

tions exercised by its members;—subdivision and delegation of ministerial powers to the parts, so far as requisite for the purposes of local efficiency;—and subordination of every part to the primary authority residing in the unity of the body; thus securing active supervision, coöperation, and expansive action in the work of Christ.

Development by growth and subdivision is the law of this system. The growing church at Jerusalem sends forth its shoots to all quarters of the world, each of which taking root becomes a new centre of expansive and healing influence, pushing forth into other regions as yet unevangelized. At the same time, all recognize and cherish the relation of unity to the parent stock, and subordination to the authority which resides in the body of which it is the centre. The church of Scotland, planted by the labors of a few divinely enlightened men, maintains at first the communion of its members through the annual convocation of its pastors and elders in one assembly. As it expands, this body develops an organization of subordinate synods, which, in their turn, are divided into presbyteries, each exercising in its sphere its distributive part of the functions of the body. A few missionaries of this church organize in Ulster a presbytery, which by a like process, becomes the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in Ireland. Driven from their homes by privation and persecution, a handful of members of these churches find themselves exiles from the means of grace, scattered in the wilds of the new world. Their call for help is heard; and a missionary from their native land erects, in their midst, the standard of the Cross, and performs the work of an evangelist by planting churches and dispensing the ordinances of the Gospel beneath the shades of the primeval forests. Others join in his labors, and the organization of the Church is completed. At first, half a dozen names make up their roll when met in full assembly. But, as years roll on, the infant Church expands with the widening continent, and creates out of its bosom a numerous retinue of synods and presbyteries, whose annual commissioners, in General Assembly, perpetuate the succession of the original court. Hundreds of thousands of souls, the flock of Christ in her fold, are led in the paths of knowledge and holiness by a growing multitude of ministers, her sons. By them the call of mercy is urged on unconverted millions throughout the land. Herself planted by the spirit of missions; her organization constructed in special adaptation to that work; her commission from Him who is the Prince of the kings of the earth; and her field the world; missionaries trained in her schools, commissioned and sent forth through her executive agencies, sustained by her contributions, and followed with her prayers, bear the glad tidings of salvation to the dark tribes of Asia and Africa, the aborigines of America, and the baptized pagans of Europe; and her General Assembly welcomes to its bosom commissioners from presbyteries which are springing into existence in India, China and Africa; the germinating courts of churches which shall yet flourish among regenerated nations, where heathenism now broods amid the gloom of the shadow of death.

Neither historically, nor in theory, is the system which thus unfolds itself one of confederate association, but of organic union. The functions and powers exercised under it are not derived by concessions of the inferior courts; nor do they primarily reside in them. Originating in the fountain Christ, and replenishing the spring-head—the Church catholic—his body; they flow downward from the higher courts in rich and exhaustless stream, which, freighted with the riches of immortality, permeates every congregation, and pours the blessings of life and salvation into the heart of every believer. “*Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.*”