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"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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THE MALADY OF HEPBURNISM

In the economy of Providence, perhaps for men's sins, or else for their discipline and deeper humility, particular countries, or districts, are sometimes subjected to strange visitations—visitations involving phenomena partly inexplicable, unless on the grounds of some such reasons as we have just now suggested. Of ancient time Egypt had its plagues including frogs, and flies, and lice, and darkness. In the fourteenth century Europe had its black death. Moreover, some countries have certain physical features such as volcanoes; or meteorological conditions producing occasional cyclonic probabilities; or tidal waves; or perhaps seismic characteristics which render earthquakes probable. Such countries often enjoy many unusual advantages, for the sake of which these occasional destructive phenomena are endured. Certain arctic regions have their gold amid the snows—the gold protected by the frost; the arctic night made tolerable by the gold. The tropics yield luxuriant growth, and sometimes luscious fruits—but under a burning sun, and with tropical reptile accompaniments.

Some countries are noteworthy for their human phenomena. Russia had its Rasputin, and then its Lennin and Trotsky; and still has its Stalin. Germany has its Hitler, and Ireland its DeValera. But what a favoured land Canada has been—and still is! And of all the provinces, what province has been more favoured than Ontario? If few of her sons have made her famous, still fewer have caused her shame. She has produced many good men—a Beck, a Mowat, a MacDonald, a Brown, and a few others. Perhaps according to present Ontario political standards and appraisals of political worth, they were none of them great—were, in fact, but mediocrities—but if they were not superlatively wise, they were not superlatively foolish.

Therefore Ontario has managed thus far to muddle through in the blundering British way. But she has been impeded by few handicaps. She should be thankful for her long immunity from pestilence and famine, and for her exemption from the experiments of any great political genius. This long period of comparative tranquility, and freedom from the mental strain of having to try to understand some dazzling human poli-

tical phenomenon, should help to prepare her for the stupendous mental strain in prospect.

For all the political stars have now faded from view in the historical firmament. A new luminary has burst upon the world which threatens to shed its political light upon the whole Dominion from coast to coast, to the complete obscuration of all other stars. At last a new power has arisen that can draw out leviathan with a hook; that can bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, and loose the bands of Orion; and bring forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guide Acturus with his sons.

And Ontario must support this wonder! Ontario must bear the blaze and burn of this St. Thomas star! Ontario will survive—even though such survival necessitates the use of smoked glasses—Ontario will survive the daring, dazzling, unprecedented, unparalleled, incomparable; incomprehensible, superlative, political brilliance of Hepburn! She must suffer this for her sins? Perhaps. For her discipline and deeper humility? Very probably. To let patience have her perfect work? Yes. To test her temper, and her qualities of endurance? Almost certainly. But surely with equal certainty, that she may learn, and never forget, how not to do it!

We have heard of moons that were "wet" or "dry". It would be interesting to know something of the meteorological and the astrological significance of this new star, Hepburn. We are unversed both in meteorological and astrological science, but from casual, untabulated, and unanalyzed, observation, we reach the assumption empirically that this burning and shining light presents the paradoxical probability of being a "wet" star.

"The astrological belief that plants, animals and minerals are under the influence of the planets is shown in the older names of some of the metals, e.g. Saturn for lead, Venus for copper, and Mars for iron, and the belief that the colours of flowers indicated the particular planet they were under led to their use in diseases and for constitutions supposed to be under the same planet. Physicians to this day head their prescriptions with a sign that originally meant an invocation to Jupiter, but now represents the word *recipe*."

Perhaps the Hepburn influence therefore has had something to do with those products of the earth from

which beer and wine are made! Certainly these beverages are flowing in an ever-increasing volume throughout the Province, which is at the moment subject to the banal influence of this astral or meteoric political phenomenon.

Of this "wet" influence we have already spoken and written somewhat extensively; but as some stars were supposed to exercise benign and others malign influence even to the extent of causing disease, so this new star has produced a malady which may appropriately be called Hepburnism. It will be the task of political scientists to isolate the germ of this plague, with a view to discovering a remedy.

We wondered ourselves for a few days following the nineteenth of last June whether this new disease would become epidemic, but we have really ceased to be alarmed by it. It has very objectionable symptoms, it emanates unpleasant effluvia, and rapidly develops into a state of delirium in which the subject suffers the delusion of superlative superiority. Even the most cursory observation, however, tends to convince one that the great majority of ordinarily intelligent Ontario people enjoy a natural immunity from the bacilli of the malady of Hepburnism. It is, indeed, likely to spread only among individuals of that peculiar mentality which combines the quality of mental superficiality with an inordinate egotism. We have heard of certain forms of illness which have exercised a purging and rejuvenating effect upon those subject to their powers. But while Hepburnism is scarcely likely, in any case, to have a fatal issue, it will probably have such an enervating mental effect upon its subjects as to destroy in them everything save a capacity to play the clown or the buffoon.

As we sought for some analogy wherewith to describe the antics of this political performer, it occurred to us that we might be able to make some use of the biblical story in which "the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbade the madness of the prophet"; but on examination we discovered it afforded no true analogy to the case under consideration, and that the story could not be used for the reason that the St. Thomas counterpart of Baalam's quadruped never consorts with prophets—and to Ontario's present almost unendurable discomfort and humiliation, is never dumb!

But now for a while let us drop parable and metaphor, and speak very plainly.

Ontario has recently been treated to a new exhibition of Hepburnism. It has long been the practice of successive Lieutenant-Governors to give a State dinner at Government House in connection with the opening of the Legislature. The present Lieutenant-Governor, following the example of his predecessors, issued invitations for a State dinner February 20th. Premier Hepburn and his Cabinet announced that they would not attend, and thereupon His Honour sent to all whom he had invited to be his guests this word:

"His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor regrets that, the Prime Minister of Ontario and his Cabinet having declined the invitation to be present at the State dinner on Feb. 20, this function will not be held.

"His Honour trusts that you have not been inconvenienced."

The reason for Mr. Hepburn's action, of course, is the fact that during his election campaign he inveighed against the expense involved in the upkeep of Government House, and pledged himself, we understand, to propose its abolition.

The Globe, of Toronto, in its issue of February 4th, had an editorial on the subject of the cancellation of the State dinner, entitled, "Could have been avoided"; and suggested that somehow the minds of the Lieutenant-Governor, and of the Premier and his Cabinet, might have been ascertained by each other in advance of the issue of the invitations, and that the unpleasant incident might thus have been avoided.

We have long been a reader of *The Globe*, and in time past have admired its advocacy and defense of worthy causes. But its attempt to maintain its rectitude while supporting Mr. Hepburn suggests the spectacle of the brave but humiliating attempt of a well-bred, cultivated woman, who finding herself married to a tipster, tries to look proud while holding the arm of her half-tipsy husband. What would *The Globe* have said of any other politician taking a like course to Hepburn's, in any other part of the Empire?

The Toronto Star, which, while generally supporting the Hepburn regime, has occasionally criticized it, in an editorial on, "The State Dinner", February 4th, says:

"It was inevitable that Premier Hepburn would decline to attend a State Dinner at Government House and everybody must have admitted this who gave the matter any thought."

It is just such observations as these from responsible papers which give seriousness to what, from other points of view, would be only a ludicrous performance. It is on account of the governmental principle involved in this and other acts of the Hepburn Government that we are taking time and space to discuss this matter.

The Toronto Globe carries at the head of its editorial column, presumably as its motto—and has done so for many years—the following:

"The subject who is truly loyal to the Chief Magistrate will neither advise nor submit to arbitrary measures.—JUNIUS."

If ever a people was subject to governmental arbitrariness, the people of Ontario are the people. The beer and wine measure is a case in point. Put upon the statute books as an amendment to the Liquor Control Act by the former Government, it was proclaimed by the Hepburn Government immediately following the election; and without so much as a month's notice, Ontario was deluged with beer. And yet no single organization in the entire Province had ever asked for the amendment. The people had never been consulted. But the will of brewers and distillers was imposed upon the people by their political agents—and apparently the people have no redress.

The Globe has written one or two editorials on the subject: one was fairly strong; the other amounted to telling Mr. Hepburn he was rather a naughty boy! But why does *The Globe* submit to this arbitrary measure? Why does it not endeavour to set the whole Province on fire in opposition to this iniquity?

But let us now look at the other case before us. Let it be assumed that Mr. Hepburn had some good reason for objecting to the expenditure involved in the upkeep of Government House, especially in such distressing times as these. Mr. Hepburn had a perfect right to his opinion—an opinion probably that would be shared by a very large number of people at such a time. Mr. Hepburn had a perfect right to express his opinion—and a perfect right to announce his determination, in the event of being returned to power, to abolish what he regarded

as a waste by relieving the Province of further obligation in this direction. No one can reasonably offer any objection to Mr. Hepburn's position in respect to Government House thus far, though many doubtless would not share his opinion.

But what are the facts of the case? The Hepburn Government was elected June 19th last. The Ontario Legislature will meet some time toward the end of February. For eight months the electors of the Province of Ontario, with the exception of those represented by the members of the Cabinet, have been disfranchised. They have had absolutely no voice in the conduct of the affairs of this Province. The elected representatives of the people have been left at home—and for eight months the Province has been governed by "order-in-council".

But what is involved governmentally by "order-in-council"? This at least that at the present time the Lieutenant-Governor is the legal representative in the Province of Ontario of His Majesty the King. Unless we are mistaken, no act of the present Hepburn Government can be given effect until it bears the signature of His Majesty's representative. Indeed, such Government as has been exercised in Ontario, has been exercised according to the technical term, by "The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council"; so that the Lieutenant-Governor is still a legal entity. He is still the representative of His Majesty the King. His signature is still necessary to give legal effect to Acts of Government. Surely Premier Hepburn is under some obligation to recognize the *status quo*.

If and when a change is effected by constitutional means, the Premier of Ontario would, of course, like all other citizens, be freed from obligation in such matters. But until such time, surely the leader of the Government ought to have been willing to have taken the usual course.

It is true that his refusal to attend the State dinner was but a refusal to accept, and thus to recognize, the hospitality of Government House; but it cannot successfully be argued surely that the fact that it was, and is still, the Government House, occupied by His Majesty's representative, is without legal significance.

Our understanding is that Mr. Hepburn does not object to the office of Lieutenant-Governor, nor to the function he officially fulfils; but only to the social accompaniments of the office, and the expense they involve. But surely it would have been better to wait until the Legislature had had an opportunity to speak on such a subject. Mr. Hepburn personally represents one constituency; the members of his Cabinet, a certain number of other constituencies; and this little group has been dictating arbitrarily to the entire Province for eight months.

When the constitutional representative of the King issues an invitation, such invitation is surely entitled to some courteous consideration. We are not in the least afraid that His Majesty will be disturbed by this affront. If it were called to his attention, he would probably pay no more heed to it than to the gibes of big "Bill" Thompson of Chicago a year or so ago. It was not a crime to decline an invitation to dinner: it was, indeed, nothing more than an offence against good manners, and against the ordinary amenities of life.

Superficially, very likely, many people—perhaps the majority—would favour the closing of Government House, and the saving of such expense as would thereby be effected. And yet we wonder, if that is not rather a superficial view of things? Does life consist in the

abundance of things which man possesseth? Is it all of life to ask, What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?

If economy be urged as justification of the Premier's action, where shall this economy end? The money spent in the upkeep of Government House is not all wasted. It is not thrown into the lake! It is put into circulation; and, directly and indirectly, affords employment for not a few. But if we are to regard all the courtesies and refinements of life as superfluous, how shall we determine what things may be omitted? How shall we distinguish between essentials and non-essentials?

We could live without art galleries. The Province could exist without the Ontario Museum. If economy in material things is to be our only standard of conduct, then the cost of the operation of Toronto University could be greatly reduced. Many departments of the University, while of undoubted usefulness, are not absolutely indispensable to physical existence. We do not know whether there is a restaurant at the Parliament Buildings: we presume there is. But if there is, do they use white cloths on the tables? Perhaps Mr. Hepburn will economize in the laundry bills!

We have read somewhere that an admirer of our friend Mayor Simpson daily supplies him with a beautiful rose, which, as we think, he wisely wears. It probably costs a little money. Ought Mr. Simpson's well-known championship of the under-privileged to have led him to refuse to wear that lovely rose? We think not.

There is something to be said for white collars, attractive ties, and decent clothes. The honoraria of the Premier and his Ministers, and of the members of the Legislature, might conceivably be further reduced without loss—if they would all consent to wear overalls, and go without white linen.

The outcry against Government House may sound well on the hustings, but it is rather a cheap appeal when thoroughly analyzed. In principle, it is akin to the ancient observation, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" We know from whose lips that objection fell, and what were his affinities, and his destiny. We believe in economy, and whether in politics or religion, it is useless to say to the hungry, "Be ye warmed and fed", while doing nothing for them. But we cannot admit that money spent on flowers, and music, or energy expressed in the graces and courtesies of life, are wasted. If "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost", so the essence and content of life in general are not material. "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

In these days of religious, social, and political, iconoclasm, it may not be amiss to point out that in the social conventions, and the courtesies observed by people of refined spirit, there may often be found an underlying rational necessity attesting the wisdom of their institution and continued observance.

Personally, we have always had the strongest natural antipathy for that kind of Pharisaical hypocrisy, whether religious or political, which, "strains at a gnat, and swallows a camel"; and we have still less respect for that economic Pharisaism which strains at a dinner menu, and swallows an ocean of beer. If Mr. Hepburn were really bent upon economy, if he were really a friend of the common people, if he really had the moral and material welfare of the Province at heart; and if such benevo-

lent attitude toward his fellows were accompanied by an enlightened judgment, can anyone suppose he would be willing to accept responsibility for the measure which takes an additional twenty-five millions of dollars out of the pockets of the people of Ontario—mostly of young people—by his beer and wine parlours?

To refuse an invitation to dinner from the King's representative on the ground of economy, while opening, and supporting, and defending, his hundreds of beer-parlours all over Ontario, which are debauching the youth of this Province as they have never been debauched in the history of anyone now living, is such an exhibition of arrant political hypocrisy as we have never before witnessed.

When first the beer-parlour plague appeared, we hoped to discover that designing men had taken advantage of a sensitive political situation to further their own selfish interests, and that if the Government's attention were called to the evils of the new measure, they would at least give a respectful hearing to such representations as might be made by responsible Ontario citizens. But Premier Hepburn made it clear that only insults awaited anyone who should even question the wisdom of his measures. It has been abundantly evident that one might as profitably try to reason with a laughing loon as to argue on any subject with the Nabal of Queen's Park. His campaign of economy is now seen to be the most unblushing practice of the spoils system this country has witnessed in many a day.

This Queen's Park demagogue has announced that he will speak from coast to coast in the coming election, against Premier Bennett and his party. We have no party politics—although we believe in Mr. Bennett's sincerity, and in the economic soundness of his policies; and we should like to see them given effect. When Mr. Hepburn made his last speaking tour, Ontario knew little of him. In the light of his record in office, of his inordinate vanity, of the ruthless exploitation of the spoils of office, we are of the opinion that if he speaks against Mr. Bennett often enough, he will do much to re-elect him! It seems to us that any party ship that takes Mr. Hepburn on board will be like the ship of Tarshish, and have to throw her Jonah overboard in order to get to port! If Mr. Hepburn retains the leadership of his party in Ontario to the end of the session, his retention will constitute a serious reflection upon the moral intelligence of the Legislature. But perhaps he will, for men who have had a long journey amid the snows and frosts of winter, when once they get before a warm and hospitable fire, are reluctant to go out into the cold again.

Mr. Hepburn is such a bundle of contradictions himself that he can accurately be described only by the employment of paradoxical terms. It seems to us that we have now in Queen's Park a boorish, ill-mannered, despotic, vulgarian, demagogue, who cannot be reformed; and for the amendment of whose practices there is no hope. There seems nothing for it but to endure this inflection with what fortitude may be possible, until it shall be time to go to the polls in another Ontario election. No splint, no mollifying ointment, can improve the condition; and only such moral surgery as is enjoined by Holy Writ can promise improvement in the political situation in Ontario: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right

hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

In many a generation there has not appeared a more discerning political diagnostician than the famous *Junius*, an unknown political writer of the eighteenth century, whose identity has never been discovered. But in his discussions of the political life of his time, and his analyses of the chief actors in the political arena, he laid bare principles of government and political expediency which have had their place in the political life of every succeeding generation, and which have their place in ours.

As we have written this article, there have recurred to our minds certain passages from one of the letters of *Junius*, portions of which we venture here to transcribe. The letter in question was dated July 8th, 1769, and was addressed, "To His Grace, the Duke of Grafton". Were *Junius* living in Ontario to-day, he would doubtless address a few letters to the Honourable Mitchell F. Hepburn—if, indeed, he did not regard Mr. Hepburn as being beneath the contempt of his facile pen. *Junius* is not here, but we borrow one of his letters, and make the following extracts for the conclusion of this article. The concluding paragraph which we print without amendment refers to the retirement of the Duke of Grafton to the Chancellorship of Cambridge University. At some points this letter will need a little adaptation to be strictly applicable to Mr. Hepburn's course, but in the main it is fairly illustrative of that political unwisdom represented by the word Hepburnism. If our readers will read this letter as addressed to the Honourable M. F. Hepburn instead of to the Duke of Grafton, we feel sure they will find in it both instruction and entertainment.

LETTER OF JUNIUS

To His Grace the Duke of Grafton:

8 July, 1769.

My Lord:

"If nature had given you an understanding qualified to keep pace with the wishes and principles of your heart, she would have made you, perhaps, the most formidable minister that ever was employed, under a limited monarch, to accomplish the ruin of a free people. When neither the feeling of shame, the reproaches of conscience, nor the dread of punishment, form any bar to the designs of a minister, the people would have too much reason to lament their condition, if they did not find some resource in the weakness of his understanding. We owe it to the bounty of Providence, that the completest depravity of the heart is sometimes strangely united with a confusion of the mind, which counteracts the most favourite principles, and makes the same man treacherous without art, and a hypocrite without deceiving. The measures, for instance, in which your Grace's activity has been chiefly exerted, as they were adopted without skill, should have been conducted with more than common dexterity. But truly, my Lord, the execution has been as gross as the design. By one decisive step, you have defeated all the arts of writing. You have fairly confounded the intrigues of opposition, and silenced the clamours of faction. A dark, ambiguous system, might require and furnish the materials of ingenious illustration; and, in doubtful measures, the virulent exaggeration of party must be employed, to rouse and engage the passions of the people. You have now brought the merits of your administration to an issue, on which every Englishman, of the narrowest capacity, may determine for himself. It is not an alarm to the passions, but a calm appeal to the judgment of the people, upon their own most essential interests. A more experienced minister would not have hazarded a direct invasion of the first principles of the constitution, before he had made some progress in subduing the spirit of the people. With such a cause as yours, my Lord, it is not sufficient that you have the court at your devotion, unless you can find means to corrupt or

intimidate the jury. The collective body of the people form that jury, and from their decision there is but one appeal.

"Whether you have talents to support you, at a crisis of such difficulty and danger, should long since have been considered. Judging truly of your disposition, you have perhaps mistaken the extent of your capacity. Good faith and folly have so long been received for synonymous terms, that the reverse of the proposition has grown into credit, and every villain fancies himself a man of abilities. It is the apprehension of your friends, my Lord, that you have drawn some hasty conclusion of this sort, and that a partial reliance upon your moral character has betrayed you beyond the depth of your understanding. You have now carried things too far to retreat: You have plainly declared to the people what they are to expect from the continuance of your administration. It is time for your Grace to consider what you also may expect in return from their spirit and their resentment.

"... and in the common arts of domestic corruption, we miss no part of Sir Robert Walpole's system except his abilities. In this humble imitative line, you might long have proceeded, safe and contemptible. You might, probably, never have risen to the dignity of being hated, and even have been despised with moderation. But it seems you meant to be distinguished, and, to a mind like yours, there was no other road to fame but by the destruction of a noble fabric, which you thought had been too long the admiration of mankind.

"... As you became minister by accident, were adopted without choice, trusted without confidence, and continued without favour, be assured that, whenever an occasion presses, you will be discarded without even the forms of regret. You will then have reason to be thankful, if you are permitted to retire to that seat of learning, which in

contemplation of the system of your life, the comparative purity of your manners with those of their high steward, and a thousand other recommending circumstances, has chosen you to encourage the growing virtue of their youth, and to preside over their education. Whenever the spirit of distributing prebends and bishoprics shall have departed from you, you will find that learned seminary perfectly recovered from the delirium of an installation, and, what in truth it ought to be, once more a peaceful scene of slumber and thoughtless meditation. The venerable tutors of the university will no longer distress your modesty, by proposing you for a pattern to their pupils. The learned dullness of declamation will be silent; and even the venal muse, though happiest in fiction, will forget your virtues. Yet, for the benefit of the succeeding age, I could wish that your retreat might be deferred, until your morals shall happily be ripened to that maturity of corruption, at which the worst examples cease to be contagious." JUNIUS.

NOTE TO OTHER THAN ONTARIO READERS

This paper circulates in more than fifty countries of the earth. Measured by circulation standards of secular papers, its circulation is not large, but it is extensive; and this is ever before us as its weekly message is prepared. Naturally, a large part of its circulation is in the Province of Ontario, and if it would be true to its mission, it must occasionally deal with matters of local interest for the information, and we hope, guidance of our Ontario readers. We do this with less reluctance when such matters involve principles which have application to the elementary things of life everywhere. In the foregoing article we have dealt with matters relating to the political life of Ontario, but involved in these matters are principles of righteousness, the propagation of which properly lies within the province of this paper's mission.

The Jarvis Street Pulpit

HOW TO OBTAIN FORGIVENESS OF SINS

A Sermon by the Pastor, Dr. T. T. Shields

Preached in Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, Sunday Evening, February 3rd, 1935

(Stenographically Reported)

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—I. John 1:9.

We shall this evening, at the close of this public service, come to the Table of the Lord, to remember once more His death in our behalf. I can think of nothing more appropriate as a preparation for participation in that glorious feast than to meditate for a little while on this text which, though so simple, has in it the whole truth of the gospel.

The context tells us, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make (God) a liar, and his word is not in us." The Word of God in many places very explicitly declares that we are sinners, that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God". Everywhere, from Genesis to Revelation, the Word of God assumes sin to be a fact in which all of woman born have participated. I know there are many to-day who deny the scriptural doctrine of sin. They would persuade us that these moral eccentricities, these imperfections of ours, are but the residue of a lower state, from which, according to this philosophy, we are emerging! If that be so, we have a long, long way to go yet, I fear.

I wish it were more difficult to believe the teaching of the Word of God in respect to sin, but the thing is so self-evident, it is so manifestly a part of the experience

of every man and woman, that it needs no argument. We are all sinners. We have all sinned. The denial of that fact involves the imputation of untruthfulness to God Himself.

There are some, on the other hand, while admitting that fact, claim to have obtained complete deliverance from sin. Once they were sinners, but the sinful nature has been eradicated: the "old man" is dead! Our context says that those who thus believe, deceive themselves: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." By whatever standard they measure themselves who assume they are now sinless, it is not the standard of God's truth.

If, then, we have sinned, and if there be still sin in us, what shall we do? "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Sin is not to be cured by being denied, but by being recognized and confessed. That is the simple principle that I propose to discuss with you for a little while this evening.

I.

Consider then first of all THE NECESSITY, FOR THE CONFESSION OF SIN. We cannot confess that which we

do not recognize. The text implies that there must be on our part *an intelligent recognition of the fact that there is sin in us, and that we have sinned against God.* Sin is something more than a mere imperfection of human nature: sin is lawlessness. Sin is an act of rebellion against God. Sin proposes an inversion of the laws of order. Sin is not the residue of a lower animal state. There is nothing evolutionary about it: sin is, in its very nature and essence, revolutionary. It is an act of rebellion against God. It is not only a rejection, a refusal, to acknowledge and submit to the divine government, but it is a repudiation of the divine rule. It is the setting up of the carnal nature in opposition to God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The mind of the flesh is distinctly and distinctively antagonistic to everything that is of God. Sin is there, and it must needs be recognized.

It must be recognized too *as to its nature*, that it is a thing that cannot be tolerated by a holy God. How people prate about toleration in matters of religion! I spoke a couple of weeks ago on some of the counterfeits of Christianity, and I received a certain paper with an editorial on the subject, entitled, "More religious toleration needed". If I were a physician I should not allow the druggist to tamper with my prescriptions. You cannot "tolerate" poison. Truth is the most intolerant thing in the world. It is never tolerant of error. Righteousness is never tolerant of unrighteousness. Holiness can never be tolerant of sin. The very nature of Deity flames against that which in us is so contrary to Him. "Our God is a consuming fire." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Sin is vastly more than a disease. It is not without analogy in that realm, I admit. A man may yield himself to his cups until alcoholism becomes a disease, and the power of his will is entirely destroyed; but he was responsible for producing that condition. By an act of his own will he effected that condition. Although sin has a terribly demoralizing and devastating effect on our whole nature it originated in an act of the will—and it is "enmity against God".

When the Bible speaks of confessing sin, it does not mean saying merely, "We are all sinners." It means recognizing that sin is sin, the "abominable thing" that God hates. So then we are admonished that when sin is known and recognized, there must be a confession of it. There is no profit in saying you have not consumption if you have! There is no profit in saying, "It is not diphtheria: it is only an indisposition", if it really is that dread disease. That does not change the nature of the disease. The thing that is essentially mortal, death-dealing, in its very nature, must be recognized as such, and dealt with as such—and such is sin.

Someone enquires, "And we must confess our sin?" Yes; sin in the mass, sin in general, that "we all have sinned". But that is not what the text says. We are to confess our *sins*. It is true that all have sinned, and that we have sinful natures. We may confess that without confessing our *sins*. But we cannot confess our *sins* without confessing our *sin*. We need to particularize in this matter.

I have heard people pray after this fashion, "O Lord, if there be anything in us that is displeasing to Thee, forgive it." We do not need to put in that "if". There are many things in every one of us that are displeasing

to God, but He never will put them away by that hypothetical method of prayer. What we need to pray is that God will let the light of His truth shine into our hearts, and show us this, that, and the other, sin hidden there,—and then, with knowledge of such sins, we must confess them. If a man has lied, he must recognize that he is a liar, and ask God to forgive him. If a man has been dishonest in his relation to others, he must confess that he has been dishonest. It is not sin in the mass that is meant here—it is comparatively easy to confess that—but we are to confess our *sins*, individual *sins*.

How shall we confess them? It depends upon what the sin is. If it be a sin against God alone, then it should be confessed to God alone. If it be against Him only, we do not need to make a parade of it. There should be secret passages between the soul and God. A man should have private audience with the King. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant." It is quite possible for a man to have displeased God in his thought, to have relegated Him to a secondary, a subordinate, position; and to have offended, not by the infraction of any moral principle, not by any outward departure from principles of rectitude—on the contrary, he may be eminently respectable, and yet in his heart he may have offended against God. Let him confess that to God.

If he has sinned against his neighbour, let him confess to God, and to his neighbour, too. But he does not need to call in all the neighbours—as the Oxford Group encourages men to do. If ever there was a delusion of the enemy, that is one of the worst. I believe the teaching of Scripture is that our confession should be as public as our offence—but no more public. If you have sinned against one, confess to that one. If you have sinned against more than one, confess your wrong to those whom you have wronged. But you are not to make a parade of your sins, and to allow the devil to make you proud of your confession. No! No! There is no scriptural justification for that. We are to confess to God, and to our neighbours only in so far as our neighbours are involved, and only to those who are involved. But if the offence has been public, and has brought reproach upon the name of Christ, the confession should be public too, and just as public as the offence: but no more.

"If we confess our sins." What follows? What does it mean to confess sin? Nobody will really confess his sin, surely, *if he does not repent of it.* One will not go to another and say, "I inflicted a great injury upon you yesterday. I maligned you; I defamed your good name—but I am going to do it again to-morrow." The mere fact that a man confesses, implies that he repents. Oh that God may make us sorry for our sins, really sorry for our sins, heavy at heart because we have sinned, grieved inexpressibly because we have done that which is displeasing to Him!

I wish we had as much sense as my dog. My dog offends sometimes. Poor little chap, sometimes he does not know it. But I have to correct him. And as surely as I do, as surely as I let him know my displeasure, he comes creeping up to me; then he will lie down at my feet and try to lick my hands as if to say, "I am so sorry. I am so uncomfortable. Will you not forgive me, that we may be chums again?"

Oh that we may be so sorry for our sins, so deeply concerned about them, feel the burden of them to be so

heavy, that we shall confess them to God, and tell Him we are sorry we have been unprofitable servants!

II.

What then? "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." I shall try to show you HOW FORGIVENESS IS ASSURED TO US. May the Holy Spirit make it plain to us all! I would have you feel the rock beneath the feet of your faith this evening, so as to make you feel you have solid standing-ground. Someone perhaps says, "I hope I may be forgiven." No! We can find no peace in vaguely "hoping". We may be absolutely sure of forgiveness. What is the ground of our assurance?

First of all, *the Divine righteousness*: "He is just (or, righteous) to forgive us our sins." "That is strange", says one, "I supposed it would be His mercy that would be called into exercise in the forgiveness of sins. But your text says that it is His justice. What has His justice, His righteousness, His inflexible righteousness, to do with forgiveness?" We think of the mercy of God as though it were a passing mood of Deity, as though He might occasionally be merciful. Let me remind you that the God to Whom we come is just: "Thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." His righteousness, His truth, His justice, His faithfulness, His love, His mercy, His power, are always the same. They never diminish. They are never subject to the vicissitudes of life as our moods are. Here we are strangely told that it is the very justice of God—not His mercy—that assures us of forgiveness.

That is the glory of redemption, that the grace of God has, if I may so put it for the sake of simplicity, converted the severer attributes of God into the ministers of salvation. Those qualities of the Godhead that make the sinner afraid, when manifested in Christ, become the very bulwarks of salvation.

How can God be righteous to forgive me my sins? Because Somebody has already paid the penalty; and by virtue of that payment He is compelled to forgive. I received a letter one day from a bank in Toronto, telling me that they had received a communication from another country depositing a certain amount of money to my credit. It was not a million dollars, but it was a certain amount of money! The bank said, "If you will call, you may have it." When I went down to the bank, what do you suppose I said? Do you suppose I said, "Mr. Jones has come"? No! There was nothing deposited to the credit of Mr. Jones, but there was a deposit to the credit of a man called by my name. I presented the letter they had sent me, and they enquired, "Are you Mr. Shields?" I identified myself, and the bank merely asked, "How will you take it, in currency or a cheque?" But the banker conferred no favour upon me: he was compelled to pay me the money. It was not his: it was mine; it was in his possession, to my credit.

Let me say to the praise of the glory of God's grace: there is a deposit of forgiveness in Heaven's bank awaiting the appropriation of every sinner who will confess his sins:

"Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity."

Do you not see, dear friends, that the moment you take your place as a sinner, you become the very man for whom Jesus Christ died? All that the death of Jesus Christ accomplished in behalf of sinners immediately becomes reckonable to you. The very justice of God, the very pillars of Deity upon which the universe is founded, become the ground of your faith. You need no longer to say, "I hope I shall be saved", for "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." He is bound to do it: He cannot help Himself, may I reverently say?—His truth, His righteousness, His justice, take up arms in the sinner's defense and demand his forgiveness.

Once more: "*He is faithful*". I apprehend that that has special reference to His covenant engagements, to the fact that He has promised. True faith makes its appeal to the divine faithfulness. Faith becomes possible to me because I come to a God Who is faithful. I can believe Him because He never breaks His word, never fails to implement His promises. His faithfulness is the answer to, and the complement of, my faith. "He is faithful"—He will keep His promises—"and just to forgive us our sins."

How many of them? All of them. What sort of sin? Every sort of sin. I care not what our sin may be, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin". If I had the ear of the worst sinner in Canada, the vilest wretch on this Continent, if I could address my invitation to one whom Whitfield would have called "the devil's castaway", the man who is so bad that even the devil himself is ashamed of him because he is too good an advertisement of his wares—every man, and any man, out of hell, but who deserves to be there, I would dare to tell him, God will forgive all your sins, every one of them, no matter how mean, no matter how great. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." His faithfulness and justice assure our forgiveness.

III.

Is not that a gospel worth while? But even that is not all. "AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS." There is a wonderful passage in Zechariah's prophecy: "And he shewed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel"—in the language of my text, he was forgiven; but he was not cleansed—"and he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments." The gospel of the grace of God is not a mere negative thing. This principle always obtains, the principle applying to God's ancient people as He brought them out of Egypt: He brought them out that He might bring them in. There is always a positive to match the negative. If He takes away the filthy garments, He gives other garments in their place. If He takes away our sin, He clothes us with His righteousness: "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin"—why?—"that we might be

made the righteousness of God in him." That is how He does it: He forgives our sin, and then cleanseth us from all unrighteousness.

Suppose a little boy treads in some forbidden path—as boys will. He goes deep into the mud. Did you ever see children stand in a mud-puddle, and literally dance in it, having a merry time, with the mud splashing all over them? I have! And I have said to myself, "Wait until you get home, and mother has to deal with those clothes of yours!" When the boy gets home he most assuredly will be rebuked—and very probably punished. But soon it is all over, for he is a child of the household. He is told to go upstairs and get those filthy clothes off. He is taken somewhere where the garments can be removed, and when he is thoroughly cleansed and attired in clean clothing, he is permitted to come back into respectable society. That is how God deals with His children: He forgives our sins, cleanses us from all unrighteousness, and then apparels us with the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus.

I trust you believe that glorious truth of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ:

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My glory are, my beauteous dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Thank God we shall not be afraid of a universe on fire, if clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ!

My dear brother, who has named the name of the Lord Jesus, do you need to confess your sins? Will you ask God to forgive you, as one of His children? Ask Him to wash you, and make you whiter than snow. But you say, "I do not know whether I ought to come to the Table of the Lord to-night. Does it not say in His Word something about eating and drinking unworthily?" Yes; it does. Let me explain what that means. What of a poor sinner who has no worthiness who says, "I am lost and undone. I have no hope for time or eternity apart from the grace of God. I ought not to come to the Lord's Table"? That is your greatest worthiness. We take the bread, His broken body; we drink the wine, His outpoured blood. If you do not need the blood, do not come to the Table of the Lord. If you do not need the cleansing of the Fountain, do not come. If you think you can pay your own way with God, have it out with Him. I have no authority to invite you to this Table. This Table is for poor sinners who have no hope save in the abounding grace of God.

"Let not conscience make you linger
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you,—
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

Are there some here who never have confessed their sins? Is there some man or woman here who says, "I am not a Christian, but I long to be such, and to know that I am." You may know you are a Christian. You may be a Christian here and now, instantly, in a moment, "in the twinkling of an eye". Some day, when the Lord shall come, He is going to change these bodies—and how long will it take Him? "In a moment, in the twinkling

of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." God can do wonders in a moment. God can make us new creations in Christ in a moment. He can blot out all our sins in a moment. He can cleanse us from all unrighteousness in a moment. He can make us heirs of glory in the fraction of a second. Instantaneous conversion? Of course! We are dealing with God—and God can do anything. Will you trust Him?

"How can I know?" "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." I have preached from this text—never twice alike—many times; because it is *my* text. It is the text the Lord in mercy used to lead me into the light. When I was younger, and had less sense, I thought I knew a great deal. I thought I was quite an important young man. Long ago I had that starch taken out of me! Very often a man before he is twenty-one knows more than he could possibly know if he lived to be as old as Methuselah. I had been well brought up. I had been brought up under the ministry of one whom I believed then—and still believe—was one of the greatest preachers in the world. I thought I knew something. I did not believe that I could be saved in any ordinary way!

One day there came a man—I have told the story before, but I repeat it—there came a man to preach for my father. They called him a professor—I thought he ought to be a kindergarten teacher, dealing with primary scholars. But I was the minister's son, and I went to hear him out of a sense of duty. I thought he was the dullest preacher I had ever heard. He was, in fact, a fine preacher, but I lacked the discernment necessary to its recognition. He treated his congregation as though they were a lot of boys and girls: he talked down to us as though we were little children, at least, so I, in my conceit, thought. But one night he preached—I do not know what he preached about: I did not know then. I thought he was prosy to the last degree, and I said to myself, Why did they put that man in my father's pulpit? I had heard my father preach hundreds of times, and I had always stayed awake—perhaps because I had to! But I ached for the end of that sermon. He got through at last, and gave an invitation to sinners. I do not know how I heard it except the Wind "that bloweth where it listeth" had appointed that that should be the night when I should hear the still small Voice, and be saved. Do you know what he said? He said, "It just means this: if you confess your sins, one of two things is bound to happen, either you will that moment become a Christian, or God will become a liar."

That was startling, was it not? There was nothing prosy about that! That night I confessed my sins, that night I made public acknowledgment of my sins—and was saved. When somebody came to explain salvation to me, I said, "I do not need any explanation: all I needed was the submission of my will to God."

Confess your sins, my brother, and one of two things must happen: either God will forgive your sins, and blot them all out; or He will become a liar. But "the God that cannot lie" has never done violence to His own nature by denying Himself—and He will not make you the solitary exception of all humankind. He will forgive your sins, and save you for ever. Let us ask Him so to do.