

A. A. Phelps - about
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Correction.

Not Published

Friend Garrison

In your comments, in the last Liberator, upon Dea. Gulliver's speech, I find the following:-

"It will doubtless surprise, as it ought to shock and alarm our abolition brethren abroad, to learn that these clergy-men (all orthodox) held several private Caucusses in Worcester, from which lay delegates were carefully excluded, & were harangued by Messrs Fitch, Towne & Co. with great earnestness. The plot, however, did not meet with success on that occasion."

~~As you~~ This was said by you in reference to the "twenty four clergymen" of whom the Deacon spoke as being present at the meeting in Worcester. In the ~~name~~ justice to the parties concerned require me to assure "our abolition brethren abroad" that nothing was done, on that occasion, by anybody, that need "surprise", or "shock", or "alarm" them. For (1) These twenty four clergymen were not "all orthodox", This number included all, of every denomination, who were present. (2) "These" held no "private" meetings of any sort whatever, on that occasion. It was only a part of them that had to do with the meetings alluded to; nor did that part include all of the "orthodox" clergy, who were present. (3) No "private Caucusses" were held by anybody, on that occasion. Such is not a just or true representation of the character of the meetings in question. (4) "Lay delegates were not" "carefully excluded" from said meetings. (5) The meetings were not "harangued" by Messrs. Fitch, Towne & Co. To give a coloring to the facts in the case is unfair. They were

& like others, doubtless expressed their opinions in the case.
~~That was all~~ (b) No "plot" whatever was attempted, by anybody,
 "on that occasion".

The simple facts in the case are these. The meetings
 in question, were made up of open & avowed, & some of them
 working abolitionists. They were of two classes, first those who
 sympathized more or less with the Appeal, & second those
 who came to Worcester as peace makers, & were in those
 meetings rather from a desire to heal dissention than
 from sympathy with the Appeal. The ^{sole} object of the meetings
 was to consider what ought & what could be done ~~to remove~~
~~just grounds of complaint against the society & its~~
 to heal ^{the} existing dissensions. The first meeting was held on

It was designed merely to ascertain the views
 & feelings of those present in relation to the difficulties in
 question. No action was taken by the meeting & no result
 arrived at but this - viz a sort of general understanding
 to let matters take their course, & if the Appeal &c. was brought
 up by those disposed to censure it, to take that opportunity
 to express their views & feelings on the case. In ^{its design & results} ~~this respect~~
^{then} this meeting was ~~in its design & results~~, just like the one, of
 which you & I were members, the day before, in Boston. It
 was as much a private caucus as was the other, and
 no more so. Lay delegates were as carefully excluded from it
 as clergymen were from the other, & no more so. Hitch, Lowne
 &c. ~~examined~~ it as earnestly as did Garrison, Phelps &c.
 & no more so. And the "plot" laid was as real a
 & as surprising, shocking & alarming, as was that laid

at our meeting, & no more so - i.e. there was in neither,
~~no plot, no harangue, no explosion, no Caucus,~~
in either - ^{in either -} nor plot, in a word nothing that should ^{need} surprise or shock
or alarm any body.

The subsequent meetings were held on this wise.
At the organisation of the ^{public} meeting of the ^{state} Society, the Committee
on business was appointed. Of that Committee I was chair-
-man. As was natural, the Appeal difficulties came early
before that Committee, & the question was whether any
& if any, what action the Society should take on the sub-
-ject. The opinion of the Committee was, that sufficient
action had been already had - that the expression of
sentiment from local societies & the Board of Managers
was all that the case required, particularly, that the
opinion of the Board stood as the opinion of the Society
until reversed by the Society, & that if any were dissatisfied
with that opinion, it was for them, not for the Board
- or the Society by its Committee, to bring the subject for-
-ward for further consideration & action. The Committee
accordingly decided to report no resolution on the subject,
& directed me, as Chairman, to inform those who felt
themselves aggrieved, that if they wished any action in
the case, it must come up in connexion with a reso-
-lution or resolutions originating with them, not with
the Committee, & submitted by them, through the Com-
-mittee, to the Society. I did the errand. The result was
a meeting of a few minutes that evening, at which it
was agreed that each person present should draft & bring

the next morning, & a meeting in the morning,
in some resolution in reference to the matter, in the morning,
at which, ^{I was present, & at which the persons concerned} ~~was~~ decided what resolution to submit to the
Committee. That resolution, was drafted by Dr. Osgood of
Springfield, whose object throughout was to act as a peace-
-maker on the occasion, & it simply urged the exercise of
Christian kindness & courtesy as well as boldness in rebuking
sin & sinners. This resolution, it is true did not meet
the wishes of all the ~~part~~ individuals concerned. Some
of them were very decided in their condemnation of the
style & spirit of the Liberator, as well as of the sentiments
it promulgated on other subjects; & would have been glad
to have its connexion with the Society at once dissolved.
Still as the contract was made for the year they were
not disposed to urge that point, ^{for the sake of peace,} but were willing to
be content with a general resolution, expressive of
general principle only, & conveying censure, if at all,
to the Appellants as much as anybody. And this ^{was} the
sum total of the "plot" & the "private Caucuses" of ~~these~~
of "these" (not all) clergymen!

As my object ^{now} is correction of ~~facts~~
~~only~~, I will make no comments, but
merely add, that I am grieved that you should descend
to such, in this case at least, ungenerous, unjust, &
uncalled for imputation.

Yours truly for the slave.

A. A. Phelps.