

THE FRATERNAL.

The Editor will be glad to have the offer of short papers on matters of interest to men in the ministry, and also brief communications in the form of correspondence. The latter must be really brief and to the point.

Vol. II., No. 2.

MAY, 1908.

The Units and the Unity.

A copy of last month's number of "The Fraternal" was sent to every minister on the Baptist handbook list, whether a subscriber to the Fraternal Union or not. The same course has been adopted this month. The present number however has very special significance. It contains the first report of an experimental year during which the attempt has been made for the first time to join together the scattered and isolated units of our ministry. The work of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal Union, in its first year, is recorded here, and the record offered to the brethren of the ministry for their information and encouragement.

The number also contains the announcement of the amalgamation of the Prayer Union with the Fraternal Union. The former society, which has done invaluable service for years past has thrown in its lot with the newer and more compact body so that we have now one society covering all the activities of our ministerial life. We are united for mutual help in material things; for consultation in matters affecting our common interests; for the increase of our fitness in our vocation, and not least of all for constant prayer for each other. The possibilities of such organisation as we now possess are limitless.

It will not be possible to make the same general distribution of "The Fraternal and Remembrancer," in any succeeding month. Opportunity is therefore given to the ministers to join their own society and

receive its magazine regularly. Brethren will please notice the enclosed slip which needs only their signature and an accompanying 2s. 6d. and the simple procedure of posting, in order to put them as units of the ministry, into unity with their brethren. It is surely worth such sacrifice, if it is a sacrifice, to join in this first attempt to unite forces and so help the isolated and lonely to feel their part in a great brotherhood.

The Arrested Progress.

The arrested progress in our church life has been much in the thoughts of all who gathered at the Spring Meetings of our Union. The subject was in the air before. The presidential address and the strong earnest paper by the Secretary of the Union, both tended to make the matter one of very grave consideration.

It is not a little startling to realise that all this heart searching and we may say, disappointment and almost dismay, should come at the end of such a period as the last twenty years. They have been years of unceasing activity. The multiplication of societies in every church has gone on without any check. The P.S.A. movement has been developed and confirmed as an almost universal institution. Christian Endeavour has been imported from the land of all remedies. The Federation of the Free Churches has been accomplished and heralded in some quarters as a millenium. At the end of all this, or at the height we may rather say, there is an arrest in the progress of our church life which causes sorrow and wonder.

It may be possible in the pages of this magazine to face and discuss some of the factors in the problem with frankness, for this is virtually a private publication. Some amount of privacy is needed in matters like this. Plain speaking is necessary whenever difficulties have to be faced and surmounted, but that it is desirable to sift

the whole matter of the condition of the Society of Christ in the hearing of an alien and unsympathetic world, may be very gravely doubted. For ourselves we have no manner of doubt that it is wholly mischievous. There have been some of our leaders in the past to whom we might have addressed a very pertinent plea that they should not undertake public confessions and repentances for their brethren of the ministry and the churches. We remember one who confessed quite needlessly and inaccurately to a lack of working men deacons in our churches. It was a wholly mischievous confession, for coming from such a quarter and given such publicity as it had, it conveyed an entirely false impression to the labouring classes of the country, in whose journals it was reported. That however is but a small and relatively unimportant instance of the particular folly which we deplore, a folly which is not softened in any way by the greatness or goodness of the leader who commits it. We may be permitted to doubt whether Paul would have said about the Corinthian Christians what he said to them.

We have no Roman theory of the church to maintain; but we have something better than that, we have the Biblical and perpetual ideal of the church as a body which does its Master's work chiefly through its spiritual reputation. God forbid that it should have a false one enhanced by sophistries and delusive concealments of any corruptions which may exist. On the other hand let us plead that the errors of judgment and the slackness of heart should be corrected where all such things should be, in solemn and private places where humble prayer can be made, and not in windy assemblies where men applaud the exposure of their own weaknesses.

The Minister as a Man of Business.

Some there be that account slovenliness of method as a sign of grace, and esteem unbusiness-like ways

as evidence that they are in the prophetic succession. Others there are who imagine that to be a capable man of affairs is the same as being a man of God, and account powers of organisation an efficient substitute for spiritual insight in the study and inspiration in the pulpit. Between this Scylla and that Charybdis has the true minister to steer his way, conscious that there is some natural antagonism between method and genius, business-like capacity and seer-like insight, but conscious also that since he is not under nature but under grace these antagonisms have to be reconciled.

That a minister should be a man of business does not mean that he should dabble in commercial schemes or be familiar with the ways of high finance, ways that are reputed to be as dark as those of the "Heathen Chinee." Still less is it desirable that he should acquire a reputation for being able to advise inexperienced ladies in the matter of investments, since on the small basis of knowledge of such things that comes in a minister's way, the advice, where taken, often turns out disastrously. Even in matters of law he had better defer to the experts, although if he be able to draw up a simple will, see it duly signed and attested, such knowledge may be of occasional advantage; and a little learning in the matter of trust deeds and the duty of trustees need not be a dangerous thing.

But the minister as a man of business is not called upon to be an expert. Rather are his qualifications those general ones which lie at the roots of all truest service. Punctuality, promptness, courtesy, consideration of the time and responsibilities of other people, the faculty of dealing with men, of entering sympathetically into their point of view, of remembering that the anxieties of a business man in these trying and difficult times are at least as great as those of any minister and that in addition they have often to be faced in silence, unsustained by the sympathy of friends which is the happy prerogative of ministerial life. The minister who "dwells among his own people" and who

has few secrets, cannot but be touched by the sympathy which is his in every trial. But his deacon who is so swift to sympathise with him, may have to carry a burden of anxiety which he dare not hint even to his pastor, which perhaps in mistaken kindness he withholds even from his own wife.

These qualities from the least to the greatest, from the prompt answering of letters to the sympathy which shows itself in the sermon, are best learnt in actual business life. A man should at least matriculate in the university of commerce before he enters on his theological studies. A couple of years in a large city office, where discipline is strict, punctuality enforced, and where men quickly find their level should be demanded by our College Committee of all or nearly all candidates. Not a few wrecked churches would have been saved if the minister, good man, had been able to exchange a little of his conceit for the same amount of tact, an exchange swiftly made in the rough and tumble of commercial life. And if familiarity with commercial life sometimes helps one to realise with how little wisdom great affairs are often conducted, one will be able in after years to remember that great merchants after all are but men.

But to descend to particulars. When a man has been compelled to attend an office regularly every morning he has acquired a habit which stands him in good stead in later years. The office is exchanged for a study and the ledger for Sanday on "Romans," or Westcott on "Hebrews," but the hour remains the same and at nine a.m. he is at his desk. So to, if he has obtained familiarity with accounts; he has no longer to work out problems of mileage, or balance pass-books, but his own accounts will be kept accurately. He will know precisely how his affairs stand and in the matter of moneys entrusted to him for disbursement in charity he will be scrupulously exact. Further we may expect him to be punctual in his appointments, for he remembers that time is money and he has no right to compel other people to waste that which is as valuable to them as to him.

Nor will he hide incapacity under the excuse that business is business and religion is—something else. A church meeting is not less a means of grace when those taking part in it are conscious that the chairman knows the rules which experience has suggested for conduct of public meetings and is able to use them not as their slave but as their master.

I feel that these few sentences do but touch the fringe of my subject. It is a matter for regret that so little literature on the subject exists, especially from a Free Church point of view. There is a valuable chapter in Dr. Watson's "Cure of Souls," and Dr. Washington Gladden's "Christian Pastor" is useful, though its value to us is affected by its American point of view. There is great need for a careful and comprehensive handbook for Free Church ministers, dealing with all the machinery of a congregation, the relation of a minister to civic and social organisations, the legal questions which arise in his work, and kindred matters. Such a book could hardly be short, nor could it very well be the work of one man. Cannot someone be persuaded to edit a work of the kind and associate with himself competent specialists? It would be a work worthy of the attention of our council.

C. W. VICK.

The Prayer Union Meetings.

The amalgamation of the Fraternal Union and the Prayer Union has been consummated upon the most satisfactory basis. As advertised, the first meeting of the Prayer Union was held at Kingsgate Chapel, on April 28th, at 2.30. The assembly was not large but was fairly representative. In the absence of the President, the Rev. J. R. Wood, as was most fitting, presided. He asked that prayer might be offered for Mr. Meyer, who according to his printed programme would leave Cape Town for Kimberley that day. Mr.

Martin reported encouraging progress in the negotiations entered into with the Committee of the Fraternal Union. The assembly resolved that proposal 2, as published in the last issue of the Remembrancer, be submitted to the Fraternal Union as needing alteration, so as to include any ministers or missionaries in charge of bonâ-fide Baptist work in the Prayer Union Section. At the meeting of the Fraternal Union subsequently held in Kingsgate Chapel this was submitted by Mr. Foster and readily agreed upon.

On Thursday afternoon, April 30th, at 3 o'clock, the Annual Meeting of the Prayer Union was held. Again the Rev. J. R. Wood occupied the chair. After prayer the Secretary presented his report, and the Rev. J. C. Foster stated the position with regard to the united Unions. The Rev. James Mursell, of Adelaide, who received a hearty welcome, gave a most impressive address, based on the letter to the Church at Ephesus. Refreshments were served in the Bloomsbury Hall, and the Rev. G. Hooper and Dr. Marshall expressed the thanks of the brethren to the ladies who presided at the tables.

In the future therefore the two Unions will be merged into one for most functions and purposes. Thus there will be one meeting only for the Spring and Autumn gatherings of the Baptist Union. A special committee will be appointed to deal with the Prayer Union branch of the work. Applications for membership, and for the arrangement of Conferences, or Quiet Days for the Deepening of Spiritual Life, are still to be made to the Rev. J. E. Martin, of Erith.

To clear all the expenses of the Prayer Union we need about £1 10s. We should be glad to hear from any of our members who could help us to meet this deficit.

We trust all former members of the Prayer Union will continue this membership by sending subscription for the current year to Rev. R. Vernon Bird, "Struan," Julian's Road, Stevenage, Herts. The subscription is 2s. 6d. per annum. This will include the Monthly Magazine—"The Fraternal and Remembrancer."

Devotional Papers.

A PLEA FOR INTROSPECTION.

That great modern master of introspection—that relentless heart searcher amongst living preachers, Dr. Alexander Whyte, says: “I would leave the church even of my fathers, and become anything as far as churches go, if I could get a minister who held my face close and even closer to my own heart. Nor would I spend a shilling or an hour that I could help on any impertinent book—any book that did not powerfully help me in the one remaining interest of my one remaining life: a new nature and a new heart. No, not I. No, not I any more.” It is impossible to escape from the impact of the tremendous energy of these words. We have, however, good reason to know that the author’s principles are not more rigid than his practice. The cry of morbidity raised against introspection is often the cry of the superficial alarmist and the coward. Men who fear to know the truth and to face the truth in every department of life, are neither brave men nor the saviours of the race. All moral reformation and progress are the result of free enquiry and close investigation. Men commend the scientists for keen and insistent investigation of the secrets of nature, and they deserve it; for the patient work of Darwin, Huxley, and Tyndall has brought many physical facts to light that have enriched the solid knowledge of mankind and accelerated the advancement of the race; why then disallow similar psychological methods. The heart must be known that its moral sicknesses and diseases may be dealt with. Wherein then lies the morbidity of this knowledge? Clearly not in the fact of the knowledge, and as manifestly not in the legitimate use of it; it can therefore only lie in the abuse of it. Therefore let us not condemn, but encourage and practice that introspection which will lead to the profoundest knowledge of the human heart. We approve the Socratic method, the

wise old philosopher pierced strata after a doubtful statement until he got to the bed-rock of truth.

The Baconian or inductive system rejuvenated physical science. The most comprehensive discovery of data provides the best foundation for theoretic structure, indeed universal data would issue in a permanent system, it is imperfect discovery that involves reconstruction. Diagnosis in case of disease is essential and the most thorough is the best. Let us not therefore decry introspection; it is the first portal into the heights and depths of the interior life.

Dr. Whyte, like all great penitents and all great saints, is never tired of urging the need of deep heart searching. His chapter on the Bunyan character, "Mr. Prywell," will take one far in this divine art. He heads this chapter thus: "Search me, O God, and know my heart." David—"Let a man examine himself." Paul—"Look to yourselves." John—"Know thyself." Apollo—"To pry is another word for peer—to look narrowly or closely," and Mr. Prywell carried out his function conscientiously for "he was a great lover of Mansoul." For a guide in this matter Dr. Whyte says, "Keep within reach John Owen's 'Temptation,' his 'Mortification of Sin in Believers,' his 'Nature and Power of Indwelling Sin,' and John Bunyan's 'Holy War.'" To enforce this duty he quotes a number of authors, and these are sayings we shall all like to have at hand; I give them therefore instead of words of my own. Thus Augustine says: "A good man would rather know his own infirmity than the foundations of the earth or the heights of the heavens." Thus Cicero: "There are many hiding-places and recesses in the mind." And thus again Seneca: "You must know yourself before you can amend yourself. And 'unknown' sin grows worse and worse and is deprived of cure." This chapter gathers up quite a literature on this theme, and he who would oppose this teaching would have to set himself against the sentiments and practices of the greatest and best of mankind.

May I urge this duty from one other ground, namely, that after all the heart is both the true 'source and arena' of a man's life. From the heart he lives, within his heart are the exploits of his life performed. From his heart his motives arise, within his heart are the actions that determine destiny resolved. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he." The large life of a man is lived in his soul, the little is often that which alone is visible to his fellow men. Except a man be an author, painter, architect, or a public man of affairs, men know very little about him. Obscurity and silence veil much from the eye, and good and great men are often both retired and reticent. Strong and sensitive men are often silent. The outward incidents of John Bunyan's life were shared by many of his contemporaries, but the eyes of his soul penetrated into the depths of Hades and the heights of Heaven. And exactly pertinent to our argument is the 'Grace abounding,' the marvellous experiences there recorded still swept through the soul of Bunyan revealed or not. We are thankful these facts of the soul were not buried in a grave of dumbness, yet many a man has felt the same who has not been able to speak. The wealth of Shakespeare lies not in his knowledge of historic incidents—this knowledge in his case was not comprehensive—but in his creative genius. Many of his contemporaries took the grand tour and sailed distant seas, but they saw little; Shakespeare migrated between Stratford-on-Avon and London, but the whole world of mankind lived in his heart. Here then within the heart is the loom of destiny; here are opened up the springs of the eternal; here a man finds himself, his God, and the Kingdom of Heaven. The importance of the interior experience in the rise and development of the religious life cannot be over estimated. A crowd of quotations from the greatest saints might be adduced, but I must ask my brethren to take them for granted on the ground of lack of space. My simple drift is to show that the making of the Godly life is carried on within the heart, and we must seek to know as fully as possible this mysterious labyrinth.

My aim at this time is to put in a strong plea for self knowledge, or at least for introspection with a deeper knowledge of self as the issue. 'The method and the temper' in which this pursuit should be prosecuted must await future treatment.

But that I may touch a practical truth before closing let us sensibly realize that the 'searcher' is not self but God, through the faculties of the man; "the Holy Spirit who searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God;" especially the deep things of God in man. The issue therefore is not the attainment of a curious knowledge, but a downright reaching forth for an apprehension of the forces of life and death working in the soul. The three leading phases that mark spiritual development have from ancient times been denominated as "the purifying, illuminating, and uniting with God." Introspection should be carried out with the view of advancing the soul's progress in all these particulars. Our prayer must be, "Search me, O God and know my heart, and make me to know my heart, and Thy claims upon me. Let me know what Thou dost find polluted, dark, and rebellious in me; and purify, illumine and unite me unto Thyself." The end of introspection is not self-justification but the justification of God, not the indulgence of the creature but the glorifying of the Creator. In his writings William Law does not allow one long to forget the claims of God. Thus he says: "As all men have all their powers and faculties from God, so all men are obliged to act for God, with all their powers and faculties." He spends so much of his time in making out a case for God that all his sympathies seem to be withdrawn from man. This however is not the case, because he shows in the most convincing way that to be obedient to the Divine will is not only the way of duty but blessedness. Therefore the saving issue of all introspection is that we take sides with God against all our sins and infirmities; that we come out on the side of health and righteousness.

J. C. FOSTER.

“The Fraternal” Notice Board,

AND RESULTS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING.

THE MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION of 2s. 6d., which includes “The Fraternal,” (post free) for twelve months, should be sent to the Hon. Secretary, Rev. B. Vernon Bird, “Struan,” Stevenage, Herts. It becomes due on January 1st of each year.

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BOOK FUND.

Many Ministers sadly need more books! This Fund helps them to meet this need. Those of very limited means—and, alas! how many there are—should apply for the advantages of the Benevolent Section, stating their “state,” family responsibilities and any other information that may help the Committee to consider their claims. It is hoped that those who read these lines will use the Book Fund to the greatest advantage to themselves, and make it known to their brethren. The Publication Department of the Baptist Union generously gives us half the gross profits on each invoice. Will those who are in Churches containing some of the “well-to-do,” not to say “wealthy” Baptists, interest some good soul in their Churches who would take charge of a COLLECTING CARD to collect for the Benevolent Section, and let the Secretary have their names and addresses so that he may send them cards.

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MUTUAL BENEFIT FUND.

The following instructions were given to the Committee by the Annual Meeting, on April 28th:

- (i.) “That, in the case of members who have attained the age of 60 years and apply for

benefit under (A), the Committee shall assume that the unemployment is not 'temporary;' but it be left to their discretion to grant benefit if satisfactory evidence is forthcoming that the unemployment is really temporary. In the case of members who have attained the age of 65 years, however, the Committee shall in no case grant benefit under (A)."

- (ii.) "That until the Fund shall be able to provide double benefit in case of (A) Lack of employment, and (B) Sickness, a member shall receive whichever benefit is the greater in amount.

And the Secretary gave notice, on behalf of the Committee of the Fund, that at the next Annual Meeting he would move the following addition to the Rules of the Fund:

Clause viii., Benefits—after (3) to add (4).

"No member shall receive, under Benefit A, more than a sum equal to twelve months' consecutive benefit in any period of five years of membership; nor under Benefit B, more than a sum equal to nine months' consecutive benefit in any period of three years of membership."

Readers are urged to join this Fund. Its success will depend upon the number who join. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Let those join who have no thought of their own possible need, as it is written:—"For I say not this, that others may be eased, and ye distressed: but by equality; your abundance being a supply at this present time for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want; that THERE MAY BE EQUALITY." Here is an opportunity for truly Christian altruism. At college some of us "pooled" our fees. At the

last hour before the Millennium we shall pool our stipends,—let us now go a little way in that direction, and pool “twenty shillings” out of every “two thousand,” to help those whom sickness lays aside, and those whom our denominational system leaves stranded without a church for a few months. And if there are some who not only have “Stipends,” but “take with them purses” on the Gospel errand, perhaps they will even give something of their “private fortune.” One brother beloved has already done this.

Applications for membership in this Fund should be sent to the Secretary, but remittances to the Treasurer, J. H. French, “after the applications are accepted.”

* * *

The Secretary would be grateful to the brethren if, before writing re. either of the Funds, they would carefully observe the Rules. This would save him a deal of unnecessary expense of time. The Secretary has all the duties of a pastorate, and other public work to fulfil, as well as that of his secretaryship. Will brethren kindly remember this? Many hours of work have been caused by little irregularities which might easily have been avoided.

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THE AMALGAMATION of THE PRAYER UNION with the FRATERNAL UNION was accomplished at the Annual Meeting on April 28th. We ate our Wedding Breakfast, as one of the speakers suggested, at Bloomsbury, on April 30th. Work hitherto carried on by the Prayer Union will now be in the hands of our Devotional Committee appointed by the General Committee, having its own Chairman and Secretary. Their names will be announced in the next number. The Devotional Secretary will deal

with the correspondence of this department. We shall now be linked up with ministers and missionaries in all parts of the world. A new rule was added to our Constitution to provide for this, as follows:

Such persons, being members of the Prayer Union at the date of amalgamation, as are ineligible for membership of the Fraternal Union, shall be considered Associates of the Fraternal Union, and be entitled to co-operate in that branch of the work carried on by the Devotional Committee, and additional Associates may be elected at the discretion of the Devotional Committee.

WE HAVE ALSO OPENED THE DOOR TO "PROBATIONERS," AND DELEGATES OF THE STUDENTS' UNION, by the following amendment of our Constitution:

CONSTITUENCY.

- (i.) All whose names are included in the Baptist Union Ministers' List, or Probationers' List, shall be eligible for membership.
- (ii.) The Baptist Students' Fraternal Union shall have the right to become affiliated, and to appoint from amongst its membership two students of each of the colleges as delegates to meetings of the Fraternal Union, the Students' Union subscribing one shilling for each of the delegates."

Thus we recognise our brotherhood with the men in college, and those entering the ministry. They do not however, become eligible for the Mutual Benefit Fund till they have been enrolled in the list of ministers.

At the ANNUAL MEETING THE OFFICERS were re-elected, and the following COMMITTEE was chosen:

E. BARLOW, B.A., Cricklewood, N.W.	G. P. MCKAY, Bournemouth.
F. G. BENSKIN, M.A. Clapton.	J. E. MARTIN, Erith.
W. E. BLOMFIELD, B.A., B.D., Rawdon.	F. B. MEYER, B.A., London.
CHARLES BROWN, Ferme Park.	T. PHILLIPS, B.A., Bloomsbury.
J. C. CARLILE, Folkestone.	J. EDWARD ROBERTS, M.A., B.D., Manchester.
A. J. DAVIES, Taunton.	J. H. RUSHBROOKE, M. A., Highgate.
HENRY DAVIS, Kettering.	W. R. SKERRY, Beckenham.
D. L. DONALD, Burton-on-Trent.	H. V. THOMAS, Manchester.
J. EDGAR ENNALS, B.A., B.D., Lowestoft.	J. F. TOONE, B.A., B.D., High Wycombe.
J. C. FOSTER, Forest Hill, S.E.	G. TURNER, Sutton.
F. GOLDSMITH FRENCH, Lee, S.E.	J. R. WALKER, Regent's Park.
C. M. HARDY, B.A., St. Albans.	W. T. WHITLEY, M.A., LL.D., Preston.
G. D. HOOPEE, S. Kensington.	JOHN WILSON, Woolwich.
F. A. JONES, Ilford.	J. R. WOOD, Holloway, N.
CHARLES JOSEPH, Cambridge.	
W. S. LORD, Loughton.	

The Secretary acknowledges receipt of BOOK FUND DEPOSITS from the following (Numbers of first receipts):—Nos. 1, 15/-; 2, £5; 5, 3/6; 7, 2/-; 11, 5/-; 14, 4/-; 16, 5/-; and DONATIONS FOR THE BENEVOLENT SECTION as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Herbert Watts, Esq., M.A., of Liverpool	5	0	0
J. T. Hart, Esq., of Lee, S.E.	2	10	0
J. C. Hart, Esq., "	2	10	0
Miss Ethel W. Bird, Windermere	0	2	0
Postage of parcel from the recipient of a Grant of Books	0	0	6
Total.....	£10	2	6

ENQUIRIES as to the price of books should not be sent to the Secretary of the Book Fund, but to Mr. C. L. Courtier, Baptist Publication Department, 4, Southampton Row, W.C. ORDERS, however, must be sent to the Secretary.