

Something ought to be done in the matter of the terms of the Court of Queen's Bench. There should be three instead of two. A poor man has been in the Montreal gaol for five months waiting his trial. He has had to live in a felon's cell—to feed on felon's fare—has been made a bankrupt—his family left to starve on charity, because the Police Magistrate judged that his case should go to a jury for trial. Now that the political parties have got their answer from the country as to Free Trade *versus* Protection, couldn't we turn our attention to these matters for a little to some purpose?

It is rumoured in England that Lord Beaconsfield is going to offer the British Commissionership connected with British Protectorate over Asia Minor to Earl Dufferin. If that should come to pass it will not please many Conservative supporters, who will be angry at seeing good things given to Liberals, but it will put the right man in the right place; for, if any man living can make England popular in Asia Minor, Lord Dufferin is that man.

Says the London *Truth* :—

"The unexpected result of the election for Argyshire has created equal rage, wonder, and dismay in the Tory ranks, and it placed the Ministerial press in a peculiarly difficult and embarrassing situation. The seat had everywhere been declared to be safe (for Lord Lorne has consistently supported the Government in its Eastern policy throughout), Colonel Malcolm had dissolved his connection with Boston to take possession of it, and, as it is usual now, the Liberals were completely taken by surprise. The *Times* certainly is not squeamish, for it related the sad reverse in that hocus-pocus style by which Napoleon's bulletins converted the retreat from Moscow into a triumph, and at once published an article expressing surprise, as unlimited as the previous confidence that the Tories, should have thought it worth while to contest the seat at all. If Lord Lorne's appointment to Canada had been announced two months back, and the writ had been issued at once, the election would have taken place about the time of Lord Beaconsfield's triumphant entry into London, and would probably have terminated in the manner expected and desired by the Tory party; but people are beginning to discover that the Treaty of Berlin has settled nothing, that the Ministers are as full of tricks as a pack of cards, and that Cyprus, instead of being only a little short of Golconda, is unhealthy, and at present comparatively unproductive."

EDITOR.

WHAT GOVERNMENT CANNOT DO.

We are slow to learn how little can be done for us by others. Constantly we find that what we need for our comfort or our progress is effected best by ourselves. And yet we are for ever looking to some outward agency, whether circumstance, or accident, or other men, to do for us what we could far better do by our own activity. Like Mr. Micawber, we hang around and spend all we have while we wait in vain for something to "turn up."

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the confidence we place in the almost supernatural powers of Government interference to set right whatever may be wrong. If we were told that the only functions that Government is fitted for are to protect life, property, and individual freedom, and to enforce contracts between man and man,—in short, to protect us from the violence or fraud of each other, leaving us in other respects to take care of ourselves,—it would seem to most men a sort of impiety, something in the nature of a political blasphemy. The omnipotence of Government is the primary article of our social creed. If Government speaks, it is done; if Government commands, it stands fast. Is there any evil in society? We stick fast in the mud and call upon Government, like another Jupiter, to help us. Does a railway train run off the track? There must be Government inspectors of railroads. Does some tradesman mix sand with his sugar, or give us short measure when we buy silk or calico? Though nothing would be easier than to get the mixture analyzed, or the fabric measured, and publish the result, and no punishment so efficacious, we are struck with paralysis and cannot move a muscle till Government passes a law and appoints a staff of officers. Have we a bad drain in the house? We must wait to get it set right till we have been to headquarters and altered the law, though if we had a cheap and easy means of enforcing contracts our landlord might be made to do the necessary repairs to-morrow. Our faith in Government is quite touching and pathetic. We look up to it as a baby to its mother.

If it were not characteristic of faith to believe without evidence we might wonder upon what our confidence in Government assistance is founded. Certainly it cannot be the efficiency of Governmental control in those things which it has hitherto undertaken, even when they fall within its proper province. We never take up a newspaper without coming across abundant instances of official bungling. In one column some wretched job or utter imbecility is exposed, even though in the next we have a demand for further officialism. Do we not all of us know that the worst of all executants of public works is the Government? Who builds the worst ships? Who wastes the most time over needless improvements? Where shall we go for badly constructed buildings, ill-drained barracks, unventilated offices, execrably paved streets, impassable roads, engines warranted not to do their work, the commonest conveniences neglected altogether, or paid for at three times their proper cost? Who makes its soldiers coats of shoddy and charges for them as though they were broadcloth? Who clothes brave men in India in a way insanely unsuited to the climate, and thrusts them into buildings that fall upon and crush them, as in the case of the ninety-five men killed at one of our Eastern stations? Who sets them, in actual war, to march barefoot, to fight without food, to lie in filthy shanties, to rot away in dysentery, and to burn up in loathsome fever? Who does all this, and more, and yet is believed in with a simplicity of faith which makes us wonder more than ever at the gullibility of mankind?

"How not to do it" is an art which has been thoroughly mastered in too many Government offices. We trust these men with beautiful confidence, nevertheless. When we compare Government control with private enterprise, we reason in the opposite way to that divinely taught us in the Parable of the Talents. The Government officers, like the fountains in our public squares, do nothing but "play every day from ten o'clock till four." Therefore, we commit to them the best interests of society. Private energy has made roads, established banks, invented steam traffic, built cities, turned deserts into gardens; therefore, we will have nothing to do with private energy. Take away the ten talents from him who has doubled his stock, and give them to him who has hidden his solitary talent in a napkin, folded his arms, and gone to sleep. A logic this more honourable to our ingenuous confidence than to our common-sense.

It is not denied that Government is a necessary institution, but it may be reasonably maintained that its proper sphere is very limited, and the moment it goes beyond its province, it does incomparably more harm than good. Whatever private enterprise *can* do, it ought, as a rule, to be left to do. The proof is that even in what falls within its proper province, such, for example, as police and military arrangements, Government goes about its business in the most indirect and least efficient way. Leave Government to its appropriate duty—the duty of protecting us from mutual violence and from foreign aggression—and depend in other matters upon the native energies of society embodied in schemes of private enterprise. These have saved us in the past; they have been the main factors of preservation, and the only instruments of progress. It is to these, therefore, that we shall do wisely to trust the future.

Government does things slowly, expensively, indirectly, with the maximum of corruption, and the minimum of efficiency. Private energy is swift in action, cheap in expenditure, direct in aim, and bound under the penalties of immediate detection and hopeless failure, to be at least moderately pure and efficient. Let common-sense draw the conclusion.

There need be no apology for drawing attention to this question. There is a cry throughout the country for help from Government to save us from the commercial pressure of the times. People have an impression that some divine Sir Somebody has only to step into Mr. MacOtherbody's vacant place, and say, like a conjuror, "Presto! Quickly!" and all will go well. Let the Jews believe that—if they choose to do so, though I have too much respect for their intellect to think that they are so foolish—assuredly I will not. There may or may not be reasons for a change of Ministry—on that I say nothing. But those who think that it will greatly affect the commercial condition of the country, might as well imagine that it will control the height of the tides, or alter the succession of the Seasons.

But of this, more in another article.

J. F. STEVENSON.

PREACHERS AND PASTORAL WORK.

The first and main work of a clergyman undoubtedly is to preach—that is to have thoughts of God and Christ and life, and then speak them out in the best language he can command. In order to do his work well, he must be a student of books and of men; he must—like his Master—identify himself with those he would help. There are but few real preachers in the world—plenty of men who can put themselves into lively and look grave—plenty of men who can take a text of Scripture as a peg to hang a few platitudes upon, said platitudes having been culled from about a dozen different printed sermons—plenty of men even who can create a little dullness of speech, which by courtesy we call a sermon—but only a few men can preach. For a man to be a preacher he must combine in himself manifold gifts and graces. He must be a psychologist, have some understanding of metaphysics—he must be a logician, with ability to analyse and synthesise—he must be an artist, and a poet, and an actor, and most of all, a MAN: he must have thought deeply and felt profoundly—fought great battles in the heated arena of his own life, some of them lost and some of them won, else he can never know how to speak strong and helpful words to others. For words taken from books and put into a sermon are neither strong nor helpful. They may have been both when originally spoken, but a storm of emotions can never be printed and so preserved in full force. Lightning and thunder can never be reproduced—they die at the birth. So it is with the vehement emotion of the preacher; his words may be borrowed, but not the soul that was in them.

Of course there are degrees of preachers, just as there are degrees of artists, and poets and actors, and writers of books. There is a Tennyson, and there is a Martin Tupper, and both are poets: there is a London *Times*, and there is a Montreal daily *Witness*, and both are newspapers, and both, perhaps, are needful. There is ordinary work to be done everywhere which only ordinary men can do; and the second or third rate preacher, who is neither a logician, nor an artist, nor a poet, nor an actor, but is merely an ecclesiastic, is a good and useful, and much-to-be-respected member of society.

But, it will be said, to preach sermons is not the only work of a clergyman; he has to take the pastoral oversight of his church—by which is meant, attendance at 6 or 8 meetings in the week; some of them devotional, and some of them the opposite of that—visits to the sick and to the well—funerals—baptisms—weddings. To do that pastoral overseeing means that he must have sufficient light of nature and of grace to know who is sick without being told—to know who desire his visits and who object to them—to know with whom he should have family prayer, and with whom he should hold friendly and profitable conversation about the sad failings of dear Brother Smith or Robinson. By the same light he must discern when some of his flock are going away, and when it would be a convenient time for him to call and say them good-by—for, of course, they will not call upon him and say a farewell word. Then, he must have the faculty of observing what strangers are in his congregation, that he may find out where they live and give them a hearty welcome—for, of course, no such courtesy as a call can be due to him. It can never be expected that those who desire his friendship and his ministry shall call upon him, and if they should "sit under" him for a year, all the time avoiding personal contact with him, they will feel and declare that he has sadly neglected his pastoral duties.