

No. 90.  
Governor Thomson  
to Lord J. Russell,  
5 February 1840.

Encl. in No. 90.

Numerous meetings have been also held in the rural parts of England, to make known the present condition of the colonial church, and awaken the sympathy and call forth the assistance which that destitute condition requires. The most solemn appeals have been made from the pulpit for the same objects, and very numerous parochial associations have been formed under the immediate sanction of the archbishops and bishops, which aim at enrolling every member of the church as a contributor to the good work, that the rich of their abundance may give plenteously, and the poor may do their diligence gladly to give of their little, and that the prayers of all of every condition may continually ascend for unceasing blessings upon this labour of love. The work is succeeding with increasing success; the amount of contributions and yearly subscriptions to the incorporated society for the propagation of the gospel has been doubled within the last two years, and they are encouraged to hope that the present amount may be so augmented by continued and unwearied efforts among all the members of the church, as to render the society competent to the full discharge of their duty as agents of the church, in the wide extended field of her missionary labours, which now happily embraces the four quarters of the world.

It can hardly be necessary to inform you, that these pious exertions call for corresponding efforts among those whose spiritual welfare engages such affection in England, and prompts such beneficent assistance. Well may it be hoped, that every member of the church in this colony will now feel a double obligation laid upon him to co-operate most cordially in the work which aims at the promotion of his own eternal welfare. Even the poorest settler will feel constrained to give of his poverty, and offer up his fervent prayers for a blessing upon his gift, when he learns that the poorest members of the church at home are called upon and readily contribute their weekly pence, that they may have a part in sending forth the gospel of the Son of God, and all the blessings of the church as he founded it, to every portion of the British empire.

Were each member of the church in the province, who has the ability, to devote one hundred acres of land towards its support, as an instrument in the hands of God for the spiritual instruction of the people, an endowment nearly equal to that set apart by the constitution might in time be accumulated, and the church, freed from all anxiety, would flourish to the lasting benefit of the country. Were, indeed, each communicant to give a few acres of land, it would in time ensure the independence of the church; nor would any such assistance be long wanting, were we all, both clergy and laity, animated wholly by the principles of the gospel; for in that case the same liberal spirit and enlarged views which animated the first Christians in every land of their conversion, would produce the same fruits, and a portion for the Lord would be first set apart; it would also be permanent, and not allowed to fluctuate according to the varying tempers and dispositions of the people.

You are probably aware, that during the last session of Parliament petitions were presented from many parishes in England on behalf of the colonial church. The feeling which prompted them will probably produce many more petitions in the next session. Having had an opportunity of communicating with the distinguished Members of both Houses of Parliament, lay and clerical, as well as with two of the colonial bishops, I am happy to inform you that all concurred in opinion, that it is the duty of every one of our congregations in every settlement, large or small, to forward similar petitions. They should be grounded upon a sincere concern for the spiritual destitution of the colonies, and the terms in which they are expressed should be marked by that Christian moderation which will receive the respect which they ought to show for the Imperial Parliament. They should be so perfectly free from everything like party or political feeling, that they may be fit for presentation by men of all parties who can feel for the spiritual wants of their distant brethren. Their prayer must be cautiously expressed, that it may not ask for more than it is in the power of the two Houses to grant.

They must be written, not printed, and forwarded to me, to save postage, by any friend who will take the trouble of handing them.

To assist you in preparing such petitions, I annex a form similar to that which is now in course of signature in the diocese of Nova Scotia, which may serve merely as a model. You will observe that the prayer is for all the colonies, as it is the earnest desire of the friends of the church to induce the British Government to adopt a general measure for the religious instruction, through her ministration, of every foreign dependency belonging to the Crown.

I have thus been carried much further than my inclination would lead me into the secular concerns of the diocese, by a persuasion that our attention to them has unfortunately been made necessary. But we must not allow them to occupy such undue portion of our regard as would interfere with our more solemn duties: we have higher and holier objects than any which are limited to this world of change to engage our attention and quicken our exertions. Let these be ever in our thoughts to assuage all anxiety for less important things, and prompt the continued aspirations of our hearts for unceasing blessings from Him who can order all things for the benefit of his church, and will supply protection and consolation under every trial and affliction which his unerring wisdom may permit to come upon his servants.

Let our faithful seeking be for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, with fullest faith in his divine assurance, that all things necessary for us will then be added from the exhaustless storehouse of his mercy.

Fervently commending you to that unfailing mercy, and earnestly desiring that our hearts and prayers may be united, and continually ascend in devout supplication to the most Holy Trinity for the richest blessings upon all our labours in the Lord,

I am, my Brethren of the Clergy and Laity,  
Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

Toronto, 15 January 1840.

John Toronto.

FORM