

1028/73/10

(W. A. Johnson to Jas. Bovell Johnson) Johnson

CVS417/73.10

"The Parsonage"

Weston, 12^h. iii. 77.

My dear Jimmy,

Yours of the 21st Ult^o is beside me & very welcome; & at last the number of Vanity Fair with Chromo.Lith. of Arthur Tooth has arrived. I am very glad to have it every one round here is interested in seeing it. Your letter is full of incidents, such as churches, their preachers, services & all interesting to me, & many more. To me perhaps doubly so, because they are the straws by w^h I can best notice the real course of the stream. A violent occurrence, the eddies near a waterfall, exciting & interesting in themselves are not true means of judging of the real course of the stream. I have long thought that neglect, contempt & finally opposition on the part of our Bp's would bring about a queer state of things w^h I still think it is likely to do. It was the same many years ago, notice the York, Hereford, Salisbury Bangor, use (i.e.) the way things were done in these different dioceses; & it is somewhat difficult to view these within the limits of one Church. The natural query is, what is the Ch if each of these so different one from the other is the Ch? I know that in those days the essentials of a Ch. were present in all. All had a Ministry of three orders traceable to the Apostles, all used the creed or faith once delivered to the saints, & all used the two sacraments necessary to Salvation, still the question was naturally pressing itself very often on the peoples minds, Why if these are one Ch. in essence, are they not so in outward conformity? This was met & answered by our Book of Common Prayer & the Act of Uniformity. After a few years have elapsed behold the contest is as to what is lawful according to the Act of Uniformity & if this contest ends in a disruption of Ch. & State, I foresee a number of usages more contraritual than ever & mens minds much puzzled to know how they ought to act & whom or w^h to follow. Well if you do not soon find every church & every diocese with its own use, according to the fancy of some Priest, or some wealthy parishioner! The result of this again would be to make men despise all ritual because none was approved & established. All this I see in a general way from your notes. Of course God will rearrange this confusion for the good of the Ch. as He always has done from the Creation & ever will do while time lasts, but the danger is lest while seeing these differences, & feeling how impossible it is to arrive at a correct conclusion as to w^h is right and w^h is wrong, the enquirer becomes cold, & leans towards something else, turns his footsteps into a seemingly quieter land, that probably of scientific indifference. Possibly (?) something like this happened to Osler when he went home. He like yourself, as I remarked by his letters (& yours bore testimony to the same) was much pleased with the Churches at first. After a while just as you are now doing saw their differences rather pointedly & ends I think in caring very little w^h way they go. This seems to me a very painful, while a very natural result of the "ritual" movement. How is it to be avoided then? This is a very serious question; & one on w^h I can only offer some rather crude, though I may hope general ideas, w^h if fairly applied may lead to good. (14.iii.77) We must regard the Ch. in its essence not in its practises. That the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against the Ch. is a comforting declaration, but points to a fearful contest, malignant & with a very powerful enemy. Our blessed Lord's life is only a type of His Ch. When He came forward to teach, satan summoned all his hosts to oppose Him. If the Ch. wakes up behold he will wake too. Look to the essence, the essentials of a Ch. These are most perfect (I think)

in the Anglican Communion. Allow there is a Greek or Roman & an Anglican portion of the one Ch. The Anglican (I say) is to be preferred. Next as to parties in a Comⁿ (I say) the party that claims to carry out the Ritual inheritance of the Ch. is to be preferred. No ritual, may be compared to a crop without a fence. Extreme or fancy ritual, to a fence without a crop. The ritual inheritance of the Catholic Ch. is such as is intended to make the spirit & understanding unite in worship. If I am right wherever this is most honestly carried out there you will find the thick of the battle. Be a little careful like a good fellow of Satan and his tricks. Doubts are a great nuisance; the devil always increases them as a good player takes his neighbours pawns at chess. The inexperienced do not know the value of pawns, so with doubts - some see little harm in doubting, yet the devil gains much from them by their doubts. You had better not be very critical with matters just now. There is plenty of ritual abroad: look to the spirit then, & let the ritual find an average conformity for itself. I fear he is no true ritualist, who would not rather worship without ritual at all, than neglect the spirit by waiting or wrangling & doubting until he finds the exact ritual. I got the wafers yesterday from Miss Hart & Rawlinson, & right glad I was to get them. By the way I rode into town & back 18 or 20 miles. I had to go out of my way to see some small-pox cases & so rode on & dined at Arthurs met old Phil. They say you are fitter for the Ministry than Medicine & you had better try Netley. Other peoples opinions are worth hearing, but I have no observations to offer on these. You are your own master, the Lord in mercy guide & prosper you & cause you love Him more & more to the day of your death. L. Jukes has just sent me a nice letter from Lou to her. I was glad to see it. It came to hand here first, being directed to "The Parsonage". Chromo. lith of A. Tooth at hand & gives much pleasure. My love to Lou. I will write her as soon as possible. God bless you all is my constant prayer for you.

Your very affec^{te} father
W. A. Johnson