

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

Church Missionary House

Salisbury Square, London,

August, 18th 1814

My Dear Sir

I take the opportunity afforded by the Indefatigable, Captain Bowles, of forwarding a continuation of Missionary Registers up to this time. I hope you will receive, in due course, those sent on the 18th of March, together with my Letters which accompanied them. You will please to take such of these as you may wish, and to look through the Newspapers, and then supply M^r Kendall &c. with them. It will give you much pleasure, I am sure, to see the prosperity of our Society.

In my last I stated that the Committee wished an Auxiliary Society to be formed among you, and authorized you to draw annually on me to the amount of £500, for the promotion of the Society's objects, particularly with respect to New Zealand. Send over thither some promising young men, if you can find them. Let them break up the ground, as Settlers, and act as Schoolmasters and Catechists. Only let a promising beginning be made, and we will send you some Clergymen from home to pass their days among that interesting people. If you can form an [f] Auxiliary Society, which will give us a good hope that our designs will be perpetuated, when your own labours or those of your worthy colleagues are over, we shall be encouraged to commit any reasonable funds to your disposal. For the members of the Church answer so readily to our call, and manifest such willingness to take their full share in the noble efforts of these

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

days to bless the Heathen with the Gospel, that, let us but shew them a fair opening for exertion and they will support all our efforts. If John King should be sufficiently recovered, we shall still hope to hear that both he and William Hall set themselves conscientiously to their destined labour. In Mr Kendall and his family you will find, we trust, instruments of good toward New Zealand mercifully prepared of God. But I begin myself to feel very strongly, both from what has occurred with respect to our Laymen with you and those whom we sent to Africa, that our course must be chiefly to send ordained Missionaries, and to commission them, in connection with Auxiliary Societies wherever such can be formed, to train up and employ such Laymen as may be on the spot, natives or others, to whom God may give a heart to assist in our designs.

The young man who carries this is named Smith. He has been a member of the Scots Church under the Rev. Alexander Waugh, and goes out with his family as a Settler. His steadiness and piety will render him a valuable [f] acquisition to the moral and religious interests of the Colony. If we could find half a Dozen such men among the members of our Church, we would venture to send them, notwithstanding what I have said.

We have received the Net, but not the Club, of which last we can obtain no tidings. This reminds me, that the Committee will be very glad to receive any curiosities of nature or of art, that they may be placed in a Museum which we are gradually forming in the House of the Society. Whatever tends to illustrate the superstition and moral state of the Heathen will be particularly acceptable, as such things – images of Deities &c &c – speak in forcible language to the

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

pity and the conscience of those to whom they are shewn. We shall, therefore, be much obliged if you will collect whatever of this nature can be procured at a reasonable expence, and send it home from time to time, with proper descriptions, addressed to me at this House.

I am sorry that a Journey which I have taken to Ireland in behalf of the Society has delayed our 14th Report and the excellent Sermon of the Dean of Wells. They will not be ready for this opportunity.

I have nothing to say respecting the vessel much more decisive than what I reported in my last. D^r Haweis is very earnest in the business, and has even proposed to devote £5000 to the object if proper arrangements can be made. But the difficulty is to procure proper persons to become responsible [f] here for the conducting of the business. The active members of both Societies have been so much engaged for a few months in attending to their respective concerns, that this has, in some measure, retarded conclusive steps on the subject. But I still conceive, as I suggested in my last, that, if you establish in connection with us an efficient auxiliary Society, as shall be able to maintain a Vessel suited to the purpose of keeping up constant intercourse between New Zealand and New South Wales — and these Islands will afford sufficient scope for all our exertions for many years to come. From M^r Latrobe we have procured an interesting detail of the circumstances which led to the establishment of their Society's ship on its present footing. While it belonged to a body of Share holders, which it did for many years, it was unprosperous; but, when it became the property of the Society, and was wholly occupied in its direct business, it not only

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

discharged its own expences, but sometimes contributed to defray those of the Mission. In truth, if we are to do any thing extensive and effectual at New Zealand, we must maintain a regular intercourse between you and the inhabitants; and it appears to me that the Auxiliary Society which we propose to you to establish, might be able so to conduct this affair that the vessel would soon be no expence to our Mission, but an advantage to it— always keeping within the moderate bounds which the object of its [f] establishment would prescribe, and never launching out into speculations, but limiting its operations to the interchange of commodities between the two countries.

Should a vessel be ultimately established on a larger plan, to trade to and from Europe, or to make from N.S.W. the circuit of the Southern Archipelago, this would not interfere with the plan I now venture to suggest. In this suggestion I offer to you my own reflections. The subject, in this view of it, has not been before the Committee: but it seems to me to grow very naturally out of the desired enlargement of our efforts in your parts. Should you establish an Auxiliary Society; and should that Society approve this plan, and present to us the prospect of its being accomplished at a reasonable expence, or risk of expence; I have no doubt but that our Committee will cordially enter into the design. Nor have I any hesitation, my Dear Sir, in saying, from the zeal and spirit which I find wherever I travel in the cause of the Society, that the members of the Church will support us in expending as many thousands per annum in prudent attempts to civilize and evangelize the New Zealanders, in proportion as God opens before us promising means and opportunities, as we

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

have now authorized you to appropriate hundreds. Your heart is much set on New Zealand; and so, I confess, is mine – [f] Your representations have turned my mind to this subject, and it appears to me, that, our Great Master having given a considerable degree of strength to the capacities of the Church in your quarter to support our designs toward New Zealand, we are specially called on to cultivate that promising field.

I have put up some new pamphlets [sic] &c. for your use, and that of the Settlers. Mr Kendall took out some books with him as the foundation of a Missionary Library. I now send the Annual Register for 1812, and 1813, to be added thereto, and would have had them bound if time would have allowed.

If you would procure at a reasonable price a complete sett [sic] of the Sydney Gazettes, we should much wish to have them for the Society's library here; and also to have them regularly purchased for us, and sent home. Copies, too, of any other periodical work which may now or hereafter appear in the Colony, would be very desirable.

Your Letter of August 16th 1813, is arrived. It greatly confirmed our hopes respecting New Zealand. The conduct of William Hall bespeaks both a want of zeal for the honour of his Master among the Heathen, and a want of faith in Him that He will provide for him while engaged in His work. Most certainly he is bound to refund [f] every farthing expended on him; if he decline the work for which he was prepared and sent out: but, what is of infinitely more consequence to him, he will be one day called on to account by our Common Master for his taking his hand from the plough. Let him go forth, trusting in

J. Pratt to S. Marsden, 18 August 1814

God, and God will not forsake him, nor shall we His Servants cease to care for and support him.

Our notice of this opportunity was too short for us to get ready the axes &c. which you desire; but we will forward them by the next vessel.

The quantity of New Zealand Flax which you sent was scarcely sufficient to make a full trial on; but I am sorry to say that the report of its value, so far as we could get that ascertained, was not very favourable. Send us a good quantity, and we will submit it to a full and fair experiment.

Mr Youl has called on us. He is in hopes of obtaining Orders.

I beg, now and always, as does Mrs Pratt, to be kindly remembered to Mrs Marsden, and to all your brethren & friends to whom I have the pleasure of being known. Believe me, Dear Sir,

Ever Yours

(Signed) Josiah Pratt