

MOORE COLLEGE: BROUGHTON LETTERS

Broughton to Coleridge, 11/7/1842

My dear Coleridge: My last Letter to you was by the "Fanny" on the 19th of June; and in that Letter I acquainted you with the departure of Mrs Selwyn and the main body of the N.Z. party by the "Tomatin" for the Bay of Islands.

It affords me sincere satisfaction now to state to you that by the return of the "Bristolian" on Saturday last we received information of her having landed the Bishop, Mrs Martin and Mr Cotton in safety at Auckland on the 30th of May: eleven days after they quitted this port. I enclose a paragraph from the Sydney Herald of this morning which conveys all that I know: no Letters having been received. There appears however to be no doubt that the Bishop would have arrived at the Bay of Islands before Mrs Selwyn, and been waiting there to receive her. I trust he will be able to establish her with tolerable comfort and full security before he leaves her: and then he has his work before him; and may God's special blessing attend and prosper him in the performance of it. Poor Whytehead still remains in this country. I saw a Letter from him a few days ago addressed to his medical attendant Dr Nicholson. His account of himself is not desponding: indeed he had rather rallied of late: but he is evidently in a state of much debility if not of immediate danger.

As to matters concerning my own position I have not much to say that is either important or new. I shall therefore first of all go back to a subject noticed in my last, and which dwells very much upon my thoughts: namely the making of some provision for rearing, under my own supervision, a body of clergy to supply, partially at least, the growing wants of the Diocese. After all but seven years experience, I am reluctantly led to believe that all which can be done in England (unless other arrangements than at present are made) will be too little to maintain such an influx of the servants of the altar as would be necessary to carry on its ministrations with due activity, and to uphold them in due

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respect. It is of course a painful thing for me to say this, because I am fully assured that the S.P.G. does all that can be done: and it seems almost ungrateful to express any dissatisfaction. However I never have expressed it to any individual breathing: not even to the B. of N.Z., nor would I except in confidence to you. But as the interests of religious Truth are superior to every other consideration, it is a duty not to conceal from you what I think: in order that we may apply ourselves to do, if possible, what is required to rectify the things that are now amiss. One instance will show you what difficulties beset me. It is only a sample of what occurs in too many other cases.

You saw, no doubt, Mr Watson who came out to me with the Bishop of N.Z., a man regularly educated, of most respectable character, wishing to do right, and skilful in managing the details of schools. But on the other hand, without force of mind to impress and guide other people; deficient in acuteness; not impressed with any deep feeling of the importance of the office he has entered upon; rather careless in the pulpit both as to composition and delivery; and afflicted with the remnant, at least, of an impediment in his speech which renders it painful to hear him read. Now I am compelled (wanting any other better or worse) to put him in charge of a parish containing 4000 professed Members of the Ch of Ed; generally ignorant, all careless, many profane: and requiring to be allured to take part in the concerns of religion; the offices of which have never before been publicly introduced into that parish from the foundation of the town of Sydney (54 years ago) until the present year. I do not expect a clergyman so placed to convert the whole mass into zealous and affectionate disciples; but I do expect, or rather wish, that he should have power to draw around him whatever elements of religion do exist, and so to dispose and direct them that they may form a visible association on the side of the Christian faith, and a counterpoise to the load of ungodliness, which

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otherwise threatens to drag down every thing into an abyss deeper and more fearful than Popery itself. But without a totally different class of men to carry on the work, how is the Vineyard to be cleared of the thorns and briars by which through long neglect it has been suffered to be overrun.

I firmly believe that it is God's interposing providence (called into exercise by the united prayers of His Church) which can alone raise up for its aid such men as are required: for they must (if they are to do the work) be men of exemplary ability, judgment, temper, and firmness: and yet there is next to nothing (in a worldly sense) proposed for their reward. If circumstances admitted, perhaps an Institution specially appropriated to the education of such, might be as well established in England; as a central fountain from which the waters might flow to all the Colonies. But if so, it must be under the control and direction of some one versed in Colonial Church affairs. It would be a blessing indeed if the Bishop of Barbadoes could be prevailed upon to devote the residue of his days to the management of a Seminary having this object in view. If he would not, I am not sure whether it might not be a position in which I might hope with God's blessing to do more really effective service than even where I am: but I look for nothing, and seek nothing: only I would be ready to act wherever, in the judgment of yourself and of such friends as have with you the welfare of the Colonial Churches at heart, my services might do good. My only settled persuasion is this: that a Colonial Bishop must be at the head of every such Institution in order to make it work well. If it be set up in England, then the Bishop presiding would form a centre to the entire ministry of the Churches in all the Colonies: if there be such an Institution in each separate Diocese, then every Bishop would be the head of his own. To provide effectually for the continuance of such a ministry as is the chief want of the Churches abroad, one or other of these Plans must be had recourse to.

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I have just been reading Dr Pusey's Letter to Dr Jelf on the 90th Tract; which latter production has never fallen in my way. In the Letter there is a good deal valuable in the way of quotation; and on a first acquaintance, the tone seems firm though moderate. But the final impression left upon my mind is that the effect is feeble and the writer's views indecisive. I have not read anything, connected with these stirring questions, upon the whole less satisfactory: not being able to repress a feeling that there is a sort of wire-drawing of the language of the Articles which their plain and manly authors could not have intended it to undergo. That on Purgatory for example - "The Romish doctrine of Purgatory etc., is a fond thing" and so forth: - The main article in the Romish doctrine, and which our Reformers were aiming at, it seems to me, was the existence of a Purgatory; or that which was afterwards expressed in the Creed of Pius in these plain terms "Constanter teneo Purgatorium esse." I do not perhaps rightly comprehend the tendency of Dr Pusey's argument; but it seems to me to establish that we may, consistently with our Subscription to the Articles, admit the existence of a Purgatory, provided it be not of the Romish kind: that is not a state of corporeal suffering or actual punishment. But though the hypothesis should be only of a poena damni or suffering by privation, yet, if this be assumed to constitute "a purifying process after this life", it still constitutes a purgatory. What ground have we for such a belief? The Romish error, I should say, consists at least as much in maintaining that there is any such place, or any such process, as in deciding on the nature of the process; respecting which latter alone Dr Pusey seems to divide from them. No one ever contended, I believe, that the Art. contradicted or prohibited the belief of an intermediate state. That the Scripture reveals; but nothing more or next to nothing. The Parable of Dives and Lazarus, which shews us the most, tells us exceeding little upon the subject. Indeed nothing seems to me more remarkable than the pains taken (if I may so express it) to keep us in the dark as to what the soul is to undergo in the interval between death and the resurrection. Did this ever strike you?

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It weighs upon my mind that our duty is to leave things in this sacred obscurity: and that in forming, or striving to form, any image whatever of that which is to be our condition beyond the grave, we are shewing impatience, and intruding into things not seen. In short, seemingly, upon this point we can have no doctrine: for as we are taught nothing so nothing can we teach. If the Romish doctrine which is so reprehensible were taken out of the way, and any other were substituted which involved the notion of a purifying process after death. I should still for myself say that that other (be it what it may) must be described as "a fond thing vainly invented, grounded upon no warranty of the word of God: yea rather, repugnant to it." So again of another Tenet "The Sacrifice of Masses". I admit that "the Sacrifice in the Mass" is not expressly spoken of. But is not that doctrine referred to and by implication condemned which was afterwards embodied in Pius's Creed - "Profiteor in Missa offerri Deo verum proprium et propitiatorium Sacrificium pro vivis et defunctis"? Why! the Article says expressly that the objectionable feature in those private masses was, that they were commonly held to involve that very doctrine. It was surely the supposed "Sacrifice in the Mass", that is, the doctrine of the Mass itself, which was meant to be condemned; and if the private solitary masses were "blasphemous fables and dangerous deciets", wherefore was it except that they involved that doctrine; and what then was the Mass itself? If this had not been so, it would be difficult to shew in what manner their frequent repetitions of Masses with a view to apply the benefits of/sacrifice to individuals, could have deserved censure more than it is deserved by us on account of our frequent repetition of the Absolution in the celebration of our Communion Service: by which the benefits of Christ's one sacrifice are conveyed to all who with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him then and there in partaking of that Holy Sacrament. If the writer of Tract 90 had admitted a false principle of interpretation I should have thought it better to say so, and to go back on to solid ground, rather than to attempt to support him in

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those treacherous shallows in which he had involved himself. I am sorry for the whole matter. You will have seen what I very conscientiously said in my Charge: and since that in writing to the Bishop of Calcutta, I have taken some pains to remove some prejudices which he appeared to have imbibed against these writers. But this was previous to Tract 90. I could not go with them in the course of Interpretation of the Articles upon which they seem now to have entered. We may have the Church of England or the Church of Rome: but the notion of a tertium quid, which shall be of both and yet be neither, I cannot comprehend. At any rate I would not associate myself with any such thing. The effect of following out that system would in my opinion be to introduce a mysticism in doctrine, corresponding with that connected with morals which misled Fenelon and Madame Guyon. If we maintain that our Articles will not embrace altogether the system of the Ch. of Rome but that they may admit conclusions between which and that system the distinction is not to be traced without studious definitions, nor to be comprehended without much metaphysical acuteness, I fear we shall not have far to seek for the source of what Dr Pusey terms the "Tendency of individuals to Romanism" for it is to be expected that the generality of devout but feeble minds will give the preference to the Romish views as presenting something certain definable and solid; exempt from that indistinctness which to a mind in earnest conveys an impression more painful perhaps than even a fixed and positive unbelief. What I have further to observe is that, whatever popery may be now, it began in the same disposition to imagine and to define as this cheme of interpretation of our Articles brings out to view. This was the fault, without any ill intention at first, of the 4th and 5th centuries: the fault of even great and pious men. Then came in the imagination first of all, and after that the endeavour, that these seductive conceptions might be turned to good account in establishing a universal dominion of the Church, or rather of church-men: and so popery (a spurious copy always of the true Kingdom of heaven) grew from a grain of mustard seed to be a great

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tree shooting out mighty branches. But on my dear friend, do not pray do not let us lose through any hallucination into which the wisest and best may be betrayed, the fruit of all their previous labours in the cause of the Church. They have been the honoured instruments of re-edifying and restoring much of its beautiful and substantial carved work which had been broken down by the axes and hammers of the adversaries who still roar in the midst of the congregations. May they not be reminded that their present course leads utterly away from that which had been (as I thought) so discreetly adopted and recommended in the 71st Tract for the Times: wherein it was plainly shewn how imprudent was the conduct of the Catholics in subscribing at Ariminum a Creed which might admit of a harmless and honest interpretation; but, by the practice of those who framed and professed it, was so wrested as to sanction the very worst excesses of an antichristian scheme. This seems to me to correspond too closely with what is doing now, in seeking to shew that the Creed of Trent is in terms so nearly unobjectionable (upon most of the controverted Articles) that we may come very near to an admission of it. But the 71st Tract very wisely said that a Creed may be unexceptionable almost in the wording; and yet the thing to be dreaded is put upon it. If we go much further I fear we shall once more give occasion to the Romanists to exult as the Arians did in the former instance; and "to circulate the news that the Anglican world has come over to their opinion."

In previous Letters (more than once) I believe I have acknowledged the receipt of both your remittances £500 and £250: but it may for security's sake be as well to repeat the intelligence; especially as it will afford me an opportunity of repeating also (which I cannot do too often) my thanks for your assiduous kindness and benevolence towards us.

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My financial position has indeed called for all the resources which could possibly be supplied: for owing to the extraordinary depression in the value of property, or rather the extreme difficulty of converting property into money, nearly all Subscriptions during the past year have ceased to be paid.

In consequence I have been compelled (besides consuming your bounty) to draw without authority upon that of the S.P.G. (of) else to see every improvement stop, ← OR every undertaking fall to the ground, and every prospect closed: while the Romanist flood (for they by some means or other always command resources) would move more rapidly on our stoppage, and sweep all clear before it.

They are anticipating great things on the return of their Bishop. By the last accounts he was at Rome, lodged in the Benedictine Convent of St Callixtus in Trastevere, officiating in Pontificalibus on the Eve of the Epiphany in the Church of the Propaganda, and delivering a series of Sermons in the Church of Gieuse e Maris in the Corso. "His Lordship was also occupied", it is said, "in arranging with his Holiness for a subdivision of his extensive Vicariat". All this is meant for effect here; and it is really formidable when taken in concert with the operations continually proceeding around me. "Nevertheless though I am sometime afraid: yet put I my trust in Thee:" and my fear would be but little if I could but obtain helpers well fitted for their work. I hope Mr Cowper is ere now in England, and that you have conferred with him. He will tell you much, and to the purpose, concerning our state. Yesterday I performed the whole morning Service at his Church; and regretted to perceive that the walls of the vast Roman C. Church opposite to it had risen visibly within the week. They now overtop ours: and I suppose they will open the building for public worship before the close of this year.

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God bless you my dear friend, and all in whom you feel affectionate interest.

I have not room left to particularize names, but beg you will make our united love and regards to all, believing me to be always very sincerely and gratefully,
yours, W.G. Australia.