

Philander Chase Letters

4-9-1846

Letter to the Author of the Churchman's Manual

Philander Chase

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Editorial Dept

To the author of the
Churchman's Manual

26. St. James place,
London, ...

Wesley College, Walnut Street P.O., Illinois

April 9th, 1846.

My dear Sir,

I rec. a few days ago, your letter

dated the 15th of Jan: 1846. and with it a little work entitled "the Churchman's manual", which you say has been altered and improved till it "has been much read in Britain and not unknown in the United States."

This little work you have been pleased, ^{to dedicate} you say, "to the Chief Bishops in England and Ireland & Scotland" and the Presiding Bishops in the U States of America."

If by the last be meant myself, I beg leave to decline the address: for I would not willingly countenance the thought of dropping the name "Protestant", given always to my venerable Predecessors.

You do not say that the Chief Bishops to whom you have dedicated your work have actually given their assent to all it contains by formally authorizing you to say it was "by permission." Had they done this it would have grieved the true friends of the Epis. Church in America: for thereby would have been manifested

prayerbook are printed these words

"The Ratification of the book of Common prayer

"By the Bishops, the Clergy and the Laity
 "of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United
 "States of America, in Convention, this the sixteenth
 "day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand
 "seven hundred and eighty nine."

"This Convention having in their present ses-
 "sion set forth a book of common prayer and
 "administration of the Sacraments and other rites
 "and ceremonies of the Church do establish the
 "same"

Here you observe that the Laity are
 an integral part of the Convention of the
 Episcopal Church in the U. States. Our practice
 therefore is contrary to the principle laid down
 in your Manual, and should the latter be appro-
 ved by the Chief Bishops in England Ireland and
 Scotland it would manifest an hostility towards
 us of America hitherto unknown - most to be
 deplored if it be true.

It is somewhat remarkable that in refusing to recog-
 nize authorities by which the laity are supposed to be
 rejected from the councils of the Church the self same
 chapter overos ~~states~~ ^{are} mentioned by "the Manual"
 thus are selected by Mr. White and all the American
 writers on this subject to establish the contrary
 principle - viz that the Laity ought to have a
 seat

read in our Conventions. In the 11th Chap^r of the
 acts of the Apostles there is given an acc^t of the
 1st council of the Christian Church. This was at
 Jerusalem and St. James the ^{third} Bishop presided
 and who were they over whom he presided and had
 a voice in its decisions? — The Apostles and Elders
Only? — Not so the record — In the 4th verse
 it appears that the Messengers from Antioch were
 "received by the Church" and "the Apostles and El-
 ders": "the Church" consisted of the "Brethren"; the
 Laity such of them as attended & represented the main
 body of baptized persons in Jerusalem and vicinity;
 and there were sitting with the Apostles and Elders
 & thus being an integral part of the council had
 not only to receive messengers from Antioch but
 to act upon the substance of their message and to
 send both messengers and message back to Antioch
 Read the 22 & 23 verses of this 15. Chapter of the
 acts of the Apostles.

"Then it pleased the Apostles & Elders with
 the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own company
 to Antioch with Paul & Barnabas viz. Judas named Barsa-
 bus & Silas chief men among the brethren: & they wrote let-
 ters by them after this manner. The Apostles & Elders
 & Brethren — send greeting unto the brethren ^{and}
 of the gentiles in Antioch & Syria & Cilicia"

In the 25th verse the language is such as to lead
 to the same conclusion: "It seemed good unto ^{us}
 to send"

By this word "us" must be meant the signers of
of the letter. - And who were they? - answer, "the
Apostles & Elders" with the Whole Church!"

These are the references which the author of the Church
man's manual has been pleased to designate to convince
the reader from holy writ, ^{in order} are not an integral part

of the councils of the Church of God - nor ^{have} any power
or right to give sanction to Ecclesiastical Law - or to
the establishment of the forms and ceremonies of the
Church of God. - You can did mind on a re-examina-

-tion of the subject ^{will I trust} perceive that the evidence, to which
you readers are referred, proves the contrary. However this maybe,

One thing is a fact, the first Convention of our primi-
tive Church in America admitted the Laity as
an ⁱⁿ integral part of that body - and acting with
the Presbyters, all laws, made by them, sanctioned
by the house of Bishops, are valid - and none else.

This ^{has been approved} was sanctioned by the practice of all
the individual Divines - and never questioned
by anyone within in the United States.

And till the Oxford Movement and other
tendencies to Rome ~~has been~~ made no
fault has been found with us in ~~the~~ England
Your little work however seems to speak a differ-
ent language - to lay down a different prin-
ciple: a principle evidently concurring with
the

11
franchise of the Papal Communion hath been
always to deprecate the Laity and exalt the Clergy
especially
~~at~~ all such as are inclined to exalt the pope, above the
civil power.

In reply to your statement that your "little work"
"is not unknown in America!" I would respectfully
observe that whoever being a true Protestant has
read it with approbation has not been aware
of the error which it has been the ^{endeavour} ~~purpose~~ of the
subscribers to point out. ~~It is~~ an error
which if generally re-acted on will destroy
the Prot. Episcopal Church in America and
erect on its ruins a Papal temple. —

In view of such a catastrophe and the struggle
which must precede it. I can not but be
worthily thank the good God that we honest
—ly and ^{scripturally} ~~rationally~~ can claim the Laity
as our safeguard in the solemn crisis which
seems to await us. While scarcely a man
among the Laity ~~with~~ a fig for his honesty
or talents has ^{to} ~~apostrophized~~ ^{promoted} how crowded
are the ranks of the ~~present~~ clergy in

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