

CMS Secretaries Josiah Pratt and Edward Bickersteth to John Butler

Church Missionary House,

London, August 3/19

Dear Brother Butler

We have received (& acknowledged in a Letter to M^r Kendall of July the 20th) your Letter off St Jago, of Feby 21st, & that At Sea of March 7th.

We bless God for the favourable report which you give us of the good health of yourself & of your companions.

The Committee highly approve of the formation of Schools among the Convicts, & of the circulation of the Scriptures &c among them & the Sailors.

The success of these endeavours to promote the spiritual profit of those on board affords an additional proof, that, when the means of God's institution are faithfully applied, his blessing will not be withheld. Yet you ought not to be too sanguine in framing expectations of a real change of heart from a disposition to hear the Word, or even from considerable excitement of the affections under it. Matt. XII, 20,21. While, however, you are, in faith and prayer, scattering "the good seed" your labour will not be {check} "in the Lord".

It is particularly gratifying to us to learn that you & your Brethren "dwell together in unity." This will tend full as much to strengthen your hands in "the work of the Lord", as it will unquestionably to promote your mutual comfort. God has graciously ordained, that whatever is for his own glory, is invariably for his peoples' [f] good. A deep conviction & an abiding sense of this should be a powerful stimulus to fidelity, diligence, & zeal.

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We are glad to find you have cultivated the study of the New Zealand Language, & hope it will be prosecuted with the utmost assiduity, as the success, to any considerable extent, of your labours, to convey the glad tidings of a Saviour to the New Zealanders, must depend, under the blessing of God, on your ability to preach His Gospel to them in their "own tongue." We therefore particularly press this on you, as a duty of the first importance.

We mourn over the account which you give us of the state of Teeterree's mind. May the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone "ordereth the unruly wills and affections of sinful men" convert him "from the error of his ways," & subdue his heart to "the obedience of faith"! By laying his case before your Heavenly Master in prayer, you have taken the most effectual means in your power to reclaim him. "Continue instant in prayer" on his behalf. We pray that the Holy Spirit may convince him of his pride & obstinacy, & unkind returns to his English friends for their offices of love. The course which he has pursued (but of which we trust he has ere this repented) his own conscience must condemn. The "true light" has, so far shone into his mind that, he is, we are persuaded, even to himself, "without excuse," if he persists in refusing to be counselled & influenced by you. We rest assured that every thing which kindness & reconciliation can suggest will be employed by our Friends around him for his recovery: may then prove effectual, thro' the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ!

We would take this opportunity of remarking that it is the decided opinion of the Committee, that Natives should not be sent to this Country. [f]

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It grieves us that any declension in religion should have been observed in Tooi. He has experienced much of the chastening hand of God, & very merciful relief & deliverances. His obligations to a close walk with Him, in a diligent use of the means of Grace, & to a temper & conduct suitable to the Gospel, are great in proportion to the mercies which he has received. Teeterree, moreover, ought to serve as a beacon to him, to warn him of the strength of sin, & of his own weakness & incessant need of the grace of Christ for his preservation & perseverance in "well doing". It should, also, be impressed upon his mind that consistency & constancy in a Christian course on his part, & a kind & Christian demeanour towards his erring brother, are likely, through the Divine blessing, to have a happy influence in bring Teeterree to "a right mind" & in "saving his soul from death."

We trust, Dear Brother, that you will "bear with us" in pointing a trivial error or two in orthography in your last Letters. You write "Wifes" for Wives; "breze" for breeze; "phylanthropy" for philanthropy; "tutch" for touch; &c. Called as you now are to sustain the character of a Minister of the Church of England, to say nothing of the way in which the Society is, in the opinion of the world, identified with its Missionaries, even these things are not unimportant. You may, & probably will, be called to correspond with persons who will not be disposed to make the same allowance for these oversights that we are. As a little attention will preclude such a cause of offence we are sure you will be studious to correct them.

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We have two other Lay-Settlers in preparation for New Zealand, who will probably sail at an early opportunity. One of them (Mr Williams) has seen much of the world: the other, James Cowell, is a rope-maker: both will prove, we trust, valuable acquisitions to the Settlement.

In proportion as the Settlement enlarges, the danger of disunion among yourselves, & of disagreements & bickerings with the Natives, will increase. Yet these things tend directly to frustrate the design with which you are sent to New Zealand & even to expose your lives to imminent danger. We therefore earnestly beseech & enjoin every one of you to pursue a prudent, kind, conciliatory, forgiving, & forbearing line of conduct towards one another, & towards the Natives & the Crews of Vessels which may touch at the Bay of Islands. To be at unity among yourselves, living as bound together by fervent love to God & [f] pure zeal for His Glory, is, under the blessing of God, a sure pledge of safety from the dangers by which you are surrounded, & of success in your arduous undertaking. Be much then in united prayer. "Let that mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." So will you "abide under the shadow of the Almighty," & the work of the Lord will prosper in your hands. May a large portion of wisdom, faith, love, patience, & humility be shed upon you all from on high, that "in word, in conversation. In charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. IV. 12) you may "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." You will thus exhibit the beauty & glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the natives around you, in a point of view which cannot fail to impress them with its excellence.

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The Committee beg you will keep a regular Journal, and omit no opportunity of sending a copy of it for their information. For safety, Duplicates of Dispatches that are important should also be sent.

Since you sailed, the Committee have entered into a very full consideration of the state of the Settlement at the Bay of Islands. The result of their deliberations having been communicated to Mr Kendall, by the "Catherine", it is not requisite to enter again on this subject. We must, however, most strictly enjoin on you, & on all those who accompany you, a punctual & undeviating compliance with the Regulations which are there laid down for your guidance., under the conviction, that, by so doing, your usefulness & personal welfare & comfort will be alike promoted.

With our kind regards to Mrs Butler & your Son, & our constant prayers for the blessing of God on your souls & labours,

We are, Dear Sir,

Ever Affectionately Yours,

(Signed) Josiah Pratt

Edw^d Bickersteth