

depart to any appreciable distance from the beaten theological paths? It can hardly be denied that the great Teacher whom they all profess to follow was the most radical and iconoclastic of all searchers for truth, and that the spirit of His teachings has been the inspiration of the most honest and most fearless of truth-seekers in all ages. Assuming, then, that in the majority of cases those clergymen and professors who have brought themselves under the ban of the majority of their fellow-churchmen have done so in obedience to conscience and as the result of anxious study and research, can this be acting in the spirit of the Master, who would subject them to ostracism and obloquy in consequence? Is not the tendency of such action to put a premium upon intellectual self-deception, or upon dissembling? Can any thoughtful Christian doubt either that uncompromising fealty to truth is of far more value in the eyes of Him who taught His followers to seek and hold fast the truth at all cost than the most zealous defence of traditional faiths, even admitting that the articles of faith held by the latter are the more correct? We are not attempting to lay down a policy or pronounce a judgment for the Churches, but are simply jotting down a few queries that must have suggested themselves to many in connection with what promises to be, during the next few years, a burning theological question.

A RECENT number of the *Woodstock Sentinel-Review* had the following:—

Last night a scene was enacted near the *Sentinel-Review* office which touched the hearts of all who witnessed it. An old man who had been taken in charge by the police was struggling on the pavement while strong men were trying to lift him into a buggy. He pleaded piteously, saying that he had done no wrong and would die before he would go to gaol. He was charged with no crime, was an old resident of the town, having become a citizen under its first mayor; his only offence was his poverty. Many were touched by the old man's agonized expression and the justice of his appeal. Offers of aid for him were whispered by the sympathetic; but a desire not to appear to interfere with the officers of the law prevented anything being done. After a long struggle the aged prisoner was overcome, and was driven off sprawling and pleading to the county gaol.

And this thing occurs in the last decade of the nineteenth century, in Christian Canada, in the flourishing town of Woodstock. Not that Woodstock is a sinner above all other towns and districts in this matter. The same thing, in substance, is, we believe, of no infrequent occurrence all over the country, though the harrowing circumstances may not often be brought so directly to the notice of the public. Woodstock is rather to be congratulated on having a newspaper which does not hesitate to hold the system under which such an occurrence becomes possible up to the light so effectively. The victim in this case is, we believe, a coloured man, but that makes no difference in the principle. He is, nevertheless, a man. His pitiful struggle showed that liberty is as dear to him as to other citizens. As the *Sentinel-Review* well observes, "In a well ordered state of society his poverty and humble station should increase the duty of corporate society to secure him the rights of citizenship and to guard him from outrage." May we not hope that our contemporary's powerful appeal will not be without its effect upon the townspeople, and that the day is near when such an outrage upon civilization as the sending of a citizen to jail for no other crime than poverty or the infirmities of age, will be no longer possible.

It is repugnant to every sentiment of humanity to deport an aged citizen, charged with no crime but that of inability to support himself, to the county prison to herd with criminals, in order to get rid of him. But our treatment of those who are to be our future fellow-citizens, on the other verge of life, is often no less inhuman, and, from the point of view of national self-interest, vastly more short-sighted and criminal. An incident related by a highly respected clergyman of this city at the opening of the new Industrial School building, at Mimico, the other day, will illustrate our reference. This gentleman said that he had recently gone to visit at the penitentiary two men whom he had known years ago as boys. For some juvenile offence these boys had been cast into prison. Stung, no doubt, by the sense of disgrace, and influenced very likely by the associations into which they had thus been brought, these boys had entered upon careers of crime with the result that many years of the prime of their lives had been spent in prison. For aught that appeared in their younger days there was no reason to doubt that if

these boys had been properly dealt with when they began to go astray: had they, instead of being sent to jail, been placed in an institution such as that at Mimico, they might have grown up to be industrious and useful members of society, a help and an honour to the community instead of a burden and disgrace. The case is referred to, not as a rare one—would that it were—but as illustrative of the terrible blunder in the treatment of child offenders and waifs, which society has so long been accustomed to make, and which it is even now but slow to perceive and to discard. Looking at the matter from the point of view of enlightened common sense, one might well suppose that the first care of every municipality upon its organization would be to provide for the proper training of the neglected young, and the proper care of the indigent aged within its boundaries. Recent legislation in regard to the homes for the poor on the one hand, and the existence of such institutions as the Mimico Industrial School on the other, lead us to hope that a better day has dawned. If every boy and girl, for whom no other arrangement can be made, were to be properly trained and educated in an industrial school, what a thinning of the population of our jails and penitentiaries should we see in a few years. As a mere matter of economy it is doubtful if any other investment of funds, either public or charitable, would bring so good a return to the state. If memory serves, it was stated that one of the convicts above referred to had already cost the public about five thousand dollars. And he is but one of dozens or hundreds of similar cases which could be found in our prisons and penitentiaries. And yet how grudgingly, in comparison, do we tax ourselves to make useful citizens out of the boys and girls who for the want of proper care and training are constantly growing up to recruit these expensive regiments of the vicious and the criminal. The five thousand dollars which are spent in the trial and punishment of one criminal would probably suffice to put several who are in danger of falling into similar courses, on the way to lives of honest industry. Even now we learn that this noble institution at Mimico is obliged to refuse admission to scores of those who should be there.

THE announcement that the unprecedented honour of a peerage has been bestowed upon a Canadian, in the person of Sir George Stephen, is a genuine surprise. That which first suggests itself as the natural and graceful thing to do, is to congratulate our fellow-countryman upon the signal mark of the Royal favour which has thus been bestowed upon him. This we can do the more sincerely and heartily because, so far as we are aware, Sir George as a citizen and a man is without reproach. From the point of view of personal integrity, he is probably as worthy of such honour as any other Canadian. But while fully and gladly admitting the merits of the man whom Lord Salisbury has thus honoured, it is but fitting that we should look a little further into the matter. Two questions at least are suggested for the consideration of the thoughtful: Is the bestowal and acceptance of such titles of nobility—even without the objectionable hereditary feature—a thing to be desired by Canadians? On what special grounds has the selection of the first recipient of the honour been based? The first question is forced upon our consideration by the intimation in a leading London paper—we know not how well informed in this matter—that this is the inauguration of a policy which contemplates the creation of an order of life peerages in Canada. The fact that the first person so honoured is no longer a resident of Canada, is, it must be admitted, rather opposed to this view of the purpose of Lord Salisbury's Government. But, however useful the nobility, as a class, may be in Great Britain and other Old World nations, in which the idea of such class distinctions is firmly rooted, there are many cogent reasons, reasons which we venture to think will commend themselves to the great majority of thoughtful Canadians, why it is undesirable to attempt to transplant caste distinctions to the uncongenial soil of democratic Canada. The native tongue, which with some difficulty accustoms itself even to the harmless "Sir," as a mere complimentary title scarcely carrying with it the idea of social superiority, would be apt to balk obstinately at the recognition of a fictitious superiority in rank, implied in addressing as "My Lord," a fellow-countryman lifted above the honoured level of a common manhood and a common citizenship for no better reason possibly than the possession of inordinate wealth, or the rendering of some special service to a dominant political party.

WHEN we come to enquire into the principle upon which the creation of the first Canadian peer has been based, we are, of course, shut up to a consideration of the distinguished part Sir George Stephen has taken in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and of the large additions he is supposed to have made to his wealth by that fortunate investment. A Canadian contemporary tells us that the peerage bestowed is "an unprecedented recognition of a Canadian who has won wealth and distinction by the exercise of worthy qualities." Among these worthy qualities are afterwards mentioned "vigour," "ability," "shrewdness," and the "courage and experience, the capital and resources, the staunchness and ability" which contributed not a little to the ultimate success of that great undertaking. We should be sorry to say a word by which we might seem to detract in the least from what we have honestly said of Sir George Stephen, personally, and we specially request that the remarks we are about to make should be considered entirely apart from any personal consideration. The question to our mind is, simply whether the qualities which lead to the acquisition of great wealth, or even to the accomplishment of large and difficult commercial enterprises, are the qualities which should be singled out above all others, as worthy of Imperial honours? We do not know that Sir George Stephen, or any of his coadjutors in the construction of the great railway, has ever claimed to have been actuated by higher or more disinterested motives than those of hundreds of others who have been less successful in great commercial undertakings, and who, we may add, have been much less fortunate in the amount of aid received from the public chest. We do not care to pursue the enquiry further, lest our remarks should seem invidious, however free from such feeling, but there can be no harm in suggesting serious reflection upon the character of the services to the State or to mankind which should be deemed worthy of the highest honour. We have on other occasions paid our tribute of admiration to the great courage and enterprise which have marked the construction and management of the Canadian Pacific from the very first. But this admiration, and the sincerest desire to do justice to the great services which it bids fair to render to Canada and the Empire, should not blind us to the fact—to which the signal honour just bestowed upon its ex-President is adapted to call attention—that the railway is one of the most powerful monopolies ever established by Government aid in any country, and that there is a real danger that some day, under other and less scrupulous management, it may make its power felt to an unwelcome extent. No one can recall the tremendous influence it brought to bear during the recent election, even though he may regard that influence as salutary in its effect, without being reminded of the possibilities involved in having so mighty an engine under private management and control.

COMMENTING last week upon the action of Sir Charles Tupper, in leaving the duties of his high office in England to enter as a partisan into the late election struggle in Canada, we observed that it was desirable that some member or supporter of the Government should explain to the public the grounds on which the action of Sir Charles, or rather of the Government in summoning him, were deemed justifiable and proper. The answer to our request came sooner than we expected in the shape of a speech by Sir John Thompson, in reply to that made by Mr. Laurier, on moving a vote of disapproval of the conduct of the High Commissioner. Sir John Thompson's speech is characteristically able, and may safely be accepted as containing the best defence of which the course of action complained of is capable. His argument consists of two main parts. In the first place he denied distinctly that Sir Charles Tupper used such language and epithets as were ascribed to him in the resolution and speech of the Leader of the Opposition, and demanded proof of the accusations. In the second place he denied that Sir Charles Tupper occupies in any degree the position of a Canadian ambassador. He is simply, according to Sir John Thompson, the agent, the confidential agent of the Government, living in London. Both these arguments are questions of fact. As we before observed, the politically important question is quite independent of the manner in which Sir Charles conducted the canvass, and the good taste and truthfulness, or the opposite, of the terms in which he saw fit to speak of one of the two great political parties in the contest. The question with which we concerned ourselves was simply that of the propriety or impropriety of the Canadian High Commissioner's act in leaving his post and returning home to take a hand in a party struggle. We had always supposed,