

Charles Pettit McIlvaine Letters

12-25-1862

Letter to Bedell

Charles Petit McIlvaine

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Much about
Cincinnati churches,

Cinc. Dec. 25. 1862

My dear Bishop-

Yours from Urbana came last Ev.
As I am too unwell to go to Church to-day, I will
write in answer next tomorrow, something should pro-
-veat. I enclose some letters - one was opened by mistake
supposing it was to me.

In regard to a meeting for the formation of a Society
the more I think of it, the more I am satisfied that
the movement would be premature.

In general - the whole matter has been too little ma-
-tered as to what should be aimed at; & you are here
to start a time to mature ideas, with due consultation
of the views of laymen, as to what should be aimed at - first,
whether it should be a young men's society, or one com-
-prehending all - (if which my mind is not decided) secondly
whether it should aim at one object of sustaining new
efforts at Churches - or a more general object - thirdly whether
it should be a limited operation comprised only of a few
decidedly working men of each Church (if they can be got)
who shall seek means from all - ~~whether it shall be~~
~~consultation~~ - My mind leans to the last - Dr. Butler be-
-gins a Soc. in Christ Ch. (Young Men) - The Men excluded

Complained. It was composed of a very few - B^{to},
the Church of Atonement & Redemption, were mainly
done - Had Dr Butler stayed & preserved his influence that
Association would have had a better history - The result was
that the few members were saddled with a prodigious
individual expense far beyond their means - & their
experience will make them very careful hereafter -
This leads me to remark that I do not find fault with
the people of Londⁿ - as to the extension of the Ch. in the
City - The fact that two congregations - neither of them rich
^{compared with many N.Y. or Phil^a Churches} have long supplied nearly or quite 2/3 of the Miss. Receipts
of the Society is evidence of willingness - The fault has
been in the Clergy - Not a man of them was to be
step beyond a collection for the extension of the Ch. except
Dr Butler & ^{Mr Gray} One of the Rectors of St Paul many years ago -
Godsend threw every obstacle in the way. Collections are
very little without personal efforts to form & sustain & add
& encourage - I have preached more for the poor new
congregations which since I came here have been started,
two of which remain (not to speak of St John's) by many
times than all the rest put together, except Mr Gray - That
however is not saying much, for I never heard of the
clergy preaching there at all - except Mr Gray & sometimes for
help - Butler - I do not include in the above wehant bills
or Clifton - which are not properly City Churches
No effort will be of any use unless the Parish Clergy take

There's true policy as to their influence is to begin slowly
& cautiously - feel their way - & state nothing new till
they have got used to the idea. For a minister as recent
as Mr. Roman to introduce this subject among his people
would have an unhappy influence - except an over
work - & that is exactly what must be avoided - that
is - a Society must have other foundations than our
work - It is easy now, on that basis to get a Soc. organized -
but to have it go on afterwards & be efficient, is another
matter - I think you over estimate the price that can
be brought out, especially ^{even} at the best of times -

If I were Roman or Cox - in these circumstances,
& my Bp. should urge this subject, I should probably
say what I think they would say - "If you think it
should be attempted now, we will do our best! - what
I should sincerely feel as I think they will, that
it is unseasonably urged - Six months hence, if they
do well, will be much better time - & if they do not
well for six months, better not begin now - Willness
is such things as the new church - Are you posted as
to the results of such societies elsewhere - Has any
general society of the kind succeeded? Are new churches
in Phila. N. Y. or Boston begun by such? The work in Phila.
has been elective - & elsewhere it has been parochial -

But I need knowledge on that head - as to my own
participation. I do not think it would be well for
such a movement to originate in a cell by the Bp -
My observation leads me to place my little reliance ^{of experience}
on special influence (Episcopal) to such ends - I am personally
I have a little belief in it - so far as I am concerned -
I have tried it here when I wanted money for the
College & been so involved in the failure that I am
not disposed to risk much again. But independently
of that, it is much better that the Congregations should
realize that it is the work of their Rectors mainly
& originally - than as to the composition of the Soc.
I should decidedly & freely object to the Bp. being
Pres. because as his residence here is only incidental
to it, there is no special reason why he should be
Pres. of such a Soc. - in ^{more} England - than in Canada -
where it should be a lay-society & the Party should feel
that it is such to such extent as that all the
responsibility is on them - as soon as you have a
Bp. at the head - all hard tugs & crises will be
placed on him - & all failures will implicate
his usefulness & influence. He can serve to better
our them us - There is no danger that the working man
would not be sufficiently dependent to his counsel as to

mode of action.

I have thus very hastily endeavored to express
my views - according to present symptoms I shall be
confined to the house some days - The local infla-
-mation by which I suffered in the summer & from
which I have been entirely relieved, since then,
only about two weeks (write in N.Y.) has returned

in great force.

Of course we must see you here -
Happy Christmas to you & Mrs. Sedell - I sent you yesterday
at Gambier, forgetting all about your coming to Lucin - a
letter from Dr. How - rather encouraging -

Yours Affly
C. P. M.

P.S. Mr. Allen:
important as to your
movement in Cin

Dec: 25/62
27