

## STATE OF RELIGION.

"The Lord has wonderfully, silently, and gradually inclined the hearts of his people to receive the truths of His holy word. There has been no special excitement; at no time have any large numbers come in at once; but for years, scarcely a week has elapsed, but we have had some accessions from the heathen, till, now, they are reduced to a few straggling individuals, having neither political nor moral influence among the community. We are safe in saying, that on this island idolatry is abolished, Christianity is the religion of the people. The Sabbath is universally observed as of Divine appointment, slavery has been abolished by statute, and, as in Britain, *the Bible is the common law of Aneiteum.*

"But let us not, however, be misunderstood. Through the Lord's blessing a great work has already been accomplished on this island; but a far greater work has yet to be done. Nearly the whole population have been brought from heathenism to Christianity; but the number who have been brought from sin to holiness is as yet comparatively small. The work is spread over the whole surface of society, but it has gained a deep and firm hold only to a limited extent. Still we hope and pray that He who has begun this good work among the people, will watch over it, and carry it forward, till every heart submits to the authority of Jesus.

## OPERATIONS AT FOTUNA, TANA AND EROMANGA.

"On the adjoining islands the prospects of the Missions are very encouraging. We have five teachers, natives of this island, on Fotuna, and seven on Tana. About a fortnight ago, our Mission boat returned from visiting our teachers on Fotuna, and brought the most encouraging intelligence that we had ever had from that island. We consider Fotuna as quite open at present for the settlement of a missionary.

"We consider that Tana, also, is now fully open for two missionaries. We are looking anxiously for the arrival of Mr Gordon to be settled as one of these two at Port Resolution. A few days ago, a vessel from Eromanga brought us two interesting letters from Eila, the Samoan teacher stationed at Dillon's Bay. He has charge of one station himself, and Mana, a native of Eromanga, who was

some years at the Institution in Samoa, has charge of another. Eila makes a very urgent application to us to send him some natives from this island, to assist him in the work. He says that he is well; that the natives are peaceable, and steal nothing from him, that they are becoming desirous for books, and eager to learn to read, and wish very much to have missionaries to live among them. Our earnest prayer is, that this wish may be soon gratified.

## NATIVE AGENCY.

"You are already aware that we are about to obtain a small schooner for this Mission to be called the "John Knox." This will enable us to maintain safe and regular intercourse with our teachers on the adjoining islands, and with any missionaries that may join us in this group. Native agency is indispensable in opening up new islands or new stations; and if native teachers are regularly visited, and carefully superintended, they are capable of doing a great amount of preparatory work. It is, however, only preparatory work that any native agency can accomplish in these western groups. When they have brought the work forward a certain stage, unless it is taken up by resident missionaries at that point, it not only stands still, but it goes back, and the preparatory work itself is in danger of being lost. The great felt want in this group is the want of missionaries. Native agency to any amount can soon be raised; but unless there are missionaries to direct that agency, it is of little or no value. This is a large and important group of islands. It contains a larger surface, and a much larger population, than is to be found in all the islands to the eastward, occupied by the London Missionary Society. The climate is not so healthy as the eastern groups; fever and ague prevail on most of the islands at certain seasons; but there is every reason to believe that by proper care a fair measure of good health may be enjoyed. We hear very encouraging accounts respecting the mild and docile disposition of the natives in the large islands to the north of this group. For the last two or three years, sandal-wood vessels have been constantly trading with the natives of Espiritu Santo; and as far as we have been able to learn, not a single quarrel has taken place between the natives and the traders."