

9-17-1818

## Letter to the standing Committee of the Diocese of New Jersey

B Gardiner

*Standing Committee of the Diocese of Ohio*

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KCh 180917

Columbus September 17th 1818

To the standing Committee of the Diocese of New Jersey

Gentlemen;

We, the undersigned, members of the standing committee of the state of Ohio, write unto you in behalf of our infant Diocese, and specially concerning the desired consecration of the Rev. Philander Chase to this Episcopate.

The reasons why the names of the Reverends, our associates in the Committee are not also herewith affixed, are these - The Rev. P. Chase, our President, is the person of whose expected communion with us, through the episcopate, our letter must necessarily treat; of course matters of delicacy make him silent: The Rev. W. Searle, the clerical member of the committee is on a tour into Kentucky, &c. and distant some hundred miles from us: The Rev. W. Johnson is also far from us at the eastward; we must, therefore beg leave to address you; and although here are but two of the committee, we are confident that the sentiments we write, will be those of every member of our primitive communion, not only in this Diocese, but in that numerous section of Virginia, who, in the event of our wishes being accomplished, will become part of this Diocese. - Gentlemen, among the numerous communications from the different parts of our ecclesiastical union, especially those where our bishop elect is best known, approving, not only in canonical, but in other highly respectful and affectionate terms, his speedy consecration; We have been honored with two letters from your secretary, the Rev. Tho. C. Rudd; one is dated at Elizabethtown N. J. July 16, 1818; and in it your secretary says "The committee were far from intending that they would not sign the requisite testimonials, but were unanimous in ~~the~~ opinion of the propriety of delay." - The resolution of the board of your Committee is in the following words. "Resolved, that, inasmuch as doubts have arisen in the minds of the committee as to the propriety of proceeding now to the signature of the desired testimonials, the consideration of the subject be postponed to the meeting of the next annual convention of New Jersey, to be held August 19th 1818, and that, in the mean time the President of the committee take measures to obtain information in relation to this subject," "Tho. C. Rudd, President of Committee N. J."

Your other communication is dated New Brunswick N. J. August 20th 1818, and contains this resolution of your Board: "Whereas such doubts with respect to the propriety of the contemplated measure still exist in the minds of the members of the committee as to induce them to withhold their consent to the proposed consecration, - Therefore, Resolved unanimously, that the Bishop of this Diocese be respectfully advised in case he shall be called on to act in said consecration, to urge the postponement of that act, till the meeting of the next <sup>general</sup> convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the state, to be holden in the city of Philadelphia in the month of May 1820."

"A true extract &c

"Tho. Churchill Rudd, Secy"

Gentlemen

We beg leave here to enquire what are the members of the Diocese of Ohio to understand from the tenor of those resolutions; these words in particular, to wit -



"doubts with respect to the propriety of the contemplated measure?" Do they affect the character of our Bishop elect? or do they affect the much desired object of our having soon as may be, the great blessing of the Episcopal officers amongst us, taken independently of the personal character of him, who may be consecrated to the exercise of them? One or other of these, we humbly conceive, must necessarily be the case. That your "doubts" reach the character of our Bishop elect, we cannot for a moment admit, for these substantial reasons - 1st. Your secretary, Mr. Radd, assures us, in the first communication, that, "the committee were far from intimating that they would not sign the requisite testimonials, but were unanimous in the opinion of the propriety of delay." 2nd. Whenever our Bishop elect, has been, & is best known (every state north & east of New Jersey) thence are his testimonials received; and the letters accompanying them are most congratulatory to us, and affectionate to him; it must, therefore, be the latter which has given rise to your doubts. You doubt the propriety of our having now a Bishop in this Diocese. We beg to know what have the Diocese of Ohio done, that we are, in the opinion of the Standing Committee of New Jersey, to be debarred the privileges to which other members of our primitive communion are admitted. And have we acted contrary to the existing constitution and canons of our Church? if so, why not condescend to point out our error and lead us, by your kind advice, into the right way? most gladly would we rectify our proceedings, if we could be sensible they were not canonical. — But, perhaps, your "doubts", in regard to our having now the blessings of the Episcopate, arise from something we have left undone. If so, pray, Gentlemen, read the journals of the two last conventions, which have been carefully transmitted to you, and the report of the Rt. Rev. House of Bishops, in relation to this state. In those things to which that report refers and of which those journals were the result, our Bishop elect was, under a kind Providence, a principal instrument. With that disinterested benevolence which characterized the Apostolic Church, he came into our state, and, without fee or reward, but such as was furnished by his own bosom, he traversed our woods, visited our infant settlements, officiated in our cabins, established churches in our towns & villages, gathered together the dismembered professors of our communion, admitting many hundreds, by holy baptism, into the fold of the Redeemer, and fed with the bread of Life the numerous flocks, over whom he has now the pastoral charge. He being pure in his morals, dignified in his manners, pious in his conversation, and sublimed in his public ministrations, we did hope that, in unanimously choosing him to fill the Episcopate, who, under God, had excited us to do so much to build up our Church in the West, we should have the hearty concurrence of all those whose duty it is to give their suffrages in such cases; but it lamentably appears, that in relation to the Diocese of New Jersey we were mistaken — So mistaken as not only to have their negative, but a positive denunciation, that in case we presume to ask their Rt. Rev. Bishop to assist in the consecration of our Bishop, he will be "respectfully advised to urge the postponement of that act, till the next general convention at Philadelphia in May 1820." — In the disappointment occasioned by this unreasonable proscription, we think, we have grounds for complaint. We call it unreasonable because no reason is assigned where we had a



right to expect it. Surely nothing but mistake or ill advice could have been the cause of your misjudging of that which we deem, and actually is deemed, throughout our state, the true and best interest of the church in the west. Would, that some of you, Gentlemen, had been present when the important event of the election of our Bishop took place. The Rev. Dr. Dodge of Virginia, (though not till the event of the consecration a member of the convention, yet) being permitted to give his counsel, urged in the strongest terms the immediate election of a Bishop on the ground that such a measure was all important to the interests of the church, and to his certain knowledge, demanded by all the Episcopals in the western parts of Virginia and eastern parts of Ohio in which he officiates: Accordingly the election took place, after the most ample investigation of the propriety of the measure. After which the Rev. Mr. Seale in his sermon to the congregation, did congratulate them, and through them the whole Diocese; and in the most solemn manner thanked God that they were so soon to enjoy the blessings of the Episcopate, for which they had been so long and so ardently praying. Had you, Gentlemen, or either of you been present to witness those things, you could not, it is confidently believed, have been thus "renowned in the opinion of the propriety of delay." — And what, permit us once more respectfully to ask, will be the result of this delay which your Rev. Bishop is respectfully requested to urge? Will it not end in (what we are very far from intimating is your intention) an alarming discouragement of the church in the west, when their members see their best endeavors so coldly treated; their zeal in the cause of the church so ill requited; and the gentlemen of their choice so unreasonably used? Nothing, we believe, will give greater cause for triumph in the ranks of the opposers of our church, than the very thing you desire, your Rt. Rev. Bishop to "urge" against us! Their opposition to our primitive discipline is surely now sufficiently strong without the aid of a discomfiture of this nature from the professed friends of the church — A few more words in relation to the personal feelings of our Bishop elect and we will have done — Did we unanimously elect this worthy gentleman to this office, but to suspend him as it were between Heaven & Earth, as an object of malicious enquiry? Who will not ask the reason of this unexampled delay? And when no reason is given, will not a reason unfavorable to his character, by the enemy at least, be suggested? So that, were he as pure as Abel, as meek as Moses and as holy as the Apostles, his character, in such case, must suffer. And is it to be supposed that the Diocese, who have elected him, and obtained his reluctant consent to accept this election, will tamely submit to such a procedure? We are not of opinion that they will. Most devoutly, therefore, do we pray Almighty God, in whose hands are the hearts of men, that you may be inclined to do us justice in the canonical favor which we have asked of you; or, that your wor-



thy and Rt. Rev. Bishop be not so influenced by your urgent request, as to wound up in a point, wherein the consequences to our prosperity in the church of the blessed Redeemer will be fatal

A sincere belief in the vast importance of this subject, viewed in its true light and full extent; and a consciousness, that it is our duty, under existing circumstances, to be frank and explicit, constitute our apology for addressing you at this time and at such length; We earnestly hope you will candidly consider and correctly appreciate accordingly our motives & sentiments.

Very respectfully, Gentlemen,

We are your most obedient &

very humble servants.

B. Gardiner

Hester Griswold

Members of the Standing  
Committee of the Diocese  
of Ohio

Copy of letter to the  
Standing Committee  
of New Jersey

(enclosure to K.Ch. 18 1003)