7-6-1865

Letter to Bishop Hopkins

Henry Lee

Bp. Whittingham
on Letter to Bishop
Bp —

Balt. July 6. 1865

My dear Bishop

I thank you for your communication of your letter to Bp Hopkins. With no exception I had felt strongly all the grounds of objection to Bp H's course which you bring forward, but am so earnestly desirous that the sundered elements of our Body should be brought together with the least possible delay, that I was fain to overcome my reluctance to give sanction to a somewhat dangerous precedent, to the extent of authorizing Bp H to send his letter in his own name with assurance of my concurrence. I inclose copy of my note on next leaf.

The point in regard of which

I do not have in your apprehensions is that of the danger of having a "military" representative sent to General Convention from some Northern Diocese. I am very positively assured by such of the clergy from the South as I have seen, that the opinion of Churchmen is strongly against the desecration of the ministerial office by military service; and that no clergyman who has been guilty of it is likely to recover his standing with ease or speedily.

The utterances of our brethren of Georgia are greatly to be regretted: but even those had perhaps better be ignored by us, if he be disposed to take an altered tone, rather than drive him, and others in support of him, into an attitude of open opposition.

Very faithfully
your friend & brother
W R Whittingham

Rt Rev Dr Wood Maine

(Copy)

Rt Rev & dear Sir

I have received your printed circular of June 22d inclosing a draft of a letter to the Bishops in the States lately in rebellion, for my signature.

I cannot sign, as my own, a letter about the contents and phraseology of which I have had no opportunity of previous conference.

But that the brotherly and timely action proposed by you may have, as far as I am concerned, the spirit and substance of entire unanimity, I cordially authorize you to send your proposed letter, as written by you in my behalf with my hearty concurrence in its purport and end

Very faithfully & truly
your friend & brother
(Signed) W R Whittingham

Rt Rev John H Hopkins, D.D.
Bishop of Vermont
and Senior Bishop &c &c

(Copy.)

Davenport, Iowa,
July 6, 1865.

Rt. Rev.
and dear Brother,

The Circular proposed to be sent to the Southern Bishops was duly rec'd. I have given to it as full a consideration as I am capable of, and regret that I must decline giving to it my signature. It contains several sentences which are susceptible of an interpretation which I could not approve, and which might give an impression to those to whom it is addressed that would be contrary to what I believe to be the facts in the case. I cannot go into details; but, my dear Bishop, will it not be better for our Southern brethren to go to work to undo what they have done in organizing a separate Ecclesiastical Body;

and then, in the regular course of things, return to that Body from which they voluntarily and prematurely retired? We can hardly ask or expect them to come to the General Convention so long as their distinct organization is in existence. Personally I should prefer to wait three years before having them again with us, so that time might be given for the purpose above indicated, and for the general quieting down of both civil and ecclesiastical matters; but if they should, any of them, appear at the approaching Triennial Meeting, I should be most strongly in favor of treating them only as brethren in Christ; though I am opposed to any advances or compromises on our part which would, either seemingly or in reality, give a false impression of our position, or commit the Church at large to views or principles which she has never

adopted.

If the ground should be taken that their General Organization falls with the so-called Confederacy, it might be said that the Confederacy did not really exist when they organized; and yet the Dioceses concerned gave in, in a formal manner, their adherence to the new Body. Is no action now required, on their part, to place them where they were before? I cannot argue this point at length, but it seems to me to be attended with serious difficulties, which the seceding Dioceses alone can remove.

But to my mind the Circular is objectionable on other grounds, and I know you will give me credit for sincerity and honesty when I say that I cannot consistently sign it.

Faithfully your Brother
in Christ,
Henry W. Lee

Bishop Hopkins.

Bp. Lee of
Iowa
Letter to Bp. Upfshur
(Southern Bp.)