

*William Wilberforce to Josiah Pratt*

Kensington Gore

19 Aug<sup>t</sup> 1819

My dear Sir

The Papers which you were so obliging as to send to me have been read over to me – but there is not among them the answer returned by M<sup>r</sup> Marsden to M<sup>r</sup> Sec<sup>y</sup> Campbell's public Letter to him of y<sup>e</sup> 3<sup>d</sup> Aug? If that was sent you with the others, & has only not been sent me by mistake, let me beg you to have the goodness to forward it to me at Hatchards 190. Piccadilly by the 2<sup>d</sup> Post, unless you can lay your hand on it immediately, in which case I trust you will be so kind as to make it up, & send it to me by y<sup>r</sup> [f] Bearer, who will take this Packet to Salisbury Square. I cannot but regret that our excellent friend should not have a little more worldly wisdom, that he might judge better what impression would be made on those, who like the Members of Government, may be supposed favourable to the Governor & his officers, by his opinions conduct & Language in cases in which he conceives himself to be ill used. I had rather you should not mention it publicly but I cannot but fear that M<sup>r</sup> Marsden has been led to suppose me less friendly to him, than I really am. Several [f] circumstances concur in producing this apprehension. However, great allowance is to be made for any one placed in such distressing circumstances without any confidential friends with whom to take counsel. I really regard him with the highest respect, esteem and affection, when I consider his generous and spirited conduct in the discharge of his long and painful course of service,

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and especially in his Settlement of the Colony in New Zealand – Captain Welch called on me as you would hear, before I had seen these Letters, and I had understood from him that M<sup>f</sup> Campbell had intimated that [f] there was some participation between Marsden and the runaway Convicts. Sec<sup>y</sup> Campbells Letter to Marsden conveys no insinuation of this kind. If Cap<sup>n</sup> Welch and any other Persons who are now in England, but then in the Colony, could state any particulars which might tend to shew that Campbell's application to Marsden as the Author of the report, must have proceeded from malice it would be well to obtain their statements to that effect, & then it might be worth while to represent the whole to Lord Bathurst's office. Otherwise I really fear for the effect which will be produced on the minds of the official Men here by what they will be too naturally [f] regard as an unwarrantable disposition in M<sup>f</sup> Marsden to take offence. If for instance it could be shewn that the report of these Convicts having run away had been general throughout Sydney, or still more, if it could be shewn that Burn the Constable who told M<sup>rs</sup> Cooper & Marsden of the Convicts intending to cut off the Governor, had conferred with Sec<sup>y</sup> Campbell, that would powerfully tend to prove that Campbells applying to Marsden for particulars, could not be honestly intended. I cannot but think that some such information, or at least some Statement which would give some grounds for Marsdens construction of Campbells application could be obtained from Capt<sup>n</sup> Welsh, by pumping him, because he was so fully impressed with the idea of Campbells having imputed some privity with the Convicts to M<sup>f</sup>

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Marsden. Campbells Letter itself does not warrant this, therefore I suppose the impression must have been received from some other source. I should not think it worth while to spend so much of your time or my own on this subject, but for my wish that our friend Marsden should really stand as well with Government as he ought & not appear to them unreasonably petulant & disposed to take offence. Not being quite well today I dictate this from my bed & while rising which however my Eyes w<sup>d</sup> scarcely have allowed me to write with my own hand so early in the day had I been up. I was sorry not to see you yesterday but you had but too good reasons for staying away. I am with Esteem & regard Mr dear Sir yours sincerely

W. Wilberforce

Rev<sup>d</sup> J. Pratt