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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1886.

THE longer one thinks of the action of the American Board of Missions in refusing to send the New Theology men as missionaries to the heathen, the more apparent does the wisdom of the action appear. Of what use would it be to send men to preach about a "perhaps" to the heathen? That kind of preaching meets with very indifferent success among educated heathen, and would meet with less among savages. To do any good a foreign missionary must be a positive man. No small amount of George Leslie Mackay's marvellous success arises from positiveness. Fancy him preaching a "perhaps" kind of gospel. Positive preachers are doing the most good all the world over. People have no confidence in a man who thinks every thing an open question. And, anyway, how much good would the New Theology do a heathen even if he did accept it? An American writer says he has no confidence in the effort that is being made to civilize the Indian. It does, he says, no good to civilization, and knocks twenty per cent. off the value of the Indian. Before teaching the heathen the New Theology, it might be able to ask how much good it would do them.

If the object is to have Thanksgiving Day at the duldest and most unfavourable time in the year a better day than the 18th of November could not be appointed. At that time the days are generally dull, the weather raw and the roads bad. In the country there is neither sleighing nor wheeling. Why should not Thanksgiving Day be in October, say, between the middle and the end of the month. The harvest is then over, the root crops are in and the fall wheat sown. The weather is usually delightful and the roads in most places fairly good—at least much better than a month later. A large portion of our population begin hard work about the 1st of September. A holiday about the middle of October would divide the time nicely between September and Christmas. The 18th of November is only five weeks from Christmas. Presumably there is some reason for having Thanksgiving Day at the time appointed, but we never heard it nor have ever seen any body that knew any reason. Probably the appointment is made by some official who takes down his almanac and marks off that day simply because some day has to be appointed. No doubt it would be impossible to appoint a day that would suit everybody, but we believe nine-tenths of the people of Canada—Ontario at all events—would prefer a day three weeks or a month earlier. The people in this country keep Thanksgiving Day as well as the people in towns and cities, and driving to church in the middle of November does not stir up feelings of gratitude.

FOR some time past the *Interior* has been carrying on a rather sharp controversy with one or two journals, several D.D.'s, and a host of correspondents, in regard to the functions of the ruling and teaching elder. The discussion began about the eligibility of ruling elders to the chair in Church courts; but, of course, could not be confined to that point. The arguments proceeded mainly on scriptural lines, and we are bound to say that the *Interior* has held its own. To the objection, that if the office of teaching

and ruling elder are scripturally one the ruling elder may administer ordinances, the *Interior* replies:

We do not wish to administer the ordinances, and would very promptly resent the attempt of any forward elder to usurp functions to which the Presbytery and the people had not called him. But this is because of expediency in the present order and condition of things. It would be scripturally lawful for us to exercise any ministerial function, and we would not hesitate to do it in circumstances where the glory of God and the consolation and edification of His people seemed to require it. That would, in any case, only be our duty in the absence of a minister. It would be lawful, but excepting in an extreme and exceptional case, highly inexpedient; an expedience which conceivably might be a positive sin.

To some this view of an elder's functions may seem new and somewhat startling. It is not by any means new in the Canadian Church. It is held, we believe, by one esteemed minister, on whom one of the colleges has recently conferred the highest honours, and has been held by him for many years. The practical question is not, Should an elder dispense ordinances in ordinary cases? Neither the people nor the Presbytery have called him to that work. The practical question is, Would it be lawful for an elder to dispense ordinances in a locality where the services of a minister could not be obtained, and where the glory of God and the edification of His people would be promoted by such dispensation?

IT is almost impossible to believe that the trial of Hand, the alleged dynamitard of Sarnia, did not end in a complete failure of justice. Indeed, if the press reports are correct, failure seems too weak a word to describe what took place. The charge of the presiding judge was one of the most remarkable we ever read. It was remarkable for what it contained and for what it did not contain. There was not a syllable from first to last about the enormity of the crime charged against the prisoner. For any thing the jury were told to the contrary, blowing up the house of a Scott Act man, with nine of a family asleep in it, may be a harmless pastime. The witness Hall was severely enough handled, but there was not a word in condemnation of blowing up houses. The next remarkable thing was the comment on the evidence of the detective. Now it may be quite true that the evidence of the detectives should be received with caution, but that is an entirely different thing from saying in effect that a detective should be regarded as an accessory after the fact to the crime he is trying to ferret out! If criminals who use dynamite are not caught by detectives, how in the name of common sense are they ever to be punished? When a ruffian goes to use dynamite on a neighbour's house, does he take some person with him to see him use it? There is no crime in the calendar less likely to be found out without a detective. Evidence which would have shown that an attempt was made on another house the same night was ruled out. The evidence of Hall, the boatman, who said he rowed the ruffians over the river was commented on to the jury in such a way as to make it almost impossible for them to believe him. Hall's wife paid this very man \$100 to leave the country and not give evidence! What did he get this \$100 for if he knew nothing about the case, and had nothing to do with it? No man of average perception can read the address without feeling that it is strongly in favour of the prisoner. Possibly his lordship was quite right in omitting what he omitted, and saying what he said, but it is very unfortunate, indeed, that his view of the case was so different from the views of many of the people of this country.

COMMENTING on the revival service conducted under the auspices of the Methodist congregation by Messrs. Jones and Small, the *Christian Guardian* says:

A noticeable feature of this revival is the absence of those who gathered around Moody, Varley, Haslam, and other evangelists who were Calvinistic in their theology. Most of those to whom we refer were strongly for Christian union at former evangelistic services, where the theological teaching they preferred was taught by the evangelists; but probably the Arminianism of Sam Jones is not acceptable to them, and they are not for union on that line. This is all right. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But no one should claim credit for liberality for union in Christian teaching and work which is wholly on the line of his own creed and preferences.

True. A man who must have union in Christian teaching and work wholly on the line of his own creed and preferences, or not have it at all, deserves no credit for liberality. Absorption is what he is after, not union. All this is true, but we think our neighbour is

quite mistaken in supposing that any considerable number of Calvinists decline to co-operate with Mr. Jones on account of his Arminianism. With the exception of one or two sermons, it would be impossible to know from Mr. Jones' sermons that he is an Arminian. We do not know to whom the *Guardian* refers, when it says: "Those who gathered around Moody, Varley, Haslam and other evangelists who were Calvinistic in their theology" are conspicuous by their absence. Certainly, the Presbyterian ministers of Toronto did not gather around any of these men except Moody. Some of them may have gone to hear these evangelists occasionally, just as some of them have gone to hear the Georgia men occasionally. We have no right to speak for the Presbyterian ministers of the city, and do not profess to do so, but we think we can assure the *Guardian* that most of them would much rather co-operate with Methodist ministers, whose methods they approved, than with any of the evangelists named, or a dozen others that might be named. Of course, almost any body would be glad to co-operate with Moody, but it is hardly fair to classify him with ordinary evangelists. We may be mistaken, but we don't believe Mr. Jones' Arminianism kept six Presbyterian Calvinists out of his meetings.

JOHN KER, D.D.

ANOTHER of Scotland's eminent Presbyterian ministers has ended his life's work. A short time ago reference was made to the death of Dr. William B. Robertson of Irvine. He is now followed by his intimate and much loved friend, Professor John Ker, D.D. Lovely in their lives, in death they have not been long divided.

John Ker was born in Edinburgh, where he received his preliminary education, afterward graduating at the University of his native city. Thence he went to the University of Berlin, where he had the privilege of attending Neander's lectures. He studied theology in the Divinity Hall of the Secession Church. His first charge was at Alnwick Northumberland, whence he was called to the United Presbyterian congregation of East Campbell Street, Glasgow. At that time that congregation had two retired pastors, Dr. Kidston and Mr. Brash. Under Dr. Ker's ministry the congregation grew rapidly in numbers and in Christian activity and usefulness. Soon they moved to a new building erected for them in Sydney Place, and the cause continued to prosper. The minister of Sydney Place Church was willing to aid in every good work, and requests for his services were far more numerous than he could comply with. His heartfelt sympathies were with all engaged in the work of the Gospel. Great as was his affection for his own denomination, he warmly loved all who loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He was ever ready when opportunity offered to conduct special services, and take part in public movements, in connection with other Churches. With the evangelization of the masses Dr. Ker had profound sympathy. To crowds, where non-churchgoers assembled, he was often heard preaching the Gospel in its fulness and simplicity, with a fervour and earnestness that moved the hearts of the listeners.

The strain on his physical strength, great as it was, at length became too great for endurance. He felt compelled to withdraw from the pastorate of Sydney Place Church; but so attached were his people that they would not hear of his resignation. He was retained as senior pastor. He resided for a time on the Continent of Europe, and also made a journey to America. Many Presbyterians in Canada and the United States cherish pleasant memories of the visit of Dr. John Ker. Here in Toronto he preached with great acceptance to crowded congregations, and wherever he went his sermons were highly appreciated. As a conversationalist he was brilliant, not in the sense that he laid himself out to say smart things, but in a rich, refreshing flow of sunny humour, full of human kindness, he would speak that which could not fail to profit his spell-bound listeners.

After a time his health improved to a degree that enabled him to take part in public work again. One season he occupied the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church in Rome, and finally agreed to become Professor of Practical Training in the United Presbyterian Theological Hall.

His profound scholarship had a wide range. Gifted with a remarkable memory, he could very profitably realize the results of his extensive and varied reading.