

# The Fraternal.

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Literary and other contributions for "The Fraternal" should be addressed to the Secretary, Rev. A. J. Payne, 25, The Grove, Earlsfield, Wandsworth, London, S.W. 18.

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## SECRETARY'S NOTES.

The Officers and Council desire to express their hearty greetings to all our members and wish for them every blessing upon their work and in their own lives and homes in the New Year.

Every subscription is due at the New Year and should be forwarded as early as possible to the Financial Secretary, Rev. W. H. Pratt, Nocton Rise, Stratford Road, Watford. The subscription is 2/6.

We are sure the Members will be pleased to read the brief account of the life and work of our President, Rev. W. Joynes, of Frinton-on-Sea.

We are publishing a list of the Members of the Prayer Union in connection with our Fraternal and hope that the membership may be co-extensive with the membership of our B.M.F.U. It is all part of our work and we hope that all intending members will send their names to Rev. J. E. Martin, The Manse, Erith, Kent.

We call attention to the valuable paper by Rev. H. Cook, M.A., of Ferme Park, which appears in this issue. It was greatly appreciated by the Baptist Board when it was given at their meeting last November and all felt that it should have a wider circulation.

The Annual Meetings will be held this next year in London when Rev. Dr. W. E. Blomfield, B.A., will enter upon his Presidency.

**OUR PRESIDENT, REV. WILLIAM JOYNES, OF FRINTON-ON-SEA.**

**T**HE Rev. William Joynes was born at Coleford, in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire; after training at the Pastors' College, where he shared in the influence of C. H. Spurgeon, he began his ministry at Cotton Street, Poplar, in 1893, passing on to New Southgate in 1898, where he remained for 28 years.

During his pastorate there, a chapel was erected and paid for to accommodate the growing number of worshippers. While devoted to his church, he served as a Governor of the Cottage Hospital, the Edmonton Pensions Committee, Moderator of vacant churches, and in various ways served the interests of the locality.

For several years he served on the L.B.A. Council as Secretary of the Northern Group, and in 1924 as President of the parent association. During his presidency the "Chapel of the year" was at Clements Wood, Ilford, and benefited financially and spiritually by his zeal and common sense; at the same time, Cross Street Church, Islington, was enabled to complete the purchase of its freehold. So that two churches were helped and encouraged during his period of office.

After 32 years in East and North London, he settled at Frinton-on-Sea in 1926 where he is exercising an influential and wide-spread ministry which is much appreciated by hosts of visitors from all over the country.

Mr. Joynes is one of a small band of unassuming and unobtrusive men who for more than a quarter of a century "made good" in the metropolis, without "journalistic boosting" and the larger denominational limelight.

That he will serve the Ministers' Fraternal with modesty and efficiency is the belief of all who know his sterling character and brotherly disposition.

J.E.J.

## THE MODERN MINISTER AND BIBLE STUDY.

I AM to speak to you about the study of the Bible. I could wish in some ways that my task had been easier, because the subject is now so well worn and familiar that it is difficult and perhaps impossible to say anything about it that has not been said hundreds of times before.

I. And yet there is no subject after all that is more important than this. For the Bible is the final text-book in the things of God, and we can never afford to do without its help. There is, we would all agree, no literature in the world that deals so adequately with the deepest things, and, whatever else we feel we are bound to read, we must take care that we never neglect the Bible. For, if it is necessary to "keep abreast of the times," it is more necessary to keep abreast of what Carlyle called "the Eternities." But the trouble is that in the enormous pressure of modern life, with all the thousands of things that are thrust upon our notice, it is the more immediate things, as we call them, that we feel bound to consider first—the daily paper for instance—and the things that really matter most we are apt to forget altogether.

We are constantly saying things like that to our people, because they need to have them said. And yet, perhaps there is no place in life where the proverb more directly applies, "Physician, heal thyself." We are all of us aware of the problem. (a) We have to read a great many things to keep ourselves abreast of our people. Travel, biography, science, the serious men of letters like Galsworthy and Masfield, and popular authors like Edgar Wallace and W. J. Locke—we feel we must have some acquaintance with all of them so that our people, especially our younger people, may see that we know something of the modern situation. Nothing is perhaps more directly useful to a minister than a wide acquaintance with general literature. But that takes up time.

(b) Then, in addition to this general literature, there is the reading that belongs more directly to our own department, theology, philosophy, Church history, sermons. Sometimes we look down a publisher's catalogue, and we sigh with envy and despair. If only we had the requisite time and money, what a tremendous lot we could do!

But as it is we can only pause to dip our bucket in the stream, and taste, and hasten on, for we dare not linger longer.

(c) Now add to all this "that which cometh upon us daily," the care of the Churches to which we minister, the letters we have to write, the committees we must attend, our pastoral visitation, and all the things which go to make up our work, and who is there among us that does not lament the awful swiftness of time and the lack of leisure from which we suffer?

We live in a busy world, and it is hard amid the rush to keep our footing and stand still for a moment or two. We are always on the move, forced on perhaps by the pressure around us, and it is nearly always the Bible that has to pay the price.

You know how it is with our people. Even the best of them find they have little time for prayer and Bible reading, the rush of life is so great. And we often have to pull ourselves up with a jerk because the thing we reprove in them we find, alas, in ourselves. We can spend our days quite honestly at our work, and discover that, apart from the portion we read at family worship or the verse we are studying for our next Sunday's sermon, we hardly ever open our Bible at all. Perhaps the greatest weakness in our Churches to-day is the lack of the devotional spirit. There is plenty of bustle and movement, but there is little time for prayer and the cultivation of the deep things of God, and when we condemn the churches we must, I think, include ourselves.

We need to remind ourselves, again and again, that the secret of any power we can wield in our ministry must lie in serious and devout Bible-study, and so, whatever else we do with our mornings, we must see, I think, that we give the Bible a daily and generous place in our time-table. For nothing can ever possibly take its place.

(a) We should find it productive and even prolific of sermons, and if we studied our Bibles we should never have to live in that dry and weary land where some unfortunate preachers seem to pass so much of their time, living from hand to mouth and wondering how on earth men like Dr. Clifford or Dr. Maclaren managed to carry on

for fifty or sixty years in one pastorate. The Bible is the most fruitful soil in the world to any one that will dig in it, and, as we work in its fields of thought from week to week the difficulty will not be how to get something to say but how to say in our limited time all that the Bible has to say.

(b) I believe, too, that this habit of daily and systematic Bible study would make our sermons fresher than they sometimes are. It is hardly conceivable that a man can live seven days a week with Jesus and the prophets and the psalmists and apostles, without feeling the glow and beauty and power of religion. So often we drink from water that is at best second-hand, and sometimes very much second-hand. It comes to us mediated through writers and preachers who have no doubt drunk of it freshly themselves, but in the process of passing it on to us they have robbed it of much of its original sweetness and vitality; it is like the water we drink in a ship at sea, and the value of constant Bible study is, that it takes you direct to the fountain itself, and the oftener you taste it the more you feel that there is nothing else like it. The Bible is bound to affect our sermons, and I have faith enough in its divine inspiration to say that it is bound to affect them for good.

(c) But a third point, and perhaps the most important, is this, that the habit of constant Bible study will nourish our souls, and for our work as ministers of Christ there is nothing we need so much in the world. For preaching, with all that accompanies it, is the expression of our own inner spirit, and it can only be true and devout and helpful when the spirit that creates it is in abiding touch with God. "My sword shall be bathed in heaven," says a text that has fascinated me a lot though I have not yet preached from it, and I am quite sure of this, that many of us would do a great deal more with our "swords" if we "bathed" them oftener "in heaven."

It was never my lot to hear any of the pulpit giants of the last generation. But I can never forget my first impressions of Dr. Jowett and my own distinguished predecessor Dr. Brown. It was not so much what they said, as the atmosphere they created. I ran through all they did, their sermons, their prayers, their lessons from

scripture, even the choice and announcement of the hymns they had. I felt then, and closer acquaintance has confirmed the impression, that these men from their habit of constant Bible study had so acquired the Bible way of looking at things that, consciously or unconsciously, it affected everything they did. They lived systematically with God, and that I believe was the secret of their influence. They created the Bible atmosphere in their services, and that is perhaps the thing that we need most to-day.

More and more the churches are crying out for the spirit of religion, and an arid intellectualism can never take its place. Long ago Paul spoke of the possibility of having the tongues of men and of angels without the spirit of love, and in the same way we all know quite well that it is possible to handle religious things without any true appreciation of the spirit that lies behind them. Every day, I think, we ought to read our Bibles with a view to knowing the mind and heart of God for ourselves, because, apart from that, our ministry must be largely in vain.

I would therefore say that the first requisite of Bible study is a Bible we read for ourselves, daily, and methodically, and systematically. Nothing can ever become a substitute for that, and nothing should ever be allowed to push it out of its place. If we have Hebrew and Greek so much the better. But if our Hebrew and Greek are like Mephibosheth, somewhat lame in both their feet, so that we find our progress hindered and hampered by the constant need to consult a dictionary, I should say that we should reserve our Hebrew and Greek for the detailed study that lies behind our Sunday sermons and make fuller use of the English Bible instead. Provided, of course, that it is up-to-date in its translations; say, the R.V. with marginal notes, or the Variorum Edition with notes and textual emendations at the foot. I was glad to see that Mr. Aubrey stressed the need for a further study of the English Bible in our Colleges. But we need it in our ministry every day of our lives, and, though it seems like stating a truism, I yet would say to myself and to you that never a day in our lives should go past without our Bible honestly open before us and our minds resolutely bent to see what it has to tell us.

II. But Bible study, if we do it honestly, begins to take us beyond the Bible itself, and I should like now to say something about that. For the Bible, however we view it, and whatever our theory of its inspiration, is a literature; not so much a book as a series of books, written by a great many different people and written over a period of hundreds of years in conditions differing very widely from those in which we now live. There are sections of the Bible that are quite plainly timeless. No one, for instance, needs to do any special study to see the beauty of the twenty-third Psalm or the fourteenth of John. A simple old saint with the A.V. open before him can get as much out of passages like these as any scholar, and, if he is devout and the scholar is not, he will get, I believe, a great deal more. But, while that is perfectly true of some parts of the Bible, there are other parts that no one, I think, can get the best results out of it without help of some sort from somewhere. For instance, the Levitical books or the prophets—there is much in these that we do not know by our own experience, and unless we get guidance somewhere, the customs, the thoughts, the aims, that the Bible in these places deals with, must remain to us more or less misunderstood. The Bible introduces us again and again to ways that are not our own, and if we as ministers are to study the Bible at all, we must study it in the light of all the conditions from which its message emerged.

Let us look at several examples of this. Take for example, geography. In the Bible, especially in the Old Testament we are dealing with a land that has stamped itself deeply on the soul of its people. Wherever we read we have the land as our constant background, and we can never really pretend to know the book unless we know something of its geography. For instance, a fact like Israel's sense of dependence on God gains enormously when we know that the physical conditions of Palestine made the people depend for their harvests almost entirely on the bounty of heaven in the form of dew or rain. In the same way, the austerity of Amos is understood when we know something of those bare, bleak uplands in Judah from which he came. Again and again, the land illuminates the book, and without the geography we should often miss the significance of the message.

I was much struck by seeing this again in Dr. Fosdick's recent book "A Pilgrimage in Palestine." As one would expect, it is always interesting and informative. But the thing that struck me most, was that his study of the geography has apparently given him an increased respect for the history, and his recent pilgrimage has, I imagine, somewhat modified his previous liberal views of the historical value of the Old Testament. No one who has ever read Sir George Adam Smith's "Historical Geography of the Holy Land," will ever feel that the geography of the Bible can be safely ignored. Without the geography it can never, in some respects, be rightly understood.

Then next, take history. Here again we find ourselves driven to go beyond the Bible for the sake of understanding its message. All kinds of peoples are mentioned from obscure nations like the Perizzites and Hivites and Jebusites, to famous empires like Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia, and I doubt if any one can appreciate the historical books of the Old Testament, and more especially the prophets, without knowing something of the political and social conditions from which they came.

Take, for instance, Isaiah and Jeremiah. We all know how great they are. But until we have looked at them with, say, George Adam Smith at our elbow, I question if we can really appreciate their value at all. We have to know something of their statesmanship and the policies they advocated before we ever see their message clearly, and we need a little history before we can fully appreciate their attitudes.

The same thing is true of the Bible wherever you touch it. I would not for a moment say that the man who never reads anything but the Bible can never understand it. But I would certainly say he can never understand it fully, and much of its significance must be completely lost to him. Many of the so-called prophetic interpretations of Scripture would never have come into existence if their authors had understood their Bibles a little more fully, and for all misunderstandings of Scripture a knowledge of history is, I believe, the best corrective. Every book and every chapter should be studied in the



light of its own environment, and the result will be, I think, that the Bible will become a thousand times more fascinating and a thousand times more lucid.

But geography and history are not the only studies the Bible compels us to make. There is COMPARATIVE RELIGION as well. I dipped, the other day, into Sir James Frazer's "Folk Lore in the Old Testament," and extremely interesting and helpful I found it. One does not suspend one's judgment in reading a book like that, and one does not need to accept all its conclusions. I found myself, for example, strongly dissenting to a sentence like this in the preface, "It should henceforth be possible to view the history of Israel in a truer, if less romantic light, as that of a people, not miraculously differentiated from all other races by divine revelation, but evolved like them by a slow process of natural selection from an embryonic condition of ignorance and savagery." (p. viii). Why should it be necessary to think that because Israel grew up from an "embryonic condition" that in some respects meant "ignorance and savagery," it was therefore "not miraculously differentiated from all other races by divine revelation?" The distinction between natural and miraculous is unscientific and the conclusion of Sir James Frazer is not by any means inevitable. But, with qualifications of that sort, I found his book extremely helpful, and many of the points he made did much to illuminate Scripture. Take that mass of intricate detail associated with Jewish law and sacrifice. I believe it comes much clearer and much more intelligible in the light of Comparative Religion, and without the light that Comparative Religion gives, I confess, I should often find it exceedingly dull and unprofitable.

There are other lines of study that I might have dealt with. But these perhaps are quite sufficient, to show that, as we read the Bible we want to read it with all the information we can get on the Bible before us, and, speaking for myself, I should say that the best of all companions to the Bible is that much abused but wonderful book, "Peake's Commentary." It says a tremendous lot in a little space, and it gives us all the background we need for the most of the reading we want to do. I do not say that all its conclusions are gospel. Many of them, I myself, quite

frankly accept; others I quite as frankly reject. But I should say that no one who spends an hour a day with his Bible and Peake at his elbow, will ever rise from his desk without feeling that he knows and loves his Bible a great deal better than he did before. I have purposely refrained from discussing the question of what is vaguely known as inspiration. Theories on that point have, I think, rather obscured the issue. After all, the main thing is that we read the Bible itself, read it daily and conscientiously, and if we do not find its inspiration there for ourselves, I doubt very much if any theory will give us the book as God meant us to have it. The Bible is a perfect mine of knowledge and one can spend years and years on its study and find it increasingly interesting and helpful. But the vital thing is the resolve to put it first in our study. Let everything group itself round it. Put the Bible in the central place, and your ministry will be enormously enriched.

H. COOK, M.A.



#### LITERATURE FOR MISSIONARIES.

**T**HE "Literature Committee" in connection with the Baptist Laymen's Missionary Movement has in hand many applications for papers and magazines of a theological type.

May I appeal to the members of the "Fraternal," when possible, to pass on such magazines as "The Expository Times," "Baptist Quarterly," "Congregational Quarterly," "Journal of Theological Studies," "Hibbert Journal," "Holborn Review," etc. Our brethren in Congo, India, and China, are cut off from libraries, Fraternal, and other aids common to us in the Homeland and would welcome all the help we can send to them, especially those in charge of preacher training schools, and colleges. A line to the undersigned will receive immediate attention.

Fraternally yours,

CHAS. T. BYFORD.

19, Banstead Road,  
Purley, Surrey.

## PRAYER UNION NOTES.

**W**E should be glad if all the Members of our Prayer Union who have not already joined the Fraternal Union, will kindly send a subscription of 2/6 to the Financial Secretary : REV. W. H. PRATT, NOCTON RISE, STRATFORD ROAD, WATFORD. This will enable us to send them the Fraternal Magazine, as often as it is published. This is the only means of communication and announcement that we now have for our Prayer Union Fellowship, but it is impossible for us to send this magazine unless they send this subscription. We especially hope that they will do this at once, as considerable expense is incurred by the printing of our list of members in this number.

A quiet day for ministers, with a Public Service at night, is being arranged at Reading in connection with our Prayer Union, on Wednesday, February 13th. We trust all our members within reach of Reading will kindly reserve this day. Dr. Meyer has kindly promised to be present throughout the meetings.

Dear Brethren,

I count it a great privilege to greet you thus, and to realise that it is no ordinary fellowship in which we share. Each Sunday morning we seem to rise about the physical and mental spheres into that spiritual fellowship, where the Apostle John found himself, when he was "in the spirit" on the Lord's Day, and felt that the Ægean could not sever him from the beloved group at Ephesus and beyond.

In addition to the remembrance of each other, let us then, and at other times, plead for the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit throughout the world. In this we shall follow in the steps of Andrew Fuller, in whose diary we read : "Devoted this day to fasting and prayer for the revival of our Churches and the spread of the Gospel." With affectionate greetings.

Yours very sincerely,

F. B. MEYER.