

Broughton to Coleridge, 26/10/1847 (Syd)

I am not aware that there is any matter of urgent importance of a public nature on which there is a call upon me to write to you; but as a longer interval than ordinary has elapsed since my last Letter to you was dispatched, the Vessel which is now sailing shall not go without one. A very gratifying subject presents itself for a commencement; that is the acknowledgment of the arrival of the box containing your portrait in perfect safety. I can scarcely thank you sufficiently for a present in every respect so satisfactory. You will of course expect me to criticize; but, except in the expression of content, I have really very little to say. The whole head, and the entire upper portion of the features appear to me quite perfection. In the mouth I see exactly what you intend to convey. It may be a little too much compressed; giving so far, a shrewd rather than an intellectual character. But it is a defect not worthy of mention. The whole has a graceful and benignant look: and it pleases me more than I can express. You hang in company with your brother, the B. of N.Z. and wife, the inside and outside of Canterbury Cathedral, and the view of Hartley Church from Ellis's field; so you may suppose, when I look around, I have many recollections. I must not omit to say that in compliance with your strict injunctions, the old picture was burned. Unfortunately I am no fiddler or I might have indulged a Neronian strain over the conflagration. A young lady here made a rather good remark I think. Seeing the two pictures together, and hearing that the one was destined to destruction, "Oh" she said "pray don't burn it. Say its (sic) the picture of somebody else and no one will ever suspect the contrary." However, burned it was. All your pious cares for the inauguration of our new prelates have had so far, I trust, their appropriate reward that the objects of so many anxieties and prayers are before now speeding across the vast ocean towards their respective fields of labour. Your views about the meeting on Trinity Sunday must have been so far disappointed that though you might have the individuals you would not have the Bishops; the newspapers informing us that the consecrations were postponed. It is an

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important era indeed for this hemisphere; and you I trust may be permitted to live to enjoy some, though not the full reward of your exertions in this matter, in receiving testimonies and proofs of the good effect of your labour.

is this expected?
I have written, as you suggested, to Mr Hawkins, expressing the grateful sense which I most sincerely entertain of his strenuous and finally successful exertions. Before that I had written him perhaps an imprudent letter on the subject of the cassation (sic) by the cassation (sic) by the civil power of a prior nomination to Newcastle: but as he is a prudent man no harm will be done. Much provoked I was at the time by such interference and on such grounds. But that is all passed: and I am entirely reconciled by the lot having at last fallen on Tyrrell in whom I really hope to find a friend and coadjutor after my own heart. I am already preparing for his reception.

If Melbourne also come, I can accommodate both; being likely for the next three months to have my house entirely to myself. The latter has delivered himself, in his Speech to the Bible Society, of sentiments which find no echo in my mind or principles: and in adhering to which if I am not very much mistaken, he will find himself involved in associations, and exposed to pretensions, which will mar both his comfort and his usefulness. I hope he will come by Sydney; that he may have the opportunity at least of benefitting (sic) by warnings which my experience will justify me in communicating.

The Bishop of Tasmania I presume will also have left the shores of England; and this time probably for ever. I perfectly agree in your sentiments as to the unsuitableness (to use a moderate term) of such a resignation as he contemplates. But my dear Coleridge, you must look with tenderness upon the hesitation natural to men in deciding to attach themselves, without expectation

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of recal (sic), to a position in life which, excepting in the fulfilment of its duties (and that is indeed a great exception) has perhaps as little to attract or satisfy the aspirations of one of us as any that the British empire (sic) can afford. It is indeed a literal forsaking of fathers and mothers and brethren and sisters, a breaking off of all the friendships and sweet familiarities of early life, and a devoting of ourselves, wives, children and dependants to a state of society in which it is impossible to throw out any more such roots as those which held us to the natale solum: Omne solum forti patria is not quite true; or else there are few fortes. Except our duties, I say again there is not much congenial to former habits of thought; no antiquity; no literature; no approach to perfection in any object that one encounters. You will not suppose that this is said in any spirit of dissatisfaction. I have long learned to turn away my eyes and my thoughts from those things that are behind: but I say it only to put in a word of extenuation, that, in case you should ever witness any momentary wavering, you may make that charitable allowance which alas under all its trials our inform nature so urgently needs. Yet I hope, so far as I know the men, that all have counted the cost, and are well prepared to abide the present trial, for the sake of the standing-ground which we may be permitted to prepare for those who are to come after.

We go on here pretty quietly; not positively losing ground any where. Yet I am not certain whether we may not comparatively. The effect of our system of religious liberty and equality is certainly felt. It is scarcely possible to impress people with the belief that where they see all persuasions partaking of public favor and support, any one of them has or can have a superior right or title to their veneration. In fact they are so taught to hate exclusiveness that they are startled at Truth; because it requires them to embrace one view in preference to others. The Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists and Wesleyans play into each others hands. The latter in particular

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→ are opponents ~~as~~ insidious as indefatigable. In the midst of all this Dr Polding is expected back with a gift of £10000 from the Queen of France in his pocket, and all kinds of appliances from Rome, and we are to expect an active and vigorous campaign. But if it please God to vouchsafe me any reasonable proportion of support, I do not fear any of them. Still we have enough upon our hands.

The S.P.G. have formed a resolution which I do not like to say much against; but nevertheless think it not altogether expedient: - that is to say to withhold assistance for Church building, and to devote it exclusively to the maintenance of clergymen. Some years ago I foresaw the probability of a contraction of our resources from that quarter, and have been ever since gradually narrowing the extent of my operations. Nevertheless upon such an immense theatre as this, and the execution of all our works being slow, one has always of necessity a good deal in progress; and if the denial of aid be enforced instantaneously, much that has been begun must go to ruin. I do not know what position you may hold with regard to the Society: but if you have the means of reaching the ear of those who direct its proceedings I should be very thankful if it could be suggested that much inconvenience and damage might be prevented if the resolution not to make grants towards building

C → Churches etc could be brought into gradual operation. So far as I can calculate, about £800 would finish all that we now have in hand (excepting the Cathedral) and if that sum could be allowed in 2 or 3 years, including the present, we should not be much incommoded. But if the bounty of the Society be withdrawn all at once, we shall certainly suffer.

I do not think Mr Allwood personally suffered disappointment from the non-fulfilment of the expectations about the bishoprick. His apprehension appeared to be (and certainly that was a very natural one) that it might be

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supposed he had been designated, and afterwards rejected; and that on account of some unfitness found in him. I have done my utmost to combat this, and I hope not without effect. It is a pity that he expressed himself so very strongly and decidedly as to his nolo: for when it came to the point he would have acquiesced if the offer had been repeated, I feel confident. Indeed he says he should have felt it a duty no longer to decline. The awkward part of the affair was, as he very justly says, that in fact the offer was never made to him: the utmost that I could say to him being that I had reason to think he would be fixed upon, and the newspapers shortly afterwards bringing word that he had been. He works away steadily and con amore at his College. The great want is material to work upon. You enquire about a portrait of myself: but I have none. At Port Phillip a Mrs Macrae took a good deal of pains with one in water-colours, and certainly the execution was good so far as I recollect: but many thought the likeness was not. She sent it to England to a friend of hers in London, Mr Cummings (a person I believe very well known) and notice was to have been sent to you to go and look at it. But I cannot help thinking it must have been a message only, by my agreeable friend Lady Franklin, who promised to go, and (to use her own words) "see the man whom bishops combined to honour". Probably she is of the "varium et mutabile" kind, and did not go to see you after all; and you got no message: and so the poor picture has come all the way back to Port Phillip again. The best and only substitute I can suggest is the wax cast from the mould which I sent home to you last year by the ship "Berkshire". I sent the same also to my brother-in-law Mr Francis. It is thought here to be a very good profile. You ask the date of my birth. It occurred on the 22nd of May 1788; so that on its next recurrence (if it do recur) I shall have been 60 years in this transitory world. I do not think that it is a division without meaning, which makes the sum of our days bipartite "threescore and ten"; but a memento how much the one portion exceeds the other. I begin to consider how the latter

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years may be most becomingly spent.

What you tell me of the present inclinations of Dr Parry and Mr Marriott is very cheering. Without affectation I assure you that I truly mourn over those that have left us: and wondering every day more intensely how men of that stamp and character ever could be misled by the groundless sophistries of the Church of Rome, I am in an equal degree thankful for those who have stood firm.

As to myself, I shall never dissemble or disguise my deep obligations to them for the wider views which they have opened to me, and the greater steadfastness with which they have fixed my attention upon points which until they arose were too little thought of: but still I have felt from the beginning that there like a bowl with a bias, running too much to one side.

At the same time I have still less inclination towards the Chevalier Bunsen, in whom I am very deep just at this moment. What a sad lamentable descent, into what would be foolish if it were not so very mischievous, for a man of his talent, and I have no doubt of sincerely pious purposes to have experienced. Methinks Mr Gladstone must have been taken rather aback (as bishops who go much to sea may be pardoned for saying) when he received the Letter to 13 September 1843.

I must not omit to thank you for the Books which came in the case with the portrait. They are always very useful and acceptable. Mrs Broughton and Emily are going on a visit to Mr Boydell's. I do not know whether the former answered Mrs Coleridge's nice letter before she went. At any rate I know she wore the shawl, which suited her very well indeed, as she is quite as slim as she was 30 years ago. Among ladies no longer very young I do not know any one who in that respect equal her except Mrs Keate. I am glad and thankful to hear

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how well my good old Rector keeps. With kindest regards and most affectionate remembrance to all, I am My dear Coleridge, Most sincerely yours, W.G. Australia.