

CONSEQUENCES AND PENALTIES

PENALTIES for the individual, consequences for the community. When the individual escapes the penalty which is his due, the consequence inevitably falls upon the community. The wage which is earned is awarded in one form or another, either in a lump sum to him who has earned it, or in doles, with added usury, to his associates and successors to the third and fourth generations, until the uttermost farthing is paid. Wrong-doing is as indestructible as matter. It passes over into suffering. Justice, which is eternal, then is satisfied. That is the burden of all history, and of religion, too.

We in Canada are now in the way of thinking upon these things, that is, if the art of thinking is not yet extinct. When that happens, as it sometimes does, the people perish. Primitive nations have an instinctive understanding of these deep matters. For the lust of one man Ilium was destroyed. That was the Greek view; but it was left for the Semites of lower Asia, from whom we have inherited most of our ideas of organized religion, to elaborate this doctrine of punishment; and their reading of history has been accepted by all the world which calls itself Christian. For the sin of the First Man death passed upon all, and reigned until the Second Man bore it in his own body. Then the people were saved.

But in time a nation becomes sophisticated. It develops a sophistry. It neglects or explains. Its perception is dulled. It finds a hundred reasons for the delusion that things are not what they are, and that the consequences of them will be quite otherwise than what they will be. Henceforth the way of that nation is the way which was followed by Nineveh and Tyre, and all other communities which have vanished into the cold void of history.

While the progress is at the height, it must always appear as a ridiculous assertion that it is righteousness alone—not