

Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt

8 Ivy Lane

7th April 1808

Rev. Sir,

In compliance with the request of the Society for Missions to Africa and the East, I respectfully suggest the following Observations, relative to the Establishment of a Mission to the Island of New Zealand. — It may be requisite to state that the New Zealanders are a Nation who have derived no advantages hitherto either from Commerce or the Arts of Civilization, and therefore must be in that State of Heathen Darkness and Ignorance, in which every Nation must unavoidably be, who has had no connection with the Civil, Religious and Commercial part of Mankind. Tho' the New Zealanders appear to be a very superior People in point of mental Endowments as far as any Judgment can be formed from those with whom the Europeans have had any Communication, [f] yet they must not be considered by any means in so favorable a Situation for the reception of the Gospel, as civilized Nations are, even tho' Strangers to the Doctrines of Divine Revelation. Commerce and the Arts, having a natural Tendency to inculcate industrious and moral Habits, open a way for the introduction of the Gospel, and lay the foundation for its continuance when once received. Since nothing, in my opinion, can pave the way for the Introduction of the Gospel, but Civilization, and that can only be accomplished amongst the Heathens by the Arts, I should for this Reason, recommend that three Mechanics be appointed to make the first attempt, should the Society come to a determination to form an Establishment on New Zealand. One of

Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt

these Missionaries should be a Carpenter; another a Smith; and a third, a Twine Spinner. The Carpenter would teach them to make a Wheelbarrow, build a Hut, Boat, &c. — The Smith would teach them [f] to make all their edge Tools, Nails, &c. — and the Twine Spinner would teach them how to spin their Flax or Hemp of which their Clothing, fishing Lines, and Nets are made. These Trades would apply to their immediate wants, and tend to conciliate their minds, and gain their Confidence. Tho' the Missionaries might employ a certain portion of their Time, according to local Circumstances, in manual Labour, this neither would nor ought to prevent them from constantly endeavouring to instruct the Natives in the great Doctrines of the Gospel, and fully discharge the Duties of Catechists — The Arts and Religion should go together. The attention of the Heathens, can only be gained and their vagrant Habits corrected, by the Arts. Till their attention is gained, and moral and industrious Habits are induced, little or no progress can be made in teaching them the Gospel. I do not mean that a native should learn to build a Hut or [f] make an Axe before he should be told any thing of Man's Fall and Redemption; but that these grand Subjects should be introduced at every favorable opportunity, while the Natives are learning any of the simple Arts. — To preach the Gospel without the aid of the Arts will never succeed amongst the Heathens for any time.

Much of the success of a Mission depends upon the Qualifications of the Persons employed in the Work: four Qualifications seem absolutely requisite for a Missionary to possess — Piety, Industry, Prudence & Patience, it will be readily admitted that sound Piety is a real Essential, that, without this, nothing

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can be expected, a Man must feel a lively Interest in the eternal welfare of the poor Heathens to spur him on to the discharge of his Duty. — a Missionary should also be naturally of an Industrious turn; a Man, who could live in any Country by dint of his own labor, an Industrious [f] Man has great Resources in times of difficulty and Danger in his own mind, great difficulties will easily be surmounted by an Industrious Man, while very small ones will overwhelm an Idle Man with Despair. It is worthy of Remark that in all my observations on Mankind I have rarely ever known an Industrious Man become an Idle one, or an Idle Man Industrious. A Missionary's Habits of Industry ought to be fully established, or he will be found totally unfit for the arduous Work of the Mission in a Country where nothing has been done before him. It will also require great Prudence and Circumspection in a Missionary to govern a Savage Mind, upon which his own very Existence will depend. His difficulties will many of them be new, and much greater, and more numerous than he can possibly imagine or foresee; on this account he will require great patience and perseverance to bear up under them. The Society [f] should have their Missionaries sent out under the sanction of the British Government in England, and with an Official Recommendation from Government to the Governor at New South Wales. From New South Wales they should proceed under the patronage and with a Recommendation from the Governor to the Chief of New Zealand, on their arrival at New Zealand they must place themselves under the protection of the Chief, as they will have no means of forming an independant Body. A sufficient Sum should be allowed for the passage of the Missionaries

Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt

from Port Jackson to New Zealand, provided there were no Vessels going at that time they wished to proceed to their Place of destination. — There should also be a certain Sum allowed to pay the Expences of keeping up a regular Correspondence with them for some time, at first, as Circumstances may require. — Their [f] Comfort and Safety may depend upon this, Till the real Character and Disposition of the New Zealanders are better known. — A small Vessel from twenty to thirty Tons would be sufficient for this Purpose, which must be hired, if a Communication between the Missionaries and Port Jackson could not be maintained by any other means. I should not conceive that it would be necessary for them to take much wearing Apparel, or any other Articles of much value, as whatever they have, as well as themselves, must be placed under the Protection and Care of the Chief; the less they possess, and the safer they will be at first. It is not possible to know what would be really necessary for them, till they arrive, and are settled upon the Island. It would be proper for them to take from Port Jackson or Norfolk Island, Hogs, Poultry, Grain, and Flour; [f] as this would contribute [sic] not only to their own Comfort, but likewise would be acceptable to the Chief. The above are the most material Objects that occur to me at present — should any of my Ideas meet the Approbation of the Society I shall feel a peculiar Gratification in communicating them, and also in forwarding their benevolent Wishes as far as my means and Influence may extend, should Divine providence conduct me in Safety again to New South Wales. As New Zealand is wholly untried Ground, little can be said with certainty respecting the Mission, till an Attempt is made. I think it highly

Samuel Marsden to Josiah Pratt

probable that the Chief will be very anxious to keep up a Communication with Port Jackson, and encourage some of his Subjects to come over for the purposes of [f] learning our Arts. –

I have the Honor to be

Rev. Sir,

Your most Obedient

humble Servant

Rev. Josiah Pratt

Secretary &c &c