

Our Contributors.

A COMPLIMENT THAT IS A REVEALER.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Not long ago the popular Lieut-Governor of Ontario, during a short visit to one of our Ontario towns, was gravely informed at least twice in public that the different churches in that particular town got on peaceably together. His Honor said he was pleased to hear it.

How many times that astonishing piece of valuable information may have been communicated to him privately, we cannot say. Quite likely he heard it more than once. His Honor was much pleased with the size, and architectural beauty of the church buildings in that town, and it is highly probable that each time he alluded to these church buildings, he was told that the ministers who preached in them and the people who worshipped in them treated one another with becoming courtesy.

In the name of our common christianity, what else should one expect. Is it paying professedly Christian people any compliment to say that they don't quarrel. The fact that any sane man of average intelligence and decency, can bring himself to say that the churches of any community live in harmony, proves that people expect them to live in a state of ecclesiastical pugilism. Too often the expectation is fully realized.

The local tea-meeting orator in Smith's Corners always puts on a little oratorical spurt and tries to be extra impressive when he announces that the different denominations "dwell together in harmony and brotherly love." He tells the "distinguished speaker from a distance" that the different churches at the Corners have a lot of union sentiment, and the distinguished visitor smiles a rather dubious kind of smile and says he is glad to know it.

Suppose some wide-awake fellow with a fair knowledge of the New Testament, a level head and a steady nerve should rise in the audience when the local man makes his spurt about brotherly love and union sentiment—and say: "Mr. —, tell us, please, what you expect the Christians of Smith's Corners to do. Do you expect them to slander and abuse one another? Do you expect the preachers to call one another ugly names in the pulpit? Do you think the elders and deacons and class leaders and all the other official people should indulge in a continuous fight?" What could the local man say in reply to these questions. If he spoke the truth he would be obliged to say he referred to the harmony at Smith's Corners, because harmony is an exceptional sort of thing. Nobody tells a Lieut-Governor, or a distinguished stranger that light is pleasant, or that the sun shines, or that water runs down hill. These things are taken for granted, and if churches had a fair share of their Master's spirit, it would be taken for granted that they conduct their affairs with a fair degree of Christian courtesy. Instead of feeling proud at the declaration that they live in harmony, Christian people should blush to the roots of their hair at the idea that anybody found it necessary to make such a declaration.

What would any decent married couple think if somebody went on the platform and announced with a flourish of trumpets that they lived together in peace. Most married people would regard, and very properly regard, the announcement as a gross insult. A similar announcement about Christians is considered a high compliment. That kind of a compliment is a revealer.

The artificial means that are sometimes used to promote brotherly love among churches are also revealers. In fact they generally show two things—the absence of the thing sought and the utter uselessness of trying to obtain it by artificial methods. If people have not enough of the grace of God to live in harmony as church neighbors,

harmony never will be promoted by "union meetings." As a matter of fact, churches never get on so well together as when each one minds its own business and does the best work it can for the Lord. The more faithfully that churches work for Christ the more will they respect and esteem one another. Begin at the Ottawa River and examine every community between the Capital and Lake Huron, and it will generally be found that the best Christian spirit prevails in the communities in which each church does the best it can for Christ on its own lines, and that the poorest spirit is found, where the people make the most fuss about what they call "union." Envy, jealousy, bickering, sheep stealing and a lot of other ecclesiastical vermin are not unfrequently found in conjunction with ostentatious drivel about "union sentiment." Ministers who work hard all day for Christ, usually love and respect one another far more than ministers who spend their time engineering union demonstrations. In fact no small amount of the friction and jealousy comes in when the programme for the union demonstration has to be drawn up. By all means let the churches help one another, but the help should be the outcome of fraternal regard, not an effort to pump up regard when the well is dry.

The worst kind of church rivalry in existence is that which too often exists between congregations of the same church. The same in doctrine and polity, the war must necessarily be more or less personal, and bitterly personal it often is. The congregation, the office bearers, the minister must be attacked because the creed and the mode of worship cannot be. The most detestably ugly things we have ever heard about churches, have been said by professedly Christian people about rival congregations in their own church. The dirtiest tricks we have ever known have been played by people who called themselves Christians, the object being to injure a neighbouring congregation of the same Church. And some of the people who played these detestable tricks would roll up their eyes in affected horror at the ways of politicians.

When organic union orators strike off their best periods about one great church, etc., they conveniently ignore the fact, well known to all practical men, that the most bitter rivalry that exists between congregations, exists between those that are in one Church already.

ADVANCE MOVEMENT.—II.

BY J. C.

Mr. Varley, as one of the prophets or a John the Baptist, like a meteor flashed before the public. He began his "Bible Campaign" in Oakland, the city of churches, the best field for a start in Northern California. In the afternoon he held Bible readings from 3 to 5 o'clock daily and a gospel service from 8 to 10 p. m., in some central church, all sects uniting. He urged Christians to special prayer at home, closet, social and church, before and after his meetings. He pressed the clergy and laity to aggressive effort by all day meetings, etc., till in one evening forty of the leading pastors were preaching on the street corners (before the regular church service began) each with a band of singers and helpers. He addressed the various ministers' Monday meetings, always keeping in the fore front of all his appeals, the theme of world-wide interest now, the great burden and desire of all evangelical, living, aggressive Christians, viz., the *endowment of the Holy Spirit for service*, the great theme so scripturally pressed on the attention of your own Assembly by the retiring Moderator, Dr. McKay, whose own work in Formosa, is the best object-lesson in that line. Mr. Varley told the preachers, better break stones for a living than to continue to preach without the Holy Spirit. He gave a series of peerless talks to men only on the sins of manhood at the Y. M. C. A. He

spent nearly \$1,000 in printing his booklets, lectures and tracts, mostly for free distribution. He delivered and published a new sermon on the Existence of a Personal Devil, to meet the wide-spread disbelief in Satan personality. Notably he defined and denounced sin in all quarters as no one ever dared before him, sins of the pulpit and pew, the rich, public men, newspapers, respectable, popular, refined and secret sins, as well as the open and gross sins of intemperance, impurity, dishonesty, etc. The graceless pastor, officers or members, and the rich pew holder, with the church in his pocket, all trembled like Felix before Paul, or Herod before John, as this man of God, filled with the same Holy Spirit, boldly gave these greater sinners God's message. But above all, his deep, calm, spiritual, scriptural teaching on all subjects, but especially on the Holy Spirit; separation of Christians from doubtful alliances; Scriptural holiness and the great subject of the age the personal and near coming of Christ, was a privilege not easily estimated. Never since we listened to Spurgeon, and George Muller, has anything worthy to be named in the same day been such a delight to enjoy. Few teachers could be described as he; in brief, as one *without an erroneous tenet, much less heresy, and without a hobby.*

He had no sweet singer, no startling stories, no tricks of mesmerism, hypnotism or the other varied sources or substitutes for the Holy Spirit of the high pressure evangelists on the wing. The Word of God as the sword of the Spirit being his sole reliance. Yet what a commotion, unmasking the refuges of lies of the empty professors and drawing the true and spiritual around him to uphold his hands. As his preaching was different from any heretofore, so the results, the solid conversions, the great uplift and quickening to Christians were of a Scriptural brand and type. Quality rather than number or quantity was the characteristic of his work. While he spoke in churches of all denominations yet he did not mince or trim doctrine like Fay Mills, to suit the creed of the various churches. For example, he preached boldly and yet calmly and courteously the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, the two natures till death in the Christian, etc., in Methodist churches. The united clergy had invited him to this city but his decided teaching in Oakland on the personal and near coming of Christ rather startled some of the ministers who have not studied that subject, so these asked him to preach, what they erroneously call "the Gospel" and omit that subject. But no! He released them from their invitation as a body, and came to those churches whose pastors, even if they did not *then* believe the whole truth with Varley, were not afraid of it. So he came unhampered and gave a useful object lesson in manly Christian independence and courage.

Lastly came from New York Rev. A. B. Simpson and Rev. Stephen Merritt, that unique man, so strange, surpassing romance in his marvelous life and work, a fit companion for the quiet man of faith, the Geo. Muller of America. They held Conferences under the Christian Alliance in the leading cities. In Los Angeles, without any appeal, money poured in upon them with over thirty gold watches, ladies jewelry, etc., so in Oakland and this city. These donations were given in the meetings, but in this city persons called at the hotel where Mr. Simpson was staying and handed him liberal sums; in one case \$5,000, another \$2,000, by persons who did not give their names, thus aggregating, with many small sums, about \$10,000 in this city alone. In this connection it may not be amiss to notice what may be fitly termed a providential object-lesson bearing on deficits in mission funds. In the Presbyterian Church, one of the oldest in this city in which the Conference was held, two members, young ladies, had offered themselves for work in China, over two years ago. They were accepted, but owing to the debt, now over \$174,000, on the Foreign

Mission Board, they could not be sent. They lately offered themselves to the Christian Alliance, were accepted at once, and are both now on the way to China! Mr. Simpson, without any church or society collections, appeals, button-holing of rich men or other visible resources to fall back on, gets by simple prayer enough money on this coast to send half a score of missionaries to foreign fields—the very cream of the Church, too. That is the open secret of real work for God.

Of course your readers are familiar with the story of Mr. Simpson's work. How in a dozen years since he withdrew from his rich uptown church and big salary, and went out and down town among the common people, trusting God only for salary and all else, he has received over \$1,000,000 in answer to prayer, and sent out over three hundred missionaries to foreign lands, besides having a varied and extensive home work, as Training Institute for workers and missionaries, various Homes for Orphans, Invalids, etc., more than any one of the denominations, with all its constituency and machinery, has done in the same time. In all these years of "dull times," instead of deficit, there was continual and manifest increase of donations.

Mr. Varley suspended his meetings in order to unite with Mr. Simpson in the Conference. All the spiritually aggressive ministers and people of all denominations allied at these meetings, which lasted from 10 a. m. to 1 p. m., Stephen Merritt speaking all through the intervals of the regular sessions. He spoken often seven hours a day—sometimes with address, singing or prayer, five hours at a stretch, and people missed their lunch staying all day to hang on his lips. His work in New York is well known, chiefly the supply of food last winter to 25,000, his Travelers' Club (tramps) breakfasting 2,000 in relays at one place, transforming some of them as greatly as Paul was on the way to Damascus, e. g., John G. Morley who was about to commit suicide. He has received \$30,000 for 100 lectures on Gospel temperance. The one thing unique and noteworthy above all in Stephen Merritt is, that he speaks always and only about the Holy Spirit. This he was led to do by a native youth from the centre of Africa, who walked a thousand miles to the coast and worked his way in a vessel to New York, at starting knowing only the English words "New York," and "Stephen Merritt," learned from a female missionary who taught him all she knew about the Holy Spirit, and told him she learned through Mr. Merritt what she knew of Him. So he started for New York to learn more, but when he came God made him the instrument to lead Mr. Merritt to a deep and special knowledge of this Spirit. The whole story is the most striking we know of outside the Bible. Let all read the Life of the Late Sam. Morris, the name given him in New York.

The climax or high water mark of the advance wave of revival and blessing began with General Booth, and, augmented by Mr. Varley, was reached in these Conferences of the Christian Alliance under Messrs. Simpson and Merritt, so that the outside spiritually was never so bright and hopeful all over the coast, as well as in those cities around the bay.

Having been a farmer's boy suggests an item for your rural readers, who may remember the good old days when a dozen stocks of wheat was a good day's reaping with a hand sickle. There are machines here that reap, thresh and bag 100 acres of wheat in a day! Some canny Celt wants to know what about the profits of farming? Well, it may reconcile him to the Canada farm to learn that wheat raising under the most favorable conditions, only pays a little over one-half of one per cent. on the capital, and barley a little over one-third of one per cent., and these are the best paying cereals that can be sown. This estimate was publicly given lately in a paper read by a pioneer who had ample capital and land and trial, for experimenting in all lines of industry.

San Francisco, Cal.