


MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 4/7/1848 (Syd)

My dear Coleridge: Either I have not kept so accurate an account as usual of my Letters to you, or else this is the first to leave these shores since the 8th of January by the Penyard Park in which Cotton went home. It is not that there has been any want of due recollection of you: but from a date not much later than that of the Letter above referred to, a deep and consuming anxiety as to the state of affairs here has very much disabled me from duly attending to any thing at a distance.

You have heard before now that early in February last the common of the  ? Church was rent asunder by two of my clergy casting off their allegiance, and going over to the Roman communion. One of these was Sconce whom you will recollect introducing to me some years ago at the request of his sister-in-law Miss Repton; she spoke of him as "going forth with the spirit of a missionary, and the deepest reverence for the Church of England." At that time I have no doubt he perfectly merited that character. He was among the most able and zealous of my helpers; and though I had seen with regret during the two last years certain tendencies taking possession of him, and an attachment amounting to a morbid enthusiasm impelling him to Mr Newman's person and opinions both, yet to the very last I would not give up my confidence in him. The blow therefore came more heavily upon me; and I will not affect to deny has made a greater breach in my happiness than any occurrence during many years has done.

As you may suppose it was a moment of intense alarm. Two clergymen deserting us in one day; and rumours afloat on all sides of many other defections immediately to follow. Still I was not dismayed. We rallied all that was good and sound: and turned a firm unshaken front upon the adversary. My first proceeding was, with the unanimous concurrence and advice of the clergy who were around me, to depose the two deserters from their Orders; having first

Broughton to Coleridge, 4/7/1848 (cont 2)

satisfied myself of the canonical authority and competency which I had for such a proceeding. It was carried into effect with due formality, and the sentences of deposition publicly read; and I have transmitted them to the several Bishops of the Province desiring and expecting their concurrence, which the greater number have already sent me. This act of firmness had a great effect, both on our own people, and on the Roman Catholics. There has not been a murmur of opposition or resistance to it from any quarter: and I am more than ever convinced that if the Church, through its bishops, do temperately and lawfully exercise that power of discipline which is rightfully hers she will not fail of receiving that strength and support which will carry her in security thro' even the most formidable dangers.

The next urgent care was to provide for the charge of the parish which Sconce had relinquished; and such was the prevailing jealousy, so deeply rooted the suspicions of every body's fidelity, that I found myself quite unable to make an appointment. The sole resource was, in my own person to stand in the gap. I became the officiating minister of St Andrew's; and have continued ever since up to the present day to preach twice every Sunday there. But I thank God the effect has been wholly for good. The wavering congregation has been wholly secured. It is a marvellous thing to say that not one has followed their late misguided pastor; but on the contrary the attendance has steadily increased. It is said (of course I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the assertion) that when Mr Sconce presented himself to Dr Polding as a convert, the latter asked him "But where is your flock Mr Sconce?" and hopes and expectations were long held out that they would follow him. The total failure of those expectations, and the impression thereby created of the fidelity of the Church of England people to their own tenets has struck deep disappointment into the expectant party: and I have no doubt lies at the root of that extreme bitterness with which Mr Sconce now pursues me and the clergy in general;

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 4/7/1848 (cont 3)

who have to a man separated themselves from his acquaintance.

The entire occurrence has opened some deep and extraordinary views of the nature of that impulse which is now acting upon the entire frame of the Church, here as well as throughout the world. If I could convey them to you, I am sure you would take a deep interest in some of the manifestations of earnest individual feeling which this crisis has called forth: and yet almost every good and earnest purpose is repressed or scared away by the apprehensions artfully excited and maintained that every one who stands upon true Church principle, and will not run into the utmost extremes of dissenting laxity and hot headed protestantism, is falling away and intends to lead others into the bog of popery. I have had, and have, much to contend against which ^{is} is painful *← Check* and dangerous to encounter. However I have felt my mission at such a moment to be this: to shew calmly and earnestly that there is a Church-system which can and does rise superior to, and stands indepndent of, those tottering *←* supports whereon the spirit of schism, and of wild individual fervor, encourages men to lean. And yet I hope it begins to be felt that my teaching makes no approach to conformity in spirit with that uprighteous scheme of spiritual despotism which has its centre in the Vatican. Now I think I have poured into your ear a sufficiency of my griefs, and an ample account of my proceedings and therefore will not continue the subject, reserving liberty however to resume it at any future season: for I cannot doubt your deep feeling of interest in such occurrences any where: and more particularly here.

Our bishops, as you are aware by this time, are all in their several Sees.

From N.Z. my last accounts convey no very important news. The Bishop was at Nelson when he wrote, and writes in good spirits. He says the present year is the first in which he could leave his Diocese without apprehending some outbreak occurring during his absence. He speaks therefore of visiting me and

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 4/7/1848 (cont 4)

seems to wish to come: which you will conclude I say and do all in my power to encourage. My desire is to assemble them all here about next October: our spring! From Tasmania I hear only that he has arrived safe at his post again: and is in some respects gratified with the results of his expedition, in others not. Newcastle left us on Saturday last to return home after spending a week here. He is a fine active minded man: full of vigour, and indefatigable in his exertions. We agree most cordially, and yet we differ: that is to say, he, as is natural in a younger man, is disposed to go much farther than I can persuade myself to accompany him, in compliance with the prevailing notions of our time. I candidly acknowledge that all the great interests in an attachment to which I was brought up, and which have so contracted sacredness in my regard, have sunk and are sinking. Nevertheless I cannot abandon them; even though the adverse party cast it in out teeth you (sic) are narrow minded and antiquated: and the rising members on our own side object, you render yourself useless by striving for what cannot be any longer defended. My view is as it ever was; that if we cling to truth, although the waves and storms may go over us, yet we shall ride them out: if we let go that, and apply ourselves to expediency we shall surely be drowned at last in the depth which swallows all up who, as the Prayer Book says, are "studious of innovations and new-fangledness."

I have not written to your brother Sir John Coleridge for a long while. I fear he will begin to think that having now accomplished through his energetic kindness the great object of my anxiety in the partition of the Diocese, I mean to follow the example of too many in this world and repay his services by forgetfulness and neglect. But it is not so I assure him: and he will receive a Letter from me, I hope, by the "City of Poonah", the next ship preparing for England. Many topics[?] might still enlarge upon; for in writing to you, my letters shew you but the image of what your conversation would be, could we meet.

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 4/7/1848 (cont 5)

The death of the good Archbishop, the influence which the new appointment may have on the state of the Church at large, and on St. Augustine's in particular, and a thousand other topics which this much distracted world [?]aily offers to ← daily? the contemplation of serious by-standers like myself, all might supply matter for many crowded pages, extracting from yr (sic) suffering pocket a heavy mulct for postage. But it must not be. It is alias poteram et plures subnectare causas: but I see the good Ship Sydney spreading her sails: and her Mail is to carry this. I have letters by the B. of Tasm for kind Dr and Mrs Keate. My daughter Phoebe has another son and is doing well. My wife and other child are in excellent health so am I: but the burden of anxiety presses much upon me. In addition to all other causes the Society P.G. taking away all aid from me at such a time perplexes me much. If any thing can be done to put off the evil day until after the present year pray use your influence. With our united love to Mrs Coleridge and all who claim kindred with her, pray believe me to be always my dear Coleridge, Your sincere and affectionate friend, W.G. Sydney.