

William Hall to Josiah Pratt

Hull 18th Dec^r 1813

Dear Sir

Your esteemed favor of the 3. March A P I duly received. On acct of the shipwreck of a Ship which was bringing dispatches from New South Wales, We did not receive the letter informing us of our Ship Minstrel's arrival there until this week. Amongst them there is a Letter from our mutually esteemed friend M^r Marsden to me, dated Parramatta the 12th Nov-1812— It is almost exclusively on the subject of fitting out & sending a Vessel of 150, 200 Tons meas^t to N. S. Wales, to be employed in the Trade which he has long been so desirous to establish, between that Settlement & the Islands East of it in the South Sea.— The arguments he makes use of, & the statements he exhibits are so clear & encouraging that had I the ability in a pecuniary point of view, consistent with a prudential regard to my Family, I would as a Merch^t immedy set about fulfilling the Plan which he recommends — But it would not be by any means prudent for either my Brother, or myself (who are owners of the Minstrel) to embark in such an enterprize separately or even jointly, considering the great risk we should run in case of the death or removal of our friend M^r M.

We shall therefore by the next conveyance write [f] our said Friend that We decline the offer which he makes, unless in the Interim some plan can be arranged of a more general nature, where in consequence of an increase in the number of Adventurers, the risk shall be comparatively trifling.

To such a number of Persons as I should propose I do not expect the probability of worldly Gain would form the Inducement, because the Shares

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being so small there could not be a chance of large Profits, except in case of one Individual taking several Shares— but the motive I would hold out is what Mr Marsden dwells much upon,— “the comfort & assistance which would be rendered to the Missionaries on these Islands & the tendency to promote the Civilization of the Inhabitants thereof, by such a continual Intercourse between them & N S Wales”. Our said friend informs me that he has written at large on this subject, to you as the organ of the Church Miss^y Society, & to some other Gent^m who belongs to the London Missy Soc^y, and that he has no doubt of the concurrence of a large number of the Members of both Societies— he is aware that as Societies they can neither of them take a part in a Merchant transaction like this, but he is fully persuaded of their readiness to do so as Individuals— If therefore the business has not been taken up by Mr Wilberforce, as you hint in your letter to me, I beg leave to propose the follow^g Plan— That my Brother & I— undertake to purchase & [f] fit out a suitable Vessel, according to Mr Marsden’s direction, & send her to N.S. Wales with those various articles of Merchandize of which he has sent us an Inventory— That in order to attain those objects, a Fund be raised of 5 or 6000 in shares of 100£ each (any Individual to take more than one at his option)— that such aggregate Sum be lodged in one of the London Banks, & that We draw from it as We want for the purposes of the Undertaking.— That 3 or 4 Gents be chosen from the Subscribers to act in concert with us as a Committee— their names to be on the Ship’s Register along with ours— & their consent to be necessary to all the measures We adopt— I can merely give you an outline, but more particulars

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will arise in case of the Plan being ent^d upon, which can easily be arranged afterwards— It will require some assistance from Persons of influence, espec^y to procure a Licence from the E. India Comp^y— for this will be necessary heretofore, because the Vessel intended must be so much less than the size limited by the late Act of Parliament— M^r M— & a Friend of his in the Colony will take one third of the Vessel, but, of course, the Subscribers must at first advance the whole, & when their (M^r M. & friend) remittance shall be rec^d, it would be divided among them— I shall be obliged by your laying this Scheme before such Gentⁿ as you think likely to promote it, & that without delay, because I understand a Vessel is appointed to sail for N.S. Wales in abt a fortnight & by her I must write our esteemed Friend as to the course We mean to pursue— If you have not rec^d the [f] letter which M^r M says he has sent you on this subject, I will send you up the Letter which I have rec^d immed^y on hearing from you.

May the Blessing of our God & Saviour descend on your Ministerial labor, as well as on those exertions which you & our other esteemed Friends in the Soc^y are so nobly making, for the extension of his glorious Gospel among the Heathen!

Believe me

Dear Sir

Yours truly

W^m Hall

at Tho^s Hall & Sons