

who wish to profess their faith in Christ and obedience to his will. We are planting and sowing the good seed in hope, and I trust that you will unite with us in prayer to God for an abundant increase.

DEATH OF SIMIONA.

It is with deep regret that I inform you of the death of Simiona, the Samoan teacher. He died of measles and dysentery. He was the last of the Samoan teachers on this island. His life was that of a Christian, and his latter end was peace. He was one of the two teachers whom we found on this island, when we landed on it. The year after our arrival, he returned to Samoa, and spent between two and three years there. He came back with a wife and remained with us until his death. I feel his loss very much. He was a good man and much esteemed by the natives. His consistent conduct gave much weight to his instructions. I was much aided by his valuable assistance. He was one of our ruling elders and faithfully discharged his duties as an office bearer in the Church. I was much attached to him, as he shared with us many of the early trials of the mission. His widow and children will return to Samoa by the "John Williams."

BURNING OF THE CHURCH—TRIAL OF THE INCENDIARY.

I told you in a former letter of the burning of our new Church by an incendiary. The deed was done when nearly all the chiefs and most of the people were prostrate with measles and dysentery. It was traced to a small party of natives from different places, who had built two or three houses a few miles from the harbour, to be near the traders. This party were apprehended and examined in turn, and suspicion fell on an elderly man named *Nhiang*. It was proved that he said on one occasion words to this effect: "Now is the time; let us burn the stone church; what are we about that we don't do it?" and his own party all say that they believe him to be the man who did it. It is difficult to say what motive could have instigated the burning of the Church. It might have been done from enmity to the gospel; or it might have been done from the remains of superstition during the prevalence of a deadly disease; these things combined, if no other cause ex-

isted, will account for it. At the time when the Church was burnt, the chiefs were very ill, and the incendiary no doubt thought that many of them would die, and that he would escape with impunity. It was not intended that the matter should be thoroughly investigated until the sickness was over, but when many of the chiefs began to recover, *Nhiang* manifested great fear, and kept out of the way. His alarm at last became so great, that his own friends said that he meditated suicide. To prevent this he was made prisoner, and watched until the chiefs could meet. After he had been a prisoner for about 10 days, a boat from one of the sandal wood establishments, went in a Sabbath day filled with men who were armed, and released him. The deed was done while the people were at Church. The natives were much enraged, but I told them that the island itself was a prison, from which *Nhiang* would not be able to escape, and first to let the matter stand until we had a visit of a man-of-war. I thought that if the white men wished to have a quarrel with the natives, that would be the best time for it. There was nothing done until about a month ago. On one calm day a cloud of smoke was seen rising on the distant horizon, and in a few hours more, H. M. S. *Pelorus* was at anchor with Commodore Seymour on board, and the next day H. M. S. *Cordelia* also made her appearance. The natives soon had *Nhiang* under arrest, and a meeting was held, attended by all the chiefs who were able to come. After spending nearly two days over the case, they unanimously agreed that *Nhiang* was the guilty man, and most of them thought that he ought to be put to death. At this stage of proceedings, Mr. Copeland and I were asked to attend the meeting. As the man denied the crime laid to his charge and as there was only circumstantial evidence against him, we urged that he should be punished for his threat alone. Our advice was taken, and the sentence agreed on was as follows: thirty lashes, the confiscation of his land and trees, and banishment for life to a remote district of the island. When the sentence was announced, *Nhiang* was a happy man, as he expected something more severe. This punishment is only for the threat, and the chiefs have announced their intention of punishing for the deed, if it should ever be known who