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## Letter to the General Convention of the P.E. Church of U. S. A.

Philander Chase

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26 To. The Right Rev. The Bishops  
of the P. E. Church in U. S. of America,  
in Genl. Convention assembled, May 1823.

Right Rev. & dear Brethren;

Most devoutly do I pray  
the ever Blessed God, Father, Son, & Holy Spirit  
now and ever to be with you; to bless, preserve, and  
keep you; to direct you in all your ways, & fur-  
ther you with his continual help, <sup>that in all your works begun & continued in him, you may glorify</sup> Thro Jesus  
Christ our Lord; amen

In addition to the solicitude, for a  
long time entertained by me, for a personal inter-  
view with those, whose advice, under God, might  
be of essential service to me, I have lately had rea-  
son to feel great anxiety to see you, arising from  
the very precarious state of my health, & the frequent  
attacks of an alarming bodily disorder. When bowed  
down by sickness, and, to all human <sup>appearance</sup> expectation,  
brought very near the confines of the eternal world,  
it would have served me essentially, in the arti-  
cle of being in a state of readiness to die, if I had  
previously seen the Bishops, and communicated  
to them somethings deemed of importance, if not

advised to the  
House of Bishops  
1823

K. Ch. 230411



to the existence, certainly to the prosperity, of primitive christianity, in the western country.

As God has seen fit, in mercy, to raise me from sickness; and yet ~~handicapped~~ <sup>weakened</sup> has withheld from me the means of traveling to Philadelphia to meet you in person, I take it to be his will, & thence I feel it my duty, to write to you freely; communicating not only the state of the Church, publick acts, &c. according to canon; but also my own <sup>perhaps</sup> opinions & judgment, founded on some experience & observation, <sup>not</sup> altogether within the reach of others.

Since my communication to you, in the sitting of the Gen. Convention of 1720, I have ~~con~~ confirmed Two hundred and eighty five persons; admitted to the Holy Orders, Deacons three persons; to that of Priests, One; consecrated Two churches; displaced one Deacon from the ministry; and suspended one Presbyter, who has not been restored. The names of the persons ordained and censured may be found in the Journals of the Convention of Ohio, already printed. The churches consecrated were ~~those of~~ St. Paul's, Chillicothe, & St. Thomas's, St. Clairsville.



In giving a view of the Church in this, I shall first  
speak of the Clergy, of their success & prospects, so  
far, as from reports visitations, & personal observing  
I have been able to judge.

The Rev. Mr. J. Hall was ordained Deacon last State  
Convention, and, with hopes of some support from  
the Missionary Society of this State, was understood to  
be stationed for this year, at Ishtabula, in the north east  
part of the Diocese. No communications have, as yet,  
been made directly to me; but are expected at our Conven-  
tion next June. I have heard, however, thro' other chan-  
nels, that, excepting some intermissions of duty, thro'  
bodily sickness, his services have been steady & constant  
to the evident satisfaction of the pious, and, as it is belie-  
ved, to divine acceptance, thro' Jesus Christ.

The Rev. Mr. Barle is still fixed at Medina. As he  
is the only Clergyman of the Church on the Connet-  
tee's lands in Priests Orders, his services are re-  
quired, over a great extent of Country, for the admini-  
stration of the Lord's Supper; & this renders his  
duties very labourious. His accounts to me are  
all in a strain of great encouragement, as to the  
success of the Gospel, not only in form, but in  
heart and in life. I pray God our hopes may be



cherished by divine grace, and final blessing!

The Rev. Mr. Rufus Murray, ordained Deacon at the same time with Mr. Hall above named, was fixed, with hopes of some assistance from the Missionary Society, in the western parts of the Connecticut Refuge, place to depend on convenience. This, I afterwards understood to be Norwalk, in Huron County. Of his success in the ministry, I heard favourable things till he ~~went~~ <sup>went</sup> ~~overland~~ <sup>off</sup>, for the settlement of his Father's estate, into the State of Connecticut. I have not, as yet, heard of his return to this Diocese, tho' he was, at the last advice, expected.

The connexion, between the Rev. Mr. S. Morse ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~regularly~~ <sup>regularly</sup> dissolved and St. James Parish Yanoville, was regularly dissolved, in the spring of 1822; since which time, he has been fixed at Steubenville; where he has regularly & faithfully ministered, devoting a portion <sup>of his</sup> services to the Parish of St. James, Cross Creek, distant, from Steubenville, about 10. or 12. miles.

This Clergyman is my nephew, and affection arising from the ties of consanguinity may, without criminality or weakness, be supposed to give some colouring to judgment. Yet this allowance, of right, ought not, and in truth, can not, obscure from the eye of the Publick the eminent virtues, the pious example, & the great usefulness of this meek & faithful servant of Jesus Christ our Lord.



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The success of the Gospel, under his ministration, both in confirming the faithful in the paths of truth & piety, and in converting sinners to holiness, has been evident, as well in the Parish of Cross Creek, as in that at Steubenville.

It ought to be mentioned, to the honour of the people among whom he ministers, that they have been mindful of their duty, in taking all due care that those who minister to them in spiritual, ~~and~~ <sup>he</sup> not wanting in temporal things, to the great detriment of the Gospel.

The Rev. Mr. Moore, in lack of health, and under great depression of spirits, thro' providential affliction, in the very sudden loss of a beloved wife, was advised to travel; and, in so doing, he performed an important missionary tour thro' a considerable part of the state, last fall. This, I hear, has done much good. With what fervency of entreaty, do I pray God to send forth a like character devoted entirely to the missionary duty, in this diocese! — but of this more hereafter.

In visiting St. Clairsville I found that <sup>the</sup> ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Armstrong had been well received, that he had exerted himself in stirring <sup>up</sup> and writing the hearts of the people to build a church; and that God had blessed his labours in things spiritual. The irregularity of his first introduction into the Diocese was rectified by his cheerful conformity to every canonical requisition, and, according to our diocesan provision, I gave him certificates of his appointment as missionary; which, tho' he lives in Virginia, entitle him to have the cure of souls, and a seat in Convention in the Diocese of Ohio.

Besides the labours of the Rev. Mr. Armstrong in St. Clairsville



which seem ~~to~~ blessed in no common degree, he officiates occasionally at Monistown, a Parish 10.m. to the east, where they have lately commenced the building of a small Church.

My son, the Rev. Philander Chan Junior, <sup>having left</sup> in ~~the~~ school at Worthington, which, under a combination of a number of very disagreeable circumstances, it was thought unadvisable to prosecute any further, fixed himself at Janesville; uniting the tuition of 10. or 15. <sup>pupils in the classics</sup> with the care of the Parish, so far as <sup>that</sup> ~~he~~ <sup>he does</sup> could ~~do~~ <sup>being</sup> yet only in Deacon's Orders.

In this course of duty, he continued, I believe, to great satisfaction, till about the first of Feb. last; when he was seized with a very alarming bleeding at the lungs. I went to see him <sup>that</sup> nearly 170 miles from me; and, beholding his danger, advised him to relinquish not only his school but the duties of his public ministrations; till God, in mercy, restore him to health. As this event, from all similar examples, is very uncertain, & even improbable, I leave it with you, my Brethren, to judge of the depth of my sorrow, & the need I have of your prayers for remission to the Heavenly will.

The Parish in Janesville, though small, had, by their unanimity and zeal, endeared themselves to their minister; and by their unwearied attention to him, especially in his late sickness, <sup>they had</sup> manifested that he was very dear to them. ~~Whereas~~ These two



circumstances, joined to the very affecting manner in which he bore testimony to the truths of the gospel and exhorted his people to holiness of life, while he lay bleeding, for many hours, in his late attack, I humbly hope will be the means of doing much good to the interests of Religion, in that very interesting Parish.

In speaking of the Rev. Ezra B. Kellogg, of ~~Andover~~ <sup>he had</sup> <sup>high</sup> reference to the very estimation, in which his services are held, by the People of Chillieth, I can hardly err on the score of commendation. He was fixed there under ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> agreement to devote one fourth of his time to the Parish of Chillieth at Portsmouth, and an other fourth at Circleville; the former 45. south, the latter 15. north, of Chillieth. This arrangement continued, till very lately, when the People of Chillieth, offering to support their Pastor for the whole of the time, could hardly be denied so reasonable a privilege. This leaves Portsmouth & Circleville again without a shepherd.

The Rev. Mr. K. as I passed thro' Chillieth a few weeks since, told me that he had reason to believe that the Divine word and sacraments had been blessed, and that there were many ready for the Holy Rite of Confirmation and desirous of receiving it.

The Rev. Mr. Samuel Johnston still continues his services in the Parish of Christ Church Cincinnati. His piety and diligence in the duties of his calling deserve



my highest commendations;— would that they  
met with a better reward, even in temporal things.  
But such is the deranged state, <sup>Secular</sup> concerns, in  
this city, that his support is lamentably deficient.  
God grant that the times may change for the  
better; especially that his people may be <sup>inspired</sup> ~~stirred~~  
~~up~~ to seek those heavenly Treasures, which none  
can take from them!

The Rev. Thomas Osborne, last fall,  
accepted a call from Edisto Island, in the  
Diocese of S. Carolina, and removed from this  
state. His learning, virtues, & piety had com-  
manded, ere he left us, great respect from  
all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance.  
The prayers of many, and of none more sin-  
cerely than myself, follow him.

The Rev. Mr. Shemur Wall, from the  
Diocese of Maryland, came into this Diocese  
and from his zeal in the ministry in the  
spring & former part of the <sup>last</sup> summer ~~last~~,  
excited many hopes of great good, <sup>to</sup> some of our  
poor destitute parishes; but by his very sud-  
denly leaving the state, these hopes were not  
realized & fulfilled.



I have closed my observation on the Clergy and  
their labours in the part of Christi<sup>3rd</sup> vine commit-  
-ted to my charge. Taken collectively, it is but  
justice to them as well as pleasing to myself, to  
observe, that they not only live in peace, har-  
-monizing for the glory of God, and the good  
of souls, but afford me every assurance of canon-  
-ical obedience & personal respect.

It remains now, that I speak of the Diocess, in  
-~~general~~ reference to the waste places, vacant  
parishes, and the scattered sheep of our Fold. —  
And here I beg leave to refer you to a circular  
letter, which God enabled me to address to you by  
my son, when on his tour to the eastern Dio-  
-ceses in quest of relief to our pressing wants.

I did hope that such were our necessities  
and ~~so much~~ <sup>essential was deemed</sup> the propriety of  
the Church in this state, even to its existence  
in the west, that ~~some~~ pains would have  
been taken to select & send to me some few, if only  
two or three, faithful ministers, peculiarly fitted,  
by their piety and zeal, for the work of the Gos-  
-pel in the wild wood of the west. ~~The~~ <sup>an</sup> om-  
-plishment of this wish, so sincerely urged in the  
-edicts above referred to, would have perfected  
the work of charity begun in the liberal dona-  
-tions sent me. But instead of this what have been  
the



8. pang of our regret in seeing the spiritual ~~treas-~~  
bandry lie desolate, for want of labourers;  
precious time consuming, and the wild  
beasts every day ~~consuming~~ our treasures.  
Brought up by the fond hope ~~of~~ <sup>even</sup> receiv-  
ing some intimations of a missionary ~~com-~~  
ing among us, I have traversed our extensive  
country alone, to keep alive what must other-  
wise die. My frame, at length, has yielded  
to premature infirmity; and the object of  
my prayer is not accomplished.

Do I say these things to reprove you? No.  
I say them in the anguish of a full heart;  
to give vent to my feelings, which I can  
express to no one else, on earth, so properly.  
If the wants of Twenty two ~~Parent~~ Parish-  
es besides many hundred of scattered shams  
can not command the services even of two  
or three missionaries for a season ~~without~~  
even with the assurance of a reasonable com-  
pensation - what an awful truth does it  
unfold, touching the zeal, and government  
of a Church, having undoubted claims to  
a primitive origin! If the candidates



for the Ministry have that zeal, which I  
humbly conceive is requisite to qualify them  
for their ~~Master's~~ service, the same, it is ho-  
-ped, might, by the authority which Christ  
has left with his Church, be directed in to  
such channels as necessity requires.

If, on the contrary, the chief motive of young  
men in seeking the office of shepherds, is  
universally, <sup>but</sup> that of the enjoyment of ease  
& plenty, green fields and fenced pastures  
; who will go in search of that, which is a stray  
- who will keep off the Wolf & the Bear - who  
will enlarge the borders of their Lord's prophe-  
- - <sup>reign</sup> - dom; and who will, his commendations  
of "well done," at the Last?

Are the young men, who present themselves  
for holy Orders, less disposed "to endure hardness"  
in the work of the gospel, than those who seek  
for the ministry among other denomina-  
tions? If so; which I am inclined, from  
long and critical observation, to believe, whence  
is the cause of this difference? However this  
question be answered; is not the cause of this very  
humiliating evil, under God, within the reach of  
the House of Bishops? Is not their influence  
(granting it unanimous,) in the making of



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common, in the expelling of the Ordination  
service, in the laying of injunctions in com-  
posing pastoral letters and in giving ad-  
vice on this head, sufficient, with God's  
helping ~~us~~ ~~to~~ ~~put~~ ~~down~~  
an evil of this nature?

The Church in Ohio, however blessed, where  
there have been ministrations, has evidently  
lost ground both in numbers & piety dur-  
ing the past years. Two pious & zealous  
Missionaries, it is morally certain, un-  
der a common blessing, could have pre-  
vented this retrograde step, & dis-  
tressing-ly humiliating to every sincere Churchman  
acquainted with the fact.

In trying to prevent the deleterious effects of  
from the want of ministers I have had recourse  
in one instance to the appointment of a ~~clerk~~  
scholar. This person was a Mr. J. M. Jones a  
native of Wales, Eng<sup>d</sup>, remarkable for his so-  
ber & pious deportment. With no family,  
but a discreet wife, he was prepared to accept  
of a small stipend of \$5 per ann<sup>y</sup>, & as a school  
master, to settle in Monroe County to read pray-  
ers & catechise the youth on Sundays. The result  
of this effort to save that poor perishing people



~~from the barbarism~~ has not been as yet fully known; but there is ~~not~~ every reason to believe that the measure will be blessed with exemplary success.

This gives me an opportunity of saying, what I wish I could say more fully than I can do on paper, that were an order of men recognized by the discipline of the Church of an inferior grade to the Deacons, qualified, in English learning, to teach in common schools; to read prayers & catechize on Sundays; and, otherwise, by their pious example and advice, to gather, & keep from straying, the lambs of Christ's fold, it would tend more than <sup>any</sup> other practicable measure, to accomplish the great end we have in view, of rearing the Church in the wilderness. Let me have but five pious young men - or those with small families - provided with a good English Education (I mean in the most ordinary branches of Eng<sup>l</sup> Gram<sup>r</sup> & Arithmetic) sincerely attached to our primitive Church, and I will place them in good schools, give them each 50. per ann. extra; and by their exertions on Sunday and other holy days, keep twice 3 parishes <sup>from ruin</sup>.



from ruin. May I not hope some such  
class of people will be recognized by our  
canons; and that persons of the specified  
qualifications be recommended, by some  
public order, to come to our assistance?

The next thing deeply affecting the  
interests of the Church of Christ, even here  
in our new Country, is the subject embro-  
-led in the Recommendation of the House  
of Bishops concerning Theatrical repres-  
-entations. You would hardly believe  
if you were not, from known and ac-  
-crued authority assured, that the practices e-  
-numerated in the forementioned injunc-  
-tion, are to be found in almost all our li-  
-t- the villages scattered up and down our woods  
of woods. The clergy of the Diocess have  
uniformly (with the exception of one, since  
degraded) thought themselves bound, by the  
spirit of the gospel, to obey the first part of  
the Episcopal injunction. In so doing this  
in the spirit of great mildness, they have  
in some instances met with hostility evidently inconsistent  
with the character of the meek & lowly disciples



13.  
of the Blessed Jesus. Now what is to be done in such cases, <sup>are the Communicants</sup> to proceed from one degree to another, till the advice and entreaty of the Ministers be brought in to utter contempt, and still be admitted to the Table?

If the meaning of that Recommendation were papered into a Canon prohibiting such practices in Communicants; and, after the second and third admonition, <sup>the</sup> the clergyman, <sup>was</sup> authorized <sup>to suspend</sup> from the privileges of the Altar; would not a sufficient check, against ~~the~~ arbitrary proceedings, <sup>that</sup> ~~clergyman~~ if any such <sup>were</sup> apprehended, be found in a proviso for an appeal to the Bishop, in case the <sup>grieved</sup> thought proper so to do?

As it now stands there is just enough done by the Church to point out the right way; there, leave the clergy to stand still, like ~~the~~ finger posts, without life <sup>& power</sup> <sup>sufficiently</sup> to pursue it.

But I leave this subject, for one, which, <sup>during</sup> for a long period, has rested on my mind with much greater weight. In mentioning it, I earnestly desire to write the discharge of my conscience with a very sincere



sinure respect for the venerable framers of the  
constitution and canons of our American Church.  
Nothing that I shall say, ~~it is desired~~, will be taken as any  
reflection upon their wisdom or holy intentions.

Being thus understood I shall ~~mention the subject~~, ex=  
press my opinion, I hope with modesty, yet with the free=  
dom of one who perhaps may never have another op=  
portunity.

Is there no way of guarding from abuse the right,  
which the Laity have by our constitution to a seat in our  
ecclesiastical councils? As things are now, there  
is no provision made to prevent the election of  
persons to the state, or genl, Conventions, who are  
not communicants, not confirmed, or even  
~~not~~ baptized.

I forbear to mention past instances & to fancy  
the probability of future cases wherein the si-  
lence of our Constitution & canons in this respect  
have led or may lead to ~~disgraceful~~ consequences  
inconsistent with the very nature of all ~~divine~~  
government ~~natural~~ <sup>or</sup> divine ~~only~~ but even  
prudential. I would speak only of the ~~thing~~ <sup>evil</sup>  
itself and suggest a remedy.

This liability to abuse is sanctioned by very  
scriptural example. If by the brethren being  
present in some meetings for exhortation desir-  
~~able and profitable to the City by their taking a part~~



18  
-ions, it must be understood that these brethren  
were the Lairty; and by their being present  
it must, with equal clearness, be inferred that  
they took an active & controlling part in such  
decisions; Then, certainly, the very name of  
"Brethren" implies that they were such, by  
having, <sup>previously</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>to</sup> tests, which the Lord  
Jesus and his apostles had instituted not only  
as means of grace, but as badges of discip-  
ship. in other words, they <sup>were</sup> baptized confirmed & unrepentant  
of the Holy Eucharist.  
2. This liability to abuse is exemplified  
in other denominations. What Conference

Synod, Council, or Assembly of the Methodists,  
Baptists, Dutch or Presbyterian <sup>associations</sup> ~~conventions~~  
but is <sup>not</sup> sufficiently guarded, the evil of which we  
are speaking? - How would even they blush  
to be told, that it were possible <sup>for</sup> that persons  
having never made a profession of Religion  
~~would~~ <sup>could</sup> not only hold a seat in their councils,  
but, in some instances, give the casting vote  
in decisions <sup>involving</sup> doctrine & discipline of  
the first importance? Yet such is the  
case of the P. E. Church of U. S. of America.

- If I were asked for a remedy of this evil, I  
should find it in the parental care of the  
House of Bishops. The whole church looks



16. To Them for direction especially in matters  
of such vital importance as this: and <sup>in</sup> this  
expectation they ought not to be disappointed  
— If it be said, that by making a Can-  
on on this subject, our shame will be expo-  
sed to the world; let a private injunction  
as by unanimous agreement among the  
Bishops, be <sup>solemnly</sup> laid upon the Clergy of every  
Diocese to <sup>use all prudent care & advice</sup> ~~see~~ that none be elected to the  
state or Genl. Conventions but ~~as~~ such  
as are Communicants at the Lord's Table.

If this do not in every respect cure the  
evil — (confident I am that it will do  
it in a great measure) then let other means  
be <sup>used</sup> resorted to, more effectual.

As it respects myself, so fully am I per-  
suaded that it is my duty to do all I can  
to obviate & destroy this evil, that I do  
now solemnly desire that my protest  
against its continuance may be re-  
corded in the minds of all my brethren.



17  
Prevented from seeing you, not by  
want of earnest desire, but by providen-  
tial impediments I think I  
have ~~some~~ just reason to expect in  
answer to this, some communica-  
tion from the House of Bishops con-  
taining fraternal advice, Christian en-  
couragement and other means of fellow-  
ship dictated by our common faith.

In the mean time I beg leave to  
reiterate the assurances of my esteem  
for your personal & official character  
and of my earnest prayers for your  
temporal and eternal happiness.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus  
Christ and the love of God, & the Fellow-  
ship of the Holy Ghost be with you all  
amen. (signed)

Apr. 11. A.D. 1823  
Cincinnati, Ohio,