

## Symposium, ON THE SUBJECT OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

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**I**S the spirit of Christian unity growing among the churches? He is not a close observer of the forces which are at work who is not prepared to say yes in answer to this question. What marvellous changes have been wrought in this direction in the last forty years. The lines which separated not ministers only but laymen of the various denominations in all matters of church work were sharply defined, so sharply indeed that to the outside world it appeared that they had nothing in common. It was for example a rare thing for a Methodist minister to be found filling a Presbyterian pulpit or a Presbyterian minister that of a Methodist congregation. Equally rare was it for laymen of various churches to be jointly associated on committees (except indeed that of the Bible Society) for any matter relating to Christian effort of a general character, their action being strictly confined to work in their own denominations, looking as they too often did with scant favour upon the work of their brethren of other churches.

Forty years ago, and the very suggestion to have a psalm or a hymn found in the collection of one church added to that of another would have been received with dismay if not with horror. Forty years ago, and by reason of the preponderance of a spirit of bigotry over the Christlike spirit of charity, the action of each church, if not expressed in words, was nevertheless borne out in its conduct to others. Its language being: "The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are we." And again: "Come not near to me for I am holier than thou."—Is. lxx. 5.

Forty years ago, and it was an unheard of thing for the members of one denomination to invite the brotherly aid of the members of any other in the extension of its church or college enterprises.

Forty years ago, and the social intercourse of church members was very largely if not entirely confined to those connected with their own denomination.