

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 15/7/1848 (Syd)

I wrote to you about 10 days ago by the "Sydney": and upon recalling the contents of my Letter am much in doubt whether one pt of some moment were not omitted. First, on referring to your letter 15/7/47 (rather an odd coincidence) I find you say, "I have paid into the Australasian Bank £150, and ordered the same to be forwarded to you without delay: £140 for your College: £10 for Mrs Smith etc." To say all in one word, the money has not reached me. The Bank disclaims any knowledge of the transaction; insomuch that there must have been some mistake. The principal regret which I have (beyond that of being obliged to give you trouble) is that Allwood requires the supply; and indeed I believe has been put to some inconvenience through his reluctance to speak to me on the subject. You will readily believe that with my present income I am not in a position to be able to advance the money; or I would do it most readily. But to speak the honest truth I am not able. My purpose therefore is to address the Bank, and state exactly how the matter stands, and endeavour to prevail on them to advance the amount, on a guarantee to be given by myself and others jointly that we will repay it in case any accident or failure should have intercepted it. I do not think this at all likely: and am quite sure that it will finally be forthcoming. But as our funds require replenishing, and I am sure that the Bank will not be satisfied without such a pledge. I do not know any better footing to place my application upon. May I hope to have your approval of this?

My next application to you is not for money, but for advice. Probably you may not be unaware that Lord Grey has lately addressed a Circular to the Governors of Colonies touching the relative rank and position therein of the R.C. prelates. As you can have no difficulty in obtaining this document, if you have not already seen it, I will not trouble you as to its contents further than saying that the effect of it is to confer upon Dr Polding, as being an

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Arch-bishop of the Pope's creation, precedence before the bishop of the Church of England. I spoke to our Governor (and have also addressed him officially) upon the question and his reply, in brief, was that he could not doubt such to be the intention of H.M. Government that on public occasions he should receive the Arch-bishop first, and give him the upper hand. My reply, very civilly expressed, was to this effect; that, such being the case, I considered that it amounted to an exclusion of me from Government House, and from all opportunity of tendering my personal respects to the representatives of Her M. because I felt that it would be a degradation to the C of E that I should place myself in a position so different from that which had been assigned to me since 1829: and that moreover, by my acquiescing in the arrangement, a precedent would be established for depriving all Colonial bishops of their position; not by the exercise of the Queen's prerogative (which we should humbly yield to) but at the will of a foreign prelate to whom we owed no subjection. There the matter stands. ← ?

Personally, I need hardly assure you, it would not have caused me uneasiness for so much time as it has taken to write this account of it. Ambition I never had much of; and that modicum of it which may have been by nature in me, was utterly dissipated when I made up my mind to come to N.S.W. It has always been painful to me to assume a high place; and to obey is more agreeable to me by far than to hold the reins of authority. But I feel of course that one's duty may require a great many things to be done which it would be much more agreeable not to do: to remonstrate when we would rather hold our peace; and to appeal against decisions when we would greatly prefer allowing them to pass unquestioned. This is exactly my position: and I want advice how to act; and my wish is, if you can do so, that the case should be put by you confidentially before persons whose judgment can be depended upon, to obtain their joint opinion and advice. Personally as you will clearly understand,

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I do not regard it at all; although it is impossible not to feel that the circumstance of being shut out of Government House (though by one's own act) does seem like a lowering of the bishop's claim to consideration; and I have no doubt will be so regarded by many worthies who bear to him or his office no good will. But the main point is, how it will affect the credit of his Church. I see all the evil which, at the present moment especially, may flow from this novel appointment; and my purpose in placing the question as I have placed it in my communications with the Govr was that it might leave me at liberty to pursue any future course which might be recommended by those who are more capable of judging than I. Let me only assure you that I place myself for guidance and direction, entirely in your hands and in the hands of those whom you may think proper to consult; and am ready to abide by your determination, whatever it may be. Setting aside the personal mortification experienced from an act of authority which, after the many years service I have rendered to the Government, ought not to have been, towards the close of my career, put in execution against me, the superior question is whether the Church does not suffer in my person an indignity under which she ought not to be silent; and whether therefore in her person I ought not to say, I will take no more support from a Government which by its deliberate act has so degraded her sacred and holy cause. Indeed I am ready to surrender all, if it be felt that by retaining it under existing circumstances I am lowering the reputation either of the Church or of myself. I do not know that a "pennyless (sic)" bishoprick as G.A.N.Z. terms it is a desirable thing: but it may be preferable to a degraded bishoprick, at all events. Therefore pray give me (I implore by the love you bear to the Church of God) your unbiased opinion what I ought to do and I will follow it. One other course occurs to me which ought to be considered. If instead of relinquishing the pecuniary emolument and retaining the bishoprick thus deprived of maintenance, my course were to be the relinquishment of both, would it render the case more easy to deal

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with? My meaning is this: if a successor were appointed to me in the See perhaps he might without compromise of the Church's credit, retain the allotted income, though I might not; because he would come in upon an arrangement already fixed and acknowledged; and would not be exposed, as I feel that I really am, to the affront of continuing to receive wages from those who have laid an indignity upon me personally. This looks, as you will perceive, too much like saying, We will put up with anything, provided only we are allowed to keep our worldly things: and is it not better to meet this voluntarily, at whatever sacrifice; rather than wait to be compelled to do it by having this case in our teeth, as I foresee it will be, by those who "have evil will

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The more you consider the question I believe you will find it the more important as involving principles; and if the difficulty may be solved by my retirement I am quite prepared to adopt that course. Indeed it will be but anticipating by a few years an event which cannot be very far off: for I am so far growing old that the activity necessary to enable me to occupy so wide a circuit must fail me: and I am not sure whether there may not be other grounds on which a new man, with ideas a little more modelled according to the form of the things that are, might not be rather desirable than otherwise. As to the parties whom you might consult, I would not limit your discretion: but I may mention extempore as persons in whom I should have full confidence, The Bishop of Winchester: the Judges Patteson and Coleridge: Dr Moberly: ← ?
Mr Ernest Hawkins: Archdn Harrison and Mr Joshua Watson of course. I am my dear Coleridge, Most sincerely and affectionately yrs W.G. Sydney.