

Samuel Marsden to CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt

Parramatta April 19th 1823

Rev^d & Dear Sir

His Majestys Brig the "Satellite" arrived this day from N. Zealand— She touched at the Bay of Islands, and brought a Letter from M^r Kendall to the Rev^d T. Hassall, a Copy of which I inclose— I thought, as the Venerable sails direct for England it would be some Satisfaction to you, to have so late Information— I conclude all the missionaries are well, tho' I have not received any Letter as yet from them— M^r Kendall's Letter to M^r Hassall is of a singular nature. If I am not much mistaken his motive for writing in such a Style, is to find some Apology for living in Adultry [sic] He means to say in plain Language, according to my Opinion of what he has stated, that by prying into the obscene mysteries of the natives in order to ascertain their notions of the Supreme Being &c &c his own mind was poluted, his natural Corruptions excited, & his vile Passions inflamed, by which means he fell into their vices— This Idea is strongly, tho covertly implied, in one Paragraph particularly, which I have marked, at the same time I cannot but draw this Inference from the whole Tenor of his Letter— You may perhaps view it in a more favorable Light— Whatever defiling Effect may have been produced upon M^r Kendall's mind by his Examination into the obscene notions entertained by the natives of the Supreme Being and their own lascivious Customs, I am of opinion, [f] that whenever we come to the true Knowledge of the Character of the New Zealanders they will not be found much worse than the

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ancient Heathens, mentioned by St. Paul in the 1st Chap[te]^r of R[omans]. who
“changed the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image like to corruptible man,
and to Birds, and fourfooted Beasts and creeping things” –

I consider the whole of M^r Kendalls Letter a master Piece of Subtility; a Letter
which few men would have had the assurance to have written in his
Circumstances. He takes no notice of his own improper Conduct, of his being
dismissed from the mission— He expresses no Contrition for his Crimes, no
Humility of mind, no wish to return from his Backslidings— A Stranger reading
this Letter, would suppose that he was in the Confidence and Esteem of the
Society; in the actual discharge of his Public duty as a missionary, and doing all in
his Power to promote the good of the Heathen— M^r Kendall was well aware this
Letter would be put into my Hands by M^r Hassall— he might think it possible that
I should not discover the Spirit under which he wrote, and by that means I might
be induced to interest myself on his Behalf again from his great Exertions— Had I
seen any signs of Penitence, had he expressed any deep Sense [f] of the exceeding
Sinfulness of Sin I should have rejoiced— The whole that he has stated in my view
may be summed up in the words of Eve, “the Serpent beguiled me, and I did
eat” –

Should you view his Conduct in a different Light you will excuse the freedom with
which I have expressed my Sentiments— As he will no doubt continue to write to

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you, for the present his Statements will require to be nicely examined in order to ascertain his real motives—

I remain

Rev^d & Dear Sir

Yours affectionately

Samuel Marsden

Rev^d J. Pratt