

### Rev. William Ryan Criticises that Berwick Address.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you kindly allow me space in *The Union* to state what I regret in your Berwick address and what we hope you will regret after due reflection? Really, the published synopsis of that address in the *Union* of the 15th, inst., is more startling and objectionable, because of what it implies, than the statement in the *Wedge*. True, there is a difference between so-called church and so-called Christian denominations, but in its local application the difference removes none of the stigma implied in the phrase, as there are no churches "in our midst," but claimed to be, and are acknowledged to be, evangelical. The position taken by the Editor and which seems to have given character to the whole address appears to me unfortunate, viz: that it is the "SPECIAL mission of the Baptist Young People to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." Until I read the address I was under the impression that this was the mission of all true Christians, young and old, of all churches. Is there any new revelation which gives the Baptist Young People a SPECIAL monopoly here and allows the rest of us to remain indifferent about our faith? This belief led the Editor to say, "Two things to-day seriously threaten the cause of truth in our midst. (1) Our necessary mingling with the world. (2) Our association with other Christian bodies" Does not that sound like the utterance of some monastic hierarch who believes that true piety can only be cultivated in a cloister and that all persons outside his own order are heretics, whose touch is contaminating? Can it be the matured thought of an ambassador of Christ who believes that TRUTH IS TO PURIFY BUSINESS AND SAVE THE WORLD and that THOSE WHO POSSESS THE TRUTH ARE TO DISSEMINATE IT BY ASSOCIATING WITH THEIR FELLOWS? "The cause of truth is seriously threatened" by the Baptist associating with Episcopalians and Methodists, for they are the only other "Christian bodies in our midst." Why? Because by such association there is disseminated among the Baptists "the giant evil that it does not

matter much what we believe so long as we are sincere and do the best we can, which is the devil's own doctrine." Does the Editor believe that the Episcopalians and Methodists hold and disseminate "the devil's own doctrine"? and the Baptists cannot associate with them without catching the contagion? This is the plain teaching of the address, whatever may be the meaning of its author, and no marvel that it is resented.

Then as to the "so-called union platforms where creeds are compromised" what can it mean? I never heard of such a platform among Protestants. I do not compromise my principles when I associate with Baptists ministers, and I never supposed they compromised themselves when they met on union platforms with me to plead for a cause we should all love much more than we love our creeds. The very passage quoted in the address should teach us not to allow external ordinances to keep us apart. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." No man ever cared less for external rites or laid more stress upon the essentials of Christianity than did Paul. He was familiar with the dual baptisms taught by John and Christ, viz: the water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Yet when he saw Christians wrangling about the emblem, the water baptism, he seemed to regret that he ever used it, and said to them, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius: . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel:" and in teaching the Ephesians what they must hold in order to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," he ignores water baptism altogether and insists only on the baptism that renews and sanctifies and saves, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Thus by a stroke he wipes out for ever the papistical dogma of water-baptismal regeneration and shows all Protestants that however they may administer their ordinances, that those ordinances are not essential to salvation, and should not keep them from united Christian effort to save the world. This being true, my pious Quaker friend, who has not received the water emblem, but who has received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and my Baptist brother, who has received

both the emblem and the thing emblemized, are equally welcome, as servants of Christ, to my Christian fellowship. "The cause of truth is seriously threatened," not by the business world nor the association of Christians of different denominations, but by a partisan spirit magnifying our differences and minimizing our agreements, and by the poisoned shafts of the enemies of Christianity which find such vulnerable targets in our denominational Shibboleths. If ever there was a time when Christians should stand together and help each other it is now: and we expect Editors of "Union" papers to take a front place in the onward march of Christian unity.

WILLIAM RYAN.

### Drunkenness is Decreasing.

Was Never a Time When the Excessive Use of Liquor Was so Infrequent.

"The men and women interested in organized temperance work in this country, are, on the whole, very worthy people," writes Edward W. Bok in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. "They are sincere, energetic and well-meaning. But sometimes they lack that nicely and wisdom of judgment which is absolutely necessary in organized effort in order that the surest success may be won. They sometimes, unfortunately, allow their zeal to run away with them. This tendency was recently shown in one of their official statements which bewailed the startling growth of intemperance in America during the year 1897. Many good people, to whom the circular containing this statement is sent, will be prone to believe this assertion. They have not the means at hand by which to verify such a statement, and will be made uncomfortable by it, whereas, in reality, exactly the opposite is the truth. There has never been a time in America when every indication pointed so strongly to a decrease of intemperance as the present. There has never been so little drinking as at present, and never such a strong tendency toward moderation in quarters where alcoholic indulgence is general. This is a fact impossible to controvert, because the most careful figures bear out this very hopeful statement."