

importance in the history of human redemption." He was told to proceed to Portsmouth to join the East India Convoy there, and to keep company with it for protection in that time of European war; to procure at Tene-riffe four pipes of the best wine in hogsheads, paying by draft on the society's treasurer; to take thence bunches of dried grapes for planting in the mission settlements, and pecks of wheat and seeds of tropical fruits for the same purpose. Making for Rio de Janeiro, he was there to lay in a stock of sugar, tobacco, chocolate, cochineal plant, and other vegetable productions. He was to proceed thence by way of Cape Horn to Tahiti, but if baffled by contrary winds to bear up and run for the Cape of Good Hope. The sphere of the mission was declared, by resolution of the general meeting, to be "Otaheite, the Friendly Islands, the Marquesas, the Sandwich and the Pelew Islands." But while it was declared desirable to introduce the Gospel into several islands, it was pronounced necessary, if possible, to establish it in one. After detailed suggestions as to negotiations with the chiefs and the settlement of disputes through "appealing to the decision of Divine Providence by a solemn and religious use of the ancient institution of drawing lots," Captain Wilson was told to call at the East India Company's Canton factory for a return cargo, so as to sail back to Europe in the early part of 1798. "You are accompanied by the affectionate esteem of the excellent of the earth, and ministering spirits, we trust, will receive the welcome charge to convoy you in safety to the place of your destination. May they be glad spectators of the formation of a Christian temple in these heathen lands, and thus be furnished with the subject of a new song to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb!"

The discoveries made in the South Seas during the three voyages of Captain Cook * had made the missionary directors familiar with the condition of the islands and peoples, and especially with Tahiti. When dedicating the firstfruits of their labors to George III., who had sent out the scientific expedition there to observe the transit of Venus, the directors said to the king: "A nobler object, Sire, has engaged the attention of the missionary society, who, believing CHRISTIANITY to be the greatest blessing ever imparted to mankind, desired to communicate that inestimable gift, with all its happy effects, to these unenlightened regions." They felt, moreover, upbraided for their neglect of repairing, if possible, the injuries caused to the natives by the miseries and diseases which inescapably with Europeans had occasioned. The early Spanish navigators had erected a cross on Tahiti, a fact which led Captain Cook to remark that, in his opinion, nothing would ever be done to Christianize the Pacific islanders, "since there were no motives in public ambition nor in private

* The extraordinary interest, scientific and spiritual, called forth by these voyages, all over Europe, is well seen in a work published at Berlin in 1781 by the Halle Professor, Johan Reinhold Forster, "Tag-buch Einer Entdeckungs Reise nach der See in der Jahren 1776 bis 1780 unter Anführung der Capitains Cook, Clerke, Gore und King. The map is of curious value.