

They had family worship in their dwelling, which was continued morning and evening, thereby holding forth a protest against the idol worship of the natives. This, it may be noticed, was productive of much good to the cause of the Mission. On the Saturday, the Missionaries intimated to the natives the approach of the Sabbath, when all intercourse with them on worldly matters must cease—no work would be done, and no presents received, though brought. On the afternoon of the Sabbath, by means of one of the Swedes, as their interpreter, the Missionaries addressed the people concerning the truths of the Gospel: the people were attentive, and afterwards asked if the message was for the inferior classes as well as for the king and the chiefs. The king (Pomare) as well as his son, were present on this occasion, but it appears, from an entry in the journal of the Missionaries, they had little hope of the “stubborn and unteachable nature” of the latter being impressed with the truths of the Gospel. In this, however, they judged wrong, as he was afterwards one of their earliest converts.

Pomare, with his wife Idia, after this visited the ship, when Captain Wilson informed him of the designs of the Missionaries, and asked him if it was agreeable to him they should settle on the island; the king answered in the affirmative, and that a portion of land should be ceded to them—which cession was formally made to Captain Wilson in presence of a large assemblage of people, though it was afterwards found to amount only to as much as might be requisite for dwellings and gardens to the Missionaries. As there was no ordained ministers among the brethren who were to proceed to the Friendly Islands, it was needful one should be chosen out of their number, and the choice having fallen on Seth Kelso, the following Sabbath, being the 19th of March, was appointed for his ordination. At 10 o'clock, the people of the island, with their king (Pomare) and his sister, having assembled under some shady trees to hear the Word, Mr. Cover addressed them, by means of the Swedish interpreter, from these words, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” After sermon, Pomare took the preacher by the hand, and pronounced the word of approbation, “*Myty! myty!*” And, on being asked if he understood what was said, he answered that there were no such things before in Tahiti, and they were not to be learned at once, but that he would wait the coming of the (Eatoa) God. About three o'clock the ordination sermon was preached by Mr. Cover, when the other ordained ministers took their parts in the service, and Mr. Kelso was set apart to the work of the ministry, by the laying on of their hands; and so, as the Missionaries add, “the communion closed the solemnity, which was to us all a most refreshing and cheering ordinance; and, for the first time, the bread-fruit of Tahiti was used as the symbol of the broken body of our Lord, and used in commemoration of his dying love.”

It was four days after the ordination that Capt. Wilson set sail with the other Missionaries for their destinations, and the brethren, having a

brief space to look around them, began to see more plainly the evil doings of the people among whom they were located—the murder of infants by their mothers—theft and dissoluteness prevailed to a great extent—and these appear to have taught them more fully their own inability for the work on which they had entered—they had, therefore, recourse to a throne of grace, and appointed a monthly prayer meeting, to be held on Tuesday the 4th of April, 1797, being in that longitude the same hour with the Monday evening prayer meetings in Britain. “We were revived,” they say, “with the consideration of the thousands of God’s people who were remembering us, and and at the same time praying for our success among the heathens. Captain Wilson having settled the other brethren at the Friendly Islands, and the Marquesas, returned to Tahiti, and remained till the 4th of August, when he finally sailed for Canton.

The Island of Tahiti consists of two peninsulas, joined by a neck of land about two miles in breadth. The smaller peninsula is about fifteen miles in length, by ten in breadth, and the larger one, which is circular, is about twenty-five miles in diameter; the whole of the island being thus computed at about forty geographical miles. At the time the *Duff* visited the island, Captain Wilson calculated the population at upwards of sixteen thousand souls. Tahiti seems at first to have been governed by several chiefs, who were independent of each other; but Pomare, assisted by the crews of some British ships, having gained the superiority, established a monarchy, of which he was the head. His government, however, being weak, in consequence of the power of the other chiefs, there arose many quarrels among them, which for the time greatly retarded the labours of the Missionaries.

The Tahitians might be truly said to be wholly given to idolatry; the chief god whom they worshipped was called Taaroa, whose worship, moreover, is said to have extended over the whole of the other groups of islands in the Pacific; but the national god of the Tahitians was called Oro. Besides these, animals, insects, and even fish, were objects of worship; they rendered homage, moreover, to beings whom they imagined presided over the sea, winds, rain, clouds, hills, trees, and flowers. They held also in superstitious fear the spirits of dead men, and worshipped them. They had idols, also, of wood and stone, which were kept in their temples, and exhibited occasionally to the people.

The religion of the Tahitians was moreover dark and cruel. The only motive which influenced them to worship their gods was terror. They sacrificed at their altars not only animals, but human beings, and these latter sacrifices were by no means uncommon among them. At a public meeting held at Raiatea, one of the native chiefs, afterwards speaking of these matters, says:—“How great was our dread of our former gods!—Are there not some here who have fled from their houses to avoid being taken for sacrifices? Yes, I know the cave in which they were concealed.” Infant murder also was practised by mothers; and one incident mentioned by Mr. Williams may