

painted the glories of his church and held all others up to scorn. On such an occasion one of his admirers somewhat deprecatingly said, "Ah ye should hear him when he has the drap in him; man! he's a great Presbyterian." Some of the greatest of these great Presbyterians have been drunkards. Living in wilful violation of the law of God they dare not occupy their minds with any point of vital religion, and shun appeals to conscience as the victim of hydrophobia flees water; but with wonderful fluency and fervour will dilate upon the constitution of a church by whose doctrine, practice and discipline they find themselves condemned.

There is unhappily a tendency among many good Presbyterians to encourage this great Presbyterianism. "He is a great Presbyterian" is often said as a word of recommendation for a man whose character is bad in the extreme, and for whom no other good thing can be said. It is unfortunate to say the least that "great Presbyterian," and "great scoundrel," or "great drunkard," should be names for the same man. A great Methodist or Baptist may be a great scoundrel too, but he generally, indeed necessarily, in order to gain his name makes a show of religion, which the great Presbyterian need not. To encourage such men, to praise them for their Presbyterianism, to recognize them as Presbyterians, is a dishonour to the church, an injury to the cause of religion, and a harm done to the souls of the men themselves. We do not think that our pulpits can compare for a moment in point of controversial virulence with those of other denominations; and there is perhaps no church so unwilling to make a parade of its denominational differences or to make them the subject of discourse at the stated times of the Sabbath service. Yet not unfrequently in new parts of the country where one or more hard-headed great Presbyterians are found to incite the preacher, valuable time is lost and golden opportunities of doing good are thrown away in needless attacks upon some sister church, and as needless a defence of that to which the congregation is supposed to belong. This takes well with the great Presbyterians, who are the great talkers, and for a time appear to be the most active men in the congregation, but, as a rule, it saddens and wearies and disgusts those who come seeking God's peace and holiness. Relationships and connections are not always found or formed within the same denomination, and blood and friendship rise indignantly in the heart of the warmest and truest adherent of the Westminster Standards against too frequent exhibitions of great Presbyterianism.

The man who in matters of religion puts his denomination first is a sectary, it matters not though his denominational differences be nearer the truth than all else, or be the very truth itself. He was a sectary who said "I am of Paul," as well as he who said "I of Apollos." Nay more, the man that dared to place the Lord and his apostles at variance, and said, "I am of Christ," thus designating a party, was a worse sectary than either of the others. It is as bad as if he had said "I belong to the Church" with one sect, or "I belong to the saints" with another of the present day. There is doubtless another extreme, equally to be deprecated, into which men run, that of ignoring the constitution and government of the Church to which they belong, and esteeming no communion of Christians above another? It is right that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind and able moreover to give a reason for his adherence to a particular branch of the Christian Church. Our people would be none the worse for knowing more of the principles which distinguish Presbyterianism, but would thereby be better fitted to discharge their duty toward the Church at large.