

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

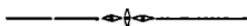
https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

above the law of the land. From a Church point of view, it was further objectionable in that, by relieving a clergyman from pains or penalties for withholding Church privileges from persons married under the Act, it implied that such persons were *per se* entitled to those privileges. Its omission, at any rate, removes this implication; but if any Act on the subject were ever to be unfortunately passed, the contrary ought to be expressly asserted in it. Instead of repeating the faulty proviso of last year's Bill, it ought to contain a clause to the following effect :

Nothing in this Act shall relieve the parties to any such marriage from the loss of any rights or privileges as members of the Church of England which, if this Act had not passed, they would have lost in consequence of having contracted such marriage.

If such a provision were inserted, the mischief of the Act from a civil point of view would remain, but the Church's law would have been safeguarded. It may be possible to avert the evil of a declension on the part of the State from the standard of Christian morality; but in that case it will be more important than ever that the judgment of the Church on the matter shall be clearly and unmistakeably expressed, and that she shall enforce her judgment in her practice and discipline.

PHILIP VERNON SMITH.



ART. IV.—BISHOP HAROLD BROWNE.

(Concluded.)

THE chorus of approbation with which the appointment of Harold Browne to the See of Ely was hailed by men of all shades of opinion and schools of thought showed that the Prime Minister had been wisely advised, for there are various aspects in which the occupant of a see is regarded. Some look for a very courtly man, who will be acceptable to the "upper ten thousand"; others to a man of sympathetic heart, that the clergy and others who have intercourse with him may by actual experience be drawn towards him with something like affection; some look for a man of great learning, head and shoulders above the bulk of his presbyters, and not, as has sometimes been the case, one very innocent of his Greek Testament; others desire a man of activity and business-like habits; while a small section simply look for a mouthpiece and supporter of their own Shibboleth. Dr. Browne, though he had too much respect for his high office to become a "society Bishop," yet was

confessedly fit to adorn any phase of it. He had all along won the affection of his curates and such as were in any way his subordinates; his learning was beyond question; the small-minded party men admitted that they might have fared much worse; and his skill in organization, already signally shown in parochial life and at Lampeter, was pronounced an admirable qualification.

The new Bishop's subsequent career justified all expectations, and, whilst upholding the dignity of his office when needful, he showed a geniality and humility not always found after promotion. For instance, the Fellows of a college had elected one of their body to be their head, a position that proved a stepping-stone to the Episcopal Bench; yet he never asked one of them to his "palace." That same prelate once addressed, with great hauteur, an official, though a clergyman, writing in a public building, "Can you tell me where — lives?" The clergyman, feigning ignorance of his interrogator, without rising, said, "Down those steps, sir; the first turn to the right; then ask again," and continued writing. The rebuff was merited. There was no such hauteur in Harold Browne. The narrative tells us that he remonstrated with an old curate for "my lording" him so much, considering their long friendship. Another describes his walking in the garden at Ely along with the Bishop and a distinguished Hebraist, and modestly wishing to withdraw; but the Bishop drew him into their conversation, and made the youth at ease. This was the uniform experience of all having intercourse with him. What body of clergy would not rejoice in such a chieftain?

The new Bishop's theory of organization was that the Bishop was to be the guiding spirit of the diocese, the centre of attraction in all religious matters. The cathedral he regarded as his parish church; the Dean as the ready lieutenant of the Bishop; the capitular bodies as the Bishop's council and leaders with him in all good works, not only in the cathedral city, but in every portion of the diocese. With such a theory, so antagonistic to all that he found in practice, we should have expected to find the Bishop in perpetual collisions. He had been an intimate friend of the pugnacious Henry of Exeter. That prelate had shown him every mark of respect by repeated promotion, and anxiety to retain Browne in his diocese. Of *that* prelate's notions of episcopal management Churchmen had painful memories. He put one clergyman in prison, not for murder or licentious conduct, but for violating some of the Bishop's ordinances. He summoned another to his court for daring to put flowers on his Communion-table, though forbidden by the Bishop (it will be

admitted that the delinquent should have obeyed); the Bishop sat in judgment, and condemned him to be "admonished," which meant paying costs of the process. Again, he heard that a very excellent clergyman, when reading the exhortation to intending communicants, substituted the word "condemnation" for "damnation"—a change which a living prelate has actually suggested, and the Revised Version has introduced a still milder word. On hearing of this clergyman's enormous crime, Henry of Exeter watched his opportunity. He repaired to the church, and when the clergyman (what matter though a saintly man!) reached the words with the substitution, "we eat and drink our own condemnation," a stentorian voice in the church roared out "damnation." Another clergyman, Mr. Gorham, was to be presented to a living in that Bishop's diocese, and the Bishop was called upon to institute the nominee. He knew or suspected that the nominee entertained doctrinal opinions different from his own. In order to justify a refusal, the Bishop did not form his acts of accusation from publications of Mr. Gorham, but he sought to "entangle him in his speech." The nominee was summoned to an examination, questions skilfully planned were put before him to be answered in writing, and then, acting upon them, the Bishop refused institution. Mr. Gorham thereupon "appealed unto Cæsar," and appealed not in vain. Finally, if the Bishop aforesaid had lived in the days of Colenso, he would have endorsed the utterance of a spirit akin to his own: "This is a heretic, who in happier days of the Church would have been burnt!"

Of such a prelate Harold Browne had been himself the protégé and friend; but if any feared that his episcopate would be marked by similar characteristics, their minds were soon set at rest. First of all, his very tenderness of spirit, his love for his fellow-men, would have deterred him from any one of these proceedings. In practice, says his biographer, he treated every opinion with courtesy, listened to arguments, gave grounds for his own, and brought things to a peaceful issue. Thus, very few implacable disputes and no lawsuits disfigured his episcopate.

His tact and forbearance were shown in his intercourse with his Dean. Deans are appointed by the Crown, not by the Bishop, and appointed from various reasons. Sometimes they have been regarded as posts of dignified retreat for relatives of Cabinet Ministers and noblemen of influence; the more general theory was to make them rewards of men of learning. Milman, Alford, Hook, Saunders, Vaughan, may be quoted as examples. Their position is not rigidly defined, so that when the Ecclesiastical Commission were pursuing their investigations, and

one Dean was interrogated as to his duties, his simple response was, "The usual duties of a cathedral Dean." In most cases they have desired to show themselves independent of the Bishop; the writer of these lines remembers the Bishop who ordained him speaking as if his very holding an ordination in the cathedral was by sufferance, and on one prelate wishing, and perhaps asserting a right, to have some function performed in his cathedral, the Dean read aloud from his stall a manifesto, reminding one of the awful oath taken at matriculation, "that no foreign prince, person, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction," etc. Thus the relations between a Bishop and his Dean have been sometimes strained, if not openly at variance, and not favourable to the theoretical conception of the office stated above as formed by Bishop Harold Browne. Accordingly, when the new Bishop desired to hold a confirmation in his cathedral, and instructed a notice to be issued to that effect, he found appended to the notices "By order of the Dean." Instead of contesting the point, the courteous Bishop does not appear even to have raised the question, for he and his Dean, afterwards a Bishop himself, were the best of friends, and probably co-operated in the cause that both had at heart, the well-being of the Church.

Under such a prelate as Harold Browne a transaction like the Gorham case would never have arisen, for his noble conception of a National Church was against it. His own words to a correspondent shall be quoted: "The National Church ought to be comprehensive and tolerant, giving fair scope to that diversity of feeling and opinion which has prevailed, and in this world probably always will prevail, among those who worship the same God and trust in the same Saviour, and I never will be a party to narrowing the bounds of the Church, so far as to reduce it to the proportions of a sect."

This noble conception of a national Church was acted upon practically by Bishop Browne himself in his treatment of Bishop Colenso. When Bishop Colenso astounded the whole Church of England by his statements as to the Pentateuch, Harold Browne, then Professor, was as much pained as anyone, and wielded his pen most effectually in refutation. The book was then submitted to Convocation to be condemned, and in that Harold Browne would also agree. But to condemn a man's book, to show forth its fallacies and its danger to the faith, is one thing. To proceed with attacking the man himself, to deprive him of his office, his civil rights, was a different procedure, and seemed to so fair and large a mind as that of the Bishop of Ely unjust and a most dangerous precedent. He therefore astonished all who knew him by standing up in Convocation as Colenso's champion. He united with Tait,

Bishop of London, Jackson of Lincoln, and Thirlwall of St. David's in opposing the action of the Bishop of Capetown; and though Bishop Wilberforce had enlisted the sympathies of the majority, and taunted the four opponents with ignorance, they recked not of the taunt, but with statesmanlike spirit, whilst condemning Colenso's utterances, they opposed the persecution. Later on, at the Pan-Anglican Synod, when Bishop Selwyn, of New Zealand, attacked Bishop Thirlwall, endorsing Wilberforce's charge of ignorance, Harold Browne still more astonished the heated partisans by courageously defending Bishop Thirlwall, whom he declared to be not only the most learned prelate in Europe, but probably the most learned prelate who has ever presided over any see. Further, Bishop Browne flatly refused to sign a paper which the pertinacious Bishop of Oxford was bringing forward against Colenso.

The same spirit was shown by the Bishop of Ely when Dr. Temple was nominated for a bishopric. Dr. Temple was joint-author of a volume called "Essays and Reviews." Against his own essay little objection would have been raised, for his other published productions were of the most orthodox character. Moreover, it was distinctly stated in the preface that each writer was responsible for his own essay alone, and it is quite possible that he may have been totally ignorant of the productions of his co-partners. But the very fact of the association, as long as it existed, identified each author with the praise or dispraise attaching to the whole volume. The book was greeted with a howl of denunciation from one end of England to the other, and it was styled the "Septem contra Christum." Some of the essays had grave grounds for objection. Dr. Temple's treatise being bound up with theirs made him one of the seven. He was therefore implored by those who knew him well to dis sever himself from his colleagues—if for no other reason, for the peace of the Church. One who urged him most strongly to this step was Harold Browne. His own sons were at the time pupils at Rugby under Temple, and this biography contains his letter of remonstrance. But Temple was not the man to yield to a clamour, and with a chivalric feeling, carried, as most men would consider, to excess, Temple refused to notice the attacks. The volume was condemned by Convocation, but when the opponents proceeded to urge the Bishop of Ely to refuse all participation in Temple's consecration, he took precisely the same ground as in the case of Colenso. Harold Browne writes to his remonstrants: "Dr. Temple is not a heretic, for in his published sermons we find the doctrines which he is thought unaccountably to have omitted in his essay; he is not an

immoral liver ; he is a man of so high moral tone, and of such a manly and truthful character, that I cannot believe he would sign formularies without heartily assenting to them in their natural and literal meaning ; any formal trial in any court, civil or ecclesiastical, would have issued in his acquittal on every charge of heresy, without a shadow of a doubt. I hold, therefore, that consecration ought not to be withheld from him, and I am bound not to shrink from my own responsibility."

A prelate who, when acting judicially, could so put aside his personal predilections, and regard only strict justice and the ultimate welfare of the Church, is a Gamaliel *par excellence*, taking heed lest haply he be found to fight against God. When to this are added uniform courtesy, considerateness for the feelings of others, shrinking from giving pain, and feeling pain himself if the faithful discharge of duty allows no alternative, such a "born king of men" draws all hearts to him, and all men rejoice to do him honour. Thus it came to pass that, while, on the one hand, Lord Palmerston had nominated Harold Browne for Ely, though all his other nominations had been at the suggestion of Lord Shaftesbury, the leader of the Low Church party ; yet, on the other hand, when Winchester became vacant, Mr. Gladstone procured Harold Browne's translation to that see. We learn from this biography that Mr. Disraeli had asked him to nominate a vicar for his own parish ; that when Canterbury was vacant, Mr. Gladstone again wished to say to his nominee, "Go up higher," and was deterred only by the Bishop's age ; and, finally, that her Majesty herself graciously expressed to him her high regard.

This article would be unduly prolonged were the proceedings of the Bishop in his new see of Winchester portrayed here. The volume itself, of which this article is mainly a condensation, must be perused by those who desire complete information. It will abundantly repay perusal. Perhaps the secret of the Bishop's manifold and diverse agencies is expressed in those two beautiful lines of Keble's :

"He who loves his Lord aright
No soul of man can worthless find."

Hence came his zeal for the prosperity of missionary enterprise, for very early in his parochial life he organized regular meetings in his parishes to disseminate information about missionary labours and create interest in their success.

In the same spirit it was that, along with the brothers Meyrick, he founded the Anglo-Continental Society, to associate with the Church of England the various episcopal Churches on the Continent. Wherever his lot was cast, all

earnest-minded men saw and admired his Apostolic spirit, and, High Churchman though he was, Nonconformists and Wesleyans venerated the Bishop in their midst, so manifestly seeking to feed the Church of God over which the Holy Ghost had made him an overseer.

The Bishop always declared himself a High Churchman, yet he had little regard for those who are eager for the Eastern position and the revival of effete forms. These became effete because they distracted devout minds, and diverted the officiating minister himself to the externals of his vocation, rather than as a messenger of grace to the souls of men. A mind like Harold Browne's was too great, too Apostolic, too Scriptural, to be absorbed by trivialities, and he heeded them not. "All things to be done in order," he desired fervently, "but to be done to the use of edifying."

The volume before us gives us a list of publications which makes one stand aghast at his industry. These alone present occupation apparently sufficient for a lifetime without any other engagements. Many of his publications were on burning questions of the day; for the sake of posterity, it is to be regretted that the proportion is so large, as their interest will be transient. One or two volumes of his parochial sermons, exhibiting the pastor feeding his own flock on the food he set before them, would have been a priceless treasure to future generations of clergy. Some of his volumes also are too learned to be extensively read. Thus, his course of sermons "on the prophecies of the Messiah," though on a subject of intense interest, were little read, not even the first edition being exhausted. He was himself surprised at this, and a little disheartened. But on being examined it can be easily seen how the range of readers even of that volume would be circumscribed. His fame as a writer will rest mainly on his work on the Thirty-nine Articles, which has ever since been, and will long continue to be, the text-book of Divinity students. Other books on the subject may doubtless be produced, for men's minds are active—there is one such already (Boulton's)—but for some generations candidates for the ministry, and English Churchmen generally, will profitably avail themselves of Harold Browne on the Thirty-nine Articles.

RICHARD W. HILEY.

