

Ponce Porto Rico

June 3rd 1902

JUN 9 1902

Rev. Joshua Kimber D.D.

My dear Mr. Kimber,

Your letter of May 20th was
rec'd. by our last mail from N.Y. ^{and}
I am very glad you gave me such
a clear account of what the
Board of Managers did anent my
stipend at their meeting on

May 13th

I have just written to Mr. Wood
in reply to a letter rec'd. from him
with yours, so that I will leave
much that might be said in
this connection as you, or the
Board, will receive the information
through my letter to him.

I note especially in the preamble
the following clause; "Pending the action
of the Bishop in inducing the local
congregation to keep its contract and to
repay money advanced by the Board
under the following resolution".

I am informed by the members
who composed the former Vestry
that there was no contract or promise
of any kind made by this congrega-
tion to contribute any such
amount towards the support of
a rector.

That the resources of the church
would not permit such a promise
and that the impression that such
a contribution can possibly be made
by this congregation is erroneous.

The only part which this church
was doing towards the support of

their former rector at his resignation
was the payment of \$25. per month
for his house rent.

It is true that under the admin-
istration of the Bishop of Antigua
the salary of the rector was met
by the local congregation apart
from the support which it
is now receiving, but the circum-
stances were very different
from those which now exist;
in the first place, private
subscriptions as well as
Missionary appropriations were
recd. from England, where the
little Protestant Church of
Porto Rico, on account of its
solitary position and independence
in daring to lift its head under

a tyrannous Spanish rule, held
a very dear place in the affections
of the Bishops of the Church of
England & rec'd. their earnest
endorsement & support.

Then too it was the only Protestant
church in Porto Rico and apart
from the regular monthly subscription
rec'd. from San Juan where
the rector paid monthly visits
and gave services, Protestants
from many other towns on
the Island sent in their con-
tributions for the support of
this church.

Of course all this has been
stopped. The English contributors
have left it to the American
Church and inasmuch as Protestant

churches have ³ been established
all over the Island each town has
its own work to support.

Again, upon the occupation of
the Island by the Americans many
of the officials were temporarily
stationed at Ponce and they were
very generous in their contributions
to this church and from this
source the treasury was much
benefited, but this was only
a temporary support and such
contributors having been removed
their contributions have ceased.

Many of those who contributed
largely to the maintenance of the
church from the beginning of its
existence have also removed or
died and much support has been

lost on this account. So that
while in the past a good
showing was made, the changed
condition of affairs have
very materially altered the financial
ability of the church and what
it did in the past is no test
of what can be done now.

In regard to "this congregation re-
~~fraining from money~~ ~~collected~~ by the
board under this resolution", the
board would know that the only
resource from which to secure
such a return, is the little
balance held to the credit of
the church by the treasurer of
the Wise Society. But I earnestly
trust that the Board would
wish to enhance the only thing

left by the former ⁴rector of this
Church from his efforts to
provide a fund with which to
meet the imperative necessity for
a new church which we all
recognize is fast approaching.

While we are convinced of the wisdom
of the Board in all its actions
and assured that it is not lacking
in sympathy for and interest in the
Church at Ponce, yet we cannot
quite understand why from
this little fund, the only thing,
apart from the regular support
of the rector, the American Church
has ever done for Ponce,
should be drawn the whole
amount demanded by the Bishop
of Antigua for the transference of the
whole Island to the American Church.

The future of our Church in
Ponce depends upon what shall
be done and not the continuance
of what we have now. The
Crisis through which we are
passing is one which affects
our very existence. True
we have a church building
the result of the enthusiasm
and liberality of Protestants in
years past, we have the history
of a struggle for existence
through more than a quarter of
a century and here and there a
well-earned Victory is recorded,
but Protestant churches, more
modern & expensive are springing
up about us. Protestant
Ministers & church workers
multiplying with liberal support

from their home³ Boards & if we
are to remain we too must take
on new life, put forth new
energy and to do so we must
have the unstinted & generous
support of the church at
home.

Please pardon such a long
letter my dear Mr but I want
to present to the Board a full
and clear account of the
situation here.

I am, with best wishes &
Christian love,

Yrs Faithfully & affly,
E. Sterling Gunn.