

Samuel Marsden to CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt

Bay of Islands April 24th 1820

Rev^d & Dear Sir

You will have learned from M^r Kendall that I arrived at N. Zealand in H.M.S. Dromedary on the 27th of Feb^y just at the Period M^r Kendall was embarking for England. I was much surprised at the Step he had taken without any previous Approbation, either of his Colleagues, the Society or any other Person - I cannot see the wisdom of his measure - According to human foresight it was an hasty Step - divine Goodness may overrule all for good and time will reveal the Good or evil attending M^r K's visit to England. However clear M^r K might see his way, to me it appeared dark and gloomy - His Colleagues had only lately arrived they were neither acquainted with the Language nor the Characters, nor the manners of the natives, and on their Account his presence was very much wanted - A new Settlement was forming under the protection of Shunghee - Shunghee accompanying M^r K distressed the minds of his Colleagues as they considered him, as their principal Guardian, and were full of Fear for their personal Safety when Shunghee was gone. M^r K left his wife and 8 Children wholly at the mercy of the natives, and at an Age when they in a very especial manner require the Eye of the Parent, to prevent them from mingling amongst the Heathens and learning their ways - However he was determined upon returning to England [f] let the Consequences be what they may - Some individual must think of, and possibly Fend for his Family - I believe myself and M^r Butler must take this Trouble or

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they will not be provided for. Tho' I cannot approve of M^r K leaving N. Zealand at the present time, his Reasons may perhaps be satisfactory to the Committee - If so it will be well - I wish now to state the Situation I found the Mission in, on my arrival - Permit me first to observe with respect to N. Zealand, there never was in my opinion a fairer Field for missionary Labors in any Heathen nation. With Respect to the Personal danger of the Missionaries I think six years experience is sufficient to remove any serious apprehensions upon that ground - M^r K leaving his wife and eight Children in the Power of the natives is at least a strong Testimony what his Opinion is upon this Ground also - no doubt but he thinks them safe from violence - There is every Prospect as far as concerns the natives to encourage the Society in their Labors - The great difficulty in establishing this mission has originated from civilized Enemies, and from the Missionaries having connections with the Shipping - which has more or less tended to destroy that unity of Spirit which is the Bond of Peace and by their Conduct to give just Cause to the Enemy to triumph - To do Justice to Mess^{rs} Kendall and Hall they have both been very [f] useful men in their respective Stations, but I apprehend they would have been much more so had they not lost sight of their duty to the Society and to each other - Their bartering with the natives and Shipping for Muskets and Powder excited their Avarice, and Avarice excited Jealousy, and both together destroyed all Christian Love, and carried them so far out of their duty that they could not even meet at last to read the Service at the Church on the Sabbath day together

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- When I visited them in August last I found them all in a State of Confusion - I saw these evils to be exceeding great but the difficulty was to find a Remedy - I had for a long time been remonstrating with them by Letter against the nefarious Traffic of Muskets and Powder with the natives, and against all private Traffic - but notwithstanding the directions I had given and the Resolutions which they entered into against this Barter, I found it was still conducive and productive of every evil - I had a string of Resolutions or Rules drawn up, which were read one by one in the Committee, and approved by the Signature of them all - when these Resolutions were past I hoped a death Blow was struck to this abominable, and disgraceful Evil - Not many days after one of the old Settlers (M^r King) purchased a quantity of Hogs with a Musket - I now despaired of ever preventing this evil, without all [f] the missionaries who were concerned in this wickedness were dismissed from the Service of the Mission - This I had no Authority to do and if I had possest the Authority as an individual I should not have exercised it, but should have referred the matter to the Consideration of the Honourable Committee at Home. I did suspend M^r King as stated in a former Letter - The Rev^d J. Butler saw this evil in the same Light I did, and also Mess^{rs} F. Hall & Kemp - After this Subject came again before the Committee, they all unanimously agreed once more to abide by the Rules which they had signed - during my stay in N. Zealand I experienced much distress from the misconduct of those employed in the mission - I hoped mutual Friendship was restored amongst them in a certain degree when I left

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them in November – At the same time I was afraid the Rev^d J. Butler would not be able to maintain his Authority, and to carry on the Mission with Comfort to himself – I have had a deal of Experience with missionaries for more than twenty years, and I have found them very difficult to do anything with. As soon as they enter upon their work they feel independent – They consider themselves their own Masters – and will only do what they please – In all missions some improper Characters will be found – In the Otaheitean Mission there were several worthless Characters – In time one after another left their Stations, and returned to [f] the world again – Some of them became drunkards and guilty of other scandalous Sins. But the Conduct of the idle and abandoned, did not prevent the divine blessing from crowning the Labors of the faithful with success. We must not expect all to turn out well who come to N. Zealand – we must be thankful if one in three do their work faithfully – what also adds to the difficulty of the mission here is the distance N. Zealand is from the Mother Country – It is probable had the missionaries been nearer Home they would have behaved better, or the Committee would have removed them – Situated as this Country is, there were none to supply their place and had they come away the Christian world would have been discouraged from supporting the mission and the Enemies would have greatly rejoiced – On my arrival in February I found the Europeans in great Confusion – and the Tares were again sprung up amongst the wheat – The Settlers had fallen into their old Barter with the Ships and natives for Muskets and Powder – M^r Butler either for want of Authority, or from fear, or Persuasion had been prevailed upon to polute his Hands with

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the same Traffic not on his private Account, but to procure animal Food for the Support of the Settlement - This Trial I was not prepared to meet - I called a meeting again, stated my Abhorrence of this Traffic - [f] M^r Butler condemned it as much as I did - They contended that without Muskets and Powder the Natives would not sell their Pigs - that they could not get a Log of Timber, nor Potatoes or any article they wanted to purchase - I did not credit all they said - but told them I should be here for some time, and then I should judge - That they should not purchase any while I remained with them, and if any did I would not pay his Salary and he might apply Home for it - if I found that they could not get animal Food without Muskets and Powder I would send them salt meat from Port Jackson till the Subject was submitted to the Committee at Home. M^r Butler was much distressed - told me he could not govern the Europeans and if I had not come he should have returned to Port Jackson by the first opportunity - I was thankful to God that his Providence had opened a way for me to visit them at this trying moment - M^r Butler wants experience - he has had men under him, but not Missionaries, who have no idea of Subordination - I think the dromedary will remain long enough for me to prove that they can get all the Native Productions without Muskets or Powder - and I hope I shall establish M^r Butler upon a more comfortable Foundation than he was before - I know M^r Kendall will plead for this Barter very strongly, and had he remained [f] M^r Butler would have found more difficulty in Abolishing it than he will at present - Notwithstanding M^r K had

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signed the Resolutions to barter no more with Muskets and Powder when I was here in November - and I believed he would do what he promised - yet to my great mortification he had some Muskets sent down from Port Jackson in the Dromedary by his Agent, which I knew nothing of till they were opened on board, and I was informed by the King's Officers that this was the Fact - M^r Butler told me the same - I did not know this Circumstance till M^r Kendall had sailed. Had I known I should have ordered them back again - I shall rejoice to give the Missionaries Credit for all the good things they do; and to approve of their Conduct as far as I can - and it gives me much pain to state the above Complaints - I condemn this Barter because its natural tendency is to defeat the grand object of the Society - It arms one tribe of Natives against another, who are unarmed - for a man with a Chain has not the same means of defense that one has with a Musket - The morning M^r Kendall sailed - I believe not less than forty Canoes came into the Harbour from a war Expedition with Prisoners of war, and the Heads of a number of Chiefs whom they had slain in Battle - I went on Shore, and saw the Prisoners and the Heads when they landed - The sight was distressing beyond Conception - [f] Arms and Ammunition tend to enflame their warlike Spirit, and to urge them to blood and Slaughter - no man can upon Christian Principles defend such a Barter - Satan could not have had a more powerful Instrument to overthrow the Mission than this Barter - If the Missionary Settlers will do their duty, and follow the Instructions of the Society they will be blessed in their work - but if they do the work of the Lord

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deceitfully, he will not bless them - They have suffered a little Inconvenience, a few privations while residing amongst the Heathens - but some of them must in the common Course of things have suffered more had they lived in England, and had their Families to maintain there. In any observations I have made I do not wish to damp the Spirits of the Society - There is nothing to discourage the Christian world. I have no doubt but the time is at Hand for God to visit these poor Heathens - The New Zealanders are prepared for the Gospel - no difficulties lie on their Side - It is the Instruments I blame - I hope the time is now come when the great evil will be conquered. I shall do all I can to put matters upon a permanent Footing - Sh^d Mr Kendall be in England he may endeavour to defend his Conduct in what I censure him in - but he never can - He will say an Hoe, Axe or Tomahawk will kill a man as well as a Musket but that argument is nothing.

I am with much Esteem

Yours &c &c &c Sam^l Marsden

Rev J. Pratt