

of the natives here, I am inclined to believe that it is, on the whole, improving. A better spirit seems to be gaining ground among them. We are much less troubled now than formerly with tribal feuds and private revenge, which unhappily prevailed among them before and after we took charge of this station, a state of affairs which was attended with much inconvenience to us, and which was doing injury to the cause of Christianity. We have never yet been able to ascertain the origin of their quarrels and jealousies. Very likely it was something quite trifling or absurd. Of course we did all in our power to make peace. But whether it was our interposition that was the means of effecting the desirable change or not, one thing is evident, that they are now more pacific and amicable in their intercourse with each other than they were a year ago. And for this we feel sincerely thankful, for we know that where envying and strife are there is confusion, and every evil work."

RUM.

We feared at one time that drunkenness was going to come in among the natives like a flood, and ruin especially most of our young men. But I am thankful to say that matters in these respects are continuing better than our fears. Strong drink may be had on the island, and there are those who watch every opportunity of vending it to the poor unsuspecting natives, but our admonitions seem to be remembered by these, so that they are in a strength above their own, I trust, nobly resisting the siren voice of the tempter. But, I confess, I have little confidence in their steadfastness in this respect, if they are not the subjects of a saving change.

STATE OF RELIGION.

The young men here, I am sorry to say, are yet very thoughtless respecting the all important claims of Christianity. Those who were born in heathenism, the old generation, are the most exemplary Christians we have. However, the best of these are much less alive to the great realities of our holy religion than we should like. Our Sabbath and week day meetings are indeed generally well attended, and a seeming devout attention is paid to the hearing and to the preaching of the Word; but they do not manifest that brokenness of heart on account of sin, or that warmth of love to the Saviour which one would expect to see manifested in true converts to God. However, we know that they form a part of the visible Church of Christ, and as the ordinances of divine appointment are being dispensed among them, the cause of truth, we doubt not, is advancing here in some degree, as Galileo of old said of the earth *it moves*. But O how unspeakably desira-

ble it is that this people should be pricked in their hearts to cry, out of their depths of sin and misery, with those who were awakened by means of the preaching of Peter, on the day of Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Will you not pray in faith that this may speedily be the case with them?

WORK OF DEATH.

By last mail we received the sad tidings of the death of my honoured and excellent predecessor, Dr. Geddie. This event will be learned with profound sorrow by thousands, especially by those of the Church whose messenger he was. But his work on earth was done, and he now rests from his labours. By the same mail we heard of the death of my esteemed friend and venerable brother, the Rev. John Campbell, Sherbrooke, the voice of these providences to us who survive is, "Work while it is called to-day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work."

Letter from Rev. Dr. Steel.

77 MACLEAY STREET,
Sydney, New South Wales,
6th Sept., 1873.

REV. P. G. MACGREGOR,—

My Dear Sir,—I have had brief notes from the Islands informing me that the chartered vessel, "the Paragon," which left this port on the 24th May, arrived safely at Aneityum on the 3rd June, exactly ten days on the passage. She left again on the 9th June, and Mr. Goodwill writes me that she came to Espiritu Santo on the 24th June. I heard from these by way of Fiji. "All on board the vessel spoke well of her sea-going qualities." Mr. Inglis says: Mr. Murray was well. Mr. Paton had been poorly. I expect the "Paragon" to return soon with news of the Mission Synod. Much will depend on the opinion of the brethren at the islands with regard to a vessel.

I send you an extract from the Rev. John Goodwill's letter to shew you his trials and perils. His position is one of difficulty and danger; but he seems to have succeeded in getting the confidence of the tribes around him.

Dr. Macdonald sent me the money paid for insuring the "Paragon" as the proceeds of the Reserve Fund. He has secured the £2000 for which the "Day-spring" was insured.

I have had funds sufficient to pay for the charter of the "Paragon," and have just received the £250 due by the Reformed Presbyterian Church. When I receive your Church portion, I will be able to start well on the return of the vessel in meeting claims for wages, &c.