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## Letter to Charles Pettit McIlvaine

W. R. Whittingham

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[1] Wm. Whittingham

Baltimore

November 25th 1865

My Dear Bishop

Your letter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> only reached me yesterday. I could not consult my notes taken in the House in time to answer it at once; and although my own recollections concerning the matter were distinct and strong, I did not like to trust them without corroboration of the written record, and further sifting by reflection. I have resorted to both and no change has been the result. I can find in my memory no trace of any other view of the problem to be made by you than as a letter of the House to the Clergy and Candidates for Holy Orders — as such to be published, — and as such, to be published just as it would have been had it been addressed to all the Clergy and Lay of the Church. It was withheld from the latter because in the judgment of the majority of the House, it was not expedient to present matter so entirely polemical, and containing so many statements of capital arguments and objections, to the mixed and often unintelligent auditories which must be found in very large numbers among the

impregations of the Church to all of which  
a Pastoral Letter generally addressed would have  
under the canonical provision, to be publicly read.  
But in the judgment of the House expressed by a  
vote unanimous and untroubled taken immediately after  
an explicit statement of the ground made by  
me in answer to an inquiry by Bp Talbot, it  
was addressed by the House as the assembly of  
chief pastors of the Church to the clergy and  
candidates as a timely monition and instruction  
how to meet and oppose errors of a deadly kind  
already largely prevalent and threatening  
to become more so — and so issued at this  
 juncture more especially as a proper means  
of warding off from the Church the reproach  
of concurrence in the disgraceful wickedness  
of one of the members of her Episcopate. The  
latter consideration was especially brought out,  
as I remember, in reply to an objection that the  
House by such action would be setting a precedent  
of a novel procedure — on which it was remarked  
that it must be admitted to be a precedent — but  
that there was no extravagance in the expectation

that it would be very long before  
a similar call for action on the part of the  
House would occur - until when there  
could be no danger in the precedent.

All this goes to show that the publication  
was at the time well understood and  
discussed as the action of the House - not a  
mere permission or recommendation of  
action on your part.

Accordingly, my private entry is:

Tuesday morning.

a Potten rose and moved to dispense with Order  
of Day in order to bring in  
motion to make Hallam's letter a lett. of this  
H. to Clergy and Candidates for Orders.

Hopkins at once said that wd be using him  
very badly - he had prepared a Part. letter

[Here follow notes of the conversation about  
suspending rules to hear his MS read -  
and what followed that reading, until]

Potten renewed his motion.

Whitehouse moved substitute - I did not agree  
to take one document and pass the other

<sup>by</sup> Res<sup>l</sup> that Bys inform H. of C & L. D. that in consequence

of 40 expedient to forebear issue of Postoral Letter  
stated reasons something at length  
In same time no one seconded.

Odenheimer did at length but advocating  
divis. of Potter's brace of resolutions asking  
to have 1st part alone.

Burgess called for alteration of Whitehouse's res.  
by omitting two reasons assigned  
Whitehouse agreed.

Howells opposed telling the lower House we did not do it  
Hopkins approached to the H. for its own silence.  
wanted to know the reason why his paper  
was rejected.

Potter rose - H. was in a painful position -  
he believed the H. had not expected  
another Part. Lett. - had re-committed  
the 1st expecting it to be modified.

McKean explained [then follow notes of the  
expl. by you and P. Smith]

Whipple testified to the nature of the resolution  
which he had offered - it was as Pott's res.  
assumed.

Potter ag. rose - insisted that pres. embarrass-  
ment arose from unexpected and uncalculated  
for presentation of the second doc.  
must adhere to his res. dispensing with  
Part. altogether.

Whitehouse read ag. his substitute as amended  
Ayes 9 Nov 10.

On Potter's res. 'in judg<sup>t</sup> of this H. inexpedient'  
Ayes 13 Nov 3.

2d res. neg. Bp of this issue paper

Talbot opposed - asked Why publish?

Whittle said - bec. in his judg<sup>t</sup> it was right

and fit and highly proper and  
our bounden duty to issue such a  
warning to clergy and candidates  
On question it was carried unanimously.

Such are my notes - copied exactly (except  
noticed omissions) abbreviations, underlining  
as first as jotted down while the affair was  
going on.

One result is, to show how little the  
statement made in the Ch. Journ. a couple  
of weeks ago conforms to the real course of  
action.

I will take the opportunity to say that  
I, at least, for one, know nothing of the  
concerted <sup>or plan of in the C.J.</sup> action of which Potter was <sup>said to be</sup> the organ,  
by which both draughts of pastoral letters  
were set aside. I, at least, in all that I did,  
acted solely on my own judgment & responsibility  
without any concert or pre-arrangement  
with others; and I know of no meeting or  
consultation such as the account in the C.J.  
asserts to have taken place. Certainly no thought  
of any such concerted action entered my mind  
from first to last, during all the proceedings  
on the subject of the Past. Letter - except that  
early in the course I was desirous to get  
a change made in the nature of the Pastoral  
and to have a special Committee appointed

for that purpose, I spoke for two or three  
of the bishops of the desirability of saving  
ourselves from the infliction of another  
attempted Pastoral by the Presiding Bishop  
but simply, and only in the way of casual remark  
with regard to the style to be given to your  
org. ay. volume, I distinctly remember  
your conversation in the th. with Potter  
and with me, just as you have recounted  
it. It tallies perfectly, you perceive, with  
all that I have given above. I remember  
also, your private remark to me, inquiring  
my view of the sort of title page to be given?  
but at that time had such an entire  
absence of doubt as to the character of the  
proposition that I misunderstood the  
drift of your inquiry, and thought it had  
reference merely to some point of  
phraseology — as to the mode in which the  
character, as a new form of action of the  
House (about which, having no doubt myself,  
it did not occur to me that you had reference  
to any doubt) should be expressed: E.g. whether  
it was to be called a "Pastoral" letter, or not?  
About its being designed by the House to be  
a letter of the House itself, I say again,  
I had not the least doubt then, and have <sup>had</sup> no  
doubt, or suggestion of doubt, since, until  
your letter yesterday first raised it.

Of course, I conceive it to have been the  
will of the House (my argument at the close  
was wholly based on the assumption that such  
was the case) that the physical form of address  
was to be retained throughout — the only  
changes to be made being those required  
by the change of persons addressed.

Whatever you may append in the way  
of additions, or notes, I think should be  
carefully distinguished of your own,  
and specified in the title — e.g. "edited, with  
additional remarks and notes, at the request  
of the House, by G. O."

The body of the publication, I take  
it, all actually read in and to the House —  
in the publication of the House itself, made  
by nobody's request, nor by anybody at its request,  
but its own. The request is to you to prepare  
what was so read. for the altered destination  
given it, when it was withdrawn from the  
public and addressed to the minority alone

Of course such address of the letter by  
the House requires its publication and  
distribution with the Journal. It must go  
to every clergyman entitled to the Journal, and  
the action of the House becomes mandatory.  
It is an authoritative act, not an appeal  
to opinion — to be sent, not offered for purchase  
to be addressed to those for whom it is intended.



From a letter of Bp Whittington to Bp Doane

not advertised to their curiosity.

X with regard to the other topics of your letter  
 I am, as you may well suppose, as much  
 disappointed as you can be with the  
apparent tenor of the action of the Southern  
 Bishops (4 in all) and delegates at Augsburg  
 — but I happen to have the advantage  
 of knowing what it means — which is simply  
 compliance with our overtures, in such  
 a way as to hinder cleavage among them-  
selves. An element, small in numbers,  
 but wisely important, would have divided  
 from the rest, had the wishes of the better part  
 been carried out. To hinder that, the awkward  
 and ungracious method adopted was resorted to.  
 The Bishops are unanimous in considering the  
 return of all as certain, and a question of  
months only. Georgia will signify its recognition  
 of its position to the Presid. { Bp within a month }  
 Alabama and Mississippi with the least possible  
 delay. Wilmer accepts our action — only delayed  
 his signature of such acceptance until his intended  
 should have been taken off. So. Car. and part of Va  
above are recalcitrant — to the extreme among one  
 of the Bp. of Va, who considers himself as much at one  
 with us as ever. He is to do duty for me in Cumberland  
 on Thanksgiving Day. — In the mean while, what difference  
 can their position, so awkward for themselves, make  
 to us? You and I never regarded them as otherwise  
 than in the Pro-Episcopal in the United States: and, as I  
 conceive, have no call to notice anything irregular

in their and I'm or proceed very awkwardly in their former position in the way  
 distinctly from the before in I have with a committee with John and Allen in the way  
 to represent the Eastern Bishops in my to and find no necessity in it. For 2 years I have for the Bp. of Va.