

The Fraternal.

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LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS for the FRATERNAL should be addressed to the Editor, Rev. F. C. SPURR, Regent's Park Chapel, N.W., and all other communications to the Secretary, Rev. E. D. deRUSETT, Baptist Church, Harrow.

EDITOR'S CHAIR.

THE present number of the "Fraternal" is very much overdue. A word of explanation is necessary. The last number issued (June, 1918) was a double one. When the printers' bill came in, it was staggering, being more than double the amount demanded for any previous number of the Magazine. The rapid rise in the cost of materials and of labour accounted for this. This greatly augmented price for producing the June number absorbed the whole of our reserve fund, hence it was found impossible to issue a further number last year. The brethren will quite understand the situation, and place it to the account of the war. The present issue will, we hope, offer some little compensation for the long wait.

The Annual Meeting of the "Fraternal" Union will be one of exceptional importance this year. The chief matter of business will be the discussion of the Pastoral Session and matters arising out of it. It is becoming increasingly evident that, for many reasons, Free Church ministers will be compelled to organize themselves into a living and acting corporation. Isolated men have no chance in the modern world. It is only in association that we can act effectively. The isolation of Baptist ministers must be broken down, and be replaced by a real fraternity which is capable of getting things done. Our Fraternal Union is good, so far as it goes, but to be entirely effective it should embrace the whole of our ministers. Will the present members do all in their power to induce other brethren to join us?

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Before this is in the hands of our readers our Secretary will have relinquished war work, and be devoting his whole energies to his Church, and incidentally to our Fraternal Union.

This will enable him to develop the Circulating Library, which should be invaluable to our members in these days of the high cost of books, and the reduced purchase power of money. We would urge that groups of five be formed and arrangements made for the boxes of well-selected books to be forwarded each quarter.

THE PAGAN RELAPSE.

By REV. GEORGE HILL, M.A., D.D.

I.

CAREFUL observers have pointed out that the conditions of life in Britain during the last fifty years have borne some curious resemblances to the conditions which prevailed in pagan Rome during the first two centuries of the Christian era. The story of this period has often been told—it may be read at length in the pages of Momsen and Gibbon, Lecky and Dill—so that here we have no need for more than the briefest sketch.

Those were the days of the great Roman peace, when within the narrow and unhealthy streets of the imperial city was crowded a population approaching two millions. People of many lands and races were there, slaves perhaps outnumbering all the rest. By successful foreign wars the wealth of the city had been prodigiously increased, though this wealth was concentrated in comparatively few hands, bringing to the multitudes little but disadvantage. To be rich was the most coveted distinction; to be poor was hardly less disgraceful than to be vicious or criminal. The social cleavage was probably as wide as any the world has ever known; the wealthy indulging in every species of luxury and extravagance, the poor being despised and trodden under foot like the mire of the streets. Legally slaves might not marry and the consequence was un-

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blushingly immorality. In this regard, however, there was little to choose between the lowest and the highest. In all classes unchastity was so common as to excite no remark: the remarkable thing was when anyone was believed to be chaste, Marriage, once held in honour, had become the lightest and loosest tie, scarcely more than a private bargain to live together so long as companionship was agreeable. Divorce was as easy as the most fickle and dissolute could desire; prostitution was commonly accounted blameless, purity was found to be perilous. An indescribable depth of profligacy was reached such as the annals of no other time can match.

To extravagant luxury and shameless immorality was added cruelty of the coarsest kind. Cruelty was the delectable accompaniment of the public games provided for the amusement of Roman society. The Colosseum, holding 8,000 spectators, and the Circus Maximus, with its 25,000, were often crowded day after day by men and women of every class; and in these buildings combats were witnessed between wild beasts, between beasts and men, between men in pairs and in armies. Lecky tells us that "ten thousand men fought at the games of Trajan; under Domitian an army of feeble dwarfs was compelled to fight; and more than once female gladiators descended to perish in the arena." These spectacles of incredible inhumanity excited little objection; they were apologised for even by some of the moralists of the time on the ground that they supplied a splendid discipline against suffering and death; the general sentiment delighted in the orgy of slaughter.

With such facts before us we scarcely need to be told that religion had little or no elevating or moralising influence. The ancient Roman religion, though largely retained in outward form, had lost its hold on the intelligence of the educated, and put no check on luxury, lust and cruelty. New religions, which found their way to Rome from Persia, Syria and Egypt, were tolerated readily enough where scarcely anything was sincerely believed. Mithra, Cybele, Aphrodite, Dionysus, Isis, Osiris, were all welcomed: all failed to command the mind or purify the heart. According to Gibbon's famous gibe, these cults were regarded by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as

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equally false, by the magistrates as equally useful. The practical results were lamentable. With the degeneration of faith, the very basis of morality had given way. We do not forget the noble ethics of Stoicism as interpreted by Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius; but Stoicism was for the cultured few; it never penetrated the masses of the people nor uplifted them from their degraded lives, as Christianity afterwards did. The ancient Roman virtues of truth and justice, simplicity and sincerity, temperance and frugality, honour and faith between man and man, gave place to falsehood and greed, dishonesty and extravagance, effeminacy, cruelty, lust, and every species of self-indulgence.

Such was the condition of society in Pagan Rome when Christianity was first introduced into that city. Even though the most loathsome details are withheld from this brief sketch, a suspicion may arise that the picture is over-drawn. So much, indeed, has been positively asserted. "The devil is not so black as he is painted, and Rome was not so bad as the partisans of Christianity have made out." Possibly. We may be sure of exceptions to the prevailing corruption. The famous Stoics with whose names we are familiar did not stand by themselves. Even in the worst days men and women were known whose characters shone out like stars in a dark night. Yet, when liberal allowance has been made for these, the judgment of Mr. J. A. Froude remains only too well warranted: "Within historical times the earth has never seen—let us hope it may never see again—such a condition of human society as prevailed in the Roman Empire during the centuries which elapsed between the Crucifixion and the conversion of Constantine."

Now, when it is asserted that the conditions of life in modern Britain resemble the conditions which prevailed in Pagan Rome, there can be no intention to suggest any approach to an exact parallel. History never repeats itself with nice precision, and the Christian centuries have not been fruitless of good. Human progress, however slow, however it may turn back upon itself at times, is an undoubted reality. Only one who ignores the facts can suppose that the average level of human life and conduct is not higher to-day than it was in the

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age of Nero. As Jowett of Balliol says, "If the inner life of that period had been presented to us, we should have turned away from the sight with loathing and detestation. The greatest admirer of old heathen virtues would feel at once that there was a great gulf fixed between us and them, which no willingness to make allowances for the difference of ages and countries would enable us to pass." So much may be thankfully acknowledged. Yet, not without reason have men recently spoken of "the neopaganism" of our time; of "the great pagan retrogression" in the twentieth century. The significant fact is that what are regarded as the outstanding evils of Pagan Rome are the evils which are deplored by the wisest among us to-day.

In the first place, here as in Rome there has been an enormous increase and concentration of material wealth. The rate of accumulation during the last fifty years has never been equalled. "Wealth is piling up," wrote Mr. C. F. G. Masterman in 1909, "in ever-increasing aggregation." "Society is organised from top to bottom on a money basis." Rich and poor, for the most, are as widely separated as were the Roman patrician and his slaves. Before the war wasteful and extravagant luxury was probably as common in England as it was in Rome during the principate of Nero. Ostentatious excess on the part of a small minority consumed larger sums of money than were asked for in vain to provide education for children and decent maintenance for our outworn veterans of industry. It seems clear, too, that as the rich have grown richer, the poor have become comparatively poorer. Putting aside any temporary alleviations resulting from war conditions, the problems of poverty remain much as they were a generation ago. There has been no general distribution of the increased riches. At one end of the scale we find abounding wealth, often expressing itself in selfish and injurious luxury; and at the other end, such penury and squalor as breed disease, discontent, fierce resentment, and rebellion. In what boasted of being the richest nation on earth we had "infernos of slums" where poverty and foul living robbed existence of all that is desirable and filled it with ignoble misery. The vaunted civilization of the most wonderful century in our history reached its climax in condition which

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reserved for vast numbers a "slavery worse in many ways than that of Pagan Rome."

To the charge of an excessive pursuit of pleasure all sections of society have been liable. "For years before the war," says Mr. E. A. Burroughs, "luxury and extravagance of every kind had been rampant on the increase in every class." And Mr. Masterman has declared that the amount spent annually on shooting, racing and golf, exceeded the total revenue of many a European principality; while on tobacco we have been spending 50 millions a year, and on alcoholic drinks 166 millions. The craze for football is notorious, and we are told that in some of our great cities over 50 per cent. of the poorest classes go regularly to picture palaces; many go every night of the week, some steal money for admission. It is willingly granted that the people should have their pleasures and amusements. The pity is that pleasure should so often be sought in unwholesome forms and in such excess that it ceases to be recreative and becomes a chief end of existence. The pity is that at times the pursuit reveals an entirely unspiritual view of life, debases the higher nature, leads to outrageous waste, and destroys all delight in work, all desire for excellence of any kind. That these have often been the accompaniments and consequences of excessive indulgence of the pleasure-seeking spirit is certain.

Closely connected with this is the subject of sexual immorality. Broad statements about the morality of nations may easily fall into exaggeration, but it is not more true that coarse and unmentionable vice was common in pagan Rome than it is that sexual impurity is one of the most alarming evils of modern life. In regard to the Army, for example, this is notorious. The laxity permitted in Britain and France has provoked angry comment in Australia and Canada, from those who resent the open solicitation to which their boys are exposed. Facts as terrible as they are well authenticated, concerning the prevalence of sexual vice in camps and other military centres, find their way to the knowledge of many; and the horrible diseases consequent on the transgression of the divine law are an occasion of deep concern to those acquainted with the actualities of life. Decent-minded people hate to speak of these

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things, but it is idle to ignore a deadly evil because knowledge is unwelcome. And perhaps the most serious significance of the truth in this matter, to quote Mr. Burroughs again, is that the condition of the Army reflects, in a measure, the past morality or immorality of the civil population before the War; that is, of the nation as a whole. For, after all, the nation is the Army now, and the present morality of the Army probably represents the past morality of the civil population drafted into it." The moral condition of the community is indicated, as well as the moral turpitude of individual offenders.

Serious as these things are, beneath them is an evil more serious still—an evil to which again pagan Rome supplies a parallel—the decay of vital religion. In some quarters suggestions of this decay are hotly resented; but, as Butler says, Things and actions are what they are, why then should we desire to be deceived?" Who can honestly say we deserve to be called a Christian people? The multiplied and well-meant activities of the Churches and of other Christian agencies are readily acknowledged; but side by side with this acknowledgment must go the confession of the powerlessness of these agencies to tell effectively and adequately on the nation as a whole. In countless instances definite religious beliefs have gone. Public worship is ignored by the overwhelming majority. Everywhere churches are half empty. A huge decline in Church members and Sunday School scholars has been reported year after year from all parts of the land and among all denominations. "The failure of the Churches" is a stock phrase of writers friendly and hostile. The apparent inability of Christians to unite even in common worship; their disagreements as to the essential nature of Christianity, and as to whether religion is propagated and maintained by rational beliefs and personal loyalties or by the performance of "mysteries" scarcely other than pagan; and the prevalence of rituals in which ministers say one thing and mean another; have created a vast mistrust of the whole business of official religion. At the outbreak of the war hope was stirred in many hearts that so solemn a crisis would turn men's thoughts to God, and that the power of religion would be revived; but the signs of deepened feeling soon

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disappeared. In the midst of the greatest upheaval known to modern civilization, the representatives of religion have stood well nigh powerless, longing to help and lamenting their impotence.

Meanwhile, in the decay of religion, superstition finds its opportunity. As in Rome under the Empire the decay of the ancient faith was accompanied by belief in "Sorcerers, astrologers, spirit-rappers, exorcists and every species of impostor and quack," as then, to quote the words of Dean Farrar, "the ceremonies were performed with ritualistic splendour while all belief in religion was dead and gone," so, to a large extent, is it to-day. Take a single illustration from many that might be given. At the beginning of the war we were told, truly enough, that it was a "conflict of ideals" that "spiritual issues were supreme"; yet when our boys were leaving us for the front they were far more frequently invited, on the last night, to the frivolities and stupidities of the music-hall than to a religious service at which they might be reminded of the principles for which our nation had taken up arms, and might be commended to God in the prayers of the people in whose name they were going forth. And not only so, but the soldiers themselves often seemed more anxious to take with them some regimental mascot, or "lucky charm" than to be assured that they had a Chaplain who could truly minister to them in the things of God. A remarkable comment on the religious and intellectual condition of many among our fellow-countrymen was furnished by a letter to the "Times" in August, 1915, from the inventor of "a lucky charm for soldiers" who asserted that during the preceding twelve months he had sold a million and a quarter of these; and that he had received a letter from the front, signed by a number of soldiers, which declared, "We have been fighting here in the trenches for five months, and have not had a scratch. We put our good fortune down to your lucky charm which we treasure highly." What is this but rank paganism—a paganism which has been encouraged by some of the highest in the land?

If now we review the evils of modern life that have been pointed out, we may observe that what is common to most of them

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is a self-centred individualism: and here again we come upon evidence of the pagan spirit. The greedy pursuit of wealth, the passion for pleasure, the wasteful luxury, the lust and impurity, the irreligion and disregard of moral ideals which marked the Neronian age, were all expressions of a self-centred life; and we hardly need go further for an explanation of what is so deplorable in our own day. In the final analysis we discover that modern Europe has been dominated by a wrong philosophy of life and conduct, a philosophy which is essentially selfish and anti-Christian. For Christianity is at heart the sacrifice of self for the good of the whole; it is "the service of God, Who is the Spirit of the whole, and whose interests can, in the nature of things never be less than universal." We are thus confronted by the contrast which seems to justify the title of this paper. The Pagan spirit is selfish and individualistic; the Christian spirit is altruistic and universal; and it is the sovereignty of the pagan spirit that provokes enmity and strife among men and nations and that involved the peoples of the world in war. For it must be obvious that, if men and nations have as their supreme aim their own advantage merely, and just in the measure that this is their aim, they will view other men and nations as a means of their own aggrandisement; while if men and nations believe that they exist or the good of the whole, they will seek each other's advantage; will care for that, labour for that, and if need be suffer for that. The action of men and nations is shaped by their philosophy, conscious or unconscious. This is the explanation of the saying "The war is the penalty of wrong-thinking." The pagan philosophy of life is "We must get all we can for ourselves"; the Christian philosophy is "We must serve our fellow-men in every way we can." The pagan philosophy makes men and nations competitors and fighters, seeking the best for themselves; the Christian philosophy makes men and nations brothers and comrades, seeking universal ends. The pagan philosophy is summed up in the word "selfishness" the Christian in the word "sacrifice"; and the disease of the modern world is that it is still pagan rather than Christian.

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III.

Nowhere has the recent paganizing of Western civilization received more striking illustration than in Mr. Benjamin Kidd's book, 'The Science of power.' Mr. Kidd shows that during the last fifty years the ideas which have dominated the social and political life of the west have been largely pagan ideas; the chief being belief in force as the ultimate principle of the world. While we have inherited and professed a religion which is the negation of force as the supreme power, a religion whose fundamental principle is that all men are brothers and should therefore seek not their own ends but the highest good of all; and while the Church has taught with growing emphasis that war is a sin against God and humanity, and that universal and permanent peace is an ideal always to be kept in view and striven after, some of the most influential leaders of our social and political life have insisted on the supremacy of force, on the necessity for war, and have boldly affirmed that not Right and Justice, but Might and Self-interest are supreme. Alike in trade disputes between capital and labour and in international disputes and rivalries, the end in view has not been the enduring welfare of the whole, through the willing service of the individual, but the material advantage of the individual man, society or state. The standard of conduct has been not the standard of the Cross, but the standard of barbarism. To a great extent the nations have relapsed to paganism and the principles of savagery.

Too much of what is lauded as patriotism is stained by the pagan spirit. No one need doubt that patriotism may be a truly noble virtue; but often what goes by the name is little better than a sin against humanity and the abnegation of what lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. Honourable and praiseworthy is it that a man should love the land in which he finds his home, the community of which he is a member, whose privileges he inherits and to whose welfare he is under obligation to contribute. But humanity is greater than nationality and has greater claims. The Kingdom of God includes all people on equal terms, and loyalty to Christ enjoins a genuine devotion to the good of the whole. That is an unworthy, a wicked patriotism

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which says "My country, right or wrong!" which seeks to aggrandise one's own state by the disadvantage and hurt of others; which desires nothing better than that the fatherland may flourish, whatever else may come to ruin. The spirit of Jesus is universal, and works to universal ends; and the patriot who is inspired by that spirit seeks the welfare of his own people that they may be the better equipped for service and sacrifice in the interests of mankind. This is what the modern pagan spirit forgets, and sometimes flatly denies. Said Bernhardt, "The Christian duty of sacrifice for something higher does not exist for the state; for there is nothing higher than the state in the world's history." Hence came militarism, Prussianism, repudiation of treaties, ruthless war, immorality and barbaric cruelty. Hence the spectacle of the world's most advanced nations seeking each other's downfall and destruction. And such horrors will continue to threaten the world so long as this spurious patriotism is held to be a people's chief virtue; and the only hope of bringing them to an end is in the prevalence of the spirit of Christ.

It is false to say that nothing is higher than the state. The Kingdom of God is higher; the Christian Commonwealth, the Federation of the world, is higher. Before His followers Christ sets the vision of mankind made eternally one, redeemed from the divisive powers of sin and selfish individualism, and united in a brotherhood of the Spirit. Rightly conceived Christianity is the religion of love, service, sacrifice for the good of the whole; and the whole includes all humanity, all for whom Christ died. The pagan soul flames in fierce hostility to this conception; but the Cross stands before the world's eye and haunts the imagination of all who have caught any glimpse of its true meaning. Its universal significance will yet be understood by the nations, and, though long delayed, its victory is sure.

The ships sail East and the ships sail West,
 On the very same winds that plow;
 'Tis the set of the sails and not the gales
 That tells them the way to go.—Ella W. Wilcox.

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THE PRESENT OPEN DOOR BEFORE THE FREE CHURCHES.

By Rev. Arthur Dakin, B.D., D.Th,

BEFORE the War we were talking of what is wrong with the Churches. During the first year of the war we were trying to persuade ourselves that a revival had commenced. To-day, in altogether more chastened mood, we are casting our eyes over the broad field of life to try and discover what special door of opportunity has opened to us. That in itself is a ground of hope. The first requirement surely is, that we should see and appreciate the facts.

It goes without saying that the task of delineating the actual situation gives fine scope for the imagination. Anyone can say something on a subject so varied and many-sided, and almost anything said is likely to have a modicum of truth in it. It is fatally easy to make a selection from among the facts in favour of one's particular fad, and the danger of prescribing a pill for an earthquake, is very real. Let it be taken for granted that in the present article there is the bias of the writer to be allowed for. The aim here is not to say something from which no one might conceivably dissent, but rather to give one's thoughts and feelings, leaving it to the reader to decide what is true and what is false, according as his experience dictates. No attempt is made to tone down anything in order to make it palatable. The situation is held to be so serious as to demand the frankest discussion carried out in the plainest possible terms. The present paper deals with the opportunity before us in the realm of thoughts, and it is hoped in a further contribution to speak of the opportunity in the matter of worship and fellowship.

There can be no doubt that the war has brought many people up against the fundamental problems. In earlier days we were resting comfortably in some pleasing delusions about God, and man, and the world. We accepted easy solutions born out of a facile optimism. We had carried to a fine art the habit of closing our eyes to things that were inconvenient or distressing. Popular thought was generally defective, be-

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cause men were so fatally given to the logical fallacy of ignoring the contrary. We had our views, our opinions, our dogmas, and instead of being engaged in the quest for truth, we were too busy seeking props to bolster up the positions we had adopted. A sermon that stiffened us in our opinions was great; one that broke new ground was doubtful; while a man who dared to disturb our mental serenity found himself generally regarded as "a good man but unsafe." Likewise we read the newspaper which said "Amen" every morning to our prejudices; the other we consigned to the gutter. At most we wanted to meet the old truths in new garb. We could not believe that anything really new was either possible, or profitable. To an extraordinary degree our minds were closed. We had settled things satisfactorily. Thought had finished her work, given her verdict and closed her book.

Now, for many people, all that is changed. The war has dragged other facts into the light, it has pushed them before us with a grim insistence, it has compelled us to see. So that to-day we live in a world of problems. We realize their magnitude. They press upon us and dwell with us, and we neither lay ourselves down to rest nor rise to labour without the feeling that we are up against something that we do not understand. It is not that the problems are new. They are the questions that have troubled men from the beginning. Only we had dismissed them in our hours of ease. The great catastrophe has stripped the scales from our eyes and somewhat softened the hardness of our hearts. We discover to our astonishment that while we were basking in our middle-class comfort and saying, "All's right with the world" because most things were right with us; others, less fortunate, were all the time face to face with stupendous difficulties and found our easy optimism not bread but stone. Men of all stations stand to-day baffled before the strangeness of life.

And because they are baffled, they are seeking. Everyone knows how keen is the interest just now in such questions as providence, prayer, the life beyond, and all the matters connected with the thought of progress. The human mind is crying out for an acceptable theology and a sane philosophy. How

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could it be otherwise in face of present conditions? The common assumption that the average man does not philosophize and has no interest in theology is now seen to be false. It is true, he seems to have no liking for the kind of theology the Church has been offering, but, nevertheless, it is a theology he needs and a theology he seeks. In face of startling facts he asks "Why must these things be?" It is a question he cannot avoid, and at the present time he is asking it with something of mental agony. Nor is this new attitude due to the fact that somehow the speculative side of man's nature has been suddenly awakened. Far more it arises out of the urgency of the practical problems. Men see that by some means the social tangle has to be unravelled, righteousness and justice have to be established and secured, peace has to be guaranteed. It is not true that these things will come about automatically by means of a beneficent evolution. Man has discovered in these days how much depends upon himself. Some had discovered it before the War. Now the number of them is greatly increased, and for them these practical questions are no longer interesting matters to speculate about in an odd half-hour; on the contrary they are vital issues demanding immediate solution. Out of this sense of urgency there comes naturally earnest inquiry. The minds of men are open as perhaps they have not been for a century. People are willing to re-consider. Recent events have demonstrated the inadequacy of so many opinions, and upset so many prejudices and knocked holes in this and that policy, that people find it easier now to revise their views and re-estimate their former convictions, to break away if need be from fettering traditions and even to transfer their loyalty. Probably ideas never had a better chance. The minds of many are as fertile soil well ploughed and watered, and the day of the sower is at hand. It scarcely needs saying what an opportunity all this offers to the Church. The fact that not all people are seeking makes no difference. Many are, and many too who are holding aloof. These are our field, and one feels that with wise and careful cultivation it might soon be a field yellow unto harvest.

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Now from what has been said it would seem as though the Church has to do no more than go on uttering her message and the situation is fully met. But that is not the case. Whether the Church has the truth or not, the fact remains, that in a time of poignant enquiry there has been no wide-spread turning to the Church. Nay many who are earnest seekers have lost all confidence in the Church, and are firmly rooted in the conviction that she does not know and consequently cannot teach. That is the fact in the situation which needs to be stamped on our very souls; for unless we can find the reasons for it and do away with the causes of it, it is simply idle to talk about the present opportunity in the realm of thought. It is by no means easy to say why the Free Churches have been failing in this regard, but the bewilderment of even our own people is evidence that of late years we have not been succeeding in giving the average man a really satisfactory grip of the faith we expect him to accept. The present crisis caught many of our own members unprepared. They found themselves at sea with no guiding chart and no anchor that could hold. And if that is true, it is all the more singular and serious, inasmuch as the Free Churches have placed an almost unique emphasis on the teaching-office. It means that we are missing it even at the point where we lay the stress. Undoubtedly a new opportunity for instructing has arisen, but are we equal to it and can we take advantage of it? Who will show us how the weakness of the past can be overcome? It would be a useful thing if the attention of the whole Free Church could be focussed upon this point, and if many minds would set themselves to work on the problems for a speedy solution to it is really vital to our continued existence.

It is obviously a matter which raises the question of the ministry. But no amount of general advice to preachers will meet the case. Such counsels as "Burn your old sermons," "Preach without notes," etc., are mere nostrums, and only make matters worse by giving the captious yet another point of view from which to criticize the already hard-pressed pastor. One person at least is absolutely convinced that at the present time all counsels to ministers should be given strictly in

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private. Those who move up and down the country giving delightfully entertaining talks on preaching to audiences composed mainly of listeners, do so no doubt with the best of intentions, but one wonders sometimes whether they quite realize all the harm they do and how much they help to weaken the church by fanning the flames of discontent. Anyway, is it not equally a matter for the congregation? Surely any question of ministry affects both parties. How can one give unless another is willing to receive? Why not have a few conferences, for a change, on the importance of hearing, on the way to hear and so forth? Is it not significant that our thought is direct to the way in which truth should be uttered, while Jesus Himself was more concerning about how it is to be received? The parable of the Sower—which might well be called “the parable of the Hearer”—is a needed word to-day. How many of our members, for instance, have the least suspicion that to some extent the weakness of the Church is due to their failure to learn? The minds of people have been so exclusively directed to the work of the preacher that they are in danger of forgetting the importance of their part, and have we not fallen into that error because we are still under the sway of that totally erroneous view which regards education as a mere pouring of information into passive minds much as water is pumped into a bucket? In part at least, our trouble is that our method conforms to an antiquated and wrong psychology. Greater demands will have to be made upon the listener, and it must be made clear to him how much depends upon his efforts. We have already urged that some are now more ready to be instructed. A wise Church will make much of that and endeavour to encourage the spirit of inquiry and to preserve it for later days. The situation does give the chance to secure a far greater measure of co-operation between pulpit and pew. Christians must be educated to seek, not first and foremost what is interesting, but rather what is illuminating and instructive. So long as the idea is abroad that a minister's chief business in the pulpit is to attract and soothe, it will be impossible to get from the congregation that mental effort without which all our attempts are bound to fail. It may be that the time has come for some change in method to meet the

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new awakening. Certainly experiments ought to be made. Anything that will get the congregation thinking is of value, and if quiet study done in the week could be made a preparation for the Sunday's discourses, so much the better. Anyway, our problem is, not to discover how to preach, but how to get the truth into people's hearts.

As to the actual utterance of truth, perhaps I may be permitted to say what seems to be revelent, especially as the "Fraternal" is not for general consumption. Just at the present time much is being made of the virtue of simplicity. It is a pretty word, and one suspects that its popularity may be due to the fact that it throws the onus on the minister, and tends to relieve the hearer of just that application of mind which we hold to be so important. Everyone is of course in favour of the greatest possible clearness. But, after all, Dr. Stalker's reminder that Isaiah and Job and Romans are not simple has its value. Nor are the problems on which men desire light simple. We are asked to-day to deal with the great themes, and the only way to secure clearness in these is by going deeper down in thought. Are we deep enough? It is a question which each faces for himself, but it is obvious that one cannot teach beyond one's acquirement. The times call for great heart-searching on the part of ministers and there is evidence that it is not lacking. The responsibility of having to think things out so to be able to lead others—a responsibility which nothing can divorce from the ministerial function is very grave, and the opportunity of the hour forces us to face it with a fresh earnestness and an altogether new courage. If the call for simplicity is a call for that, then it is well, and we heed it, even though it smites us with a sense of our insufficiency for these things.

But not all the hard thinking will meet the case unless it finds its outlet in fearless speech. The controversy against us in the minds of many is, partly that we do not state openly all that we believe, and partly that we refuse to have anything to do with some of the most urgent problems of life. It is difficult to deny either charge. Much is heard just now of the demand for reality. That is the natural outcome of the spirit of earn-

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estness that is abroad. Men seek desperately, consequently they expect to be treated honestly. Yet is not the insistent demand for reality a proof that it is felt to be lacking? We have often criticized the Anglican who reads his creed with mental alterations, but we have not always noticed how the Free Churches have suffered from the same subtle falseness. The professorial advice, "Don't preach your doubts," has often been taken to mean "Don't say anything that is likely to be controversial." How many congregations have had the opportunity of knowing the whole mind of their minister on, say, the general questions of textual criticism? Is it not true that the older views have been allowed full freedom of expression, while a measure of suppression has been the rule with regard to newer views, even when those are no longer mere opinions but assured results of research? Even the Churches that have boasted of having no formal creed have been equally hampered by a fettering tradition, and the effect of this is seen in the present chaotic state of Christian knowledge. It is not so much our speech that has condemned us as our silence. People have been allowed to rest in ignorance. The preacher has often had one thing in mind and the congregation another, and the minister has known it and has acquiesced. An incident that occurred recently reveals the situation. Someone wrote in the "Nation" criticizing the new Free Church Creed, and asserting that it is only a re-annunciation of the old doctrines more or less in the old form. A reply was immediately forthcoming from a minister of the advanced school. He points out that the said creed does not mention (1) The fall and original sin, (2) The infallibility of Scripture (etc.—10 points in all). Then he adds: "Surely, when in an official or semi-official declaration of faith, such doctrines are not so much as mentioned, the least we can infer is that they are no longer insisted upon." One could not wish for a better indication of the difference between the average lay mind and that of the typical minister. The minister takes silence as denial. The layman does nothing of the kind. He expects explicit statement. And surely the layman is justified. It is not in the province of this article to discuss the social problem, but with regard to that, the chief complaint against the Church is

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that she persists in maintaining an attitude of sphinx-like silence on the great matter of principle, viz., whether the sources of wealth ought to be in the hands of a comparative few or in the ownership of the community. Unless the Church can scrap her opportunism in the interests of truth, the present opportunity in the realm of thought is not for her, but for those who have learned the value and necessity of perfect frankness and plain unequivocal utterance.

One knows the difficulties in the way of such openness. But the situation makes it imperative that those difficulties be faced. Nor is it beyond our wit to find a way to overcome them once we have the will. In the first place, we have a right to expect more from our leaders and college professors. Clear and unmistakable deliverances from them would be a most valuable moral support to the rest of us, and would have a decided influence throughout our Churches. In the second

place, ministers might do more to help each other. Is it not time for those on whom this problem presses to band themselves together for moral and spiritual support? It is our pernicious isolation that numbs us and makes us afraid. And lastly, could not a really effective attempt be made to lay the situation in all its bearings before our laymen, that they might see the difficulties and help to solve them? Our people ought to be told plainly that many men find it hard to be frank owing to the conditions of Church life, and they ought to be asked to unite with us, in an atmosphere of genuine concern and prayer, in order that together we may find a way out for the good of the Church and the blessing of the world.

There is, of course, no intention whatever in this article to be in any degree censorious or to cast reflexion on any. It will be read rightly if it be regarded somewhat in the light of a personal confession. One realizes that the opportunity in the realm of thought is simply tremendous. The door is wide open, but alas! there are barriers. One yearns that the barriers may be removed, and the appeal here is that a combined and sustained effort should be made to clear the way, that the Church may be able to pass through to the broader field and there find a larger life.

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A DAY'S RETREAT.

By The Editor.

TWO years ago, in the pages of this magazine, the question of holding a series of congregational and ministerial "Retreats" was discussed. Nothing further, however, has come to the suggestion. Beyond the holding of the Hampstead Retreat, I am not aware that anything else has been attempted in the way indicated. And this seems to me to be a great pity, for if the value of the retreat were understood we should realize that in this form of devotion we possess a very powerful weapon on behalf of the Kingdom of God. In this time of ours when the psychological idea is dominant in the world of religious thought, it ought not to be difficult to persuade ourselves that a minister's very first business is with his own soul—its quality, its intensive power and its expressive force. And his second business is with the souls of his people rather than with their intellectual outlook or theological opinions or social moods. Not that this trinity of personal life is to be treated lightly, much less ignored, but rather that the underlying ego demands our first attention. For we know to-day, as we never knew before, that the windows through which we look out upon the world are mostly coloured windows and that the colours are derived from within ourselves. It is the elusive, mysterious soul that accounts for much of our intellectual orientation and our theological opinions. We are not moved so much as we think by "truth" without: we are moved and fashioned from within. Both clearness and dimness, straightness and crookedness have their origin there. And the value of the retreat properly conducted is that its entire exercises are focussed upon the soul. The soul is probed, stripped bare of all disguise and pretence, and made to see and to know itself in the Light which at once reveals and heals.

But is not each man quite capable of entering into himself and exploring the content of his own hidden life without any guidance from without? I do not believe he is. Our ministry is founded upon the assumption that he is not; otherwise why are we ministers at all? There is a proverb which says "invite a stranger to prune your vine." It requires some courage for

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a man to prune his own. A vine to be properly pruned involves something like a holocaust. It is cruel work to cut everything down to the last bud. The amateur does not always care to do it, the professional does not mind the effort, he knows what is needed to produce the best fruit. And certainly it is not every man, not even every minister, who has the courage to cut down to the very quick of his life. And it is not always that he sees any necessity for so doing. To change the figure we, like Agag, find it difficult to slay all the animals in our herds. we are tempted to reserve the goodliest. And in ministerial life there is always the temptation to hide the real man behind the professional man. It is good for us all to remind ourselves that before God there are no professional men; we are real men or no men. The official counts for nothing with Him. From every point of view it is wise for a minister to place himself periodically in the hands of some other man who can overhaul him and see through him, and who has the courage to tell him the truth about himself.

But in our Free Church ministry we have no provision for this psychological necessity. Our people open their souls to us, and we treat them as physicians treat their patients. We hold, in very deed and truth, a "cure of souls." But what when the physician falls sick, or flags, or loses his skill? To whom shall he go? "To the Great Physician, directly," will be the quick answer of some. And the reply is true so far as it goes. But it does not include all the elements of the case. We do not accept such an answer as applying to our own ministry for others. Certainly we point souls to the Great Physician, but we also take in hand their lives and direct them. We are human mediators between men and Christ, or we have no business to be in the ministry at all. We offer our aid to needy people in the name of Christ; we obey a Divine law in doing so. Thus we justify our "call" to the ministry of reconciliation. But the need that impels men to seek our help is the same kind of need that should impel us to seek similar help for ourselves. It is just here that there is a great lack in our ministry. We have fraternals, we meet for conference concerning the work of God. We exchange ideas, we gather at

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congresses to hear men preach, speak, and sometimes chatter, but we have no machinery for the overhauling of our own souls in thorough and systematic fashion. I speak not only for myself when I say that Free Church ministers are often unutterably lonely men so far as their deepest life is concerned. We do not care to expose our souls to others. There is a fear, perhaps, that if we did so, we should suffer in their esteem. Or, what is probably more common, we are filled with a strange shyness when it comes to a question of central living things.

The Anglican and the Roman Communions recognise this need of ministerial life and make provision for it by the holding of "retreats." And, Free Churchman as I am and shall ever remain, I am bound to admit that in this matter they are ahead of us. Their methods do not always appeal to us, nor would they suit us, but the idea of the Retreat is right, and it would be wise of us to include it in our ministerial programme. I feel a kind of humiliation in the fact that twice I have had to go outside my own communion to obtain what my soul really needed—a thorough overhauling at the hands of men who, whatever else they did not know, certainly knew the windings of the human spirit. We have had, in years gone by, "Quiet days" in London, and some of these have been helpful, but I cannot recall one that ever did its proper work. The conductor talked too much, or the members of the Conference did. There was little order in the exercises. After a time discursiveness entered. At meal times conversation often drifted into directions which were far removed from the purpose of the Quiet Day. The men seemed afraid of the very thing they were supposed to assemble for—quietness. Somebody was bound to talk. After a time many of us gave up attending these gatherings: they were simply a waste of time. At present the "Retreat" is effectively conducted in communions other than our own. I wish we could naturalise it amongst ourselves and make it really effective.

It may be helpful if I describe in a few words a day's retreat at which I "assisted" quite recently. I saw the advertisement in a "Church" paper. It was a "retreat for priests," to be conducted by one of the Fathers of the community of the Resurrection, at the priory in London. I knew him slightly, having

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been on the same platform with him at mass meetings in Hyde Park and elsewhere. So I wrote, and asked if I might attend. He knew perfectly well who I was and that my proposal to attend the retreat was not the preliminary to a humble following in the wake of Mr. Campbell. In the most gracious manner I was welcomed to the day's exercises. The Fathers of the Community are probably the most learned men of any religious order in the Church of England. Bishop Gore once belonged to them, and the names of Dr. Figgis, Dr. Frere, Dr. Bickersteth, and Fr. Seyzinger will be familiar to everybody. The Retreat lasted from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Before the day these ten hours to be spent in absolute silence and in pure devotion looked formidable. As I reflect upon that memorable time the marvel is that the hours sped so quickly as they did. My one desire was that the time might be prolonged. The arrangement of the exercises was perfect. Only a skilled psychologist could have arranged them, but then psychology is one of the strong points at Mirfield. There were three addresses so arranged as to fit in with the offices of matins, prime, text, nones and compline. These addresses were wonderful. No purple patches, no oratory. They were read from notes and delivered very very slowly. The obvious idea was not that the leader should relieve himself, but that he should get something into us. And he succeeded. To me the day was a revelation, a time of vision. It was not altogether pleasant. I winced again and again as my weakness was exposed. The notes I took will remain a very precious possession. The outstanding feature of the day was the time allotted to meditation or mental prayer. And the method employed was an absolute preventive of mind wandering. The mind was tied down and compelled to face one thing at a time and settle with it. It is a method we might with advantage introduce into our devotional devices in our own Churches. The silence was unbroken throughout the day. During the two simple repasts, a Bishop and two of the Fathers in turn read from a recent book of Theology. Such a day as this leaves a permanent mark upon the soul. Only those who have had experience of it can appreciate it. And I am persuaded that we Free Churchmen would do a great thing for our spiritual lives if we introduced the retreat to our ministers and our people.

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SOME NEW BOOKS.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE NEW AGE.—By E. Herman. (Cassell and Co., Ltd.).—Mrs. Herman has won her right to a place amongst constructive religious thinkers. Her first little book on Eucken and Bergson gave great promise of still better things from her pen. Her book on the meaning and value of mysticism more than fulfilled the early promise. It still remains one of the best statements we have upon the subject. The present volume runs on different lines. It is analytical rather than constructive. It points out directions rather than makes a way. It is a book to set one thinking, although there are some things in it against which one rebels. The best chapters are those which deal with the need for a new thought of God, and the message of the Cross of to-day. There is a good deal that is fresh in the treatment of both these themes, although (it need scarcely be said) there is nothing final. The notes struck are very modern, yet the author is profoundly evangelical and has respect for the past. It is a book that ministers should read. It will start many lines of thought: ending, perhaps, in ways different from those which the author indicates. Mrs. Herman is essentially a journalist and the journalese touch is all over her book. It is none the worse for that, for it preserves the air of actuality throughout. Mrs. Herman is capable yet of giving us a volume in advance of the present one which will develop the ideas she exposes of the doctrine of the Cross. "Christianity in the New Age," however, is a good half-way house towards it.

SIR HENRY LUNN has published "Some Chapters from My Life." The book is not what one would naturally expect it to be. The business side of his career is passed over without notice. The main part of it is taken up with the question of reunion and the part the writer played in it in the Grindewald Conference. There is also what may be called an "Apologia" for his present position, which seems to be unique. He is a communicant of the Church of England—apparently a High Churchman—yet he remains a Methodist. There are one or two good stories in the volume. A mother in Ireland was asked if her young hopeful of four years could sing. "No," she replied,

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“but he can say quite nicely ‘to hell with the Pope.’” That belongs to Dr. Lunn’s Dublin days of which he has many interesting things to say.

Messrs. Morgan Scott publish “Ruling Lines of Progressive Revelation,” by Rev. W. Graham Scroggie. (4s. 6d.) It is written on what is known as the “dispensational” line and is an excellent summary of “The Unity and Harmony of the Scriptures” from this point of view. The main thesis is that revelation is progressive, that light has been given as men were able to bear it, and that the first and last revelations are vitally related to each other. Mr. Scroggie takes the Bible as he finds it. He does not touch the subject of progressive understanding, nor make use of the historical method. The book is very clearly written and arranged much in Mr. Campbell Morgan’s style.

The Students’ Christian Movement has recently published several very helpful books, the most important of which is probably Dr. Fosdick’s “Meaning of Faith.” It is the best book he has written thus far, and will prove to be a veritable goldmine for young ministers.

“The pulpit has traditions which are a trammel upon free utterance. Intense and passionate utterance is liable to be misunderstood: it is often not welcomed, and it is always deprecated by those with whom decorum counts for more than truth. And yet I believe no preacher is so respected in the long run as the preacher who is fearless.”—(W. J. Dawson.)

“Have you heard of the end of Auguste Comte? He is dead three months ago. Shortly before he died he fell in love and immediately reversing all his thoughts, wrote a book declaring that intuitive feeling was all; that positive truths apprehended by the intellect were as nothing to the truths gained by feeling.”—(Stopford Brooke, “Life and Letters,” Vol. I., p. 112.)

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PRAYER UNION NOTES.

By Rev. J. W. Ewing, M.A., D.D.

WITH our prayers just now praise must inevitably mingle. Since the last issue of "The Fraternal" the terrible War has come to an end in a dénouement so sudden and so dramatic that even men of the world have seen in it something supernatural. Surely the Lord of Heaven has heard the prayers of His servants and shown Himself once again "a God of deliverances." With full hearts we thank and bless Him.

The ending of the War does not, however, mean the lessening of the need of prayer. Before us and the nations looms a mass of problems the solution of which may well drive us to our knees. The community seethes with unrest; forces are astir which might undo us all, but, rightly led, will shape a fairer England. There is great need of men who have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do. Let us go to the Wise for wisdom.

Our sympathies go out to the many ministers' homes which are left without the head. During the recent epidemic numerous brethren, and not a few of our younger men, have been called with brief warning into the unseen. We are sure that for them the change is of surpassing gladness, but we feel keenly for their loved ones who remain. May He who binds up the broken-hearted give "the oil of joy for mourning"!

Many of our brethren are now returning from Chaplaincy and Y.M.C.A. service among the troops to the work of the home ministry. Their point of view will have altered; their experience will have been widened; their touch upon men made more sure. Now there will be in their hearts a quickened desire for the strengthening of the churches which have spared them, and a longing to reach the people outside. May all help and guidance be given them!

The welcoming of the demobilised men presents an opportunity to all our ministers. Here are men who have come back to us from hell, scarred and scathed, but thankful to breathe once more the pure, sweet air of home and sanctuary. Hearts

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once indifferent are tender, and lives already Christ's are ready for deeper consecration. We who speak in God's name need to be imbued indeed with the very spirit of our Master.

As my devotional classic for this issue I take Augustine's "Confessions," a book to which some would assign the highest place among such writings. It is the work of one of the greatest of men, a man to whom both Romanist and Protestant turn with veneration, a man whose influence on the thought of the Christian Church has doubtless been greater than that of any other since the apostle Paul.

Augustine was born in the African town of Thagaste in A.D. 354. His father was a heathen (till near the end); his mother, Monica, a sincere Christian. Augustine, who at sixteen entered the rhetorical school at Carthage, was a careless, self-indulgent youth, until the reading of Cicero's "Hortensius" awoke in him desire for a higher life. He now began to study the scriptures, but disliked the plainness of their style. For some years he fell under the spell of the Manichean doctrine, and then under that of the new Platonism. He had now become a lecturer in rhetoric, and after a little time in Rome went as Public Teacher of Rhetoric to Milan, where he attended the Ministry of Ambrose.

Under Ambrose's sermons he began to realize the strength of Christianity, and there ensued a period of spiritual travail, in which his soul was drawn hither and thither by the conflict of the higher and the lower wills. He had long been living with one who was not his wife, and was very responsive to sensuous appeals; yet there was something in him that cried out for God. At last, in 386, came the scene in the garden in which he heard a voice calling "Tolle, lege"—"Take, read"—and turning to his New Testament he opened on the words, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Augustine now broke with his self-indulgent habits, and was baptized by Ambrose, afterwards being ordained to the Christian Ministry, and in 395 becoming Bishop of Hippo. After many years of incessant activity, as preacher, writer and

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organiser, he died in 430, while the Vandals were besieging Hippo.

The "Confessions" were written at Hippo about the year 400. In them Augustine tells the story of his inner life, and with such frankness that seldom has a heart been so unveiled to the eyes of men. For this reason the book has revealed many other hearts. "Whenever I read your Confessions," says the Italian poet Petrarch, addressing Augustine as in a vision, "I seem to be reading the history of my own wanderings, and not another's."

Augustine's Confessions have been compared with those of Rousseau, but the motives of the two books are in strong contrast. Rousseau dwells complacently on his life, hiding no shame indeed, but he does so as a man impenitent, unrenewed. He declares that when the last trumpet sounds he is ready to present himself book in hand before the Sovereign Judge, and calling on all men to listen to his confessions, he will challenge any one living to say "I was better than that man."

Augustine, on the other hand, tells his story with tears of penitence, casting himself on the mercy of God and trusting in the merits of his Redeemer. His confessions are those of a man forgiven, cleansed, regenerate, who glorifies God alone for his salvation.

The Confessions of Augustine are rich in memorable passages. There is the analysis of the child mind, so suggestive, yet to the student of child psychology, in which we are made to see how deeply-rooted in our nature the sinful tendency is. Yet even in those earliest days Augustine felt God had been seeking him in grace—"I had heard, while yet a boy, of the eternal life promised to us through the humility of Thy Son, our Lord God, Who condescended to our pride. Even from the womb of my mother, whose sure hope was in Thee, I was signed with the sign of His Cross, and seasoned with His salvation."

In his unfolding youth, his mother's love was still the silken cord holding him to higher things. Touching is the scene between Monica and the priest whom she besought to reason with her son. "Leave him where he is," said the priest,

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“only pray the Lord for him.” But she would not be persuaded, and pressed him the more with entreaties and tears to see and reason with him, till at last he took umbrage, and cried, “Go, and God be with you; it cannot be that the son of these tears should be lost.”

When Augustine set sail for Rome, Monica spent the last night in prayer that he might be detained. “But thou, in thy hidden wisdom, didst grant the substance of her desire, yet refuse the thing she prayed for, in order that Thou mightst effect in me what she was ever praying for.”

When the shadow of a friend's death fell on Augustine, he was inconsolable, having no solace in God. “I fumed, I sighed, I wept, I feared; I could find neither rest nor light. I carried about a torn and bleeding soul. In pleasant groves, amid sports or songs, or plats of flowers, in rich banquets, in the alcove or on the couch, in books, and poetry, there was no peace. Everything, even the light of day, was gloom. I continued to be my own prison. Whither could my heart flee from my heart?”

The battle of “the two wills” is depicted by a master hand. It is the struggle of Rom vii. Augustine wished, and yet did not wish, to be free. “Wretched, O wretched youth that I had been, I had even begged of Thee the gift of chastity, but I had said, ‘Give me chastity, and self-control, but not just yet.’” At length in the garden scene the bonds of the flesh were snapped, and Christ gained the victory.

Soon after the baptism of Augustine Monica died. One of the most beautiful passages in the Confessions narrates the conversation between mother and son as she drew near the Eternal City. They seemed to rise above terrestrial things; then they were in the heavenly glory—yet not even there did they pause. Up from all creatures they passed with one flash of thought to the realisation of “the Eternal Wisdom that abides above all.” “Is not this,” asks Augustine, “the meaning of ‘Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord’? Ah, when shall this be? Shall it be when ‘We shall rise, but shall not all be changed?’”

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My own copies of the "Confessions" are the following:—
 In Latin "The Confessions of Augustine," edited by Gibb and Montgomery in the Cambridge Patriotic Texts; and in English, "The Confessions of Saint Augustine," translated with the notes by C. Bigg, D.D. (Methuen and Co.); the latter is a handy little volume, suitable for carrying in the pocket.

"No one is fit to be entrusted with the Ministry of the Word unless he is willing to wear his crown of thorns in patient, persevering study . . . the real sweat of the brain which alone can enable a man to conquer and appropriate truth, so that it may become his own."—(Paul B. Bull, C.R.)

ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE FRATERNAL,

AT THE LIBRARY, 19 FURNIVAL STREET,

on Thursday, May 1st, 1919.

2.30.—Annual Business Meeting and Election of Officers.

3.0.—Address by Rev. Geo. Hill, D.D.

Free discussion of the Pastoral Session, opened by
 Rev. A. M. Ritchie, M.A.

4.15.—Reception and Tea.

Please bring any Ministers, will you, who are likely to become Members.

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LIST OF LIBRARIES, GRANTS, ETC.

CIRCULATING LIBRARIES.

Fraternal Union.—Boxes of five books are sent quarterly to groups of five members on payment of postage. A few boxes of books are available, on the same terms for isolated men who cannot possibly form a group of five. For particulars, write to the Secretary.

Mudie's.—This library has an elaborate scale of charges, particulars of which will be supplied upon application to 30 New Oxford Street, W.C. 10/6 per annum secures the use of one book which can be exchanged as often as desired, the subscriber paying the postage.

Boot's.—Books can be obtained through any of the branch shops at most favourable terms, the minimum being 10/6 per ann. for one volume, to be exchanged as desired.

Smith's.—The terms are much as those quoted above, but it will be well to obtain particulars from one of the branches.

GRANTS.

Fraternal Union Book Fund.—All members purchasing books through the Book Department of the Baptist Union will receive the following grants from this Fund—15 per cent. on all books published by the Kingsgate Press, and 10 per cent. on all other books. In the case of "subject" books, the usual 2d. in the 1/- will be allowed, and the grant will be made in addition.

Particular Baptist Fund.—Students on settling in their first Church, and others after two years' ministry in a Church, may apply for a grant through Rev. C. M. Hardy, B.A.

(All applications should be received before September).

Those desiring to participate in the benefits of Dr. Williams' Library in Gordon Square, W.C., or the Reading Room of the British Museum, should write for application forms to the Secretaries of the respective institutions.

Particulars of other Libraries and Grants will be gratefully received by the Secretary.