

# The American Presbyterian.

John A. Weir

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### WHAT CONSTITUTES A PARISH?

The recent trial of Rev. Stephen H. Tyng has brought into activity some long dormant claims, which have more than a denominational interest. If the canon, under which he was disciplined was rightly interpreted by the court, the parochial system of the Episcopal Church in this country involves an assumption of territory and persons, which is simply an outrage upon our American ideas of denominational equality. That it was rightly interpreted, we do not believe; but in the New York diocese at least, the construction given must remain the operative one, until changed by the action of the General Convention—an event of which we suppose there is no immediate hope.

The parish system of the Church of England gives to the incumbent of each parish a fixed territory, making all the persons there residing to become his parishioners. They may be dissenters, communicants in Presbyterian or Methodist churches, or accept the services of the incumbent; still they legally belong to his parish and are his parishioners. This is the parochial arrangement for a State Church, and would become a necessity, if any necessity for a state establishment existed. But, until the exhaustion of this old canon, we had supposed that, in this country, and under our voluntary system, this claim to pastoral authority over territory as such, was abandoned. We had supposed that the Episcopal Church here, if not content to cast it off as an indefensible spiritual usurpation, had at least quietly dropped it as an impracticability.

In this country, the true idea of a parish is that which assigns to a pastor the persons and families who usually attend upon his ministrations, as being properly his parishioners. It accounts no persons as such simply because of their proximity to his church. The church on Washington Square in this city, may be, and in fact is, attended by families who reside a dozen squares distant, and within one square of another church of the same order. Territorially they might be claimed by the latter, but in fact they are never thought of except as belonging to the parish of the former. And we believe it was in evidence that precisely this state of things exists in New Brunswick, between the parish of Dr. Stubbs, the prosecutor of Mr. Tyng for the offence of intrusion, and his neighbor, rector, who united with him in the protest. The Episcopal churches of this city may each have its territorial parish: we know not how this is; but we are sure that if every Episcopal family is really a resident of the parochial territory of the parish whose worship it attends, a city map with the parish boundaries marked, would be a rich puzzle for a geographer. We presume, the fact in the case is, that, on the principal territorial intrusion—the only charge against Mr. Tyng—not a day passes in which the Episcopal clergy of Philadelphia or New York, in their performance of some of the services of the Church, are not making exactly the legal intrusion which Mr. Tyng made in the parish of Dr. Stubbs. It is a state of things which, under the religious liberty enjoyed in this country, is unavoidable—nothing less. People will not submit to a territorial parish relation, as a thing of prescription. They will, on the one hand, choose their own parishes, and on the other hand, they will reside in more or less proximity to the place of its worship, as they please.

The principle on which Dr. Stubbs founded his complaint, and which, while the decision of the court stands unreversed, must be accepted in the New York diocese as a law of the Episcopal Church, is the English one which, as we have said, gives the rector a territory with every dweller upon it, as his parish. Mr. Tyng intruded upon the parish of Dr. Stubbs, not by entering his church, not by going among the families of his congregation with private offices, or calling them together at some place for schismatic service, but only by accepting an invitation to preach in a Methodist church located within the geographical limits of said parish. Of course every one presumes the real offence to have been *interdenominational fraternization*; but as this was essentially left out of the indictment, and in addition specified, we take only the documentary view of the case; and that makes inevitable this logical effect of the complaint—that Dr. Stubbs claims that, under the Church law, the Methodist Church there is a part of his parish, and that the people of the congregation to whom Mr. Tyng preached, or at least so many of them, came within his territorial

jurisdiction, and are under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction as his rector. And the logical result of the decision of the court is to give this monstrous assumption the imprimatur of the diocesan authority of New York!

We suppose there are dioceses in this country in which such a complaint would have been promptly dismissed. We know that some of the Episcopal clergy around us, including men of the highest consideration, incur precisely the same exposure to prosecution, but they are not molested or likely to be. But the event here noticed, is one of a series of movements which are working the Church concerned toward some more decisive and unmistakable position on the points at issue. If there is the numerical strength to carry out this and cognate despotisms, it will ere long develop itself by more specific canons. If, on the other hand, those bishops and clergy who are desirous of serving the cause of our common Christianity, wherever and whenever the Macedonian cry calls them, find themselves able to command a vote, they will sweep aside these technical embarrassments, as relics of the darkness which is past, now that the light shineth. We do not believe that many General Conventions will pass, before either more and sharper restrictions will be laid upon the Low Church clergy; or they will disenthral the Church as a whole from this bondage to *efete* canons, and in official ministrations and holy cordiality, walk hand in hand with the entire "sacramental host of God's elect."

### THE MEETING OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE.

The *Evangelist* of last week has a much fuller report of the meeting of the Committee on Reunion, than appears in any of our other contemporaries. We were aware of all the facts stated, and more, but were prevented from publishing them and others by a feeling of what was due to the circumstances and wishes of the Committees themselves, and to the Assemblies which they represent. But as these facts have been made public, we think our readers may as well be made acquainted with them. We, therefore, copy from the *Evangelist*, premising that Dr. Patterson, being obliged to leave before the final vote was reached, now finds himself unable to approve of the basis, as he understands it, as not sufficiently guarding our Presbyterian liberties. He prefers the plan agreed upon last year.

The Old School Committee met a day in advance, for separate consultation. When both came together, they presented certain points on which they desired a modification of the basis formerly adopted. This led at once to a full explanation on both sides. Brethren on both sides felt it due to each other, and to the great bodies which they represented, to be perfectly outspoken. Hence they "kept back nothing." Every latent suspicion that lurked in the corner of any heart, was brought to light. The Old School brethren told all their doubts and fears. On our side the Committee were equally plain. Dr. Patterson, though sincerely desirous of union, if it could be a true and cordial one, with no mental reservations whatever, was not yet blind to the difficulties in the way. If there were to be "guarantees" for "orthodoxy" on one side, there should be guarantees for "liberty" on the other. He was not willing to surrender a particle of that liberty in Christ, in which our churches had enjoyed such a blessing from on high. It was a valuable accession to the Committee that he could be present, not only on account of his own personal influence, which is deservedly great, but, as he represents the Northwest. Other brethren were equally explicit. If the union was to take place, it was not to be one in which the New School men were merely to be tolerated, but one in which both parties were to be equals in every respect.

These declarations had their effect. It is due to truth to say, that this mutual frankness disclosed such a divergence of views, that at one time those who were most desirous of union, felt very doubtful of the result. They had been in session two days, and still they could not see their way to a perfect agreement. Their hearts were anxious and troubled, lest all their labors had been in vain.

But the third day brought light. After discussion had been exhausted, Dr. Gurley, of Washington, who had come to Philadelphia in great feebleness, yet who was anxious to be present at this meeting, which might be the last he could attend, arose and offered a resolution that a clause be inserted in the doctrinal basis, which while insisting that the Catechisms, our recognized standards as a Church, should be held in their integrity and in their fair historical, that is, the Reformed or Calvinistic, sense, yet granted full liberty to both sides in "explaining and illustrating" those doctrines of the Gospel. This cut the knot at once. The resolution was adopted unanimously. All felt that there could be no longer any bar to union in a Church which had thus proved itself at once orthodox and free.

As these difficulties were thus met, and it began to appear that they would be overcome, the tide of feeling, which had been restrained, began to rise and overflow. As they all bowed together in thanksgiving to God, the voice of prayer was mingled with weeping; and at the close of the meeting, as they were about to part, they stood

up, and joining hands, sang together the glorious doxology

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

### THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The Permanent Committee on Foreign Missions desires to remind the Standing Committees and Stated Clerks of Presbyteries of the importance of their forwarding statements from the Presbyteries, so that the Committee may be able to make a full and satisfactory report to the General Assembly. Such statements should be addressed to the Secretary (at 258 Broadway, New York) so as to reach him at the latest by the first day of May.

The Committee also would call the attention of Presbyteries, pastors, and Church-sessions to the earnest appeal of the last Assembly for an onward movement, in all the congregations under its care, in the great cause of Foreign Missions. The Assembly, expressed its profound concern that this cause does not receive a larger support; and declared its sentiment to be; that it would be disastrous beyond measure to the piety and power of our Church, were the idea to prevail that to promote home evangelization our foreign work must be forsaken.

The voice of God calls for an advance along all the lines of our benevolent action. There are special and urgent reasons, in the condition and claims of the missions, which we support, and in the present circumstances of our branch of the Church Catholic, for more generous aid than ever before in sustaining the heaven-blessed work of giving the gospel to the heathen world.

China responds to the resolve of the American Board to undertake her evangelization on a scale more worthy of American Christians and of the end to be accomplished, by sending, under the lead of an American friend of Christian missions, an embassy of her noblest sons to the nations of Christendom, asking for an intercourse by which she may receive whatever good they have to impart to her. One half of the pagan world thus invites us to give it the gospel. The progress of the work in other fields imposes a necessity for reinforcements of men and material of support. Prayers from which there is no escaping. The duty in the case is evident. We cannot doubt what the will of our Lord is, and what will ensure his blessing.

The Committee beg leave of their brethren to remind them of the language used by the last Assembly in regard to the remedy for the want of interest and inadequacy of contributions which it deplored in relation to this cause. If the pastors and stated supplies will acquire and communicate information on this subject, and show that personal interest in it, which the Assembly exhorts, the churches will advance.

Immediate action on the part of churches which have not yet made contributions in this ecclesiastical year for this object, and the forwarding of reports from Presbyteries are earnestly invoked.

ROBERT RUSSELL BOOTH,

Ch'n Perm. Com. of For. Missions.

WALTER S. GRIFFITH, Secretary.  
New York, March 18, 1868.

DR. SKINNER IN THE PULPIT OF THE FIRST CHURCH.—We have rarely attended a more interesting service, than that in the First Church on Sabbath, March 22nd. The pulpit was occupied by Rev. T. H. Skinner, D. D., who divided the devotional part of the service with Mr. Barnes. It was a privilege to witness and participate in services jointly by these two veterans in the service of Christ and his Church. Scenes and events in which both bore an honorable and an important part, and which have become historic, rose before the mind. Their long and well-filled lives have been luminous with consistency to the theological principles which made them famous in the days of their youth, and which may be heard with no uncertain sound from their lips to-day. Not the shadow of decay or weakness has yet, in the mercy of God, fallen upon the mental faculties of either. How it is with Mr. Barnes; his Lectures on the Evidences in the Nineteenth Century will testify. What is the mental condition of the revered Professor in Union Seminary, now in his seventy-eighth year, one need have no doubt who listens to his animated, logical, trenchant style of delivering his Master's message from the pulpit. The sermon on Sunday afternoon was from Isa. 48: 18: "Oh that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments; then hadst thou peace." &c. His text, he said, suggested three propositions: (1) That God desired and had power to bring to pass, what yet did not happen. (2) That He was willing to show favour where he could not show it, from the failure of men to fulfil the necessary conditions, and (3) That what God supremely and intensely

desired was that men should keep his commandments. These propositions he illustrated and enforced without any display of imagination, but with a clearness of statement, a rapidity and vividness of allusion and a manly Scriptural and common sense mode of argument which riveted the attention. His inferences and his cautions left nothing to be desired in the completeness of the form and the soundness and practical excellence of the matter. The Homiletical Training of our young men cannot be in safer hands. We do not believe a younger heart, or one more capable of noble enthusiasm for the right, or indignation against the wrong, one whose sympathies on the theological and moral issues of the day are fresher, warmer or sounder, beats in any bosom of those who look up to and venerate him as their instructor.

### A UNITED PRESBYTERIAN ON THE UNION OF THE TWO BRANCHES.

[The CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR of this city contains the following thoughtful letter from "an esteemed friend and correspondent," with a disclaimer on the part of the Editor as to endorsing its statements. The whole is worthy of careful consideration. Italics are ours.]

I suppose that many have been surprised at the great solicitude manifested by some of us, at negotiations for union between the O. S. and N. S. Churches, the latter should get the advantage, and the former should be drawn into heresy; and, in our solicitude, we have not been slow to counsel and warn our Old School friends, and to attend to their business fully as much as was courteous, and we have not hesitated to talk about our New School friends in a way that bore a little hard on gospel charity. After all, our solicitude may have been wholly unnecessary. It may be that our Old School brethren are fully competent to manage their part of this matter. They may take our advice very kindly, and they may not. They may fancy that they are as wise as we are, and just as loyal to truth. We may not be thanked for our interference, and may be hidden to mind our own business. Then the consideration that, in these negotiations, the Old School brethren are the conservatives, should still our fears. Conservatives are not likely to be caught napping. They are wont to content the field inch by inch. They would rather have their feet and corners upon their locks than otherwise. The newness of a thing is likely to be *prima facie* evidence to them of its heresy. They are much like ourselves, and we need not concern ourselves about them. When conservatives and progressives negotiate, the progressives are apt to put up with present toleration. Thus it has been, and thus it will likely be again. There is danger that our motives be suspected when we thus discourage this union. Some may think that our solicitude is prompted by nothing higher than denominational selfishness. It may be seen that, while such a union might be of great advantage to the cause of Christ, it would, *liberally*, damage the United Presbyterian Church. It would likely draw in many of our people and ministers. The Presbyterian Church, divided, swallows up our interest every year; the Presbyterian church, united, would draw largely upon our principal, and soon rob us of our present vigor and strength. It may be that our Old School friends will think of this, and regard our solicitude as merely an instinct of self-preservation. An honest confession is said to be good for the soul, and now with your leave, good reader, I will go on to confess as follows: That, although not very old in the ministry, I have, by preaching and apologizing for the sin of schism, I have believed, and have tried to make others believe, that it was all well enough that the church was broken up; that perhaps (?) thereby the gospel was more widely known; that small denominations could not meet more directly and promptly which, if it proved anything, would show that the more we can get up the better. I am beginning to feel that I am apologizing for schism with great displeasure. I feel about it as many may be supposed to feel over their apologizing for slavery ten years ago. As for myself, I do not think that I will ever again make excuses for schism, or cease to regard the present divided state of the church as involving God's people in great guilt.

W. J. M.

THE MOTE AND THE BEAM.—The *Congregationalist* has been defending the "Puritan order" in the old style, i. e., by abusing all others. It says:

"The first Church of England church in this city [Boston] became the first Unitarian—using a Prayer-Book still." Yes, but by its very change it became Congregational. The Presbyterian church in England has become and remains almost wholly Unitarian. It never was Presbyterian in any proper, historical sense of the word.

We are glad that the *Examiner* and *Chronicle* belongs to a denomination that practices immersion, and that the *Religious Telescope* (Dayton, O.) represents a body (the United Brethren in Christ), which sometimes administers baptism in the same way. We hope that there is water enough in their respective denominations to wash them clean of the obscene quackeries that defiled their 8th pages last week. We are sorry to add that the Church Union avows that it considers such advertising in the line of its legitimate business.

### AFFAIRS AT THE CAPITAL.

"Strange whisperings float through the air of great temptations addressed to the most exalted station and fame; and far worse, of an extant ear to these satanic seductions."

Mr. Tilton is correct when he writes that these "strange whisperings" do pollute the ear at Washington; but he ought to have added that they are set on foot by men who are Judge Chase's enemies, and that great injustice is done to him when his friends treat them as serious. The supposition that he will become the Democratic candidate for the Presidency in the event of his doing or attempting to do something in the impeachment trial, and that he will perform these conditions and accept the nomination involves: first, that Judge Chase should become a party to an utterly corrupt and dishonorable bargain; and second, that the Democrats should enter into a compact so foolish as to contain its own defeat. Nothing in Judge Chase's course of life gives warrant to his enemies, much less his friends, to connect such injurious suspicions with his name. He is too honest in nature, and too conscientious in his convictions to suffer any temptations of his opponents or any personal disappointments to draw him away from principles which he has held unwaveringly for so many years. And so far as the Democratic party is concerned, the scheme is an absurdity. It would split the party into fragments. Its real strength and energy reside in its ultra men, its radical leaders, the men who are more pro-slavery and more disloyal now than during the war, and any such proposition would be received by these men with a howl of rage and disgust. The scheme implies that Judge Chase is wholly corrupt and that the Democratic leaders are utter fools—neither of which inferences are warranted by fact. The whole scheme has doubtless originated with the friends of President Johnson and is characteristic of their small cunning and ready treachery—it is denied by both Judge Chase and the Democrats; still it cannot be denied that Judge Chase has exposed himself to many foolish charges by his fondness for political preferment manifested even since he has been in the highest judicial station.

The *National Intelligencer* which is well understood to be edited at the White House, makes the following bid to Chief Justice Chase to refuse to preside at the trial:

"It would be well to consider whether the Chief Justice is under the least possible compulsion in this matter. Suppose he should be driven by these intolerable affronts to defend the most sacred dignity which can be lodged on any man's person in this country, by refusing his presence for such purpose?"

To-day the President made answer to the charges brought against him. One of his organs here states that "the answer is very strong, and one Mr. Johnson can rest upon confidently for a verdict from the people, even if the Senate should vote for conviction." The House Managers have had daily sessions and have prepared arguments in advance as far as possible to meet all objections that may be urged by the President's counsel, that there may be no delay on their account. It is understood that they are ready to abandon the last or "Butler" article reciting the speeches abusive of Congress made by the President on his "swing round the circle" trip, if the defence attempts to take undue advantage of it, by summoning witnesses from distant points for the purpose of delay.

A measure which is expected to withdraw jurisdiction of the Supreme Court from cases appealed from the Circuit Courts, as was the McArdle case, and which was designed to affect that case, has passed both Houses, and is now in the hands of the President. He seems to have been too busy to send in his veto to the bill allowing a majority of votes cast to decide upon the adoption of a Constitution in the rebel States, and thus that became a law. Possibly this measure which has now been more than a week in his possession may share the same good fortune. The Democrats of the House have been excessively mortified that this measure should have passed without their knowledge. It was brought in by Mr. Wilson of Iowa as an amendment to another bill, and they have been compelled to make the admission that they did not understand it at the time it was before the House. This acknowledgement has exposed them to the scathing ridicule of Gen. Schenck, through whose skill the measure was passed. He disclaimed any responsibility for the ignorance of the other side of the House, or that it was his duty to run over to that side, shake members by the shoulder—those vigilant watch-dogs on the walls of liberty always guarding the Constitution—and say, "Wake up, Mr. Boyer; wake up, Mr. Holman! the country is in danger. This incendiary from Iowa has offered an amendment to a very innocent bill, and you are not on the watch; the country is likely to be destroyed, the Constitution overthrown, the Supreme Court demolished, and everything is going to ruin. I beg you to arouse and get full possession of your faculties in order to prevent this catastrophe!" It is very seldom that any bill good or bad gets before the House without the "object" of some of those who were napping this time, and the satire of this speech was well deserved and richly enjoyed by all but the victims.

Gen. Hancock has returned from his disastrous attempt to expound the Constitution, and report assigns him as the next candidate for the Department of the Atlantic vice Thomas declined, vice Sherman declined.

FENWICK.  
Washington, March 23, 1868.