

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON PAPERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 10/7/1850 (Sydney)

It is not yet many days since I wrote to you by the ship "George" in reply to yours of 15/3/1850. At the same time I noticed the contents of Mr Gladstone's letter to the Bishop of New Zealand on the subject of the decision of the Judicial Committee's carrying forward my views to the assembly of our Provincial Synod on 1 October; when I trust by God's grace, prompting and directing our determination, we may be enabled to fulfil, not unworthily, the duty which at this crisis we owe to the Church Universal; and more especially to that division of it in which we are ministers. You shall hear more upon the subject from time to time, as circumstances arise worthy of communication. (In our Colonial paper of this morning we have a report of the questions proposed by Mr Gladstone in the House of Commons on 19 March, and of L.J.R.'s reply, upon the insertion of a Clause in the Australian Bill applying the principle of self-government to the affairs of the Church of England in these Colonies. What may be implied by L.J.'s answer that such a step might be very inconvenient to the Colonies I cannot surmise. Why would it be more inconvenient to allow that freedom to our Church, than to other communions, Wesleyan, Roman or Presbyterian, who now appear to rejoice in an unfettered liberty to conduct their own affairs according to their own discretion? There is a most mischievous fallacy indulged in by most statesmen, namely that because the Church is established and in alliance with the State, which dissenters are not, therefore it must possess and exercise the same right of interference with the C of E in the Colonies; where it has no special connexion with the Government, no superior right, advantage, endowment or indulgence above what, in proportion to their numbers, are enjoyed by any dissenting body.

The matter however on which I wish particularly to write is one which I have already said a word or two in a former letter: that is to say the possibility of making further provision for the growing and almost intolerable wants (spiritual) of this most unmanageable country: and that by the only means

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which seems practicable - the further surrender of my own resources. The only obstacle that presents itself to my thoughts is a concern (neither undue nor unreasonable I hope) for the maintenance of my children when I am gone. My own wants were never exorbitant; and now, a solitary man, I could put myself upon a scheme of life which, without detracting anything from the due and decent maintenance of exterior observances, might be very economical in its character. To speak the truth, and sincerely, I do not see how, for his own immediate support, any man can allowably consume more than necessity (the word being understood with a certain degree of latitude) requires him so to apply. Not to make a long story therefore, the thing which I am desirous of doing, if it can be accomplished without worry to those who are by nature made dependent on me, is to appropriate another £500 p.a. from my income to the service of the Church.

My impression, as already said, is that a necessary maintenance is all that I ought to seek or require for myself in a country where through want of additional means of grace, the whole population is in the constant and not very slow process of deterioration, and of UNIMPEDED DECLINE INTO THE LOWEST DEPTHS OF SPIRITUAL IGNORANCE (min). During a journey of more than 2000 miles, which I have recently concluded, this terrible consequence was every where more or less apparent. Surely then it is needless to say more to shew that it must be my duty to attempt, at least, the application of some remedy although at my own cost; and yet without the infliction of any injustice upon my children. The way in which this may be attempted is not exempt from difficulty. My plan would be to effect afresh insurance of my life for £1500; first of all paying the annual premium upon this, whatever the amount might be, out of my present income, and then devoting to Church purposes such further sum yearly, as (unitedly with the premium) would make up £500. But my apprehension is (and this is the difficulty above referred to) that the Offices will not take

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Insurances upon lives above 60. It is upon this subject, my dear Coleridge, that I venture to give you some trouble, by asking you to make some enquiries among your friends conversant with such affairs, as to the practicability of my design; and, if there be no insuperable obstacle, to carry it into effect at once, for the good (as I would humbly hope) of God's holy Church. I may with a perfectly unembarrassed conscience express my own persuasion that I labour under no disorder, except the influence of years, which should tend to shorten life: and I will send to Mr Francis my brother in law such medical certificates, as I hope will confirm this. If the insurance can be made, the resource for paying the first premium will not be hard to find: as my conviction is that upon your representation of the intention, the S.P.G. would willingly advance the required sum; upon an understanding that it shall be repaid by me here in the form of Stipend to their missionaries - thus abating to the same extent our Drafts upon their Treasurers. Already I have entered upon this course by pledging myself to the payment of £100 p.a. for the purpose of obtaining from voluntary contribution the Stipends of clergymen for two important Churches; which, otherwise, must have been shut up. The condition is that I give £50 p.a. to each, if the parishioners raise twice £150, so that upon the same principle, were I to give £500 p.a. the sum actually applicable to like purposes would in the same interval be augmented to £2000. You may receive my assurance that I am no visionary in making this proposal; but discern the coming of a most awful Period in all these Colonies, unless a due and timely effort be made to stir up and encourage the people to provide out of their own store the means of grace and holiness for themselves and for their children. There is no other resource. Neither have I neglected to consider, in divesting myself of this portion of my income, whether the effects of this act upon the interests of my successors, were likely to be such as should dissuade me from it. But my best powers of reason and foresight are in fault if the effect on futurity prove not the exact reverse of this: that

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is to say of detrimental consequences in futurity. Under the (somewhat questionable!) experiment, which is now in the course of parliamentary incubation, it may be presumptuous to reckon the chickens before they are hatched. Still may any one conversant with the signs of the times prognosticate that there will be no more favourite pullet than that which cackles for a reduction of Church emoluments. If the discretion be left to the legislature which it seems to be meant to impose upon us, the most probable result to be looked forward to is, that there will be no income granted from the public funds to any bishop after me. But if any circumstances can create a probability of his being allowed to succeed to the £1000 p.a. which (if you can aid me in my present purpose) will remain to me, it will be the proof which I hope it may be thought my acts have given that we do not grasp at acquiring or retaining the very utmost that we can lay our hands upon. So, therefore, my conclusion is that if what I have done, and now again propose to do, have any effect upon the worldly circumstances of him who in the Providence of God may succeed me here, it will be a favorable effect and not the contrary. If an example of self-denial for holy purposes be required (and from the people of this country I do think such a willingness to make a surrender of themselves and theirs for such a purpose is urgently needed) who can be so proper or so peculiarly called as I to go before them in the true and the right way? Upon this matter I would not have communicated with any other than my brother in law; knowing that it is not fair to add except in a case of need, to your load of voluntary engagements. But I thought it possible that in case any difficulty, of the kind I have supposed, should offer itself in limine, you might have access to better channels than he could for obtaining information whether it could, and how it might, be overcome. Moreover if the cooperation of the S.P.G. should be required, your better acquaintance with the leading people there would enable you to make such an application with more effect: and even with more propriety, as you are my accredited Commissary

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in England for ecclesiastical affairs. This Letter is quite a business one.
Upon other subjects I will write by my valued friend and fellow labourer W.H.
Walsh who proceeds to England by the Asia...