

THE
Free Presbyterian Magazine
 AND
 MONTHLY RECORD

(Issued by a Committee of the Free Presbyterian Synod.)

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear Thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."—Ps. lx. 4.

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Tribute to the late Rev. Malcolm Gillies.

By Rev. D. M. MACDONALD, *Portree.*

It is with sincere regret that many would hear of the unexpected death of the late Rev. M. Gillies, who for about twenty years was the highly respected and popular minister of the Free Presbyterian congregation of Stornoway, where his ministry was greatly appreciated.

Mr. Gillies served the Church faithfully in London as a student, and in Winnipeg for several years. After a short pastorate in Halkirk, Caithness, he accepted a call to Stornoway some time after Rev. N. Macintyre, their former minister, was translated to Edinburgh, and had the heavy burden of several Lewis congregations on his shoulders for a considerable time. He thus became well-known throughout the Island, and laboured in season and out of season preaching the Gospel he loved so well to his fellow sinners. He was well acquainted experimentally with the Doctrines of Grace, and his discourses were finely balanced, being doctrinal, practical and experimental. He delighted in preaching a crucified and glorified Saviour, as the only hope for lost sinners, and, like Paul, he gloried in the cross of Christ.

He excelled in handling unusual texts and it was interesting to note how he sought to point out point after point and applied his subject in such a manner as to be for the spiritual benefit of his hearers.

His ministry was blessed to souls, and especially to the people of God, who were often edified and refreshed by his ministrations all over the Church.

Being possessed of a ready wit, he could express himself in a very original manner, which fixed the points he wanted to make clear in the minds of his hearers.

As a man and Christian, Mr. Gillies had admirable qualities which won for him the love and respect of his own denomination and of some outside who knew him well.

Like the good Master he served, he was of a humble mind and ready to put others before himself. He never spared himself if any of his brethren wanted his assistance, and he would do everything possible to help the cause of Christ. That is what he lived for, and it might be said of him as the inspired Apostle said of himself—

“For me to live is Christ, to die is gain.”

For a number of years he served the Church as Assistant Clerk of Synod, and laboured in this capacity with the greatest devotion and unselfishness.

His kind and homely manner endeared him to those who were familiar with him, and his hospitality was great. In this respect, he was well supported by his amiable partner, who showed much kindness to guests in the house.

A great blank has been made in the Church by his removal to eternal glory, and his sorrowing congregation have lost a faithful, zealous, and able minister of the New Testament. The whole community is the poorer by his death. They have lost one who had their highest welfare at heart and was an example to them in his public and private Christian life. We sympathise with them and his family in their great loss. May the God of all Grace grant them all the rich consolations of His Gospel in their sorrow.

Personal Tribute.—The Editor feels he cannot let this opportunity pass without paying tribute to one whose friendship he enjoyed without a shadow of a cloud from Mr. Gillies' Canadian days, through his Caithness ministry right on to the day when the cord was so suddenly and unexpectedly broken. His readiness to help, referred to above, was characteristic of him and both by pen and typewriter he was willing to come to one's help. He had a humble opinion of his literary productions and in sending articles to the Magazine he invariably added a note—"if considered suitable." He evidently did not consider that he was the best judge of what was suitable.

The following in a letter from the Rev. J. P. MacQueen to us shows that our friend had a strong feeling that the summons to cross over had reached the Stornoway Manse. He confided to Mr. MacQueen at Uig Communion, "I have a strong feeling that this is the last Communion that I shall ever attend at Uig. When asked where are you going? He replied with emphasis and earnestness: "I am going to heaven." He repeated this three or four times in such a manner as to deeply impress Mr. MacQueen. We conclude this tribute by a short extract from a finely-expressed tribute in the *Northern Chronicle* (Inverness) which we understand is from one of our ministers. Here is what is truly said of Mr. Gillies as a preacher:—

The Rev. Malcolm Gillies was no ordinary preacher of the Gospel. He was especially gifted as an original and versatile Bible expositor, and excelled in the uncommon gift of spiritualising in an edifying, instructive and eloquent manner Old Testament themes, such as historical events in the history of Israel, the Song of Solomon, and what has been termed "out of the way" texts.

Few preachers in our day excelled Mr. Gillies in the rare gift of giving clear Scriptural and logical expositions of the evangelical meaning underlying the types, sacrifices, symbols, emblems, ordinances and ceremonies of the Old Testament economy. It was, however, on Communion occasions, in both English and Gaelic, that Mr. Gillies fed the Lord's heritage with the finest of the wheat." It is in this connection especially that his edifying sermons and expositions on the theme of themes, "Christ and Him crucified," will cause Mr. Gillies's memory to be revered and warmly

and gratefully cherished by those—and they are many—at home and abroad, who had the privilege of being his edified hearers. These, assuredly, will bless God on every remembrance of him.

We extend to his widow and family our heartfelt sympathy and to the pastorless congregation to whom he declared the glad tidings of salvation our sympathy in the great loss sustained by them particularly and by our Church in general.—D.B.

ANOTHER TRIBUTE BY A FRIEND.

Through the sudden passing of the Rev. M. Gillies, in the early hours of Tuesday, 25th September, the Church of Christ on earth has lost an able minister of the New Testament.

Although his passing was sudden, it was not unexpected by himself. Since his illness in the early spring, it was evident that he was not without intimation from his Master in Heaven that the time of his departure was drawing near.

His first appearance in public after his illness was on the Friday of the Tolsta communion, towards the end of March. In the opening prayer of the services of the day, it is no exaggeration to say that he enjoyed an extraordinary measure of liberty, many remarking afterwards that seldom, if ever, had they heard a prayer like it. The burden of his prayer was on behalf of the cause which he so dearly loved, and so faithfully served. "We shall soon be out of sight," he remarked, and with that earnestness and soul-refreshing unction, he pled that the Lord would raise such as would be counted faithful to maintain and uphold the Testimony raised on the side of Christ and His down-trode cause in Scotland. The impression one got that day was that, having served his generation in the office of the ministry, he was taking a solemn farewell of the Church militant, and was now awaiting his exodus to the Church triumphant.

At his own Communion in August, he served, as was his custom, the last table, basing his address on the significant words in II. Peter—"Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." In the evening he took the Gaelic service in the Church, and with unusual unction and power preached from Matt. xxvii. (51-53).

On Sabbath morning, September 23rd—his last Sabbath on earth—he preached from the words, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." The night before his death he read at worship the last chapter of II. Timothy, containing the Apostle's triumphant farewell, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." In the concluding prayer—his last public exercise in time—he quoted the first part of the above passage. A few hours afterwards he was awakened out of sleep by a severe pain.

Having repeated in Gaelic verse 17 of Psalm CIII, "Oir gabhaidh thairis osag ghaoith' 's cha bhi e idir ann," he lapsed into comma, and about 6 a.m. on Tuesday entered the rest which remaineth for the people of God. The large concourse from far and wide which attended his funeral—one of the largest seen in Stornoway for many years—evidenced that a prince and a great man had fallen in Israel.

As a preacher, Mr. Gillies shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God. Through the efficacious teaching of the Holy Spirit, he had an experimental acquaintance with the distinctive doctrines of grace. His preaching, therefore, was not in the enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He faithfully declared the state of every child of Adam's race as lost, ruined, and undone, and deserving hell as his eternal portion. He held forth Christ, the only and eternally begotten Son of the Father as the One who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and with equal clearness and force, he emphasised the absolute necessity of the effectual and gracious work of the Holy Spirit in applying to sinners the redemption purchased by Christ. With consummate skill, he could handle as few, the varied cases of the tried and tempted household of faith. As a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, he rightly divided the word of Truth, keeping nothing back.

By all endowed with a measure of gracious discernment to prize and value a living ministry and a witness for Truth, his passing is felt, and in the strength of that grace which enabled him to persevere unto the end, they would seek to take a firmer hold of the precious Presbyterian heritage bequeathed to them, and of which Mr. Gillies proved himself a faithful custodian, and to hearken anew to the voice which says—"Behold I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

Stornoway Gazette.

There is no Peace.

THE war has ended, but there is no peace, nor prospects of peace as far as the world is concerned. We who accept the teaching of God's Word look not for peace in that way. For God saith in His Word: "there is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48: 22). "We looked for peace, but no good came; and a time of health, and behold trouble" (Jer. viii: 15). That is exactly how we are to-day. Millions have perished, and many more millions are on the verge of starvation, disease and death. The horizon of this generation is extremely dark, and solemnly threatening. The Word of God is ignored by all the nations; there is no exception. Britain is as guilty in this respect as any other nation. Her people are utterly godless, atheistical, and irreligious. Millions are churchless, and indeed no wonder when the churches rejected the Word of God and turned into fables, gossip, and paganism. The respect, and love that should be shown towards the blessed Word is profusely, and lavishly poured out in other directions which must have most awful repercussions on individuals and nations alike. We read in the press that the London conference has been a failure, deadlock, and abortive. We may expect nothing else,

and worse to follow. If men, women, and nations think that they are to govern, and regulate the affairs of the world without any regard, respect, or submission to divine principles they will find out that God rules in affairs of men as sure as Nebuchadnezzar had to feel, and forced to believe it. "Take ye heed every one to his neighbour, and trust not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongues to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity" (Jer. ix. 4, 5).

Russia is playing the game of remorseless covetousness. The rest of the nations of Europe are prostrate in the dust, and our own gallant nation sick to death, and unable to stem the tide, and floods which pour across Europe from Moscow. It is obvious that the mighty United States of America is longing to cut the cords which connects her with miserable Europe!

What is the root cause of our troubles, and misery for the last thirty years in particular? It began in 1914. It is going on, as black, as dismal, and hopeless as ever. We have not the least hesitation in stating that the "civilised nations" are secretly, and may be feverishly preparing for the next "blood bath" which may come soon upon us, and by weapons which will forever place former engines of destruction into the shade.

Our readers would have read in the press reports of what is called atomic bombs have been dropped on two cities in Japan with fearful results. It only took (according to reliable reports) a "split-second" to hurl scores of thousands into eternity, and to leave many scores of thousands maimed, blind, hurt, home-less, father-less, and mother-less. It was appalling! That was the experimental stage of this new weapon of destruction. What would ten, twenty, or a thousand times more of this new power let loose on cities like London, New York, Paris, or Moscow mean? But it won't be used, and the learned world will resist the use of it, and prevent the nations of the world ever using this fearful weapon of ruin, and annihilation! We read the slogans of time-serving politicians after the 1914-18 war, "no more war," "peace on earth," forgetting that glory to God in the highest must be the first object to be honoured, obeyed, and glorified before there can be peace on earth! Oh! the madness of man! The spiritual and mental insanity of the graceless human soul, and mind. No wonder wise Solomon would exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Yes, men will use atomic power, and dare not hesitate for one moment in using it in defence, and offensive—for the law of self preservation is not dead! This new power has been introduced at the end of the bloodiest war ever waged by man since the creation, and the fall of Adam in the garden of Eden. We venture to say that it has revolutionised the weapons of war for all time, and that methods, and means used in the next war will be annihilation for the nation, or nations attacked by the aggressor.

Let us not flatter ourselves that protocols signed, and solemnly signed by politicians will stand a moment longer than it will suit the aggressor to attack his neighbour. Let us listen to one of the most learned, and experienced of our presentday scientists—Prof. M. E. Oliphant, Poynting

Professor of Physics at the University of Birmingham, and a member of the Technical Committee of scientists for the development of the atomic bomb. Prof. Oliphant said at the Rotary Club, Birmingham, "that he thought those associated with the bomb's development were if anything, more horrified than anyone else at the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." The Professor's plea was that "intensive propaganda by wireless and leaflets would have warned the Japanese that one of these weapons would be dropped on their country. They would have seen their country illuminated by a stronger light than any sun which ever shone on Japan, and they would have experienced physical evidence of the greatest power of this new force. . . . But only as a last resort would scientists have dropped this weapon on to a city. . . . The idea that Great Britain and America or any other country could control the bomb by keeping the process secret was just rot, as the principles on which the bomb was based were well known to everyone. Any industrial country could have the bomb in five years, and any determined industrial country in two. A lump of material rather smaller than an ordinary Rugby football had the equivalent explosive force of 20,000 tons of T.N.T., and he was confident that before long bombs could be made with the explosive force of 1,000,000 tons of T.N.T. and ultimately 10,000,000 tons. There was no defence against it. . . . If we failed to make use of our opportunities, then he thought that Great Britain was doomed not only to live the rest of its short life as a second class Power, but because of its peculiar vulnerability to aerial attack to annihilation."

That is the opinion of Professor Oliphant! It is a dreadful solemn warning! The Lord alone can prevent the use of it. We need not for a moment hesitate about the use and abuse of this atomic power when, and if the nations of the world will challenge and fight each other but the atomic bomb will be in active operation, and the first in the air with it will be the only surviving nation! No city, nor place, nor nation is too far away—the atomic bomb can reach any, and all, and who can prevent it?

Rev. Dr. H. Cockburn came from Geneva the other day to London, and gave a gloomy account of the conditions prevailing in the parts of Europe known to him, and those associated with him in Geneva. He says:—Germany—"Displaced persons camped in the open air to the east of Berlin wait for days around railway stations hoping for a train to carry them somewhere where they can find food. Starving children continue to arrive in Berlin from Stettin, now taken over by the Poles. France—Grave difficulties over the feeding of 500,000 German prisoners and civilian internees in French camps. One estimate says that 90 per cent. face death by the Spring."

In to-day's *Daily Scotsman*, Field-Marshal Montgomery gives a terrible account of conditions in Germany. We have asked the cause of all this, and let us now try to understand what is the cause of it all. We, who believe the Word of God will have no difficulty in coming to this conclusion that sin is the root cause of it all. Yes, quite true, but God in His infinite love provided a remedy in the gospel to meet all that and infinitely more . . . for she has received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

Eastern, Southern, and Western Europe had the gospel and rejected it. Germany had the glorious Reformation, and the blessings of religious and civil liberties restored to her people in the days of Luther, and the Reformers, and so had France. For the great John Calvin was a Frenchman, and many of his letters, and speeches were directed to his native country. That cursed thing popery has been instrumental during the last one hundred years to bring Europe back into the darkness of paganism. As F.M. Montgomery emphasises that the literal ignorance of the average German, boy or girl, is appalling. We can lay the blame of this calamity at the door of popery, the Jesuits, and their political agents in Poland, Germany, France, Spain, and Belgium. This war which began in 1914 was instigated by the Jesuits, and popish nations.

Popery must be destroyed, and until it is abolished from the Councils of Europe, Asia, America, and the British Isles there will be no peace in the world, or between nations. It is the canker-worm at the root of the political tree as well as at the root of civil, and religious liberty. The gospel of the grace of God as recorded in the Bible can save Europe, and the World from annihilation. Men, and women in all nations must turn to the Word of God. We see not, nor hear of any among the powers that are directing their fellow country to the Word of God. Popery hates the Bible. The Anglo-Catholics of England have no need of the Bible—their pagan ritual is their Bible. The Lutheran Churches of the Continent rejected the Bible. The Greek Church stands between the people and the Bible. Russia and its vast population never had the Bible, and were not able to read it although it were placed in their hands until very recently. The only cure, and offered remedy is the Word of God. If nations will continue to resist it, and reject the gospel we may then solemnly, humbly, but watchfully look for worse to come than what has passed between 1914 to 1945!

Finally, the Lord's people can do much at a throne of grace, and let them frequent it on behalf of poor, miserable, and dying Europe. Oh! let your prayers ascend to the throne of mercy for the blessed One can turn millions of precious souls to His own blessed Word, and gospel. Our hope is in the Lord. To Him we should look and not to an arm of flesh. The glorious gospel can save the world from utter ruin, and the soul from going down into the pit. The blessed Saviour is at the right hand of power. He will carry out the purpose of God, and fulfil the ever-blessed promises of the gospel to the Church.—J.M.

Matters of Present Interest.

By Rev. JAMES MACLEOD, Greenock.

IN recent times it has been circulated among our people that our Synod abolished the right of protest in the courts of the Church. That sort of talk seems on the surface of it childish; but it is a deeply-laid plot of Satan to discredit the Synod, the ministry, and cause confusion among our loyal people! The right of protest is a recognised privilege, and an inalienable attainment in the Protestant Churches of Europe, and wherever the Reformed faith, and government has been settled in accordance with the Word of God.

The papal church refuses to its people the right of protest, and requires of all the devotees of that system implicit obedience to all its laws, enactments, and decisions. The Protestant Churchès from the dawn of the blessed Reformation acknowledges that the people have the right to appeal, complain, and petition the courts of the Church, when they consider that necessary in the interest of the cause of Christ with which they are intimately united by the bonds of faith, and love.

The courts are open, and must be kept open to hear their complaints, appeals, petitions, and overtures. The Church would cease to be Protestant, and Presbyterian if the opposite could be proven against any of its courts. The complainant, petitioner, or partly aggrieved must always have access to the courts of the Church if his business, or grievance should be brought within the ambit of the ecclesiastical court. We should endeavour to keep in mind that there is a clear line of distinction between the civil, and ecclesiastical courts. No sane person should trifle with these courts. One may have grievances, afflictions, and complaints that the men to deal with them is the physician, and apothecary. The members of our courts have the right to protest when they are convinced in the light of God's Word that it is their duty to do so in defence of truth, conscience, principles, vows, engagements, and promises: against conduct, doctrines, and unscriptural practice which they not only repudiate but must separate from.

Let us not forget when the ecclesiastical court is constituted in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; He is there and then acknowledged as Supreme Head of His body the Church, and if His servants execute their duty according to His Word there can be no room, nor place for a protest against the decisions of that court. In Forbes *Procedure* p. 12 we read "In June, 1563, it was ordained, that if any person found himself wronged by any sentence given forth by the session of any particular Kirk, he be permitted to appeal to the superintendent, and the Synod, and, if yet wronged, from them to the General Assembly from which it shall not be lawful to appeal."

We read in Row's history p. 91 that the Assembly of 1582, 24th April, which met at St. Andrews, *inter alia*: "After decision, if the party sentenced conceive himself wronged, it shall be lawful to him to appeal to the next General Assembly, and to intimate the same within ten days after the decision, otherwise, the decision to receive present execution. It is concluded that the Kirk has full power to revoke any thing formally done to their hurt and prejudice.

John Knox was a member of the 1563 Assembly, and Andrew Melville was Moderator of the Assembly of 1582. If the Synod were to change, or tamper with the constitution, repudiate the authority of Scripture, deny the doctrines of the Confession of Faith, government, practice, or discipline then it would be the duty of any member thereof to dissent, and protest, and separate from that Church which deliberately changed from her original avowal, and adhere with all his heart to the Word of God. The Reformers maintained the above attitude as long as the Supreme Court continued loyal to the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus protested against the wicked conduct, and false doctrines of the Pharisees before finally, and for ever separating from the Synagogue, and temple worship. It was repeatedly referred to in recent times that Rev. Dr. Begg before, and after final decisions in the Assembly protested, and that he was not declared separate. One is inclined to treat this sort of arguing, and reasoning with, if not contempt, silence. Dr. Begg, and others, protested under their Scriptural constitution in defence of it against decisions arrived at by majority rule. Dr. Begg never had any occasion to protest against any final decision arrived at by the General Assembly which came before the Supreme Court under the Carrier Act. He could not do that, and his opponents well recognised that the veteran leader of the Free Church was acting under the constitution which he vowed to assert, maintain, and defend. Rev. D. Macfarlane in the lower courts of the Free Church in 1892 in defence of the constitution, protested but as the Assembly of May, 1893, would not revoke what the Assembly of 1892 did, Mr. Macfarlane, and all who followed his lead had no alternative but separate from those who had departed from the Word of God.

It is bare-faced trickery to preach in the ears of our people that there is no place given by the Synod for protesting in defence of truth and righteousness. If the courts of the Church act according to the Word of God, Confession and Faith, and subordinate standards there is no room for protests. When Aaron, and Miriam challenged, and protested against Moses, and called in question his authority, he calmly, and meekly submitted the matter to God to decide between who was right, and who was in the wrong. The courts of the Church must consult the Word of God, and abide by their decisions if not convinced by clearer knowledge, and light that they acted, and decided the matter on insufficient understanding of the case before them on a previous occasion. Let us bear in mind that it is a grievous sin to renounce the authority, and jurisdiction of the court, provided always, the ecclesiastical court acts in submission to the Head of the Church according to His own Word! When Mr. Macfarlane renounced the authority, and jurisdiction of the Declaratory Act Free Church Assembly in May, 1893, and all the subordinate courts as well as the Supreme Court—he did so because that Church had renounced the Word of God, Confession of Faith, and introduced a new constitution into the Church.

When Revs. Allen Mackenzie, and Ewen Macqueen protested against decisions arrived at by the Synod, the truth is there was no need in neither case for protesting, nor for protester. We have in both these cases an open and unprovoked act of rebellion against constituted authority, and a public repudiation of the jurisdiction of the final decisions of the highest court of the Church. Their separation was schism—an unscriptural division!

Another matter which has been brought to our notice is "that some men in our Church teach, or hold that there is little if any difference between 'dissent, and protest' in the ecclesiastical sense." That of course means that Rev. D. Macfarlane could have simply dissented with reasons and remained under the Declaratory Act after May, 1893, to his dying day, as of course they did who dissented in 1892, and 93! Those

who hold that opinion are not Free Presbyterians, and do not understand, nor in truth value the testimony of our fathers in May, 1893.

May God give us His grace to abide faithful to His Word to the end.

J.M.

Grace as it Reigns in our Justification.

By ABRAHAM BOOTH.

How shall sinful man be just with God? is a question of the most interesting nature to every child of Adam. A question which, notwithstanding its infinite importance, could never have been resolved by all the reason of men, nor by all the penetration of angels, if the Lord of heaven and earth had not exercised and manifested reigning grace, towards his disobedient and rebellious creatures. But, with the Bible in his hand, and the gospel in view, the mere infant in religious knowledge and in Christian experience is at no loss for an answer; for "the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Nay, such is the pleasure of God, that he frequently reveals this truth in its glory, to those who are esteemed fools by the haughty sons of science, that no flesh might have the least ground of boasting.

Justification is a forensic term, and signifies *the declaring, or the pronouncing a person righteous according to law*. Justification is not *making* a person righteous, by a real, inherent change from sin to holiness, in which the nature of sanctification consists; but it is the act of a judge, *pronouncing the party acquitted from all judicial charges*. That the blessing of which we speak does not consist in a real change from sin to holiness, will further appear from considering, that justification is diametrically opposite to condemnation. Now the sentence of condemnation is never supposed to make the person criminal on whom it is pronounced. There is no infusion of evil qualities into the culprit's mind; nor is he made guilty, either in the eye of the public, or in his own estimation. But being arraigned as a criminal, and proved guilty of a capital offence, according to the tenor of that law by which he is tried, he is esteemed worthy of death, and condemned accordingly. So, in justification; the subject of it is pronounced righteous in the eye of the law, is deemed worthy to live, and his right to life is declared. Hence that justification of which the Scripture speaks, is now the subject of our inquiry, is called *the justification of life*. That the words *justify, justified, and justification* are used by the sacred writers in a forensic sense, and as opposed to the words *condemn, condemned, and condemnation*, is manifest to every attentive reader.

To justify, is evidently a divine prerogative. "It is God that justifieth." That Sovereign Being against whom we have so greatly offended, whose law we have broken by ten thousand acts of rebellion against him, has, in the way of his own appointment, the sole right of acquitting the guilty, and of pronouncing them righteous. Jehovah, whose judgment is always according to truth, is the Justifier of all that believe in Jesus. Here grace reigns. For the infinitely wise God appoints the way; the righteous and

merciful God provides the means, and (let the sacred name be repeatedly mentioned with profound reverence) the God of all grace imputes the righteousness and pronounces the sinner acquitted, in perfect agreement with the demands of his violated law, and the right of his offended justice.

Superlatively great, glorious, and divine, is the blessing of justification. Most ardently to be sought, most thankfully to be enjoyed. Can any one, conscious of possessing it, cease to exalt in God his Justifier, who, by being so, is also the God of his praise? Or, who that is convinced of his guilty, condemned condition, can cease to pray and most earnestly to long for it? O, sinner! are you insensible to the worth of this blessing, and supinely negligent about it? Be assured, then, that you are in your sins, and under condemnation. The justification of which we treat is far from you. And what, if you should never be justified? What, if your affronted Sovereign should swear in his wrath, that he will never forgive, never accept you; but that you shall die under the curse already passed upon you? In such a case, though awful beyond conception, what could you have to object? You have trampled his authority under your feet, and cherished a spirit of the most malignant enmity against him. Your conscience testifies, that you have neither obeyed his law, nor loved his gospel; that you have had little concern whether he was pleased or offended, so that you could but gratify your impetuous lusts, and obtain your sordid purposes. You have, it may be, never considered the death of the Son of God as worthy of your serious notice; though it is the greatest and most wonderful event that ever took place in the universe, and the only thing that can save you from final condemnation. Remember, thoughtless reader! that you have a cause to be tried at the bar of God, and before Jehovah your Judge, which involves your all. An eternal hell to be suffered, or an eternal heaven to be enjoyed, will be the awful or the glorious consequence of being cast or acquitted in judgment. Can you rest, then, can you take any comfort, while entirely ignorant whether the Judge immortal will absolve or condemn you? Consider the ground on which you stand, and the reason of that hope which is in you. A mistake about the way of acceptance with God will be attended with the utmost danger; such danger that, where it is final, inevitable and eternal ruin must be the consequence. May the God of grace and the Father of lights awaken the sleepy consciences of the inconsiderate, into an earnest solicitude about it! and may he direct the steps of such as are anxiously inquiring, "How shall a man be just with God?"

The persons to whom the wonderful favour is granted, are sinners and ungodly. For thus runs the Divine declaration, "To him that worketh is the reward" of justification, and of eternal life as connected with it, "not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth—whom? the righteous? the holy? the eminently pious? Nay, verily, but the "UNGODLY"; "his faith," or that in which he believes, "is counted unto him for righteousness." From this remarkable text we learn, that the subjects of justification, considered in themselves, are not only destitute of a perfect righteousness, but have performed no good works at all. Nor are they only described as having performed no good works, but also as being destitute of every heavenly quality and righteous disposition. They are denominated and considered

as ungodly when the blessing is bestowed upon them. The mere sinner, the ungodly person, he "that worketh not," is the subject on whom grace is magnified; toward whom grace reigns in justification. Thus it is written in those sacred canons of our faith and practice which are unalterable.

That the mere sinner is the subject of justification, appears from hence. The Spirit of God speaking in the Scripture repeatedly declares, that we are justified by *grace*. But grace, as already observed, stands in direct opposition to works; all works and worthiness of every kind and of every degree. Whoever therefore is justified by grace, is considered as absolutely unworthy, in that very instant when the glorious blessing is vouchsafed to him. This momentous truth is yet more strongly expressed in the following emphatical words: "Being justified freely by his grace." *Freely by grace*. If these words do not prove that justification is entirely free, without the least regard to any supposed holy qualities in the sinner, or any good works performed by him, antecedent to his being possessed of the unspeakable favour; I think it is impossible to express any such thing. The most fruitful invention would be at a loss to contrive a form of words better adapted to express the communication of any benefit in a way of mere favour. This text informs us that, in regard to God, justification is an act of pure, unmingled grace; exclusive of all good works, and absolutely independent on any such thing as human worthiness; and, in respect of us, that it is entirely *without cause*; for so the adverb in the original signifies. The word "freely," does not so immediately respect, either the blessing itself, or the giver, as it does the state and character of the persons to whom the inestimable blessing is granted. It denotes that there is no cause in them, why they should be thus treated by a righteous God. In this sense the original word is used and translated in the following passage: They hated me without a cause (John 15:25). Was the holy Jesus hated, by the malevolent Jews, without the least cause in himself? Certainly: to assert the contrary would be a contradiction of the sacred text, and blasphemy against the Son of God. The person, therefore, that is justified freely by grace, is accepted *without any cause* in himself. Nothing in him, or about him, is considered by the sovereign Dispenser of every favour, when he bestows the blessing, as preparing or qualifying for it.

Hence it appears, that if we regarded the persons who are justified, and their state, prior to the enjoyment of this immensely glorious privilege; Divine grace appears and reigns in all its glory: there being no conditions, or pre-requisites, no terms to be fulfilled, or good qualities to be obtained, either with or without the Divine assistance, in order to a full discharge before the eternal Judge. Justification is a blessing of pure grace, as well as transcendently excellent. So the true believer esteems it, and as such rejoices in it. In this, as in every other part of his salvation, he is willing to be nothing, less than nothing; that grace may reign, that grace may be all in all.

Having considered the antecedent state of the person whom God justifies, and the freeness with which the important blessing is bestowed upon him; the way appointed in the eternal counsels and revealed in the everlasting gospel, in which the condemned criminal may be honourably acquitted before the Divine tribunal, and accepted as righteous, now demands our

attentive regard. Here we behold immaculate holiness and strict justice harmonizing with tenderest mercy and freest favour. Nor can it be otherwise. The Judge of all the earth must do right. He can acquit none without a complete righteousness. For to justify a person, and judicially to pronounce him righteous, are the same thing. Were a person to be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth; it would be a false and unrighteous sentence.

That righteousness by which we are justified must be perfect; must be equal to the demands of that law, according to which the sovereign Judge proceeds in our justification. Every judge, it is evident, must have some rule by which to proceed in his judicial capacity. This rule is the law. To talk of passing judgment, without having any regard to law, is absurd, and involves a contradiction. For, to judge, is nothing else but to determine whether the object of judgment be according to rule. A judge first considers what is fact, and then, comparing the fact with the rule of action, he pronounces it right or wrong, and approves or condemns the performer of it.

Many persons talk of, I know not what, *conditions* of justification; some supposing one thing, and some another, to be the condition of it. But hence it appears, that the only condition of our acceptance with God, is a *perfect righteousness*. This the law requires; nor does the gospel substitute another. For as the Divine law can have no more, so it will admit of no less. Those persons, therefore, who think of any thing short of complete obedience being sufficient, let them call the supposed condition by what name they please, may do well to consider, how they can free themselves from the charge of Antinomianism. (The doctrine that faith renders the Christian free from obligation to the moral law.) For the gospel does not, in any degree, make void the law. So far from it, that the voice of the gospel and the death of Christ demonstrate Jehovah to be absolutely inflexible, as to all that his holy law requires or forbids. The way in which sinners are justified, does not in the least infringe on its rights. For, considered as moral, it is unalterable and eternal. Perfect obedience was demanded by it of man, while in a state of innocence, as the condition of life. Perfect obedience is still required of man, though in a state of apostasy. And perfect obedience it must have, either at our own, or a surety's hand, or we must fall eternally under its curse.

Where then shall we find, or how shall we obtain a justifying righteousness? Shall we apply, with diligence and zeal, to the performance of duty, in order to attain the desired end? Such a procedure, though it might flatter our pride, would betray our ignorance, disappoint our hopes, and issue in eternal ruin. The apostle of the Gentiles, when professedly handling the doctrine of justification, positively affirms and strongly proves that there is no acceptance with God *by the works of the law*. Now, the works of the law are those duties of piety and of humanity which the law requires. Nor can any acceptable obedience be performed, which is not required by that law which demands perfect love to God, and perfect love to man. So that when the infallible teacher excludes the works of the law from having any concern in our justification, he entirely rejects all our works, all our duties of every kind. But let us hear his words and consider their import.

By the deeds of the law, by our own obedience to it, however sincere, shall no flesh be justified, accepted of God, and pronounced righteous in his sight. The reason is evident; for *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, as an opposition to the Divine revealed will, and as deserving an everlasting curse. But if so, it is absolutely impossible that we should be justified by it; for a law which proves us guilty, is far from pronouncing us righteous in the eye of the lawgiver. "The law entered," was promulgated at Sinai, "that the offence might abound," that the abundance of our iniquities might be manifested, and their exceeding sinfulness appear. "The law worketh wrath." It reveals the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. It fastens a charge of guilt on the criminal, and works a sense of deserved wrath in his conscience. Far from justifying any offender, it denounces utter destruction against him, and unsheaths the sword of vengeance. "*As many as are of the works of the law*"; who do their best endeavours to keep it, and are looking for justification by it; are—what? In a promising way to obtain acceptance with God, and to be rewarded with life eternal? quite the reverse. They are *under a dreadful curse*. "For it is written" by the pen of infallibility, and is awfully expressive of Jehovah's unchangeable purpose: "Cursed is every one," without any respect of persons, without any regard to please, "that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." From this alarming text we learn that there never was, nor can be any acceptance with God, without a perfect obedience—an obedience, perfect in its principle, complete in all its parts, and without the least interruption in thought, word and deed. For he who *fails in one point*, breaks the law, is guilty before God, and exposed to ruin.

The apostle argues in proof of his point, from the opposition there is between living by faith, and living by the works of the law. These are his words: "That no man," however excellent his moral character, however righteous in his own esteem, "is justified by" his own obedience to "the law in the sight of God, it is evident: For the just," the truly righteous and justified person, "shall live by faith. And," that he does not obtain the character, or enjoy the blessedness connected with it, in virtue of his own obedience, appears from hence; "the law is not of faith"; it makes no mention of a Redeemer, or of believing in him. "But," its uniform language is, "the man that doeth them"; that punctually performs the duties enjoined, and entirely avoids the things prohibited; he, and he only, "shall live in them"; shall find acceptance and enjoy peace.

The inspired penman, ever jealous of his Master's honour, ever concerned for the glory of Divine grace, argues from an absurdity; an absurdity, obvious to the meanest capacity, and shocking to every mind that has the least esteem for the Lord Redeemer. "If righteousness come by the law"; if men either were or could be justified by their own duties and endeavours, "then" it would inevitably follow that "Christ is dead in vain"; all his obedience and all his sufferings were useless things; there was no occasion for them. Again, "If they which are of the law be heirs"; if they who rely on their own legal performances be accepted of God, and entitled to the heavenly inheritance; "faith" in a dying Redeemer "is made" entirely "void, and the promise" of life by him is "made of none effect."

Nor are the works of the law, which Paul so expressly and repeatedly excludes from having any concern in our justification, to be understood only of an obedience to those *positive* institutions of Jehovah, which, being of a temporary kind, were abrogated by the death of Christ. His design was to set aside all our obedience to every law; all our works and duties of every kind. That this was his intention, appears from the following considerations. The apostle excludes "all works" in general. "God imputeth righteousness without works—By grace ye are saved—not of works—If by grace, then it is no more of works. Not by works of righteousness which we have done—Who hath saved us—not according to our works." He does not only say, that we are not justified by the works of *the law*; but also, that we are not justified by *works*, performances, duties, obedience, in general, what rule soever may be their object, or however they may be denominated. He does not give the least hint, as if he meant only to exclude the works of some particular law or duties of some particular kind, in contradiction to others. And when the Spirit of God declares, without limiting the phrase to any particular kind of duties, that we are not justified by *works*; what authority have we to restrain the sense to this or that sort of works, to the exclusion of others? For as all duties performed in obedience to a law are *works*, whether the law be considered as moral or ceremonial, old or new; so all works, whatever they be, are here excluded without any exception.

Nor is *faith* itself our righteousness, or that for the sake of which are justified. For though believers are said to be justified *by* faith, yet not *for* faith. That faith is not our righteousness, is evident from the following considerations. No man's faith is perfect; and if it were, it would not be equal to the demands of the Divine law. It could not, therefore, without an error in judgment, be accounted a complete righteousness. But the judgment of God, as before proved, is according to truth, and according to the rights of his law. That obedience by which a sinner is justified, is called "the righteousness of faith; righteousness by faith"; and is represented as "revealed to faith"; consequently, it cannot be faith itself. Faith, in the business of justification, stands opposed to all works. "To him that worketh not, but believeth." Now if it were our justifying righteousness, to consider it in such a light would be highly improper. For, in such a connection, it falls under the consideration of a *work*, a *condition*, on the performance of which our acceptance with God is manifestly suspended. If faith itself be that on account of which we are accepted, then some believers are justified by a more, and some by a less perfect righteousness, in exact proportion to the strength or weakness of their faith. "He was strong in faith—O ye of little faith." Consequently, either more of justice and less of grace must appear in the justification of some, than in that of others; or else it must be concluded, that some are more fully justified than others; each of which is absurd. That which is "the end of the law," is our righteousness; which, certainly, is not faith, but the obedience of our exalted Substitute. "Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth." That righteousness by which many are justified, is the obedience of ONE. The believer, therefore, is not justified for the sake of his own faith; for then there must be as many distinct righteousnesses, as there are justified

persons. Were faith itself our justifying righteousness, we might, without either pride or folly, depend upon it, plead it before God, and rejoice in it. For whatever the Most High is pleased to accept as our justifying righteousness, may be pleaded before him as such. Whatever may be so pleaded must be esteemed a proper ground of our confidence—may be used as an argument in prayer at the throne of grace, and as the foundation of our expecting final happiness; and whatever is the ground of our confidence, must be the source of our spiritual joy. So that, according to this hypothesis, not Christ, but faith, is the capital thing; the object to which we must look. The glorious Redeemer and his undertaking are only considered as auxiliaries in the affair of justification; while faith is the grand requisite, as it renders Immanuel's work effectual, and crowns the whole. To understand those words, "Faith was imputed to him for righteousness," in the Arminian sense, is to contradict the whole scope and design of the apostle's argumentation, when treating about the justification of sinners. For his main design is to prove, that the eternal Sovereign justifies *freely; without any cause* in the creature. But, according to this hypothesis, *faith* is the condition; is the cause; is that on account of which we are accepted as righteous. For it is considered under the formal notion of righteousness. Hence it appears, that it is not faith itself, but its glorious *Object*, which Paul intends, when he speaks of faith being imputed for righteousness.

If then the subject of justification be, in himself, ungodly; if the Supreme Governor of the world neither will nor can justify any without a perfect righteousness; and if such a righteousness cannot possibly be found in our own performances, nor in faith itself, nor in any of the graces or fruits of the Holy Spirit; it is absolutely necessary that righteousness, wrought out by a substitute, should be imputed to us, or placed to our account.

That we are not justified by a personal, but by an imputed righteousness appears from the Scripture with superior evidence. There the doctrine is taught in the plainest terms; there the important truth is set in the strongest light. It was in this way that Jehovah justified Abraham, the Father of the faithful; to the consideration of which notable example of Divine grace and free acceptance Paul referred his Jewish brethren for their conviction, and for the instruction of all who should at any time inquire after the methods of grace. Abraham was the renowned progenitor of the Israelitish nation; and he was honoured with that exalted character, "the friend of God." His resignation and faith, his obedience, and piety, stand on everlasting record. Few, among all the saints, ever manifested so cheerful a submission to the Divine will, or so unreserved a confidence in the Divine promise. No sooner did the true God signify his will to Abraham, that he should leave his native country and his father's house, that he "obeyed; and went out, not knowing whither he went." No sooner did the Great Possessor of heaven and earth intimate his sovereign pleasure, than he should sacrifice his only son, his Isaac, whom he loved, that he readily submitted; though the heavenly mandate was quite unprecedented, and the thought of performing it enough, one would think, to astonish and confound him. Yet these acts of obedience, though highly pleasing to God, and such as will be had in everlasting

remembrance, were neither the cause, nor the condition, of his justification. They, indeed, afforded the noblest testimony that his faith was genuine, and his piety real; and, in that sense, he was "justified," or declared righteous, "by his works." But they were far from being placed to his account in the article of Divine acceptance. "For if Abraham was justified by" his own "works," though amazingly great, and in one instance quite unparalleled; "he hath whereof to glory," in comparison with others, who come far short of that elevated pitch of obedience to which he arrived. "But" though he might, on that supposition, have gloried before his fellow-creatures, yet "not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed" the promise of "God," concerning the Messiah and the work to be accomplished by him, "and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Nor was the method of Divine proceeding, in the justification of this illustrious patriarch, any way singular. In this respect he had no exclusive privilege. For it is added, "Now it was not written," in the ancient Scriptures, "for his sake alone, that it," the work of a dying and rising Redeemer, "was imputed to him; but for us also," Whether Jews or Gentiles, "to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." For "they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham." Now if a person of such victorious faith, exalted piety, and amazing obedience as he was, did not obtain acceptance with God on account of his own duties, but by an imputed righteousness; who shall pretend to an interest in the heavenly blessing, in virtue of his own sincere endeavours, or pious performances?—performances not fit to be named, in comparison with those that adorned the conduct and character of "Jehovah's Friend."

The apostle having shown in what way the Father of the chosen tribes was justified before the King immortal; and having intimated, that the patriarch was considered as an "ungodly" person, as one who had "no good works," when the Lord imputed righteousness to him, in order to his final acceptance; to illustrate and confirm the momentous truth, he presents his reader with a description that David gives of the truly blessed man. And how does the royal psalmist describe him? To what does he attribute his acceptance with God? To an inherent, or to an imputed righteousness? Does he represent him as attaining the happy state, and as enjoying the precious privilege, in consequence of performing sincere obedience, and of keeping the law to the best of his power? No such thing. His words are, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." The blessed man is here described as one who is, in himself, a polluted creature, and a guilty criminal. As one who, before grace made the difference, was on a level with the rest of mankind; equally unworthy, and equally wretched; and the sacred penman informs us, that all his blessedness arises from an imputed righteousness. For what else can be intended by those remarkable words, with which he introduces the evangelical declaration? "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man"—what man? Why, "he to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." The righteousness here intended, cannot be understood of a person's own obedience; because it is expressly said to be "without works." His own virtues and duties, however excellent, contribute nothing toward it. No; it is perfect in itself, and

entirely detached from every thing which he either has done, or can do. The phraseology of the inspired writer is very remarkable. He does not only speak of blessedness, as the result of an imputed righteousness; but he describes the obedience which is thus applied to the sinner, as being *without works*. This he does, more strongly to assert the truth he defends, and more effectually to secure the honour of grace. Righteousness imputed; righteousness without the law: righteousness without works. Such was the language of Paul; such was the doctrine that he preached; and such was the faith of the primitive church. Now, alas, the phrases are cashiered as obsolete, and are become offensive; so offensive that their frequent use is considered by the generality of those who call themselves Christians, as a certain indication of an enthusiastic turn of mind. And as the language is disapproved by multitudes in the present age; so the sentiment expressed by it is discarded with contempt, as offering an insult to common sense. But however much the doctrine of imputed righteousness may be despised as absurd or abhorred as licentious, by any of our modern professors, it is evident that the great apostle considered it as intimately connected with the happiness of mankind, and esteemed the blessing as the only solid basis of all our hope, and of all our comfort.

(To be continued.)

A Note-worthy Incident in The Religious Experience of The Late Mr. Hector Jack, Strathconon.

ON one occasion in the early religious experience of the late Mr. Hector Jack of Strathconon, he was so concerned on the Saturday night that he might sleep in on Sabbath morning, and so miss hearing Rev. John MacRae ("Big MacRae"), then minister at Knockbain, that he resolved not to divest himself of more than his boots and jacket, and thus went under the bed-clothes. Early on Sabbath morning he went to pray beneath a willow bush in the back garden, before setting out on the long journey to Knockbain. When Rev. John MacRae began to preach, Hector Jack was amazed to find his own spiritual exercises so vividly and minutely described, but still thought that Mr. MacRae might possibly be referring to somebody else. At this stage of the discourse Mr. MacRae declared "Young man, you are still wondering if I am referring to somebody else, but no, I am referring to you who were so anxious last night that you might sleep in that you divested yourself of only part of your clothes." Naturally enough, at this stage Hector Jack regarded the discourse as extraordinarily applicable but still persisted in thinking that the description might be applicable to someone else in the congregation. It was then that Mr. MacRae raised his voice almost to a shout, by way of emphasis, saying: "You are still thinking, young man, that I may be referring to someone else in this congregation. To put it beyond the shadow of a doubt for you, then, I am referring to you who, in addition to what I have already said, prayed beneath the willow bush in your back-garden before you left for Knockbain this morning." This climax made it plain to Hector Jack that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and so he was overwhelmingly melted with a sense of wonder and gratitude to the Lord "for His

goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men." The above incident is narrated in minute detail as it was related by the godly Hector Jack himself to the godly minister, now in glory, who told it to the present writer, J. P. MacQueen.

Church Notes.

*Communion*s.—January, Last Sabbath, Inverness; February, First Sabbath, Dingwall. *South African Mission*—The last Sabbath of March, June, September and December. NOTE.—Notice of any additions to or alterations of the above dates should be sent to the Editor.

Literary Notice.

Historical Sketch of the Gospel Standard Baptists by S. F. Paul. Farncombe & Sons, Ltd., 65 South End, Croydon, Surrey. Price, by post, 2/10d.

Mr. Paul has given us a very interesting sketch of the Particular Baptists commonly called Strict Baptists. One comes across famous names in the sketch—Gifford, Bunyan, Keach, etc., not to mention later leaders. Gifford and Bunyan though classed with the Particular Baptists were not close-communists. One comes across interesting sidelights on the religious life and ecclesiastical customs of other days. All who take pleasure in reading of what men and women were willing to endure for what they believed to be the truth of God will find this a most interesting booklet though they may not accept the Baptist views.

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