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A "League of Service."

Some suggestions towards an efficient Young People's Society.
By Rev. VICTOR RUSSELL, B.A.

In attempting an outline scheme of a Young People's organisation adapted to the conditions of our modern churches, a word of explanation is, perhaps, necessary.

No claim to originality is made. The suggestions come from so many quarters that it is impossible to trace all of them to their sources. One's aim, however, has been simply *to get the work done*, to consider no trouble excessive so long as something worth doing is likely to be achieved.

Neither is there intended any criticism of other organisations. The only test of any organisation is its ability to do the work needed. One is continually learning, and all who put 'first things first' are ready to make changes if there be a prospect of securing more fully the great object of our endeavour.

The following suggestions are simply the outcome of an attempt, covering several years, and carried on under varying conditions ranging from the life of Central London to that of a county town in East Anglia, including London Suburbia and the vigorous life of a Midland City.

It is, perhaps, only natural that I find the organisation continually changing in form. The main principles abide, but the methods are in a state of flux.

The present article is intended simply as a publication of the results of experiments, in the hope that they will evoke questions and correspondence.

I.—The Name: "THE LEAGUE OF SERVICE."

The Name of my own organisation is the "League of Service." It was adopted ten years ago in Birmingham. The late Dr. Paton (of Nottingham) had conceived a plan for a "*Brigade of Service.*" The word 'Brigade,' however, did not appeal to me as the most attractive, and, as my plan was somewhat different from that of Dr. Paton, I adopted the term 'League.'

Soon after this there was published in America a book by Mr. W. J. Dawson entitled "A Prophet in Babylon." In this work he developed what he called a "League of Service." The phrase was taken up by the late Rev. Albert Swift, and used as a subordinate title for the "Social Service Section" of his "Young People's Institute."

Personally, I see no reason why the phrase should not stand for the *whole* organisation. It has certain obvious advantages, for it embodies:—

1. The General Attitude and Aim.
2. The Co-operative Principal of the Society;

and this without any suggestion which may arouse prejudice. It is *fundamentally religious*, and yet *apparently secular*. In our approach to the outsider, the issue of programmes and syllabuses under this title is calculated to overcome possible prejudices.

II.—GENERAL OUTLINE SCHEME.

Two Sides—

“EQUIPMENT” or Programme,	and	“SERVICE.”
A.—GENERAL PROGRAMME.		
1. Christian Teaching or Devotional Section.		1. Sunday School and Institute Bible Classes, including League of Young Worshipers, Scout Troop, etc.
2. Literary Section.		2. Home Campaign.
3. Missionary Section.		3. Missionary Section (corresponding to similar Section under Programme.)
4. Social and Religious Problems Section.		
B.—STUDY CIRCLES (in connection with A.)		
1. <i>c.f.</i> “Student Christian Movement” Text Books.		4. Musical.
2. <i>c.f.</i> “National Home Reading Union” Syllabus, &c.		5. Library.
3. <i>c.f.</i> Young People’s Department of Missionary Society.		6. Social Service Section. Temperance Work. <i>e.g.</i> The “Temperance Circle” plan of Mr. W. Y. Fullerton.
4. <i>c.f.</i> S.S. Union—for courses of Study in S.S. Methods and Child Psychology.		Other Social Work according to ability.
<i>c.f.</i> Social Service Text-Books for Temperance, Poverty’ etc.		7. Temporary Special Sections. <i>e.g.</i> The “League of Honour” (for Girls and Women during war-time).
C.—AUXILIARIES.		
<i>e.g.</i> Recreative.		
<i>e.g.</i> Public Speaking Club.		

III.—EQUIPMENT (the Programme Side).

The plan can best be illustrated by an example, and I venture to give the Programme for the present Session. It is a very unambitious programme, due to the “War” conditions. I also give the explanations printed upon our Syllabus for the present term—

THE FRATERNAL

PROGRAMME.

Studies in Christian Teaching.

Oct. 5th. "**FAITH.**"—A Symposium.
Chairman: The President.

Studies in Modern Fiction.

Oct. 12th. "**THE FOUR FEATHERS.**" A Study
in Courage. A. E. W. Mason.

Studies in the Peoples and Problems of India.

Oct. 19th. **INDIA**, Its Geography, Races and History.

Studies in Religious and Social Problems.

Oct. 25th. **WAR AND PEACE.** "Germany and the
Next War." Gen. Von Bernhardi.

Studies in Christian Teaching.

Nov. 2nd. "**HOPE.**"—A Symposium.
Chairman: Mr. H. Underwood.

Illustrated Travel Talk.

Nov. 9th. "Through France and German Switzerland
before the Great War." By the President.

Studies in the Peoples and Problems of India.

Nov. 16th. **INDIA**, Its Customs and Religions.

Studies in Religious and Social Problems.

Nov. 23rd. **THE PSYCHOLOGY of a CHILD'S
SOUL.**

Studies in Christian Teaching.

Nov. 30th. "**LOVE.**"—A Symposium.
Chairman: Mr. H. S. Trent.

Studies in Modern Fiction.

Dec. 7th. "**RODDLES.**" By Paul Neuman.
A study in Ambition.

Studies in the Peoples and Problems of India.

Dec. 14th. **INDIA**, Its Customs and Religions.

Xmas Recess.

**THE PLAN AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE
SESSION, 1914-15.**

The Programme of the "League of Service" is divided into Four Sections, for each of which a Special Committee is responsible.

1. The Devotional Section, responsible for the "Studies in Christian Teaching."

Each of these Studies will take the form of a Symposium, and members are requested to bring apt quotations from various sources illustrating the meaning of the different topics. The proposed topics for the second quarter are:—

4. Truth. 5. Liberty. 6. Immortality.

2. The Literary and Musical Section, responsible for "Studies in Modern Fiction," and for an occasional Musical Evening. The same method will be followed as in the Devotional Section. The proposed topics for the second quarter are:—

3. "The Cloister and the Hearth"—A Study in Mediæval Europe, by *Charles Reade*.
4. "Long Will,"—A Study in Mediæval England, by *Florence Converse*.

3. The Missionary Section, responsible for the "Studies in the Peoples and Problems of India." Missionary Study Classes are to be held at 7 p.m. upon the two preceding Mondays, in view of the open Missionary Study Evening.

During the second quarter

The Influence of Christianity upon India, and the Renaissance in India will be reviewed.
"The Brahman Marriage" Demonstration given.

4. The Social and Religious Problems Section, responsible for the Studies coming under this heading. Preparation will be made by members, as in other sections.

During the second quarter the proposed topics are:

- "The United Baptist-Congregational Church,"
and "Woman and the State."

(With a view to such studies the President is giving lectures on "Social Evolution," and "Social Philosophy," upon alternate Wednesday and Friday evenings, under the auspices of the Worker's Educational Association.)

Three important advantages seem to be secured by this method—

1. The Unity of many interests.
2. One United Meeting only in the week.
3. The adaption of the Study Circle method to the Young People's organisation.

IV.—THE STUDY CIRCLE PLAN.

A Programme such as that suggested gives ample scope for all kinds of Study Circles, the number of such Circles being limited simply by the number of members and the time at their disposal.

In a thriving organisation there is no reason why *several* Study Circles should not be working at the same time. During any particular session one or more of the Circles might be regarded as of paramount importance, other circles being arranged as need arose, and dropped when no longer required.

The Christian Study or Devotional Section, might be one of considerable importance in which the members meet every week to study some aspect of Christian teaching. One of the text-books of the Student Christian Movement might well be taken, and at the monthly meeting arranged by this particular section, the leading ideas might be passed on in an attractive manner to those present.

The Week-Evening Meeting or Prayer Meeting might well be combined with this, the latter part of the meeting being devoted to Systematic New Testament Teaching on the 'Circle' plan.

The Literary Section might arrange a series of Literary Studies, meeting regularly, and doing the work in a thorough-going manner, the most interesting features of the work being passed on at the Monthly Meeting.

The Missionary Section ought in any case to arrange one or more Study Circles which would meet at least twice during the month in order to study more fully and arrange adequately the programme for their Monthly Meeting.

In this section I venture to give an outline. We have been taking studies in the "Peoples and Problems of India." Our second evening was given to the "Customs and Religions of India." The result of our Study Circle was that we arranged the following programme.

INDIA—ITS CUSTOMS AND
RELIGIONS.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Caste. | (a) Early Vedic Religion. |
| 2. Outline Scheme of Religions. | (b) Later Developments:
{ Brahmanas.
{ Upanishads. |
| 3. Two great Non-Christian Religions:
Hinduism v. Mohammedanism. | (c) Philosophic Hinduism:
The Vendanta. |
| 4. Hinduism. | (d) Definitions and Summary:
What is Hinduism?
(e) Divisions of Hinduism.
(f) Local Deities of Hinduism. |

The result of this arrangement, with the aid of a supply of diagrams from the B.M.S., was that we had a most useful meeting, without a suggestion of dryness. Those, of course, benefited most who had attended the previous Study Circles.

Religious and Social Problems Section.—In a League consisting of many members, a short series of Study Circles might well be arranged during one session for the "Study of Child Psychology," intended largely for the workers amongst the young. At another time the problems of Temperance, Poverty or Housing, might be taken for study, the results of the studies, as far as possible, being handed on to the united meeting. In the course of time this would probably lead to a Social Service Section, on the "Service" side.

Advantages.—By this plan all special interests are catered for, and the benefits derived by the people most con-

cerned are shared, in part, by the other members of the League.

In the case of a small Church, with but few young people, a less ambitious programme would of course, be followed. The general outline might be adopted, and only *one* special department for study taken during a particular session. In the other sections the different Committees would simply arrange for the meetings without special united study.

V.—AUXILIARIES.

Recreative Section.—This section would see to the organisation of all Sports Clubs—Tennis, Football, Cricket, Rowing and the Gymnasium. But this section would be regarded as an *extra, not an essential*, its members belonging, in addition, to some other section of the League.

Public Speaking Club.—A Public Speaking Club might be organised on the lines laid down by Professor Grenville Kleiser, at which young men could be trained in the art of speaking.

This again, might be either a temporary or a permanent club, in either case it should be regarded as part of the League's work.

VI.—SERVICE.

On the "Service" side, the League would embrace as many *Sections* of active service as are found necessary in the particular circumstances of any church.

1. **The Sunday School, etc.**—Embracing all workers in the Sunday School and "Institute," the workers in the League of Young Worshippers, Band of Hope, and all subordinate organisations for the instruction and benefit of the boys and girls.

By this union the Sunday School and the Young People would mutually benefit, the Sunday School securing workers, and the Young People learning to regard this important

branch as part and parcel of their work. In this connection it is necessary again to make clear that the "League of Service," as such, is *not a Controlling but a Helping Society*. No jurisdiction would be exercised over the Sunday School.

2. **The Home Campaign Section**—Consisting of all workers who are anxious to help forward the work of the Church itself in the town or the city. This help is given by distributing bills announcing services, arranging for the display of posters in windows and on hoardings, making arrangements for the Young People's Monthly Social Gatherings, distributing "Welcome Cards" and other literature at the Church itself, assisting in carrying on open-air work, helping in Mission work, etc., and lending a hand in the clerical work of an aggressive League.

When this branch of the work becomes very extensive, it may be found desirable to still further divide it.

3. **The Missionary Section**,—Comprising those who belong to the Missionary Section on the "Equipment" Side, and who undertake to arrange the *Missionary Démonstrations*, or *Missionary Exhibition*, or anything else of that nature calculated to arouse missionary zeal.
4. **The Musical Section**.—Embracing the Choir,—for all the members of the Choir should be encouraged to consider themselves the servants of the Kingdom and of the Church, and as such, rightful members of the "League of Service." Again, no jurisdiction is exercised.
5. **The Library Section**.—This would be an important section, though small in actual numbers, consisting of those who are willing to give time to the organisation of it. It would arrange:—

1. A "Book Reception", at which the "League of Service" Library could be started.
2. A Rota, according to which members would be on duty in the Library itself.
3. To secure a supply of the best weekly papers and monthly magazines.
(These can be *given* by individuals, and, at the end of each half-year, be sold, the money going towards the Library funds.)

Each of the Sections on the Programme side of the League should be represented on the Library Committee, and be ready to suggest additions to the library.

Quite a number of people are found willing to *lend books for a time* to such a library, the minister finding his library particularly valuable in this respect.

Those who use the Library are requested to present *one book*, approved by the Committee, every year.

6. **The Social Service Section.**

Under the Social Service Section would be included the Temperance work of the League. In order to economise time, a Temperance Organisation is needed which requires but few public meetings. This is provided by the excellent plan adopted by Mr. W. Y. Fullerton at Melbourne Hall, Leicester, in his "Temperance Circles." An organisation is formed ready for any emergency, having but one meeting annually.

Other Social Service for which the members were adapted would, of course, be undertaken.

By members of this section a brief campaign on behalf of Purity, under special circumstances, might be undertaken.

Such a list may, at first sight, appear staggering. In submitting it, however, one has in mind the conditions of a *live* Church in a great industrial centre, with hundreds of young people—potential enthusiasts—more or less associated with it. The scheme is open to endless modifications, and, as a matter of fact, can be worked, if properly organised, with perfect ease.

VII.—THE QUARTERLY COMMITTEE.

There should be regular Committees, but the frequency of such Committees should be reduced to the absolute minimum consistent with real efficiency.

There is no need, for instance, for any Committee, under normal circumstances, to meet more than once in three months— that is, assuming that the arrangements have been adequately made beforehand.

In the case of each Section, on the Service Side, there should be appointed a *Small Executive Committee*, consisting of about seven, to be called together in an emergency.

The plan of the Quarterly Committees is found to be one which economises time without impairing efficiency.

VIII.—THE CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP.

The following outline, taken from our present Syllabus, explains the conditions of Membership.

THE FRATERNAL

LEAGUE OF SERVICE.
Its Aims and Membership.

The Aims of the "League of Service" are:—

SERVICE. 1.—To form an Association of young people who desire to render what service they can to one another, and to the community in association with the Church.

EQUIPMENT. 2.—To provide meetings and classes whereby the members may fit themselves for service in Body, in Mind, and in Devotion to the Highest.

CO-OPERATION. 3.—To co-operate with one another and with the other sections of the Church in carrying out whatever service is possible for the advancement of the Kingdom of God.

RESPONSIBILITY. 4.—To so organize the work that the responsibility for initiating and carrying out the various plans, shall be shared very widely by the members.

Watchwords: —

1. Ready to Serve.
2. Fit to Serve.
3. Serving Together.
4. Sharing Responsibility.

MEMBERSHIP. Membership is therefore open to all who desire to render service in association with other members of the League, and who are willing to fit themselves to work together for the Church and the Kingdom of God.

SECTIONS. It is desired that all members attending the meetings should take an interest in at least one section of the arranged programme, and, as far as possible, should connect themselves with one branch of the active service of the League.

SUBSCRIPTIONS. The minimum subscription is 6d., and members are asked to give what they can afford.

BADGES. Special "League of Service" badges have been made, and it is desired that members should wear them, and so gain opportunities of making the League known.

Membership is not confined to those who attend the Monday Evening Meetings, but it is expected that, as far as possible, both for their own benefit and for the encouragement of others, all members will be present at the Meetings.

Associate Members are older workers and friends who are in sympathy with the League.

Lists of Members and Sectional Committees will be posted on the League Notice-board.

The idea of "Associate" Member is taken from the Wesley Guild plan, and one is not altogether satisfied as to the desirability of introducing it.

The League must embrace the 'potential' as well as the professed Christian and it must find room for the young people who cannot attend meetings, because of evening classes, but who are anxious to do what they can.

IX.—THE SOCIAL CLUB PROBLEM.

With regard to further details, the same principles of adaptation to local conditions must hold good, but a word may be said respecting the problem of the "Social Club." If such a Club be arranged in connection with the Young People of the Church, its members should all be members of the League of Service, and such a recreative club should be regarded as a mere adjunct to the other interests of the League.

To put it *first*, and to allow young men to simply make a convenience of the Church premises without entering in the remotest degree into the spirit of the Church service, is, I think, a fundamental mistake.

Of course, if thought well, members of the "Social Service" Section might carry on a "Social Club" or open a "Public House" in some other part of the town in order to counteract evil influences.

X.—HOW TO FORM A LEAGUE.

The following suggestions may be found useful in forming a League of Service.

Enrolment Night.—After much preliminary consultation, all Young People—an elastic term—might be invited to a meeting at which the plan was fully explained, and a rough programme for the ensuing session presented—opportunity being given for some general discussion.

Forms should be provided, on which are printed, in addition to the general conditions of membership, the lists of possible Sections.

Each member is asked to put a cross against those sections in which he or she wishes to serve, either on the "Equipment" side, or on the "Service" side, or on both.

These papers should be collected, and if time allow, the Sectional Meetings should at once be held, to make arrangements for those items in the programme for which they are responsible.

It would not, of course, be necessary to completely fill in the details for all the evenings, so long as the general plan was agreed upon, and people responsible for various evenings were chosen sufficiently beforehand.

This meeting might, however, profitably be postponed for a week, the forms being carefully analysed meanwhile. In the event of a member desiring to serve in several sections, it would be just as well to allow his name to stand until experience and the limitations of time inevitably brought about a further selection.

These committees should be continually revised. A chairman and a keen secretary should be appointed at once for each. Minutes should be carefully kept.

Having finished their work, all Sections should again unite, the Secretaries of each Section reporting progress. Any overlapping could thus be dealt with, and any necessary alterations and criticisms made, the hearty support of the whole League being secured for the programme.

At this meeting the General Secretary and the Treasurer should be appointed.

A Central Executive Committee for the Equipment (or Programme) Side, should be *recognised*, consisting of the President, the Secretary and the Treasurer, and the Chairman and Secretary of each section—making altogether a committee of eleven.

The Executive might never have occasion to meet, but would continue in office until the next year, and would be

useful at the beginning of the next Session, in preparing an outline programme to be submitted for approval.

The sections on the "Service" side would meet as soon as convenient, those involving only a change in name or relative position as, for example, the Sunday School, continuing as before, but with an accession of potential helpers. Any new sections formed would simply make a beginning, decide upon the first practical steps, appoint a secretary and an emergency committee, and arrange a Quarterly Committee.

XI.—THE COMPLETED PLAN.

The completed plan for the harmony of the whole Church (a strong, aggressive church), may be briefly sketched.

There would be three branches, the Men's League, the Women's, and the Young People's.

Men's Branch—Under the Men's Branch would be organised all work such as the Men's Meeting and the Adult School. Individual men would, of course, be Chairmen of the Young People's Sections, and would take part in the Home Campaign and other branches.

This branch would be a loose comradeship which could be called upon when need arose. The meetings would be infrequent.

Women's Branch—Under the Women's League would be organised all the splendid work of the women on behalf of the Church, the Women's Meeting or Sisterhood, the work of visitation, and all "Benevolent" work. Again, individual members would be also members of various sections of the Young People's work, acting as Secretaries and members of Committees.

If the controlling spirit of Service animate the members of all branches, no quibbles need arise concerning boundaries.

The Problem of the connection between the "League of Service" and the Church.

There can be no suggestion of rivalry between the League and the Church. The League will be the servant and the embodiment of the spirit of the Church of Christ.

In order that there may be complete harmony, I suggest that a "*Church Council*" should be formed, meeting quarterly, consisting of the Minister and Deacons, and one or more representative of every Section of the League.

At this Council brief reports of work attempted and in contemplation would be submitted, together with Financial Statements coming with the authority of the Quarterly Committees of the sections. Any difference of opinion, or any criticism would be referred back to the particular section for further consideration.

At the "*Quarterly Church Conference*" again, a brief report embracing all salient points, would be given, so that the Church as a whole would be kept constantly informed respecting everything that was done, and would, of course, be the final authority in any matter of dispute.

In this way complete co-ordination would be effected, without impeding the proper independence of those chiefly concerned in each department.

"Ye serve the Lord Christ,"

"Ourselves your servants."



The Relationship of the Regular Minister to the Local Preacher.

By F. J. GODDEN, J.P., Mayor of Canterbury.

I hope that my ministerial brethren will not think it presumption on the part of a mere layman to venture to make a few suggestions to them, (and in their own official organ too) regarding their attitude and relationship to the work of the lay preacher. It is only from a deep sense of the importance of this work, and a conviction born of knowledge, that our ministers are always ready to do what lies in their power to help on the work of "The Kingdom" that I venture to write these lines.

For very many years now, a great and important work has been done throughout our country in our villages and towns by lay agency which until the last few years has had but little recognition, and scarcely any help and encouragement given to it. It would be difficult to too highly magnify the importance of this work; I think that it would be willingly admitted that without this agency it would be impossible by our regular ministry alone, to thoroughly evangelize our villages or even some large areas in our towns and cities. This work has been done in the past with considerable efficiency and many gracious results, by a large band of some thousands of local preachers, labouring under many disabilities, the principal of which has been lack of organisation, and the absence of opportunities to obtain the necessary equipment for the work. The importance of this work will not decrease but rather increase as the days go by. As the new schemes of the Baptist Union come to fruition, especially the sustentation fund, it will be found more and more necessary that there should be a good supply of well equipped local preachers

to carry on the regular work in many of our villages, where even with the help of this fund, it will be found impossible and even unnecessary to support a regular minister. Even now, before these schemes have come into operation there are many cases within our knowledge of a regular and efficient ministry being maintained by local preachers, working in conjunction with a small sub-committee of the Church and Association. Then, has not the time come when a concerted and continuous raid should be made in most of our towns and cities upon the parts which have hitherto been untouched by our ordinary services. I am well aware that occasional missions are held, which reach a few, but these will not compare in permanent results with a continuous work carried on in the midst of these people, in Mission Hall, Cottage Meeting or Open Air. I know that much of this kind of work is being done but, with better organisation and equipment it ought to be possible to largely widen and increase this sphere of service. A minister of one of our large churches who is in full sympathy with the work of the local preacher said a short time ago, "We can no more evangelize our own country by paid agents than we can evangelize the Great Pagan and Heathen Nations by European Missionaries."

Rightly understood, this united and sympathetic working of the two branches of the service is most desirable, I would even say necessary, if real good work is to be done in the direction I have indicated. The training, experience, and spiritual wisdom of our ministers should be eminently helpful to men, a large part of whose time is occupied in secular pursuits, and I may say also, that the breezy optimism and absolute unprofessionalism of our lay workers might also be found to give helpful tone to the particular work of our ministers. May I be forgiven if I say that they have not quite accepted and recognised the facts which I have just placed before them. There is a great latent force, which is ready to be used, and made active, and it is very much in the hands of our ministers whether they bring it into efficient

activity, train and use it or not.

In the majority of churches, there are a number of men who are ready at an invitation to come out into active service, how much better would it be that these should be organised into auxiliary forces, rather than as free lances, just going and doing as fancy leads them.

I readily and gladly admit that much good and effective service has been done in the past; and will continue to be done by very many of these workers, who have never had the opportunity of obtaining even an elementary education, let alone a knowledge of the rules which help to make a successful public speaker. Thank God, the lack of these things has often been amply made up by a simple, devoted, Christian life, much earnestness and absolute dependence on God. We do not belittle them: the work in the past owes more to such men than we shall ever be able to measure. But what was good enough for fifty years ago, will not do for to-day, a new order of things is in existence, the people are better educated, opportunities of getting about are increased, they are able frequently to hear men of ability. At the same time the sphere of the Local Preacher is becoming wonderfully enlarged, taking in people of every class and condition. Thus it is essential for the work's sake that their training should be better, and their equipment for the service of a higher order.

The main object of this article is to indicate what seems to be the only way by which this may be obtained, viz. by some considerable extra work, and a large amount of self-sacrifice on the part of the pastors of our Churches. I repeat advisedly, the only way. By reason of the conditions under which most of our local preachers live, training colleges would be impossible; the men could not give continuous time, or afford payment for such education; if it is to be obtained it must be close to their hand,

and without interfering with their daily employment by which they live; even if these more distant means were obtainable, they could never be so effective for their particular work as the kindly personal help of their own minister whose own college training and experience should eminently fit him for such a gracious and far-reaching work.

I place this obligation before you with much diffidence for I am fully aware that many of our pastors are much overburdened with multifarious duties already, and every year seems to increase the load. To attempt to add to the burden may seem to be attempting the impossible, as well as the extreme of unkindness. I am not unsympathetic, and rather than increase the load I would strive to find some way to lessen it. I have long failed to see that it is absolutely necessary for a pastor personally "to run" everything which is being done in connection with our churches. True, he must be the presiding genius, seen or unseen, influencing the whole, but surely in the majority of our churches it would be possible by systematic arrangement, for many of the things which are now the pastor's work, to be shared by helpers which are to be found in nearly every church, in practice, I think he would find that these works would not, of necessity, suffer in being shared by some of his people. As a last argument we shall agree that it must always come back to "First thing first" in all the works of the Ministry, and surely this work of helping the worker, of training his thought and efforts on right lines for the work of the ministry, is amongst the first things which must engage his best efforts.

This article would be incomplete were I not to indicate some lines on which this help could be most effectively given. I am not for a moment advocating high training, or anything like a College curriculum, or even doing much in the way of remedying what may be lacking in ordinary education. But, first, where the numbers are sufficient, arranging for and conducting a training

class. The associating of men of like pursuits in study, especially if their studies are guided by a kindly personality at the head, is always helpful.

Second, he might indicate and direct certain courses of reading and studies with some assistance (not monetary) in the best way to obtain the necessary books, such, for instance, as methods for reading and study, choice of texts, simple course of Homiletics, sermon-building, elocution, etc., and now and then an examination on papers set by himself. On these, and other lines which would come natural to him, help would be rendered to the local preacher, which in the results to his future work would be incalculable. This work would bring its own reward. Failures there would be; do we not occasionally find them even in our theological colleges? Discouragement there must be, for it is not easy for men who have, for years, had to do their work, in many cases unsystematically and without help or guidance, to break through custom and begin to work on indicated lines. Yet, I am sure if our ministers will take up, and persevere in this service which I have ventured to indicate, they will win the gratitude of these, their fellow workers, and add to the vast debt which our country already owes them.

The War, and Continental Baptists.

The present moment is perhaps not an inopportune one at which to indicate the position of our Baptist brethren on the Continent. So far as Germany and Austria are concerned, we have little to report, save that already some of our Austrian Pastors are prisoners in Russian hands and interned in Siberia.

The neutral countries are feeling the effects of the clash of arms, for even in Spain we learn that a long-contemplated evangelistic campaign has had to be abandoned, and that some of the German missionaries have had to leave the country at the call of the Fatherland.

In Switzerland a despairing appeal has come to hand: poverty stalks grim and stark through the ranks of our church members, whilst they have, out of their meagre resources, to aid the Belgian and French protestant refugees. Our Dutch brethren are stranded economically through the mobilisation; their male members are called up by the army authorities, and the rest of the membership are overwhelmed with the task of caring for the refugees from the neighbouring Kingdom of Belgium. In the areas where fighting is in progress, conditions are terrible in the extreme. Our churches in Belgium are many of them destroyed by shell fire, the membership is scattered, and many of the younger men are already sacrificed upon the blood-stained altar of war.

The French Government has very generously allowed the majority of our Baptist Pastors to engage in Red Cross work, where they have many opportunities granted to them of bringing consolation and comfort to the wounded and dying.

Outside the war zone the churches are open daily for prayer and meditation, and many encouraging letters are to hand of conversions amongst both civilians and soldiers. From Pastor

Jaccard, of Montheliard, we learn that "An officer—congratulated for heroic conduct on the field—is daily preaching Christ to the men under him, and is meeting with much success." Pastor Saynol has been hard hit by the war—"All my four sons and son-in-law are at present at the front, whilst one is wounded and another has been killed." "The present crisis is keenly felt by the church here, for all our male members have been called up by the authorities, and my time is fully occupied taking care of the forlorn ones."

The heaviest burden will undoubtedly be felt by the brethren in Russian Poland. In Lodz, Radav, Kiczin, Pabianic, Rypin, Warsaw, Zelov, Zyrardov, and other places, we have strong, flourishing churches, with a membership ranging from 145 in Cholm to 1,363 in Lodz. According to the official Russian and German news, all these towns have been the scenes of fierce sanguinary fighting, and in the conflict our people must have suffered terribly.

In Russia our churches have plunged into Red Cross work, and the leaders of the Russian National Baptist Union have received autograph letters from the Tsar and Dowager Empress thanking them for their splendid and heroic efforts upon behalf of the troops at the front.

An interesting letter has come into my hands from one of our Czechish brethren, now interned in Siberia. I was able to get him into touch with our Baptist Minister in the town where he was held prisoner, and he writes: "All the Russian soldiers and other Russian people behaved splendidly towards us. I never thought that a Russian soldier could be as kind as we found them here and there at the railway stations and towns where we stayed. I rather like the Russian people, and it is a splendid opportunity offered to us to speak of Christ to them. Yes, Russia has a grand, perhaps the grandest future."

Amidst all the welter and carnage one hope sustains and fortifies us, that out of this tremendous catastrophe we may witness emerging a new spirit of righteousness and peace, a spirit which shall make for the furtherance of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

JOHN T. BYFORD.

From the Secretary's Desk.

May I take this opportunity of thanking various brethren for their kind wishes and congratulations, which they have conveyed to me in various ways, on my accepting the Secretaryship of our "Fraternal?" The good wishes of one's brethren make all the difference as one faces one's new duties, and I only hope that I shall be able to be of as much service to them as was our late Secretary, Mr. Whitman, whom we all most warmly thank for his devotion and service, and we trust he will be much blessed in his new sphere in the North.

I most cordially congratulate our Union on the fact that we have been fortunate enough as to obtain the services of Rev. F. C. Spurr as Editor of our magazine. When we remember that Mr. Spurr has not only had experience in the Home Ministry, but also in our Colonies, and has for years moved amongst his brethren and came into very close relationship with them while acting as Baptist Union Missioner, it is certain that in his hands the success of the future of "The Fraternal" is assured, and I quite anticipate that before long every Baptist minister will feel it is essential to become a subscriber to it.

I should mention that Mr. Spurr gave it as a *sine qua non*

of his accepting this office that he should be allowed to conduct it along the lines which govern the production of *Punch*, that is, it is not to be the product of one man's brain; but each number will be the outcome of a round-table conference of a number of men, each a specialist in his own department.

Without betraying confidences, I may say that the future policy has been decided upon and the character of the articles for a period of two years has been sketched. From the suggestion for these, and the ability of the writers selected, I have no hesitation in saying that our paper will not only be of great practical use, but also of exceptional inspirational value. Need I appeal to brethren to do their best to largely increase the circulation?

I will leave Mr. Spurr to disclose his plans in the April number, but he has asked me to request you to send me postcards giving information as to what you have been preaching about recently, especially with reference to the war, and would like each postcard to contain the text, topic, and treatment of the sermon you feel has been most appreciated (the latter of course in bare outline.) By this means Mr. Spurr hopes to be able to form some judgement of the trend of thought among the ministers, at least of our denomination.

By the way, all subscriptions are now due, with the exception of a few which have been paid in advance by considerate brethren. Perhaps the enclosed slip will facilitate a speedy response to this reminder!

With best wishes for the New Year,

E. D. deRUSETT.

Prayer Union Notes.

Dr. Meyer sends the following New Year's Message to the members of the Prayer Union:

Dear Brothers,

The Book of National and Universal Destiny is in the hands of the Lamb Who was slain. Let us have the book of our own life there, and give ourselves more than ever to the "Come, Come, Come," of Rev. VI. (r.v.) We must hasten the coming of His Kingdom, and see to it that our loins are girded as those who await the advent of the King. In what guise He will come, we cannot tell; but surely He is near, even at the doors.

My love to you and yours,

Affectionately yours,

F. B. MEYER.

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It is with deep sorrow we record the home-going of the Rev. E. Henderson, for so many years the devoted Pastor of Victoria Chapel, Clapham. He took the deepest interest in our Prayer Union, and Mrs. Henderson was one of the founders of the Ministers' Wives' Prayer Union.

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We have received the following from Rev. J. R. Wood, who for so many years took a keen interest in our Prayer Union, and served it in so many ways:

"I am glad you are calling attention afresh to our concert in prayer on Sunday mornings. The call for Intercession is being widely responded to in these solemn times. Demands on Ministers become more ur-

gent as the weeks pass. We must strengthen one another's hands in God. Our own difficulties are best met by such intercession. 'The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.' How often this is so!"

* * *

Rev. J. Griffiths Lloyd, of Acton, writes suggesting the holding of Special Devotional Meetings for Ministers in the present crisis. The difficulty of adding to the already too numerous demands upon our time is, however, evident at once. Our Sunday morning concert of prayer, however, enables us to meet in spirit at the Throne of Grace, and to lay before the Lord those special difficulties and hindrances which beset our ministerial work in this trying time.

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We have been glad to send copies of Prayer Union Membership Card to several brethren who have applied for them. Other brethren desiring to unite with us in our Sunday morning Union in Prayer, can obtain the membership card by writing to Rev. J. E. Martin, The Manse, Erith, Kent.