

a way by which the union of the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian Churches in Canada may be effected on a scriptural basis.

It may not be improper to state, in the outset, that forbearance and the exercise of a large-hearted charity are mutually necessary. The recent case, for example, of the Presbyterian Church Synod and the Rev. Dr. Ferner, is one of those untoward events that tend to awaken old jealousies, and to embitter feelings. This unhappy case is unhappy only for the ecclesiastical purposes of our fathers and brethren of the Free Church—has certainly created a large increase of capital to those of the Free Church population, who trade "in the infidelity that lurks in the principles and practice of the United Presbyterian Church."

We can afford to smile at the charge. With foolish animosity and a consciousness of the safety afforded by innocence, we could stare and look on, while the hurried words passed by, and leaves us speechless.

Charges, however, whether of an openly displayed, or an insidiously lurking infidelity are usually esteemed grave. In the present case they are merely ludicrous. We spin the vile thing from us with supreme contempt. It does not apply to us. We ask for the proof. Where is it? Is it to be found in the case of Dr. Ferner, as it has again and again been said by our Free Church brethren? Unsubstantiated charges—set or later reced on the head of the coward, or the rash calumniator. Again we demand proof. When given, we shall not shrink from facing it.

We have carefully examined the judicial evidence in the case of the Free Church Synod and Dr. Ferner, and the extrajudicial statements published by parties to these complaints by Dr. Ferner, and letters by and from the Rev. Mr. Stark and Dr. Burns—letters in every case, reprehensible and unworthy of the pen of Ministers of the Gospel of the Son of God, and Fathers in the Church of Christ. But in no part of the case, nor its adjuncts, do we find either, "the infidelity that lurks in the principles and practice of the United Presbyterian Church," nor "the letters" with which, of late years, have been so freely and so feverishly charged. Nor do we find in this miserable case, a single distinction or denominational principle.

Our opinion of the whole case is, that it is merely a large conglomeration of enormous blunders, a ecclesiastical law, perpetrated by the supreme court of the Presbyterian Church in Canada—of abundant instances of individual dishonesty and clerical and lay subservency, beautifully opposed to the doctrine of Presbyterian party—of painfully perused evidence of published judicial deliverances drawn up not with that simplicity which ever ought to characterize documents drawn up and sanctioned by a Court constituted in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but with that dissimulatio—the power which gives falsehood the semblance of truth—and which is a power to corrupt the subject, and produces on the mind of the reader who forms his opinion of the merits of the case on these published documents, a false and a party impression. Besides these things, this miserable case, in our opinion, is a blunder which, as a natural sequence, denudes a member of the supreme court of rights and privileges which the law and usages of Presbyterianism have stamped as his, and which he is as long as a member of that court, and produces on the mind of the reader who forms his opinion of the merits of the case on these published documents, a false and a party impression. Besides these things, this miserable case, in our opinion, is a blunder which, as a natural sequence, denudes a member of the supreme court of rights and privileges which the law and usages of Presbyterianism have stamped as his, and which he is as long as a member of that court, and produces on the mind of the reader who forms his opinion of the merits of the case on these published documents, a false and a party impression.

The sooner this case is conveyed to oblivion, the better it will be for the name and usefulness of the Free Church in Canada. It is a disgraceful affair for them; but it contains no distinctive nor denominational principle. It is the effect of mere feelings brought up to the boiling point by the heat of individual animosities. It embodies not that which we are seeking for, viz., the distinctive principles that keep the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian Churches in Canada in a state of separation.

Will any of the fathers or brethren of that Church enlighten us on that subject, and tell us why these sister churches are not amalgamated?

PAKENHAM, August, 1851.

[FOR THE CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE.]

BRIEF NOTICE OF GILBERT WILSON.

How different are the times in which we live from those of the seventeenth century, when many of our forefathers in Britain and Ireland were persecuted for righteousness' sake! We have still, indeed, in some circles, we regret to find, the remains of those intolerant principles which, in former ages, subjected the faithful to the most cruel persecutions, and violence, and often to banishment and death. But they have not strength now to be reduced to practice by those who hold them, or even to cause the slightest alarm to those who exercise the birth-right privilege of thinking for themselves in matters of religion. The time was when the civil rulers claimed to be supreme judges in the doctrines of christianity, which were to be believed by their subjects, and when those who dared to take their religion from the Word of God, and to diminish the right of civil authorities to intermeddle with matters of christian faith and practice, were exposed to the cruelties of persecution. Now, however, in the gracious providence of God, men are permitted, without molestation, to worship God according to their consciences; and, although, some churches continue to cherish the principle which would permit the rights of conscience to be interfered with, and especially still cling, in theory or practice, to the antichristian principle of a civil establishment of religion which has been the source of all persecution; yet the views of general society are so much changed on this point, that, in a spiritual sense, it may be said that now "every one sits under his own vine and under his own fig tree, having none to make him afraid."

But it is profitable for us to remember that scarcely two hundred years have elapsed since our godly ancestors, in the father-lands, were in many

cases persecuted unto death, and when others had trials of cruel mockings, and scourges, yea, torments, of bonds and imprisonments, had to "wander in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Such were the perilous and bloody days when many lived whose memory is dear to us, and who shall be had in everlasting remembrance by God.

Gilbert Wilson, the subject of this notice, was the proprietor of a small estate near Dalry, in Ayrshire, Scotland. He was born in the year 1644 and, of course, had not reached majority when the persecution was begun on the restoration of Charles II. But, before that period, he had been the student under some of the most distinguished and celebrated divines of the day, the Rev. James Guthrie, of Stirling, who had adopted James' A's Ramsay, of Shillidale, of excellent memory, and of whom we have many things in writing, he afterwards married. It is supposed that this was the young man referred to in the following anecdote, related in connection with the martyrdom of that distinguished minister, which, as is known, took place on the first of June, 1661.

In accordance with the sentence against Mr. Guthrie, his head was, after his execution, severed from his body, and fixed on the Netherbow, Edinburgh. The body of the martyr was put into a coffin and carried into the Old Kirk aisle, where it was decently prepared for interment by a number of ladies of high respectability. While thus employed, a general young man, a Quaker, who was seated near the altar, and who, by his fame, the colour of which filled the whole church. On observing this, one of the ladies exclaimed "God bless you, Sir, for this labour of love which you have shown to the slain body of a servant of Jesus Christ!"

The young man, without speaking a word, made a low bow and retired.

When Mr. Wilson reached manhood he openly identified himself with the persecuted remnant, and when, on the death of his father, he became proprietor of the family estate, he gave shelter and entertainment, as his father had done before him, to many of the Presbyterian ministers, who had been driven from their families and their flocks. In consequence he was marked out by the diabolical and other agents of the existing tyrannical government, as a suspected character, and one on whom it would be necessary to cast their eyes, and that by inflicting their cruelties they might frighten him into submission, or, failing in this, might put him to death. After the battle of Bothwell Bridge, some of the survivors of the Covenanter party escaped to his house and were concealed by him from their enemies. This being known, although Mr. Gilbert Wilson was not at the battle, he was closely identified with the party, and was not only declared an outlaw, but his apprehension was eagerly sought by his enemies. On this account he found it necessary to quit his habitation and to conceal himself in a cave in the Meads of Moor, at some distance. In this dreary situation he spent a whole winter, employing himself chiefly in reading, meditation and prayer. During this tedious season of seclusion and privation, away from those who were dear to him, he was regularly supplied with food by a woman, the name of which was Glass, his servant, the time of whose coming he knew by a large silver watch of antiquated form, which he wore. When the savage violence of his enemies had nearly detested his hiding place, and when he found it dangerous to remain in his native country, he embraced an opportunity of sailing to Holland, (then an asylum for the persecuted) along with some ministers and private chieftains. There he lived for several years, supporting himself by his own industrious activity, corresponding as often as he could with beloved friends in Scotland, and when at length, in the gracious providence of God, the remarkable British Revolution took place in 1688, he returned in the train of the illustrious William, Prince of Orange, who was now called to the Throne of Great Britain.

In the meantime, however, whilst he had been in the continent, his estate had been confiscated, and all his moveable property sold at the Cross of Glasgow. On reaching Scotland his endeavours to recover his possessions were unsuccessful: but on applying to the King, who had taken an interest in him, and had entered with condescending sympathy into his circumstances, he had the promise of some compensation for the loss he sustained.

It was during this interval that his marriage with Miss Isabella Ramsay, daughter of James Ramsay, Esq., of Shillidale, was consummated. With this lady he had been acquainted for many years, but their earlier union had been prevented by the calamities of the late persecution, which had so long raged, and in many instances, as in this, had separated chief friends. On account of the persecutions to which the father, Miss Ramsay had been, at an early period of her life, diminished by her father, a bigoted Episcopalian, and a proud and determined Jacobite. In consequence she had taken up her abode in the family of her uncle, the Rev. James Guthrie, of Stirling, and by him, and her aunt, Mrs. Guthrie, was adopted as a daughter.

After his marriage to this excellent lady, Mr. Gilbert Wilson lived in Glasgow, awaiting some appointment of Government, which he had been led to expect. Whilst in that city, on the 9th of November, 1690, the only son and child of these worthy parents was born. They named him William, in honour of the King, through whom, in the gracious providence of God, the glorious Revolution had been recently achieved.

Soon after this Mr. Gilbert Wilson received the appointment to be Comptroller of the Customs in Greenock, and went to that place, where

• This watch reached the present generation, but was literally worn out with age when the writer saw it.