

Australian Historical Monographs

**Some Letters**

of

**Rev. Richard Johnson,**

**B.A.**

**First Chaplain of New South Wales**

**Collected and Edited,  
With Introduction, Notes and Commentary,**

by

**GEORGE MACKANESS**

**O.B.E., M.A., Litt.D.(Melb.), D.Litt.(Syd.), Hon. D.Sc.(Syd.),  
F.R.A.H.S.**

**IN TWO PARTS**

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## **AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS**

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### **DR. GEORGE MACKANESS**

Dr. George Mackaness, O.B.E., M.A., Litt.D. (Melb.), D.Litt. (Syd.), Hon. D.Sc. (Syd.), F.R.A.H.S., was born in Sydney in 1882, and was a distinguished author and educationalist. He was in charge of the Department of English at Sydney Teachers' College from 1924 to 1946, was the N.S.W. Representative on the Commonwealth Literary Fund from 1938, and was President of the Royal Australian Historical Society (1948-49). He died in 1968.

Dr. Mackaness wrote over 70 books and journal articles, including such outstanding historical works as "The Life of Vice-Admiral William Bligh" (1931), and "Admiral Arthur Phillip, R.N.: Founder and First Governor of New South Wales" (1937). He edited anthologies such as "Poets of Australia" (1946), "Australian Short Stories" (1928), and poetic works of Byron and Wordsworth.

Between 1935 and 1962, Dr. Mackaness edited and privately produced in limited editions the series of Australian Historical Monographs, of which this volume is part.

These monographs, totally 46, cover an enormous range of Australian historical subjects and represent a considerable amount of original research on the part of Dr. Mackaness since most of the material in them had not previously been published. Since the monographs were produced only in very limited editions (some as few as 30 copies), their circulation has been very restricted, though their reputation amongst historians and scholars stands very high.

Review Publications Pty. Ltd. Hopes that the work of Dr. Mackaness will receive a much wider public recognition as a result of the reprinting of these important monographs.

**To**  
**The Venerable Archdeacon Stephen H. Denman, Th.L.,**  
**Rector of St. Clement's Church, Marrickville.**

**Acknowledgments.**

**For permission to publish original material in their possession, my thanks are due and acknowledged to the Trustees of the Public Library of N.S.W. ; to the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne ; and to the Council of the Royal Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.**

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## **Some Letters of Rev. Richard Johnson.**

### **PART II**

**No. 20.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Jonathan Stonard, Esq.**

**Source : Archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.**

Sydney, New S. Wales,

August 11<sup>th</sup>, '94.

Dear Sir,

Though I have already written to Mr. Gill by this conveyance, I am unwilling to pass you over in silence, to convince you as well as him that you are not forgotten.

By the Gorgon, which sailed from hence in Decr, 91, I sent you a Box of Seeds, which I had collected here & at Norfolk Island, from which place I had just at that time returned. These I sent to you by Major Ross, who promised to call and see them safely delivered. As I have never received a Letter, I fear some neglect or mistake has happened. I thought they might be acceptable, particularly to you, as you have a garden so extensive. I hope you will favour me with a line informing me upon this subject in case they have miscarried or you wish for any more you will inform me, I shall be happy to supply you with what I can collect.

As I have given Mr. Gill a short account of the present state of the Colony, it will be unnecessary for me to give you the same particulars. – I believe few Colonies have experienced more and greater vicissitude of fortune. We have more than once been brought into the greatest straits. Before the Second Fleet arrived our situation and prospects began to be very gloomy. – Before the arrival, at least on the very day the William<sup>1</sup> arrived, the last Salt Provisions were issuing from the Store, & the only thing left us to subsist on was Indian Corn. – Everyone began to think you in England had forgotten us in your troubles and disturbances with your near mad & infatuated neighbours, the French. Everyone began to fear for his little stock & the comforts he had about him, & that some disturbances and Insurrections wd take place amongst the Convicts. But the arrival of the above ship put an end to our fears. – Since then other ships have arrived from England & other parts of the world. – Our Stores are now in good state & our Prospects are now as promising as before they were gloomy. – Stock is scarce & intolerably dear. A very indiffert goat will sell for five guineas offered me for a ewe sheep which I refused. – I gave as good as thirty guineas for a Mare, which I have since been offered forty pounds for. A cow has been sold for seventy if not for eighty guineas. – Pork now sells for 9d per lb., & mutton 1/6d. Beef 2s. per lb., a fowl for four shillings, ducks, geese &c. in a like dear proportion.<sup>2</sup> – Little other conversation is heard by buying, selling, bartering, &c. Many of our officers have turned merchants, shopkeepers & wholesale & retail dealers in spiritous Liquors. – A convict can go & purchase a Bottle, a Pint of Rum from an officer & gentleman. Some, not quite so open, employ their wash women or others in this way -- & in this way many are making their fortunes – spirits, or what shall I call it, a mixture of ----- or adulterated with water, little better than the sailor's grog sold for 40 shillings a gallon. Such conduct is to me unaccountable, yet practiced by some whose fame my have spread [blot] as in England. – I have no hand in these affairs. I think it unbecoming of me as Minister & beneath me as a gentleman. My only wish is to support my family in a comfortable manner. This I hope to do from the ground I have cleared & the little stock I have raised or purchased. I have now about fifteen sheep, a dozen goats, a Mare, Hogs, &c., &c., & had I the same support or Indulgence (wh I have not for certain Reasons I shall not mention) I believe I should be able to do pretty well. – I have by this conveyance directed a fd of mine to call on you to send me a Box of Starch, which you will be so good as to direct to be safe packed for sea. Mrs. J. Unites in respectful Compts to you & Mrs. Stonard. Excuse my scrall & believe me to be, dear Sir,

Your faithful & humble servant,  
RICH'D JOHNSON.

Addressed : Jonathan Stonard Esq.,  
High Street,  
Lambeth,  
Near London.

Date stamp : 2 o'clock FE 28, '95, A.F.N.

**No. 21. – Rev. Richard Johnson to Rt. Hon. Henry Dundas**  
Source: "Historical Records of New South Wales," Col. II., p. 271

Sydney, New South Wales,  
24<sup>th</sup> November, 1794.

Sir,

It gives me sincere concern that I feel myself obliged to write to you upon a subject of so unpleasant a nature, but hope you will pardon my freedom, as I conceive there is an absolute necessity for doing so.

In the month of Sepr, 1793, I informed you, Sir, of my having erected a temporary place of worship, and stated also to you my reasons for undertaking and accomplishing this business, and at the same time I thought proper to give in to the Lieut.-Gov'r an estimate of the expenses.

I have since learnt that my conduct on this affair has given offense to Major Grose, and that he has written to you disapproving of what I have done, and also speaking of me in terms which I do conceive my general conduct has not merited.

Should it be thought, Sir, that my erecting a place of worship (after waiting for more than five years, all that time exposed to the greatest inconveniences, and no prospect of having these difficulties removed) was any way unnecessary or improper, I shall yet cheerfully take the burthen upon myself; neither would I ever have made application for a reimbursement had I known, or could I have conceived, that any objection could have been started upon the subject.

As to those unhappy differences that have since taken place between me and the Lieut.-Gov'r, I can only refer you, Sir, to the papers which I have transmitted to my hon'd friend, Mr. Wilberforce<sup>3</sup>, for the propriety or impropriety of my conduct.

Previous to this difference, Major Grose has given me the character of a discontented, troublesome person. If this be true, I must, Sir, submit to you and others to judge whether I have not had sufficient reason to be discontented, when I say that I have been opposed in the discharge of my publick duty and (my situation being compared with that of others) sorely oppressed in my private circumstances. I do conceive, Sir, that my station, calling, and standing in the colony entitle me to the same indulgences as are allowed to other gentlemen. But of these indulgences I have been deprived, and for more than twelve months I have only had two men allowed me, while other gentlemen have ten to clear and cultivate their ground, besides others given them to shoot,<sup>4</sup> and other domestic purposes.

I only beg leave to add further, that I have hitherto endeavoured, Sir, to discharge the duties of my sacred function with fidelity and diligence, in which I hope still to persevere, to long as my services may be required, only expecting that I be supported as a Clergyman and treated as a gentleman. Had I been thus supported and treated, all those unhappy differences would have been avoided, it being ever my wish and endeavour as a man and as a Christian to live in peace with all men. But should any representations be made that may require my returning home, I shall cheerfully resign my appointment, and be ready to appear before any person, and at any time it may be deemed proper, to answer for my conduct.

RICHARD JOHNSON.

## No. 22.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Secretary of Society for Propagation of the Gospel.

Source : Archives of S.P.G.

Sydney, New South Wales,  
Decr. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1794.

Revd. Sir,

By the Pitt, East Indiaman, I took the liberty of writing to you, but as yet I have not had the Honor of receiving an answer.

As I have not kept a copy, I cannot charge my memory with what is contained in my Letter, but recollect the purport of it was to inform you of my having seen some Letters that had passed between the Revd. Mr. Bain, Chaplain to the New South Wales Corps, & his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury,<sup>5</sup> respecting the appointment of schoolmasters & the Salary which the Society had agreed to allow to each. Mr. Marsden has given me the same kind of Information.

It is greatly to be wished that this laudable Intention & Resolution should meet with due Support & Encouragement. If any Hopes are to be formed of any Reformation being effected in this Colony, I believe it must begin amongst those of the rising generation & no steps, I think, can be better adopted & pursued for this Purpose than due attention being paid to their Instruction and Morals. And I would hope that together with the 10 pounds per ann. Allowed by the Society,<sup>6</sup> some small Indulgences given them by Government, & any Individuals so disposed, the object would be such as to induce a man to use his best endeavours to instruct them.

I presume, Sir, the children belonging to the Convicts, Settlers, &c., are to be included in this charitable design.

A Person of the name of Richardson, together with his wife, began to teach a few children at Sydney about the beginning of the year ninety, which they still continue to do,<sup>7</sup> and I believe so far as their ability & opportunity wd permit, they have been attentive to their duty. Should the Society be pleased to allow them a trifle in consideration of the Time past, I believe it would be both well bestowed and thankfully received. They have two children of their own and an orphan child they have taken, which they bring up in a decent manner. Whatever salary the Society may think good to allow

any school masters in this Country, to remove any difficulties that may arise as to sending them such remittances, if the Society thinks proper to pay into the Hands of my and Mr. Marsden's agent, Ambrose Martin Esq., Finch Lane, Cornhill, and the Revd. Henry Foster, Wilderness Row, we shall be happy to give the schoolmasters to the amount in this country either in cash or Bills, & also to use our endeavours to see that the charitable intentions of the Society be not abused.

I have hitherto been able to furnish the children & also some of the Convicts with Spelling Books, but as their numbers still increase the stock I have left by me will in time be exhausted. Could the Society send me out a few more, I should be thankful, & distribute them as I may see occasion. A few Prayer Books & Bibles wd be very acceptable & I wd lend or give them to those who appeared most deserving. Excuse, Sir, this Freedom.

As Mr. Bain is at this time about to return to England<sup>8</sup> and purposes upon his arrival to call upon you, it will be unnecessary for me to say any more upon the subject, as he will be better able to give you what information you may desire.

That God may bless & prosper the pious desires & endeavours of the Society is the sincere wish & prayer of

Revd. Sir,

Your most obedient,

Most humble sert.,

RICHARD JOHNSON

[No inscription.]<sup>9</sup>

**No. 23.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Jonathan Sonard, Esq.**

**Source : Archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.**

Port Jackson,

New S. Wales,

Novr 27<sup>th</sup>, '95.

Dear Sir,

I have received yours of the 11<sup>th</sup> March last, as also the Box of Starch & Powder, together with the magazines, for all which I thank you, but intended my fd Goff to pay you for the starch, & must request, sd he call again upon a similar occasion, you will take pay for what you send. Otherwise I am sure you will have no cause to thank me for my custom.

Having not heard from you in so long I was fearful my Letters had miscarried, but am happy at length to find you recd the seeds, & that some for them have answered my wishes. The seeds are now ripening & I purpose to collect & send you a few more by the first opportunity of a ship sailing directly for England.

Am very sorry to hear of the misfortunes &c. have happened in my Uncle Gill's Family, but not much surprised at the misconduct of my cousin Srafford. I sincerely wish these misfortunes may teach him wisdom, & sd it please God that he again got into any Business, he may learn to act with more discretion, I feel much for Mr. Gill, believing him to be a truly honest man, but always thought him faulty in giving his Children too much Indulgence, which I believe has been the occasion of most if not all his misfortunes.

Am sorry to find also that you are still visited with your old troublesome Companion, the Gout – wd advise you to take a trip to Port Jackson. – This is one of the best Countries in the world for the Cure of this Disorder, because here you wd find plenty of Exercise, but not so many of those Luxuries as are in many other Places. I do not much expect, however, you will follow my advice & shall be glad to hear in your next that you are better.

We have lately had a change of Government at P.J. – I hope & believe much for the better. Governor Hunter arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September & has already began to make some new Regulations, (and amongst others in some particulars relative to my line of Profession) which I hope will be attended with the best of Consequences.

Five of the Seditious Gentlemen have been sent out here from Scotland – four of them have been here a twelve month, viz., Palmer, Muir, Skirving & Margarot the fifth (Gerald) has but just arrived.<sup>10</sup> I have had many Letters of Recommendation of most of them, but the Principles they have espoused & as strenuously propogated in these perilous times, are no good Recommendation to any who love their King & wish well to their Country. I pity & respect Skirving the most – from what I have seen & even heard, I believe him to be a morally honest man, but unhappily misguided in his Political Principles, -- He has purchased a farm to wh he has retired & is but little seen. Muir conducts himself as far as I have heard with propriety – Palmer is always upon the bustle, but I feel no Partiality to my Bro. Parson.<sup>11</sup> Margarott has no connection or communication with any of the above three persons owing to an affair of Morality, it was supposed, whilst on their passage to this Country. –

Gerald I have not spoken to. Hope their Principles will be of no bad consequence here. Hear little of them, but can see in conversation they are yet warm in the Cause in wh they have embarked.

Our wheat Harvest is now coming on apace – The crops in general very promising, & the season throughout has been very favourable. It is thought that what is about to be gathered in, will be nearly, if not wholly sufficient, to supply the Colony for the next year. I have about 38 acres in wheat wh I hope will produce 16 or 17 bushels per acre. This has hitherto been taken into the publick Stores at 10s per Bushel. Whether it will lower in the value this season is not yet certain.

Stock, particularly sheep & goats, begin to increase very fast. I have now near thirty of the former & fifty of the latter. Some officers have a flock of some hundreds. These continue very dear. A very indiffert ewe or female goat will sell for seven or eight pounds & a pretty good goat for 12 or 14 guineas. A herd of 131 cows and bullocks were brought here some time since from Madras wh were purchased on account of Govt at the rate of 35 pounds a Head. These, though they may be thought dear, will in time be a great acquisition to the Colony.

The Britannia was some time since taken up by some officers, was sent to the Cape & brought 33 Horses, or rather Mares, except one. For one of these 100 pounds is asked – too much for a poor Parson's pocket. The same ship brought near 30,000 Galls of Brandy, the consequences of which you may easily judge.<sup>12</sup>

The cows lost soon after our first arrival have been lately discovered about 30 miles to the S.W. of Parramatta & have increased to upwards of sixty.<sup>13</sup> The found rich & open & well-watered, & the cows very fat but very wild that it will be difficult if not impossible to bring them in – 4 cows, 1 bull and 2 calves were lost in June, 88. –

Numbers of people have become settlers. The careful & industrious do well, but by far the greatest part spend in drinking, their crops, as or even before they become ripe. Hope this abominable Traffic will be checked, if not abolished by the present change of Govt.

The people at the Hawkesbury might do well particularly were they to act with Prudence & Industry, -- but owing to their Improvidence & Idleness &c., few out of about 100 settlers are worth sixpence.

About four years ago, five men stole a small boat in wh they put to the sea, intending to go to China. The boat swamped soon after they got out of the Heads of the Harbour. They consequently put in at Port Stevens, a Harbour laying at some distance to the Nor4thward. The natives behaved friendly to them, but made them throw aside their Clothes. They then supplied them with fish &c., and then have lived with them till last Augst, when the *Providence*, calling in there through bad weather, found them & brought them back to P.J. These men, not shaved, quite naked & living in such a manner for so many years, you may suppose were miserable objects. – Only four returned, the fifth having been dead some time since.<sup>13</sup>

This is the coldest season we have yet experienced since we arrived in this Country, though now almost the height of Summer. I am writing by a fire. The changes, however, are very great & often sudden.

The coldness of the season, whilst favourable to our grain, particularly wheat, is detrimental to our fruit gardens. My fruit trees of differt kinds, viz., oranges, Limes, almonds, apricots, guavas & Vines & figs, look promising. Have already in former years gathered a great many guavas. Some limes and some of the other kinds now bear fruit. Guavas will answer for tarts, as well as making wine or vinegar.

Mrs. Johnson and my two little folks, a Boy and Girl, are through Mercy, very well. I believe we shall stop here. Wd not wish for any further increase of this kind of stock, though it would be a severe trial to loose either of those with wh God has been please to bless us.

Mrs. J. begs to unite in best wishes to you, Mrs. S., family & fds., particularly to Uncle Gill, from whom a letter wd be deemed a favour. Remember me affectionately to my Cousin Tom &c.

Excuse my terrible Scrawl & believe me to be, Dear Sir,

Your greatly obliged  
& faithful Servant,

RICH'D JOHNSON.

**No. 24.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Governor John Hunter.**  
Source : Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 220.

Sydney, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1795.

Sir,--

I beg leave to state to you the following circumstances, viz., that after having made repeated applications, first to Governor Phillip, and afterwards to Major Grose, the late Lieutenant-Governor, for a place of worship to be erected, and there being no prospect of my applications being complied with, I

was at length (after being in the Colony for about five years and-a-half) induced and resolved to erect a temporary place for that purpose.

That when I had completed the undertaking, I laid before the Lieutenant-Governor an estimate of the expenses, requested that he would transmit the same to the Honourable Henry Dundas, not doubting but these expenses would be refunded.

But from letters which I have lately received from some respectable friends, some doubts have arisen in my mind whether the application and request which I have made will be complied with.

After having declared that my sole intention in undertaking and accomplishing this business was for the good of the Service, I submit to you, Sir, whether there could be anything unreasonable or improper in my making such a request and application.

Should my conduct in what I have done meet with your approbation, I humbly request, Sir, that you make such a representation of this affair to His Majesty's Minister, that these obstacles which have unexpectedly arisen, may be removed.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing to you, in brief, an estimate of the expense which I have been at in the above affair, and am, etc.,

Signed RICHARD JOHNSON.

Sydney, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1795.

To His Excellency John Hunter, Esq., Governor, etc.

**No. 25.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Jonathan Stonard, Esq.**

**Source : Archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.**

Port Jackson, New S. Wales,  
Sepr 16<sup>th</sup>, 1796.

Dear Sir,

I have in a former Letter acknowledged the receipt of your kind present of the Starch, Powder & magazines. — I beg leave again to thank you for your respected kindness towards me & mine.

By the *Britannia*,<sup>15</sup> which has been lately taken up by government to sail direct to England, I have taken the opportunity of sending you a four inch plank of Cedar, which grew upon the Banks of the Hawkesbury. — I fear it will be scarcely worth your acceptance. I will serve you, however, to make a table or some other little Furniture, as a specimen of the kind of wood which we here deem as valuable as any that grows in this Country.

T.C. No. 2

The direction I have set upon it is --  
Richd Johnson.

R : J. viz., Thos. Chauntrell from

I have written to Mr. Chauntrell of the Custom House, requesting him to take charge of it till called for by you or your order.

I have looked into the Book of duties & hope that no duty will be laid upon this article, sent from this Country in an English Bottom.

I very much wish I could have sent you a variety of seeds by this same conveyance. But the difficult shrubs are now only in Bloom and but few will be ripe yet for six weeks to come. I hope I shall be able, however, to collect some by & by. I will endeavour to send you some whenever an opportunity may offer.

Am sorry to hear of my Uncle Gill's misfortunes, but wd hope by this Time his Circumstances have become better. I was fearful while I was in London that Mr. S. G's.<sup>16</sup> extravagance might one day be attended with unpleasant circumstances, & sincerely wish what has happened may teach the young gentleman more wisdom & Prudence in future.

I do hope by this time that the public affairs have become more settled & peaceable in your Part of the world. The accounts which for some time we have received are truly of a most melancholy nature. May the Almighty God in Mercy protect our little Isle, from all foreign Invasions & intestine Commotions, & preserve & continue to us our religious & civil Liberty & Privileges.

Am sorry to say that I fear the same spirit seems too much to prevail in this Country — two of the seditious gentlemen, viz., Skirving & Gerald are dead.<sup>17</sup> Muir has made his escape in an American [ship].<sup>18</sup> Palmer & Margarot are still here, aiming I fear, to sow discontent &c. amongst the People.

The Colony at present as to Grain & salt Provisions is very well off. — Our Crops last year were very good & more wheat grown than will be consumed before the next Harvest. Stock too increases very considerably & in a little Time will be sufficient to supply the Colony with supplies from England. — But in other respects I am sorry to say we appear in a very unsettled, confused state. Party spirit seems to increase notwithstanding the Governor's mild disposition & his wishes to render the situation of all comfortable. I hope, however, in a little Time things will be brought into better

order. Steps are taking to prevent such horrid abuses of spirits, till wh is done the settlers in general must be miserable whilst a few individuals are through extortion &c., making their Fortunes.

Mrs. J. unites in respects to you, Mrs. S. &c. My two little ones are well. Accept our thanks for all favours, and believe me to be

Yours sincerely,  
R'D JOHNSON.

**Marginal Note—**

You will receive a small parcel of seeds from Mrs. Stokes, No. 8, Goldsmith St.,<sup>19</sup> – having procured a few wh a man brought me since I wrote your letter yesterday.

**Addressed :** Jonathan Stonard Esq.,  
High Street,  
Lambeth,  
Surry.

**No. 26.—Precis of Letter from Rev. Richard Johnson to the Secretary, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.**

**Source : Journal of S.P.G. for 1797.”**

“From the Revd. Mr. Johnson, dated Sydney, N. South Wales, December 1, 1796, in which he acknowledges the Secretary’s obliging letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1795, and says that he shall pay to Wm. Richardson and Wm. Webster the sum of ten pounds each agreeably to the Society’s instructions & for the time mentioned. To the former he could wish the same to be continued, being fully persuaded that his diligent conduct merits such indulgence, but the latter being too much addicted to drinking was led to treat his scholars too severely, and his wife, who had the principal part in teaching being dead, most of the children have been taken from him & several of them sent to Richardson. And as a school has been lately established at Parramatta,<sup>19</sup> distant from Sydney nearly 20 miles, he submits it to the Society whether it would not be better to appropriate the other 10 pounds a year to the Master of that School. The Revd. Mr. Marsden resides there and he believes will use his best endeavours to forward the Society’s good intentions. It is likewise in contemplation to have an Orphan School as soon as a building for the purpose can be erected ; or, when a Church is built, the temporary one now used for Public Worship may answer. It is much to be wished, he says, that such a school had been already established, as the principal hopes are from the rising generation. The miserable wretches sent out to that country being lost to all sense of virtue and religion, as long as their offspring continue with them, he fears every means used for their instruction will be ineffectual. The present governor much wishes for such an Institution, but owing to the number of engagements of a public nature, little can be done at present. In his next Letter he will endeavour to send a particular account of the number of schools and the children of ages to be taught. That he has applied to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for some Books for the children, and, if granted, would wish that leave might be obtained from Government for the case to be received on board ; otherwise, the freight will come very dear. With this is enclosed a letter from Thomas Macqueen to Mr. Johnson, dated Sydney, Norfolk Island, 21 October, 1796, as follows :-- (Letter not included.)

**No. 27.—Rev. Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.**

**Source : Mitchell Library, Unpublished MSS.**

Sydney, New S. Wales,  
August 15<sup>th</sup>, '97.

My dear friend,

I thank you for your kind Letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> of Sepr, '96. It gives both myself and Mrs. J. great pleasure to hear that you and your are well. May our gracious Lord continue to you this inestimable blessing, till having lived to a good old age, you are taken to that blessed world of spirits where there will be no Pain or Sickness for ever.

With pleasure I can likewise inform you that Mrs. J. & my two young ones are well, myself but middling, but I bless God, I am still able to go on in the discharge of my duty, & trust I still feel the gospel of X very precious to my soul.

The Path I have for many years had to tread, has been rough & thorny, & have often had to wonder how I have got on at all & hence am led to adore the Wisdom, Power, Faithfulness &c. of God, whose Promises I trust I can say have been verified “when thou passest through waters I am with thee.”<sup>21</sup> &c.

‘Tis now more than ten years since we left England, a long time to be banished from my fds & what is still more painful, from the enjoyment of the means of grace wh I once enjoyed. This

consideration often leads me to reflect upon David's case in the 42 Psalm.<sup>22</sup> Shd God spare my life, I still hope, however, once more to enjoy with you those inestimable Privileges, intending, should God be pleased in his Providence, to open a way for me to return home.

Since the arrival of Govr Hunter, wh is near two years, my situation has been much more comfortable than for some time before. His Excellency sets a becoming example in regularly attending public worship, & wishes as much as he can, to promote & establish the Principles of Morality & Religion, but I am sorry to add few seem to be influenced by is example. Our congregations, however, are much larger than before his arrival, & bad as things yet are, I still hope that out of all this confusion, God will bring some order.

Have just now been up with the Govr, found him alone & reading a sermon. He showed me the Book, & believe the subjects were very important. I only mention this to show you that his Excellency is disposed to promote Virtue & Morality in the Colony.

It gives me pleasure to hear that all fds with you are well, & I beg you will present our Xtian respects to all that inquire after us. I would have wrote to some of them, but I cd not find opportunity. Besides the duty of my particular office I have for some time had to perform the duty of a Magistrate,<sup>23</sup> a most unthankful, troublesome office, from morning to night am I more or less pestered with one complaint or another ; shd wish much to give up this duty, as it is almost too much for my Health & spirits, but in my present situation, I consider it my indispensable duty.

I have heard lately that my fd Wm. Dawes<sup>24</sup> is now settled at Portsmouth. I wish you wd inquire whether it is so, & if so, give my love to him & beg him to write by the first opportunity.

Mrs. J. unites in love & best wishes. Excuse this sad scribble & believe me to be,

Yours most affectionately,

R'D JOHNSON.

**On verso :**

P.S.—I am going to take a trip to Norfolk next week, & shall return here about Christmas.<sup>25</sup> This excursion will prevent me from writing to a number of my fds. You must therefore give my respects to Messrs. Horsey & Miles & also our dear fds whose residence is at Portsmouth & take them the will for the deed. —  
Farewell.

**Addressed :** Mr. Henry Fricker.  
Portsmouth Common,  
Hants,  
England.

**No. 28.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Governor John Hunter.**

**Source : Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 195, and  
Historical Records of New South Wales, Vol. III., p. 432.**

Sydney, 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1798

Hon'd and Dear Sir,

I have received your Excellency's letter of yesterday's date ;<sup>26</sup> and in compliance with your request, I sit down to give you an answer as early as possible.

Your Excellency, well knowing, however, the weak state I am in, and the afflictions I am labouring under for some time, will, I trust, have the goodness to excuse me entering into that length, in stating particulars, which otherwise I might do.

Yourself, Sir, being a kind of resident amongst us at the first formation of the Colony, and for some time afterwards, I need not state to you the plans adopted, and the measures pursued by Governor Phillip, for the proper regulation and good order of the Colony, as well in a moral as civil point of view.

Little or no alterations were made from these plans, from the time you then left us, to that when Governor Phillip himself returned to England in December, 1792. Sometime previous to his going, I was, at his request, sworn in to act as a Civil Magistrate in your place, which duty I continued to perform until the time he left us, at which time the Colony was as peaceable, orderly and moral as could be expected, from such a description of people as the Colony was formed of.

But no sooner had Governor Phillip left the Colony than I was convinced that the plans or measures of Government were about to undergo an entire change. The Civil Magistrates, within two days, received an Order that their duty would in future be dispensed with, and from that time till your Excellency's arrival again in the Colony, everything was conducted in a kind of military manner.

This, I believe, was the first step towards overturning all those attempts and endeavours that had hitherto been planned and pursued for the establishment of good order to be kept up amongst the different ranks and orders of the inhabitants of the Colony. Every order that had been given, tending to

promote morality and religion, seemed now to be laid aside, and fresh Orders issued, tending to banish whatever (in the opinion of a good and virtuous mind) is or ought to be first considered and promoted (and particularly in a Colony like this, where by far the major part of the inhabitants are lost to all sense of virtue, and abandoned to every species of wickedness), viz., a reverence for the Supreme Being, and a strict observance of all His just and righteous precepts. But the case was much otherwise, for within a month after Governor Phillip was gone, I received an order to perform Divine Service at six o'clock in the morning. A quarter before seven *the Tattoo* (as it was called) beat off for relieving the guard, so that I had barely three-quarters of an hour allowed me to go through the Church Service, and this was all that was required for the day.<sup>27</sup>

I beg leave here to give your Excellency an anecdote that happened one Sunday morning at that time. I had got up at day-break, as usual, to be ready in time to perform public service. At six o'clock the drum beat for church. I met the soldiers at the place appointed, in the open air. Before I began, I heard the Drum Major give directions to two drummers to beat off at ten minutes or a quarter before seven as usual. Suspecting what was going on, I looked at my watch, read part of the Morning Service; then (without any singing) gave out my text, and had gone through about half of my discourse, when the drum beat, and the soldiers instantly got up, took their arms, fell into their ranks and marched away. Judge you, Sir, what must have been my astonishment and concern. I looked around, and saw about half-a-dozen convicts standing behind me, but (such were my feelings upon this occasion) I could not go on with my discourse, and therefore returned home, greatly distressed in my mind, at such barefaced profanity and infidelity.

What I have above stated, your Excellency may conceive was a most effective step to throw aside all regard or reverence for the Sabbath day, and to render all public solemn worship utterly contemptible. And such were the bad effects, which this strange kind of an Order, and not less strange and unaccountable kind of conduct, produced. Seldom more than ten or twenty convicts (and sometimes scarcely any except my own servants) ever attended public service. The generality of them at the time were either asleep or in their hammocks, or sitting in their huts, or otherwise gone out to work for officers or other individuals. Spirituous liquor was the most general article and mode of payment for such extra labours, and hence in the evening, the whole camp has been nothing else often but a scene of intoxication, riot, disturbance, &c.

Gaming was no less prevalent at the same time. Many of them I have myself detected at this work, both as I have gone to and returned from Church. Sixteen men were at one time detected by one of the constables within a hundred yards of the Church, and at the time I was preaching, numbers of them have gamed away the clothes off their back, and the very provisions served them from the public stores, for weeks and months before they became due.

Hence so many flagrant and daring robberies that were committed at that time, seldom a night passed but in morning some fresh depredations were heard of; neither have I escaped these nightly visitors. Twice has my house been broken open, once through the wall, brick and half thick, and once through the tiling, and both times I was robbed of property to a considerable amount, which I had purchased for the use and comfort of my family.

In this way things went on from bad to worse, and from worse to worse still, until (I will not say all vital religion and godliness, but) even all common morality, and even common decency, was banished from the Colony.

Seeing, my dear Sir, such gross immoralities, depredations, drunkenness, riots, and even murders, daily committed; seeing these becoming more open and flagrant, and seeing no steps taken to put a check or stop to such shameful and horrid proceedings, I could not forbear complaining and remonstrating against them. But all such complaints and remonstrances answered no other end than to add to the insults and pointed opposition I had already experienced in the performance of my public duty, and to oppress me the more in my domestic concerns.

I cannot forbear giving your Excellency another instance of the most gross opposition I met with at that time. Once when a Criminal Court was held, there were two men sentenced to suffer death. The same afternoon I visited them in their lonely cells and intended to visit them again in the evening. The serjeant of the Guard called at my house the same evening with a request from the prisoners that I would spare them a candle. I sent one by my servant, and desired him to inform the serjeant that I would come to the prisoners in a few minutes. In less than half-an-hour the Serjeant came to my house a second time, brought back part of the candle, and informed me that he had received orders not to admit any person to see or speak to the prisoners, except Mr. Bain, *Chaplain to the Corps*<sup>28</sup> This message surprised me not a little.

The Rev. Mr. Marsden was then arrived in the Colony, and was with me in the room at the time, and was under no less surprise than myself. We then agreed to go to the guard-house together. We called for the Serjeant, begged he would repeat the message which he had before delivered at my house, which he did nearly in the same words. I replied, "I suppose, Serjeant, you know who we are," and asked if we could not be permitted to see and speak to the two men who were to suffer. He

answered that he knew us very well, but that such were his instructions, that he could not admit us. We then returned home, when I immediately wrote a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, but received no answer.

The next morning the Order for their execution was brought to me, that at such a time the two prisoners were to suffer, and that at their request, he had ordered Mr. Bain to attend them. All this was a prefabricated falsehood, as I will prove by incontestible evidence by a person who was permitted to visit them, and who asked them several times whether they had ever made such a request, when both of them positively and frequently declared they never had ; that they were surprised I had never been with them, and expressed (particularly the morning on which they suffered), an anxious wish to see me.

I will give your Excellency another instance. A convict and his wife came one morning to my Church, and on their return home they met one of the constables, who asked them why they had not been to Church. They said they had been there. "Where?" "To hear Mr. Johnson." The constable replied, "Don't you know you are forbidden to go there?" He then threatened to have them punished if they did the like again.

Had I time, my dear Sir, would my health permit, and would it not be carrying my answer to your letter to a greater length than may be convenient, or intended for your purpose, I would readily give your Excellency a more particular account of the various difficulties, insults, oppositions, oppressions which I forbear this being not altogether answerable to the purport of your letter, which is, not to give a detail of my peculiar situation or trials, but a general statement of the Colony, both before and since your arrival in it, in that high and important office you now sustain ; neither would I, believe me, Sir, have said so much respecting myself, but as I have been compelled to do so, this being so closely (I may say), inseparably connected with the general tenor or purport of your letter.<sup>29</sup>

I, therefore, only beg leave to inform your Excellency, that I have different times given my friends in England full and ample information upon this general, and to me painful subject. Either his Lordship, the Bishop of London, or Mr. Wilberforce, I believe, is at this time in possession of those papers ;<sup>30</sup> and, if your Excellency has any wish that those papers may be produced, as likely to answer any end or purpose you intend, I will readily write both to his Lordship, and my friend upon the subject.

If, Sir, more evidence is necessary to prove the authenticity of what I have stated, either in the papers I have just mentioned, or in the lines I am now writing to you, I can likewise appeal to the Rev. Mr. Marsdon, my assistant, who arrived in the Colony at the time public matters were thus conducted, and those immoralities were committed, and who, as well as myself, has often been shocked to see the Colony in such a state of disorder and confusion.<sup>31</sup> But your Excellency need only recollect, and seriously reflect upon the general state of the Colony upon arrival, and I am persuaded that all papers or appeals I could produce would be rendered unnecessary. The same immoral and licentious practices were then committed, and were not got the better of, but by much patience, great exertion, and unwearied perseverance. And yet, after all that has been done, I believe your Excellency is aware that much yet has been done, before the Colony in general, and the happiness of individuals in particular.<sup>32</sup>

I hope, however, that the steps your Excellency has already taken, and are daily taking, will be attended with the much to be desired consequences of producing some order out of so much confusion, some reformation and morality out of so much abounding licentiousness and irreligion, yet has so long prevailed in, and almost overspread the Colony. Your having, Sir, re-established the Civil Magistrates, to the execution of their duty ;<sup>33</sup> your causing proper and substantial buildings to be erected as placed of confinement and punishment of those vagrants as seek to disturb the public peace ; your appointing a Night-watch, both in the camp and in the different districts throughout the Colony ; the levity you have shown to some, and the severity you have seen necessary to exercise towards others ; in short, the various Orders you have issued, and the different regulations you have made, have, I hope, in some degree, already checked the abounding iniquity that once prevailed. And I would further hope (arduous and painful as your present situation may appear to be, and really is), ere you quit the Colony, that your continued, resolute exertions in pursuing those measures which you have adopted, you will have the happiness to see your exertions have not been rendered fruitless.

Bear with me, my dear Sir, while I add, that ever since our first arrival at, and first formation of the Colony, viz., for now nearly eleven years, it has been uniformly my sincere wish and endeavour, as well by precept as example. To promote the general peace and happiness of the Colony, and to the best of my knowledge I never deviated from, or disobeyed any Order given me, however contrary it might be to my own private sentiments, or painful to my feelings. I have equally endeavoured to inculcate the same kind of moral conduct upon the minds and consciences of others, an inward consciousness of thus having endeavoured to discharge my duty has ever afforded me matter of consolation, in the midst of all the insults, oppression, etc., I have met with, as well as under those bodily afflictions and infirmities I now feel, which I ever did, and shall, attribute to that illiberal and severe treatment I some time past experienced.

I should be happy, Sir (should it please God to restore me to enjoy better health) to remain some time longer in the Colony, and to unite, according to my abilities, and agreeable to my office and station, whether as a Minister or a Civil Magistrate, in my endeavours for the public weal. At present, However, I have but little such hopes and expectations. The attacks of my complaints are both frequent and severe, and every relapse leaves me still weaker and weaker. All I can do at present is to pray for you, that the Supreme Being may give you that wisdom, patience, courage and other virtues so necessary to govern in a situation like yours, and that the Almighty may bless and succeed your wishes and endeavours to the prosperity and happiness of the place and persons, over which you are appointed to govern. With such sincere wishes and fervent prayers for you, believe me, etc.,  
His Excellency, John Hunter Esq. RICHARD JOHNSON.

**No. 29.—Rev. Richard Johnson to the Duke of Portland.**  
**Source : Bonwick, “Australia’s First Preacher,” p. 246.**

Sydney, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1798.

I beg leave to inform Your Grace, that my health has for some time been upon the decline, and that at present I am in so weak a state as to not be able to discharge the duties of my sacred office. The faculty here have frequently given it as their opinion that the only, or at least the most likely, means of my health being restored, is by returning for a time to my native Country.

On this account, and that I may likewise have an opportunity of settling my domestic or private concerns at Home, I hope your Grace will be pleased to represent my wishes to my Gracious Sovereign, and that His Majesty will be graciously pleased to grant me leave of absence from the Colony until my health is better ; in doing this Your Grace will confer the greatest obligation upon, etc.,  
Signed RICHARD JOHNSON.

**No. 30.—Precis of Letter from Rev. Richard Johnson to  
the Secretary, Society for the Propagation  
of the Gospel.**

**Source : Journal of S.P.G. Proceedings.**

From Mr. Johnson, dated Sydney, New South Wales, August 31, 1798. That agreeably to Instructions from the Society he had paid William Richardson 20 pounds for teaching School from Michaelmas, '93 to '95, but William Webster having turned out an infamous character, he thought proper to stop the last 10 pounds from home and to give it between two others who teach and are more deserving. He was just recovering from a dangerous illness which had prevented his doing anything respecting the Schools, but he was about to make some regulations with the consent of the Governor which he hopes will meet with the Society’s approbation. Being very short of books, the first and second part for the Smaller and Dixon’s spelling book, which is most esteemed among the bigger children. The number of children has been given in by one of the Commissary’s Clerks, -- at Sydney 407, Parramatta 171, Hawkesbury 137. But it is supposed that the number is nearly 1000. The only hope he has is from the rising generation. Immorality prevails too much among the others.

Agreed in Opinion that it is not necessary for this Society to send Books to Mr. Johnson who has made application for the same to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

**No. 31.—Rev. Richard Johnson – No Inscription.**  
**Source : Archives S.P.G.**

Sydney, N. S. Wales,  
1798.

(No Inscription.)

[The first nine lines of this manuscript are totally illegible. The next twelve are badly stained and blotted.]

It is from a long & ardent wish that the minds of the rising generation of this Colony may be duly thus impressed with such moral & religious sentiment, that the following Plan has been adopted, & Rules & regulations have been made, which I hope every Parent as well as others concerned in bringing up children<sup>34</sup> will see it to be their duty & interest to promote.

Mutual complaints having been often made between Parents & Masters, -- of one that his Children make little or no improvement, & the other that Parents do not send their children regularly to school, it has been proposed to and agreed to by His Excellency the Govr that the different

schoolmasters shall have the use of the Church during the week & thus to unite in their endeavours for the better Improvement of their Scholars. It is likewise my Intention, so far as my time & health will permit to visit the School and to watch the Improvement wh the Children make. But, aware that certain articles are necessary to prevent any disputes or differences arising & that the school may be carried on with any success, such articles have been drawn up & laid before the Govr, it is to be considered that those, & those only, who submit or agree to these Articles or Rules here laid down & are intended to reap the Benefit which it is hoped will be derived from the school.

RULES OR ARTICLES TO BE OBSERVED RESPECTING  
THE SCHOOL AT SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1798

1. That this School is to be considered for the Benefit of Children of all Descriptions of Persons, whether Soldiers, Settlers or Convicts, provided they comply with the Rules here laid down.
2. Any Parent, &c, as intends to send a Child to School is to give a week's notice to the Revd. Mr. Johnson, that the Child's name, together with that of its Parents may be registered in a book, which Mr. Johnson will keep for that purpose.
3. No child is to be admitted, till he or she shall arrive at the age of three years.
4. The School hours to be from nine to twelve o'clock in the morning & from two to five in the afternoon. No School on Saturday afternoon.
5. Every fresh scholar to pay sixpence at first entrance. – Such children as are learning to read, to pay four pence pr week ; those learning to write, or arithmetic, six pence.
6. Such payments to be made once a Quarter, & if paid in articles, then to be charged reasonable.
7. Such Parents or others, as refuse, or with hold such payments, (except those included in the next article) to be deprived of ye privilege of sending their children to this School.
8. Persons incapable of paying for their children will not be required to do so. – Who those persons are will be principally left to the Judgment & Humanity of the Schoolmasters.
9. Any child or children guilty of swearing, lying, stealing, or any other idle or wicked Habit are to undergo such Punishment as the Masters (first acquainting Mr. Johnson with the Crime & having his concurrence) shall think proper to inflict ; if after frequent correction no reformation be effected, that child to be turned from school.
10. All children belonging to this School, are regularly to attend public worship on the Sabbath Day, (except upon necessary and proper occasions they may be prevented) and to appear clean and decent ; the different Masters (two at least) likewise to attend, to mark those that are absent, & to report the same to Mr. Johnson on Monday morning.
11. The children to be catechized, & to sing one of Dr. Watt's Hymns for Children<sup>35</sup> every Saturday forenoon, & to be catechized at Church at such times as Mr. Johnson or the clergyman officiating may find convenient. Such parents as neglect or refuse to send their children to be thus instructed, to be deprived of the Privilege of the School.
12. A Form of Prayer to be read by one of the School Masters, & one of Dr. Watt's Hymns to be sung morning & evening. And it is strongly recommended that Parents will send their Children early to School to pray, as they are able, for a Blessing to attend the Instruction given them.
13. The Church Bell to ring a quarter before Nine in the morning, as a warning for the Children to prepare immediately to School.
14. Those Parents as make a practice of keeping their Children for several days together from School upon frivolous occasions, (by wh means their children make little or no improvement in their learning, whilst the blame is laid upon the Master) are first to be warned of such neglect, & if they still persist, they are to be deprived of the Benefit of sending their Child to this School.
15. As books of learning are at present very scarce in the Colony, the children are to give up their Books to the Master every noon & evening, except on Saturday, when they may be allowed to take them Home, that the Parents on Sundays, during the Interval of Divine Service may hear their Lessons, & thereby see the Improvement they have made during the week. But such children as either tear, lose, or do not bring back their Books, must not expect other Books to be given them.
16. The pecuniary Benefits derived from teaching school from the time these Rules & Regulations were made to be divided equally amongst the Schoolmasters appointed for that purpose, -- and
17. The persons thus appointed are William Richardson, Isaac Nelson, and Thomas Tabor, who are to receive & enjoy the above mentioned Benefits, until some good & sufficient Reason be given for their removal – or, shd more assistance be required, as the scholars increase in numbers, in that case, observation to be had of the 16<sup>th</sup> article.
18. These different Rules may be hereafter allowed to be altered, enlarged or curtailed as may be deemed necessary – to be read publicly in Church once a quarter ; & a copy of them to be kept in the Vestry Room, that no Person may be able to plead ignorance of their Contents or Meaning.

Sydney, New S. Wales,

RICHARD JOHNSON.

August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1798.

**No. 32.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Governor Hunter.**

Source : “Historical Records of Australia,” Vol. II., p. 323

Sydney, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1790.

Hon’d and Dear Sir,

Understanding that my name has been mentioned in two letters – one in a letter from Lancashire to a member of the Court before whom he had been tried ; and in another which I saw Nichols addressed to the members of a Court of Inquiry<sup>36</sup> convened for the purpose of investigating the truth or falsehood of certain reports at that time in circulation, and which, if founded in truth, were highly material to the prisoner Nichols, who had been convicted before the Criminal Court just then dissolved, -- I beg leave to acquaint you with the business to which Nichols in that letter alludes.

I was called upon by Captain McArthur, and by him informed that Lancashire either had made,<sup>37</sup> or was about to make a confession to Mr. Bond,<sup>38</sup> relative to the evidence he had given upon the trial of Nichols, and desired me officially, as chaplain, to go with him and to take down his confession, After some little hesitation, I went with Captain McArthur ; took pen, ink, and paper with me ; Mr. Bond was there with Lancashire, who was frequently and closely interrogated by both these gentlemen, but was surprised to find he had no confession to make to them, and repeatedly answered them by saying that what he had said upon the trial of Nichols was the truth, and that he had no more to say upon the subject. Hearing this, I left him and returned home.

I have thought it necessary to say thus much least you or any others sh’d suppose I sh’d have been concerned in attempting any unjust confession from Lancashire, and also to declare that my only motive was, what I have always conceived my duty upon such occasions, viz., to obtain any information from persons in his unhappy situation which might be serviceable to the community.

I am, etc.,

RICHARD JOHNSON.

**No. 33.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Joseph Hardcastle,**

**Esq., Treasurer of The Evangelical Society.**

Source : *Journal of The Evangelical Society, 1799.*

(Reprinted in Bonwick, “Australia’s First Preacher,” p. 126.)

Sydney, August 26, 1799.

Dear Sir,

Though I have not the pleasure of knowing you in person, you will, I hope, excuse my freedom in transmitting to you a Letter from this distant part of the world – I am sorry to add, upon so unpleasant and painful an occasion.

By this time, I suppose you have heard that part of the Missionaries sent first Oraheite have left that Island, and have come to Port Jackson. These gentlemen arrived here on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 1798, at a time when I was confined to my room through a long and severe sickness.<sup>39</sup> Upon their first arrival, Messrs. Cover and Henry, with their families, spent a few days with us, after which they removed up to Parramatta, about fifteen miles from Sydney, where they still reside.

Owing to my indisposition, it was some time before I became any way acquainted with any other of the Missionaries ; and with one or two I did not feel disposed to claim any acquaintance, and fear the Society have been deceived in them ; but I wish to be excused in saying more upon that subject. A conscientiousness of my own infirmities makes me delicate in exposing those of others – to their own Master they must stand or fall. The Apostle’s motto, I wish, on all occasions, to make my own. “Be not high minded but fear.”<sup>40</sup>

During the time of my illness, Mr. Samuel Clode frequently called upon me, and I believe was pretty well acquainted with the nature of my indisposition ; and after I recovered a friendly intimacy was formed between us, and I confess the more I came to know him the more I esteemed him. But it has pleased God to remove my friend away from me, to meet him no more till it pleases Him to remove me likewise from this vale of sin and misery. I will now, Sir, give you a short account of this painful melancholy event.<sup>41</sup>

Mr. Clode, some weeks previous to this, had signified to me his intentions of returning to England, and at that time was preparing things necessary for the voyage. He had spoken to Capt. Wilkinson of the *Indispensable*, and had so far agreed with him, that Capt. Wilkinson had begun to provide cabin for him ; but, alas! A cabin of a different kind was preparing for him at the same time. A soldier, of the name of Jones, had for some time owed Mr. Clode a sum of money, Mr. Clode now thought it necessary to ask for it, and after some altercation Jones desired him to call on Tuesday, the 2d of July, in the afternoon, and he would settle with him.

My friend had dined with me on the Sunday and Monday preceding, and was likewise in the camp on the Tuesday ; dined at Dr. Harris's, Surgeon to the Corps, a gentleman, who had from Mr. Clode's first arrival, been very kind and friendly towards him, providing him with a hut to live in, with plenty of vegetables, and giving him free access to his own barracks at all times.

About four o'clock he called upon us, sat a few minutes, and then took his leave for the night, promising to call the next morning, and to bring with him something for my little boy, who at that time was indisposed. But truly it may be said, we know not what a day may bring forth ; for the next morning, instead of seeing my friend, tidings were brought me that he was murdered – was found in a saw-pit under water – his skull was fractured in different parts, and his throat cut from ear to ear. Judge, Sir, what was my surprise and horror upon receiving this information. A kind of stupor seized me – I could not believe it – it appeared as a dream ; but recalling myself, I immediately went and acquainted his Excellency the Governor with the melancholy news. The Governor, with several other officers, went with me to the place, where we found every thing as was represented, a scene so shocking as I never shall forget, but too painful and distressing for me fully to relate.

It pleased God, however, that this horrid murder did not lie long concealed ; divine justice and vengeance soon pursued and overtook his cruel and blood-thirsty murderers. News of this shocking event soon spread in all directions. Numbers of all descriptions of persons ran to the spot ; Jones the man above-mentioned among the rest, and was the first to lay the murder upon an innocent person who found my friend in this melancholy state. But this wretch's crime in the murder, and his no less wicked intention in throwing it upon another, were both soon discovered. Suspicions falling upon Jones, the path leading from the pit to his house was closely examined a blood traced (besides some of the dear deceased's brains laid in different places) to the very door, and making further search in the house, blood was discovered in different parts, particularly in a small skilling, where as afterwards appeared, my friend was dragged after this horrid butcher had knocked him down. An axe was found with blood and brains upon it, though it had been previously washed ; a knife and blanket were discovered in the same state ; and, upon examining the person of Jones, blood was found upon one of his fingers. These and other circumstances, fully confirmed the suspicion of his guilt. Jones, his wife and two other men who lived in Jones' house, were immediately apprehended, and the next day, Thursday, a Criminal Court was convened purposely to try them, when three (viz.) Jones, his wife, and Elbury, were convicted upon the clearest evidence ; and I fear the fourth, though acquitted, was a party in some way concerned. After their conviction, I officially visited these three horrid monsters, who, for the purpose of obtaining a more full confession of this murder, an others it was conjectured Jones had committed, were put into separate places. Jones continued hardened to the last, his wife little better ; but Elbury (struck with remorse which was occasioned by what I shall hereafter mention) made a full confession of the whole transaction, first to a serjeant in the Corps, and afterwards to myself, which I took down in writing and was to the following purport :

The scheme was first planned by Jones and his wife on the Thursday : Elbury was asked to assist in it, but at first refused ; to gain him over Jones gave him several drams of spirits ; when, at length, in the morning of Tuesday, he consented. Trotman (the other man that was tried, but acquitted), was sent with Jones's two children to a settler's farm for turnips ; Mr. Clode was at that time in the town, and expecting him to return home after dinner, it was the intention of the other three to dispatch him before Trotman and the children returned ; but Mr. C. not returning home as soon as was expected, this scheme failed. About four o'clock (for Jones and Trotman belonged to the Corps) called in purposely to drink tea. At that time Jones and Elbury were looking out for Mr. C., and seeing him coming downhill at a distance, they went into the house, and Jones proposed that his wife, together with the two soldiers, and Trotman, and the children, were to go to look at a piece of wood, which Jones was said to be cutting for the purpose of a canoe ; this was agreed upon. Mr. Clode by this time wax come to the door, was asked in, and a chair was set for him by the table to settle his accounts with Jones. The axe I have already mentioned was placed in the corner of the room ; with this Elbury, coming behind him, was to knock him down ; he took it up in his hand, but his heart failing him he laid it down again and went out of doors, where he staid a little while ; returning in again he heard the first blow given by Jones. This inhuman wretch repeated his blows so often, that Elbury at last cried out, "For God's sake, Jones, you have knocked him all to pieces." They then dragged him into the skilling, when Elbury came out again and Jones soon after him. Jones went into the skilling and coming out a second time took up a large knife. Elbury asked him what he was going to do with it, he replied, "D--m him, he moves, he is not dead," and taking the knife went in again, and cut his throat, from ear to ear, and then returned both the knife and his hands reeking with blood. This he immediately washed, whilst Elbury scattered ashes over the room to conceal the blood upon the floor, the window shutters were put in, the tea-things set against the Company returned ; after tea liquor was set upon the table, several songs were sung by Jones, his wife and others. About nine Jones and Elbury went out, when they dragged their prey through a hole in the skilling, and taking him up upon their shoulders, carried him to the pit, threw him in, covered him over with green boughs, and then returned to their company, and

kept up their jovial mirth till after midnight. The providence of God appears singularly in bringing this horrid murder to light. A man had been at work hoeing for several days upon the ground round this pit, and in the evening used to leave his hoe in the pit ; going to work the next morning, and looking for his hoe, he was surprised to see so many green boughs laid over the pit ; suspecting something was there planted : (i.e.) some property that had been stolen was concealed, he put in his hoe and removed the boughs, when he immediately saw the hand of a dead man. He then called out to another man cutting firewood at a small distance ; three or four others came at the same time, Jones among the rest, and immediately charged the man that first discovered Mr. Clode in this woeful plight, with the murder, and wanted to tie his hands with an handkerchief, and take him into the camp a prisoner. Jones came into the camp with others to bring tidings of the murder, expressed his concern for the murder of man he so much loved, and to whom he was indebted for his attention to him and family, in times of sickness, and again endeavoured to throw the murder upon the man that first discovered Mr. Clode in the pit. From the tale he told, and other circumstances concurring, the man was committed to prison ; but at the very time Jones was thus speaking, another man came up (myself and the Governor and other gentlemen present) and said to Jones – “Jones, you are the murderer ; blood is traced from the pit directly to your house.” He then began to protest his innocence, and to repeat what I have before related. His house, his body, &c., were examined ; he was taken to the pit, ordered to look at the body, and to touch it. He replied, “Yes, I will, and kiss him, too, if you please, for I loved him as a brother.”

That this unfeeling wretch had reason to love Mr. Clode, you may easily perceive by his wife’s declaration to me whilst under sentence. Speaking to her of this horrid business, and lamenting the unhappy end of a friend I so much esteemed, she replied, “Oh, Sir, that dear man was the saving both of my life, and the life of my husband. His intention to Trotman was such as I never saw in any other person in my life : three times a day he came to visit him, washing and cleaning his sores, and had it not been for his attention, he would have surely lost his hand. Who, my dear Sir, can her such a declaration as this, but must shudder, to think that such horrid monsters can exist?”

By an order from the Governor, the house in which the murder was committed was on the Saturday pulled down, and burnt to ashes ; a temporary gallows was erected upon the same spot, and at twelve o’clock, these three inhuman wretches were taken out, and conveyed in a cart to the place, where, having discharged my duty as chaplain, they were launched into eternity, to appear at the tribunal of a righteous sin-avenging God, and rather execrated than pitied by a numerous multitude of spectators. The bodies of the two men are hung in chains near the place ; that of the woman given to the surgeons for dissection.

In the interim, I gave directions to have the body of my deceased friend brought into the town to a small hut of my own, and ordered a decent coffin and shroud, &c., to be made. Numbers came to see him, and many with tears, lamenting his untimely end. On Friday, his body was committed to the silent grave. The pall was borne by five surgeons (Doctor Harris, the gentleman above mentioned being one) and Captain Wilkinson.<sup>42</sup> His Excellency the Governor walked with me before the corpse ; and Messrs. Cover, Henry, Hassel, Smith, Oakes, and the two Puckey’s behind the corpse,<sup>43</sup> and after them several officers and others. After having read the burial service, a hymn was sung, given out by Mr. Cover. I then spoke a little upon the melancholy occasion ; many being in tears, and myself so much affected, that I could indeed say but little, but gave notice that I purposed to preach a discourse on the Sunday but one next following.

The ensuing week I composed two discourses, and on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July preached in the morning from 2d of Samuel xvi, 17, middle clause, “Is this they kindness to they friend?” Spoke to the general character of the deceased, the aggravating circumstances attending his death (and what these were you will easily judge, Sir, from what I have above related) and concluded my sermon with an exhortation to different descriptions of persons. In the afternoon, I preached from Jeremiah vi, 10, “To whom shall I speak and give warning, that they may hear?” which was intended as a solemn warning and exhortation to the living, and particularly to those guilty of drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, &c., the reigning vices committed in the Colony ; the fatal consequences attending which, my dear Sir, I have long seen and lamented, but alas! I fear all to little or no purpose.

The Missionaries attended Church ; hymns were sung, and the lines were given out by Mr. Cover. In the evening, Mr. Cover gave an exhortation at my house, to his brethren of the Mission, to my family, and some others, upon the same occasion.

I promised to tell you what it was that occasioned Elbury to make a confession of the murder before he suffered. When the bell began to toll for the funeral of my friend, he asked what the bell was tolling for. The serjeant of the guard told him, it was for the funeral of the person which he and Jones had murdered. He was then taken out of the room, when seeing the corpse just taken from my hut, he asked who it was walking with Mr. Johnson before the corpse. He was told that it was the Governor, -- He then hung down his head, went again into the guard room, burst into tears, desired one to read to him ; and soon after made a full confession, which was in substance what I have above related.

As I do not doubt, but that Mr. Cover and the other Missionaries, who have seen, and with me lamented the unhappy end of my deceased friend, will write either to you or some other of the Directors, it was not necessary for me to write to you so fully, not indeed at all upon the occasion ; but, for reasons I have given, by whom, as well as by persons of every description belonging to the Colony, he lived beloved, and died lamented.

I must now beg leave to apologise for the hasty and incoherent manner in which I have written this letter, and can only plead as an excuse, that having many letters to write by this conveyance, my domestic concerns, as well as official duties to attend, and withal enjoying but a weakly state of health, I could neither be so particular, nor correct as I could have wished, in relating so extraordinary, singular, and I may say, unexampled a circumstance of barbarity and cruelty.

My friend Henry<sup>44</sup> appears anxious to return to Otaheite. He is a studious, serious young man and appears well adapted for the work, upon which he was sent out, and, I hope ere long, a door in Providence may open for his return.

Mr. Cover does not appear anxious to return,<sup>45</sup> unless a stronger body of people were upon the island, to defeat any evil intentions of the natives. He is, I trust, a person of solid piety, and possessed of good ministerial abilities, and he, together with Messrs. Henry and Hassel, have almost from their first arrival at Port Jackson, gone to the Settlements, established at different parts of the Colony, to preach, and to exhort the settlers, I sincerely wish them every success in their attempts and endeavours.

His Excellency the Governor has been, and still continues to be, very kind and attentive to the Missionaries.

That God may bless and prosper the missions sent out to the Heathen in every place, is the fervent prayer of, dear Sir,

Your sincere well-wisher, and humble Servant,  
RICHARD JOHNSON,  
Sydney.

J. Hardcastle, Esq.

**No. 34.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Rev. William Morris,  
D.D., Secretary to the Society for the Propagation  
of the Gospel.**

Source : Archives of the S.P.G.

Sydney, New South Wales,  
Sepr. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1799.

Revd. Sir,

I have received your obliging Letter, dated June 1<sup>st</sup>, '98, together with two cooks, containing Sermons & other Proceedings of the Society for the years '97 & '98.

As the *Buffalo* is about to sail for the Cape of Good Hope, I take this early opportunity of returning your answer and to thank you for your kind favours.

And first I beg leave to lay before you the sums of money I have paid at different times on account of the School which the Society have been so kind as to patronize, viz.: --

To Messrs. Richardson & Webster <sup>46</sup> for teaching School from Michaelmas, '93, to do. '94 .....	pounds: 20	0	0
To William Richardson for do, from Mch., '94 To '98 .....	pounds: 40	0	0
To do. With Isaac Nelson and Thos. Tabor, from To do., 98 – 99 .....	pounds: 10	0	0
	-----		
	pounds: 70	0	0

From the general Instructions you have given me there yet remains to be paid to William Webster from Michaelmas, '94 to '97, the sum of ----- 20 pounds. But this sum I do not purpose to pay until I have the pleasure of hearing again from you, when I request you will inform me whether I am to pay it to Webster or to any others teaching school, or whether not to pay it at all.

As the two persons you mention in your last Letter, viz., Thos. Macqueen and Susanna Hunt, live at Norfolk Island, I suppose the Clergyman which I am informed is coming out from England to reside there,<sup>47</sup> will take the Direction of the different Schools established upon that Island. However, when this Gentleman & Govr King arrive I hope to know from them how & by whom the salary of these two persons is to be paid, & unless they have received separate Instructions from you, I shall, as opportunity offers, transmit the sum of 20 pounds annually to Norfolk Island for the above two persons on the Society's account.

The Resolution of the Society in leaving out the name of Wm. Webster I greatly approve of, his general Conduct being such as by no means entitling him to any Indulgence from them, but am

sorry that they have resolved to allow only the sum of 10 pounds pr ann. for the school at Port Jackson, whilst they allow 20 pounds per ann. for Norfolk Island, considering the great disproportion of children upon that Island, when compared with those at Port Jackson. I hope, Sir, you will forgive my freedom in giving this hint, aware that it is not for me to dictate to the Society, but rather to express my obligations for their friendly & liberal Benefactions.

In a former Letter I informed you that we were at that time attempting to make some new Regulations<sup>48</sup> respecting the School. Several small schools were by this plan united into one, & the three masters I have mentioned above were appointed to instruct ye children that were admitted into it, which, agreeable to the Rules laid down, was for the children belonging to the Corps, to settlers, or Prisoners or others. Those who were able, to make a certain small compensation to the schoolmasters, but the children belonging to the poor to be taught gratis.

The church was on the week days appropriated for that laudable purpose, & about one hundred & fifty scholars were collected and everything promising agreeable to my wishes. But I am sorry to say, that very soon our scheme & endeavours were in some degree frustrated by some evil-minded person or persons setting fire to the Building, which at once deprived us both of Church & School.

In consequence of this the Gov. gave permission for the Children to assemble in the Court House,<sup>49</sup> but owing to different Courts being so frequently held, this place was found very inconvenient & occasioned many complaints from the Parents. It was then thought best to have the Children again removed, to a Building appropriated for the Church, which I confess, is not very comfortable, owing to which unavoidable Circumstances, our numbers have decreased to ninety-nine.

Spelling Books<sup>50</sup> &c. are at this time very much wanted. These I have given out as sparingly as possible. I have some left whilst the calls for them increase every year as the Colony increases in the number of children.

The Books, Sir, which you mention in your Letter intended to be sent by the Society in Bartlott's Buildings, I have not yet received & wd advise that whenever either Society favours me with such a supply, they wd be so kind as to give me a Line by the same ship, signifying that such a Case (marked and directed) was shipped on board said ship, & if a Receipt was taken either of the Captain or mate, & sent enclosed in the letter, it wd be better, as not seldom, I fear too often [illegible] with Packages sent out to individuals.

I have written by this conveyance to my Agent, Ambrose Martin, Esqr., Finch Lane, Cornhill, to whom I request, Sir, you will be so obliging as to pay, or order to be paid, the Balance of the Account as above specified, & further to pay to the same Gentleman any future sums as the salaries may become due, which I promise to pay to the schoolmasters agreeable to the laudable & benevolent intentions of the Society, and am,

Rev. Sir, with great deference,

Your obliged Friend

& faithful Servant,

RICHARD JOHNSON.

Rev. William Morris, D.D.

**No. 35.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Joseph Hardcastle,  
Esq.**

**Source : Journal of the Evangelical Society, 1800, p. 303.**

(Reprinted in Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 142.)

Sydney, New South Wales,  
Oct. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1799.

Sir,

In a pretty long letter, which I lately sent you, relative to the melancholy death of Mr. Clode (which, I believe, I shall never forget), I informed you, that Mr. Henry was anxious to return to Otaheite. An opportunity at this time offering, he has embraced it, and in a few days will take his leave of us.\* The reason of my giving you this line, is to give you my opinion of Mr. H., which I shall do in a few words ; and that is, I believe him to be a sincere, pious, zealous young man, whose heart is much engaged in the arduous work of a Missionary, and trust his absence from his post for a time, and what he has seen in this Colony, have been blessed to him, in teaching him more than perhaps he before knew of mankind, and from the scenes of surrounding iniquity and infidelity, which increase and spread in this colony, he will return to his post and to his friends with a fresh relish for religious conversation, and renewed vigour to that work to which he has been called, gratefully acknowledging the mercy and grace of God for making him to differ, not only from the world in general, but also from some who professedly came out upon the same important expedition.

If I may, Sir, be allowed to give my sentiments, I may say, that I believe that some of those first sent to Otaheite, and who have left it since, are much better away, and hope their secession will turn out for the furtherance of the pious wishes and endeavours of the Society. My friend Henry has repeatedly expressed the same opinion, and I hope upon his return, he will find his friends left behind living in love, and unite hand and heart with them in the work in which they are engaged.

I believe Mr. Cover has no intention of returning to Otaheite. Having taken a farm, he means, I understand, to remain some time longer in this country. He constantly preaches, and exhorts every Sabbath in different places. His labours are greatly wanted, and I pray God they may be rendered useful. Mr. Hassel occasionally assists him, as Mr. Henry has done hitherto. Having spoken of these three, and poor dear Clode (whose labours and sufferings are over) I have said all I can. Some of the others are gone from the colony, and with the remainder I have no acquaintance, as I cannot approve of their conversation and proceedings.

You will, Sir, I trust, excuse my freedom ( as I have conceived it go be my duty) in writing, and giving you the above information. Mr. H. will write to England upon his arrival at Otaheite ; and it will give me great pleasure to hear of his and his brethren's success, and that God is blessing this and every other evangelical mission to the conversion and salvation of the heathen.

And am, dear Sir, with great respect,  
Your most obedient and faithful servant,  
RICHARD JOHNSON.

**No. 36.—Rev. Richard Johnson and Rev. Samuel Marsden to Ex-Governor John Hunter.**

**Source : Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 227, and "Historical Records of New South Wales," Vol. IV., p. 162.**

Sydney, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1800.

Sir,—

Understanding from a Public Order<sup>51</sup> issued on the first day of this month, by His Excellency Governor King, that he was instructed to allow the acting magistrates the indulgence of five extra men servants,<sup>52</sup> for the purpose of carrying on their agricultural concerns, as a reward for their extra and laborious services, we beg leave to submit to Your Excellency whether the services we have performed in that duty do not merit for us the same indulgence. We have both acted in that capacity from the time of Your Excellency's arrival in September, 1795, and hope our exertions for promoting the good of the public service, and establishing and maintaining the good order of the Colony, have not met with Your Excellency's approbation. Your Excellency cannot be ignorant of the disordered state in which you found the Colony upon your arrival, and that the difficulties which have been thrown in the way of the Civil Power, have rendered that duty much more arduous and troublesome than it my perhaps be in future. We humbly request, for the above reasons, the you will have the goodness to submit the above representation to His Majesty's Ministers.<sup>53</sup> With all due respect we beg leave to subscribe ourselves,

Yours, etc.,

RICHARD JOHNSON  
SAMUEL MARSDEN

**No. 37.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Lord Hobart.**

**Source : Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher."**

No. 60, Pater Noster Row,  
[London].

My Lord,—

I have received your Lordship's obliging letter, and beg leave to return you my sincere thanks for the favour you have done me in presenting my Memorial<sup>54</sup> to the Right Honble. Mr. Addington, and also for that encouragement which your Lordship has given me to hope that I shall be provided for in the Church.

In my Memorial, I acquainted your Lordship that I returned from New South Wales in the months October, 1800, and arrived in England in May last. Being from that time unprovided for, I humbly request to hope that your Lordship will be pleased to give Directions to the Agent for the Colony to pay me the moiety of my salary, until such provision be made for me in the Church as your Lordship has given me encouragement to expect,<sup>55</sup> in doing which you will confer a further obligation upon,

My Lord, your Lordship's most obedient

And most humble Servant,  
RICHARD JOHNSON.

No. 6, Pater Noster Row,  
February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1802.  
Lord Hobart.

**No. 38.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Under Secretary  
J. Chapman.**

**Source : Bonwick : “Australia’s First Preacher,” p. 249.**

Burwell, nr. Attleborough, Norfolk,  
December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1808.

Sir,—

Previous to my receiving your letter, which was brought to me yesterday evening, I had received a letter from Mr. Marsden upon the subject, and on the same evening gave him an answer, which I was in hopes would have been sufficiently explanatory to have enabled him to settle with Mr. Chinnery (Agent for the Colony) without giving you the trouble of writing to me.

Since I received your letter, I have looked over some papers, and from them will give you what further information I am able.

On Saturday, the 20<sup>th</sup> of March, 1802, I first obtained an interview with Mr. Sullivan, who asked me if I purposed to return to New South Wales. I replied, that on account of my weak state of health, and the little prospect of a speedy recovery, I durst not venture. This I supposed he considered as resigning my Office as Senior Chaplain.

I then solicited (as by my friends Messrs. Wilberforce and Saml. Thornton I had done before) that some indulgence should be shown me in consequence of my long and painful services for fourteen years, as the first Chaplain appointed and sent to that distant infant Colony. Mr. Sullivan then desired me to call again on Tuesday, when he would inform me of Lord Hobart’s pleasure upon the subject of my application. Accordingly, on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, I called again, when Mr. Sullivan told me that the utmost that could be done for me was to allow me my whole pay from the time of my leaving the Colony, the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1800, to the end of two years ; and then desired me to call again the next day.

Having signified to Mr. Sullivan that I supposed Mr. Marsden would expect something for doing my duty, when I called the next day, one half of what Mr. Sullivan had signified the day before I should receive was stopped, and he gave me an order to Mr. Chinnery, to receive one year’s salary, which, by an order upon the bankers, at Charing Cross, from Mr. Chinnery I received on Tuesday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of March.

I trust, Sir, you will pardon the liberty that I shall now take of stating a circumstance or two upon the subject of my application to Government, for some small consideration to be shown me in consequence of my, I cannot forbear repeating, long and painful services in New South Wales. I certainly did hope and expect that either I would be allowed my half-pay, as I have understood some other civil officers, who have services, who had served in that country, duty not so long as I have done, have obtained, or that I should have been presented to a small living which might have rendered my situation in the decline of life comfortable.

His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, advised me to memorial Lord Hobart upon the subject of a living. This I did, and his Grace was pleased to present it with a strong recommendation. A few days afterwards I received the following letter from Lord Hobart,

“Sir,—I have taken an opportunity to lay your Memorial before Mr. Addington, and I have great pleasure in acquainting you that he is not without the hope of being able to procure for you some provision in the Church.

“I am, etc.,  
“Signed) HOBART.”

About the same time I received the following letter from his Lordship the Bishop of London :  
“Reverend Sir,—I received the following letter on the 10<sup>th</sup>, and should have answered it sooner but I waited till I had seen and conversed with the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject, which I have now done. I have the satisfaction to inform you that His Grace has delivered your Memorial, with a strong recommendation, which I hope will have its weight. I shall at all times be ready to record His Grace’s exertions in your favour, and with my best wishes for your success,

“I remain, etc.,  
“Signed) B. LONDON.”

Upon receiving the above two letters, I could not but for some time entertain a hope that my, I trust reasonable application, would have been finally successful, but now, for about *seven years* since I

made that application, I remain wholly unprovided for, and am under the painful necessity of serving as a Curate.

But may I yet entertain a hope, Sir, that, through your kind offices, my case may again be represented to Lord Castlereagh. And should I by this means attain the object of my long and ardent wishes, some humble situation in the Church, or otherwise, my half-pay, I hope I shall ever prove grateful for so great a favour conferred upon, Sir,

Your obliged, etc.,  
(Signed) RICHARD JOHNSON.

James Chapman, Esq.

**No. 40.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Goulburn, Esq.**

**Source : Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 257.**

Rockingham Row, New Kent Road,  
February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1815.

Sir,—I hope you will not deem it presumptuous in me addressing these lines to you, when I have stated my reasons for taking such a liberty.

When the Colony in New South Wales was first established, I was appointed as Chaplain, and as such was resident in that remote part of the world (including the passage out and back to England) for upwards of fourteen years.

During so many years' residence, and endeavours to fill so important a duty, you will suppose, Sir, that I am not altogether unaccounted with the then moral state of the Colony, and which from the general reports received from thence, since my return, I fear that in this respect, it has made little improvement.

I have, Sir, from the beginning, been uniformly of opinion that the morals of the Inhabitants should be one of the prime objects attended to, and that for that important end the strictest care should be taken as to the persons appointed as Chaplains sent out to instruct them, and you will pardon me when I say that I do conceive that amongst a description of persons as those who in general are sent out to New South Wales, those clergymen will be found more likely to be useful in promoting the most important objects of morality, and religion, who are of plain habits, and who humbly yet zealously devote their time and talents in the discharge of their clerical duties, than those of more refined taste, or profound learning, and who for this very reason may not be so diligent in visiting them, which from experience I have found so important part of a minister's duty, and as ye most likely means of his being made useful.

Such a person I have every reason to believe is the person in whose belief I have been induced to address you — Mr. Youl<sup>56</sup>; and should he, by Lord Bathurst, be appointed as Chaplain to the Settlement at Port Dalrymple, or elsewhere, I am fully persuaded he would not be found wanting in fulfilling with faithfulness and diligence the important duties entrusted to his care.

I am, etc.,  
(Signed) RICHARD JOHNSON.

Henry Goulburn, Esq.



<sup>1</sup> The *William* was hired by the Commissioners of the Navy in June, 1793, to carry 2080 barrels of beef and pork from Cork to Port Jackson.

<sup>2</sup> Captain William Hill, of the Marines, writing July 20, 1790, throws additional light on the prices of provisions. He says: "I purchased some wine, being a vegetable juice, and obtained it as a favour—port wine at forty shillings the dozen, and sherry fifty. I had also the offer, a few days ago, of three small pigs, very poor and not old enough for roasters; my mouth literally watered at the sight of them, but the price of fifteen shillings each was too great for my purse... Soap is from three to four shillings the pound sugar, two shillings; Irish salt butter, eighteenpence; flour, when any can be bought, a shilling; teas exorbitantly dear. See *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 370.

<sup>3</sup> These papers are not available.

<sup>4</sup> This has reference to the practice, then in vogue amongst the officers, of telling off one or more of their convict servants to range the woods in search of game for their tables.

<sup>5</sup> For accounts of the Scottish Martyrs see *Australian Encyclopedia*, under individual names; Serle, *Dictionary of Australian Biography*; similar entries; Ferguson, *Bibliography of Australia*, Index; *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. II., pp. 821-886; Watson, *Journal of Proceedings* Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. IV. And Vol. XII.; *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 568, and especially note 245, p. 771, where a brief summary of their careers are given.

<sup>6</sup> The Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer was an Anglican clergyman.

<sup>7</sup> See Colonel Paterson to Dundas, *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 490, for another account of the *Britannia's* voyage to the Cape.

<sup>8</sup> See *Journal and Proceedings*, Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. XIV., for an account of the cattle lost at the Cowpastures.

<sup>9</sup> In September, 1790, five convicts at Rose Hill, who arrived by the Second Fleet, after hoarding up provisions, fishing tackle and some pots and utensils, first secured a flat-bottomed boat or punt, then rowed down to the buoy near the Lookout Post, South Head, stole the station boat and escaped. According to report, their intention was to make for Otaheite. Though Phillip sent a search party after them, no trace was discovered for several years. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1795, long after Phillip had left the Colony, four of these escapees, John Jarwood, George Lee, George Connoway, and John Watson (the fifth, Joseph Sutton, had died in the interval) were found by Captain Broughton, of H.M.S. *Providence*, at Port Stephens, where, having been cast ashore they had lived for five years with the natives.

<sup>10</sup> The Archivist to the present Archbishop of Canterbury informs me that no letters such as these can be found amongst the records.

<sup>11</sup> This was the amount allowed to William Richardson, convict schoolmaster at Sydney

<sup>12</sup> This is the very first authentic reference to schools and education to be found in Australian records.

<sup>13</sup> The Rev. James Bain, Chaplain to the N.S.W.

Corps, left Sydney in the *Daedalus*, December 17, 1794. No further trace of him has been discovered.

<sup>14</sup> Probably to Rev. William Morris, D.D., Secretary of the S.P.G.

<sup>15</sup> See Hunter to King, *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 589 and 643.

<sup>16</sup> This was probably Johnson's cousin, Stafford Gill, referred to in Letter No. XXIII.

<sup>17</sup> Williams Skirving died "with a violent dysentery" April 19, 1796; Joseph Gerrald "in a rapid consumption," March 16, 1796. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 568.

<sup>18</sup> This ship was the *Otter* of Boston, commanded by Ebenezer Dorr, which had put into Port Jackson for repairs. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 568

<sup>19</sup> This was a member of the family, to whom Rev. Samuel and Mrs. Marsden addressed the sheaf of letters which I printed in Monograph No. 4, of 1942, entitled *Some Private Correspondence of the Rev. Samuel Marsden and Family, 1794-1824*.

<sup>20</sup> For an account of early schools in N.S.W., see *Journal and Proceedings* of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Vol. II., pp. 70 and 74. McGuanne, without giving any authority, states that "two old huts were pulled down and re-erected at the corner of Church and Macquarie Streets, Parramatta..... Here an old schoolmaster named Toll soon commenced school-teaching."

<sup>21</sup> Incorrectly quoted from Isaiah 42:3. It should be "When thou passeth through the waters I shall be with thee."

<sup>22</sup> The Psalm which begins: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

<sup>23</sup> As early as 1791, we have records of Johnson's acting as a Justice of the Peace. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 283, and Bonwick, *Australia's First Preacher*, chap. xxxi.

<sup>24</sup> For a full account of William Dawes of the Marines, see Serle, *Dictionary of Australian Biography*, Vol. I., p. 226. He returned to England in 1791.

<sup>25</sup> No account of this trip to Norfolk Island in 1797 is available.

<sup>26</sup> This letter is "Enclosure No. 3" of a letter, Hunter to the Duke of Portland, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1798, and is marked "Separate and Particular." Though Hunter's letter to Johnson is not available in any of the records, his report to Portland (*Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. III., pp. 418-446) should be read in full for an account of the state of morality in New South Wales at that period.

<sup>27</sup> See also Marsden to Hunter, (*Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. III., pp. 449 *et seq.*) where Marsden tells the Governor of experiences similar to and even worse than those of Johnson during Grose's administration.

<sup>28</sup> The Rev. James Bain, who arrived with the N.S.W. Corps as Chaplain in 1790. He returned to England in December, 1794.

<sup>29</sup> See Bonwick, *Australia's First Preacher*, Chap. xxxiii, "Acting Governor Grose and the Chaplain."

<sup>30</sup> Search in London has failed to discover this correspondence.

<sup>31</sup> See my Historical Monograph, No. IV., *Some Private Correspondence of the Rev. Samuel Marsden, passim*.

<sup>32</sup> By proclamation, Hunter, who himself regularly attended divine service, made strong efforts to encourage the observance of the Sabbath on the part both of officers and convicts. See, for example, his orders, Hunter to Portland, *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 236 and 357.

<sup>33</sup> By Government and General Order, Hunter, in September, 1796, appointed Johnson and Dr. Balmain as Acting Magistrates for Sydney.

<sup>34</sup> In 1799, the official return listed 526 children in Sydney, 239 at Parramatta, and 166 at the Hawkesbury, a total of 931.

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Isaac Watts (1674-1748) eminent divine and hymn-writer, was the author of *Divine and Moral Songs for Children* (1715), and other volumes of Hymns, including such famous hymns as "There is a land of pure delight," "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," "When I survey the wondrous Cross," and "O God, our help in ages past."

<sup>36</sup> A full account of the trials of Isaac Nichols, William Collins and John William Lancashire will be found in *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 278-338 and notes. Isaac Nichols was the principal overseer of the Sydney town gangs, and at the time of his trial for receiving stolen goods, was a free man. Many responsible officers gave him an excellent character, and Lieut. Kent took exception to this description as a labourer in the indictments. At the trial on the previous day when William Collins was found guilty of the robbery of the goods (tobacco), no mention was made of Nichols's name. Nichols was found guilty by Dore (the Judge Advocate) and the three military officers, and not guilty by the three naval officers who formed the Court. Hunter, on reviewing the proceedings, considered there had been a miscarriage of justice, and suspended execution of the sentence—14 years at Norfolk Island. To this action the military officers took strong exception. Apparently, as Hunter suggested to the Duke or Portland, they had some covert motives.

<sup>37</sup> John William Lancashire was tried and condemned to death on April 1, 1799, for forging and uttering a counterfeit note, but was respited and emancipated in 1802.

<sup>38</sup> Ensign George Bond, of the N.S.W. Corps. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. II., pp. 224, 225, 312, 391 and notes thereto. It is alleged that he was implicated in a conspiracy on board the ship *Barwell*, in the year Macarthur. See especially Isaac Nicholls to the Court of Enquiry (*Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. III., p. 312) for his version of the interview between Johnson, Macarthur, Ensign Bond and Lancashire. For Lancashire's statement, see *ibid*, p. 319.

<sup>39</sup> "On the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1798, the missionaries stationed at Otaheite left that island on the *Nautilus*, a trading vessel, and landed at Port Jackson. They comprised eleven men, four women, and four children, and fled the island in consequence of the violence of the natives."—(London Missionary Society MSS.) In his volume *Australia's First Preacher*, Bonwick devotes the whole of Chapter XXIV. To "The South Sea Island's Missionaries." Cover of Henry, in a letter to the London Missionary Society, September 1, 1798, stated: "We were very kindly received by him [Johnson] and Mrs. Johnson, who gave us and our wives an invitation to their house and table, till such time as a suitable accommodation could be provided for us."

<sup>40</sup> Romans 11., 20.

<sup>41</sup> Several accounts of the murder of Mr. Samuel Clode were prepared by various missionaries. Mr. Puckey wrote one account to the Society, September 1, 1799; a fuller one, dated August 25, 1799, from Parramatta, is signed by Messrs. Cover, Hassall and Henry. Another came from the pen of Ensign Bond. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. III., pp. 708 and 771.

<sup>42</sup> Captain William Wilkinson of the N.S.W. Corps.

<sup>43</sup> These were all Tahitian missionaries.

<sup>44</sup> The Rev. William Henry did not return to England, but became the first minister of Ryde, where he died—the last of the *Duff* missionaries—in 1859, aged 89 years, and was buried in St. Anne's churchyard. See *Ryde, 1790-1926*, pp. 24 *et seq.*

<sup>45</sup> The Rev. Francis Oakes, Rowland Hassall, William Smith, Edward Main and James Cover each received from Governor Hunter a grant of 100 acres at Dundas, and began farming there.

<sup>46</sup> In 1796, Samuel Marsden, writing to the S.P.G. from Parramatta, regarding education at Norfolk Island, said of Lieut.-Governor King: "In one part of the island he has built a school for the girls, and committed them to the care of Susannah Hunt, who appears to be well qualified for her situation. The boys are taught in the town of Sydney (Norfolk Island) by Thomas Macqueen, who was once a schoolmaster in England, and has merited by his good conduct the opinion of the Governor. The number of children in August, 1795, was 75, some of whom have neither parent or friend to superintend their bringing up, as many of the fathers whose time of transportation has expired have left that part of the world." Marsden then asks for additional salaries for teachers, a request which was refused. (See *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vol. III., p. 2.)

The two schoolmasters officially appointed by the S.P.G. in 1794 were William Webster and William Richardson. They each received 10 pounds per annum. In the S.P.G. Report for 1796, both their names appear, but not in that for 1797, Webster having been dismissed for bad conduct. In 1797, Thomas Macqueen and Susannah Hunt, both of Norfolk Island, were voted a like sum, continuing for several years. From 1797 payments were made to Isaac Nelson and Thomas Tabor, of Sydney, whose names appear in the Reports till 1810. A change appears in the Report for 1811, when grants of 10 pounds each were made to five schoolmasters in Sydney and two at Norfolk Island. The same statement is made for the following thirteen years, and allowances in one form or another till 1830.

<sup>47</sup> In October, 1798, the Report of the S.P.G. states that the Rev. C. Haddock was appointed as a missionary to Norfolk Island, but as by November, 1800, he had not left England, and had drawn several large sums in advance, his name was struck off the list of missionaries.

<sup>48</sup> See Letter 31 for these Regulations.

<sup>49</sup> The Court House was situated close to Government House.

<sup>50</sup> Ferguson, *Bibliography of Australia*, Vol. I. No. 507, has a long and interesting note on the first Spelling Book to be printed in Australia, that by George Howe in 1810. Of this, unfortunately, no copy has survived. It was based on Lindley Murray's "Spelling Book."

\* As noted in letter No. 33, William Henry did not return to Otaheite.

<sup>51</sup> No copy of this Order, dated June 17, 1800, has ever been found.

<sup>52</sup> See Bonwick's criticism in his *Australia's First Preacher*; Chap. XXXVI., "The Farming Chaplains."

<sup>53</sup> There is no record of a reply to this letter. Johnson, however, left Sydney in the company of Governor Hunter on H. M. S. *Buffalo*, towards the middle of October so that this appeal was made on the eve of his departure. Apparently at that date he contemplated returning to the colony.

<sup>54</sup> Neither Lord Hobart's "obliging letter" nor Johnson's memorial is available.

<sup>55</sup> As Bonwick remarks "His [Johnson's] former labours and privations were alike forgotten in the whirl of public affairs and the voice of appeal got lost in the rumbling of cannon and the shout of war." Bonwick *Australia's First Preacher*, p. 249.

Very little definite information regarding Johnson's later career has been discovered, beyond the following : He received his full colonial salary until October 10, 1801, after that date nothing. As will be seen from the next letter (page 46), for seven years he remained "wholly unprovided for," and was "under the painful necessity of serving as a curate." For some time he worked as a curate at West Thurrock, near Grays, in Essex. In 1810 he was appointed to the rectory at St. Antholin, London, and in 1817 was inducted to the perpetual curacy of Ingham, Norfolk, where he died in March, 1827, aged 74 years. Mrs. Johnson died January 24, 1831, aged 78 years.

<sup>56</sup> The Rev. John Youl was appointed assistant chaplain at Port Dalrymple in Van Diemen's Land, March 27, 1815. He arrived in Sydney by the *Ocean*, January 30, 1816. Macquarie considered him a great acquisition to the colony, and wished he "had two or three more like him." He died in 1827. See Rowland, *The English Church in N.S.W.*, pp. 104-106.

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