

Manchester, that whatever took place in Canada was sure at some time or other to take place in England, yet at the present moment there was in Canada a very striking proof that this secular education could not last. Thirty years ago the Canadian Legislature confiscated the whole of the endowments of the Church. There was a Church University from which it took away no less than 200,000*l.*, which it spent upon the endowment of a secular University. But the three principal religious bodies—Churchmen, Presbyterians, and Wesleyans—set up Universities of their own, and they had actually raised another 200,000*l.* They were, in fact, educating more than the State University, Moreover, the number of their graduates and the amount of their endowments were perpetually increasing. The secular party had more recently made an attack upon the elementary schools; but eighteen months ago the three religious bodies sent a deputation to the Government to beg it not to listen to any such application; and within the last three weeks the Government decided to grant their request. Thus the secular party in Canada had received a most complete check; and the reason was because the public had observed what irreligious teaching had done for it. Merchants on account of their clerks, parents on account of their children, and employers on account of their people, had come to see that irreligious schools were no benefit to the country."

A more extraordinary series of misrepresentations could not readily be imagined.

1. It was the exclusiveness of the Church University which brought into being the universities of Queen's and Victoria.

2. In 30 years the Church University has attained to 33 students in Arts and Theology.

3. There is no secular party in Ontario. The great body of the Christian people have agreed upon a non-denominational system of public schools, in which the Bible is read, and whose regulations give ample scope for instruction in Bible knowledge and practical Christian Ethics.

4. There was no application from any party, secular or otherwise, to remove the Bible from the schools, or to exclude anything of a religious nature admissible under the Education Act.

5. There was an application from representatives of the principal Christian Churches urging the Government to take additional measures to enforce and enlarge existing regulations.

6. There was no opposition to this application from any quarter, and the Government promised all possible consideration.

These are the facts which have thus been strangely perverted. No doubt the Archbishop based his statements upon information given to him. By whom was this information given? The Archbishop owes it to himself and to the people he has unintentionally wronged to state who are his informants. But in the meantime there can be little doubt as to the source from which these misrepresentations emanate.

The Sunday School.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

TRINITY SUNDAY, JUNE 8TH. 1884.

BIBLE LESSON.

Justification by Faith.—Rom. 3: 19-31.

Last Sunday we spoke of St Paul's letter to the Galatians. To-day we are to look at one written probably

very soon after that, while the Apostle was at Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), just before he went to Jerusalem with the money collected for the poor saints (Rom. xv. 25, 26).

(1) *To whom* is the letter addressed? (See i. 7.) The Roman empire, then the great power in the world (kingdom of iron in Dan. ii. 40). Palestine a Roman province—Roman magistrates, laws, roads, everywhere—and the capital of this great empire was the chief city of the world. A heathen city—but many Jews there, living in a separate quarter given them by Augustus—just where you would find them now if you went to Rome. Some came for trade, many had been taken for slaves, but very inconvenient to have slaves who could not eat with heathen (and you know Jews could not), so they were set free. Often unruly—banished once—by whom? (Acts xviii. 2.)—Soon came back again (Rom. xvi.). Many proselytes there. And now we find Christ had saints there. Who preached the Gospel there? We do not know—probably "strangers of Rome" (Acts ii. 10). What effect? (Rom. i. 8.) [Note 1.]

(2) How does the writer describe himself? A "servant" or "slave of Jesus Christ" (Gal. vi. 17. See last lesson). His office? (v. 1.)

(3) *Why did he write to them?* He had a special grace or favour given him—what? (i. 5, 6; xi. 13; xv. 15, 16.) Therefore he was anxious to preach in the very centre of all Gentiles (i. 10-13). He had been praying that he might go to Rome—had planned to do so soon (Acts xix. 21). Had he done anything for them already? Yes (see i. 9).

And now, *before he goes*, he writes this wonderful letter—why? Wherever he had yet been Jews opposed him—and not unbelieving Jews only, but believers in Christ, who tried to mix up faith and works. Many believing Jews in Rome. So Paul prepares a full, clear statement of the Gospel which he preached. He was not ashamed of it—why? (i. 16.) What was the your source of its power? (v. 17.) In this verse he tells us the great subject of the letter.

Suppose now we were to take our place inside one courts of justice. A jury has been summoned to try a prisoner, who stands there accused of some crime against the law of the land—witnesses give evidence—then prisoner is asked if he has anything to say—then comes the verdict—is the prisoner *guilty* or *not guilty*? If not guilty, the man walks out of court *justified*—free from blame; if guilty, judge pronounces sentence according to law—he is *condemned*.

To-day we are to speak about a trial much more solemn—why? Because you and I are the *persons to be tried*—because the Judge so holy, knows every thought of our hearts (Rom. ii. 2, 11, 16)—because the law so strict, will not pass over the slightest fault—because on the *verdict* depends our life or death for ever. When will that trial take place? When we stand at the judgment seat of Christ? Yes—then *publicly*, before the universe, we shall be justified or condemned; but *the verdict then will be the same as now*—for now in God's sight all men are either guilty and condemned, or not guilty and justified. [Note 2.]

I. WHO ARE GUILTY?

What was the state of man when first created? (Gen. i. 31; Ecc. vii. 29.) But man broke God's law—then see change (Gen. v. 1-3). From that day *all sinners*. St. Paul begins his letter by proving this—because if not sinners, no need for his Gospel to tell how sinners can be saved. He takes the *two divisions* of the world—Gentiles and Jews.

(1) *Gentiles* first (ch. i.). They are *heathen*—in darkness. Had no Bible, no written law to guide them—but God gave them some light—what? Light of nature (vs. 19, 20). Had they followed it? No (v. 21). *Light of their own conscience*—did they obey that? No (i. 32; ii. 5). And therefore when judged by the light they had, they are "*without excuse*"—the verdict is, *guilty*.

(2) *But the Jews* in quite a different position (ch. ii.). They had *light of God's Word*—were separate from heathen—admitted to covenant with God by circumcision—thought themselves safe for heaven (Matt. iii. 9; John viii. 33, 39). By what law will they be judged? By God's written law which He gave them (ii. 12). The Judge will not respect persons (v. 11)—will judge, not by what men *profess*, but what they *do* (vs. 6-10, 13). Have they kept the law? No (vs. 1, 17-24). Circumcision no use *alone*—only a sign—worthless if they broke the covenant (vs. 25, 28, 29). They too are *guilty, inexcusable*.

(3) Now read ch. iii. 9-19. What is the Apostle's conclusion? (v. 9.) So the Bible says (Ps. xiv., liii.) If a fountain poisoned, water flowing from it poisoned too; so with sinner—heart polluted (Matt. xv. 18, 19). See what comes from that—*corrupt words* (vs. 13, 15)—*sinful ways* (vs. 15-17)—*why?* (v. 18.) Has anybody an *excuse* to make? No

(v. 19). Then what is the *verdict*? ALL GUILTY BEFORE GOD.

And then God's law is different from man's. (a) Man's punishes *acts*—God's looks at *thoughts*; e. g., man's punishes an injury to his neighbour—God's says (1 John iii. 15).

(b) Man's laws tells us *what we must not do*. God's does more, requires a *perfect obedience* too. (See Matt. v. 20, xxii. 37-39. [Note 3.] And see James ii. 10; Prov. xxiv. 9.) Illust.—One faulty link in a chain. Can any one then be *justified* before God by his works? No. (Read v. 20; Ps. cxliii. 2; Ecc. vii. 20.) Then all must be *condemned*. What is the *sentence* of the law? DEATH. (Ezek. xviii. 4; John iii. 18; Rom. vi. 23; Gal. iii. 10.)

But is not the Judge *merciful*? Yes; but He is *just* too—cannot pass sin by (Ex. xxxiv. 7). Even an earthly judge might be full of pity and tenderness, but must decide *according to the law*—if let off criminal, not fit for his post (Deut. xxv. 1; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Prov. xvii. 15). God, the ruler of the universe, shall He not be just? (Gen. xviii. 25; Ps. lxxxix. 14.)

Is there no way of escape for the prisoners? Yes—this is the good news which the Gospel brings (Rom. i. 16, 17).

II. HOW CAN MAN BE JUSTIFIED WITH GOD? (Job xxv. 4.)

How can the Judge be *just*, and yet *clear the guilty*—justify the ungodly (ch. iv. 5; read vs. 21-26). God Himself in His infinite love provided the way (John iii. 6).

(i.) Jesus became our Surety—took our place—became answerable for us. [Illust.—If I am answerable for any one's debts the creditor looks to me for payment. See case of Judah (Gen. xliii. 9, xlv. 33). What did our Surety do for us?

(a) *He bore our punishment*—what? Our sin was put to His account, and He died for it (Is. liii. 5, 6, 8, 11): Because He was the *Son of God* His blood atoned for all (1 John ii. 2). So called a "*propitiation*" (v. 25), because through His death God can be favourable to sinners. How did God show that He accepted the sacrifice? (ch. iv. 25.) Is this taught in the Old Testament? Yes (v. 21; see Ex. xii. 13; Lev. xiv. 5-7, xvi. 15, 21, 22; Job xxxiii. 23-26). But this not all Jesus did. We saw God's law requires us to give a perfect righteousness; but we cannot, for we are sinful (Is. lxiv. 6). So our Surety—

(b) *Kept God's law perfectly* for us—no sin in Him (Ps. xl. 8; John viii. 46, xvii. 4; Matt. iii. 17, xvii. 5). This, too, "*witnessed*" in the old Test. (Jer. xxiii. 5).

(ii.) *But how are we to get the benefit of Christ's work?* (See the answer in vs. 22, 25, 26, 28, 30.) *By faith*. What is faith? *Trust*. [Illust.—Your mother owes rent—cannot pay—afraid; I promise to pay—she trusts my word—is at rest. That is faith.] God says that He will accept what Jesus did for us—His atonement—His righteousness (2 Cor. v. 21). We are to trust God's Word—to believe in Jesus. Faith joins us to Jesus—then all that He hath done is ours. [Note 4.] Now all is changed (John iii. 36, v. 24). The prisoner is at peace (v. 1)—he pleads "*not guilty*"—no one can bring a charge against him—the law is satisfied (Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34). "The righteous Judge" Himself acquits. This is the way in which the *saints of old were justified* (ch. iv. 1-8, 22).

This the teaching of the Church of England. (Read Art. XI.) [Note 5.] [Now read vs. 27-31.]

(1) This is the *only way* by which sinners can be saved. All alike needed it—why? (vs. 22, 23.) It is freely offered to all (v. 28).

(2) This is the way for *Jews and Gentiles alike*—for God is the God of both (vs. 29, 30).

(3) *No one can boast*—for the righteousness is a free gift of God, accepted by faith—as the beggar receives the robe and puts it on (v. 27).

(4) *This honors God's holy law* (v. 31). The mercy and justice of God both seen (Ps. lxxxv. 10; Is. xlv. 21). Did angels wonder how sins could be passed by? (v. 25.) Now they see God's *righteousness* and His *wisdom* (Eph. iii. 10).

Now see on what the Apostle Paul rested his own hopes of heaven (Phil. iii. 9). Noah was safe when the flood came—why? Others perhaps helped to build the ark, but he was *found in it*. Dear children are you *in Christ*? Then you are safe, for see Rom. viii. 1. And when that great judgment day comes, need you fear? No—for see 1 John ii. 28.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

1. It is evident from Rom. xv. 14-16, as well as from other passages, that most of the Roman Christians were of Gentile origin; probably the original nucleus of the Church was formed by converts (Gentile proselytes chiefly), who had separated themselves from the Jewish synagogue.

2. *Justification* in its proper, and common meaning is, a judicial declaration of the innocence of the person justified. (See Ex. xxiii. 7, xxxiv. 7; Deut.