

George Clarke to Josiah Pratt

Native Settlement –

New South Wales Oct 21st 1823

Rev^d. and dear Sir

My continuance in New South Wales appears mysterious not only to me but to many of my friends also. Mr Marsden has used every means consistent with his views of us, to remove us to our intended destination, but his plans have hitherto been abortive._

Mr Williams waited for us four months, after his arrival at New South Wales, and we had made every preparation to leave the present scene of Labour, by the first vessel that might offer itself for New Zealand, but it pleased God again to thwart all our plans by a long and painful – affliction of M^{rs} Clarke, in a case which baffled the skill of the Surgeon, and for a long time led us to despair of her life: however the father of all our Mercies, again raised her from the brink of the grave, and on the 29 of June Made her the Mother of a living child. –

The affliction we found peculiarly trying being obliged to remove M^{rs} C – from the Native – Settlement to Parramatta, a distance of about – fourteen miles, – and I left with the weight of an infant Mission upon me to provide for twelve children, with two services on the Sunday [f] amongst European prisoners, and often had to ride 150 miles on horseback during the week; but blessed be God Who always causes us to triumph, I never found his promises to fail, for as my day so was my strength, for although I have but a Moderate constitution, yet amidst my labours I enjoyed a good degree if health.

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Respecting my labours amongst the aborigines of New South Wales, I will say but little, the natives are, I verily believe, the poorest objects on the whole habitable Globe. I have seen the miserable Africans first come from the holds of the Slave Ships, but they do not equal in wretchedness and Misery the New Hollander, and to enter into detail of their habits, and customs would not only be tedious but exceedingly offensive, however I have in great measure been the means of doing away some of that prejudice excited in their minds, by the Heathenish conduct of them around those ^{^who} calling themselves Christians, and I have the pleasure of seeing ten or eleven regularly attend the service twice on the Lord's day - and as - they can all of them understand a considerably the English Language, and have the Gospel made known to them, it would be infidellity to me, to doubt whether the Gospel could still be the power of God to their Salvation. I must be allowed that there are great difficulties in the way to their - conversion, or civilization, so there are to the conversion of any poor sinner, but that which is impossible with man is possible with God, the work is Gods and in his own good pleasure he will bring it to pass, From what God has done for the aborigines [f] of New South Wales, Notwithstanding much - opposition from sons of Belial, I am greatly inclined to think that the set time to favour - them is not far distant.

When I first took charge of the Aboriginal Institution the foundation of a Mission House was not laid, the work was altogether to begin: but now, although I have been here but nine months we have got a commodious Mission House, room sufficient to accommodate, at least, sixty children - has not God

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already wrought wonders for his Glory? Would he have put into the heart of the Governor to have spent several – Hundred pounds for the cause, if he had not designs of Mercy for the poor Heathen here? Would he have thwarted the plans of his aged servant, (our dear friend M^r Marsden) by detaining us here so long, though we longed earnestly to go to New Zealand? If he had – not something in reserve for this long neglected race of Mankind that is but one step beyond the brink that perish in appearance & it does not to me appear presumptuous to say no; ere long the New Hollander shall stretch out his hand unto God.

I have now under my tuition eleven Children, in my last letter I mentioned twelve, but since then one very promising little boy has died, I have equally the same hope of them as I should of as many European Children, _ In my next – letter I hope to have the pleasure to informing you that our Number of Children will be vastly augmented, we have been so pressed on every side, that we [f] have not had the opportunity – of travelling in order to collect children; beside we have not had where to put them till very lately.

I have not regularly kept a public journal since in New South Wales expecting till very lately to be called to New Zealand, but have not been unmindful of the dealings of God with me in this distant land. My usefulness I find very much depends upon my living near to God, my prayer is that I may be fettered by his grace, and daily walk with him. The awful fall of fellow labourer points out the necessity of thankfulness and prayer, I deeply sympathize with your and the Committee – under such severe trials of your

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faith and patience and mourn that the the Enemy has had cause to blaspheme, and the cause of God so dishonoured and do hope it will lead one, and all, of us to regard the warning bring St Paul "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." My prayer is that I may be preserved from falling so as never to give you committee one painful hour on my account, nor bring disgrace on the religion I profess —

M^{rs} Clarke unites with me in dutiful affection to you and M^{rs} Pratt

George Clarke

PS with kind regards to dear M^r & M^{rs} Bickersteth whose kind letter I received by M^r Williams —