wonder why our hearts are getting so cold.' A sceptical attitude towards God which may develop in many through too much speculation about His ways, and too much conceit of our own reasonings, brings on 'sclerosis' of the spiritual arteries. Jesus had to rebuke even His beloved apostles for this (Mark 16:14). Hebrew Christians had to be warned of it (Heb. 3:13), and under a different figure we see how a hardened conscience produces, or is produced by, apostasy (falling away from the faith) (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

R. B. SCOTT.

CORRESPONDENCE

January 14th, 1956.

Dear Editor,—I am very glad to-day to write you this letter according I have been told you about my need of books. Now I have received a beautiful commentary Bible, from [a brother who does not wish to be named Ed.], Old and New Testament from Vol. I to six. I am all right now indeed. Not only myself but to all the brethren of here in Nyasaland, we just beg God in prayer to bless our white brethren for this your best love.

Now here with my question. There is a certain Church which is called Ethopian Church then these people are just going in the villages and be preaching the gospel of God in a different way. This is what they say:

When God created Adam He also created Adam's wife on the same day. Then God gave the name of Lilian to the wife of Adam. Then after some days or months Satana came and stole Adam's wife and run away with her. Now when God saw that Adam had no wife He made him asleep and took one rib from him. Then God made the second wife of Adam, whose name was Hava [Eve] meaning that she was misunderstanding.

Is it true? but I am not find in the holy Bible this name of Lilian, therefore when I read in the Book of Genesis chapt. 1 ver. 26-27 I am find only Adam,

and his wife Hava, therefore I am doubt; where they have took this name or this preaching.

And by asking them they are say we have a big Book which no one or other mission have. I will be glad if you will answer me with reference in S.S.

I am your brother in Christ,
J. R. PONDAN,

African Church of Christ,
Namiwawa,
P.O. Box 100,
Zomba,
Central Africa.

[The query has been sent to Bro. Channing with the request that it be dealt with in 'Question Box'!—Ed]

A WISH

'The Blessing of the Lord it maketh rich.' (Prov. 10:22).

Dear Bro. Melling,—Here is the wish of the church at Dennyloanhead to you for the year 1957.

God's rich blessing all divine
Now upon thy New Year shine;
Each day with His love be fraught,
Feet be led and heart be taught;
Burdens shared by Him be light;
Dark hours by His cheer made bright.
What more can we wish for thee,
That the year may blessed be?

[This kind thought is deeply appreciated, and we pass it on to all our readers.—Ed.]

AN APPEAL

Dear Brothers,—We, the undersigned, belong to the Church of Christ at Fort Jameson as in the address. We are resorting to you on an important question—church-building expenses.

We have procured a chance to erect a permanent church-building, which is in building by the time of writing. We have hope enough to get the whole wall up, but the roofing shall take us a long time before it can be put up, as there are no funds to help us towards this end. The local Town Management Board has advised us to use iron-roof for this building—as it is permanent; in addition we have to purchase timber for the roofing. But we can neither manage the timber nor the corrugated iron materials; also the ten double steel windows, as our layings-by-in-store are ever very small. Actually we are a very poor African brotherhood. Moreover the cash we used to buy bricks was sent us from some Churches in America through Brother H. E. Pierce at Lusaka. We very much thank these Churches.

Our writing to you is with a view to asking you kindly help us supply money to accomplish the roofing and the buying of windows as mentioned above. If you

will desire to help us, please send the helps through the following:—

Mr. (Brother) H. E. Pierce, P.O. Box 1016, Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia.

We shall be much delighted to have some favourable response to our petition. All the saints salute (Romans 16:16).

Your loving brethren in Christ Jesus.

Signed: TIMOTHY T. C. ZIMBA,

E. S. MTONGA.

J. S. MITUI.

J. H. MNAMIE.

AFRICA CALLING!

As announced in October issue of S.S., the appeal for funds to print a tract in Ci-Nyanja met with a splendid response. Ten thousand copies were printed and paid for with a balance in hand remaining of £7 16s. 0d.

The saints in Africa are grateful for this assistance, and I have had appeals for another tract in Tambuki—another African language. Bro. T. T. C. Zimba has translated the tract, 'Christians in Prison,' into his language, and 10,000 copies have been ordered. They will be off the Press shortly. The cost of printing will be £10. Thus £2 4s. is still needed for this purpose.

If funds continue to come in, further tracts will be printed for the use of our black brothers and sisters. They manifest great zeal for distributing the printed word, and they are worthy of our help.

A. E. WINSTANLEY.

43a Church Road,
Tunbridge Wells, Kent.

NEWS FROM THE CHURCHES

Fauldhouse.—From beginning of September to end of December the Church had the services of Bro. Andrew Gardiner, evangelist from Kirkcaldy.

Each week he distributed 250 invitation cards and church literature dealing with our position and plea as a Church of Christ. He conducted the Gospel Meetings on Sunday evenings in St. John's Masonic Hall, besides teaching and exhorting the church. He inspired and confirmed the saints in their efforts to 'run the race with patience, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.' Bro. Gardiner's work among us has been much appreciated, and although results have not been obtained as we had hoped for we feel he has been doing real work for the Master, which can be likened to Noah and his building of the ark. He preached the things revealed by the Head of the

Church through the Apostles so that more might be saved.

Bro Gardiner's work with us may bear fruit in days ahead, as during these months he had the privilege of teaching the senior Sunday School scholars and spent of his time with them in portraying the Church of the early days of Christianity, and the things preceding the 'adding to the church.' It may be he has sown and others will reap.

Our numbers are small as a church, and Bro. Gardiner appreciated the support given him, but, like ourselves, was disappointed at the absence of those we hoped to be interested in the Mission. On Sunday evening the 23rd, Bro. D. M. Stewart thanked Bro. Gardiner for the services rendered to the church and wished for him a more fruitful field of labour in the days ahead.

DUNCAN MCNAB STEWART.

Ilkeston.—In the issue of last March we reported the immersion of five young people, intimating that another was prevented by an accident. Joan Webster has since recovered from her accident and was immersed into Christ on October 3rd, 1956. May God richly bless our young sister in her Christian life and service. She is already starting work in the school.

S. JEPSON.

Kentish Town.—We record, with regret on our own account only, that our sister Helene Lee left us for the States on December 27th. A little company of brethren and friends saw her off at Waterloo Station on that day. She goes to be the bride of Bro. George Morrison of Denver, Colorado, through whom she came into contact with the New Testament plea, and was baptised into Christ. She has been faithful in attendance and has given help in the Sunday School. We shall miss her, and our good wishes and prayers follow her.

R. B. SCOTT.

Motherwell.—The Church rejoices in that another soul has decided to serve the Master and was immersed into his name on Sunday, December 9th, 1956. Sis. Coady was brought to a knowledge of the truth through the medium of an advertisement in the local paper: "Are you interested in churches which are neither Catholic nor Protestant?", in association with Bro. C. Leyland. We pray that our sister will remain faithful to her Lord and Master.

L. PURCELL.

Newtongrange.—On January 6th Robert Holgate determined to become a follower of Jesus Christ and was immersed the same night. Robert's mother and sisters, Jean and Marion, are already Christians, and we know that the joy which they must feel at his decision can only be surpassed in heaven. We pray that he may grow in grace and in knowledge of our Lord, and be a blessing to his house.

Peterhead.—Again we rejoice and thank our heavenly Father for more increases to His Church.

On December 2nd we had the joy of witnessing William McLemman immersed into the name of Jesus. John Hepburn was buried with his Lord in baptism and on December 9th George Reid followed. Many friends attending the gospel meetings are interested.

Pray for us, brethren.

ALEXANDER STRACHAN.

On December 16th we witnessed the baptisms of Marion Summers and Margaret Greig. We pray that they may be kept by the grace of Him who died to save them.

OBITUARY

Ilkeston.—On December 7th, 1956, the Church lost another member by the hand of death—Sister Mary Jane Gregory, at 78 years of age, widow of our late Bro. Anthony Gregory. Immersed in 1902, our sister's death breaks another link with the earlier days and membership of the church. For five years she met with her husband with the church at Langley, owing to his employment in that locality, returning later to Ilkeston. She leaves two daughters in the church, with three grandchildren, to whom our Christian sympathy is extended. She was ever a faithful wife and mother and her place in her daughter's home will be sadly vacant. Owing to leg trouble and general indisposition she has been able to meet only intermittently for some time. Her mortal remains were laid to rest in the Ilkeston General Cemetery on December 11th, 1956, Bro. F. Gregory officiating.

S. JEPSON.

Kentish Town.—The church has sustained a loss, and our brother Leslie Venn a deeper and more personal one, in the departure to be with Christ of our sister, his wife, Mrs. Gertrude Venn. Baptised in November 1954, she attended all the meetings she could thereafter, gave energetic help whenever she could in the work of the church, and maintained a faithful Christian character. She had suffered with heart trouble for many years, sometimes resulting in extreme weakness. She became severely ill early in October and, in spite of patient endurance and effort, passed away on December 13th. Brother Venn asks us to express his thanks for sympathy extended to him by many who know them both.

R. B. SCOTT.

COMING EVENTS

NEXT CONFERENCE

Preliminary Notice

The Church Meeting at Hamilton Street, Blackburn, Lancs., invites the brethren to meet in conference on Saturday, 20th April, 1957.

Afternoon session. It is anticipated that the business will be transacted inside ninety minutes and that the remainder of the time will be spent in discussion of 'Useful activities for the younger members of the church'; the discussion to be introduced by three eight-minute talks.

Preliminary Notice: Hindley Bible School to be held (D.V.) from Saturday, June 8th, to Thursday, June 13th, 1957. Mountain top experiences, glorious fellowship. Book the dates. Write for hospitality to Mr. Tom Kemp, 52 Argyle Street, Hindley, Wigan. or for further particulars if required, to Mr. L. Morgan, 'Briarcroft,' 396 Atherton Road, Hindley Green, Wigan.

Kirkcaldy, Rose Street.—The Annual Social of the above Church will be held on Saturday, March 9th, 1957, at 4.30 p.m. Speaker, Bro. C. P. Findlay. A warm welcome is extended to all the brethren.

Morley Anniversary Meeting.—Saturday, February 23rd. Tea 4 p.m., evening meeting 6. Speakers: Brethren David Dougall, Tom McDonald. Chairman: Bro. Donald Hardy.

Slamannan District.—The half-yearly conference of Bible-school teachers will be held (D.V.) in the meeting place of the church at Slamannan, on Saturday, April 6th, 1957, at 4 p.m. The speaker will be Bro. Ed. Jess and Bro. McGinn, the chairman, both of the church of Dalmeilington. A warm welcome is given, not only to Bible-school teachers, but to all who are interested in the work of the young.

Ulverston, Burlington Street.—Anniversary meetings, March 23rd and 24th. Saturday afternoon 3.0; tea 4.30; evening 6.0. Will those intending to be present please let us know as early as possible, so that arrangements for catering can be made? W. Crosthwaite, Ford Villa, Hart Street, Ulverston, Lancashire.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Blackburn Church Secretary: Harry Wilson, 10 Hollin Bridge Street, Blackburn, Lancs.

WEDDING

Hill-Bird.—On December 22nd, 1956, at Oxford Street, Loughborough, Norman John Hill, to Brenda Margaret Bird, both of the Church at Loughborough. Bro. G. H. Hudson, of Blackpool, officiated.

FROM THE TREASURER

Have you yet paid your outstanding account for the S.S.? If so, thank you. And thank you to those who did not need an account because they had previously paid. There has been a very good response to my note in the November 1956 issue. Very few subscribers have taken exception, and a good number have expressed approbation and good wishes.

In future remittances will you please state: (a) name and address of the receiver of the *Standard* if different from the sender. To save trouble please return statement with cash; (b) please be sure to state what the money is for—S.S., number of years, reading cards, gifts.

Thank you again for your generosity and help, both received and anticipated.

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Secretary of Conference Committee: A. HOOD, 45 Park Road, Hindley, Nr. Wigan.

NYASALAND MISSION. Contributions to W. STEELE, Atholl Dene, Longniddry, East Lothian.

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