

The Fraternal.

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APRIL, 1929.

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.

SECRETARY'S NOTES.

The Council have completed the arrangements for the Annual Meeting at the Spring Assembly and hope that we shall have a fine attendance. The Annual Business Meeting will be held in the Kingsgate Church at 2.30 on Thursday, May 2nd, for the Report and Elections, etc. Then there will be a United Meeting with the British and American Fraternal Union in the same place at 3 p.m. Rev. Wm. Joynes will preside at the opening and induct the Incoming President, Rev. Dr. W. E. Blomfield, who will then preside over the gathering. Our retiring President has chosen as the subject for his address "The Minister in his Home." An address will also be given by Rev. Dr. J. W. Ewing, M.A. as representing the British and American Fraternal Union, and it is hoped that one or two visitors from overseas will also take part.

Nominations for the Vice-Presidency and Council should be sent to the Secretary by April 27th at the latest. The present Officers are all willing to serve again if desired. The list of names you will find at the end of the "Fraternal."

Will you please note that all subscriptions for 1929 are due and should be forwarded to Rev. W. H. Pratt (Financial Secretary), Nocton Rise, Stratford Road, Watford, on or before the Annual Meetings.

A brief reference is made to the Home-going of Dr. Meyer in the Prayer Union Notes but a further tribute will be inserted in the next issue.

We hope that where any local Fraternal would like a visit from Dr. Blomfield they will let the Secretary know in good time and the Doctor will endeavour to meet their requests if his health and other engagements permit.



A PLEA FOR DIFFIDENCE IN ENUNCIATING THE DOCTRINE OF THE COMING OF CHRIST.

Since prophecy is not history written in advance, of necessity, the future is obscure. Some of old, prophesied of the grace that should come unto us, but though they searched diligently what was to be the date or character of the time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them, they were unable to discover it. The very men through whom the Spirit spoke had to be content with the knowledge that they were ministering to those who would succeed them. The Jews were ardent students of the Scriptures, but they formed an opinion as to the work and position of the Messiah which was entirely wrong. They are to be blamed that when Jesus came, they did not discern that He was doing the work and manifesting the character foretold; but the most pious, humble and spiritual of those who were looking for the Redemption of Jerusalem had no conception how the apparently contradictory prophecies would be harmonised, or that the coming One would live and die as Jesus did.

To-day, in describing the future we should be humble and tentative in the expression of our opinions. But, strangely enough, there is little on which some men dogmatize more emphatically. Men who will admit that, times without number, others who were perfectly sure of their theories have proved to be mistaken, naively claim that they have found the real clue to the maze, and it is not conceivable that *they* are wrong.

We search the Scriptures, and finding certain doctrines

which we feel justified in maintaining with assurance, we range other texts around them, that we may have a complete theory. If we come across a passage which seems inimical to our view, we endeavour somehow to reconcile it. We are apt to twist it, press it and give to it a meaning which it does not naturally bear. We should be wiser if, when unable to discover a system which harmonizes with the whole Scripture, we admitted the difficulty, and frankly acknowledged that we are still seekers after the truth on the subject. Has any theory of the Lord's Coming been broached which takes fairly into account all that the Holy Spirit has spoken ?

I.—WHAT IS MEANT BY THE COMING OF THE LORD.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit was a Coming of the Lord. In John xiv., 16ff, Jesus promised Another Comforter: "Ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate; I come unto you." There is here an entire absence of particles, of anything that could be pressed into meaning such a word as "and" or "moreover." The asyndeton form (the absence of a connecting particle), expresses a more forcible re-affirmation of the same fact, but presented in a new aspect. It is not that the Paraclete should come, and, in addition, they were to look for the Lord's advent: the coming of the "other Paraclete" would be His own coming. As Jesus had been the Paraclete *with* them, so now the other Paraclete would be Jesus *in* them. That being so, when Jesus said, "I come again, and will receive you unto Myself," He must have been speaking of that intimate union which would be established between them and the glorified Saviour when they received the Paraclete. Some see in the words the promise of a "secret rapture." That would require that in one discourse Jesus used the same expression in two senses. It may be that He did; but it is a precarious foundation upon which to build an interpretation.

In Matthew xvi. 28, the Lord said, "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom." This is by some understood as a prophecy of His crucifixion; certainly, it is upon the Cross and the

Resurrection that His Kingdom is founded. But He is speaking of something which only His audience should live to see. Must it not be that great and solemn event, about forty years later, of which the Lord spoke so explicitly, and with such deep feeling, when the city which God had chosen to put His Name there was destroyed, the Temple consecrated to His worship was left not one stone upon another? The Temple was historically connected with the time of David and Solomon, the acme of the prosperity of the Theocracy; it suggested another empire of the same character; it had an ancient, imposing, God-appointed service. The disciples worshipped there daily; Paul was, of all men the freest from Jewish traditions, yet he endeavoured to keep the Feasts, at Cenchrea he had his head shorn, and he was engaged in a Temple ritual at the time of his arrest; circumcision and obedience to the Law were burning questions; the Hebrews to whom the epistle was written were in danger of renouncing their faith because of its modernness and bareness compared with what was always before them; the cross, with its unique glory was obscured. Not till the glamour of the old was destroyed did men *see* the power of the kingdom of God. Whatever may have been the meaning of the Master, this is evident, that "the Son of Man coming in His kingdom" referred to what is now passed.

Again, when Jesus answered the adjuration of the High Priest (Matthew xxvi., 64), He did not say "hereafter." The Greek word has not that meaning, and it is never so rendered elsewhere. It means "from now." The Revisers, consequently, translate the Lord's reply, "Henceforth, ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." This clearly shows that repeated comings of the Lord were to be expected. If anyone understands that this has taken place in crises in the history of the world, or the Church, or in his own life, is he certainly wrong? Every Englishman will feel that for such an application the words seem extravagant; but Western minds are cold and logical compared with Eastern. In "The Christian" of 27th May, 1926, Dr. D. M. McIntyre wrote, "The Semite paints a picture, the Anglo-Saxon lays down a proposition. If the Semite can succeed in conveying

his meaning, he is apparently careless of the precise terms he employs. Our Lord Himself conformed to the custom of His nation . . . we do not weigh His words in jewellers scales, but we understand with entire precision all that He meant to convey. When an Arab says of a palm tree that "It loves to have its feet in water and its head in fire," a very simple process of translation from one code to another will tell us all he means to express."

The prophets frequently emphasise the importance of earthly crises by associating with them phenomena in the heavens. Thus Isaiah speaks of the destruction of Babylon (xiii. 10), the salvation of Jerusalem (xxiv. 23), and, the judgment of the Heathen (xxxiv. 4); Ezekiel of the fall of Egypt (xxxii. 7, 8); Joel of the gift of the Spirit (ii. 30-1), and, of judgment of the Heathen (iii. 15); and Amos of judgment on Israel (viii. 9).

Fourthly, there is to be the bodily coming of the Saviour as was foretold by the men in white to the disconsolate disciples on Olivet. "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds."

In the Old Testament there is described a period of holiness, peace and prosperity (is it anywhere in the New?) which some regard as the reign of Christ, to be established in the future. When He was upon the earth He recognised that spectacular events are powerless to win to righteousness; are we to anticipate that the voluntary submission which the cross could not effect, will be accomplished by the sight of overwhelming glory. Such a kingdom would involve one or more appearances before the judgment. But these prior Comings are based rather on inferences than any express Scripture.

Is not Christ reigning now? "Who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter iii. 22), "Him did God exalt to be a prince and a Saviour" (Acts v. 31). "He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death" (1 Corinthians xv. 25). Surely, He is reigning now, and His present reign will continue unto death and hades are cast into the lake of fire.

There are then, at least, four senses in which the Scripture speaks of the Coming of the Lord.

II.—WHAT IS MEANT BY “THE MILLENIUM.”

The only place in which the “Thousand Years” is mentioned is Revelations xx. It behoves us, therefore, to be particularly careful there. It is confidently taught that this passage refers to the resurrection of the saints, and their rule on earth. This is only conjecture; it cannot be supported grammatically. “And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them.” Of whom is this spoken? What is the antecedent to “they”? None is expressed; but immediately there follows “And I saw the souls of them that had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their forehead and upon their right hand; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” This refers to certain martyrs exclusively; and in the absence of any antecedent these should be taken as the subjects of the preceding sentence. If it should be a bodily resurrection spoken of, it is clearly that of these *martyrs only*, and all other saints must be included in the rest of the dead, who lived not until the thousand years should be finished. But observe that the resurrection is not of the martyrs but of their souls. Sometimes the word “souls” is equivalent to “persons”; but here John speaks of “the souls of them.” This is very different.

No book is so filled with Old Testament imagery as the Apocalypse. In Hosea vi. 2, xii. 14, and Ezekiel xxxvii. 12, it is revival that is indicated by coming out of graves, and our Lord in John v. 25, uses the figure in the same way. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear, shall live.” May not the passage under discussion refer to a spiritual quickening, in which the souls of the martyrs shall rule; to be followed by a revival of evil principles?

Again, a little further on, Revelations xx. 11-13, we read, “The sea and hades gave up the dead that were in them” and “The dead, the great and the small (that is,

whether their names were written in the book of Life, or not), were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." If these words are taken as they stand, without reading into them what is not expressed, they do not favour the idea that five verses earlier the writer was speaking of the resurrection of some of the number.

Nowhere else are two resurrections even suggested. Our Lord speaks as though the good and the evil are to be raised in the same hour. John v. 28, 29, "The hour cometh, in which all that are tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment." Paul speaks in a similar way (Acts xxiv. 15), "There shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust." So does Daniel (xii. 2), "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." These passages are distinctly unfavourable to the view that the righteous and wicked will be raised separately.

It may be thought that Paul had two resurrections in view when he longed to attain to the resurrection from the dead. He uses the preposition "ek" "out of" as though he aspired to share in the rising of the righteous out of the mass of the dead. Such a conclusion is precarious for Dean Alford, though he maintains a separate resurrection of the saints, admits it cannot be established on this preposition, which, he says, "Merely indicates rising out of the dust." Cremer, in his celebrated lexicon says it refers to a single case that is generally expressed without it. Nor is it necessary in order to understand the apostle. In the highest sense of the word, it is certainly only the saints who rise. The resurrection of the wicked is ignored in the New Testament apart from the two cases mentioned. May it not be that as "death" used absolutely, is too terrible a word to describe the departure of the saints so "resurrection," without qualification, is not used for a resurrection to judgment; thus Paul's aspiration was for a rising to everlasting life, in virtue of his union to the risen Christ.

It may be that there are to be two resurrections of the body, also that the saints are to reign for a thousand years ; but they are not taught with clearness sufficient to justify one in asserting they are unquestionably the voice of Scripture.

III.—WILL A KINGDOM BE RESTORED TO ISRAEL ?

Immediately before the Ascension of the Saviour, the disciples asked Him (Acts i. 8), "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" His reply was evidently intended to turn their minds from such a subject : and after the descent of the Spirit they do not so much as mention it. St. Paul wrote (Romans xi. 26), "So all Israel shall be saved ; even as it is written, there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." But nowhere does he suggest that Israel is to have a political kingdom, or even be restored to their land. Either it is not to occur, or the subject is unprofitable.

Our Lord spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, but He gave no hint that it would be rebuilt. In fact, the only suggestion of it throughout the whole of the New Testament is in His words (Luke xxi. 34), "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." No dogmatic statement should be based upon an uncertain inference, from a solitary passage.

For the ground of this theory one has to go back to the Old Testament ; but no doctrine concerning what is to happen after the close of the New Testament Canon can be regarded as established if the New Testament does not itself teach it. Is it even in the Old Testament unquestionably ? There are passages which speak of a restoration ; but many of them describe, with poetic and Semitic hyperbole, the return from Babylon.

The great question is as to the principle on which prophecy is to be interpreted. This cannot be done consistently in a material way. That would involve David's personal reign, the discovery of his throne, the re-establishment, for the purpose of their destruction, of the nations which at different times have been enemies of Israel, with the pouring out on them of a vengeance too ghastly for

anyone who knows Christ to contemplate; it would mean the endurance of seven months of pestilential vapours arising from the country being covered with millions of corpses, the erection of an immense temple with the institution of bloody sacrifices, the identification and separation of the tribes, who will each occupy a parallel strip of land only four or five miles wide, and yet will be able to give to the stranger an inheritance among them.

It is true that God said to Abraham, "All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Genesis xiii. 15). But even in the Old Testament possession of the land was not regarded as the substance of the promise. They did not then enter into rest; "For if Joshua had given them rest, he (the Psalmist), would not have spoken afterward of another day. There remaineth, therefore, a Sabbath rest for the people of God, to which we must give diligence to enter" (Hebrew iv. 8). R. B. Rackham, in his able commentary on the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, says on Acts ii. 39, "The promise had at first been of material blessings, e.g., the land of Canaan, but as these were obtained and yet the ideal was not attained, the content of the promise grew deeper and more spiritual until it became the promise of the presence of God Himself in His spirit." St. Paul explicitly states (Galatians iii. 14), that the promise of the Spirit was actually the blessing of Abraham coming to Gentiles, as well as Jews. The material land, the political kingdom, sink out of sight in the New Testament; the country sought is described as a better, that is, a heavenly one, of which the Holy Spirit is the Earnest.

The apostles generally gave a spiritual interpretation to prophecies "Zion" and "Jerusalem" they twice (Hebrew xii. 22, Galatians iv. 26), associate with "the church of the firstborn," "the mother of us all." They tell us that it was not to the twelve tribes that the promises were made. "It is not the children of the flesh that are the children of God; but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed" (Romans ix. 8). And who are the children of the promise? The answer is clear, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise" (Galatians iv. 28). Again, (Galatians iii. 29), "But if ye are Christ's, then are ye

Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise." We are called "The Israel of God" (Galatians vi. 16), "The Circumcision" (Phil. ii. 3, Cor. ii. 11), and "Jews" (Romans ii. 28, 29). In Hosea ii. 23, God gave the gracious promise to Israel, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not My people, thou art My people." St. Peter (1 Peter ii. 9, 10), applies this to the Church of Christ, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession . . . which in time past were no people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but have now obtained mercy." If it should be contended that this verse has reference solely to the elect sojourners of the Dispersion in certain specified countries the answer is in Romans ix. 24-26 where St. Paul declares explicitly that the Gentiles are included in the promise. Again, the New Covenant proclaimed (Jeremiah xxxi. 31ff), was made "With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah," but in Hebrews x. 15ff, it is applied to all the saints of this dispensation, "Greek and Jew" are indistinguishable. These passages must not be overlooked. If a man be wrong in applying the promises to the church, at any rate, he is in good company.

It would appear that the prophets spoke in figures with which they and their hearers were familiar, not knowing what the Holy Spirit was teaching through them. Take as an illustration Isaiah xi. Describing the unity of the people of God, he says, "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim"; declaring victory and supremacy, he writes, "They shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines on the west, together they shall spoil the children of the east," he alludes to the enemies of the Lord's people as "Edom, Moab, and Ammon."

But this system of interpretation is not always suitable. Some of the applications made in the New Testament are strange and startling. There are passages which do not seem to be susceptible of a spiritual meaning. Taking all into consideration, there does not appear to be any theory of exposition of the prophets that is universally valid, and whatever interpretation of different passages is given, the possibility of error should be remembered.

IV.—WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF THE LORD'S COMING?

The disciples put this question to the Master. As Mark and Luke record it, they referred only to the casting down of the temple, but Matthew includes His coming and the consummation of the age. The destruction of God's house occupies the first part of the answer in them all, and, perhaps, Luke speaks of it exclusively. The Lord then describes what will precede the Advent. But they all contain the interjection, "Verily, I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished." This is a note of time; it cannot refer to the Jewish, or the whole human race. It cannot well mean anything but the generation Jesus was addressing, from whom the blood of all the prophets should be required. This makes the discourse difficult to interpret with any certainty. Another verse has of late become prominent. From the fig tree learn her parable: "When her branch has become tender, and putteth forth her leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh; even so ye also, when ye see all these things, know ye that he (or it), is nigh even at the doors." The suggestion is that the fig tree symbolizes Israel, and the putting forth of leaves foretells the revival of national spirit which has recently occurred as for several years Jews have been moving to Palestine. (There is at present a re-action; in 1927 more left than entered). We read of the vine and the olive as emblems of Israel; but there is no authority for introducing the fig. The conclusion is reached by the process humorously described as "guess at the half, and multiply by two." The weakness of the suggestion is the more clear since Luke xxi, 29 includes "all the trees." The Lord took an illustration from nature to emphasize His warnings. His disciples heeded them, and, fleeing without delay from the doomed city, they saved their lives.

There are intimations that evil is temporarily to triumph immediately before the Lord's Coming. Many are sure we are now in that period. When there is an exhibition of depravity they remind us that we are in the "latter days". Of course we are. Centuries ago John said it was the last hour. Evil as the world is, has it never been worse? Indeed, has it ever been so good? St. Paul said (1 Corinthians xi. 9), "There must be Heresies among

you." We have them; but they are not so dishonouring to the Lord as they have been in other ages. Before the Reformation, Jesus was displaced by Virgin and Saints. In the days of Athanasius, His Deity was almost universally denied. Probably, the worst heresy the church has ever known was that which commenced in the time of the Apostles. Gnostic teachers declared that all material things are essentially evil. This involved that the Son of God was not their Creator, or, at best, it classed Him as one of an endless genealogy of thrones, dominions, principalities and powers. The doctrine that the human body is evil meant at first that holiness was secured by rigid asceticism. In the epistle to the Colossians, Paul warned against precepts and doctrines of men, "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch." Soon the opposite deduction was made, that the body is so corrupt that its corruption cannot be increased. When he wrote to Timothy he saw a more terrible condition of things was imminent. By the time that 2 Peter and Jude were written there were filthy dreamers, defiling the flesh who yet identified themselves with the people of God. At Thyatira some desired to know the depths of Satan. Could anything be worse? Jude said *this* was the fulfilment of what was spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

How frequently in this generation has the Advent been foretold only to be falsified. I pass over the ridiculous, unscriptural, statement common a few years ago, that wars and rumours indicated the end. Other catch phrases torn from their connection were pressed to this view. There was a vivid anticipation of His coming in A.D. 1000; I have happened across the declaration that it would happen 2nd December, 1662, and also in 1833. Elder Cumming showed conclusively that it would arrive in 1866. Mr. Baxter in the "Christian Herald" made it somewhere about the end of the last century. If the weather is unusually bad, earthquakes have been above the average, or sickness is rife, it is a "sign of the end." These false prophecies make it difficult to speak of the imminence of the Advent, lest we should be thought to endorse these vagaries.

Is it really certain that the world is to get worse before the Lord comes? The parables of the mustard seed and

leaven must not be ignored. Could a man with no theory to support possibly think that when the Lord said, "The Kingdom of God (Matthew, heaven) is like unto leaven." He meant the kingdom of the devil? True, evil is compared to leaven; but that is beside the mark. Evil works contagiously and secretly: but the Lord here says that His kingdom will work in the same way, until the whole is assimilated to itself.

Some build much on the difference between the "Kingdom of God" and the "Kingdom of Heaven." But the baselessness of the distinction is evidenced by the fact that St. Matthew (almost always), uses the latter, while SS. Mark and Luke invariably employ the former. Moreover in each of the ten cases where the same saying of the Lord is recorded in different Gospels, Matthew speaks of the kingdom of Heaven, while the others say the kingdom of God. Others have fixed the end of the dispensation by intricate calculation. This throws the whole doctrine out of perspective. The Advent is not a puzzle to be solved by mathematicians, but is a joyful anticipation to babes. The uncertainty of the time of the return of the Lord from the wedding must not lead the servants to stand at the door speculating whether every cloud of dust on the horizon is a sign of His approach; but should constrain them to gird their loins for earnest service.

The divergencies spoken of are only in appearance, and if any man is assured that he has the solution, by all means let him declare it; but he should distinguish between his inference and the very words of Scripture. Also, he should frankly indicate what passages are unfavourable to his interpretation.

The second Advent is as difficult to define as was the first. We are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and when Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory." Also, "God hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom He hath ordained." On these assured facts we rest; but as to the sequence of intermediate events, we must leave them in the same indefiniteness as does the Word of God.

T. GREENWOOD.

STUDIES FOR THE NON-COLLEGIATE MINISTER.

THE Non-Collegiate Minister is usually desirous to fit himself as thoroughly as possible for his great work. If he could have had the benefit of a College training he would gladly have accepted it. But often his circumstances rendered that impossible. Needs of loved ones, his own health, or the inability of College to receive him, has blocked the way. So now he must do the next best thing. Perhaps at one time there were those who regarded the Non-Collegiate as a shirker, using the back door of the B.U. Exams as an easy way into the ministry. That view of him is however passing; he is becoming recognised as an earnest servant of Christ, ready, despite his limitations, to do his best to advance the Kingdom of God, and ready to obtain a fuller equipment for the glorious task.

His great difficulty is to know where to start and what to read. The Examination Studies are good for a beginning, but insufficient for full equipment—they are pointers to a great field awaiting his working. My desire in this paper is to help from my own experience—not making myself a standard, or setting myself up as an authority, but as a brother who, having floundered a bit along the path, may point out some of the stepping stones. Even so, I am undertaking it only because requested to do so by our esteemed County Secretary. If after the B.U. Exams he is desirous of more Examinations the subjects for the Certificate of Religious Knowledge are very useful.

The Non-Collegiate man cannot usually go so deeply in his studies as a Collegeman. If he can learn to read the Greek Testament it will be a great gain. If also he can pass the Examinations for the Diploma in Theology it will be an immense help. I shall, however, in this paper, address myself to the Greekless Minister.

We are Ministers of the Word; our task is to proclaim a Gospel and to teach truths which are enshrined in the Bible. And we have to bring them home to the minds and consciences of men and women more or less reluctant to receive them. These things will determine the lines of our studies.

I would strongly urge as a fundamental matter that

the Minister should read the Bible carefully and prayerfully every day. He should be familiar with it from end to end. And nothing is better for that purpose than steady, consecutive, meditative reading. That must not be understood as counselling a plodding through from Genesis to Revelation, over the genealogies of Chronicles, past the gorgeous ritual of Leviticus, by the portals of the Shulamite and the pessimist preacher, at so many chapters per week, the bookmark moving ever onward. Some parts of the Bible are less fruitful than others, yet none is without its importance. The minister of the New Covenant will give first place to the Scriptures of the New Covenant, ranking next to them those of the Old Covenant which come nearest in spiritual vision. A dear friend of mine who had a fine grip of both letter and spirit of the Word, made it his rule to read two chapters of the Old Testament and two chapters of the New Testament every day. He thus read the New Testament several times while reading the Old Testament once. If the *rule* is too inelastic, the *principle* is worthy of observance by us all.

While the individual Minister will seek a first hand knowledge of Scripture, he will remember that others have worked in that great field, whose labours should be utilised by the student to inform him concerning certain unknown matters, to help him to accurate estimates, to guide him to fuller understanding. A good book of Biblical Introduction, such as Bennett's or Adeney's, or the companion volumes of Buchanan Gray and Peake in Duckworth's Studies in Theology will probably furnish all that is needed by the Non-Collegiate brother. Fuller studies will be found in the Critical Introductions to the Commentaries in the Century Bible and Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, as he takes up individual books for study in detail. These series are excellent guides to the grammatical meaning of the text—especially of doubtful or disputed passages. For the general teachings (Biblical Theology), much help will be obtained from such books as Burney's "Outlines of O.T. Theology," or Wheeler Robinson's "Religious Ideas of O.T.," and—if it can be obtained—from Adeney's N.T. Theology in Hodder and Stoughton's old-time Theological Educator series. This latter is now

out of print, but secondhand copies are frequently available. Larger works for later study are Davidson on the O.T. and Stevens on the N.T. A very valuable little handbook to the teachings of our Lord is Oldham's "Teachings of Christ according to the Synoptic Gospels," published by the S.C.M., and forms a good introduction to Bruce's "Kingdom of God." Others by Bruce, Stevens, and Milligan on the Theology of Paul, John, the Hebrews are good followers-on after the general work of Stevens.

But the preacher does not merely expound the Bible; he seeks to apply it to the manifold circumstances and needs of human life. Much help is to be obtained therein from Expository and Homiletical Commentaries and from Devotional Literature. Here the supply is bewildering. Much is good, and much is bad, a waste of money to buy, and of time to read. Some of the good—the useful for to-day—is old, but not all the old is good. Don't judge it by its age nor by its newness. Matthew Henry will perhaps (as J. D. Jones says), never be antiquated; but I prefer McLaren's Expositions—and if restricted to one Commentary would choose McLaren. The Expositor's Bible is a very varied treasure, some volumes are well worth digging into, others call for decent burial. The R.T.S. is issuing a series of Devotional Commentaries, also of very varied excellence—J. D. Jones' "Mark," J. M. E. Ross's "Luke," Shepherd's "Revelation" are perhaps the best. Volumes on separate books issued independently, of great excellence, are to be found, and when found should be seized with both hands. Collections of outline sermons are very attractive, maybe very useful, but often are snares to the user. I hesitate to recommend them because so many men have made shipwreck thereon.

Devotional literature will be most useful; and when the preacher hears of a good book in this department, he should beg, borrow, or buy it at the first opportunity. There are multitudes of them ranging through the centuries. While their numbers prohibit any special and detailed mention, one may note a few. Among the classics are Augustine, Thomas à Kempis, John Bunyan, Richard Baxter, and William Law. Spurgeon's sermons may here be of great value. Later books are those of G. H. Morrison,

Archibald Alexander, a couple of volumes by Canon E. S. Wood. A book that touched me closely is Weatherhead's *Transforming Friendship*, issued by the Epworth Press.

As the preacher compares the church and its beliefs to-day with the church and its beliefs in the N.T., he will become aware of a vast difference in both organisation and doctrine. Both have become immensely more complex, Many different forms of ecclesiastical polity, of ceremonial, of theological conception are around him to-day. How have they come into existence? To answer that, he will find it necessary to know something of Church History and of the History of Doctrine. He should be acquainted with the landmarks of these, and know the critical periods. Some one has said that the Minister should know the history of the early church and of the Reformation. And I would add that the Baptist Minister should know the history of the Free Churches, and Baptist History. A good general view of church history can be gathered from Harrison's "Church of Twenty Centuries," or from Williston Walker's larger book of church history. Vernon Bartlet's "Early Church History," Lindsay's "Reformation," Sylvester Horne's "History of the Free Churches," will make him acquainted with the special periods. A good Baptist history suitable for Non-Collegiate pockets is, I think, yet to be found. Dr. Whitley's book is too big and expensive. Dr. Carlile's is a cheaper, if less voluminous and detailed guide. Some of the small handbooks issued by our own Publication Department are very useful—the Report of the Leeds Assembly for instance, and Professor Wheeler Robinson's "Baptist Principles." I have not seen his "Life and Faith of the Baptists," so can say nothing of it.

For the growth of doctrine one might suggest Fisher's "History of Christian Doctrine. Or the three volumes on Christian Thought in Duckworth's "Studies in Theology" would supply all that is needed, perhaps. Also in the same series there is a good handbook on "Apologetics" by Dr. Garvie.

The preacher does not merely seek to convey truth which he finds in the Bible to men and women, he seeks also by means thereof to influence them for good. In

order to do so effectively he must know something of general human nature—the springs and motive forces of human character and conduct. He will not find that time is wasted in acquiring a general acquaintance with Psychology, especially in its practical forms. Perhaps he will get as much help as anywhere in the field of classic fiction. Some knowledge of Economics also, and of general Science will not be amiss.

In order to bring home to his hearers the truths he expounds, he must speak interestingly that he may engage and hold attention, he must speak impressively and forcefully that he may move to action. Apart from special studies in Homiletics and English Composition, there is the whole wide realm of English Literature for the culture of the mind, the quickening of the emotional life, the purifying of speech. As the preacher travels and travails therein, he will gather many treasures for his life's work—"jewels five words long" of sparkling speech, thoughts beautifully expressed, images and incidents to illustrate and enforce the truths he is preaching. Let him read Ruskin's "King's Treasuries"; and then take up one by one some of the great books of the English language. As he reads therein and meditates, his mind will be quickened, uplifted, energised.

I have outlined what perhaps appears a large programme. But I would not have it considered as a programme—rather as a few hints by one who has attempted to "give attention to reading," not always as successfully as he wished, but who still presses on as not having attained. Much more could be said—for instance, nothing has been mentioned of the very fruitful department of history and biography. But enough has been said, perhaps, to point out a pathway towards a thorough furnishing.

Nothing has been said about the deeper and more important matters of the spiritual life of the Minister. Studies are desirable and necessary to an all-round service. But a vigorous spiritual life is essential at all stages of his development and for all departments of his work. Without that vigorous spiritual life he will fail, however much he may know. His study must be a shrine. Day by day he

must sit at the feet—not of any Gamaliel merely—but of Jesus, the Saviour and Lord. His studies are materials which the fire from heaven will transform into a sacrifice fit for the worship of God. They are his weapons of warfare and instruments of service; the spiritual vigour to wield them usefully will come in that secret place where saint and Saviour meet.

WILLIAM J. NUNN.



PRAYER UNION NOTES.

WE are grieved to have to report the decease of quite a considerable number of our members, some of whom had been in association with us from the early days of our Prayer Union. Amongst them are D. Arthur, J. Bates, T. A. Carver, J. Chadwick, Dr. Edwards, T. Evans, E. E. Fisk, E. S. Hadler, W. Leyshow, J. W. Padfield, W. A. Richards, Dr. Roberts, and G. A. Webb. We thank God for their faithful service and rejoice in the hope of ere long meeting them again in the "Father's house."

So long a time had elapsed since we published our last list of members that it is not perhaps to be wondered at that inaccuracies are to be found in it. We greatly regret that the following names were omitted from the list and should be glad if brethren would kindly add them to their copies:—E. Corns Davies, M. Lister Gaunt, Frank James, W. Olney, and A. J. Payne. Rev. J. Cornish writes to point out that he joined our Union long before 1928. He was indeed one of the early members of our Prayer Fellowship.

Probably many of our brethren have seen the appeal which has been issued on behalf of our brother A. D. Garrow, of Brighton. In the great gale of November last he was blown under a motor lorry whilst crossing the road and received such severe injuries that one of his legs had to be amputated. It is feared that, even when an artificial limb has been obtained, his future work will be seriously affected by this accident. Our brother has done a splendid

bit of work at Brighton, which is worthy of the recognition of the whole denomination. Gifts should be sent to Councillor H. B. Elliott, J.P., 47, Crescent Road, Brighton.

We have been deeply concerned at the serious illness of our beloved leader, Dr. Meyer, and we are sure earnest prayer has been offered on his behalf. We rejoice that these prayers have so far been answered and that at the time of writing this, the Doctor is at Bournemouth and that health and strength are slowly returning. Dr. Meyer's illness necessitated the cancelling of the meetings which had been arranged at Reading on February 13th.

From his sick room Dr. Meyer indited the following letter to the members of our Prayer Union. It has already been sent to all our members, but we thought it would be of interest to members of the "Fraternal" who are not members of the Prayer Union.

Christ Church

Westminster Bridge Road,
London, S.E.1

Sunday, March 10th, 1929.

Dear Brothers of the Prayer Union,

At the suggestion of dear Brother Martin—to whom we owe an incalculable debt—I send a few lines of affectionate greeting on this Sunday morning, from my Nursing Home. I think of you all going forth to your various services; and once more I say "God bless them." How different the varieties of the ground and soil—trench-digging, sowing, wrestling with thorns, reaping under blue skies, almost losing heart—but He knows, who will walk the whole distance beside you. I have so loved that statue of Philips Brookes standing in his pulpit with the Master behind. May it be true of you all!

The one thought, which engrosses me just now, is the low ideals of the average Christian communicant. In innumerable cases, he or she believes that Jesus lived as in the Synoptic Gospels, and that He was crucified, and that if they believe that He was the Son of God, and are asking for pardon and salvation,—that it is all right for them here and hereafter. But, surely, the great ordinance for which

we stand, implies much more than this ! It is a profession of faith, *certainly* ; but it is much more. It foreshadows the life which is hidden with Christ in God, which receives its constant incentive and power from the Vine, which is anointed by Pentecost for service and which moves Society.

One longs for that kind of life for oneself ; and I believe that if we preached it with the passion of personal experience, it would strike fire in the hearts of our young men and women. Though I was a poor exemplar of what I am urging—I know that this gathered crowds of young men and women around me at Christ Church—many of whom have carried the Fiery Torch into the Missionary Fields at home and abroad. My one regret to-day, is that I must now carry my bat to the pavilion and see others play the game. But this is the Master-Stroke !

Accept my love ! Don't write unless you want help in diagnosis or application. Why not get up a talk in your ministerial gatherings ? Love to your wives and children and selves.

Yours affectionately,

F. B. MEYER.

As we go to press the news of Dr. Meyer's home-call reached us. To many of us it will bring a sad sense of personal bereavement. As the founder of our Prayer Union and its President for so many years, he will be sadly missed by us all, while the memory of his unwearied services and helpful influence will be an inspiring memory in coming years. We shall have more to say about his connection with the Prayer Union in our next issue.

