

# The Fraternal.

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## PSYCHOLOGY AND CONVERSION.

*Paper read before the East Midland Baptist Association,  
June 1923*

**I**N religious circles to-day there are emerging two more or less well defined classes of people who seem to find increasing difficulty in discovering a common understanding of, and common values for the new birth into the Christian life. One may be termed the "liberals" who talk of it in terms of the new psychology: and the other are "conservatives" who talk in terms of the old Gospel. The psychology people tend to develop a spirit of impatience with what they call old-fashioned conceptions and language; while those who declare stoutly, "We are of the Gospel" are not seldom more than a little suspicious whenever that blessed word "Psychology" is dragged in, and have been known to murmur things about "Science falsely so called." I doubt not, that in this assembly, could its mind be analysed, there would be found elements in some wise indicative of such conflict. There would be brought to consciousness in some a sentiment predisposed, not to say prejudiced, to the new learning, and in others a sentiment of undefined hostility to it. Some would incline to say at once that psychology, recent or otherwise, can have no light to throw on conversion—inasmuch as people were converted long before psychology books were written: and others to retort that conversion was always a more or less unintelligible dogma of religion, until light from the schools of Vienna, and Nancy, and many places in America revealed the order in the chaos.

I take it, however, that there is a sense among us that there is some relation between the science of mind, so popular to-day, and the fact of conversion, for which we Baptists, of all people, stand; and that, with open minds, and spite of our prejudices, we want to discover where the truth lies. I venture to suggest that the truth will be most likely to appear when we think and talk about it afterwards; and that you do not expect me in twenty-five minutes to exhaust the evidence for, and dogmatically pronounce upon, such a subject as the behaviour of the human mind, and the interaction with it of the spirit of God.

But we do need to have some clear ideas about the terms we are using. For the fact is, that there is an astonishing number of people who are hazy about what both words "Psychology" and "Conversion" mean; and a still greater number who manifest little concern to keep clearly in mind the *ends* or *purposes* in human nature, which each claims to serve.

The fact that psychology is at present the vogue, and attracts crowds of people to whom the whole thing is new; and the further fact that some of its exponents are more skilled in playing up to a popular demand for novelty than in understanding of their theme, partly explain the great need for clear definition. If that could be given there would be fewer people than there are who imagine, *e.g.*, that psychology is another name for religion. There is an idea amongst others, that its theme is Sex, and when to that promising topic is added all sorts of interesting matters about dreams—they go with the crowd that likes to hear about these things. Others deem psychology interesting, because they understand that it deals with something that nobody knows anything about, *viz.*, the Unconscious. Others again have a vague notion that it is a new and easy way of cure for physical disorders. If psychology is to be related to such an august experience as conversion, people will have to discover what it is, and what it professes to do.

The same in regard to conversion. What does it mean? Lots of people tell us quite frankly and sincerely that they do not know what it means. Others say they know, and it means nothing: nothing, *i.e.*, that can be talked about, inasmuch as people who profess to experience it, foreclose any discussion by explaining it entirely in terms of subjective feeling. Are there not some Christians, too, who are equally hazy? They confine the operation of conversion entirely to God's energy, and when

enquirers want to know how they, too, can share the experience, they are reminded that God moves in a mysterious way, and that His spirit's operation is like unto the wind, about whose origin and direction you can say precisely nothing except that there it is. If we need to know what psychology is: we need still more to know what conversion is. If they are to be related, obviously, we need to be able to say something about both that people can understand—and proclaim.

Psychology—without any qualifying words—“New” or “Recent”—is the science of mind. It treats of mental states and processes, and be it noted, “the conditions of their occurrence.” It is thus the science of human experience, as distinguished from the physical sciences, which treat of matter. Psychology does not seek primarily to explain what Mind is, any more than physics sets out to enquire, first of all what Matter is. But its business is to systematise, and give a coherent account of how it behaves. In what, I suppose, we must call the old psychology as distinguished from the new (although, by the way, “old” must not be interpreted as “out of date”), the mind studied is the Conscious mind. It is that which, consciously thinks, feels and wills, and the method for studying it is largely the introspective—whereby the mind turns upon itself, and tries to grasp what it was doing a second before—because when we introspect we are always a moment too late, the stream of consciousness moving on. What is called the New Psychology is engaged in investigating something that is extraordinarily elusive—what is called the “unconscious mind.” Of that, introspection can give no account, simply because the mind can examine directly only a conscious state. But the idea is that there must be postulated a region of unconscious mind to account for the non-rational instincts, desires, and emotions which complicate and yet largely determine our conscious behaviour. So to this unconscious region are referred the primary instincts such as the sex instinct, the herd instinct (whence proceeds our social life), the self instinct, and many an impulse working obscurely in us. The inherited tendencies of races and family, and the memories of a life time, are conceived as being stored there. Some of these are unpleasant, some morally forbidding. Our conscious mind will have none of them. But they are still part of us, the original cause of many a distressful interruption of the ordered course of our conscious life. They are repressed in

the unconscious. There, they ever tend to burst forth into the conscious mind and to realise themselves, the result is a "complex" that leads to internal conflict in conscious activity and produces that distressing state known as divided personality. Now Psycho-Analysis is the new psychological method for resolving these manifestations of inhibited mental energy. The mental scientist, by reason of his special skill, explores the Unconscious for these complexes: discovers them; drags them into the patient's conscious mind, and, mainly by suggestion, evaluates the obscure trouble for the patient—and generally helps him to recover a healthy mind and body: a unified personality. That is the point. What the New Psychology aims at is the moral unity called personality—(1) by research into the nature of the Unconscious Mind and (2) by applying the knowledge acquired in that way to bring order and composure and right direction to the lives of ineffective people.

Now, what is conversion in its Christian sense? I add that, for it is well to be forewarned that some modern writers have taken over the word to express any crisis of the mind, which issues in redirection of the self. A man can, *e.g.*, be converted from drunkenness to sobriety; he can be "converted" to Socialism. There are such things as ethical crises. As we use the word, however, we mean a redirection given to personality from a Power outside ourselves—God. We mean the change of thought feeling and will that is wrought by the Spirit of God when He effects reorganisation of any life round a new centre—God Himself, and God as revealed in Jesus Christ. The thing that is essential is that One other than ourselves—God—is predominantly active in conversion. Any transformation of personality that leaves the Holy Spirit out may be real enough so far as it goes, (and there is no need and no use to belittle the really wonderful works of the mental specialists) but it is not conversion as the New Testament and Christian experience conceive it.

At what point then do the two methods converge? At this: Conversion is the outcome of *two* orders of mind in contact—the Divine and the human. One of these minds is the *human* mind, with all those instincts and impulses which Psychology is studying. Conversion is moreover determined by two sets of activities; God's, which is "regeneration"; and man's, which are "repentance" and "confiding." (I use that word instead of faith because "faith" may be construed as a purely intellectual

exercise, and that is insufficient for conversion; whereas "confiding" emphasises the harmony, that fellowship between God and man, which is that which changes a man). Now the point is that while God wills to regenerate us, we may or may not be regenerate. "Ye are unwilling to come to me that ye may have life." So the thing that determines whether or not we are converted is the human will, the significant thing about the human mind. And that is why we cannot afford to say that psychology, which deals with human mind, is irrelevant to the student of conversion.

True; mystery will always remain. For this is the supreme mystery of life—the action of spirit upon spirit. And when we remember that one agent active in conversion is the Divine Spirit, we do not need abnormal insight to detect some pretty obvious limits to our research. It *is* all we can say of *God's* regenerative word in conversion—that there it is, the grace and mercy of it. It *is* like the wind blowing where it listeth. We cannot diagnose the Divine mind. But can we say no more about the human material than that some are converted and some not? Does it not matter whether or not we can learn anything about how our minds work? If there are laws of mind, which presumably there are, will God in His dealing with souls, be likely to work along the line of these laws, or capriciously? Who imposed the laws, if not God? Man is not passive to the Spirit of God, but active. And what God works upon by His Spirit is not a sort of mental vacuum, colourless and featureless and undistributed, but on individual minds, each with its own bias and character: predisposed to act in such and such a way; each suffering its own complex, its own toil of repression or otherwise: each with its own hereditary stain or adornment, with its secret storehouse of memory, helpful or otherwise. We cannot search out unto perfection the Almighty Who regenerates; but we *can* explore the human mind, the material destined for regeneration. And if, as seems likely enough, the psychologists can help us to explore the elusive recesses of our minds and to understand the laws of their working, the conditions to be fulfilled for wholehearted response to that understanding can help the will in us, and in others, to be converted. We can more easily adjust human nature to God's energy when we know something about that nature, than when we neither know nor care. For the *whole* of our spirit life—the

conscious realm, which we can introspect; and the mysterious depths of the unconscious, where so much significant matter for personality is stored; the *whole* of our inner life is, we believe, open to the movement of God's Spirit—seeking to resolve our complexes; to drag into the light our repressed memories, to sublimate our irrational instincts and to raise us to power and victory. We Christians can use the psychological language quite relevantly; only we must have God to work the miracle. For psychology and conversion alike there is a common end—the transformation of personality. But personality in the Christian sense is a richer achievement than in the psychological. In the latter the purpose is “to set free the unconscious, with a view to the discovery and comprehension of the patient's buried complexes,” and for many people the purpose is served if physical health is restored. In the former, it is that we be transformed into the image of God's Son. The first need not re-issue in the second, and the second can be achieved without the first.

With this introduction to the general problem, let me close by enumerating a few points emerging that may serve to guide our thinking on the subject. There is no time to do more than to state the issues.

I suggest that there are, at least, three things about the new psychology which cannot be straightway ratified by the disciple of Jesus Christ. They call for caution, lest we betray the faith.

1. We must beware of assuming that the ideals of the psychologist, and those of the Christian are really the same. As we have seen there is a good deal held in common. Achievement of unified mind represses them both. But there is more than a hint in a good deal of modern writing that all that man needs is “healthy mindedness,” and that if, by suggestion or otherwise, he can be disciplined to think thoughts of health, happiness and beauty, all the personality he has is being raised to its highest terms. There is nothing specifically religious about that ideal, and the Cross of Christ has no relevance to it. It is simply the outcrop of the Pagan spirit. What we have to face is this. Has man some inherent power to raise himself to that height of personality for which Christ died, that man might attain? Are we just a mass of unpleasant complexes, or are we sinners? There is more in the Gospel than just “mental therapy,” and the plus quantity is its essence.

2. We must beware of many a subtle hint given to-day that what we call conversion by the Spirit of God, is simply either an explosion of complexes in the unconscious, or an auto-suggestion with a view to peace and harmony. If it is either the one or the other why is it that we cannot be converted to God to the order of the psycho analyst, or by the study of Coué? There is no conversion by natural psychological law alone.

3. We must refuse to breathe that pessimistic atmosphere that we have sensed again and again in reading modern psychology. It is suggested that there are certain persons who never can be converted; that you needn't be good to be effectively religious. The psycho analysts have discovered cases too intractable for their methods, and from their standpoint, if these fail, there is precious little hope that harmony in the patient can ever be restored. Moreover, I am bound to say that as I have read and grappled with those endless and complicated modern rules for the cure of souls, I have wondered whether God could have made us so complicated as all that, and whether conversion can be such a difficult process as all that. I find more fresh air and sunlight, and sheer sense in the Gospels. That on the one side.

But, for three reasons, we Christians are bound to welcome all the help that a study of mind can give. For (1) all that we know of God suggests that He works by law and the complement of God's law of grace is the human mind. That is what He works upon for conversion. I suggest that it is because we Christians have not sufficiently taken account of this "material" of conversion that we have despairingly looked for God to act miraculously from heaven rather than attempted to adjust the mind He is eager to convert.

(2) We should welcome this movement inasmuch as it is at least an ally with religion against any materialistic theory of reality. It is sensing the region where ultimate truth lies—the region of Spirit.

(3) I doubt if we shall ever be as successful as we all long to be in what we call "bringing young people to Christ," unless we acquire some skill in understanding the mental constitution of these young folk whom we want to bring. There is no use in expecting that the outlook of youth is the same as that of middle life or age, or that this science of mind is going to have no more interest for them than it has had for past generations. What is

the nature of their mind's behaviour; the centre of interest in their conscious life; or the dominant complexes of their unconscious life? If we say all this is irrelevant to conversion and can have no interest to God, and ought to have none for men, then it means that ignorance is better than knowledge—and we shall look in vain for conversion that can stand the strain of the modern challenge. Psychology cannot convert; but it explicates that which is to be converted.

And therein, I think, we get the relation of psychology to conversion—which we set out to discover. It is properly the relation of the investigator of facts to the elaborator of them, and applied psychology, like the law, can be tutor to lead to Christ.

To the Christian, the significance of the scientific facts is seen, significance for God, as for men. The human mind is seen by him to have a range bigger than the scientist's. God is in it, and not only man himself—God with redemptive purpose to save men made like that.

Conversion sets the ultimate value on that which the psychologist discovers. Our distinctively Christian witness is that the psychologist's omitted factor, *viz.*, the Spirit of God, is that which composes and harmonises human nature, so fearfully and wonderfully made.

JAMES AMOS, M.A.



## THE GOSPEL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCE.

Concluded.

**A**PPROACHING more nearly to the content of the Gospel, one or two questions emerge as to the reaction of Modern Science upon it. It deals with a supernatural order which to loose thinking is synonymous with the miraculous. Murray's definition of a miracle runs: "A marvellous event occurring within human experience, which cannot have been brought about by human power, or by the operation of any natural agency and must therefore be ascribed to the special intervention of the Deity, or of some supernatural being: chiefly an act exhibiting control over the laws of nature and serving as evidence



that the agent is either divine or specially favoured by God." This surely is a perfect illustration of Rousseau's *mot* that definitions might be good if words were not used in making them! It is clear however that here we are dealing with matters in which science claims no competence. In the definition, though the word is absent, the idea of causation is not, and when we turn to the scientific conception of cause we find it expressed as the totality of the conditions in the presence of which an event occurs and in the absence of any member of which it does not occur. More briefly, it means sequence under definitely known conditions. Let it be noted that science has grown so diffident that it steadily refuses to answer the question, "Why?" and is content when it can answer the question "How?" It disclaims, that is, the ability to explain, and claims only the humble role of description—"the classification of facts and the recognition of their sequence and relative significance," to quote Karl Pearson. Let it be granted there are sequences under definitely known conditions—the subject matter of scientific enquiry. Obviously, however, there are sequences under conditions only imperfectly known, or not known at all—not known, *i.e.* in their totality and coherence. "The opening of a bud," said Lord Kelvin, "the growth of a leaf, the astonishing development in the beauty of a flower, involve physical operations which completed physical science would leave so far beyond our comprehension as the difference between lead and iron, between water and carbonic acid, between gravitation and magnetism are at present. A tree contains more mystery of creative power that the sun from which all its mechanical energy is borrowed. An earth without life, a sun and countless stars contain less wonders than that grain of mignonette." There are incomprehensibles in the domain of the inorganic, still greater incomprehensibles associated with life or livingness. It is not merely that science cannot tell us why, it cannot even tell us how. When so nonplussed, it strains at its tether, and it sometimes happens that not with an altogether quiet conscience it strays into the forbidden realm of metaphysic. The point is that in regard to so prominent a fact as Life, science is impotent to trace the sequence. Hence the controversy between mechanists and vitalists, hence the invocations of forces and entelechies—the implicit confession of being baulked. Living is not reducible to terms of matter and motion, aspects of reality, transcending mechanical formulation, emerge in the organism, which is, in truth, a psycho-physical individuality. As with Life so with

Mind. Thinking, no more than living, can be brought under any general biological or physical concept. Epiphenomenalism which reduces the elements of consciousness to short-lived bubbles on the current of cerebral processes is rejected by the commonsense which repudiates the idea that thought is a will-o'-the-wisp endowed with the extraordinary capacity of looking at itself. Nor has any other theory brought within the range of intelligibility the passage from cerebral metabolism to thinking, feeling, willing. Body we know, and mind we know, but the nexus is behind the veil.

The confessed impotence of science in regard to the problems of the origin of life and the relation between body and mind point, as it seems to me, in this direction. It suggests the substitution of the unknown for the notion of miracle. The notion connoted by the word miracle in the sense of a suspension of law is not really native to the gospel. Science plainly avows that miracles (in that sense) do not happen, for the simple reason that the notion of miracle in an ordered universe is simply unintelligible. Such a notion is possible only to a disorderly account of the universe. Though the sequence we call life is carried out in the presence of conditions unknown, science refuses to acclaim a miracle. So thought cannot be completely described in its antecedent conditions but again science will not resort to the alien element of miracle for an explanation. Life and thought are simply imponderables. Implicit in this attitude, is always the possibility of coming up against the insoluble, and the relegation to higher branches of investigation the task of elucidating the mysteries of experience.

This humility of science is surely relevant to our attitude to the gospel. The universe is one. The invasion of the National Order by the supernatural is perhaps the most natural thing of all—indeed we may be all at sea in the use of these terms. Using the analogy of the scientific idea of causation, may it not be permissible to believe that though the antecedent conditions to the so-called supernatural framework of the gospel are only imperfectly known, or quite unknown, the sequence is as much a fact of experience as life or thought. May we not be pursuing a chimaera in discussing the miraculous element of the gospels, when all we mean are sequences in the presence of imperfectly known conditions. As well speak of the miraculous elements in Physics or Biology in view of the unsolved problems involved in matter and energy, or in living and thinking. If in domains

accessible to the cognitive methods of science there are sequences whose nexus with the conditions, in the presence of which they occur, is obscure, may not theology follow the lead suggested, and abandon the crude conceptions of primitive folklore in favour of a more comprehensive view of causation? All's love and all's law! The effort to evacuate the miraculous element from the Gospel is due to the discomfort arising from the attempt to give it house-room in the same scheme as the scientific conception of causation. Let the idea of miracle itself be evacuated from our thinking in favour of a conception of sequences of the antecedent conditions of which we are ignorant, and we can scrap most of the discussions of miracles in the New Testament. Miracles do not happen. You can't conjure a sitting of eggs out of an empty hat. Out of nothing, nothing comes. The spiritual order is under law like the material, and the use of the words translated miracle in the New Testament do not, in my judgment, justify the conceptions which have often found currency even in Christian thought.

In another direction recent science is not unhelpful. The concept of heredity as the relation of organic continuity between successive generations, which secures the general resemblance between off-spring and their parents, between progeny and their ancestors, in brief, the genetic relations between ancestors and descendants, is one of the firmly established results of science. It is not claimed that heredity is a force: it is no more than a continuity of germ-plasm binding one generation to another. It is simply the doctrine of natural inheritance—all that the organism is or has to start with in virtue of its hereditary relation. Inexorably persistent is the transmission of all sorts of inborn peculiarities not only to the third and fourth generations but far further. The study of heredity forces upon us a fatalistic impression very unfavourable to the presupposition behind the gospel of autonomous spiritual nature, as well as to its doctrine of the renewed life. Yet the further science has gone in its examination of the factors in heredity, the more it tends to break down the imprisoning walls. Within the orbit of hereditary transmission there is variability and "a copious fountain of change," without which evolution would never have been. Heredity is not the same as immutability. In the nature of the living organism is wrapped the potential break-away: Proteus not Procrustes is the analogue: changefulness is its most abiding

quality. Arthur Thomson makes bold to affirm that the essence of the creature is its innate creativeness, and he is compelled to recognise the originative impulse within the organism, which expresses itself in variation and mutation, and in all kinds of creative effort and endeavour. This of course is the verdict of science having regard to the organism only as the subject of biological or physical examination; the suggestion of freedom hinted at is mightily strengthened when we pass to the realm of spirit. Possibilities may be hereditarily pre-determined but not personalities. The higher the organism the greater the unpredictability, the greater the power to modify what has undergone automatisations, the greater the capacity to select and alter environment. Biology itself can be cited to give the lie to mechanistic determinism. It is no great further step to avow that man's spiritual nature forms a region outside the play of inheritance. The man who said that he found it easier to get the devil out of his heart than his grandfather out of his bones embodied in the epigram the truth of the higher freedom. While no dispassionate observer would deny the enormous influence of hereditarily acquired characteristics in conditioning the forms of spiritual experience, it is clear from an examination of actual cases that time and again the new creation is wrought in lives to which inheritance provides no clue. Nothing in the scientific conception of heredity need obstruct the recognition of the assumption of the gospel that the action of the Spirit of God upon the human spirit is capable of producing an entirely original experience with hardly any closer relation to hereditarily transmitted characters than the song of the canary to the cage in which it is imprisoned.

One more point. Scientific views of evolution have coloured men's thinking about morals, and it is relevant to enquire whether they invalidate or modify the ethical content of the gospel. Bernhardt has familiarised us with the disastrous results of carrying over from biology to the realm of human conduct certain concepts which are supposed to express the laws regulating all living existence. Whether these same concepts were legitimately used as being of universal application even in biology is open to question. Huxley saw in Nature a gladiatorial spectacle, a ubiquitous Ishmaelitism, every living creature for itself, and extinction taking the hindmost. But he did not adequately appreciate the fact that throughout the struggle for existence in

Nature, there is often a pathway to survival and success through increased co-operation, kindness and mutual aid. The deeper aspect of Nature's strategy seems to be that the individual living creature realises itself in its inter-relation, and has to submit to being lost for the salvation of the whole. The social bias of Nature is overwhelmingly established. Nevertheless Nature may well not be the Court of Appeal for ethical judgments. "The effort to cram the moral ideas of civilised man into the rigid mould of the natural selection hypothesis is an artificial and not very promising enterprise." Meanings obscure in the beginning or middle of the process are interpreted or corrected in the end. Fools and bairns should never see a thing half-finished. The ethics of self-sacrifice have nothing to fear from a criticism based on something far lower down in the scale of becoming.

The universe, broad and high, is a handful of dust which God enchants. Nothing in his marvellous wizardry in that order obstructs but rather prepares for faith in His power to work greater wonders still in the realm of spirit. The wonder of His ways in the sphere nature demands a coronation in the surpassing wonder of His ways in the Realm of Grace. Science has built its stairway as far as it may to the bound of the dark, and it may be permitted to us to believe that when men have recovered from the first transport of self-congratulation over this not inconsiderable achievement, their minds may be more open than before to an appreciation of the architecture of the further pathway to reality given to mankind in the truth as it is in Jesus.

P. T. THOMSON, M.A.



## A MINISTER'S SOLILOQUY.

*The following is offered not so much as a constructive essay or article, but as a symptom of the questionings which are part of the hard practical life of a man in a remote outpost of our denomination. The questions are old and yet ever new, and urgent. We should be glad of answers to them, born of hard experience.*

I HAVE been asked to write a short article for the Fraternal. What is the use? Here am I away from everybody, with three or four addresses to prepare every week, with hardly any first class authorities to consult, and with little strength or time for consecutive study. Various problems arise from time to time. They receive a passing thought, and then there is the next sermon calling.

Why so much preaching, with so little apparent result? What is this conversion that used to be made so much of, but for which most preachers now only sigh? Should conversion be an object in preaching; *the* motive and *the* object, or is it only a happy consequence? If conversions do not follow Christian effort, should the minister take the hint and resign? Is the Church capable of deciding? Or must he settle the question for himself, and in the meanwhile carry on, trusting that God will work with him, to move the wills of the people and to save their souls?

What is my special object in visiting? I get practically no help from the people. They expect me to visit them from time to time. But they make practically no opportunities for useful fellowship. They leave the minister to force open the door, to enter in and roam about. It is a game of mental hide-and-seek. Well, I must play the game.

How am I to deal with the question of divine healing? Shall I preach about it? Shall I volunteer prayer or advice when visiting the sick? People seem to treat the whole problem with suspicion. Suppose I preach about it, and work it out in my own life and thought, and then wait for openings. Surely God will honour faithful inquiry and earnest prayer!

What is really the best way of treating the question of Bible inspiration? Some of our best workers tremble at any hint of

criticism. They seem to resent any expression of opinion about it. But somehow or other the truth must be told, and people must be taught to see the truth from different points of view.

We must ask God for guidance, and perhaps give people the opportunity for conference, either in the weeknight service or at a Church meeting. Truth *will* prevail!



#### INEXPENSIVE THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE.

THE Editor asks me to send him some "notes on inexpensive theological literature." In College days one of our men in a moment of inspiration announced his purpose to sell out his theology (he did not possess much) in order to complete his set of Mark Twain. I imagine that the Editor would sternly set his face against any such manifestation of frivolity. A member of our Fraternal has recently expressed himself in the public press to the effect that a lot of things he learned in College have proved of no earthly use to him in his successful ministerial career. Does he mean theology? The Editor, in his superior wisdom, judges that there are sufficient men in the membership of the B.M.F.U. who will purchase theology, even yet, provided it be inexpensive. It is not for me to judge. Mine not to reason why, mine not to make reply, but to try and provide a little help for such supposed person. Of course these notes are not intended for the diligent student who religiously pursues the ideals set before him in College, and whose books overflow the study, invading even the bedrooms. They are for the busy men who have to do a lot of newspaper reading, and who find it almost as much as they can manage to keep posted in the interests of the moment, and meet the multifarious demands of Church life.

Nevertheless when one looks at one's bookshelves, and thinks about those books which have proved of most service to himself, and which he would most cordially commend to his brethren, he finds himself confronted with an almost impossible

task. The trouble, of course, is not to find sufficient matter, but the right sort of matter; to say enough to stimulate hope and sacrifice, and yet to preserve some sense of proportion, and some regard for the magazine space allotted to him.

There are some books which every minister must possess in spite of all his wife may say, and whatever be the condition of the children's boots. He must smuggle them on to his shelves in some way or other, and in a surreptitious manner if it is necessary to avoid irritating domestic comment. Was it not Robertson Nicol's father who used to wheel the parcel up from the station in a barrow at dead of night? It is always possible to make one's coat last out for another season: or, if the worst comes to the worst, he can leave his tobacco pouch empty for a few weeks. But by hook or by crook the thing must be done. And these books which he must have are not always the kind usually termed inexpensive; though they are amazingly cheap when one bears in mind the cost of labour, brains and materials.

He must have a few volumes of the International Critical Commentary. If he can afford no other, let him at least get Driver's Deuteronomy and Sanday and Headlam's Romans. Moreover, unless he is one of these unfortunate individuals who got into the ministry with "little Latin and less Greek," he must possess the Expositor's Greek Testament. If he belongs to that class he will still find a good deal of help in the Century Bible—in fact, however much he may know of ancient tongues, he will find that he cannot dispense with some of the volumes of that issue. From the Expositor's Bible he ought to have, as a minimum, the four volumes on Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, by George Adam Smith. Moreover he will avoid wasting money on a lot of fiddling things, if he gets Bruce's Apologetics, Gwatkin's Knowledge of God, and Macintosh's Person of Jesus Christ.

If the members of one's Diaconate or Church know that a real hunger for knowledge torments the minister they will usually be glad to help him out with the requisite books. If some good deacon will fit him out with the set of Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible he will be fairly equipped for a start. Anyway these things seem to be so important that when one speaks of inexpensive literature it can only be on the assumption that there is a minimum of solid and necessary literature on the elements



and fundamentals. The securing of these things is at least more important than the furnishing of the drawing room.

The Editor's limitation to inexpensive literature at once reminded me of a little book issued just prior to the war, by Longmans, Green & Co., entitled: Books to Read, A Reference List of Inexpensive Literature for Students of Christianity, with a prefatory note by the Archbishop of York. Price Sixpence. I find but one book in it which is as much as two-and-sixpence. As a rule one-and-sixpence is the limit by the compilers in an upward direction, and a penny in the downward direction. If anyone desires to indulge in a perfect orgy of "inexpensive literature" he cannot do better than spend his first sixpence on the purchase of this. No doubt for present use he will have to add fifty per cent on to the prices given as in 1914. But it is an amazing study of what really excellent material can be had at prices ridiculously low, even when you have made the necessary allowance for new days. On the whole I propose to keep outside the recommendations of that book, as it can so easily be procured.

In Jacks' People's Books there is a small volume by Bennett and Adeney, on the Bible and Criticism. Was sixpence, but is now a shilling. Its smallness may lead to an inadequate estimate of its worth, but it is more than a compilation, and anyone who has made its contents his own will not be at a disadvantage when matters of criticism are under discussion. It is also delightful reading, and a wonderfully successful attempt to give a birds-eye view of the general situation. The same publishers issue Peake's one-volume Commentary on the Bible, which, though it costs twelve-and-sixpence, is really inexpensive, since it is a perfect mine of information on everything concerning the Bible.

If one is unable to procure the rather expensive volumes of the International Critical Commentary there are other less costly series which aim at meeting the needs of English readers. Sometimes the best volume will be found in one series and sometimes in another. In the Cambridge Bible for Schools, especially in the new series, there are some numbers which every minister must possess, such as those on Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Job, Jonah, Hosea, Joel and Amos, and Daniel. The New Testament volumes are not quite so good. The newer series of the Century Bible is more compact, making

good pocket volumes. In this series there is work of special value on Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah and Daniel. In the New Testament portion the volumes on Acts, Romans and Revelation are specially worth possessing. New editions have just been issued of the Gospels, and are a great improvement on the old edition. In these the 1611 version is omitted, and in the Synoptics the sources are indicated in the margin. The prices of the Cambridge Bible differ considerably; those of the Century Bible are three-and-sixpence. In Murby's Larger Scripture Manuals by Dr. C. Knapp, there are good volumes on Mark and Luke. These are all cheap commentaries.

In the field of History, Doctrine, and Religious Philosophy there are many gems to be found at a small outlay. Most men know Glover's "Conflict of Religions," but not everyone knows that its most beautiful chapter, that on Jesus of Nazareth, can be purchased separately, for twopence, from Headley Bros. His "Jesus of History" is issued in a cheap form at half-a-crown. His "Jesus in the Experience of Men" has not yet come out in paper covers. If one cannot obtain the volumes of the International Theological Library there are similar series of books which cost considerably less. Take Duckworth's "Studies in Theology." If you were fortunate enough to buy in pre-war days you would get them at about two shillings a volume: now you will have to pay five shillings. But it is a series containing such books as Rashdall's Philosophy and Religion, Inge's Faith and its Psychology, Moffatt's Theology of the Gospels, J. K. Mozley's Doctrine of the Atonement, and Wheeler Robinson's Religious Ideas of the Old Testament. That makes a remarkable twenty five shillings' worth, and of books of which no scholar can afford to be ignorant.

Years ago T. & T. Clark issued a series of Bible Class Handbooks. It must be remembered that the Bible Classes meant are in Scotch parishes, and the work implied is more extensive and thorough than would usually be accomplished in Bible Classes elsewhere. Take Candlish's books on Doctrine e.g. The Doctrine of God, The Doctrine of Sin, and The Work of the Holy Spirit. It is difficult to conceive of an ordinary Bible Class submitting to such rigorous discipline. The books seem too small for themes so vast, and old fashioned at that; but you must know something of the position as it was, before you can understand the position as it is. In this same series is

Marcus Dods' *Genesis*; cheaper and better than his volume in the *Expositor's Bible*, also his *Post-Exilian Prophets*. There is also Davidson's *Hebrews*, Henderson's *Palestine*, and Lindsay's *Reformation*, which even the student who possesses the two big volumes in the *International Theological Library* cannot afford to overlook. Another even cheaper series is Jack's *Century Bible Handbooks*, containing Peake's *Religion of Israel*, and Frank's *Man, Sin, and Salvation*. Still another series needs to be named, the *Home University Library*, which, in the field of *Comparative Religion* contains Margoliouth's *Mohammedanism*, and Giles' *Civilisation of China*. One ought also to possess Selbie's *Nonconformity*.

R. C. Gillie, in his "Minister in the Modern World," says that in the preparation of sermons we are in danger of falling too much under the spell of the spirit of our time, and so to adjust scripture to life rather than life to scripture. And he says that Church History is a great corrective, both for our own minds and for the minds of our people; but that we use it too little in Free Church pulpits. The minister who knows little about Church History is likely to have some bad hours if he has any conscience. It is happily possible to get much valuable help in this field at small cost. And there are two periods with which he ought to be specially familiar, what is known as the Age of the Fathers, and the period of the Reformation. If he has sufficient possession of himself he will find some excellent work done by Anglicans. Bate's *History of the Church to 325* is published by Rivingtons at two-and-sixpence, and Leighton Pullan's *Church of the Fathers* at five shillings. Both are good, but the latter is specially stimulating and perhaps the more so that one so often will be provoked by the conclusions reached by the writer. For the Reformation period Lindsay's *Little book* above named is a perfect marvel, wonderfully sane, full, and well-balanced—and it costs two shillings.

It can by no means be assumed that the majority of men keep up their language study throughout the ministry. The earnest man probably does. It would be a great gain to most men to do a little serious study in *Patristics*. For those willing to undertake the work the S.P.C.K. have issued some very cheap aids. In their *Texts for Students* the originals of important works can be had for a few pence, e.g. *Selections from Josephus*, *Tacitus*, etc. for threepence, the *Epistle of Clement of Rome* for

sixpence, the Epistles of Ignatius for a shilling, the Teaching of the Twelve for fourpence, the Epistle of Barnabas for sixpence. If you want translations to help you along, they can be had for most of these at prices but a little more. No man can urge the plea of inaccessibility for omitting a study which will transport him into the ages when the Church was in process of formation, and enable him to recapture something of the atmosphere of those far-off days.

Throughout this paper the writer has endeavoured to avoid all expensive publications. and has limited himself with trifling exceptions to strictly theological literature. There is one book outside that field which he is tempted to commend, viz.: Jevons "Personality." It is an easy book to read, but it conveys more philosophy than many bigger and more difficult books; and it deals with just such questions as are uppermost in men's mind to-day. I venture to say that after reading it one will have a better grounding than can be supplied by most books.

It may be remarked that no books published by the Christian Student Movement have been mentioned, except Dr. Glover's. That is partly because they are seldom essential books: they are rather the applications of theology to the conduct of life, so far as the department of theology is concerned. There are two very important books on Psychology in its relation to Religion which call for special mention. One is Pym's Psychology and the Christian Life, at prices from half-a-crown; and the other is Barry's Christianity and Psychology, at five shillings. Both make fine reading.

Apart from Hasting's Dictionary the cost of the books named runs to somewhere about Ten Pounds; and the only section of theology entirely ignored is textual criticism, in which subject the best book costs the least. It is Lake's Text of the New Testament, published by Rivingtons at two-and-sixpence. For so reasonable a sum a beginner may acquire the skeleton of a good theological library, without launching out into those larger works which he will inevitably find himself compelled to purchase to satisfy the hunger created by those here named. If, in addition, one takes in a theological magazine, such as the Expositor or the Expository Times, he will be able to keep himself fairly abreast of the advances constantly being made in this fascinating subject.

R. C. FORD, M.A., B.D.

## BOOKS RECOMMENDED IN ANSWER TO ENQUIRIES.

**O**N PSYCHOLOGY—Tansley's is a competent handbook, but McDougall's "Outline of Psychology" just published by (Methuen 12/- net) is likely to be much better. I have not seen it yet, but the author is one of our leading authorities, a masterly and judicious writer, and his earlier "Introduction to Social Psychology" (Methuen 7/6 net) ranks almost as a classic. All who have read Dr. J. A. Hadfield's essay on "The Psychology of Power" in "The Spirit," will want to obtain his new book on "Psychology and Morals" (Methuen 6/- net).

As an elementary introduction to the "New Psychology," a very clear and simple outline, nothing could be better than Miss V. M. Firth's "The Machinery of the Mind," (Allen and Unwin 3/6 net). I can also recommend "Recent Psychology and the Christian Religion" by C. E. Hudson (Allen and Unwin 3/6 net) a sane and suggestive discussion. Another very lucid and helpful book not to be overlooked is Professor J. G. Mackenzie's "Modern Psychology and the achievement of Christian Personality" (National Sunday School Union 2/6 net).

As between the two books published by the Student Christian Movement Pym's "Psychology and the Christian Life," and Barry's "Christianity and Psychology;" my own preference is for Pym, although both are worth reading. Barry's book is not too well put together. "An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion" by R. H. Thouless (Camb. Univ. Press 7/6 net) is admirably careful and clear, whereas "The Psychology of Christian Life and Behaviour" by W. S. Bruce (T. & T. Clark 7/6 net) is in my opinion a disappointing book, and not worth the money, being very slight and cursory in its discussions of the large number of topics upon which it touches.

No doubt those of us who can manage it would be well advised to study the works of the great pioneers, Freud and Jung, particularly perhaps the latter's "Psychological Types" just published by Kegan Paul (25/- net). But such books as these are not within the compass of us all.

I do not know of any book on the Textual Criticism of the Bible as a whole. There is an interesting little book on the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament by T. N. Weir (if it is still

published). For the New Testament there is nothing better Kenyon's Handbook (Macmillan 10/-); Nestle's "Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament" (Williams and Norgate 8/-); Souter's "Text and Canon of the New Testament" (Duckworth 3/6 net): and Lake's excellent little volume "The Text of the New Testament" (Rivington's 1/- net) can all be recommended.

E. J. ROBERTS, B.A., B.D.



### PRAYER UNION NOTES.

By the Secretary.

**T**HE older members of the Prayer Union have been delighted to read of the wonderful activities of their former President, Dr. Meyer, in Australia, and heartily joined in the congratulations with which he was welcomed on his return. It is with much concern we have heard of his serious illness, and our prayers will be offered for a speedy restoration of his health and strength.

During the recent holiday months five letters have reached us about Prayer Union matters. Two brethren, however, have written expressing their regret that the conferences and quiet days which we used to hold have been discontinued.

We fear that we have been remiss in this matter. When the Prayer Union was emerged into the Fraternal Union it was agreed that a sub-committee should be appointed annually by the committee of the Fraternal Union, which should be charged with the arrangement of devotional meetings for Ministers. It being stipulated that any expenses incurred by this Committee should be subject to the sanction of the Committee of the Fraternal Union. This agreement seems to have been overlooked and as the result no such meetings have been arranged. The various Conferences of the Prayer Union were greatly appreciated and there can be no doubt, that large numbers of our brethren would welcome their resumption. The secretary would be glad to receive suggestions or proposals to this end. In the meanwhile might not our brethren in various parts of the country, and specially those in the larger towns, arrange amongst themselves for meetings of a devotional character. We have already too many meetings and conferences on all

kinds of subjects, but most of us feel that we could do with more help than we get in the cultivation of our own spiritual life. A friend told us the other day that the ministers of Newark are accustomed to meet for prayer every Tuesday morning at half past seven. Perhaps this may be a helpful suggestion to brethren in other towns. Such a meeting held occasionally could not fail to be helpful.

The members of our Prayer Union will we are sure be following the Evangelistic Campaign in London by Revs. Douglas Brown and Lionel Fletcher, with sympathetic and prayerful interest. Certainly the opening of the Campaign, has been encouraging and justifies the great expectations which so many of us have entertained concerning it.

We hope that members of the Fraternal Union, who have not yet done so, will join the Prayer Union section. The only undertaking we ask from those who join, is that they should unite in prayer for each other and for all Christian workers in all lands, on the morning of the Lord's Day. Cards of membership may be had on application to the Prayer Union Secretary—J. E. Martin, The Manse, Erith, Kent.



#### SECRETARY'S NOTES.

**I**T is very gratifying to know that the regular issue of the "Fraternal" is greatly appreciated, as also the well-selected and helpful articles gathered together by the Editor, Rev. F. Goldsmith French, to whom we are all so greatly indebted.

Much interest has been awakened by the review upon "Superannuation" which I understand has been discussed in many local Fraternal. It would be helpful if any comments or criticisms could be forwarded to me so that they might be dealt with by our Council. The next meeting of the Council is fixed for November 20th at 2 p.m.

The Librarian, Rev. W. H. Pratt, of Norwood, reports increased interest in our Circulating Library. All applications should be made direct to him.

May I urge that the subscriptions for this year (which are due in January) should be sent on immediately, as it is only possible for us to send out the "Fraternal" quarterly if these are forthcoming. *Have you sent yours this year?*

## THE MEMORY OF THE FAITHFUL.

**A**T the moment of going to press, we have news of the passing away of one who has played a great part in matters concerning the FRATERNAL UNION and its organ, from the first. John Henry French, our Treasurer, always faithful, eager, and kindly, gave of his best to all the affairs of this Union of ours, and truly served its best interests. He was so vigorous and vital, that he seems to have gone all too soon from work which he loved, and of which he never tired. But we may be thankful that he was spared any long decline of strength and that he laid down his many activities at a time when things both true and new were still attractive to him. He was ever learning and counted not himself to have attained. To his wife we tender our very sincere sympathy.