

Saint Louis -

Oct 18. 1839.

J. Rev. Dr. McKim.

Dear Sir,

I am well aware that the liberty which I am now about taking will at first surprise you. Perhaps it may displease you. But the sympathy which I feel with every sentiment expressed in your preface to the book which you now have in the press is so strong, that I am ready to run some risk in violating the strict laws of Etiquette, for the sake of making myself known to you and of testifying my joy at the step which you have recently taken. I rejoice chiefly not because you seem to be approaching more and more nearly the faith which I myself hold, but because your dissent from the Church to which you formerly belonged is grounded upon an abhorrence of that sectarian and exclusive spirit which so strongly characterizes it. Here is the common ground upon which all lovers of Truth stand. "A mind fettered by authority is unfaithful to the God of Truth, who made it to be free." The banner upon which such words are written is the only one that I am willing to follow. Those whom the love of Truth "has made free" are the only ones whom I am ready to acknowledge as fellow-believers. I therefore cannot help saying to you how grateful I am to be thus confirmed and strengthened in

my love of freedom and in my dread of all human authority in matters of religious belief, by the example of one so much older and more experienced than myself, and whom I had learned to respect even before this bond of sympathy was known to exist. Indeed, Sir, with all earnestness and ~~not~~ in all sincerity, I thank you for the bold step you have taken and the strong testimony you have borne. It has done me good, and although I have always detested sectarianism and loved freedom, I shall from this day love the one and detest the other more fervently. And I trust also, that these feelings will ever exist in my mind, as they evidently do in yours, without any admixture of arrogance and without any retaliation of the hard feelings which are evinced by others in their judgement of us.

It is proper for me to inform you that I am the Minister of Christ in the First Congregational Church, which is generally known as the Unitarian Church of this City. As such I am called upon to bear much reproof. It was only yesterday, that the Presbyterian Minister, Rev. Mr. Potts, refused any association with me in performance of Services at the grave of a stranger who died at the house of one of my parishioners. This spirit is exhibited towards me every day. And yet I feel confidence in saying that the most bigotted can lay no charge against me, either as a man or as a Minister of Christ, except my "heresy." Alas, they do not know that Sectarianism is the heresy by which more souls are lost than any other. "How much," says Baxter,

has the devil gained by over doing?

Although I am a member of the Unitarian body, and am Unitarian in most of my opinions, I am not entirely satisfied with this connexion, and value it chiefly because of the full, Christian freedom which it permits me to enjoy. I mean by this, that I think Unitarianism to need very material modification before it becomes a clear expression of Gospel truth. There are now many symptoms that such modification will soon be effected, or at least in part. Unitarians as a body are becoming more spiritual in their interpretation of Scripture. To use a much abused word, they are becoming more Evangelical. Therefore they have relied too much & confidently, upon the light of human reason. Now it is to men like yourself,

who have been led by a hearty love of independence to disclaim human authority, that I look for the elements of our improvement. Your position is such that you are likely to avoid either extreme. I shall look anxiously to see the faith in which your mind will ultimately settle, and from it hope to learn much.

Again I ask your kind indulgence for the freedom I am taking. I am a young man, but would not willingly transcend the bounds of propriety. If I do so, in this instance, most respectfully I ask your forgiveness. At least it may give you pleasure, that your recent change will not be misunderstood by all.

In conclusion let me say that it will give me great pleasure to see you in St. Louis. My pulpit and Church will be entirely at your service. I am not at

house-keeping, but can give you a very pleasant
room if you will stay with me. I will add that
a Church, independent of all sects, such as you would
probably wish to establish, would undoubtedly suc-
ceed in this city. Nothing would give me greater
pleasure than to see such a Church established.

Single & Paid *1/3*
PAID



Rev. A. Myer - D.D.

St. Bloomington

Indiana



of to
judge

With the confident hope that you will excuse
my forwardness and receive my letter in the
same spirit in which it is written,

I remain Your brother in the Christian faith -
Wm. G. Eliot