

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.**

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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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## **INTRODUCTION.**

### **1.—The Man, Johnson.**

It has been alleged that when the First Fleet—eleven vessels in all, six of them laden with convicts, men and women, totally 756—was about to set out for Botany Bay, no provision had been made for ministering to the spiritual needs of the convicts, and that, therefore, at the last moment a hurried appointment as chaplain was arranged, the choice falling on the Rev. Richard Johnson, B.A.

Like many other historical legends, this is not true, for as early as October 24, 1786, nearly five months before the ships sailed, through the influence and on the recommendation of William Wilberforce, that philanthropist, and the Rev. John Newton, Pitt approved of Johnson's appointment, though it is believed that the poet Cowper, who was on terms of friendship with Johnson, first suggested his name.

Of the convicts of the First Fleet more than a third (about 300) were Roman Catholics. Yet no clergyman was sent to administer to their needs. There was a devoted priest, Thomas Walshe, who in a most religious and humane letter to Lord Sydney volunteered, with a companion, to accompany the fleet, at his own expense ; but the offer was refused.

To familiarize himself a little with the actual conditions of convict life this "poor curate"—the "Bishop of Botany Bay" as Wilberforce, in a spirit of levity, denominated him—went, in some trepidation be it confessed, on board one of Duncan Campbell's hulks, the *Leviathan*, then anchored off Woolwich, where he was introduced to 250 members of his future congregation. One experience of the stench, filth, obscenity and degradation was more than enough for him, for on his complaining to his friend and mentor, Newton, the latter wrote : "It will be madness for you to risk your health by going down into the breaths of a crowd of passengers in chains. If they are sick and want you, let them be brought up on deck." So Johnson paid no second visit to the hulks, but passed the interval before the Fleet's departure seeing the sights of London and holiday-making at Lymington.

Richard Johnson was a Yorkshireman, born in 1757 at Welton, near Hull, and educated at the local public school and at Magdalen College, Cambridge where he graduated B.A. in 1783. He was ordained deacon and priest by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1786, and just before his departure married Mary (whose maiden name is unknown to me), who accompanied him to Port Jackson, though not always on the same vessel.

Though food, water, clothing and other essentials might possibly be lacking on the voyage, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, at Johnson's request, provided an ample supply of religious reading matter—4,200 books in all (I have the list)—sufficient to allow each of the 700-odd convicts embarked to borrow six at a time. In addition to Bibles, Testaments, Prayer-books and Catechisms, the convicts—the few who could read—must have been edified by finding on board 200 copies of *Exercises Against Lying*, 50 Woodward's *Caution to Swearers*, 100 *Exhortations to Chastity*, and 100 White's *Dissuasions from Stealing*. Truly, as gentle Elia might have remarked, "a spacious closet of good old English reading."

In spite of this, it is somewhat puzzling to learn that even before leaving Portsmouth, Captain Phillip complained about the quality of Johnson's sermons, requesting him "to begin with moral subjects."

Rough and tempestuous was the eight and a half months' voyage out ; Mary became so ill that her life was despaired of ; once on board the *Golden Grove*, they were both "washed out of their cabins". Richard visited two of the transports each Sunday, held divine service and baptized some children born on the voyage. When the Fleet stayed at Rio de Janeiro, Johnson was struck with the thought that oranges might grow well at Botany Bay. He therefore procured some seeds, which it is averred he planted on his property at Kissing Point, near Parramatta, and thus became the pioneer of the Australian citrus fruit industry.

There is no doubt that Johnson kept a journal of his voyage to New South Wales, for in February, 1789, portions of it were read to members of the Eclectic Society in London, in whose Journal I have discovered recently extracts from some of his home letters were also printed. Unfortunately the Journal of his voyage out is still missing.

And so the young parson and his wife, Mary, came to the new convict settlement of Botany Bay. So great were the bustle, excitement and confusion when the vessels reached Port Jackson and anchored in Sydney Cove on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1788, and began to unload their cargo, human and material, on the following day, which was a Sunday, that no religious service could be held ashore. It was not until the following Sunday, therefore, February 3, 1788, that the first divine service was held on Australian soil, with Johnson officiating and the congregation made up of officers, marines and convicts, male and female, all assembled "under some trees," as Johnson's register has it, or "under a great tree" as Captain Tench asserts.

It is recorded that on this momentous occasion “the behaviour of the convicts was regular and attentive,” to which Lieutenant Ralph Clark, whose informative journal is in the Mitchell Library, though still unpublished, adds: “We had a very good sermon, the text being taken from the 116<sup>th</sup> Psalm, and the 12<sup>th</sup> verse, ‘What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?’.”

Much controversy has taken place concerning the exact spot where the first service was held. The late Professor George Arnold Wood suggested that ‘the great tree’ was probably on the Quay, “near the Fire Brigade Station at the corner of Barton and George Streets”; Mr. A.G. Foster thought “the great tree: was that pictured by Dayes in 1804 near the site of the present Rawson Institute for Seamen; another guess is in the vicinity of Macquarie Place.

It was not until a fortnight later that Johnson, who had brought with him a set of Communion vessels, first administered the Sacrament. In his Pepysian-like journal I found this passage, written to his wife by Lieut. Ralph Clark : “Major Ross—his commanding officer—sent down to ask me if I would be so good as to let the Governor have our markee to take Sacrament in, which I would not refuse, and I am happy that it is to be my markee ; never did it receive so much honour. Oh, my God! My God! I wish that I was fit to take the Lord’s Supper. When it pleases him that I return home, the first thing that I will do shall be to take it with you, my dear Betsey. I will keep this table also as long as I live, for it is the first Table that ever the Lord’s Supper was eat of in this country.”

Within a few days of their arrival Johnson was very busy about his domestic and religious duties. Many marriages of convicts—amongst the number being those of William Bryant and Mary Broad, who later escaped to Batavia—were celebrated. According to contemporary records, however, several of the marriages were bigamous, one or both of the contracting parties having spouses in England.

Most unpleasant of the gentle chaplain’s duties was that of being present at all executions. When Thomas Barrett, a young man, but a lifer, was publicly hanged—the first execution in N.S.W.—Surgeon Bowes tells us in his still unpublished journal that Johnson “prayed most devoutly with the prisoner and performed every office appertaining to his function with the utmost decorum.”

Though for a brief period the chaplain held his services under cover, using a new but incomplete storehouse, this did not last long. As he continually and bitterly complained right through Phillip’s administration, his appeals for churches at Sydney and Parramatta had no result. Labour could not be spared for such work. Consequently, he was “but a field preacher,” “no place of worship erected or so much as talked of.” True it was that the Governor had allocated 400 acres as Church land, but as the chaplain laments in a letter to one of his friends, “What, Sir, are 400 or 4000 acres full of large green trees, unless some convicts be allowed to cultivate?” After two or three years spent with Mary and a young family in a cabbage palm hut, he had the consolation of being provided with a comfortable cottage, where he assiduously cultivated his garden plots.

So things remained until Phillip’s departure in 1792. He was still occupied growing his cucumbers, pumpkins and watermelons, succouring some of the young aborigines, suffering from constant illness, including a serious deafness ; complaining about the thinness of his congregations, visiting Parramatta every week and preaching there ; preaching, as he says, “in the open air, alike unsheltered from rain and wind, as from the fervour of the summer’s sun” ; even threatening to throw in the sponge and return to England.

But he was not to be beaten when fighting the battle of the Lord. Finding no help forthcoming from the Governor, he took matters into his own hands, and, on a site close to the present junction of Castlereagh and Hunter Streets (where a memorial was erected in 1921 and where an annual commemorative ceremony is held), he erected at a cost of 67/12/11½ pounds, by his own labour and that of his convict assistants, a temporary church, which was opened on August 25, 1793. Five years later it was maliciously burnt down.

Grose treated the chaplain very harshly, making vague charges against him and removing him from the magistracy; but with the arrival of Governor Hunter and the appointment of Rev. Samuel Marsden as his assistant, conditions began to improve. In 1794 he issued his one and only publication, now a very rare item: “An Address to the Inhabitants of the Colonies established in N.S.W. and Norfolk Island.”

Worn out by hard work, privations, and lack of sympathy, Johnson, in September 1798, applied for leave of absence, left the colony a year later, and spent two years resting in England. Then, on being asked to resume his post, he resigned and took a curacy in Essex.

In 1810 he became Rector of St. Atholin, in London, and, seven years later, perpetual curate of Ingham, in Norfolk, both of which livings he retained till his death on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1827. His character may best be summed up in the words of Governor Hunter: "A most dutiful son of the Church of England. A Moravian Methodist—I believe him to be a very good, pious, inoffensive man."

## **2.—Sources of the Correspondence.**

The Johnson Correspondence, now first collected and published in this monograph, is derived from the following sources :--

- a) A collection of nine unpublished Mss in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.
- b) A collection of seven unpublished letters in the archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.
- c) Five unpublished Mss in the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London.
- d) A Precis of two letter in the Journal of the Eclectic Society, London.
- e) Nine letters printed by Bonwick in his "*Australia's First Preacher.*"
- f) Eight letters printed in the *Historical Records of New South Wales*, Vols. II. And III.

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

### **No. 1. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.<sup>1</sup>**

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

*Golden Grove,*<sup>2</sup>

At Sea, May 30<sup>th</sup>, '87.

My dear Friends,

I am in duty bound to write to you at every opportunity. I dropped you a line in great haste by the return of the *Hyaena* frigate.<sup>3</sup> Was informed soon after that she was going to Ireland to be stationed somewhere there about and not to return to Portsmouth. Had I known this a little sooner, I wd not have put you to the unnecessary expense of a Letter so soon after I had left you. I hope, however, you will excuse it. It is a token of my sincere esteem for & obligation to you. May God render fourfold to you for all your kindness towards me and mine.

In my last letter, dated May 20<sup>th</sup>,<sup>4</sup> I informed you in very great haste how we had fared since we left the Mother Bank. Had both been sickly, but upon the recovery. We had before then one or two rough gales, after which it became calm. This occasioned the sea to run high, and on this account, when the wind ceased, the ship rolled very much, all of which together rendered it very unpleasant for some days. But soon after the 20<sup>th</sup> the wind changed gradually from the South-West to the North, from which last quarter it has blown for above a week this last past. This has made us sail with great rapidity some days 150 miles a day.

This morning the Captain called me up, informing me that we were within sight of Land—the Island of Madeira, whether we shall call here or go on to Teneriff I am not yet certain, but of this I will inform you in the close of this Letter.

We were rather dissatisfied with our removal from the *Alexander*<sup>5</sup> to the *Golden Grove* at first. The Captain seemed to be close, unsociable and ill-natured, and the ship's company to be very profane. But since then things are much more comfortable. The Captain behaves with civility. We have prayer every evening in the great Cabin ; he has granted me leave also to preach once at least on a Lord's day to the ship's crew. Accordingly, last Sunday I preached to them. My text was in Matt : 5, 34, designed to set forth the heinous evil of *common swearing*<sup>6</sup> [last line of text guillotined]. . . . satisfied and pleased with my subject—hoped that I sd repeat or follow this practise throughout the Voyage. Since then I have scarcely heard an oath from any of them. May God convince them of the folly and wickedness of such a Conduct.

I have been at times very dull and stupid in my Spirit since I came on Board. Have not such comfortable convenience for retirement as I could wish. This is sadly disagreeable at times, especially when I feel (would to God this more often) a disposition and warm desire of soul to go and pour out my sins and sorrows before the Lord. It is better, however, to have the disposition and want the opportunity, than just the contrary. I hope likewise this will make me prize secrecy the more if it please God to bring me in safety to my place of destination. You will, I hope, remember us kindly to all friends. I'll mention some that you may not forget them—Mr. Horsey and family—Wickendens—am vastly pleased with their little present—tell them my little cats are very well and vastly entertaining. Remember us also very kindly to Mr. Millard & family. I think myself greatly indebted to them for their civility & kindness, to Mr. Mile & family—Lucus—Lacey—Edwards—Shoveller—Peers--& to Mr. and Mrs. Eastman. Wd have wrote to the last if I had found opportunity. In short, our love to all if they enquire after us. I love the dear people of God at Portsmouth. Thank them for their favours. I still solicit their earnest prayers to God for me and mine.

Teneriff, June 8<sup>th</sup>. —We came directly forward here, leaving Madeira to the westward, and arrived at Teneriff on ye 3<sup>rd</sup> inst. Am sorry that I have neither room nor time to give you much information about Teneriff. Can only say that a great Part of the Island is prodigiously mountainous. The town of Santa Cruz, where big ships all are at anchor, is rather mean and shabby and . . . [a whole line guillotined from MS.] . . . indolent & superstitious. We have seen a good deal of this amongst them. Yesterday was Corpus Christi day, when we saw the grand procession of their Host. Have also paid our respectful compts to ye Virgin Mary. She was very nearly ornamented and magnificently decorated with gold & silver. Mrs. J. was so captivated with some parts of her dress that we cd scarcely keep her from committing sacreledge (sic). —Alass! Alass! What superstition & Idolatry is all this. God make us thankful. My dear Mary desires cordially to be remembered to you all. —Had she staid much longer I'm afraid you wd have got her into [indecipherable]. She is about ½ a Baptist & ½ a Methodist. Farewell.

Yours very affecy,  
R. JOHNSON.

**No. 2.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, London.**

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

Port Jackson, New South Wales,  
Feby. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1788.<sup>7</sup>

My dear Friends,

My last letter to you was dated from the Cape of Good Hope, which, together with many more, I sent by Mr. Davis,<sup>8</sup> passenger on a Danish ship bound from thence to Portsmouth.

I will now proceed to give you a little account of our passage from the Cape to this place, and some other circumstances that may not be unacceptable to you.

We set sail from the Cape of Good Hope on Monday, Novr 12<sup>th</sup>. For about a week after we met contrary winds. This drove us back 3 or 400 miles. —I began from this circumstance to apprehend and fear that our passage wd be long and tedious. —Our water, our stock, provisions, &c., exhausting; we detained by calms, so daily going further from our port. These things rather alarmed us. Strict orders were given to come to the allowance of three pints of water for each person for the 24 hours. But



God has been much better to us than we deserved. Unexpectedly about ye 19<sup>th</sup> the wind changed into the westward, and continued more or less fair for us for several weeks, changing from the North to ye west, round to the South, but seldom there. Then to the Eastward, so that from ye 19<sup>th</sup> of Novr. To the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jany we generally had the wind favourable for us, and in that space of time we travelled 6000 miles.

The weather was generally during this time fine, but cold, and once, viz., on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jany, we met with a severe gale which lasted for about 24 hours. Never did I see such an awfully grand night before in my whole life. The different elements seemed to be in the greatest tumult, threatening our dissolution every moment. But through mercy we suffered little, to our great satisfaction, both before or since, and I do assure you we ate our roast Pig and Plumb pudding with great relish, though with no less difficulty, our plates, &c., tumbling down, and we scarcely able to keep upon our seats. I was just going to wish you had been with us to partake of our fare, but considering that you must at the same time heard of our fate, I think you were much better off at Bonfire Corner than upon the *Southern Land*.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jany we first discovered Van Diemen's Land; \* towards evening of the same day came near the Mewstone, the [two words indecipherable] and other rocks which Cook makes mention of. In the night we saw a large fire on the shore, but were not near enough to the main land either to see any of the Natives or to discover the nature of the soil, possibilities of the country, &c. —The next morning, about 10 o'clock, we again lost sight of land, bearing further to the eastward. From that time to the 19<sup>th</sup> of Jany we had a great many changes of weather, but in respect of the winds contrary. Out of sight of land till the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup>, when we discovered land again, which from its situation we judged to be what Cook called Red Point, about a ligue to the Southward of Botany Bay. On the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> we bore off, till about midnight, when the fleet tacked & about 8 of next morning came to anchor about a mile within ye entrance of the Bay.

The Commodore on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Novr quitted ye *Sirius* & went on Board the *Supply*, armed tender, which ship, together with three of the transports, parted company from us, and the next day the *Supply* parted from the other three ships and (which is rather extraordinary) without coming in sight of each other again the *Supply* arrived ahead of the other three on Saturday, and we on Sunday, through Mercy in general well & healthy.

I shall not give you any very particular account of Botany Bay, as this is needless; the account which Captain Cook has given of it is very just in general, both as to its situation, produce or production, whether of Plants, trees, fishing, woods, &c., and the Natives much the same as he describes them. The first I saw were all walking up the Beach, which they did with some degree of [gap]\*\* surprise and consternation. This was [gap] that came into the Bay. —A few days after I saw thirty of them fishing as we (myself with four others) [gap]. They came out of the water, joined in a Body together & stood till we came up with them. As we came near them they spoke to us in a loud dissonant Manner, principally uttering these words—“Warra, Warra Wai,” which we judged to be to tell us to go away. When we came up to them, I tied some bits of cloth &c. round their heads and necks & also gave one of them a comb, at which he seemed especially pleased & astonished. Some of them then began to dance, and one of them offered me one of his fishing giggs, which I refused, the Governor ordering that nothing should be taken from them.<sup>9</sup>

For several days after we cast anchor we were quite uncertain where the Settlement should be formed. The Bay has been investigated on every end and side. Some parts seem little calculated from fertility, being a black sand, & as Cook mentions, some resembles only heavier, [that] in England.\*\*\* But other parts are more promising, & fully expected from the account I heard of these, both for ground and water we wd have settled there. But during that time, the Governor with some others went a few Leagues farther to the northward, & upon their return, though several preparations were making for our settling near Point Solander, things took a sudden and unexpected turn, the Governor pitching upon Port Jackson, not Botany Bay for the place of our settlement. Would proceed to give you some description of this place, but my paper being full, having many correspondents and especially having to write to Lymington, I must refer you to our [indecipherable] on this head – with a grateful Remembrance of your many favours & our regards to all f'ds, We remain,

Yours most affectionately,  
R'D and MARY JOHNSON.

**Addressed :** Mr. Henry Fricker,  
Bonfire Corner,  
Portsmouth Common,  
Portsmouth.

**Endorsed :** “Rec'd this letter 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 1789.”

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This page of the MS is in places almost indecipherable.

\*\* The edges of a whole page of the MS are badly discoloured and almost illegible.

\*\*\* Text of MS almost indecipherable here.

### No. 3.—Rev Richard Johnson to Rev. Jonathan Stonnard

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

NB—The *Prince of Wales*<sup>10</sup> is expected to set sail in the course of a few days with Dispatches —purpose to write to my Uncle G.<sup>11</sup> by the remaining part of the fleet. June 19<sup>th</sup>, '88

Port Jackson, New South Wales,  
Sydney Cove, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1788.

Hon. & dear Sir,

After so many civilities & favours I have rec'd from you, I sh'd be very ungrateful were I not to give you a line amongst the rest of my kind fds & generous Benefactors. This is the only apology I shall make for the freedom I am taking with you in scribbling a few lines over this Morning.

Having wrote repeatedly to my Uncle both before we left England during the time of our Passage from thence to this place, I need not repeat any thing upon this head, only to just mention that perhaps considering the length of the Voyage, & various other circumstances never fleet was more highly favoured. — This you will confess when I tell you that our whole passage was but little more than eight months, ten weeks of wh time we were in the diff't ports of Teneriffe, Rio Janeiro & the Cape of Good Hope — and out of the 14 or 1500 persons, the greatest part of wh, being confined & living upon salt provisions, were not, as you may judge, very well accommodated, not more than thirty died during the above time, accidents included.<sup>12</sup> And finally, during this whole passage, we scarcely ever knew what it was to meet with a storm except on the first of January in Long. About 128 East, & Lat. 43-30 South, this gale lasted about 24 hours, appeared very tremendous, but our spirits were not so flagged or low, but we could enjoy our Roast Pig & plumb-pudding wh we shd have been happy for you to have partaken of. 'Tis now just twelve months since we left Portsmouth, weighed anchor from the Mother Bank of the 13<sup>th</sup> of May. — On the 3d of June we arrived & cast anchor at Teneriffe. — On the 10<sup>th</sup> again set sail. — On the 3d of Augst we discovered land on the coast of the Brazils, & on the 6<sup>th</sup> came to anchor in Rio Janeiro Harbour. — Here we staid about a month, where we regaled & refreshed our [word blotted] with oranges & other fruits, &c., with which this Country abounds. — On the 4<sup>th</sup> of Sepr we again got under weigh, bound from thence to the Cape of Good Hope, where we arrived on the 13<sup>th</sup> of Octr—staid here till the 12<sup>th</sup> of Novr, when we again set sail from thence to Botany Bay. — On the 7<sup>th</sup> of Jany we first discovered Van Diemen's Land, lost sight of land again the next morning, & sailing slowly, owing to contrary winds, calms, &c., along towards the Northward, we again made land on the 19<sup>th</sup>, wh we supposed to be what Cook named Red Point. — About noon we came within sight of Botany, Bore off in the evening—at midnight tacked, & about 8 next morning came to anchor in Botany Bay. — The *Supply* armed tender, together with three of the Transports,<sup>13</sup> separated (all voluntary or by order of the Commodore) from the other three; -- & what is rather extraordinary, though the fleet was thus divided into three diff't Companies & never met with or saw each other after throughout the passage, yet the *Supply* came, to anchor in Botany on the 18<sup>th</sup>, the other three on the 19<sup>th</sup> & the remaining seven on the 20<sup>th</sup>, all well.

The fleet staid at Botany Bay about a week. — During this time the Governor &c., were very busy in examing (sic) the ground, trees, water, &c., &c. Not being satisfied with what he saw, he went from thence to Port Jackson, about three leagues to the Northward of Botany. Upon his return it was finally settled we wd not settle at Botany but remove from thence to Port Jackson Harbour from whence I wrote this Letter, & where in all probability I may stay many years. If not also end my day —

I will not give you any particular information or description of Botany Bay — Cook's description of that Bay is more particular & more full than I can give you.<sup>14</sup> I do think that what he says of it is very just and exact. — I wish we may find Port Jackson better answering our purpose, but confess I have my doubts & suspicions. — As to the Harbour itself, I must own that perhaps there is not one in the known world better adapted for shipping. — It is in general a deep water — extends above twenty miles up in to the Country and abounds with small coves on both sides from its first entrance quite up to the head of the harbour. The particular cove we have settled in is about 6 miles from the harbour's mouth & is named Sydney Cove.<sup>15</sup> — As to the ground or soil, it is in general but very indiff't — in some parts nothing but hard, solid rock, in others a black sand full of ant hills. — In some spots, however, it is better, in one place especially we have found some good strong clay of wh they have already begun to make bricks wh are said to be very good.<sup>16</sup>

The Governor has taken several excursions inland many miles into the Country.<sup>17</sup>—First a little to the Northward — here the ground & country are most wretched, nothing to be seen but impassable Rocks, thickets, & swamps. Next he went more toward the SW Here he met with better ground — also with blue shale, a thing likely to be of great service to the Settlement. The wood is in general very ordinary & bad for building. — Fowles are but [gap in text] though these are some of the most beautiful Plumage as Laurikeats, Parrokeats [gap] — likewise crows & wild ducks, the same as in England & equally good to eat. — Quadrupeds are likewise scarce. The chief animal of this kind is what

is called the Kangaroo. Many of these have been seen, several shot, part of wh I have tasted & was found to be good & wholesome good. – Several skins are stuffed & intended to be sent go England.

As to the natives, I cannot give you much account, but from what I have both seen & heard they are very harmless & inoffensive – have been amongst some both at Botany & here – tied buttons about their arms, giving them combs &c., with wh they seem wonderfully pleased. They are of a [indecipherable] size. –The men have in general one of their fore teeth out. The women (of whom they are very reserved and careful) have a joint of one of their fingers cut off. They chiefly live upon fish & dwell near the water, none being to be seen more inland. –At the exercise of fishing they seem very expert, wh is chiefly by a fishgig about 8 or ten feet long. –

My paper is full, & I must therefore conclude, otherwise I might tell you a little how we come on in our Buildings, &c., but respecting all this I doubt not you will receive sufficient information from the Papers. The convicts we have some well others ill; some are idle, &c., others industrious. –Have already had two executions, & am afraid we shall soon have more. –Give my sincere respects to Uncle Gill & family, & tell him I'd have wrote to him, but thought this letter might ansr the same end, begging you to communicate its contents to him. –Our respects also to Cousin L. Gill –and especially to Mrs. Stonard, with a grateful remembrance of past favours,

I remain, ever yours, &c.,  
RD. JOHNSON.

**Addressed :** Jonathan Stonard, Esq.,  
Lambeth, near London, Surry.

#### **No. 4. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Sir Joseph Banks.**

**Source: Mitchell Library Unpublished MSS.**

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,  
New South Wales, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1788.

Hond. Sir,

I am happy that I have at length an opportunity of writing you a Line to inform you of my heath & welfare, but am at the same time equally sorry that I have not been able to collect you a greater quantity & variety of shrubs, &c.

Have but two reasons to offer as an apology or to clear up my conduct to you as to this matter. One is the want of Taste in things of this nature. I do not profess myself a Naturalist or a Botanist; otherwise, I doubt not, there is sufficient variety of shrubs, seeds, &c., to have collected, a much greater quantity than I have done.

But Sir, I have to add further that really things have been so new and strange; everything in such confusion, & having so many things to attend to that I have not had the Leisure or time I could wish for such Recreation.

Have still, however, the greatest part of the Paper by me, which you was pleased to send me & do promise that as soon as I am able, I will endeavour to send you more plants with some seeds, &c., what I have been deficient in as to this matter. His Excellency the Governor has, however, made up, having collected a quantity of I suppose almost all the different productions of the Country.<sup>18</sup>

As to an account of the Country, &c., this, Sir, would be totally unnecessary, you yourself being well acquainted with it from your own observation & knowledge, and as to such things [indecipherable] relate to the settlement here in Port Jackson, of this you will doubtless receive better information than I am able to give you. I can only say that as to myself I have not any very sanguine expectations that it will ever turn to any very great account. What is to us hereafter is only known to God, but at present I think appearances are against us.

I doubt not, however, but every proper means & effort will be used, both by Government & likewise by our Governor for its Cultivation & improvement, and it is my sincere wish to see the endeavours both of the one and the other succeed by the Blessing of God.

With all due Respect, & Defference, permit me, Sir, to subscribe myself,

Your most humble,  
Most obedt Servt,  
RICHD JOHNSON.

**Addressed:** Sir Joseph Banks, Bart.,  
Soho Square,  
London.

**Endorsed:** Dated July 8, '88.

April 22, '89—Bank's handwriting.

Letter inscribed on the back: "Sir Joseph Banks."

#### **No. 5. —The Rev. Richard Johnson to Under Secretary**

**Evan Nepean.**

**Source: Bonwick—"Australia's First Preacher," pp. 82-83.**

Port Jackson, in the County of Cumberland,  
New South Wales, July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1788.

Hon. Sir, --

Though I have nothing particular to mention to you, I cannot think of letting the fleet return to England without dropping you a single line to inform you of my health and welfare.

It would be unnecessary for me, Sir, to give you any account of the various circumstances or incidents respecting the fleet, during our late passage from England to this distant part of the globe; as no doubt you will receive ample information respecting these matters, together with a description of this country, as to climate, natives, &c., &c., from His Excellency Arthur Phillip, Esq., our Governor, and others.

Everything here is as yet (as you may easily suppose) very unsettled, but hope in time our situation will be rendered more comfortable, and even now, all things considered, thank God! I have no reason to complain.

You may remember, Sir, a circumstance which greatly interested the publick a little before our leaving England. This was respecting the Norwich gaoler and two convicts, Cabel and Holmes,<sup>19</sup> which, with a child, were removed from the Norwich gaol to Plymouth, in order to be embarked on board one of the transports then bound to New South Wales. These two persons I married soon after our arrival here. Some persons made charitable contribution for these two persons – collected the sum of 20 pounds, and laid this out in various articles, at the same time requesting that I would see these delivered to them upon our arrival here. Unfortunately these have not been found. This circumstance has been brought before the Civil Court out here, when a verdict was found in their favour against the captain of the *Alexander* – am sorry this charitable intention and action had been brought to this disagreeable issue, the more so because the publick seemed to be so much interested in their welfare. The child is still living, of a weakly constitution, but a fine boy.<sup>20</sup>

Hope, Sir, you will excuse my freedom in directing these few lines to you. My chief intention, as I have already mentioned, being to inform you of my health and welfare and that I may have the honour of once more subscribing myself,

Hon. Sir,  
Your most Obedient Humble Servant,  
RICHARD JOHNSON.

Evan Nepean Esq.

**No. 6. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.**  
**Source: Mitchell Library Unpublished MSS.**

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,  
In the Country of Cumberland,  
New South Wales, Novr. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1788.

My dear Friends,

Am happy that another opportunity offers of writing to you to inform you of our health & welfare. Have already given you at least two Letters since our arrival at Port Jackson, & hope that before I write again, shall be favoured with a long letter from you among the rest of my dear friends in England. I most sincerely & anxiously wish & desire to hear from you, to hear how you do, how you go on, how my dear friends Hausty & Miles do – what success in fishing . . . [some words completely blotted out.]

'Tis now near Ten Months since we first arrived at this part of the world. I travel much about home; wish much Labour & no small cost we have got our little Cabbage tree Cottage<sup>21</sup> – no small curiosity it is, I assure you, & could it be placed on Bonfire Corner but one day, I dare say it would have as many spectators & admirers as ever had Lunardy's Balloon.<sup>22</sup> Am happy, however, that it in some measure answers our purpose, though now and then in excessive Rains, we are all in a swim within doors. – My little Garden also begins to flourish & supplies us daily with either one kind of vegetable or other. As to the Country in general, I confess I have no very great opinion of nor expectation from it. The greatest part of it is poor & barren & rocky & requires a great deal of labour to clear it of trees, roots, &c., & to cultivate it, & after all, the corn that has been sown hitherto looks very poor & unpromising. I think I can say none have given it a fairer trial than myself. Have been at work in my little farm for a day together, burning wood, digging, sowing, &c., but do not expect to reap anything nearly adequate to my labour. Others seem to be in the same predicament & all almost, at least with but few exceptions, are heartily sick of the expedition, & wish themselves back safe in old England. I hope I have said enough to disswade (sic) you from ever emigrating to this part of the world. You will act more wisely to stay at Bonfire Corner & (one thing excepted) I should be most heartily glad again to see you on that side of Southern & Atlantic Seas – and what without? Why the pity and concern I feel for these poor people with whom I am here connected. Happy would I be were I to live upon Bread &

water [two words blotted out] severe hardship, did I but see some of those poor souls begin to think about their latter end. Am sorry to see so little good yet done amongst them. They neither see nor will be persuaded to seek the Lord of Mercy and Compassion of God. They prefer their Lust before their Souls, yea, most of them will sell their souls for a Glass of Grogg, so blind, so foolish, so hardened are they.

The Colony begins already to be a good deal dispersed. About seventy or eighty are gone to settle in New Norfolk.<sup>23</sup> This took place soon after our arrival. Ships have been backward & forward, & the last particularly brings us a flattering promising account of that island as to wood, garden stuff, &c. Others have been lately sent to the top of this harbour to cultivate the ground. Understand that I am sometimes to go thither to perform Divine Services. The distance is 12 or 14 miles by water, which will make it very inconvenient & unpleasant.<sup>24</sup>

Mrs. J. was delivered on the [gap] ult. of a man child, but my Babe was still born & my dear Partner, for some time, was in the utmost danger. Through Mercy, however, she was at length safely delivered & continues to recover though but very slowly.

I am yet obliged to be a field Preacher. No Church is yet begun of, & I am afraid scarcely thought of.<sup>25</sup> Other things seem to be of greater Notice & Concern & most wd rather see a Tavern, a Play House,<sup>26</sup> a Brothel –anything sooner than a place for publick worship.

Please to present our most cordial respects to Mr. Hausey & family, & tell his little girl that Miss Pus has lately behaved so ill & made such bad work in my garden that I was obliged to have a Court Martial upon her; that after frequent threatenings I was at length resolved she shd be transported & accordingly have shipped her off to New Norfolk. Give our respects likewise to Miss Wickenden, and tell her that Mr. Tom Puss is come to high preferment –tired of such poor fare as I cd give him, he took himself off to the publick stores, where he feeds upon the richest dainties of the country. Our united love and [blot] respects to all other inquiring fds. Accept the same Yourselves from

Your sincere fds, &c.,  
RICH'D & M. JOHNSON.

Our particular respects to dr Milly and family.

On verso: Mr. Hen. Fricker,  
Bonfire Corner,  
Portsmouth Common,  
Hants.

**No. 7. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Jonathan Stonard, Esq.**  
**Source: Archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.**

Hond. & dear Sir,

I have sent you a Laura Keet as a specimen of some of the Birds of this Country, which I beg your acceptance of if you think it worth it. I wish I had something better to send you for a poor return it is truly for the favours I have rec'd from you. Have sent my Uncle Gill one of the same kind, and beg you to present my most affecte respects to him, Mrs. G., &c.

I have but five or ten minutes to write this letter in, & therefore you cannot expect any very particular account from me. Can only tell you that this Country does not by any means answer my expectations, Very unpromising & if I rightly predict, will never repay Government one-tenth part of the cost they have already been at. Have myself made some trial of it & you know I am ½ a farmer. Others agree with me in my opinion of it –few think otherwise. –Most have wrote to request they might be called home. –This however I have not yet done, & purpose to give it a little further trial, but give for it as my humble opinion Government would act very wisely to send out another fleet to take us all Back to England or to some other place more likely to ansr than this poor wretched Country, where scarcely anything is to be seen but Rocks, or eaten but Rats. Ah! & these esteemed most delicious eating. –Fresh attempts have been made to find out some rich gold or silver mines<sup>27</sup> –Great Expectations were formed that they had at length succeeded --& where sd this valuable place or mine be but in my Garden. –This I discovered when digging a well for water. The Governor was acquainted with it – ore was produced – more dug – this refined, but all dross. –Oh, Sir, we shall all be rich soon, & return home like Nabobs, rather I am afraid like fools.

Perhaps I may give you a further account of these things in my Next if I thought it needful --& shall know whether this be so when I hear from you. –

Mrs. Johnson is just recovering from a bed of laying in sickness –recovers but slowly. My little Babe is no more. –She unites in Compts, &c., to Mrs. Stonard. –

Am, Sir,  
Your very faithful fd & Sert,  
RICHARD JOHNSON

Sydney Cove, Port Jackson,  
In County of Cumberland,

New South Wales, Novr 17<sup>th</sup>, '88.

Addressed: Jonathan Stonard, Esqr.,  
Lambeth,  
Near London,  
Surry.

Note on cover: "Received the 16<sup>th</sup> June, 1789, answered both 17<sup>th</sup> same month."

**No. 8. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker.**  
Source: Mitchell Library MSS.

Port Jackson, New South Wales,  
April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1790.

Dear Friend,

'Tis now a long time since I have been able to write to or hear from you. Am happy, however, to embrace this first opportunity of scribbling over a few lines to you to inform you we are still alive & well, but have had many ups and downs, changes & vicissitudes of Providence since we left England, & I can only tell you that shd we be so fortunate as to set our feet upon England ground again I think it wd not be a little that sd induce us to venture a second time upon the deep & mighty ocean. I don't speak this by way of murmuring & complaining. I still believe this is by God's appointment, & this is a sufficient argument to silence objection or complaint. I will now give you a little information respecting our situation, wh you will find not the most comfortable in the world.

'Tis now about two years & three months since we first arrived at this distant Country. All this while we have been as it were buried alive, never having an opportunity of hearing from our fds. The *Sirius* frigate has once since that period been at the Cape of Good Hope,<sup>28</sup> and this means we have had a little information of publick affairs, but this is very small. It was fortunate for us, however, that the *Sirius* has had a voyage to the Cape, for otherwise we wd now have been very precariously situated. Our Stock of Provisions brought from England is nearly exhausted, & as to flour we sd have been without any for some months had it not been for the supply we rec'd by her from the Cape. This Providence appears still greater as she was very nearly cast away by Diemen's Land as she returned here. Had this been the case, our situation by this time must have been deplorable.

We have been anxiously looking out for a fleet for a long time, but hitherto none has appeared, and 'tis now generally conjectured that the fleet expected is either lost or taken by some enemy. Our hopes now are almost vanished, and everyone begins to think our situation not a little alarming. This is increased by the following melancholy Providence (sic). The *Sirius* was intended to be sent off about this time to Canton in China for the purpose of taking up some vessels & bringing us a supply of Provisions. But previous to her doing this, she, together with the *Supply* Tender, was sent to Norfolk where (sic) she was drove ashore upon the Rocks or Reef & foundered. Fortunately no lives were lost, & it is hoped the greatest part of the Provisions will be saved.<sup>29</sup> The *Supply* returned here on the 5<sup>th</sup> inst with the news. This cast a further damp upon every countenance. A Publick Counsel was called by the Governor on the same evening to see what measures had best to be adopted in consequence of the loss of the *Sirius*, & the present Scarcity of Provisions till a supply arrived here either from Europe or elsewhere. In consequence of this Counsel the greatest part of publick work is to be stopped. All boats belonging to individuals are to be made use of for the publick. Officers are to superintend this fishing Business in their turn amongst whom I am to take an active part; sometimes go down this Harbour, & sometimes to Botany Bay. Others are to be employed in raising vegetables, Potatoes, &c., &c.; some are to shoot for the publick, & whatever is caught, whether fish, fowles or Kangaroos, is to be served out in lieu of Salt provisions. Several Hogs have been already killed and sold to Government at 1s. per lb., & this likewise served out in the lieu of Salt provision.<sup>30</sup> As an individual, I am as well off as most. Have plenty of vegetables, Potatoes &c., wh I feel of essential service & wh are chiefly the fruits of my own hard labour. Had not we something of this to help out, you may judge how we sd now do, upon the Provision of 2 lbs. Of Pork, 2 ½ lbs. Of flour, 1 lb. Of Rice, & a pint of pease per week. This is the utmost allowed us, & when served fish &c. the Pork stopped.

The *Supply* is going to Batavia in the Course of a very few days, where she is to take up some vessels & purchase provisions for the settlement. This supply we hope to receive in about six or seven month, if it please God no misfortune attends her. Two persons are going from here to England by whom I send my letters. One of these is the Commissary,<sup>31</sup> who will take up more vessels at the Cape in case a fleet has not yet touched there. Such is our state of affairs as a Colony.

As to my family, we are in a thriving way. Mrs. J. has had a second child. The first was a boy, but still born, the latter is a girl, a sweet Babe about five weeks old. Have baptized [her] already. Had you been here you sd, if you pleased, have stood as sponsors. Have given it the name of Milbah Maria (Milbah a name amongst the Natives). Have a native girl under my care. Have had her now about 11 months. She was brought in here together with three others dreadfully afflicted with the Small Pox. The

two men died. Abaroo (the name of the Girl) & a Boy (Nanbarry) recovered; the latter is with the Surgeon General.<sup>32</sup> Three more have been brought in by force, one of which died of the above disorder after he had been in the camp several months and had become reconciled to the Camp.<sup>33</sup> A second made his escape, & a third, O-gul-troyee or Bennelong (for they in general have many names) is still at the Governor's, & has become very communicative and affable. Have taken some pains with Abaroo (about 15 years old) to instruct her in reading, & have no reason to complain of her improvement. She can likewise begin to speak a little English & is useful in several things about our little Hutt. Have taught her the Lord's Prayer &c., and as she comes better to understand men, endeavour to instruct her respecting a Supreme Being, &c. Wish to see these poor heathen brought to the knowledge of Xtianity & hope in time when these shall be given for our Lord's heritage, & the uttermost parts of the earth for his Possession. But little apparent fruit yet, amongst the Convicts, &c. Oh that they were wise, but alas! Nothing seems to alarm or allure (sic) them. Trust, however, I have been in some degree faithful, & believe that God's word will not return to him void.

I need not tell you I am haste. The scribble & many inaccuracies of the above lines testify it. Have much to do before the *Supply* sails. On Monday I am appointed to go a-fishing, so if it is impossible, I cd satisfy the wishes of all my flock. Must beg you to communicate the Contents of this Letter to my fds at Lymington, Boldre, Priestland, & the Isle of White (sic) with our united & cordial Love to everyone that inquires after us. —And be sure not to forget to remember us to our dear Portsmouth fds. Our hearts are with you. We often talk of you —pray for you, & wish you prosperity of Body & Soul. Know not when I shall be able to repay you for past favours. These, however, I trust I bear in grateful remembrance, & hope sometime to make you some small return. Don't fail to let me hear from you; if in nothing else here, remember I stand Creditor, I long to hear from you, much more to see you, but when or whether ever this will be God only knows, & if we never see each other here again I trust we shall soon meet in a better world when we shall part no more for ever.

Am with real Xtian esteem & affection,

Your truly obliged fd & well wisher,

RICH'D JOHNSON.

Addressed on verso: Mr. Henry Fricker,  
Portsmouth Common,  
Portsmouth,  
England.

**No. 9. —The Rev. Richard Johnson to Mr. S. Thornton.**

Source: "Historical Records of New South Wales," Vol. I.,  
Part 2, p. 386.

n.p., n.d. [July, 1790]

[EXTRACT.]<sup>34</sup>

The *Lady Juliana* brought out from England two hundred and twenty-six women convicts, out of which she had only buried five, though they had been on board for about fifteen months. The case was much otherwise with the other three ships. There were on board—

|                              | Died on board. |     | Sick landed. |     |                   |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------------|
| <i>The Neptune</i> ,         | 520            | ... | 163          | ... | 269               |
| <i>The Scarborough</i> , 252 | ...            | 68  | ...          | 96  |                   |
| <i>The Surprise</i> ,        | 211            | ... | 42           | ... | 121 <sup>35</sup> |

The short calculation or account given me will account for what I am going to relate.

Have been on board these different ships. Was first on board the *Surprise*. Went down amongst the convicts, where I beheld a sight truly shocking to the feelings of humanity, a great number of them laying, some half and others nearly quite naked, without either bed or bedding, unable to turn or help themselves. Spoke to them as I passed along, but the smell was so offensive that I could scarcely bear it. I then went on board the *Scarborough*; proposed to go down amongst them, but was dissuaded from it by the captain. The *Neptune* was still more wretched and intolerable, and therefore never attempted it.<sup>36</sup> Some of these unhappy people died after the ships came into the harbour, before they could be taken on shore —part of these had been thrown into the harbour, and their dead bodies cast upon the shore, and were seen laying naked upon the rocks. Took the occasion to represent this to his Excellency, in consequence of which immediate orders were sent on board that those who died on board should be carried to the opposite north shore and be buried. The landing of these people was truly affecting and shocking; great numbers were not able to walk, nor to move hand or foot; such were slung over the ship side in the same manner as they would sling a cask, a box, or anything of that nature. Upon their being brought up to the open air some fainted, some died upon deck, and others in the boat before they reached the shore. When come on shore, many were not able to walk, to stand, or to stir themselves in the least, hence some were led by others. Some crept upon their hands and knees, and some were carried upon the backs of others. The next thing to be considered was what was to be done with all

these miserable objects. Besides the sick that were in the hospital previous to the arrival of the fleet, there were now landed not less than four hundred and eighty-six sick; but the hospital erected here is not sufficient to hold above sixty or eighty at most; what then must be done with the rest? It was fortunate that a new hospital was brought out in the *Justinian*.<sup>37</sup> This was set up with all speed; a great number of tents, in all ninety or a hundred, were pitched. In each of these tents there were about four sick people; here they lay in a most deplorable situation.<sup>38</sup> At first they had nothing to lay upon but the damp ground, many scarcely a rag to cover them. Grass was got for them to lay upon, and a blanket given amongst four of them. Have been amongst them for hours, may say days together, going from one tent to another, from one person to another, and you may imagine that what I here behold was not a little affecting. The number landed sick were near five hundred, most at the hospital and some few dispersed here and there throughout the camp. The misery I saw amongst them is inexpressible; many were not able to turn, or even to stir themselves, and in this situation were covered over almost with their own nastiness, their heads, bodies, cloths, blanket, all full of filth and lice. Scurvy was not the only nor the worst disease that prevailed amongst them (one man I visited this morning, I think I may safely say, had 10,000 lice upon his body and bed; some were exercised with violent fevers, and others with a no less violent purging and flux. The complaints they had to make were no less affecting to the ear than their outward condition was to the eye. The usage they met with on board, according to their own story, was truly shocking; sometimes for days, nay, for a considerable time together, they have been to the middle in water chained together, hand and leg, even the sick not exempted, --nay, many died with the chains upon them. Promises, entreaties were all in vain, and it was not till a very few days before they made the harbour that they were released out of irons. The greatest complaints by far were from those persons who had come in the *Neptune*. No wonder that they should be so afflicted; no wonder to hear them groaning and crying and making the most bitter lamentations. Endeavoured to commiserate them under their afflictions, pitied them, encouraged them to hope many of them would soon recover; that every indulgence, every attention would be paid to them; prayed with them, and gave some books amongst those of them that were able to read.

You will, perhaps, be astonished when I tell you a little of the villany of these wretched people. Some would complain that they had no jackets, shirts, or trowsers, and begged that I would intercede for them. Some by this means have had two, three, four—nay, one man not less than six different slops given him, which he would take an opportunity to sell to some others, and then make the same complaints and entreaties. When any of them were near dying and had something given to them as bread of lillipie (flour and water boiled together), or any other necessaries, the person next to him or others would catch the bread, &c., out of his hand, and, with an oath, say that he was going to die, and therefore that it would be of no service to him. No sooner would the breath be out of any of their bodies than others would watch them and strip them entirely naked. Instead of alleviating the distresses of each other, the weakest were sure to go to the wall. In the night-time, which at this time is very cold, and especially this would be felt in the tents, where they had nothing but grass to lay on and a blanket amongst four of them, he that was strongest of the four would take the whole blanket to himself and leave the rest quite naked. These three last ships have now been here about six weeks. In this time you may suppose there have been great alterations among the sick; a good many are so far recovered that they have got to work; a great number have died; have buried not less than eighty-six since they landed—eighty-four convicts, one child and one soldier.<sup>39</sup>

[No signature.]

**No. 10. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.**  
**Source: Mitchell Library Unpublished MSS.**

Augt 21<sup>st</sup>, 1790.

Port Jackson, New South Wales,

Dear Sir,

Mr. Locke, in his Book on human understanding,<sup>40</sup> has one Chapter, which he entitles Causes & Their Effects. And it is generally believed & acknowledged that there is never an effect produced but what must arise from some preceding Cause.

It sometimes, however, happens that the effects produced are not such as might be expected.

I will only mention one thing more & then I will come to an explanation of this Business, & that is the great difficulty generally found in investigating causes & their effects is to find out the proper cause, & when this is properly understood the effects that follow are generally natural & easy.

Now to explain myself. I have both upon the passage & since our arrival here have wrote to you repeatedly. This I did for two reasons, 1<sup>st</sup> Because I promised I wd do so, & you know that he that promises is a debtor. But 2dly, my esteem for you & the obligations I shall ever feel myself under to you for the civilities I have recd from you during our stay at Portsmouth. These are the Causes or Reasons of my troubling you with one letter after another. But what are the effects or Consequences



that might be naturally expected? Why surely, I should have the satisfaction & hap's of receiving Letters from you by the first conveyance. But in this I have found myself sadly disappointed, & not less grieved. What can be the Cause or Reason of your silence, I know not; if in any thing I have affronted or offended you I am ready to beg your pardon & remember our Saviour's direction, Matt. 18:21,22.<sup>41</sup> If I do not hear from you in consequence of this Letter, you cannot, you must not expect to hear any more from me.

Having already filled one side of my sheet with a long preamble, I think it time now to tell you of our health, & to give you a little information respecting us as a Colony with the same freedom as I have hitherto been wont to do.

Have lately seen & read a printed account of this settlement, which I am free to declare, is much too flattering.<sup>42</sup> The generality of these late comers find it so & I believe there are very few of them, if any, but who wish themselves back again in old England. As an individual, & as flattering myself that I believe there are not many here who understand agriculture better, I must declare it as my opinion that the soil is nought, & ye Colony never likely to answer the wishes & expectations of government. All the officers soon after our first arrival here had each two acres of ground given them with two Convicts each to clear & cultivate it. I have taken very great pains in this, & after great Labour have got it into Cultivation. Have had two crops of Wheat, Barley & oats, but in many parts I have not got my seed again, & at best I have not received above two fold, of any of the above kinds of grain. At Rose Hill where the soil is esteemed much superior than it is here, the greatest produce that has been raised is from six to eight fold; last year not so much, & according to the present appearance it will be less still the year ensuing, & I fear unless measures shd be instituted, in the course of a Year or two hence, it wd be so run out & impoverished as to produce nothing at all.

Indian Corn & Potatoes seem to ansr the best of anything, & if manure be got, might turn to some little account. The first of these may be grown all ye year, but those set from about this time till Jany produce greatest increase. Indian corn is set in Sepr & ripe about March following.

Vegetation has been for some time greatly at a stand, but in the Course of about a Month it will be so quick, that ye greatest part of garden seeds as Cabbages, Turnips, Beet, &c., are no sooner sown & sprung up, but they run to seed. February is the best time to sow turnips, as then vegetation becomes more moderate.

Have at times taken great pains in my garden, & in general am as well off for vegetables as most of my neighbours. Last year I cut, I suppose, not much less than a thousand cucumbers, & some that I left for seed have been 16 or 18 inches long & a foot or more in circumference. Have also rais'd some melons, very good flavoured – Water melons & pumpkins too have been raised here very fine & large. All these are put into the ground in the Course of the next month.

At our first landing I put in some Pips of oranges,<sup>43</sup> limes & lemons. There are some of them now two foot high, & seem to be very promising. Some Guavas too are likely to come to perfection, only I think the Climate is not quite hot enough for them. Strawberries we had last Summer –not bad. The Governor brought out one Root of this, which has so increased that now there are scarcely any but who have them in their gardens. Vines I think will do well in time, better if the Climate were hotter, but as these do not require the most rich soil, we are in hopes of seeing these turn to some account, & I promise you, if ever wine be made here, & not prohibited from being exported, I will send you a specimen, & perhaps may drink your health in a Bumper of New Holland wine.<sup>44</sup> Add to this, I have raised some Tobacco, & am persuaded this wd grow here tolerably well, provided any should be found that know how to order and cure it. Garden Peas do pretty well, but Beans will not ansr at all. They come up & even bloom exceedingly well, but whether it be some insect or what ever else be the cause, they seldom head well or come to any perfection.

You see I am quite a farmer, & have to tell you that I have a prospect of being still a much greater –am going to have 400 acres, laid out as Glebe land to the Church, for which I wd not give 400 pence, having already paid more attention & spent more time than I wish upon such matters. Have other ground to dig and cultivate wh I think of greater consequence & wh more immediately concerns my own line of duty.

Have been very much employed since the arrival of this last fleet. These came in here in a most deplorable situation. Near 300 died upon the passage, & since their arrival I have buried above 100 more. Numbers yet sick, some likely to die, & others never to appearance will be fit for any employment. Never did I see such a scene of Misery in my days, in every sense truly wretched, naked, filthy, dirty, louzy, & many of them unable to stand, to creep, or even to stir hand or foot. Have been a great deal amongst them, till I have come home quite ill. Through mercy we are tolerably well; except that I fear we have by some means or other caught ye Scotch Fiddle,<sup>45</sup> which at times makes us dance & caper about the room more than I could wish. Hope, however, soon to be cured of this filthy disorder. My dear Milbah grows every day more & more engaging. Mrs. J. desires to join in Xtian respects to you all, the Rev'd Messrs. Horsey, Inder, Eldringley & Edwards, Mr. & Miss Wickenden, Mr. Pears

&c., &c. I need not tell you that I expect to hear from you. This will always be thankfully recd andsd by,  
dear Sir,

[Six or seven words indecipherable] forgot to remember us kindly to Mr. Millard & family.

Your very affte fd & servt.,

RICH'D JOHNSON.

**Addressed:** Mr. Henry Fricker  
Bonfire Corner,  
Portsmouth Common,  
Portsmouth,

England.

Per favour of Mr. Alt. <sup>46</sup>

**No. 11. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.**

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

Port Jackson, New S. Wales,

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1791.

Dear Sir,

I cannot but wonder what's the matter that I never yet heard from any of my Hampshire friends since we left England, & sd I not hear from them by the next fleet, I believe I shall not take the liberty of directing any more letters to that part, least I should be thought impertinent. I cannot, however, suppose that I sd be so soon forgotten by everyone, Mrs. Stradling excepted,<sup>47</sup> & think that somehow or other, they have miscarried. At all events, however, I am unwilling to let this ship<sup>48</sup> sail without dropping you a line to convince you that though so far distant, we do not forget you, and to inform you of our welfare.

I shall, however, let this letter serve for the whole & beg that if any enquire after us, you would remember us to them in an affectionate manner.

Wish I cd give you a pleasing account of our situation here, but must confess, I think I meet with things worse than I expected, bad as I might naturally expect them.

In almost every aspect things are truly wretched & uncomfortable, & when it will be better with us, God only knows. We have been once reduced into great worldly straits as a Colony, but it pleased God in Mercy to send us a seasonable & gracious relief & supply.<sup>49</sup>

Since then again things have appeared dark & gloomy. We have been visited with a most severe drought for nine or ten months. Our gardens & fields looked very unpromising & have turned out but very indifferent. Water began to grow scarce & very bad. Many people have been ill on this account, & what has tended to increase their illness has been the very great heat of the weather. The Hottest day in England is quite moderate to what we have repeatedly felt it here. Birds, unable to bear the heat, have great numbers dropped from the trees & expired.

Justly does God thus in his Judgments assist us. We are truly a wicked people, sin abounds of all kinds & amongst all ranks too much; God and religion set little store by.

Hope the Lord has hitherto enabled me to be faithful; but confess I at times am ready to sink under my many and great discouragements. I have great need of faith and patience & am convinced at times that I have not so much as at other times I have been ready to imagine.

We are now upon a pretty friendly intercourse with the natives. Numbers of them are coming into the Camp daily, or rather are in night & day. This intercourse was principally brought about by means of a little girl, which, if I mistake not, I mentioned to you in a former Letter.<sup>50</sup> For some time this Girl made good improvement in her behaviour & [we] began to be very partial to her, but since they have come in in common, she has not behaved so well or so complying. Once & again she has been off in the woods for sometime, but believe she finds things better in camp & with us than amongst her Countrymen. Hope that good will come out of all this, though appearances are yet very dark. Have wrote home to some of our great ones, and I hope good ones, too, upon the propriety of sending out Missionaries.<sup>51</sup> Hope to see some come out soon, hope you & our dear fds with you will help forward this blessed and important work with your prayers.

Mrs. J. is through Mercy well. We have had an increase of one in our family, a sweet little girl just turned a twelve month.

I beg your acceptance of the enclosed. One thing I have sent you is what the Natives call a Barrin, which the females whilst young wear as a fig leaf. Have also sent you two or three fish Hooks & one line. The Hooks made of a kind of pearl fish shell & the lines of the inner Bark of a small shrub or creeper. Wish I had some thing to send you more worthy of your acceptance.

We beg our united love & respects to all inquiring fds & remain as ever,

Your truly affte fds,

RD. & MARY JONSON.

**Endorsed on back**—Mr. Henry Fricker,  
Bonfire Corner,

Portsmouth Common,  
Portsmouth,

And the addendum: --

Have also sent you a small Kangaroo skin, if you think it worth your acceptance. You will take your choice of the Hooks & lines, and then send the other two, one to my fd Miss Wickenden, & the other to my old Hostess, Mrs. King, if alive, if not, to Mr. Etty. The above Small Box to a Mr. Dawes at Portsmouth, & will send it to you.

**No. 12. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Henry Fricker, Esq.**  
**Source: Mitchell Library MSS.**

Port Jackson, New S. Wales,  
Octr 4<sup>th</sup>, 1791.

My Worthy and dear Friends,

I have received your very kind & affectionate Letters, the last dated Feby 21<sup>st</sup>, 91, for which I thank you, & fearing least putting off too long, I sd not be able to write at all, I have begun this early to answer yours & some others, though I do not imagine the *Gorgon* will return yet for some time.

I observe what you say as to the doctrine preached in St. Peter's, Portsmouth Common, & cannot but lament that any, ah! That many, very many of my Brother Clergymen go aside so much from the principles & fundamental doctrines held in our established Church, & so flatly contradict those very articles which they have subscribed to. But, blessed be God, I trust I see things in a different light, & however stigmatized by the name of Methodist, Enthusiast, &c.,<sup>52</sup> I am not ashamed of the precious gospel of Jesus, have long since come to the Apostle's Resolution, 1 Cor. 2:2,<sup>53</sup> well knowing that, whatever doctrine does not tend to humble the Sinner, & to exalt the Saviour, is anti-christ.

But I rejoice to hear at the same time, that while some are thus pulling down (or rather are attempting to do so) this spiritual Building, others there are in different parts of England a well as elsewhere, who are building up the Church of God, & I hope & trust their numbers will increase still more & more, & finally that God will still smile upon our establishment to the bringing of many from darkness to light & from the power of Satan to God.

But I beg your pardon, I had almost forgot I was writing to a Baptist. I must therefore draw in a little, or perhaps I may be carrying things too far. But I know my good friend too well, & however we may differ about circumstantials, I am persuaded we most cordially & fully agree on the essentials of Xtianity, & I am persuaded, that, let but sinners be wrought up & be turned from the error of their ways to God, whether it is in a Church or Meeting; a store house or Barn, a Cathedral or a Chapel my friend so will rejoice.

There is one part of your Letter, astonished or surprised me a little, & that is the ideas which you & others have formed of my returning home to England so early as in a year or two. I may probably have expressed in my letters to you & others that I am sick of my situation & in many respects I am sorry that I am compelled to be in the same mind still, (for never surely was a man, a Minister, more exercised & tried with the crooked & ungodly ways of sinners; & few I believe have met with more or greater trials in worldly matters considering my station & office). —But after all, I assure you I have no immediate intentions of returning to Europe.<sup>54</sup> I am persuaded that I am where God aims & intends me to be, & till I see my way home more clearly than I do at present, I think it my duty to abide where I am.

I have still cause to lament & complain with Isaiah 59,1.<sup>55</sup> But I hope & trust I have not laboured wholly in vain, & I trust in time, in spite of all opposition & obstacles, God will make bare his holy arm in the Conversion & salvation of the Souls of men.

Our Colony begins to increase greatly. Last Sunday I preached I suppose to not less than six or eight hundred, & I have since heard that one at least went away sorrowful & heavy-hearted, & some others rejoicing in the Son of God manifested towards them. I endeavour always to adapt my discourses to the state & capacities of my people generally. My sermons are upon the awful strain, as was the Case last Sunday. Texts Pro's 19:21,<sup>56</sup> first part; 1 Pet. 4:18<sup>57</sup> But I know that this is not the only way of working conviction upon the Conscience & see it necessary & find it precious work at times I trust, to speak, of the great & inestimable Love of Jesus in dying for sinners, & in inviting them to come to him, to believe in & to rest upon him for life & Salvation.

After being here for near four years you may reasonably suppose that by this time we have become more settled; in some respects I am happy to inform you we are so, as we have lately removed out of our old little cottage & are now in a house as comfortable & convenient as I can wish.<sup>58</sup> My garden, too, is in a flourishing state; but yet in some other respects & especially in my publick line, I am little better off than ever. No Church is yet built or even begun of, & the only place that we can procure for the purpose of publick worship, is an old Store-House or Barrack &c. I have frequent promises & assurances made me however, that in a little time a Church shall be built, both here at Sydney & at Parramatta or Rose Hill.

Rose Hill lies at the head of this harbour, distant from this Cove, about 12 or 14 miles.<sup>59</sup> At first I used to go up, perform publick duty, & return on the same day. This I found more than I cd well go through; and after some time obtained a Room (a miserable one it is indeed, but trust I have at times found it a spiritual Bethel) where I sleep on the Saturday & Sunday evening, which gives me an opportunity of visiting the Convicts in their Hutts, & I declare to you that I have found more pleasure at times in doing this than in preaching &c.

Another clergyman came out in the Gorgon, who is Chaplain to the New S. Wales Corps. His name is Bain,<sup>60</sup> who informs me that he saw you at Portsmouth. He has preached on shore two Sundays, but I have never heard him, being elsewhere employed at the same time. I wish rather than hope that he may prove a fellow Labourer in the same blessed Cause. As yet he seems to be greatly caressed by our great ones, & I fancy is not suspected as being a Methodist. I have need of wisdom, & I hope my good fds. will not cease daily to pray for me.

I have received many Letters from Portsmouth & wd be glad, had I time, to write to everyone of my fds in return, but am sorry that I cannot for want of time. I will however, if possible, write to your two worthy pastors to whom we beg our united love & Respects, & rejoice to hear of their united efforts. [Last two lines totally indecipherable.]

Your sincere fd,

RD. JOHNSON.

**No. 13. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Jonathan Stonard, Esq.  
Source: Archives of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne.**

Hond & dear Sir,

I have already wrote a Letter to you about two months ago to thank you for the receipt of yours. —Since then I have taken a trip to Norfolk & have just returned a few days since to Port Jackson.<sup>61</sup> —In my return home I wrote a letter to my Uncle Gill, which I have sent home by Major Ross, who promises me that he will call upon my Uncle at his arrival in England.<sup>62</sup> Should he call, you will pay him some little attention I hope for my sake, though I have no great acquaintance with him. He lives near Lambeth, & promised me one day he wd call upon my fds if I pleased. This was the reason of my sending my Uncle's letter by him.

I have taken the Liberty of sending you a small Box of the seeds of this Country, which I beg your & my Uncle Gill's acceptance of between you. Have head that seeds are much sought after in England which has induced me to send you these few, hoping that they will be acceptable. I have but little time or taste for Botany otherwise here in great variety to feast the eyes & to amuse the curious. — Such as they are, however, I send you as a token of my Remembrance & of the Obligations I am under to you for your past favours. —

I have received a letter from Mr. Thos. Ashton —Should have been glad to have answered it, but owing to my late Voyage to Norfolk & the many, many things that are continually coming before me, I shall not [be] able to answer one half of the Letters I have now by me. —I beg you will thank him for it from me.

I have directed the Box of seeds to the care of Major Ross, who promises he will take the best care he can of them. I suppose they will be sent to the Custom house where you will be obliged to inquire for them.

Have sent you also two or three specimens of Plants.

There have been and are great differences amongst our officers here. Yesterday a duel was fought between Major R---and a Captain Hill.<sup>63</sup>—I wish that after the Marines are gone home we may be more peaceable, but I fear whether dissensions will not prevail as bad as ever. Fortunately neither party was wounded yesterday, & after two fires on each side, the seconds interfered & settled the differences.

I beg that you will present our most respectful Compliments to Mrs. Stonard & your family & friends. My little Milbah grows the most dear & engaging Babe I ever saw in my life. But the misfortune is, I suspect another is upon the stocks. But I cannot help it.

I shall be always happy to hear from you & am, dear Sir,

With great Respect,

Your truly obliged fd & faithful Servant,  
RICHARD JOHNSON.

Sydney, Port Jackson,  
Decr 13<sup>th</sup>, 1791.

Major Ross lives in some house in Walnut Walk. —The Major has, besides the small Box, a small parcel of Norfolk seeds, which he will give either to you or Mr. Gill.

Addressed –Jonathan Stonard Esq.,  
Lambeth,  
Nea London.

**No. 14. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Governor Arthur  
Phillip.**

Source: “Historical Records of New South Wales,” Vol. I., Pt. 2, p. 594.

Sydney, Feb. 29, 1792.

[EXTRACTS.]<sup>64</sup>

There is another thing which I beg leave to relate to your Excellency, and that is the manner in which the holy Sabbath is observed. I have often lamented, and not seldom complained, of the thinness of the congregation; some times not one-half, one-third, and sometimes one-fourth of the convicts (especially the women) present. Many of the officers, both civil and military, and I may add of the naval and merchant line, too, have frequently apologised for their non-attendance, and have assigned as the cause the want of a convenient place of worship.

We have been here now above four years, and the first time we had public service for myself and for the congregation (for whom I would ever feel as for myself in such circumstances) than I did last Sunday, for then we had the advantage of the trees to shelter us from the sun ; but now we were wholly exposed to the weather; first to the rain, which I was fearful would have made me dismiss the people and afterwards to the wind and sun. On this account, Sir, it cannot be wondered at that persons, whether of higher or lower rank, come so seldom and so reluctantly to public worship. I have, not seldom, found very great inconveniences attending it myself. I have, which I must in a great degree attribute to this, contracted a deafness which I am very apprehensive I shall never get the better of, and repeatedly for a day or two after I have been thus exposed I have been very unwell, and quite unfit and unable to attend to my duty.

I neither wish or mean to interfere with any thing that does not concern myself; but as the clergyman of the colony, and as entrusted with the spiritual charge of those unhappy people around us, I submit it to your Excellency’s own consideration, whether before the approaching winter, some place should not be thought of and built both here and at the new settlement for the purpose of carrying on public worship.

[No signature.]

**No. 15. —Rev. Richard Johnson to –**

Source: Bonwick, “Australia’s First Preacher,” pp. 88 et seq., and “Historical Records of N.S.W.,” Vol. I., Pt. II., p. 601.<sup>65</sup>

Port Jackson,  
23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1792.

[EXTRACTS ONLY.]

...As to my habitation, I am very well satisfied; it is pretty commodious – few better provided for in this respect in the Colony than myself. My principal family complaint is, that I cannot better provide for them. We are now eight in number,<sup>66</sup> and Mrs. J. at this time far gone with child. Our allowance (rations) at present is scanty, and is likely to be still less. ‘Tis seldom we can get any fresh meat, and then in general it is at a dear rate, fresh pork one shilling per lb.

A moderate sized fowl, three, four, or five shillings, and sometimes more; Indian corn, 10s. a bushel; everything else, whether from ship or on shore, in the same proportion. Have frequently asked to have the privileges of a man to shoot for me now and then. This favour I never have [been] granted.

Upon the arrival of the *Juliana*, in June 1790, his Excellency told me that 400 acres were to be measured out as Church ground. This was measured out at that time, but, to this day, he has not been able to let me have any help to cultivate it, neither has there been so much as a tree fallen upon it. I cannot suppose Government meant for me to use an axe or spade myself, but this I have done day after day, otherwise, bad as my situation is, it would have been still worse. I mention this circumstance, being aware that the sound of 400 acres will appear great. But what, Sir, are 400 or 4000 acres, full of large, green trees, unless some convicts be allowed to cultivate it?

I did not come here as an overseer or a farmer. I have other things more, much more, important to attend to. My duty as a clergyman fully takes up all my time, neither will my constitution admit of it. This is much impaired since I came into this country, and at this very time I feel such rheumatic pains and weakness that I can scarcely go through the duties of my office.

This brings me to mention another circumstance. I have to perform Divine Service at three different places, viz., at Sydney, Parramatta, and at a Settlement about three miles to the westward of Parramatta,<sup>67</sup> and at never a one of these places is there to this day any place of worship erected, or as much as talked of. The last time I preached in Sydney was in the open air. On the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. We could

not have any service at all because of the rain. Next Sunday, if the weather will permit, we shall assemble in an old boat-house, close by the river side; the sides and ends quite open. I declare to you it is a place not fit or safe for a stable or a cowhouse, and I declare further, owing to the violent pain I this moment, and have all this day felt in my temples, etc., I dread Sunday coming, aware of the danger, and the consequences I have to expect. By the Grace of God, however, I am resolved to go on in the discharge of my duty, till I can hold out no longer, and then I must give up and leave this miserable people to spend their Sabbaths wholly like heathens.

Last Spring there was the foundation of a Church laid at Parramatta.<sup>68</sup> Before it was finished, it was converted into a jail, or a lock-up house, and now it is converted into a granary. Have had this place to perform divine Service in for several Sundays, but now am again turned out, and must again turn field preacher there also. I go up to Parramatta, as usual, once a fortnight –the distance by water about fourteen miles. Generally go up on the Saturday, sometimes four, five, six hours upon the water. On Sunday morning early, I now ride up to the new Settlement, preach in the open air about seven o'clock to about 600 convicts. At ten, and four in the afternoon, I preach at Parramatta. I fear, however, I shall not be able to continue this much longer especially as the winter is now approaching, unless some places be erected for the purpose.

Besides my public duty, I have to visit the sick, which at present, both at Sydney and Parramatta, are a great many – numbers dying every day. Last month about sixty died, and I fear before this expires, there will again be near the same number.

In different letters which I have lately received, my friends seem to intimate that I meant to return home soon. I know not for what reason they have formed such conjectures, I do not know that I have ever given them any reason to think so. I have not so much as thought of retuning, at least as yet; but this I must be free to tell you, that if things are not made more comfortable for me in these matters, that I have already complained of, I shall certainly think it my duty to write home to be relieved, as I am pretty well aware I cannot stand it many years longer, as things are at present conducted.

*[Text ends abruptly. No signature]...*

### **No. 16. —Rev Richard Johnson to Under Secretary of State Dundas.**

**Source: Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 206. Reprinted "Historical Records of Australia," Vol. I., pp. 451 et seq.**

Sydney, New South Wales,  
September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1793.

Honble Sir, --

As Chaplain to this distant Colony, I humbly beg leave to state to you these following circumstances, viz., that from my first arrival in this country, which was at the first formation of the Settlement, I trust I have at all times endeavoured to discharge the various duties of my sacred function with fidelity and diligence.

That, in doing this, I have met with many and great inconveniences.

That publick works of different kinds have been and still continue to be, so urgent that no place of any kind has yet been erected, for the purpose of performing Divine Service.

That my own health has been greatly exposed and at times not a little injured by these means.

That for the same reason (I mention it with sincere concern) there has been too general and repeated neglect shown to publick worship.

That in these and such like considerations, I have at length deemed it advisable, and even expedient, on my own accord, and account, to run up a temporary shelter, which would serve the above important purpose until a better can be provided.

That I have, to save expence, gone upon as reasonable and rough a plan as possible, that I have, since I began this work, devoted the principle part of my time to it, and have asserted myself to the utmost to get it completed.

That I began this building on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June last, and have just at this time got it finished.

That the Building which I have erected will seat about five hundred people, and hold one hundred more when necessary.

That I have given in an estimate of the whole expence to his Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, the real amount of which has been upwards of sixty-seven pounds, sixty pounds of which I have paid in Spanish dollars, and the remainder in provisions at or under prime cost.<sup>69</sup>

I humbly trust, Sir, that what I have done will meet with your approbation, that it will be a means of rendering my own situation more comfortable than it hitherto has been, and also, of inducing these unhappy people, whose reformation I do so ardently wish to see, to attend more willingly, and, consequently, more regularly, upon the solemn and public worship of God.<sup>70</sup>

I beg leave, Sir, to apologize for intruding so much upon your time, when matters of much weightier moment are daily coming before you ; but conscious of the rectitude of my intentions, and fully aware of the expediency for what I have done, in the above affair, I have been induced to take this freedom.

I have the honour, etc.,  
(Signed) RICHARD JOHNSON.

**No. 17.—Rev. Richard Johnson to the Right Honourable  
Henry Dundas.**

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

Sydney, New South Wales,  
April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1794.

Sir, --In a letter dated the 3d of September last, I took the liberty of acquainting you that I had, on my own accord, erected a temporary place of worship, and in the same letter assigned my reasons for so doing.

The above letter, together with an estimate of the expense, I put into the hands of the Lieutenant Governor, and requested that he would transmit the former to you.

To my great surprise, I have since then been informed that, together with my letter, Major Grose has thought good to send you another, in which, instead of approving of, he has reprobated my conduct in this affair, and has also spoken of me in terms disrespectful and injurious to my children.<sup>71</sup> Whether there was anything in my letter that merited such uncivil treatment, you Sir, will be the best judge.

As matters have, however, been thus stated, I think myself justified, nay, I feel myself compelled to give you another letter, and therein to write to you in a manner more open and unreserved.

Major Grose is pleased to represent me as “*a discontented and troublesome character.*” He has not, however, signified in what respects, or for what reasons, I am so. However, since he has thus asserted the charge, I will, should this be true, endeavour to produce my reasons.

Soon after Governor Phillip left the Colony, Major Grose gave out an Order for Divine Service to be performed at six o’clock in the morning, which Order, though for various reasons not meeting my ideas, I strictly attended to.

One morning, as I was going through the Service, I was interrupted first, by the improper conduct of two soldiers, and soon after by the beat of a drum, when instantly the Corps took their arms, got into their ranks, and marched away. I had then been barely three-quarters of an hour on the whole service, and was then about the middle of my discourse.

Such strange and unprecedented conduct induced me to write to the Major, and to make a serious complaint of such improper proceedings, which I believe, was the first thing that gave offence. But, whether being thus interrupted in the discharge of my duty, I had not sufficient reason to make a complaint, or, whether my conduct herein can be considered as any criminal or improper, I submit, Sir, to your consideration. I have consulted the Canons of the Church of England, and to them I would refer you, whether such conduct, as has been shown upon this occasion, is by any means justifiable or proper.

The next circumstance which I believe has given offence was my building a place of worship. My reasons for doing so I have stated to you in a former letter; and whether my conduct on what I have done deserves censure, or merits condemnation (after having waited for five years and a half, and no prospect of any place being about to be built for this purpose), this, also, I do humbly submit, Sir, to your impartial and candid consideration.

Some time after I had built the Church, I made application for a Sexton, an old man, to ring the bell, to keep the Church clean, and to see that there was proper order and decency during the time of Divine Service. This request, though both reasonable and necessary, was denied me, though I then signified that this was the general custom throughout England and I may say, is common amongst all nations.

The burying ground is at a considerable distance from the Camp,<sup>72</sup> and when I have gone to bury a corpse, it has often happened that the grace has been to alter, and sometimes, make, on which account I have had to wait for half-an-hour, and sometimes longer, all this time exposed to heat or rain, and without any shelter or shade to cover me, and there being no one appointed for the purpose of digging a grave.

From these different circumstances you may judge, Sir, whether I have not sufficient reason to be discontented. The soldier, it seems, is properly supplied with his regimentals, the surgeon has an hospital provided for his patients and is supplied with medicine. Persons being other offices are furnished with what is needful for them to do their duty, and, for the same reason, I do not see why a clergyman should be denied what is necessary for him in the discharge of his duty. But such has been

all along my situation, that I have neither had Church nor Clerk (except my own free servant who fills up this place at Sydney), nor *Sexton*, for want of which convenience and assistance I have seen it needful to complain. But whether there was an impropriety of my making application for all this, I must, and do, humbly appeal to you.

It was this last circumstance that gave rise to an unhappy difference that has taken place between the Lieutenant Governor and myself. When refused this request, so just, reasonable and necessary, I could not forbear signifying that I conceived myself extremely slighted, and that, as Chaplain to the Colony, I had reason to expect greater support. This occasioned some warm dispute and altercation, when some ill-natured and ill-founded reflections were thrown out upon me, which I trust and flatter myself, my general mode of conduct has not merited.

The treatment which I have met with since the above difference happened, has been all along very uncivil and severe, an instance or two of which I now beg leave to mention.

Some time since there were four hundred acres appointed and measured out as Church land. This, a very short time before Governor Phillip left us, I had begun to clear, with the assistance of two or three men. Soon after, grants were given to the different officers, and ten men (some I believe had more) allowed to each officer, to clear and cultivate their ground. I then thought it both proper and reasonable to apply to the Lieutenant Governor for more assistance, to clear the ground belonging to the Church, which request he refused to grant me; and, at the same time, signified that if I chose, to resign my claim to the Church land, I would have a grant the same as others, otherwise he did not feel disposed to allow me any further assistance whatever.

This circumstance, Sir, induced me to write to you upon the subject. A grant of a hundred acres was then given me,<sup>73</sup> and seven men more to assist in clearing and cultivating it.

In consequence of promise then made me (viz., providing I made an opening of fifty acres before the end of November, I should have a cow), besides the assistance allowed me, I have laid out upon my ground considerably above one hundred pounds. But instead of this promise being made good to me, All my men, domestics included, at a moment's warning, were taken away last November, except two. Whilst all the other officers have to this time the same indulgence and assistance allowed them, and three married officers of the Corps have had each a cow given them.

In consequence of my men being taken from me, I have been obliged to take four men off the Store, to whom I have to pay at the rate of forty shillings per week, and, after all my corn is exposed to perpetual depredations for want of proper assistance to protect it.

I humbly conceive, Sir, that my station, officer and standing in the Colony (as well as situation with a wife and two dear and tender infants), entitle me to the same indulgence as was given to others; but whether such indulgence has been given to me, you may judge from the above circumstances, having only two men allowed me, whilst some have twenty.

I should not, however, be understood to ground any complaint upon the circumstance last mentioned, for whatever indulgences I meet with in these respects, I hope I am thankful. But when not properly supported in my office, and refused that assistance which, in order to do my duty, is absolutely needful, then I conceive I have a right to complain; and, whether my complaint herein be not well founded, from what I have above stated, I must again beg leave to submit to your consideration.

I am properly aware, Sir, of the subordinate station I hold in the Colony under Major Brose, as the Lieutenant Governor, neither am I conscious of ever once refusing to comply with the Orders which he has given, not of being wanting in paying to him that respect and deference, which his superior and exalted station entitles him to, till he, seemingly having forgotten those mutual duties, which I conceive either do, or ought to, subsist, between a Governor and a Clergyman, has treated me in a manner which I am sure my sacred office, and, I am persuaded, my general conduct, has never merited.

As it is probable, however, that you may have some circumstances stated to you from another quarter, wherein my conduct may be represented in a light unfavourable and prejudiced, I trust you will suspend your judgment or opinion till you have seen, read, and examined both sides to the question.

I have, for this reason, deemed it both proper and necessary (though, owing to my present situation and indisposition, I have found this attended with some inconvenience), to write a true and full statement of the whole affair to my friends. I have also written to his Lordship, the Bishop of London, to whom I have taken the liberty of enclosing your letter, at the same time requesting that, should it seem necessary, his Lordship would condescend to make application for the above papers, thereby to examine, whether my conduct has in any way or degree merited that severe treatment which I have met with.<sup>74</sup>

Should you, then, Sir, see it needful, or should you find leisure or inclination to make further inquiry as to these different and, I am sorry to say, disagreeable circumstances (which I have ever endeavoured to avoid), I beg leave to refer you to his Lordship, and to the papers which I have mentioned, and after a fair and impartial examination has been made of what I have therein stated, I shall cheerfully submit to your and his Lordship's judgment and decision upon the business.<sup>75</sup>



I again beg leave to apologise for intruding so much upon your time and patience, and am,  
etc.,

RICHARD JOHNSON.

The Right Honble Henry Dundas.

**No. 18.—Rev. Richard Johnson to Mr. Thomas Gill.**

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

Port Jackson,  
July 29<sup>th</sup>, '94.

Dear Sir,

I have often been at a loss to account for the Reason why I have never been favoured with more than one Letter from you since I left England. —A Person, I think of the name of Jones, now on Board the *Britannia*,<sup>76</sup> has lately given me a Reason for your silence, signifying that you was displeas'd at nor hearing from me, I have not kept an exact account of the diff't Letters I have written, but if those I have sent have been so fortunate as to reach you, you will I hope be convinc'd that I have not forgotten you, nor am unmindful of the favours I have received.—

By the *Gorgon* I sent you, together with Mr. Stonard, a small Box of Seeds, which I collected here, and when I was at Norfolk Island. —These I sent you, together with a Letter per favour of Major Ross in December, '91. —I believe too that I have written again to you since that Time, but as yet have rec'd no answer. You will judge from these circumstances then, my dear Sir, who has the greatest right to be offend'd. —But my Profession teaches me to bear no resentment. I shall forget & forgive all that is past provid'd & upon the receipt of this, you make an apology for what is past & be not so remiss in future.

You will doubtless wish to hear news from a far country. —As to myself & family, we continue to jog on much as usual —we are blessed with two as sweet children as any in the world —my girl turned four & my Boy two years old. Mrs. J. in general enjoys good health, but I have been three times within this last twelve months confin'd to my Bed & to my apprehension near my end. —But through Mercy I am much recover'd, though my constitution by no means so good as it was in times past.

Our stock increases though slowly —I have now fourteen sheep, eleven goats, a Mare, some hogs, fowles, &c.

Last year I had a grant of a hundred acres of ground given me, as had most of the officers. About forty acres of this I have at a great expence got into cultivation, & had have from it about six hundred Bushells of Indian Corn. Have now fifteen acres sown with wheat which [indecipherable] I have for certain reasons which I forbear to mention, labour'd under great disadvantages, wch induces me sometimes to wish I had never taken a grant at all, but I hope in the issue, I shall be able to refund the expenses I have been at, as well as render my family more comfortable than I have hitherto been able to do.

The Colony at this time seems to be in a more prosperous flourishing state than I have yet seen it. —The supplies we have just received from England & other Places came very seasonably, & it is expected that from this time we shall be nearly able to grow grain to supply ourselves. —The corn (wheat) in general looks promising. We still, however, want livestock both for manure & Labour. The ground is cultivated by the hoe, which is not equal to plow. —The soil in some parts is good, but will soon wear out unless fallow'd & manur'd. The Colony spreads in extent every year. A great number of those whose term of transportation has expired have turn'd settlers, some of wh are doing well, better than many farmers in England.

We are concern'd to hear of the Commotions &c. in your part of the world, & think ourselves happy to be at a distance. I hope, however, by this time the mad Frenchmen are brought to their senses.<sup>7</sup> We are anxious to hear the events of the present.

Shall be very happy to hear from you. Mrs. J. unites in respectfully Compts to you & yours,

With, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Nephew,  
RICHARD JOHNSON.

Addressed—Mr. Thomas Gill,  
High St.,  
Lambeth,  
Near London.

Postmarked Feb. 28, 1795.

**No. 19. —Rev. Richard Johnson to Under Secretary of  
State Dundas.**

**Source: Bonwick, "Australia's First Preacher," p. 212.**

August 7<sup>th</sup>, 1794.

In a letter, dated September 1793, I acquainted you that I had on my own accord, erected a place of worship and also stated to you my reasons why I did so.

I have since learned that the Lieutenant Governor transmitted a letter home to you at the same time,<sup>78</sup> wherein he has thought proper to disapprove of what I have done, and to speak of me in terms which I conceive I do not deserve.

This, together with some subsequent differences that have arisen, has induced me to write home more fully upon the subject. These papers I have transmitted to my honoured friend, Mr. Wilberforce,<sup>79</sup> to whom I beg leave to refer you for what information you may wish upon the subject.

I am truly sorry that ever any differences of this kind should have arisen, and have ever studiously wished and endeavoured to avoid them. For this reason, had I been aware that my building a place of worship would have been the cause of such differences, I should never have acquainted you with what I have done. And, even yet, though I have made application, if it should be thought that I have acted improperly, I neither desire nor require any Compensation for what I have done.<sup>80</sup>

As to other disputes and differences that have happened, I must submit to your judgment, and the judgment of others, my superiors, whether I have been the aggressor or whether I have been unavoidably brought into them by the severe and oppressive treatment I have met with, and shall endeavour to wait, and cheerfully submit to the issue.

I am, etc.,

RICHARD JOHNSON.

The Right Honble Henry Dundas.

- <sup>1</sup> Of the unpublished letters from Johnson in the Mitchell Library, eight, covering a period of ten years, are to his Portsmouth friend, Henry Fricker.
- <sup>2</sup> The *Golden Grove*, Captain Sharp, 375 tons, was one of the three store ships of the First Fleet, on which, for a time, Johnson and his wife were passengers.
- <sup>3</sup> H.M.S. *Hyaena* accompanied the Fleet for the first 200 miles of its journey, and then returned to Plymouth with letters.
- <sup>4</sup> This letter is not available.
- <sup>5</sup> The *Alexander*, Captain Duncan Sinclair, was one of the six transports.
- <sup>6</sup> “But I say unto you, Swear not at all.”
- <sup>7</sup> The first official despatches from Sydney—Phillip to Lord Sydney—are dated May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1788. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part 2, p. 121 *et seq.* They were sent home by the transport *Alexander* in the care of Lieut. Shortland.
- <sup>8</sup> Those letters have not survived.
- <sup>9</sup> For a complete account of the arrival of the First Fleet at Botany Bay, see my *Life of Admiral Arthur Phillip, R.N.*, Chap. VI.
- <sup>10</sup> The *Prince of Wales*, transport, sailed from Sydney on her return journey, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1788.
- <sup>11</sup> ‘G’ is Johnson’s uncle, Mr. Gill.
- <sup>12</sup> According to Phillip’s official report, 36 men and 4 women died on the passage. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., pp. 113 and 150.
- <sup>13</sup> The three transports were the *Alexander*, the *Scarborough*, and the *Friendship*. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 121.
- <sup>14</sup> Cook’s account will be found in Hawkesworth’s *Cook, An Account of the Voyages . . .*, Vol. III., Chap. I., pp. 481 *et seq.*
- <sup>15</sup> Another early name was “Governor’s Cove.”
- <sup>16</sup> The first bricks were made at what is still known as Brickfield Hill, on George and Pitt Streets.
- <sup>17</sup> For Phillip’s early explorations, see my *Life of Admiral Phillip*, pp. 137-140, 146-150, 173, 207, 210, 328, and *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part. II., pp. 124, 133 *et seq.*
- <sup>18</sup> See my *Life of Admiral Arthur Phillip, R.N.*, pp. 168 and 187, where extracts from letters to Banks and Lord Sydney illustrate the Governor’s views on the productions of the new Colony, and list the objects sent home as specimens.
- <sup>19</sup> In Ralph Clark’s *Journal*, still in MS in the Mitchell Library, it is stated that Henry Cable (also written Cabell and later changed to Kable), aged 20 years, born in Suffolk, of no occupation, was convicted in March, 1783, at Thetford, of housebreaking and transported for 14 years. Susannah Homes, a native of Norfolk, no occupation, aged 22 years, was also convicted of housebreaking at Norwich and sentenced to the same term. She had then one child, a boy, She arrived in N.S.W. on the transport *Charlotte*. Apparently the misfortunes of this couple excited much interest in England. Indeed, so great was public sympathy with them that a collection of 20 pounds was taken up and laid out in goods, which Johnson was requested to deliver to them on arrival of the fleet at Port Jackson. Unfortunately the packet was pillaged, so all the couple received was a few books. The Kables later recovered 15 pounds as compensation from the master of the *Alexander*. (See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Pt. II., p. 181.) On February 10, 1788, Johnson married the couple. They had eleven children. They died, Henry 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1848, aged 74, and Susannah, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 1836, aged 62, and were buried in St. Matthew’s Cemetery, Windsor. In the early days of the colony, Kable became first a gaoler and later Chief Constable. In 1804 he was registered as the owner of the schooners *Governor King* and *Diana*, and in the following years of several other vessels. Later he established himself as a brewer and publican at Windsor, and shared in many of the ventures of Simeon Lord and James Underwood. Bonwick has the following note: “A newspaper of 1813, referring to the incident, records the fact that the father of the little one, so befriended by the humane gaoler and the chaplain in 1787, afterwards rose to be a man of wealth and position in New South Wales.”
- <sup>20</sup> One child, Enoch, died in 1792, at the age of two years.
- <sup>21</sup> When the First Fleet arrived at Port Jackson, one of the outstanding natural features round the foreshores of the harbour was the number of cabbage tree palms. It was not till about 1930 that the last of these disappeared from Blackwattle Bay.
- <sup>22</sup> Vincenzo Lunardi (1759-1806), a native of Lucca, on 15<sup>th</sup> September, 1784, made the first balloon ascent in England, from Moorfields.
- <sup>23</sup> On February 14, 1788, Phillip despatched the *Supply* with Lieut. Philip Gidley King, a petty officer, a surgeon’s mate, two marines, two men who understood the cultivation of flax, with nine male and six female convicts, to establish a settlement at Norfolk Island. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., pp. 124, 136-138.
- <sup>24</sup> The first settlement at Rose Hill, or Parramatta, was made during the first week in November, 1788. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 98, and note 83.
- <sup>25</sup> Though on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 1789, Philip was instructed that “a particular spot, in or as near each town as possible, be set apart for the building of a church, and four hundred acres adjacent thereto allotted for the maintenance of a Minister, and two hundred for a schoolmaster” (*vide Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 259) it was not till September 3, 1793, that Johnson opened the first church in the colony, and then he built it himself. (See Letter No. 16, Johnson to Dundas, p. 47 *post.*)
- <sup>26</sup> The first recorded theatrical performance in Australia took place on King’s Birthday, June 4, 1789, when the play Ferquahar’s “The Recruiting Officer” was performed by a party of convicts in a hut specially fitted for the occasion. Does Johnson, however, insinuate that there was “a Playhouse” as early as the date of this letter?
- <sup>27</sup> See Phillip to Sydney, *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 190, and Considen to Banks, *ibid*, p. 220.
- <sup>28</sup> For an account of the *Sirius*’s Voyage to the Cape, see *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 73, 85, 95, 141.
- <sup>29</sup> For an account of the wreck of the *Sirius*, see my *Life of Admiral Arthur Phillip*, pp. 246-250.

- <sup>30</sup> See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 167, 173, 175, for an account of Philip's measures to save the colony from starvation.
- <sup>31</sup> One of the two was Andrew Miller, the Commissary, who died on the passage from Batavia to Mauritius. The other was Lieut.-Governor P. G. King (see *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., pp. 427-8), who carried the Governor's despatches.
- <sup>32</sup> Dr. John White. For an account of Phillip's attempts to contact the natives, see my *Life of Admiral Arthur Phillip*, pp. 200 and 229; Hunter's *An Historical Journal*, p. 140 *et seq.*; and Tench's *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, p. 34.
- <sup>33</sup> This was Arabanoo, who died May 18, 1789. See Collins, *An Account of the English Colony in N.S.W.*, p. 59.
- <sup>34</sup> This letter is one of the documents transcribed in England by James Bonwick. A note in *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 386, states: "The Rev. R. Johnson, first chaplain of the settlement, wrote a letter to Mr. Thornton, describing the condition of the convicts on board the vessels of the Second Fleet.... The statements contained in it are confirmed by the despatches of Governor Phillip and the reports of naval and military officers." The letter is undated, but it must have been written about July, 1790. According to Bonwick, this letter was endorsed: "Account of the treatment of the convicts in the *Neptune* and other transports, written by the Chaplain at New South Wales to a friend who communicated it to Mr. S. Thornton (of the Eclectic Society.) R'd from Mr. Thornton 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1791. Copy for Treasury."
- <sup>35</sup> For a complete account of the despatch, voyage and arrival of the Second Fleet, see my *Life of Admiral Arthur Phillip*, pp. 209-210, 224, 227, 233, and particularly 264 *et seq.*, where the whole of Chapter XIII. Is devoted to "The Coming of the Second Fleet." See also *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., *passim*.
- <sup>36</sup> Amongst the arrivals in the Second Fleet on the *Neptune* was Dr. D'Arcy Wentworth, and on the same vessel, but transferred to the *Scarborough* in mid-ocean, John Macarthur and his wife, Elizabeth.
- <sup>37</sup> The *Justinian*, a storeship, arrived at Port Jackson July 20, 1790.
- <sup>38</sup> See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., pp. 355, 362, 367.
- <sup>39</sup> The remainder of Johnson's narrative is not available. Bonwick did not mention the provenance of the MS he used. Though Dundas (*Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., p. 588) asserted that "the strictest enquiry" would be made and the offenders brought to justice, no action seems to have been taken to sheet home the guilt of those responsible for the state of affairs on these three ships. To avoid punishment, Donald Traill, master of the *Neptune*, absconded.
- <sup>40</sup> John Locke (1632-1704), English Philosopher, published his famous "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in 1690. He proved that knowledge cannot be consciously innate in man, but must in all cases be gradual growth dependent on fallible experience.
- <sup>41</sup> "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him 'till seven times; but Until seventy times seven."
- <sup>42</sup> This may have been an account in a British newspaper, but more likely was "An Authentic and Interesting Narrative of the Late Expedition to Botany Bay, ... written by an Officer just returned on the *Prince of Wales*." London, 1789. (See Ferguson *Bibliography of Australia*, Nos. 42-46.) I hardly think it likely to have been either Phillip's *Voyage to Botany Bay*, or Tench's *Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, both published in the same year, for Johnson surely would have named the authors of these two volumes.
- <sup>43</sup> This statement seems definite confirmation of the tradition that while on the voyage out, at Brazil the thought struck Johnson that oranges might grow well in N.S.W., that he preserved some seed which he afterwards planted on his property at Kissing Point, Ryde; and that he thus became the pioneer of the Australian citrus fruit industry. I am indebted to Mr. James Jervis, F.R.A.H.S., for a note to the effect that Johnson did not receive a grant of land at Kissing Point, but bought three small grants from three soldiers, to whom they were issued about 1793. The location was very close to the present Ryde Memorial Hospital.
- <sup>44</sup> In 1803-4 a small quantity of poor wine was made near Sydney, but Governor King reported that the industry would prove unprofitable. By 1823, however, Gregory Blaxland had succeeded in making good wine at Brush Farm, and was awarded the Ceres Medal for his wines by the Royal Society of Arts in England.
- <sup>45</sup> The itch, also called the *Welsh* fiddle.
- <sup>46</sup> Augustus Alt—Baron Augustus Theodore Henry Alt, of Hesse Cassel—born of Hanoverian parents, who had had a distinguished career in the British Army, had been appointed Surveyor-General of N.S.W. He resigned November 14, 1791. Died 9<sup>th</sup> January, 1815.
- <sup>47</sup> Mrs. Stradling, like many other friends of the Johnson family, cannot now be identified.
- <sup>48</sup> Probably the Dutch snow *Waaksamheid*, which carried also many of the Governor's despatches.
- <sup>49</sup> This was the arrival of the storeship *Justinian*, June 20, 1790.
- <sup>50</sup> Thus was Abaroo. See *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part 2, p. 276, and *ante*, p. 27.
- <sup>51</sup> See Bonwick *Australia's First Preacher*, Chap. xxii., entitled "The South Sea Islands Missionaries."
- <sup>52</sup> For some account of Johnson's religious beliefs, see *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, Vol. I., p. 685; Bonwick's *Australia's First Preacher*, Chap. XI.; and Serle, *Dictionary of Australian Biography*, Vol. I., p. 476.
- <sup>53</sup> "For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."
- <sup>54</sup> Johnson left the colony in the company of Governor Hunter in September, 1800, on board H.M.S. *Buffalo*.
- <sup>55</sup> "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear."
- <sup>56</sup> "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand."
- <sup>57</sup> "And, if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"
- <sup>58</sup> The location of Johnson's first cabbage tree cottage has never been identified. His second house, however, was in Bridge Street, on the site of the present Lands Office. See Meehan's map of 1807 in *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol.

VII., p. 366 ; Mann's *Present Picture of N.S.W.* (1811) ; and Dean Cowper's *Autobiography*, p. 85. "Dean Cowper was born in a cottage on this site in 1810, and one may suppose it was the cottage in which Johnson had lived, for there were still, in the Dean's memory, two orange trees in the garden which, he thought, had probably been planted by that famous orange-grower, Mr. Johnson himself." (Note by the late Professor G. Arnold Wood, *Royal Australian Historical Journal*, Vol. XII., p. 251.)

<sup>59</sup> Rose Hill, so named after Phillip's friend and neighbour of Cuffhells, near Lyndhurst, Sir George Rose, Treasurer to the Navy. The flocks of parakeets in this locality, originally called Rose Hillers, are now known incorrectly as Rosellas.

<sup>60</sup> Very little is known of the Rev. James Bain, Chaplain to the N.S.W. Corps, except that he undertook duty at Parramatta in 1791. He returned to England in the *Daedalus* on December 17, 1795. Lieutenant John Gardiner, of the *Gorgon*, who wrote an account of the voyage to Australia (still unpublished) referred to the chaplain as "Mr. Bain, who I can only delineate by saying he was a peevish old Batchelor, not much esteemed by the Ladys." I have recently discovered on the archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Bible in Foreign Parts, three letters from the Rev. James Bain, referring mainly to education in N.S.W., but written before he left England.

<sup>61</sup> Lieut.- Governor P.G. King wrote from Norfolk Island to Under Secretary Nepean, November 23, 1791, that "the clergyman who came out in the first fleet accompanied me hither and has been very usefull in marrying, christening, &c."

<sup>62</sup> Major Ross left Sydney with the Marines on the *Gorgon*, December 18, 1791.

<sup>63</sup> The first duel in Australian history is recorded in the unpublished diary (now in the Dixson Library) of John Esty, a marine on the *Scarborough*, who noted that on August 1, 1788, Surgeon-General John White and Surgeon William Balmain fired at one another, both being slightly wounded. The duel between Major Ross and Captain William Hill, both of the Marine Corps, is therefore the second on record—this note by Johnson being the only reference to it ever discovered.

<sup>64</sup> James Bonwick, with the assistance of his daughter, spent some years in London transcribing official and other documents. These, known as the "Bonwick Transcripts," are filed in cardboard foolscap boxes in the Mitchell Library. Unfortunately Bonwick did not always give the provenance of his originals. So far some of the originals from which Bonwick printed "Extracts" have not yet been located.

<sup>65</sup> In *Historical Records of N.S.W.*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 601, the editor states that this letter was addressed to Governor Phillip. This, as seen from the context, is obviously wrong. It was sent to one of Johnson's friends, possibly Fricker or Stonard.

<sup>66</sup> Unless this number includes some convicts allotted to him, Johnson's assertion cannot be explained, for in 1792 he had only one child, a daughter, Milbah; his first son having been stillborn.

<sup>67</sup> This was Toongabbie. See Phillip to Dundas, *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., Part II., p. 645.

<sup>68</sup> It was not till 1797 that Marsden announced that a Church was being built at Parramatta. Hunter, in 1800, informed King that he had "erected an elegant Church at Parramatta and prepared the foundation of a Church at Sydney." See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. II., p. 561.

<sup>69</sup> For a complete account of Johnson's building of the first church, see Bonwick, *Australia's First Preacher*, chap. xxxv. The total cost of the building was 67/12/11 ½ pounds. Bonwick includes in his volume a facsimile of Johnson's MS. Bill of Costs, which he had great difficulty in recovering from the Crown. Major Grose, the Lieutenant-Governor, was very hostile to Johnson's efforts, even malicious, describing him most unjustly as "one of the people called Methodists, a very troublesome, discontented character." There has not been found any contemporary evidence as to the exact location of this church, except a statement that it was on the east side of Sydney Cove. In Fowles's *Sydney* in 1848, p. 11, the situation is stated to have been "at the back of the huts on the east side of the cove, near to what is now the corner of Hunter and Castlereagh Streets." It was built of strong posts, wattles and plaster, and was covered with a roof of thatch. The first service was held in it on August 25, 1793. See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 451, 479, 594 and *Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Johnson's church remained till October 1, 1798, when "some wicked or disaffected person or persons set fire to it." The building had also been used as a school, 150 to 200 children being in regular attendance.

<sup>71</sup> For this letter, Grose to Dundas, see *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., p. 451.

<sup>72</sup> Though in the first few months of the settlement it is believed that burials were made in the Rocks area, at the extremity of the lines, the first regular burying ground was in the vicinity of the present Sydney Town Hall.

<sup>73</sup> The grant of 100 acres to Johnson is described as "to the westward of the ground reserved for Government, between the Church and School Lands adjacent to the town of Sydney. It was dated February 12, 1793.

<sup>74</sup> Search in the archives of the Bishopric of London has failed to reveal any correspondence between Johnson and the Bishop of London.

<sup>75</sup> For further details of Grose's ill-treatment of Johnson, see Bonwick *Australia's First Preacher*, pp. 211, *et seq.*

<sup>76</sup> The *Britannia*, a storeship (William Raven, Master), made several voyages to Port Jackson. She returned from a voyage to Batavia early in July, 1794.

<sup>77</sup> In 1792 France declared war against Austria and Prussia. When in 1793, Louis XVI. was executed, the first Coalition was formed, and war declared by England in February. It lasted till 1802.

<sup>78</sup> See *Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I., pp. 451, *et seq.*

<sup>79</sup> This correspondence is not available.

<sup>80</sup> The repayment to Johnson of the expenses incurred in the building of the church was authorised by the Duke of Portland in a letter to Governor Hunter, January 31, 1797.