

## Rev. T. Sykes and the Brotherhood Federation

### Transcription of article published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Rev. H.J. Taylor

TOM SYKES has yielded to the earnest and repeated entreaties of the Brotherhood Movement to become its National Secretary for five years.

The General Committee and Conference of our Church have reluctantly but heartily released him for this special work. The opportunities of the position were so put and pressed upon him and us, that no other course could be taken without withstanding a clear sense of duty. All parties concerned have been splendidly magnanimous; only one consideration has prevailed — how to best use a strong man and a more than national opportunity in the interests of the Kingdom of God at this crisis.

The leaders of the Brotherhood movement are more solicitous about the state of religion and the quality and utility of the manhood in the land, than about the movement itself. That (the movement) is relatively insignificant— a means to an end. With this solemn concern over-riding all else, they also saw in this young and virile preacher, a man marked out for this hour.

Twice in one brief year our Church has shown that the interests of the Kingdom are more clamant in her councils than anything merely denominational. A foremost missionary has been lent to the Bible Society, and now Tom Sykes has been liberated from circuit work and let loose in the Brotherhood movement. Our sacrifice will promote our salvation, but it would be right in any case.

The National Secretary enters this new sphere with brilliant prospects of every success. First of all, he sees clearly; he undertakes work, the need of which is not only beyond question, but fundamental to almost all questions.

Whether the Brotherhood movement is to find a renaissance in the new day which has already dawned, or to fizzle out, has now to be decided. Five hundred thousand men are linked up in P.S.A.'s. The movement was born in an evangelical revival. It came out of the Moody and Sankey Mission—it took on and has done wonders, but in some places it lacked virility. When the men come back from the War, they will ask for vim, for reality and utility, and now is the time for the Brotherhood movement to recover its soul, and get that soul incarnated in the life of this land. So of the Church. With all its hold and value, it simply is not gripping as a whole, either the best or the worst men of our time. Services do not pull religion lacks bite. There is no instance in this generation in which organised Christianity has been the determining factor in any great national or international decision of supreme moment.



So, too, of religion itself. Its place in days gone by, in the evolution of British civilisation has been paramount and central. It is still leaven. It is really and actually in the midst, but its grip is not tightening; its range is not extending.

If of all days, this is the day to avoid panic, it is also the day to remember S.R. Gardiner's words: "The secret of Statesmanship is power to recognise existing facts."

Tom Sykes has that power, and, what is more, he clearly sees the remedy. He stands for the renaissance of religion. He believes that the everlasting gospel will only find acceptance, and only ought to find acceptance, if it is as fresh as the age in which we live.

Whether we like it or not, religion only has its reasonable opportunity, when, like business, science and war, it is literally up-to-date in its presentation and methods, and Tom Sykes—an on-looker can say—has for these many years illustrated in his own ministry in the capital city of the North, this up-to-date presentation, and now he steps forth into the national arena to show the methods through a great organisation by which it should work.

In the *Holborn Review* for July, Mr. Sykes sets forth, by request, his doctrinal creed. It is severely evangelical in its substance. Jesus and His Cross are its substance. Jesus and His Cross are in the midst, but it is startlingly fresh in its form. This explains. He aims at such an interpretation of religion as will be effective in the modern mind. He regards this as essential if the men of the nation are to be captured, the Church resuscitated, and the Brotherhood movement above all else made a religious force in the land.

Along this same line he hopes to help the closer union between Brotherhoods and Churches. They should be one, and not—as is too often the case, distinct organisations under one roof. While men and women are entering every form of service side by side, it will spell calamity if the Churches by ritualism or any other means merely gets the women, and the Brotherhood the men. The same process will work toward the unification of the Church of Christ. Protestantism shattered unity to save the truth. The fuller truth should bring these ecclesiastical divisions to an end. A process of denominational disarmament should take place. This will take time and many funerals of men and things, but come it must, and a National Brotherhood movement, knowing and preaching simple and sublime New Testament religion, will mightily contribute to its coming.

Cardinal Manning held that it was the business of the Church to be "constantly interfering with the world."

Tom Sykes shares that view. He will all over this land call Brotherhoods and Churches to united aggression. Standing on the defensive will not suffice—evil must be specifically and constantly challenged. He will lead a great offensive. The mobilised manhood of the nation will, by the grace of God, find its substitute for War in the new war on drink and all its makers and their allies; war on slums and all their degenerating and demoralising evils; war on materialism and its pernicious claims to the rulership of life; war on unchristian commercialism and its vicious influence in the Church of Christ; war on class hatreds and all their kith and kin in human society; war on red tape — mountains high—and all its obstruction of humane activity; and most of all, war to the knife on the new anarchy which imperils the very existence of every form of freedom. In the name of the Defence of the

Realm, men in the places of the mighty are endangering the liberties the centuries have won with blood. Here are the coming wars: the moral substitutes for war for which Henry James called aloud, but which he has not lived to see. Every discriminating lover of the race in our Israel. will, amid these far-reaching clarion calls to battle, lift a prayer for the man who joyfully but humbly steps to the front of the fray.

---

#### References

*Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1917/564