

Samuel Marsden to CMS Secretary Josiah Pratt

Parramatta July 12 – 1823

Rev^d & dear Sir

As I know of no Ecclesiastical Authority which has Jurisdiction over these Settlements, I have often been greatly at a Loss to know how to act in many things that have occurred in this Colony for the last 30 years relative to the established Church. I have been much perplexed for some time relative to the baptizing the Children of the Female Convicts who are confined in the Factory – This is a new difficulty, and how to remove it I know not, without Reference to those in Authority at Home. I am always unwilling to complain to the higher Powers, if this can be avoided. I have had several Conversations with His Excellency Sir Th[oma]^s Brisbane on this Subject – have written officially, and privately to him – His Excellency accords with me in opinion; but at the same time he does not remedy the evil – I have now written to the Bishop of London, and [f] have sent all the documents open, for your Inspection – There are nearly two hundred women in the Factory at this time; and Children who want christening – I do not see what the civil magistrate has to do with the duty of the Clergy – This is merely done to annoy, and distress – D^r Douglass has behaved very ill – I did expect much assistance from him when he arrived in the Colony, as I considered him at that time a moral man at least – I never have been so much disappointed in any man as I have been in him – His Reign cannot be long – Sir Th[oma]^s Brisbane is a mild and pleasant man – His natural disposition is so gentle that he is liable to be

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imposed upon by wicked and designing men— His Excellency, in his private note observes to me that as Dr Douglass has the Charge of the women in the Factory, the Responsibility rests with him— I say no— The Governor cannot delegate his Power to a magistrate to prevent the Clergy from doing their duty. However such is the opinion of the Governor— [f] If you should think it imprudent to lay these documents before the Bishop of London for his opinion upon them, I will thank you to act as you may deem best— Some thing must be done— I have mentioned the Subject to both the Judges— and nothing can be done here, unless the Governor would interfere— I know a very great public Sensation will be excited, should a Child die unbaptized, and Christian Burial refused to it on that Account— I have also written to His Lordship a Statement of the want of Clergy which I have laid before the Governor, and which he has promised to second by His Excellencys Representations to His Majesty's ministers— We have one very great Enemy to the Gospel who will oppose the increase of Gospel ministers as much as he can— The Rev^d Th[oma]s^s Hassall who is a very pious man, has received no appointment yet, tho the Settlements are so much in want of Clergy— I applied to the Governor, and he expressed every wish to serve M^r Hassall, but he did not like to give him an acting order— M^r Hassall [f] has officiated every Sabbath, since his arrival in various Settlements, but has received no Salary— He will do my duty during my Absence— Should I bring over with me a number of native youths from N. Zealand I purpose to place them under the Care of the Rev^d

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Mr Hassall— Should he not succeed in obtaining an Appointment as one of the Chaplains of the Colony— Perhaps the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign Parts might be induced to extend their Patronage to him, if they were made acquainted with the real State of these Settlements where so many thousands of British Subjects are in want of the public ordinances of Religion— I shall leave all these Subjects to your Consideration— Should you deem them worthy to be mentioned to the Committee of the C. M. S. I will thank you to do so— I have also sent some documents to Mrs Fry for the Ladies Committee— containing my Letter to Dr Douglass and his answer— This Letter when written was never intended to be sent out of the Colony— as I thought Dr Douglass would comply with my wishes I urged the Governor to allow the women to come to Church, but he left this to Douglass

I am yours affectionately

Sam^l Marsden

Rev^d J. Pratt