

tian Church, from the apostolic days onward, no broader plans have been laid, no more efficient work has been done, than belong to this century of modern missions.

CHRISTIAN UNITY.

We now trace the synchronous and parallel development of Christian Unity. Perceptibly for a period embracing at least a third of this century of mission work, Christian thought has pressed persistently toward a larger fellowship among evangelical denominations. About thirty years since a great revival swept over the United States and Great Britain. It brought with it, or left as its effect, in this land at least, a marvelous influence upon inter-denominational life. It was not strange that some reaction should come. The limits of religious divisibility—the ultima thule of denominationalism—had been reached.

The Baptist denomination had developed seven distinct species, among which were "Freewill," "Seventh Day," "Six Principle," and "Anti-Mission"; nine, if we add "The Disciples," and "The Church of God."

The Methodist denomination had exuberantly blossomed out into fifteen varieties, distinguished as "Methodist," "Methodist Episcopal," "Methodist Protestant," "Primitive Methodist," "Free Methodist," "Independent Methodist," "Congregational Methodist," "Calvinistic Methodist," "American Wesleyan," "Canadian Methodist," "British M. E.," "African M. E.," "Colored M. E.," "African M. E. Zion," and "M. E. South."

The Presbyterian denomination followed with some ten clans, some "Reformed" and some not; "Old School, and New," singers of hymns and singers of Psalms, some organ players and some non-instrumental, some close-communication, and some not—and some that would discipline a member for attendance upon another church, even as an "occasional hearer."

Besides, there were denominations impossible of description, and almost of classification. We may not challenge the rights of conscience, asserted for themselves by these manifold and almost infinitesimal bodies, but we may call in question the wisdom and expediency of erecting a denomination on postulates as narrow as these which underlie some of them. These bewildering ramifications of denominational life strained Christian unity to its utmost tension and gave abundant opportunity for the vent of any possible spirit of intolerance.

The strong counter-tendency which we mark as characteristic of the present time operates in a variety of ways. It first "reduces the fractions to a common denominator and then adds." It unites churches of the same general order. By sympathies and communities of faith and polity it will make broader and simpler classification.