

The Independent

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"EVEN AS WE HAVE BEEN APPROVED OF GOD TO BE INTRUSTED WITH THE GOSPEL, SO WE SPEAK; NOT AS PLEASING MEN, BUT GOD WHICH PROVETH OUR HEARTS."

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IN TRINITY CHURCH.

(January Twenty-sixth.)

BY JULIA WARD HOWE.

LABOR cease.
Rest and peace
O'er thy silent bed;
Lilies sweet
At thy feet,
Lilies at thy head.

Organ boom
In the gloom
Of the darkened shrine:
Hearts whose grief
Seeks relief
From the Source Divine.

Happy years
Seen through tears,
When he led you all
In the fields
The Gospel yields
With a shepherd's call.

Where he trod
Love of God
Blossomed into sight.
Form and hue
Goodlier grew
In the eternal light.

Noblest friend,
Who shall end
All thy tender praise?
Souls alit
With thy shrift
Seeking better ways.

Oh! that rhyme
Could out-chime
Something of his worth:
Could upbuild
What God willed
Should be dear on earth!

Keep the word
Ye have heard
As a fruitful seed;
In the rest
Of Heaven's best,—
That shall be his meed.

BOSTON, MASS.

PASTOURELLE.

(February Fourteenth.)

BY E. IRENEUS STEVENSON.

Oh, whither is my heart gone?
Without it, what to do!
How shall I heed the shepherds
Who daily come to woo?
I know not how I lost it,
Nor if the treasure's ta'en;
But, worst of all I know not
How 'twill be found again.

Oh, whither is my heart gone?
Dear shepherd lads, I pray,
Cry "Who has seen a maid's heart,
That's missed since yesterday?"

Yet stay! Beneath the oak tree,
Beside the ruined wall,
Who was it I saw standing—
So straight, so proud, so tall?
His smile, 'twas so much sunshine,
His eye, how blue, how bright!
I met them for one moment
And dreamed o' them all night.

Too late, kind lads, fair lasses!
What gift, what magic art
Shall make the man who's won it
Give back a girl her heart?

NEW YORK CITY.

PHILLIPS BROOKS.

THE LAST TIME.

BY ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

It is already natural to use the famous phrase of Victor Hugo's great story, and to speak of Phillips Brooks as "the good Bishop." He has become so precious to the religious life of our people, that the clamorous hunger for the least facts of his history cannot be surfeited. Crowding memories jostle the hurrying pen which recently recorded a reminiscence of him for these columns—and out of them all, two scenes more arise with the insistence which will not be disregarded.

What the good Bishop was as a preacher of the Christian religion, all the world knows.

The rich personality of his private life was scarcely less powerful and memorable. Almost anything that we can garner from it is treasure to us.

It is impossible to say why out of many a more important picture, this one, above others, first unrolls itself from the tapestry which is inwrought with his grand figure; but there it is, and here it is.

There is a young girl, a little friend, scarcely more than a child, who has listened to his preaching all winter and whose soul's priest he has become. She is a sensitive child, not like other girls, delicate and thoughtful, devout and unselfish, and high of heart to that rare and fatal degree which foredooms an early death. It is her heart's desire to seek personal religious counsel of the great preacher; but she is far too modest and shy to have obtruded herself upon him. Knowing what such things mean to young girls of a fine mold, and confident that his value will not be wasted upon this little maid, I venture to bespeak his patience that he should give ten minutes of his golden time to her. Back by the next mail comes the prompt and more than heartfelt welcome which takes the child to his study in Clarendon Street—and it seems to me in the thick of one of his busiest days. I am to accompany her, and we set forth together quietly. As we stand in the vestibule of his peaceful house one can see that to her it is a gate of the Temple Beautiful, and that she steps through it with the kind of simple and all-absorbing reverence at which men of this world may smile—but before which men of the other bow. Such personal interviews as this, between priest and people, have determined the heavenward direction of thousands of lives; and it is a wise pastor who does not underestimate the possible uses of his time and power to a very young parishioner.

He welcomes the little maid—whom he now sees for the first time—as cordially as if he had known her all her short life, and, as he leads her into his study, he is reminded that we are to take "only ten minutes" of his time.

I sit alone in the still house awaiting my young charge. It is ten minutes—it is twenty—it is half an hour, and still I wait. It is nearly half as much again before he disturbs me at the desk, where I have chosen to sit, in the light, correcting proofs to pass the time. I drop my papers—look up—draw breath, and say not a word.

The child is walking with bowed head and wet face toward me. The great preacher follows her silently. One glance shows me his noble face unreservedly, and unconcealedly streaming with tears. He dashes his hand over them when he sees me—but he is not thinking of me—the emergency of this young soul is his emergency, and her God is his God; and the place whereunto they have stepped is holy ground. Who else shall stand upon it? I, too, bow my head; take the trembling hand the child slips into mine; and, without a word of common surface phrase, we leave him in the sacred tears of that rare and wonderful sympathy which we, at least, shall forever understand.

Only God and he—and perhaps her mother—knew what that broken morning in the great pastor's study meant to that sensitive young life upon which was already set the seal which the Dark Angel never overlooks. When she died we told him; and his reply indicated that this interview had made no passing nor ordinary impression upon his own mind. Perhaps—who knows?—the child herself, by the mystery of that unknown life in which experience means age, and spiritual quality, power, may be one of those who will compete for the precious opportunity of ministering to him, when he, too, a stranger, climbs the step of the Gate in the

Temple Beautiful. Such a man as he must find the hospitality of Heaven crowded with the unexpected and touching sequences of incidents like this.

The tapestry unrolls again, and this time it is with grave, reluctant motion; for, beyond a passing smile or word upon the street, I never saw him after. The solemn value of "last things" surrounds this scene.

We were at luncheon at the house of a friend whose distinguished hospitality easily calls the best of mind and heart together. There were but six of us, and among these was one of our great pentarchy of poets. He and Dr. Brooks, as Madame Swetchine would say, wrought out "the embroidery of conversation," and the rest of us "put in the filling." It was one of the few memorable occasions which might stand embossed upon the foreground of a life familiar with the eminent and noble elements of society; and so the noblest and most eminent of that little group themselves appeared to estimate it.

The poet and the preacher flashed fire from each other's souls. It was a conversational duel before which the rest of us were content to stand by as admiring seconds. Whatever the reason I cannot say, but I have seldom heard Dr. Brooks himself converse as he did that day. Sometimes he was even a quiet man at a dinner table; sometimes he said the civil thing and departed into his own country by another way as soon as he could. More often I have been unreasonably disappointed by the lightness of his words and manner. I do not mean that these ever declined in dignity or worthiness, but that he sometimes kept pertinaciously, not to say pugnaciously, to the surface of things, and clung to the funny view of a question with the willfulness of a man who has his own reasons for avoiding its more serious aspects. Probably he was too often tired out, and needed anything else but to have the reality and gravity of life forced upon his attention. Possibly some jarring note in the company struck "the music in him" dumb.

On this day of which I speak he talked like a fountain of light. He spoke with almost unmitigated gravity. I do not remember a jest, or a repartee. He spoke seriously, devoutly, and eagerly.

From the first the conversation took a high, then a sober, then a solemn, then a positively religious key. Before we knew it, we were deep in a discussion of the power and purpose of Christianity, and the heavens were unrolled like a scroll before us.

He spoke of the methods by which men were trying to reach what are called the masses. He introduced the subject of the Salvation Army, with unexpected distinction and respect. He paid a high tribute to the motive and the work of this ardent organization. He tolerated no criticism of its limitations, but disposed of these with the superiority of a mind too large to dwell upon the little drawbacks to a great moral influence. He returned again and again to the need of the world for whole-hearted Christians; he dwelt upon this with a kind of anxious persistence not usual with him, as if he himself were responsible for it, and must set all these great wrongs right. He talked of the rich heathen of society as I had never heard him speak of any moral delinquents before.

No one who heard the denunciation which he gave that day to merely fashionable, irreligious existence could ever forget it. For trenchant power and for pure scorn it surpassed anything of the kind I have ever heard. It reminded me of but one thing: the denunciation of the Pharisees of which we read in the biblical record of our Master's own stern and terrible rebuke.

As he talked the large lines of his face deepened; something which it would wrong him to call bitter, but a flavor difficult to characterize, and new to my experience of his conversation, just touched the wine of his words as he dwelt upon, as he may be said to have brooded over, the spiritual defalcations of our times. He defined the spiritual honor needed to meet them with passionate eagerness. As I listened I perceived that it was the unusual intensity of his feeling which had given that strange flavor to his language. No, I should wrong him indeed to call it bitter; but there is a point where exceeding earnestness cannot be saccharine; it is no such feeble thing.

Someone mentioned, I remember, a certain city club, ultra-fashionable, worldly, aristocratic, and as useless to the real world as most of its kind—in fact, a typical thing.

captain with his firearms all ready to shoot any of his men who did not obey orders.

Then he spoke of his own feelings when he had to face death—and he looked for a moment as tho he could not stand any longer to tell the rest; but he recovered and went on. He said he did not feel afraid on account of his sins; but the thought of actually looking into his own grave (which he thought he was doing for hours), and never seeing his family, was almost more than he could endure. This feeling lasted until he had to pray with some one; so General Howard, his son and himself had a prayer-meeting in his stateroom, and then he did not feel satisfied until he had the prayer-meeting all together. He said when he took his Bible to read to them it seemed like a new one, and what he read had a new meaning, and he had literally to believe what he read; and when he got through he told the people that he believed that God would bring him to his desired haven. It might be Northfield, or it might be Heaven; "the will of the Lord be done." After that meeting he said he had perfect peace.

Some people, he said, thought they must have had a continual prayer-meeting; but they had too much to do to keep the people quiet and their minds off the situation. He said he never told so many stories in his life; he just raked up every story he had heard for the last twenty years, to tell the people and get them to laugh, if possible, and feel comparatively safe for the moment.

He said at their prayer-meeting he read Psalms 91 and 107 from the 19th to the 31st verses, and some thought he had made up that part of the 107th Psalm for the occasion; and he had to take his Bible and let them see it. He said that was a good description of their condition, all but the 26th verse; for if that had been the case they would have sunk, never to come up again.

The "Lake Huron" that towed them in was a 3,000 ton something, while their ship was a 7,000 tons something—perhaps you know what it is, I have forgotten what he called it; that they were afraid she could not do it, that her cables would break, or something. But he said he did not feel afraid at all; that the Lord had begun to answer their prayer, and that he would save them.

I begin to feel that if God can save people in the sea, he can take care of me the rest of my life. I think that Moody's talk did me more good than a sermon. He said that he knew that was what we wanted to hear, and he wished to tell us in a bunch, and so have it out of the way. He doesn't like to talk about it all the time.

PRESBYTERY VERSUS GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

BY PROF. JOHN T. DUFFIELD, D.D.

THE unprecedented action of certain presbyteries on the Revision Overtures, or rather on the General Assembly for submitting the Overtures in the way they did not approve, will bring before the Assembly of 1893 another grave question for decision, *Whether an interpretation of an article of the Form of Government by the highest court of the Church is binding on the lower courts.*

In the Assembly of 1892, when a motion to submit the Revision Overtures to the presbyteries was under consideration, Mr. Junkin moved as a substitute "that the Report of the Revision Committee be referred to a new committee appointed in accordance with the provisions of Section 3, Chapter XXIII of the Form of Government."

The section referred to is as follows:

"Before any alterations or amendments of the Confession of Faith or the Larger or Shorter Catechism, proposed by the General Assembly, shall be transmitted to the presbyteries, the General Assembly shall appoint, to consider the subject, a committee of ministers and ruling elders, in number not less than fifteen, of whom not more than two shall be from one synod, and the committee shall report its recommendations to the Assembly next ensuing for action."

Mr. J. maintained that as the Revision Committee, appointed in 1890 and reappointed May 22d, 1891, had in several instances more than two members from the same synod, it was not constituted in accordance with Sec. 3, Chap. XXIII, which became the law of the Church, June 1st, 1891, and to submit the Overtures without referring them to a new committee as proposed would be a violation of the Constitution.

Dr. W. C. Roberts, Chairman of the Revision Committee, replied, and maintained, that the *object* of Sec. 3, Chap. XXIII—namely, to prevent the submission to the presbyteries of a proposed amendment of the Confession that had not been deliberately considered by a committee on which the different sections of the Church were duly represented—had been carefully provided for and effectually secured by action of the Assembly prior to the adoption of the new Chapter on Amendments; that this being a notorious fact, in the discussions in the Assembly of 1890 on the proposed new chapter and subsequently on the appointment of the Revision Committee, in the discussions during the following year in the presbyteries and religious press, and in the Assembly of 1891, which reappointed the Revision Committee and announced the adoption of the new Chapter by the presbyteries, it was never suggested that the adoption of the Chapter would require the re-constitution of the Revision Committee and a re-revision of the Confession of Faith. Dr. R. accordingly maintained that the legislative bodies concerned in the enactment of Chap.

XXIII, never intended that the rule in Sec. 3 should be applied to the Revision Committee, and consequently Mr. J.'s contention that the submission of the Overtures as recommended by the Committee would be a violation of the Constitution was wholly unfounded.

The question at issue having been thus distinctly presented the motion of Mr. J. was laid on the table by a decisive vote, and the motion to submit the Overtures was adopted. This action was a decision by the highest court of the Church as to the intent and meaning of the section of the form of government in question.

About 50 of the 550 members of the Assembly entered a protest against this decision. Heretofore this has been regarded as exhausting constitutional opposition to an interpretation of the Form of Government by the Assembly. The presbyteries referred to, however, have taken the unprecedented course of refusing to accept the Assembly's decision, and avowedly on the ground of its unconstitutionality, in their judgment, have declined to take action on the overtures as directed by the Assembly. This novel proceeding will come before the Assembly of 1893 for consideration on the report of the committee to canvass the replies to the Overtures, and it will be for the Assembly to decide whether it shall be allowed to pass without censure and become a dangerous precedent.

There were two decisions of the Assembly of 1892 interpreting our Form of Government, against which protests were entered, signed by about the same number of members—the case mentioned, and that of the right of appeal by the Committee of Prosecution in the Briggs case. No doubt a majority of the Presbytery of New York regarded the decision in the latter case as unconstitutional, yet when the issue was raised at the recent trial the Presbytery showed its ecclesiastical orthodoxy by deciding, without hesitation, to acquiesce in the decision of the Assembly. It may be said that in the one case the Assembly was acting in its judicial capacity, in the other in its legislative. But where is it either expressed or implied in its Form of Government that a decision by the Assembly as to the intent and meaning of an ecclesiastical law, is binding on the lower courts if the law in question relate to a judicial matter but not binding if it relate to a matter of legislation.

It has been said in justification of the presbyterial action referred to, that the action of the Assembly in submitting the Overtures was "hasty and inconsiderate." But where is it either expressed or implied in the Form of Government that a presbytery is empowered to review the decisions of the General Assembly and disregard them if, in the judgment of the presbytery, the Assembly has not acted with due consideration. In this connection it may not be amiss to remark that in the advocacy of Mr. J.'s views by himself and others in the religious press since the meeting of the Assembly, so far as we are informed, there has been nothing added to his argument in the Assembly, and, on the other hand, the statements of fact by Dr. R., on which the decision was based, have not been called in question; the issue, therefore, was fully and fairly before the Assembly.

It has been said that, in amending the Constitution, "the Assembly and the presbyteries are co-actors," and "neither has any control morally or legally over the other." In all ordinary cases of amendment, the Assembly and the Presbytery may be said to be co-actors in adopting an amendment; but where is it expressed or implied in the Form of Government that they are co-actors in interpreting ecclesiastical law relating to the submission of an amendment, or any other subject? The Assembly of 1799, but eleven years after the adoption of the Constitution, evidently knew nothing of the theory that in this matter "neither has any control morally or legally over the other" when, in submitting the first Overture for an amendment, they said: "The respective presbyteries were and are hereby required to send up to the next Assembly their opinion on the section of the Constitution referred to." The Assembly of 1834 certainly knew nothing of this theory when they resolved "that the presbyteries which have not sent up their decisions on this subject [a proposed amendment of the Constitution] be required to send them to the next Assembly."

In deciding whether a presbytery should decline voting on the Overtures on the ground of the unconstitutionality of the Assembly's action, we venture to suggest the following facts and questions for consideration:

1. Sec. 2, Chap. XXIII, expressly discriminates between proposing and transmitting an amendment. It prescribes that before a certain class of proposed amendments shall be transmitted to the presbyteries they shall be referred to a committee "to consider the subject." Does not this evidently imply that the amendments to which this section refers are amendments that have not been considered by an Assembly's committee? Is not the Assembly's interpretation in question justified by the letter of the law as well as by the unquestioned and unquestionable intention of the legislative bodies enacting it?

2. However decided any presbyter may be that the Assembly's interpretation was erroneous, must he not admit that there is some ground for an honest difference of opinion on that subject?

3. However decided any presbyter may be that the action of the Assembly was unconstitutional, would he

regard it as unconstitutional to accept the Assembly's interpretation of the Constitution in his ecclesiastical action?

4. If the Assembly's interpretation were unquestionably erroneous, declining to vote on the Overtures would not correct the error—it would be simply voting indirectly in the negative on all the Overtures without any regard to the merits of the changes proposed. If any presbytery feels constrained to express its disapproval of the action of the Assembly, could not this be done more unequivocally, equally effectually, and less objectionably, by a resolution?

5. If a minority of even one-third the presbyteries desire the submission of an Overture for an amendment, the Form of Government, Sec. 5, Chap. XXIII, makes it "obligatory on the Assembly to transmit it." In 1890 near two-thirds of the presbyteries expressed a "desire for a revision of the Confession." Accordingly a committee of twenty-five ministers and elders, carefully selected as specially qualified for the responsible work, and by the manner of their nomination representative of every synod of the Church, was appointed by a unanimous vote of the Assembly to revise the Confession and was expressly designated, "The Assembly's Committee on the Revision of the Confession of Faith." After two years' faithful effort to discharge satisfactorily the duty assigned them—including a reference to the presbyteries, after one year's deliberation, of proposed amendments, for consideration and suggestions—the committee reported, proposing with almost entire unanimity a number of amendments, with the recommendation that they be submitted by Overture to the presbyteries for their action. Had the Assembly refused to submit to the presbyteries' amendments thus proposed would they have not violated the spirit, if not indeed the letter, of the requirement of Sec. 5, Chap. XXIII?

6. While all have an equal interest in the form of expression of the common faith of the Church, in voting on the Revision Overtures the wishes and judgment of a majority barely less than two-thirds of the whole number of the presbyteries may be defeated by a heterogeneous minority barely exceeding one-third, made up of negative-voting and non-voting presbyteries; the former including the opposite extremists—those who believe in the inerrancy of the Confession and are, therefore, opposed to any revision, and those who regard the Confession irremediably objectionable and therefore prefer a new Creed. The latter, the non-voters, a *tertium quid*—those who desire revision but regard a satisfactory expression of the faith of the Church as of less importance than the expression of their opinion of the Assembly's interpretation of the Constitution.

As to those who are opposed to revision it is a matter of indifference whether they express their opposition directly or indirectly. To those, however, who approve of revision but disapprove of the action of the Assembly, we respectfully submit, whether in view of all that has occurred during the past three years in bringing the movement for revision to its present stage, does not due regard for the wishes and judgment of Christian brethren, for the interests of the truth and the peace of the Church, to say nothing of due respect for the authority of the General Assembly—demand, or at least justify, the adoption or rejection of the proposed amendments by voting squarely on their merits, instead of directly rejecting them without consideration, on a side issue—a side issue, moreover, based on a technicality of form which three successive assemblies have regarded as irrelevant? Or to put the question more definitely: If a presbytery is in favor of striking out of the Confession the declaration, "God hath foreordained some men and angels to everlasting death," is he justified in voting to retain it on the ground that there were more than two members from the same synod on the committee that proposed its omission?

7. The failure of the present movement for revision, commenced and conducted under circumstances and conditions so favorable to success, would be regarded as demonstrating that any revision of the Confession is impracticable. The immediate result would be a distracting agitation for a new Creed—some advocating it as a supplement to the Confession, others as a substitute for it.

Would not such an agitation at the present crisis, with no prospect of a revised Confession, be seriously injurious to both the peace and the purity of the Church? Is there not grave reason to apprehend that it would precipitate and aggregate a schism which to many thoughtful observers of "the signs of the times" seems to be impending?

In the above there has been a careful avoidance of the expression of opinion as to the authority of the Assembly to decide a question of doctrine not regularly brought before it by judicial process.

PRINCETON, N. J.

It is the custom of the Pope each year to give the "Golden Rose of Virtue," a jewel valued at \$50,000, and made in Rome by a famous goldsmith, to a female member of some ruling family in Europe. This year it is said that an archduchess of Austria, daughter of Archduke Charles and niece of the Emperor, will receive it. The young princess is twenty-three years of age and is abbess of a convent near Prague, to which only members of noble families are admitted. Last year the Golden Rose was given to the Queen of Portugal.