

There is a fine opening on this island for missionaries. The poor people are so anxious to have missionaries that they have cut timber and burnt lime in order to build a house, and had they had tools we should have found the house in progress if not finished. Surely this is an affecting appeal. If it be our duty to go out to the highways and hedges and compel the reluctant to come in, how much more ought we to haste to the rescue of those who thus touchingly implore us to come over and help them.

Beyond Vate we found openings and commenced operations on two important islands, viz., Api,* a large fine island surrounded by nine or ten smaller islands not more than from 5 to 15 miles apart, and on Espiritu Santo, the largest and most important island of the group. This island is not less than two hundred miles in circumference. It is larger than any of the islands of Eastern Polynesia, and there are but two larger in the West, viz., New Caledonia and one of the Fiji group.

We took steps also towards occupying the island of Ambrym, another large island and one of the finest I have any where seen, and Malicolo which is next to Espiritu Santo, the most important island of the group.

But for full information relative to the voyage I must refer you to an account of it which I am about to forward to the Directors of the London Missionary Society, in whose publications it will be likely shortly to appear.

As regards the island of Aneiteum I can speak in terms of strong confidence. The late severe trial through which the mission has passed, has rendered it more abundantly evident, that the judgment which we had formed in past years is the right one—that Christianity has obtained a hold on Aneiteum which trials and reverses will but strengthen and extend. I know what Aneiteum was when we placed the first native evangelists upon it twenty years ago. I have watched the progress of the work upon it during the whole period of its history. I have now every facility for gaining a full and intimate knowledge of its present state, after it has been severely tested, and I have no misgivings, the work is God's and it will stand though earth and hell oppose. There is another subject of some delicacy but of great importance on which I feel it right to say a word or two—I mean the subject of *Native Agency*.

My long experience in missionary work has given me opportunities of forming a judgment in this matter which fall to the lot of few, and my conviction is that much has been written of late years by inexperienced men respecting native teachers is wholly incorrect, and that the course of conduct adopted by the same parties has been and is being greatly injurious to the cause. You may fully rely on the soundness of the views of Messrs Geddie and Inglis, on this and all other matters of importance relating to missions in these seas. They are men of missionary experience; they are men who have proved themselves "workmen that need not to be ashamed," and they are men whom the Head of the Church has signally honored and blessed.

Perhaps I may as well name in conclusion what is wanted in order to the successful prosecution of our work in these islands, though on that subject you will have full information from Mr Geddie. The most urgent want at present is a *Vessel*—a vessel about 60 or 70 tons burden to be employed in visiting the islands and the neighboring colonies; the next want is *men*—men of the right stamp. If we could only have these in adequate numbers in connection with a vessel—if your Church and the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland could send forth between you two or three men annually for the next ten years the work would with the divine blessing progress apace—the New Hebrides in its length and breadth would soon hear the joyful sound; the light of the glorious gospel of the blessed God would be everywhere diffused; the abominations and cruelties of heathenism would be swept away, and a grateful and happy people would bless you as the instruments of imparting them that to which they owed their deliverance.

But I will not further enlarge. Apologising for the liberty I have taken, and praying that the Head of the Church may direct and abundantly prosper you in all your efforts for the advancement of his cause at home and abroad.

I remain, Rev. and Dear Sir, Yours very truly,
Rev James Bayne, Sec. B. F. M. &c. &c. &c.

A. W. MURRAY.

* Pronounced *Apes*.