

men. The *Dayspring* can no longer be the messenger of peace to these islands, and it will be hard for those missionaries to persuade the natives that they come only in love and mean to do them no injury.

It is important to observe that the peaceable character maintained by the missionaries—their being entirely disconnected from any acts of violence has hitherto been their chief security. The sandal-wood traders have been abundantly supplied with arms and have used them freely, but what are the consequences. Why, some time ago the missionaries drew up a list of more than 300 employed in that business who had been killed by the natives, and yet of the agents of the London Missionary Society not one known as a peaceable missionary has ever fallen a victim to violence. Williams and Harris it is true were killed on Erromanga, but it was by mistake, and in revenge for the brutalities of white men. Mr. and Mrs. Gordon's death we may also observe, was the result of ignorance and the misrepresentations of white men. As Bishop Patteson who lands freely in the midst of the wildest savages says, their "very defencelessness is their best protection."—With such facts before us, we cannot but have fears for the future safety of the missionaries and of those on board the *Dayspring*, such as we have never had before. "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword." This has been illustrated abundantly in the case of the sandal-wood traders, and who will wonder if dangers should surround the *Dayspring*, should she ever again visit the scene of these outrages. Already these proceedings are bearing their natural fruit. For ten years there has been no white man killed on Tana, 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.

We would not be understood as for a moment hinting anything against the motives of those engaged in these affairs. We believe that all concerned were animated by the best intentions. We regard the affair as simply a deplorable error in judg-

ment, whoever is answerable for it. The history of missions on the South Seas ought to have taught all concerned to put their trust in the protection of him who sent them forth, and not in any worldly power.

In looking at the great question of duty we must go to the words of the great Master. He has sent forth his servants to the work of preaching the gospel, and has given them directions how to act in every situation. He has given such directions, contemplating their being placed in circumstances as perilous as any in which our missionaries have been or can be, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." What then are you to do? arm yourself with sword and pistol? Call in a British man-of-war? No, but "be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

We must not be understood as not sympathizing with our missionaries in their present situation. We do feel deeply for them, especially for Mr. Gordon; and it is because we feel deeply that we so profoundly deplore a step which must result so injuriously to the future comfort, success, and even safety of themselves and other missionaries who may follow.

Mr. Gordon's situation is not without peril, and he should have the earnest prayers of the church. We may observe, however, that the wars of the natives are not such serious affairs as we might at first suppose. For some grievance the people of one tribe gather to make war on another. They fight, and one or two men are killed; their revenge is satisfied, peace is made, and both parties unite in a great feast over the affair. The crisis must have passed long ere this, and, if his life was seriously threatened, it would be easy for the brethren to remove him in the *Dayspring*. Such a course would be only in accordance with the divine commission, and experience has shown the wisdom of it in certain circumstances.—When the feelings of the natives are strongly excited against the white men, and missionaries share in their prejudices, it may be better to leave the work, for a while, in the hands of native teachers, against whom there is not the same prejudice. Missionaries have no right to force themselves, or their