

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

*A Presbyterian weekly magazine devoted to the
statement, defense and propagation of the
Gospel, the faith which was once for
all delivered unto the saints*

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A National Challenge

BY WM. E. DOUGHTY

(See Anglers)

O America, America, stretching between the two great seas, in whose heart flows the rich blood of many nations, into whose mountain safes God has put riches of fabulous amount, in whose plains the Almighty has planted the magic genius that blossoms into harvests with which to feed the hungry multitudes of earth, nursed by Puritan and Pilgrim, defended by patriot and missionary, guided by the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, sanctified by a faith as pure as looks up to heaven from any land; O America, let thy Master make thee a saviour of the nations; let thy God flood thee with a resistless passion for conquest; let thy Father lead thee over mountains and seas, through fire and flood, through sickness and pain, out—out to that great hour when all men shall hear the call of Christ, and the last lonely soul shall see the uplifted cross, and the whole world be bound back to the heart of God!

It Is God That Justifieth

**The Gospel Is The Power Of God Unto
Salvation. Son, Be Of Good Cheer,
Thy Sins Be Forgiven Thee.**

These texts remind us that the Gospel is not a mere set of human ideas. It is the power of God. In and through the preaching of His Gospel, God acts. Justification is an act of God's free grace. God *acts* in justifying a sinner not less than He acts in judging an impenitent person. There are writers and speakers who treat the one as well as the other as though they were both matters of human intellectualization, or mechanical cause and effect. But the Bible sees God in action. For it, God turns the wicked into hell and the Son of Man says to those on His left hand: Depart from Me, ye cursed into everlasting punishment. For it, Christ says to the paralytic, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee; and it is God that justifieth.

Let us also keep in mind that according to the Book, we are to pray continually: Forgive us our debts—trespasses—sins. Our Confession testifies, "God doth continually forgive the sins of those that are justified." If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Whenever we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Calvin well writes:

"Our first entrance, therefore, into the Church and Kingdom of God is the remission of sins, without which we have no covenant or union with God." "Nor does God only once receive and adopt us into His Church by the remission of sins; He likewise preserves and keeps us in it by the same mercy." "Wherefore it ought to be held as a certain conclusion, that from the liberality, by the intervention of Christ, through the sanctification of the Spirit, pardon of sins has been, and is daily, bestowed upon us, who have been admitted and grafted into the Church." "Whatever holiness may distinguish the children of God, yet such is their condition as long as they inhabit a mortal body, that they cannot stand before God without the remission of sins." Institutes IV :i:20-22.

Finally, it ought to be emphasized that this is God's work, not man's. It is not a mere matter of brushing guilt-consciousness from our minds, as one might brush cobwebs from his face. In our sin we are guilty before God, obnoxious to His wrath. God must deal with us. Blessed be His Name, He does—He forgiveth all our iniquities. And He does this out of free grace through the redemption that is in

Christ Jesus. The ground on which God's great mercy acts is the righteousness of Christ. It is not because of our faith as some too loosely say. Paul never uses *dia* with the accusative when he speaks of faith. Jonathan Edwards found that men were misconstruing the covenant into an agreement or legal bargain between equals. Dragging God down to man's level, they described faith as the condition of the covenant, and then they made it the cause of our forgiveness - - and ended by having God in debt to man and obligated to forgive him. Away with such humanistic conceits, Edwards thundered. Here again let us re-read our Confession: God freely justifieth those whom He calls by pardoning their sins for Christ's sake alone—by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them. Moreover, this justification is only of free grace, inasmuch as Christ was given by the Father for us, His obedience and satisfaction are accepted in our stead, and even the faith by which we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation is the gift of God, the inward work of the Holy Spirit.

Brother, draw the confidence God has for you in this blessed assurance: It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? —W.C.R.

The Kingship Of Christ And The Plan Of Union

In Our Book Of Church Order And In The Form Of Government

CHAPTER II

The differences between these two documents may be concretely exhibited by quoting our chapter in full, italicizing the words that are taken over in the 1954 Plan of Union and adding in parentheses with italics the few words the Plan adds, thus:

"(Of Jesus Christ), The King And Head Of The Church.

(1). 8. *Jesus Christ*, upon whose shoulders the government is, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of whose government and peace there shall be no end; who sits upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever; *having all power given unto him in heaven and in*

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