

ago? You give us the Bible? why do you deny it to the slave? You multiply schools among us; why do you forbid the African to learn to read? You feel indignation at our Moslem oppressors; why are you unwilling to disturb, even with a whisper, the American slaveholder? You tell us of the sanctity of marriage; why do you endure a system, which, hardly less than Mahometanism, tends to concubinage? You hold up before us the family relation as of the most sacred and delightful character; how then can you sanction the violent sundering of these ties, and the scattering of father, mother, brother, sister, son, and daughter, to the winds of heaven? You assure us that man is not a brute, that he is made in the image of God, that he is to live forever; why then do you, in America, buy and sell men, and reduce them nearly to the level of the horse or the ox? Is this consistency? Is this Christianity? Is this the land of freedom; this the land of philanthropy, of pure and devoted piety, of which you boast?

What should we say to such questions? What could we do but hang our heads? Now, my dear brother, I do not believe in denunciation on this subject; there has been too much already. We should love the slaveholder as well as the slave. Had we been accustomed to the "peculiar institution" from our childhood; had you and I received a southern training, we should probably now have a slaveholder's feelings. It is God only who makes us to differ. What we need, is simply this, that the gigantic evil be understood and appreciated by people of all classes; and then that each one set himself, calmly and seriously, to look for the remedy. When all our thinking men and true-hearted patriots take this attitude, slavery will soon die; nor will the flimsy excuse longer be heard, 'Slavery is a great evil, but our hands are tied, and we know not what to do.'

#### THE CATHOLICITY OF PRESBYTERIANISM.

Though Presbyterians do not recognise the Divine origin of what is called "the Apostles' Creed," they are prepared cordially to express their belief in "the holy Catholic Church." The word *catholic* simply means *general* or *universal*, and the Presbyterian doctrine upon this subject is thus set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith:—"The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel—not confined to one nation as before under the law—consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children, and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation. The Catholic Church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible; and particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the Gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them."—(*Westminster Confession of Faith*, ch. p. xxv. 2-4.)

It must be apparent from these statements that Presbyterianism is pre-eminently a *catholic* system. There is here nothing of that narrow, Judaical spirit which would limit the true Church to any particular sect or denomination, for Presbyterians acknowledge as members of this holy brotherhood all who profess the doctrine of the Gospel, and adhere more or less strictly to its ordinances. That our readers may clearly perceive our meaning, it may be well to enter somewhat into detail, and thus more distinctly explain what we understand by the catholicity of Presbyterianism.

We observe, then, in the first place, that *Presbyterianism is catholic in its spirit*. It can afford freely to admit that the ministers of different churches are true ministers, and that the mem-

bers of various communions are true Christians. The contrast which it here exhibits to Popery or Puseyism, cannot fail to commend it to every devout and intelligent reader of the Scriptures. Popery asserts that its own votaries are exclusively "the holy Catholic Church," and Puseyism is barely willing to divide the title between Prelacy and Romanism; but Presbyterianism breathes a more generous spirit, as it extends the name to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; and though it abhors Popery as "the mystery of iniquity," yet, like the true mother who appeared before Solomon for judgment, (1 Kings in 26,) that it may not consign any of the living children of God to perdition, it is willing to admit that some of them may be found lying in the bosom of "the mother of harlots." So far from shutting out of the pale of salvation all, save those who have been baptised by a minister, claiming to be a link of the pretended chain of the apostolic succession, it is prepared to admit that even an evangelical Quaker, who has never received water baptism at all, is a living member of Christ's mystical body; and it has thus no reason to be jealous of the spiritual prosperity of other denominations, as it teaches that a revival of religion in any quarter is a step of advancement for the holy Catholic. Whilst it holds that its own ordinances are Scriptural, and its own constitution apostolic, it has no idea of affirming that other regiments under the command of the great Captain of salvation, who do not wear its uniform, and who do not observe its discipline, do not belong to the army of the Church militant. "The purest churches under heaven," says its Confession, "are subject both to mixture and error," (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, chap. xxv. 5,) and, therefore, on behalf of itself, it puts forth no claim to the exclusive enjoyment of the Divine favour.

We observe, in the second place, that *Presbyterianism is catholic in its creed*. It adheres tenaciously to those cardinal truths which, in all ages, have been justly ranked among the fundamentals of Christianity. Such is the principle that the Bible is the Word of God. Such also are the doctrines of the Fall and of the Trinity, of the Incarnation and the Atonement, of Justification by Faith, and of Regeneration by the Spirit. But there are other tenets which, in the spirit of an enlightened catholicism, orthodox Presbyterianism utterly repudiates. It denies, for instance, that the Romish Church is the holy Catholic Church, that baptism is regeneration, and that every ungodly ignorant who has been ordained by a bishop, is a true successor of the apostles. Instead of recognising such dogmas as catholic, it denounces them as false, self-righteous, and sectarian. And it is very remarkable, that as often as heresy has attained the ascendancy, it has never continued long to tolerate the ecclesiastical arrangements of Presbyterianism.

We observe, in the third place, that *Presbyterianism is catholic in its diffusion*. In all ages, and in all parts of Christendom, we may discover some traces of its existence. What were the twelve apostles, when they engaged in the ordination of the seven deacons (Acts vi. 2, 6,) but the members of the primitive Presbytery of Jerusalem? And what were the apostles and elders, when they assembled in the Jewish metropolis, and ordained decrees which were to regulate the procedure of the Church, (Acts xii. 4, 5,) but the General Synod of early Christianity. Timothy was ordained "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery," (1 Tim. iv. 14,) and Paul himself was separated to the work to which the Lord had called him by the Presbytery of Antioch. (Acts xiii. 1, 3.)

It is notorious that, in the second and third centuries, the Church was governed by presbyteries and synods; and even long after the Man of Sin had established himself in the house of God, the councils, which continued occasionally

to assemble, were so many remnants of primitive Presbyterianism.

The Vaudois of the Valleys of Piedmont are, beyond all comparison, the most ancient body of Protestants in Christendom as their history can be traced with considerable distinctness for nearly a thousand years. They reject the designation of *reformed*, for they say that these were never connected with Popery. The account which they give of themselves is, that they separated from the degenerated Christian communities around them in the early part of the fourth century, and that they have ever since maintained the position of witnesses for the truth. It is supposed by some of our most valued interpreters of prophecy, that they are mentioned in the Book of Revelation (Rev. xi. 3, 4), and that they are there represented as under the special protection of the Almighty. It is an interesting fact that these ancient Protestants are Presbyterians.

We might suppose, from the style in which some express themselves, that Presbyterians are a paltry sect, confined to a very narrow sphere of influence; but those who speak thus only betray their own limited information. Presbyterians are more widely diffused than any other class of Protestants, and, ever since the period of the Reformation, they have occupied a prominent position in Christendom. In Ireland, the communicants connected with the Presbyterian Church greatly outnumbered those of any other Protestant denomination. In Scotland, Presbyterians constitute almost the whole of the inhabitants of the country. In Wales, the Calvinistic Methodists, who are substantially Presbyterians, form a large proportion of the population; and in England, though Presbyterians are not, comparatively, numerous, they are to be found in all principal towns. Whilst Presbyterianism is extensively diffused on the continent of Europe, it appears there in connection with the most healthy and thriving sections of the Protestant community. Of late, the Presbyterians of Piedmont, under the protection of the State, have been rapidly extending themselves in the territories of the King of Sardinia. In Presbyterian Switzerland, the Evangelical Society of Geneva has recently done much to advance the interests of Scriptural Protestantism. The French Protestants are almost all Presbyterians, and their ministers, even at the present time, receive an annual allowance out of the national treasury. A species of Presbyterianism is established in several of the Protestant States of Germany; and not long since, the King of Prussia proposed to organise a system of strict Presbyterianism throughout his Protestant dominions. Since the time of the Reformation, Presbyterianism has prevailed in Holland. It has been often said by coxcombs, that Presbyterianism is not a religion for a gentleman, but in the country we have just named it is a religion for a king. "The members" of a Dutch congregation, says a minister long connected with Holland, "sit down promiscuously" at the Lord's table, "without distinction of age or rank, the king being seated, perhaps, next to the poorest of his subjects."

Presbyterianism is not confined to the British Isles and the Continent of Europe. The sun never sets upon its territories. It is to be found in East and West Indies, in Africa, and in Australia; but nowhere has it made more rapid and extensive progress than on the Continent of North America. About the beginning of the eighteenth century, only one little presbytery existed in the New World, now the Presbyterians of the United States are counted by millions, and constitute a leading section of the population of the great Republic. Throughout the various parts of the Confederation, they may be found occupying the highest civil offices, and the presidential chair has been not unfrequently filled by an individual connected with their communion.

Thus, whether we consider the spirit, or the