

Correspondence.

ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

To the Editor of THE MONTHLY.

IN these days of thought and advancement, when it is no longer a credit to a man to be liberal in religious matters, one of the most interesting questions is : How best to foster the spirit of brotherly love and the desire for unity of action that characterizes the churches at the present time.

That there is such a feeling abroad among the churches is abundantly evidenced by the action of church synods, assemblies and conferences in discussing the question and passing resolutions relative to a desired union of the churches. A careful observer, too, may see it at work in all denominations, for it has already passed the purely theoretical stage and is becoming more and more practical. Those churches whose ritual is embodied in a book of prayer are, of course, for that very reason precluded from making other than very slight changes in their form of service. They are not behindhand, however, in the onward progress of development, for the sympathy which extends to them, along with other churches and denominations, is bound to show itself and does show itself, if not in one way in another. But when we turn attention to those churches which have no written form of church service, a more material and no less practical result is manifest.

Churches and denominations are distinguished from one another in their earlier history more by extremes of formality (or, as they fancy, by the entire absence of all formality, which is much the same thing) than by any remarkable difference in their views as to the essential doctrines of Christianity. In our day these *essential* doctrines are the questions of absorbing interest. To them is given the best thought of the best minds. The consequence is, the Church of Christ begins to grow ; non-essential differences come to be regarded, first, as of minor importance, and afterward as a hindrance to the evangelization of the world, to the growth of Christian character in the individual and, by consequence also, in the society at large. Ultimately these differences, looked at now as having once served a purpose—and, it may be, a very useful