

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*, chap. xxv. 2-4)

It must be apparent from these statements that Presbyterianism is predominantly a catholic system. There is here nothing of that narrow, judicial 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 members 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 iii. 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 baptized 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 regulations 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 xvi. 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 infor-

mation. 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 India, 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 the 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 creed, or the extension of Presbyterianism, it is obvious that it may legitimately lay claim to the designation of *catholic*; and, we may add, that the catholicism of Presbyterianism is very different from the catholicism of Popery. Presbyterianism may be found in all parts of the globe, and it is everywhere at home, for it speaks in vernacular tongue, and uses language which to every one is intelligible. Popery, too, may be found everywhere; but it is everywhere a stranger, for it uses an unknown tongue, and everything about it is suspicious and perplexing. Wherever Presbyterianism appears, it carries with it an open Bible, and, in the spirit of a true Catholic, it invites all to read the Word of God's own communication;—wherever Popery exists, it treats the Bible worse than would a Turk or a Heathen, and when it has the power, it consigns to the prisons of the Inquisition those who seek to be acquainted with the catholic doctrine of the holy oracles. Wherever Presbyterianism prevails, it is found connected with the catholic blessings of civilization, social comfort, and civil liberty; wherever Popery has established its dominion, it appears connected with the catholic curses of ignorance, beggary, and despotism. We leave our readers to decide the catholicity of Popery and the catholicity of Presbyterianism.—*Irish Presbyterian.*

LIBERALITY—In one of the New York papers it is stated that a collection was taken for the Bible cause, (which means we presume, the circulation of the Holy scriptures through the agency of the United States Bible Society,) amounting to *three thousand and eighty-three dollars*, on the first Sabbath in November, in the Presbyterian Church, on the Fifth Avenue, after a discourse by the Rev. Dr. Alexander, the pastor. The congregation, we believe, is not a very large one. A year has scarcely elapsed since the building in which they now worship was finished and dedicated to the worship of God. Its cost exceeded \$100,000, and the sale of pews realized nearly the entire sum. Such an expenditure for the erection of a sacred edifice is evidence of the wealth and liberality of those who propose to assemble in it that they may seek after "the true riches." This munificent collection for the circulation of the Holy Scriptures is in good keeping with the munificent expenditure for the erection of a temple, where the divine lesson is taught: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man on the things of others." This liberal people not long ago sent their pastor, at their expense, to Europe to recruit his health, where he remained about a year; and besides the affection which they bear to him, manifested by tokens not to be estimated at a money value, they pay him a stipend of \$4000 per annum. This sum, it is understood, is no more than sufficient to support a minister in his right position in a city like New York.

Our churches in Canada, both in the cities and larger towns, might do well to consider whether such an example be not worthy of imitation, not that we, in our poorer condition, can come up to this style of munificence, but, as an apostle speaks in an analogous instance, it may be imitated by us (*proportionate*) EQUALITY. Unhappily the idea seems to prevail among us that a minister has no claims whatever, or at least that all his claims