

*Letter of advice from Samuel Marsden to John Butler*

On Board H.M.S.Dromedary

Wangharoa Sep<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 1820

My Dear Sir

As I am now on the eve of my Return to Port Jackson I avail myself of the present moment to address a few Lines to you before my departure with the sincerest wish to animate you in the great work of the Lord to which you have been solemnly called and set apart - You will remember at the time I arrived in New Zealand in Feb<sup>y</sup> last I found you greatly "discouraged because of the way" you had experienced six months of severe trial in a new Field of Action during which Period I have no doubt you suffered more real Anxiety and Pain of mind, than you had ever experienced during as many years at any former Period of your Life - your Trials were new - your Graces when exercised with new Temptations and perhaps in some instances you saw yourself in a different Light from what you had been wont to do - Your Patience were put to the Test, and often completely exhausted - you seemed to feel much of that unbelieving disponding Spirit, that the ten Rulers of the Children of Israel, who had been appointed by Moses to examine the Land of Canaan, manifested, when they returned and made their Report - "we are not able to go up against the People, for they are stronger than we" - when you mentioned to me the State of your own mind, and the Situation of the Settlement I felt much grieved for the evils that existed; yet from my long Experience of mankind I was not astonished at them - To despise Authority is inherent in human nature, I have often seen this disposition manifest itself more in missionaries than in [f] any other men who

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have come under my notice - The Scriptures are the best Comment upon the Conduct of mankind whether they are religious or irreligious. Wherever God appoints a Moses and places Israelites under his Authority, there will always be a Norak or a Dathan, or an Abiram to say to him, "you take too much upon you, seeing all the Congregation is holy everyone of them; wherefore lift ye up yourselves above the Congregation of the Lord?" Even men of sound Piety are liable to fall into this Sin; and it is a dreadful one for disturbing the Church of Christ - our blessed Lord hath told us that offences will come - but adds, woe to him by whom the offence cometh. Did not Miriam, and Aaron, (own Sister & Brother to Moses) and Partakers of like precious Truth with him break out into open Sedition against him, and laboured to bring Person, and Authority into Contempt before the Congregation of Israel - They carried their opposition against Moses so far, as to kindle the Anger of the Lord against them, and to make them public Examples of his high Displeasure, as a warning to others, by instantaneously afflicting Miriam with Leprousy, and compelled both Aaron and her with Guilt and Shame to intreat Moses to pray for them, that the divine Judgments might be averted from them. Sin is Sin, & Rebellion, Rebellion whether found amongst Angels or Saints, and God will always punish it - If any despise our legal Authority, we should not seek to avenge ourselves "for Vengeance is mine saith the Lord, and I will repay." You and I have never seen what Aaron & Miriam saw of the works of the Lord, and were convinced that their Brother was a Favorite of Heaven, yet their Pride got the better of their Piety, and they fell - Let us no[t] think it strange if we meet with the same [f]

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Spirit amongst our Brethren - Tho' "Moses was very meek above all men which were upon the Face of the Earth", and had closer Communication with God than any other Saint, for we are told he talked with God Face to Face as a man with his Friend, yet all his meekness was not Proof against the repeated Insults he met with from the Israelites - he lost his Temper with them; for they provoked his Spirit so that he spake unadvisedly with his Lips; and on that Account the sacred Historian tells us, it went ill with Moses for their Sakes - Sometimes he remonstrated with the Seditious Israelites under the Influence of human Passions - at other times with the deepest Humility he cried to God for Aid, saying "What shall I do with this people for they are almost ready to stone me." View Moses Situation - you will see his brother Aaron while he is praying, make the golden Calves, and all the Israelites dancing round them, shouting and singing these are thy Gods O, Israel - Another secreting the wedge of Gold, by which the wrath of the Lord is brought upon the Congregation - and the Princes and Leaders of the tribes committing Fornication with the daughters of the Heathens, which compelled Moses to execute the painful Task of hanging up one Thousand of them one morning before the door of the Tabernacle - what must have been his Feelings when he signed the death warrants of one Thousand men many of them probably leaving widows and Orphans to be provided for. In all trying moments go to your Bible for Instructions - This will greatly tend to relieve your mind, and to heal any wound that your Colleagues may inflict by improper Conduct. [f] They will often do wrong - you must expect this,- If they should provoke your Spirit, and cause you to speak

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unadviesdly with your Lips, it will go ill with you for their Sakes - nothing can justify before God any improper temper in us whatever difficulties you may meet with, expecially from the Europeans never entertain an idea of giving up your Situation. Satan will drive you away if he can. To give up would be to follow the example of Jonah and if you had not to cry unto God out of the Belly of the whale, you would feel all the painful Reflections of having set your Hand to the Plough, and drawn back again; which would bring a Curse upon you and not a blessing - If you patiently persevere you will succeed - you will see the barren wilderness literally become a fruitful Field - The place of danger is the post of Honor - If you run from your Post because the Enemy makes an attack upon it, another will step in and take your Crown. Bear with the weaknesses, Infirmities, and even Faults of your Colleagues - Be not easily provoked. Remember the Eyes of the Christian world are upon you and much of the Success of the mission under God, depends upon your wisdom, Patience and Perseverance - you must make some allowance for your own Habits with respect to your Brethren - you have been accustomed to obey, and to be obeyed - Perhaps some of your Colleagues have neither been accustomed to obey, nor to be obeyed but have got these Lessons to learn - you are now at the Head of the Settlement, and have no Superior - Tho' it may be the duty of those under you to obey your orders in a certain Sense as readily as the men you had under you in London were wont to do, yet if you expect this, you expect too much - you might as well expect a man to make a watch, because he had seen one