

A CHARGE,
DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY
OF THE
Archdeaconry of New South Wales,
AT THE
PRIMARY VISITATION,
HOLDEN AT SYDNEY,
In the Church of St. James,
On Thursday, the 3d of December, 1829.

BY THE VENERABLE
WILLIAM GRANT BROUGHTON, M. A.
ARCHDEACON OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

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Mr & Mrs James Broughton

With the Author's Love

TO
THE REVEREND
THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY
OF
NEW SOUTH WALES,
This Charge,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS INSCRIBED,
WITH THE UTMOST RESPECT AND REGARD,
BY
THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,
W. G. BROUGHTON.

THE REVENUE

THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE

NEW SOUTH WALES

IS INSCRIBED

W. G. TROUGHTON

A CHARGE, &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

THE “minister of Christ and steward of the mysteries of God” stands pledged by engagements so awful, that every one of us by whom they are regarded with becoming seriousness must tremble, in his attempts to fulfil them, under a sense of his own insufficiency. Where we are charged with only a personal responsibility, such a dread of falling short of the glory of God, must be the natural consequence of due reflection on the disproportion subsisting between our feeble powers, and the duties of a Christian teacher. No elaborate argument is needed to demonstrate with how much greater force this observation applies to the occupier of a station which imposes on him, in addition

to his own proper ministerial charge, the superintendence of others in the fulfilment of their sacred duties. I speak not, believe me, my brethren, the language of insincerity or affectation in affirming that my own mind is even painfully sensible of the weight of this twofold obligation ; and that two considerations alone enable me with any degree of confidence to undertake the duties with which I am here entrusted. The consciousness, I mean, of not having myself desired or sought the arduous post which has been assigned to me ; and my assured belief that God, whose Providence has conducted my steps, will give me grace and power, as I most earnestly and humbly beseech he will, faithfully to take the oversight of his Church, and rightly to divide the word of truth unto all followers of Christ Jesus our Lord.

The present Meeting, as it affords me the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with so many of my fellow-

labourers in this work, is one in which I find much cause for gratification. The advantages which may be expected to result from this our introduction to each other's knowledge, will be, I trust, improved by my entering into some observations on our ministerial engagements : first, of a general tendency, and secondly with a particular application to our situation in this Colony.

The great purpose of the gospel, stated in a few words, is to bring back man to God ; to renew in his mind the image of his Creator in righteousness and true holiness ; and thus to subvert and expel that spirit of sensuality whereby the devil leads and governs those who are taken captive by him at his will. The bounden duty of every minister of the church of Christ is to deliver the message of the gospel without evasion or corruption. More effectually to fulfil this our appointed work, and at the same time to furnish ourselves with a criterion for determining whether or no

we are proceeding in it, I would recommend to you, as a practise of which the utility has been proved, not too much to generalise your discourses ; but that such may be the tenor of your preaching as never to lose sight of one great leading principle. That principle, it should be the object of our public and private endeavours to explain clearly, and to establish in general acceptance ; and from this every point of belief and practice, in due subordination and arrangement, may be deduced as corollaries from their fundamental proposition.

The principle to which I would direct your attention, may be described as that which represents the religion of Jesus Christ under the character of "*Salvation*;" and the Son of God as the "*Redeemer*" of his church. Unless I have greatly mistaken the spirit of the apostles, and the views of the reformers, I am justified in saying that the gospel cannot be preached conformably with their principles unless

this feature be always prominent in our representation of its doctrines ; and in stating my persuasion that those doctrines cannot otherwise be urged with any great practical effect. To call forth and exert his utmost powers in recommending the beauty of holiness, exemplified in the fulfilment of Christian duties and obligations, is the stated service required from every preacher of the word of God. Experience in the Scriptures, acquired by prayer and meditation, must however quickly satisfy us that it is but lost labour thus to exhort unto works of righteousness, unless we lay the foundation aright, and continually bring back to the recollection of our hearers the grounds of their obligation so to abound. That obligation, we must unceasingly remind them, arises out of the relation in which they stand as persons “ *redeemed* ;” as a “ *purchased* possession ;” as “ *bought* with a price ;” as being therefore “ *not their own*,” nor at liberty to live otherwise than in subjection to the

will of Him, who, by the payment of an inestimable ransom, has opened the doors of our prison-house, and set at liberty those whom "the Scripture had concluded all under sin."

We hear it sometimes maintained, and an opinion prevails in many quarters, that the preacher who thus frames his discourses with constant reference to one leading truth, must acquire a contracted style of thinking, and be confined within narrow limits in his practical exhortations to godliness of living. But such apprehensions I must consider as founded either in prejudice or mistake. In dwelling upon redemption as the proper end for which Christ's blood was shed, and thus presenting to men a view at once simple and correct of their condition under the covenant of grace, we both explain to them most readily, in their just extent, the obligations arising out of that condition, and are enabled to urge them, by the most appropriate and persuasive motives, to fulfil

their part in the engagements of that covenant. All inconsistency of conduct originates in mistaken impressions or in imperfect views ; in ignorance or forgetfulness of our real situation and circumstances. So true is this in a religious sense, that it is vain to expect men to make much advance in practical christianity unless they have a distinct comprehension of the relation in which they stand to God in Christ. That relation I would therefore recommend to be frequently and expressly presented to their attention ; and to be so incorporated with all your teaching, that the savour of the doctrine may be discernible even when it is not avowedly or specifically insisted upon. Our representations will be more effective and awakening in proportion to their unity and simplicity, the inseparable characteristics of truth ; and by thus referring constantly to one primary and governing principle, we shall attain the advantage of a systematical style of preaching, without the risk

of that coldness and languor which too close an adherence to system is commonly found to introduce.

Next in succession and importance to uncorruptness of doctrine, I would place fidelity, regularity, and attention in the discharge of our ministerial duties. The exhibition of a becoming gravity of deportment in the celebration of public worship, and the maintenance of due solemnity in the administration of the Sacraments, and of the occasional offices of the Church, we may confidently expect will bring greater numbers, and with improved dispositions, to be the attendants on our ministry. Such conduct, on our part, will beget a feeling of respect and confidence on theirs ; and, as a natural result, will dispose our hearers to attend with greater seriousness and devotion to the warnings and instructions which they receive from us. I can reckon indeed but few more effective causes of disesteem for the person, and disinclination towards the

ministry of a clergyman, than an opinion prevailing that the offices he has to discharge are hurried over merely as a task which he must perform, and without any impression, upon his own mind, of their solemnity and importance. And can we feel surprise at this? Can we reasonably expect the hearts of others to be affected, when he who should lead and animate their devotions exhibits an example only of carelessness and languor? It is, in the nature of things, impossible we should ever be looked up to with general reverence, or obtain that influence over the public mind which is necessary to make us effective ministers of the New Testament, unless there be a prevailing persuasion that the object which we have really at heart is to advise and assist men to save their souls. To this end we have solemnly dedicated ourselves. Let it be this which, in sincerity and as in the sight of God, we propose to accomplish, and the benefit will appear in the edifying tone of our exhor-

tations; in the respect with which they are attended to; in the beneficial influence of our example: and, finally, we may hope, in turning many to righteousness, to the saving of their souls in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In no country whatever is it possible for a clergyman to fulfil all his duties within the walls of his church. To constitute him the freely-chosen and efficient adviser, both spiritual and temporal, of his flock, he must be among them during the week as habitually as he is over them on the Sabbath. His foot must be accustomed to the threshold, his voice familiar to the ear, and a sense of his concern for their welfare imprinted on the heart, of even the least considerable person for whose soul he watches, as one that must give an account. I make these observations with a full perception of the difficulties which here oppose this pastoral intercourse, but at the same time with an equally strong conviction of its greater

necessity and importance in this country than in almost any with which I am acquainted. The impression conveyed to me by your official returns is, that there exists on the part of the remote settlers a very general disposition to attend the public services of our Church, whenever those services are brought fairly within their reach. But our Churches are few in number, and placed at such inconvenient distances as greatly to impede, and too often wholly to frustrate, their inclination. Seeing, then, that ordinary circumstances unavoidably deprive such numbers of our people of all participation in our public worship, and in one at least of the Holy Sacraments, how incumbent is it upon us to call to mind the solemn vow of our Ordination that we will "seek for Christ's sheep scattered abroad, and for his children who are dispersed in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever." How

shall we acquit ourselves to our own conscience or in the sight of that great Shepherd of the sheep, if, knowing that so many are gone astray in the wilderness, we resort not to every practicable exertion to seek them out and to bring them back to the fold? Especially are we bound not to decline these labours if it be true, as is confidently affirmed, that in many parts of the Colony removed from the reach of ministerial superintendence, there is not only a decay of real piety, but even a want of the outward observance of religion. Public prayers and exhortations are utterly unknown, and the sanctification of the Sabbath by its distinction from other days, is falling rapidly into disuse. This is a state of things which must afflict the hearts of all who are zealous for the glory of God and the only true happiness of man. But such profanation is not without a precedent under nearly similar circumstances, nor without instructive warning as to the means of reformation.

In the Charter of Incorporation granted by King William III. to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, it is stated, " His Majesty has been credibly informed that many plantations, colonies, and factories beyond the sea, are wholly destitute and unprovided of a maintenance for ministers and the public worship of God ; and for lack of support and maintenance for such, many of our loving subjects do want the administration of God's word and sacraments, and seem to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity." And who shall check the growth of these alarming evils here, unless we, my Reverend Brethren, in the service of God, and in an entire dependence upon Him, bestow the benefit of our ministerial attention upon the widest possible circuit which we can severally occupy ? Much practical good, I am satisfied, may be done by periodical visits to such districts as lie beyond the reach of your regular and ordinary ministry ; and by the cele-

bration, which I should gladly sanction, of Divine Service, and administration of the Holy Communion, wherever a suitable station can be found, and a congregation can be induced to assemble. It will be productive of some advantage even to make these lonely ones familiar with the presence of a clergyman; to shew them that there is one at least who takes an interest in their welfare; who comes among them, not from any inducement of worldly advantage, but solely through the love of Christ constraining him, to put them in mind of things eternal, and to enquire of them, lest they themselves should forget to ask, how stands the account between God and their soul. Such intercourse cannot, it is to be feared, be of very frequent occurrence. Still it is our duty to think, that in many cases enough may be done to prevent that general relapse into "atheism and infidelity," which, without some expedient, arising out of the zeal of the Clergy here, is to be but too fearfully apprehended.

Neither, I would observe, need the intervals between these truly pastoral visits be left wholly unimproved, if care be taken to recommend the practice of private family devotion, and to afford instruction and facility for the performance of it. The "Manual of Family Prayer" by the present Bishop of London, is admirably adapted to this purpose; especially if it be aided by the general circulation of the Scriptures, the Church Liturgy, and those other useful and edifying publications which are on the list of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. By the establishment here of a branch of that Society, all these are placed within general attainment, and may be regarded as a most probable inducement to occupy in edifying studies and devout exercises, many hours which would otherwise be passed in reckless vacuity, if not in the practice of positive evil. It may be gratifying to you to learn that, at the period of my latest personal intercourse with the

Society, a Committee, consisting of several most active, most judicious, and most experienced Members, had been appointed to revise the books and tracts published under the Society's sanction ; and as far as the efforts of piety, and of zeal for the general increase of religion can effect it, I entertain a perfect confidence that those publications will be increased in number, in usefulness, and in every instructive and edifying property. Sensible as I am, from long connection with the Society, of its ready attention to every undertaking by which Christian Knowledge can be promoted, I can safely pledge myself to the Clergy here assembled, and, through them, to the community at large, that every facility will be afforded in procuring such supplies of the Scriptures, or of other works contained in the catalogue, as there is any prospect of employing with advantage to the eternal interests of men. I can promise equal attention to applications from masters of families, and

others, having servants in their employ in parts of the Colony so remote as to debar them from regular attendance on public worship. I have it much at heart that these facilities of obtaining sound religious knowledge should be generally known and largely resorted to ; and I request—for it will have with you, I am certain, greater force than an injunction—I request your co-operation, my Reverend Brethren, in giving effect to my wishes.

In enumerating the means of promoting Christian knowledge, a distinguished rank must be assigned to the truly Christian scheme of affording general education, founded on the basis of revealed religion. Upon any other system, the population of a country may acquire knowledge, but not wisdom. The only reasonable hope which we can entertain of diffusing religious impressions and virtuous habits, rests on the continuance in full efficiency of those parochial schools, wherein, while the elements of instruction are liberally

afforded, the youthful mind is trained up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To these we must look as to so many fountains which will gradually purify the waters of bitterness, of which this land has been made the receptacle. Under this impression I recommend them to your assiduous care and encouragement. They are worthy of both in a very eminent degree : since the future religious character, I repeat, and therefore the real greatness and security of Australia, will greatly depend on the continued efficiency of these institutions.

Previously to quitting this subject, suffer me, my Reverend Brethren, to pay one tribute which must, I am certain, be satisfactory to you all ; and the omission of which would subject me, in my own mind, no less than in your estimation, to the reproach of not having done justice to the acknowledged claims of another. I allude, you will readily perceive, to my Predecessor in this Archdeaconry. I

shall not prostitute the situation from which I address you, by indulging in unqualified panegyrics upon any man ; and were I even so disposed to do, for which however I can have no motive, the correct taste and simple feelings of the individual in question, if he were yet among us, would lead him to be the first in repressing and reproving the fulsome design. In common with the best of us, Archdeacon Scott was, I doubt not, liable to err ; but from an extensive acquaintance with what he designed and what he effected, I do not hesitate to express my persuasion that a man of purer intention, stricter principle, and less under the bias of self-interest, never trod these shores. I would wish, however, principally to connect his name with the praise of having devised, and through many difficulties brought near to perfection, that system of religious instruction on which I am persuaded the best hopes of this Colony repose. Let not those who are enjoying

the benefit of his labours grudge him a distinction which he has fairly and honorably earned. You will not, I am certain, refuse to unite in this feeble but well-deserved testimony ; and in the expression of a wish that the virtual founder of our existing establishments for public education, may to the end of life enjoy the gratification of knowing that these his exertions are duly appreciated, and that the monuments of his zeal, in the service of God and man, are extended and perpetuated by ours.

I hope not to weary your attention by observations too much in detail ; but there are two subjects peculiarly and intimately connected with our duties, and the maintenance of religion in this Colony, to which, before I conclude, it is necessary your attention should be directed. The first of these is the exertion which we are called to make for the reformation of the class of persons who are here expiating their offences under sentence of the

law. Looking at their collective and continually increasing numbers, we cannot but experience a sensation of shame at a spectacle so little honorable to the principles and character of our age and country. But we must regard them in another light, and ask ourselves what claim these erring, yet, under God, still retrievable agents have upon our services, as we are accredited Ministers of One who “came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” To our natural feelings it may be a repulsive employment to be brought into contact with profligacy and vice ; and, for its correction, to strive against the inattention, ridicule, or contempt with which our remonstrances are often received. Still the minister of Christ must not be weary with well-doing, nor faint in his mind. All the day long must his hands be stretched forth to a disobedient and gainsaying people, under a conviction that as any human being is more involved in the snares of vice, the

more earnest and unremitting must be our endeavour to make him sensible of his slavery, and to point out to him that only path by which he may return into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God." We must seek them out, since they will hardly make the first advance, and endeavour to convince them that we take an interest in their restoration to honesty and happiness ; that we are solicitous for their eternal preservation ; that far from entertaining towards them any sentiment of neglect or contempt, we are disposed for their sakes to labour, if, peradventure, through our teaching, God shall give them a knowledge of the truth. Neither are these labours without hope, or always without reward. Many of these unhappy persons have erred less through settled malignity than from ignorance or momentary weakness ; many in deep repentance have been made sensible of their criminality, and are ready, on the slightest encouragement, to obey the call, and to

return into the way of life. Many an Onesimus "which in time past was unprofitable, may again become profitable to thee and me; not now as a servant, but above a servant, as a brother beloved." Blessed is that man to be accounted, the effect of whose labours as a minister of Christ is to give occasion for the joy which is in heaven "over one sinner that repenteth."

The last subject with which I shall at present detain you, is the condition of the native or aboriginal inhabitants of this country. It is an awful, it is even an appalling consideration, that after an intercourse of nearly half a century with a Christian people, these hapless human beings continue to this day in their original benighted and degraded state. I may even proceed farther; so far as to express my fears that our settlement in their country has even deteriorated a condition of existence, than which, before our interference, nothing more miserable could

easily be conceived. While, as the contagion of European intercourse has extended itself among them, they gradually lose the better properties of their own character, they appear in exchange to acquire none but the most objectionable and degrading of ours. The most revolting spectacle which presents itself to a stranger newly arriving on these shores, is the sight of their natural occupants reduced to a state of worse than barbarian wildness by that fondness for intoxicating liquors which they imbibed from our example; and in reckless addiction to which they are still encouraged by many whose superiority in knowledge ought to have been directed to some less unchristian purpose. But can we satisfy ourselves, my brethren, that we have fulfilled all our duty while such a spectacle is exhibited before us? Shall we look on and see them perish, without so much as an effort for their preservation? Natural and much more Christian equity points

out that as in the occupation of their soil we are partakers of their worldly things, so in justice should they be of our spiritual. As through the tender mercy of our God the day-spring from on high has visited us, we are solemnly engaged to impart to them the glorious beams of Gospel truth to guide their feet into the way of peace.

I am aware of attempts having been undertaken with this view, and of their abandonment from a sense of existing difficulties and despair of final success. But from the very nature of the undertaking obstacles were to be anticipated. Every advancement of the Christian religion, from its first origin to this day, has been effected in opposition to difficulties which, in a natural sense, might be termed insuperable. Its excellency and its derivation from a heavenly source have been best demonstrated by surmounting such opposition. It may be considered after all a very doubtful question whether the erratic habits and incon-

siderate disposition of the native tribes are in reality more adverse to the reception of Christianity than those propensities which its earliest preachers had to encounter in the nations they addressed ; the obstinate superstition of the Jew, and the philosophic arrogance of the Gentile. But suppose them to be so, what shall we say ? Shall we therefore desist ? Unhesitatingly I answer, No. Persevere as you regard the honor of God, and as you value the souls of these your helpless and unhappy fellow-creatures. The very ground which we tread upon teaches us this lesson. What does it exhibit but the sublime spectacle of the triumph of civilized man over the ruggedness of the physical world ? And shall the Christian philanthropist despair of having, in God's good time, an equal right to rejoice in the success of his exertions to produce a moral reform, and by spiritual cultivation to reclaim that human wilderness which extends on every side of us ? The feeling

which I derive from difficulties in such a case, and would communicate to those around me, is animation not despair. God works in every dispensation for his own glory, and in his own fore-ordained times and seasons; and his purpose in permitting the existence of such difficulties may be to furnish an immediate exercise of our faith and patience, and, in their final subjugation, a clearer manifestation of his own Omnipotence. As a believer in the Scriptures which assure us that "out of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people," the worshippers of the Lamb shall proceed, I cannot be persuaded that here is one nation irreversibly excluded from a share of that privilege; I cannot be persuaded that when the religion of Christ is solemnly propounded as "the power of God and the wisdom of God," here is an obstacle to its progress which Eternal Wisdom did not foresee, and Infinite Power cannot remove; or, that when we have a plain command to

“preach the Gospel to every creature,” here is an entire race of immortal and accountable creatures with respect to whom we may dispense with obedience to the injunction. The duty is indeed so manifest that I forbear any further to insist upon it. The best mode of proceeding may require more extended consideration ; and our future attempts may be aided towards a prosperous issue by observation on the causes of former failure. I hesitate not however to express my desire that as the Church of England is endowed with pre-eminent advantages here, she should justify the distinction by leading the way as a Missionary, and by becoming the mother of Missionaries who should attempt the recovery of this unhappy generation. It is with God alone to give the desired increase. In due time we shall reap if we faint not ; and, under Him, I shall look to you, my Reverend brethren, when the suitable period arrives, as to the instruments by whose aid this

design of genuine love may be carried, we hope, into successful operation.

Here, therefore, I bring my observations to a close ; having first availed myself of the freedom which I have displayed throughout, to remind you that however inconsiderable may be our attainments, or our individual importance, yet as we are invested with a commission to preach the Gospel, and charged with the care of souls, our conduct and character will have, for good or ill, a very powerful effect on the interests of religion, and on the general feeling towards it. As we are ordained for the guidance and instruction of other men, our own actions will be by others narrowly and jealously observed. Instead of disputing their right to pass such strictures on our conduct, it will be well that we strive to raise ourselves above them, by making it the constant object of our wishes, thoughts, and prayers so to walk as to give none occasion for gain-saying ; and effectually to secure ourselves

from the mortifying sarcasm of "Thou that teachest another teachest thou not thyself?" I urge, therefore, and adjure you in the name of that God and Saviour whom we serve, and as we must render an account of our ministry to him, to bear in constant recollection the extent and solemnity of the engagements we have contracted. So far as in us lies let us stand aloof from worldly occupations, cares, and desires, that we may be able to apply our undivided attention and our whole heart to that one purpose of preaching the Gospel of Christ, and of promoting by it the eternal salvation of men. The prayer of my heart is that from every quarter I may hear of the diligence, the uncorruptness, the habitual piety, and the edifying example of the Clergy of the Established Church; and that they may be every where regarded as the promoters of whatsoever things are true and lovely and of good report. May they shine in this world as lights to which men look up

as to a guiding star ; and, having by a faithful and laborious exercise of their ministry turned many to righteousness, may they also shine hereafter as the brightness of the firmament, in the kingdom of their Father for ever, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

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 Saviour, Amen.

The prayer of my heart is that you may
 all prosper in the service of your Lord
 and King, and in the advancement of
 the Christian religion, and in the
 glory of our Father, Amen.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,
 J. B.