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Presbyterian Lesson Scheme for 1890.

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PHILOSOPHERS, scientists, and all those people who plume themselves on their alleged cool and philosophic manner often denounce clergymen for their warmth. They say it is unscientific, unphilosophic, and several other bad things, to display any feeling. The other day Professor Tyndall wrote a letter in the *London Times* in which he describes Gladstone as the "wickedest Englishman of our day or generation" and Sir William Harcourt as "the politician who has most prostituted great abilities and made it the business of his life to illustrate the unveracity of man." Even philosophers and scientists seem to be human.

THE Solons of the Ontario Legislature wrestled with a new and original problem the other day. It might be briefly stated in this way: Who knows best what a man says, the man who speaks or the man who hears? The House decided almost unanimously that when a member says anything he ought to know himself what he says better than any one who hears him. Now that may be true of some old and practised members of Parliament, but there are speakers who certainly don't know what they say half as well as those who listen to them. A man may be so nervous making his first effort that he has not the least idea of what he is saying. He may be so angry that he cannot measure the force of his utterances. Cases have been known in which orators had taken so much drink that they had rather confused notions about what they said. On the whole we think it is not a safe thing to assume that every man who speaks knows better what he says than those who hear him. Some speakers do and some don't.

IN the matter of fair, manly criticism of persons in high official positions the British press is far and away ahead of the Canadian. Even the religious press speaks out boldly and yet no one ever accuses it of partizanship. One of the English justices retired the other day and the *British Weekly* declared that his deafness had long been notorious, that he would have retired long ago had it not been that he wished to serve long enough to get his pension, and that many good natured things were being said about him in public and many ill-natured things in private. His successor is described as a staunch Tory and a genial man, but as a lawyer that nobody ever mentioned without a smile. What journal in Canada, religious or secular, would speak out in that fashion? A religious journal that did so would be denounced, savagely denounced, for taking part in politics. Why powerful political journals should be afraid to denounce bad judicial appointments we never could see. Some years ago the Ottawa Government after lengthened hesitation appointed a most unsuitable man to the Ontario Bench and so far as we can remember the only journal in Ontario that spoke out was the *Week*.

IT is a matter of profound gratitude that the swindler and alleged murderer, Burchell, did not profess to be an evangelist or preacher of some kind. Had he started on a preaching tour a year ago when he first favoured Woodstock with his presence, his genial manner, his prestige as a lord, his connection with the Church at home and with Oxford University would have made him a formidable man at certain kinds of religious meetings. How the people would have flocked to hear him! Even

some elders and unemployed ministers would have left their own churches to sit at his feet. Burchell is quite as good a Christian as the famous ex-monk that hundreds flocked to hear some years ago. The ex-monk is now in the penitentiary in England, but if another ex-monk were to appear, or if a Lord Somerset were to start out as an evangelist instead of as a social lion, the crowd would be on hand again as gullible as ever. It is bad enough to have Lord Somerset eating and drinking and dancing with Canadian citizens, but when they take to preaching it is time somebody had called a halt. Just as great frauds as Lord Somerset have starred at religious meetings in this country.

IF a prominent Presbyterian divine is about to be tried for heresy you can place all the outside parties before the trial begins. The secular press with scarcely an exception will take the side of the man on trial no matter what the merits of the case may be. The majority of Episcopalians and Congregationalists will regard the matter with mild astonishment, because in their own Churches a man may believe or teach almost anything he pleases. If the man on trial is a useful, good man, doing good work, the Methodists will be inclined to deal very easily with him. If he is no good they are willing to pitch him overboard on general principles. Here is what one of the English Methodist journals says of the Dods and Bruce agitation:

The Presbyterian ministers and elders who are doing their utmost to stir up the authorities of their Church to prosecute Professor Marcus Dods and Professor A. B. Bruce for heresy are doubtless animated by the purest motives, but are engaged in a most dangerous enterprise. When a majority of this country are heathen, when drunkenness and lust and blasphemy are flooding the land, they are harrowing two of the most gifted and most devoted of their ministers. Is this the time to waste our opportunities and our tempers in quarrelling about theological formulæ? Nothing is easier than to assume airs of superior orthodoxy. We do not underestimate the importance of correct and scriptural views. But we believe with John Wesley that men may be as orthodox as the devil and as wicked, and that the great matter is to trust in the Living Christ, and so to lift Him up that sinners may be drawn to Him. Are not Professors Marcus Dods and A. B. Bruce doing that? Why then try to twist isolated phrases from their writings into an appearance of heresy? We, at any rate, have been greatly edified by the writings of both these distinguished Christian teachers.

So long as the work seems to be going on a typical Methodist never asks any questions. Presbyterians generally go to the other extreme and prefer stopping the work to having it done in a manner or by persons they do not like. Both extremes should be avoided.

THE heather is on fire in the north of Scotland and the result will probably be a great heresy trial in which Dr. Marcus Dods and Dr. A. B. Bruce will figure as defendants. Dr. Dods is accused of being unsound on the Divinity of our Saviour, the Atonement and the Inspiration of the Scriptures. The learned gentleman has not the slightest idea of beating a retreat as Robertson Smith did. In a letter to the College Committee of the Free Church he defends himself vigorously on the three doctrines named, and it is but fair that his own words should go before the world as the words of his accusers have had ample publicity. Dr. Dods says:

While I adhere to all I have written, I vehemently object to the interpretation put upon some of my statements. This particularly applies to conclusions drawn by the Presbyteries of Lorn and of Skye regarding my attitude towards the doctrines of the divinity and atonement of Christ. It has given me much pain to find myself charged with defection on these fundamental points. I am conscious of none; and it is encouraging to know that many persons have found it natural to put another interpretation on my statements, and have expressed cordial agreement with them. As regards the divinity of Christ, I can only say that without that I can have no religion, and indeed no God. My danger has, in fact, always been to make too much rather than too little of the divinity of Christ, to put the Father too much in the background, and speak too constantly as if Christ alone were our God. All who know my preaching know that this is so.

On the Atonement Dr. Dods declares he agrees with the Confession but claims the liberty—reasonable liberty we should say—of emphasizing aspects of the doctrine which are not emphasized in the Confession:

As regards the Atonement, I can only say that I have carefully and repeatedly gone over the Confessional statement of this doctrine, and I can detect in it nothing with which I do not agree, or with which any published statement of mine is inconsistent. The Confessional statement is, indeed, surprisingly brief. It emphasizes the satisfaction of the divine justice, and this, I, too, desire to emphasize. But it is to be remembered that the Atonement, being the central fact of this world's history, has a hundred different faces and aspects that I claim liberty to emphasize as I find occasion, and according to my impression of existing needs, aspects and bearings of the death of Christ which are not specified in the Confession.

On the Inspiration of the Scriptures the learned professor also declares he is in accord with the Confession:

As regards the inspiration of Scripture, I hold with the Confession that all the writings of the Old and New Testaments are "given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life;" but I do not hold that inspiration guarantees Scripture from inaccuracy in all its particular statements; neither do I find that the Confession either expresses or implies any such idea of inspiration. The affirmation of inaccuracy in certain details has assuredly a bearing on one's theory of inspiration; but it does not, on my part, involve the slightest hesitation as to the divine authority of Scripture, the pervading influence which makes it God's Word, its fitness, when interpreted, as the Confession itself directs, by a due comparison of its various parts, to be the conclusive rule of faith and life."

Whether these positions are satisfactory or not there is enough in them to show that those who impeach the orthodoxy of Dr. Dods have some heavy work before them.

PRESIDENT PATTON ON PREACHING.

MANY may regard the subject of preaching as one that is worn threadbare. Everybody has ideas on it that can readily find expression at a moment's notice. Every hearer of a discourse feels competent to form a critical estimate of its value, or at all events can say whether he likes or dislikes the sermon to which he has listened. Opinions of what preaching should be are of the most varied description. The preacher who, desirous of learning the kind of discourses most relished and best calculated to benefit his hearers, chose to depend on changing popular estimates of the principal part of his ministerial work as a guide, would find himself in a position as helpless as it would be peculiar. Common as the discussion of preaching may be among church goers and non-church goers, it is surprising what fresh thought and interest can be infused into a subject that has been obscured by commonplace when treated by a clear-seeing and vigorous thinker. President Patton's paper on "Preaching" in the first number of the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* ought to be read carefully by every preacher who is resolved to do the best work he can, and by every hearer of the Gospel who desires to possess an intelligent appreciation of the tendencies of the time and the relation of the pulpit to these.

The complaint is sometimes made that Protestants and Presbyterians especially make too much of preaching and too little of liturgic service. If the idea of spiritual worship is lost sight of and the devotional part of the service comparatively neglected there may be room for the complaint. Disproportion always works detrimentally. While giving due place to earnest spiritual worship in which the whole congregation should join the first place in the Evangelical Protestant Church is given and rightly to the declaration of the whole truth of God. To minimize Gospel preaching, and to partially exclude doctrinal teaching would in due course result in a nerveless Christianity, from which little influence over intellect and life could be exerted. There is an impression that doctrinal and practical preaching are mutually exclusive. Such an impression is anything but well founded. It finds no confirmation in the record of the preaching preserved in the New Testament. In the teaching of Jesus Christ and in that of His apostles, the mighty instrument employed to move the hearts and minds of men is the truth of God. Doctrinal preaching need not be formal, arid and dull. The outcry against it has been to a great sense occasioned by the absence of direct application of doctrine to practical life. This point is well brought out in Dr. Patton's paper. He refers to the impression cherished by many that the press has taken the place of the pulpit, and that the last named institution is falling into decay. He shows successfully that the living personality having a clear grasp of divine truth must exercise a wide and powerful influence. Valuable and influential as the modern press has become, and long as it is likely to retain and augment that influence, it cannot supersede the preaching of the Gospel by human lips, for the reason that the office of preaching is of divine appointment, as the parting counsel of the Saviour to His disciples is "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations," and again "Preach the Gospel to every creature." As long as the divine command stands unrevoked the place of the preacher remains.

Another point touched upon in the paper may be described as the limited independence of the pulpit. Where a State Church exists restrictions on the freedom of preaching are sometimes imposed by the powers that be, and the minister may not speak out on certain subjects the thing that he would