

# Canadian Presbyterian Magazine

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"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—Exodus xiv., 15.

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## Religious Intelligence.

### ANSITEUM.

Our readers will remember that, in former notices of the Mission of the sister Church of Nova Scotia to Ansiteum, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland, had joined in supporting their Missionary, Rev. Mr. Inglis, as an associate with the Rev. Mr. Geddie. Mr. Inglis, from all we have heard of him, as well as seen from his pen, seems to be a missionary of the right stamp; and the following letter, addressed to the Synod Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, is highly important as an honorable testimony to the labors of Mr. Geddie, as also exceedingly interesting in the facts stated, and well fitted to encourage all in prayer and liberality for the support of a mission that has had such remarkable success.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

I believe you are fully acquainted, through your esteemed missionary, the Rev. John Geddie, with the state and prospects of the mission on this island. It occurred to me, however, that you might feel interested by receiving a brief account of the operation and result of the mission here, from an independent witness, and one who has had among the best opportunities of learning and witnessing its progress. Since the commencement of the mission, I have been in regular correspondence with Mr. Geddie and some of the Samoan brethren. Two years ago I had the privilege of sailing for three months, on board H. M. S. *Haramah*, Capt Erskine, while that vessel was visiting the New Hebrides, Queen Charlotte's Islands, the Solomon Group, and New Caledonia; my attention being directed solely, during that time, to missionary objects. I have now resided and laboured on this island for nearly six months, and consequently can speak with some degree of certainty on the state and prospects of the mission.

I was much gratified with what I saw here in 1850; but the progress of the mission since that time has been marked and encouraging. I have just returned from paying Mr. Geddie a visit for the purpose of being present at the opening of his new place of worship, and to assist him in laying the foundation of a new Mission House which is much needed for himself and his family. The new church is capable of containing 500 people. At the opening services the house was completely filled, and a good many had to sit outside. There were present, a number of the most influential natives, from nearly all parts of the island. Leading chiefs met on that occasion, who had not seen each other since they met as enemies in battle. Large presents of food were exchanged among them; the symbol by which treaties of peace and friendship are confirmed. Peace is now established over the whole island. Nearly the half of the population, which is estimated at 3000, have abandoned heathenism and professed christianity. When the natives of this and other barbarous islands profess Christianity, it is not to be expected that they are all or many of them changed in heart, or that they have any clear conception of what Christianity is, any more than a child newly sent to

school can understand and appreciate a classical education; but it shows that the missionaries have gained the confidence of the natives, and that they are willing and anxious to receive religious instruction, and this is a point of great importance gained. It is moreover, one striking feature of this people, that while they are jealous in the extreme, till you gain their confidence, when that confidence is gained they are docile and confiding as children.

The change effected among the natives by the Word and Spirit of God, is very striking. Their external appearance is quite changed. In their attention to decency in dress and in their civil and respectful deportment, they present quite a contrast to their heathen countrymen. In their devotional character they are very exemplary,—they observe the Sabbath, wait upon public worship, and attend to religious exercises, with great regularity and reverence. They have family worship in their houses regularly morning and evening. They sing well, and pray extempore with great fluency and propriety. At the two principal mission stations on this island, where Mr. Geddie and I respectively reside, the attendance upon public worship is from 200 to 300 every Sabbath; at the several out stations there is also a good attendance. Education is advancing favorably. Our two principal week-day schools are attended by upwards of 100 each, and perhaps as many attend at the other schools throughout the island. The four small books, printed in this language by Mr. Geddie, are eagerly sought after by all the christian population. The twenty-four church members, admitted to sealing ordinances by Mr. Geddie, are all very exemplary in their character. Indeed, in morality, the invariable fruit of true religion, the christian part of the population are remarkably improved. They have abandoned their heathen abominations, and are greatly more honest, truthful, and correct in morals, than they formerly were.

In natural disposition the natives of this island, and probably of the whole group, are much more amiable, and greatly less covetous and selfish, than the New Zealanders and other Malay races. It is quite true that in their natural uncivilised condition, they have been, and many still are, the slaves of every thing that is criminal and abominable; but when brought fully under christian influence, they exhibit to a pleasing extent those things that are lovely and of good report.

Your church has, I think, being signally owned of God in her undertakings. Your mission on this island has indeed passed through severe trials, both from within and from without; but it has nevertheless been crowned with a large and gratifying measure of success; and the mission family here may well erect their Ebenezer—their stone of help—and say "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." Mr. Geddie has evidently labored with great diligence, patience, prudence, and perseverance, and he has not labored in vain; and Mrs. Geddie's efforts to improve and elevate the female portion of the community have been attended with most beneficial results. The prospects of the mission are more encouraging than they have ever been. Within the last six months numerous and important accessions have been gained and not a few of these from among those formerly the most violent and obstinate opposers of the mission. The precious seed, for long sown with weeping, has of late been brought home in sheaves with rejoicing. There is also a movement going on among the christian natives to make aggressive evangelizing operations on all the heathen districts especially in the interior. There is still one district which is closed against the reception of the gospel, but we have good grounds for hoping that even there the days of heathenism are numbered, and that Christ's name and power will be every where supreme on this island.

The real importance of this island we consider to be greatly enhanced by its relation to the other islands of the group. It is in many respects well adapted for being a centre or point, from which missionary operations may be extended to other islands of this group. Mr. Geddie and I are both of opinion, that a printing establishment, and an Institution for the training of young men, to fit them for becoming native teachers, should be in constant operation, not for this island only, but for the group. We have agreed that in the meantime Mr. Geddie shall continue to conduct the printing establishment, and the Institution be placed under my charge. A new printing press and a good supply of printing materials are much wanted here at present. The stock of paper is quite exhausted, and the press is become quite too small for the wants of the mission. We purpose to commence our Institution as soon as ever arrangements can be made for beginning. We have a few promising young men at both stations to begin with, and we expect to obtain young men, from time to time, from