

mainly entitled to some such considerations as these in our circumstances. To have acted in this spirit towards us, would have been dignified and honourable on the part of the church. But for the official organ of the mission to fall into hysterics, when the first exaggerated reports reached your ears, and denounce us to the public in a spirit so far removed from that charity which thinketh no evil, is a proceeding which we regret fully as much for the sake of the Church, as of ourselves.

It is true, however, that though entitled, in the first instance, to some such treatment as I have indicated, I have as yet given no proofs that we were justified in the steps we took. We may have been sadly to blame, notwithstanding. To err is human: and God, as a punishment for our sins, may have left us to adopt foolish counsels; and if the statements I am about to make are not deemed satisfactory, I am prepared, so far as I am concerned, to bear the blame and abide the consequences.

But before proceeding to detail the facts of the case, I shall advert to two or three statements made in the *Record*. Mr. Paton is blamed for not listening to the advice of the elder missionaries, and leaving the field for a time; and it is inferred that if he had done so, the likelihood is that the Tanna mission would never have been broken up. This is simply matter of opinion, and we estimate the value of opinions by the position and character of those who give them. From the way in which Mr. Geddie's name and Bishop Selwyn's are associated in the article, it will be no disparagement to Mr. Geddie to say that, on a question of this kind, Bishop Selwyn's opinion may be regarded as equal to his. Now, I have it on unquestionable authority, that Bishop Selwyn distinctly approved of Mr. Paton's holding on to the last. When, therefore, the opinions of two such authorities are found to be so completely opposite, is poor Mr. Paton to be seriously blamed, when he followed the course which received the approbation of the Bishop? All the more so, when the course he declined would have been one of safety to himself, while the course he pursued was beset with dan-

gers. Paul would not listen to the advice of his brother missionaries at Cesarea, when they earnestly dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem; but Luke records no reflections that were cast upon him when he was a prisoner, because he refused to listen to his brethren, and had even apparently disobeyed a heavenly vision; so far as we learned no one blamed him, or said, if he had listened to advice, there would have been no need for his being escorted by troops of soldiers to protect him, and no necessity for his afterwards appealing unto Caesar.

The *Record* says, "For ten years there has been no white man killed on Tanna, but a week did not elapse after the visit of the man-of-war to Port Resolution, till one was murdered in cold blood at another part of the island;" and this is said to be the natural fruit of those proceedings; and the inference seems to be that if we had left well alone, Tanna would soon have been a well conditioned island. Mr. Gordon has by anticipation answered this objection in a letter published in the same number of the *Record*. In referring to Peacock's murder he says, "A native of Port Resolution who was in the boat shot the man who did it; so it would appear the thing was not done to avenge the visit of the men-of-war."—Were I to hazard a conjecture, when so little is known of the cause, I should say that the report of Fletcher's murder on Erromanga, two months or so before, had probably a good deal to do with it. The only account I have heard of the matter, and it is from parties who had the best means of knowing all that could be known says, that the man was shot by an inland chief, who was eager to obtain the body of a white man for a cannibal feast. If this was his object, the murder of Fletcher may have emboldened him in his attempt to gratify his desire. But the statement in the *Record* is not correct. In 1858 two boats' crews were attacked on the west side of Tanna, at different places and within a few months; in the first case a white man was killed, and I think also a native; in the other case the captain of the vessel, and if I remember aright, one or two of his men. Shortly afterwards, H. M. S. *Iris*, Commo-