

PRESBYTERIANISM AND EDUCATION.

AN ADDRESS.

DELIVERED BY REV. PRINCIPAL MACVICAR BEFORE THE PRESBYTERIAN UNION OF NEW YORK, IN THE OPERA HOUSE, BROADWAY.

IT would be arrogance for Presbyterians or for any other branch of the church of God to claim supreme and exclusive excellence in the vast field of educational enterprise. Such a claim is certainly foreign to the spirit of our creed, our polity and practice. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church and in the communion of saints. It is our joy and distinctive glory to recognize and acknowledge the good works of all members of the body of Christ by whatever name they may be pleased to designate themselves. We incorporate, I venture to think, in our belief and practice the best elements of all other protestant systems. We have, at any rate, points of sympathy and identity with them all. We strive, for example, to manifest the fervour and energy of Methodism and its skill in organizing and directing Christian activities.

We emulate the zeal of independents in maintaining the true principles of spiritual democracy in guarding the freedom and autonomy of individual congregations so far as compatible with order and the unity and catholicity of the flock of Christ. We emphasize Scriptural Episcopacy, or the feeding and

governing of the flock by New Testament Presbyters or Bishops ; and there is no other church more fully supplied with Bishops. Thus we are practically related to all these ecclesiastical systems.

It has been asked how far back can we trace Presbyterianism as an educational factor? Does it date from the days of the Apostles or Post-apostolic Fathers? Some make it far more ancient than this, and profess to trace its principles and beneficent workings in the land of the Pharaohs long before the Christian era when Moses went down into Egypt and called for the elders of the people. In this fact they see the origin of our Kirk Session.

For myself I am content to discover the chief features of our doctrine and polity in the lessons of Jesus and his apostles, and in the record of their practice in planting and governing churches. If Christ and his apostles were educators of the highest order—and who will assert that they were not—if He was the Great Teacher sent from God, who spake as never man spake, we as following in their steps, however imperfectly, may fairly claim to be engaged in the same divine work.