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Letter to Charles Pettit McIlvaine

G. T. Bedell

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He should arrange the Monday morning Bible exercises in College; which are rapidly degenerating.

When there is a Bishop resident the Diocesan might act through him; or consent to his being actual spiritual Overseer, only reporting to the Diocesan.

So long as there is a Bishop resident, much of the evil would be saved by abolishing the Chaplaincy, or appointing him Chaplain. The former plan is preferable; for he would then assume all duties of Chaplain & the proper official spiritual relation, as by right of office & charter. All questions then would be saved. He stands by office above all Professors. He is the only one who does.

66-01-13 Private & Confidential. 1

To be read carefully & preserved for a time.

The beginning of the Ch. of the Holy Spirit. Cambridge Jan 13 1866

My dear Bishop

We have had a good deal of conversation & correspondence on the subject of re-arrangement of the spiritual oversight of these Institutions. The practical question, the *modus in quo*, is encompassed with difficulties. Yet I feel more & more persuaded that something must be done; and ought to be done speedily. One who lives here sees what no one else can. You are a better judge than any one of the Trustees for you have felt the trouble. And yet, in the particular phases of later troubles, even you can hardly appreciate the unexpected evils of the

present system.
There is no centre of unity among
the schools. There is no
acknowledged spiritual head.
Even in the Colleges the spiritual
authority is divided between
the Chaplain & President. There
is collision; and there have
been collisions between every
Chaplain & the Authorities.
Clements was the most successful;
but he at last came into
collision with the students.
The Parish has become a "third
estate". It is a power outside
of the Institutions, claiming its
rights, and being a sort of
court of appeal for the Rector
against Authorities. Consequently,
it becomes a power, easily moved
on other occasions, against
wholesome discipline. And the

interests of the Parish necessarily
~~are~~ receive attention to the injury
of the spiritual care of the students.
How to arrange any plan which
will reach all the rights of the
case, and amend all the wrongs,
is a task for an angel.
Unity might be given by
creating a Chancellorship, as in
Trinity College Hartford, for the
Bishop of the Diocese.
Spiritual unity (which is
probably the most feasible) may
be given by restoring the Bishop
of the Diocese to the actual
spiritual oversight, intended (as
I suppose) by the Charter. He
should actually direct all the
religious services of the Institutions
as a whole; and the particular
services in the College, Hall,
& Seminary.

continue a nominal Harecourt
Parish, the assistant to be
called Rector, or perhaps better
to have seat in Courtenay as
assistant. A Rectorship might
lead to trouble again.

The Chapel then to be thrown
open to the people except so
much as the Spiritual Overseer -
(?) what is that but Bishop -
reserves for the Institution.

The Professors to be saved the
expense which they are now
put to (£25 each) for few
rents for unnecessary services.

The people being provided for by
the Institution, to would
necessarily exercise no rights of
control in Chapel affairs.

Such is an outline of a
possibility.

It would be an advantage to
the Institution were there no
Parish organisation; at least were
there none connected with the
Chapel, or holding a traditional
right there.

When there are so many good
preachers on the hill, it seems a
waste of ministerial strength, to
bring another, who cannot do his
duty without shutting the mouths
of able men already around him.

The Institution can provide for
all its own wants without going
beyond itself. And the Professors
will retain their freshness longer,
be much more vigorous & positive,
& have a far deeper interest in
the students, by feeling it to be
their duty to preach & minister
to their wants.

The Institution is not bound to provide for the Parish. And yet it might provide for every want, except during vacations, by not going outside of its own Professors. If the Parish were not content with the able men who could preach to them from the Sem:., they would have the resource of every other parish. They could provide for themselves.

Somewhat to meet these various ideas, the following outline has occurred to me to be submitted to you.

Abolish the Chaplaincy, so long at least as a Bishop is resident at Gambier.

Assume again as Bishop the spiritual oversight of the Institution.

Commit certain functions to the

resident.

Repeal the permission to use the Chapel, given to the Parish, and place the entire control of it in the hand of the Resident.

Make it his duty, in connection with the Professors, to provide for all services during term time except as hereafter suggested.

Place the \$500 in his hand, to pay for each sermon \$5.

Every one who preaches, resident or otherwise (except the Bishop) to receive that sum, \$5.

Allow him to employ an assistant, who should take all responsibility of filling the pulpit when the Bishop is absent. If the people choose to pay this assistant, he then to act as Pastor when required. If it is best to

On Tuesday 2^d - the only day
I had to give to the City - I
collected \$10,000 towards this
plan. No doubt \$10,000 more
will be given. Dr Smith thinks
that in the course of a year or
18 months he can raise the
whole to \$30,000. I doubt it.
But \$20,000 I think is sure.

Now I do not see but that
this plan will give us what
we so much need - a Church
entirely appropriated to Divine
worship, & in every way fitted
to its purpose: and a Hall
which for many years will
supply Library, Cabinet, &
College occasions.

The Association proposes, if it
meets your view, to ask of the
Trustees leave to erect a Church

A new turn is given to the
whole thing, and perhaps an
easy solution placed in your
hands, by an occurrence on
my visit to New York, which
I have not had opportunity to
report to you.

As soon as I applied to my old
Parish, for Gambier interests, it
was suggested that the Association
ought & would be glad to do
some one thing; and to give it
the character somewhat of a
personal matter whilst benefiting
Gambier.

You will not be surprised that
on consultation the subject of
a Church was suggested. Dr
Smith was earnest in the
matter; for he had felt many
of the difficulties referred to.

The idea took immediately.
It naturally pleased the people
to whom I had so long ministered
to present a Church to their
old Rector, for his use so
long as he should live, & to
be the Diocesan Church for ever.
It was a thing in which all
could take part; chancel,
font, windows, tower, bells,
each presented opportunity for
individual gift.

The question was, how could
it be most available for
Gambier? I had mentioned
the importance of a Library &
Cabinet.

Why not then turn Rosse
Chapel into Rosse Library? a
building most admirably suited
for the purposes of Library &
Cabinet. For many years

to come, it might be used for
all the purposes of Library,
Cabinet, Reading room, Lecture
Hall; and on Commencements for
that purpose. The only serious
change needed for several
years would be the erection
of a gallery, on iron columns,
for the Cabinet. Library cases
might be arranged round the
walls. The whole central area
would be left for other uses.

The idea seemed feasible to
me. I promised to broach it
to you. There was no time
to consult you before acting.

I therefore consented to
present the subject to the
Congregation on Dec: 31st, with
the understanding that it
should be laid before yourself
and the Trustees.

Rp. Bevell

Chaplaincy &

Gambier

as a Gift to me, and the services & institutions after me: to be a Church, in which my old pulpit shall stand (for they have substituted a platform desk in ascending) and over which I shall have spiritual oversight.

Now may not this idea solve many, perhaps all, the questions raised: and may it not, in the Providence of God, establish the spiritual interests of Gambier on a satisfactory and permanent footing.

In such a Church you would have your seat. There the Bishop would speak by authority. You would have, as I have longed to see you, a place where you would be the centre of this great Diocese.

It would be a flaw for
Ordinations, & Consecrations, &
meetings of Clergy. The Bishop
would not be compelled to ask
leave of a Rector to utter
himself, or to solicit opportunity
to open his mind.

I trust it will strike you as
it does me: a thing to be
desired & aimed at. It will
need to be nursed. The end is
not yet. But there is nothing
wanting to the beginning save
your assent, your influence,
the consent of Trustees —

And then wisdom to know
how to reconcile all conflicting
interests and opinions at
Gambier.

Perhaps there will be less
difficulty here than I

imagine: perhaps there will
be more.

But the modus we can
think about. I want now to
know your mind.

Of course it is important
not to say any thing about it
until we have settled it.

If our friend near you gets
wind of it, pray do not
express yourself to him.

Praying God's direction I
am affec^d by
G. T. Peck

Robt. S. McShaw