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A Letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps

A. C. Van Raalte

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No. 46

Hudson, New York, June 11, 1868

A letter of A. C. Van Raalte to Philip Phelps, a message of discouragement.

"...We are left in the cold....A great number here could be won for the Western interest but the managers [of the Synod] know how to kill it."

Original in the Archives of Hope College.

Rev. D. P. Phelps. Hudson, N.Y.
June 11/1868.

Dear Brother,

This will be my last I think: - I wrote you yesterday how we are left in the cold: - Sentiment is slowly developing: - I am certain that to day they intend to crowd in every thing and to finish: How it is possible I do not know: but I have heard that every thing must be finished under the 5 minute rule speech: - I expected such a course but I did not expect such a bold extreme: - I do not know what to do: - I must be contented with picking out only one of the many topics: - I must make the best of it: - I see they have what they wanted and now they will cut short. They have their money matters in shape their Professors released, and the ^{permission} to reverse the lithography: and now they will pass a Resolution I think to

leave the University questions in hand
of the Council, and keep the Theology
in their own hands in a some what,
moderate way to please both parties, or
rather to get rid of the thing as soon
as possible. - Under the 5 minute rule
speech we can do very little: this had
been the plan: to shut out the dis-
cussions. - - and to shut us out effectually
from the field to make collections; I
think it is a fool who would under-
take it. - a great number here would
be won for the western interest but the
managers know how to kill it. -

Yesterday the Chairman of ~~the~~ the com-
mittee on The Professorate had yet nothing
prepared: so none of the Committee did
know exactly how they would report. -

I suppose it is best to say not much
about the Synod or about the whole
matter. - We may leave in God's hands

Yours truly
H. Van Raulte

Hudson NY
June 11/1868

Revd Dr P. Phelps

Dear Brother,

This will be my last I think: I wrote you yesterday how we are left in the cold: -Sentiment is slowly developing. -I ascertain that today they intend to crowd in everything and to finish: How it is possible I do not know: but I have heard that everything must be finished under the 5 minute rule speech: -I expected such course but I did not expect such a bold extreme. -I do not know what to do: -I must be contented with picking out only one of the many topics. -I must make the best of it. -I see they have what they wanted and now they will end short. They have their money matters in Shape their Professors releaved and the permission to revise the Lithurgy; and now they will pass a resolution I think to leave the University question in hand of the Counsel and keep the Theology in their own hand in a somewhat moderate way to please both parties, or rather to get rid of the thing as soon as possible. -Under the 5 minute rule speech we can do little: this has been the plan: to shut out the discussions. ---and to shut us out effectively from the field to make collections; I think He is a fool Who would undertake it: A great number here could be won for the Western interest but the managers know how to kill it.

Yesterday the Chairman of the Committee on The Professorate had not yet nothing prepared: so none of the Committee did know exact how they would report. -

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Hudson N Y

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Yours truly

A.G. Van Rensselaer

68-06-11 [GS46]

Things seem to be going from bad to worse for Dr. Van Raalte. His good friend and comrade, Philip Phelps, was not present at this meeting of the General Synod and able to do damage control regarding the university proposal. Professors Crispell and Scott, who are opposed to the university idea for Hope College, are influential at this synod, well-known in the Eastern Reformed churches, graduates of New Brunswick Seminary, etc. Their point of view surely won over many delegates at the synod. Van Raalte's influence has clearly waned in the denomination.

Hudson NY
June 11/1868

Revd Dr P. Phelps.

Dear Brother.

This will be my last [letter] I think: - I wrote you yesterday how we are left in the cold: -Sentiment is slowly developing. -I ascertain that to day they intend to crowd in everything and to finish: How it is possible I do not know: but I have heard that every thing must be finished under the 5 minute rule speech:¹ -I expected such course but I did not expect such a bold extreme. -I do not know what to do: -I must be contented with picking out only one of the many topics. -I must make the best of it. -I see they have what they wanted and how they will cut short.

They² have their money matters in Shape their Professors releaved, and the permission to revise the Liturgy:³ and now they will pass a resolution I think to leave the University question in hand of the Counsel and keep Theology in their own hand in a somewhat, moderate way to please both parties, or rather to get rid of the thing as soon as possible. -Under the 5 minute rule speech we can do little; this has been the plan: to shut out the discussions. --and to shut us out effectively from the field to make collections; I think He is a fool Who would undertake it: -A great number here could be won for the Western interest but the managers know how to kill it.-

Yesterday the Chairman of the Committee on The Professorate had yet nothing prepared: so none of the Committee did know exact how theij would report. -

¹ General Synod meetings tend to get long and drawn out because some delegates can monopolized the floor. This rule limits "filibustering."

² Apparently the leaders of the synod who had the political influence to control the synod and what would be discussed.

³ The action of the General Synod on liturgy was as follows: *Resolved*, That a Committee be appointed to revise our Liturgy, so that it may more fully meet the wants of the Church." The gentlemen appointed to the committee Elbert S. Porter, Mancius S. Hutton, John B. Thompson, Thomas C. Strong, William R. Duryee, ministers; and Elders F. T. Frelinghuysen and Jacob B. Jewett. *Acts and Proceedings... 1868*, 467. Several of the members appointed were prominent in the denomination. For instance, Porter was editor of *The Christian Intelligencer* and Frelinghuysen was a member of a well-known New Jersey family.

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Yours truly

A. C. Van Raalte