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Rev. J. D. McCall

THE  
**Home and Foreign Record**  
OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE LOWER PROVINCES.

**Extra Number.**

**LETTER FROM REV. JOHN INGLIS.**

To the REV. JAMES BAYNE, D. D., Sec'y  
to the Board of Foreign Missions of the  
Presbyterian Church, L. P., B. N. A.

ANEITEUM, NEW HEBRIDES, }  
May 14th., 1866.

My Dear Sir,—I have just seen a copy of the February number of your Home and Foreign Record, in which there is a leading article animadverting most severely on the members of this mission, for their connection with the "Curacoa" affair on Tanna and Erromanga, and singling me out as particularly blame-worthy in the matter. It is admitted, indeed, that all were to blame, but only in a lesser degree. Mr. Gordon was at first reluctant, and all your missionaries had been but a short time in the field, "and might be expected to yield to the opinions of others," and Mr. Paton had shown himself to be a man of no judgment; but with my experience, to lend myself to such proceedings was beyond measure astonishing. Mr. Copeland was out of the field, and it is inferred that he would have repudiated such doings, and Mr. Geddie would have died rather than have had a finger in such proceedings.—Hence to whatever extent the proceedings were blame-worthy, that blame, according to the Record, rests chiefly with me. It has never been my practice to shirk responsibility, when in the providence of God it was laid upon me; nor do I shrink from accepting my full share of this, whatever, after full explanation or thorough investigation it may be found to be.

I should be slow to believe that Mr.

Geddie had given his *imprimatur* to that article, or that it expressed his sentiments to the extent that the writer would lead us to infer, or that he would take up such an attitude towards his brethren at present in the field, but if it is otherwise, the Record has done him great injustice. I have no wish to criminate Mr. Geddie in this matter, It is well known that during all the years we laboured together on this island, our views, on all matters of importance connected with the mission, were uniformly alike; and my firm impression was, from all that I knew of Mr. Geddie's sentiments, that in this case, had he been present, and in our circumstances, he would have acted just as we did. But as the Record has used Mr. Geddie's name so freely, directly and indirectly, against us, I feel constrained to use a similar freedom, but simply in self-defence.

We are placed at a great disadvantage here, when any attacks are made upon us at home, which happily is a rare thing. This is perhaps the first of any consequence. It is generally a twelvemonth or more before anything that we might be able to say in our own behalf could meet the public eye, and our characters may be irreparably damaged before we could be heard in our own defence. Hence, in general, it is better to be silent than write under such circumstances; and in the present case I should have remained so, had the strictures emanated from almost any other quarter. But as the Record is understood, and in this case professes, to be the organ of the mission and the church, the whole comes forth with an official authority, which from its loose

and incorrect statements, and its uncharitable spirit, it very ill merits.

I consider it, therefore, but just to myself and the mission, and respectful to the Board, to lay before them the leading facts of the case, that they may judge in this matter for themselves. Regret has been expressed that this had not been done sooner. Had we anticipated the amount and character of the misrepresentations, exaggerations, and censures to which we have been exposed, we might have done so; but this we did not foresee. We were not conscious of any crime, and we did not think of setting up any defence. It is a principle with me never to defend myself till I am attacked. As soon as other duties permitted, I did write a statement of the leading facts to our Committee; whether or not that may have met your eye, and if it did, to what extent it was satisfactory, I of course do not know; it was for the most part a simple narrative, not a defence. The *Record's* strictures, however, have necessarily made me assume the defensive.

Allow me also to say that although the editor of the *Record* might have felt it to be a duty incumbent on him to wash his hands, and clear himself, the Board, and the Church, from all complicity in this affair; yet having done so, there was no necessity laid upon him for throwing so much blame upon us till we had been heard. He might, in a few sentences, have vindicated the Church and the Board, by stating the principles on which the mission is authorised to be conducted, and that if, on a thorough knowledge of the case, it should be found that the missionaries had acted otherwise, it would be treated as the doings of individuals, not of the church; and without bespeaking a charitable judgment till the facts were fully known. But instead of this, the very worst enemy of the mission, even in a case of special pleading, could hardly have made out a worse case against us. That the church may be whitened we must be blackened. Mr. Geddie and Bishops Selwyn and Patteson, arrayed in robes of peerless excellence, and adorned with every missionary grace and virtue, are brought forth and made to confront us; while we,

dressed up in sordid and tattered habiliments, are made to stand blushing for shame in their august presence. We are made to stand on the pillory in the sight of christendom, and declared unfit to associate with the common brotherhood of missions.—From the world we think ourselves entitled to justice; from the church, from our brethren, we think ourselves entitled to something more, to charity. Alas! in the present case we have, as we think, got little of either.

It is well known that captains in the British navy are, as a general rule, not only men of high attainments in their profession, but men of good common sense and great humanity; and, hence, when one of these has made himself a terror, it may be almost safely inferred, that he has made himself a terror only to evil-doers. When in addition to this, as in the present case, five missionaries, on the spot, with all the facts of the case before them, unanimously sanction the proceedings, it may charitably be supposed that there were some good grounds for doing so, which those on the other side of the globe were perhaps not aware of.—None of us were children; none of us had reached the years at which dotage usually begins. From our antecedents and position we might reasonably claim, and it might be charitably conceded to us, that we possessed among us an average amount of common sense; that we had an average knowledge of the principles on which modern missions are conducted; that we had as much acquaintance with Biblical criticism, as to know the usual interpretations put upon the few texts quoted in the *Record*; that the words "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" must not be pressed too hard to yield a literal interpretation, otherwise every soldier would die a violent death; and that "when they persecute you in this city flee ye into another," is a permission, not a command, and given primarily to itinerant missionaries in a civilized land, not to missionaries settled in heathen isles; that in these circumstances we were not likely, rashly and recklessly, to compromise ourselves and the mission in the face of all christendom. We were cer-

mainly entitled to some such considerations as these in our circumstances. To have acted in this spirit towards us, would have been dignified and honourable on the part of the church. But for the official organ of the mission to fall into hysterics, when the first exaggerated reports reached your ears, and denounce us to the public in a spirit so far removed from that charity which thinketh no evil, is a proceeding which we regret fully as much for the sake of the Church, as of ourselves.

It is true, however, that though entitled, in the first instance, to some such treatment as I have indicated, I have as yet given no proofs that we were justified in the steps we took. We may have been sadly to blame, notwithstanding. To err is human: and God, as a punishment for our sins, may have left us to adopt foolish counsels; and if the statements I am about to make are not deemed satisfactory, I am prepared, so far as I am concerned, to bear the blame and abide the consequences.

But before proceeding to detail the facts of the case, I shall advert to two or three statements made in the *Record*. Mr. Paton is blamed for not listening to the advice of the elder missionaries, and leaving the field for a time; and it is inferred that if he had done so, the likelihood is that the Tanna mission would never have been broken up. This is simply matter of opinion, and we estimate the value of opinions by the position and character of those who give them. From the way in which Mr. Geddie's name and Bishop Selwyn's are associated in the article, it will be no disparagement to Mr. Geddie to say that, on a question of this kind, Bishop Selwyn's opinion may be regarded as equal to his. Now, I have it on unquestionable authority, that Bishop Selwyn distinctly approved of Mr. Paton's holding on to the last. When, therefore, the opinions of two such authorities are found to be so completely opposite, is poor Mr. Paton to be seriously blamed, when he followed the course which received the approbation of the Bishop? All the more so, when the course he declined would have been one of safety to himself, while the course he pursued was beset with dan-

gers. Paul would not listen to the advice of his brother missionaries at Cesarea, when they earnestly dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem; but Luke records no reflections that were cast upon him when he was a prisoner, because he refused to listen to his brethren, and had even apparently disobeyed a heavenly vision; so far as we learned no one blamed him, or said, if he had listened to advice, there would have been no need for his being escorted by troops of soldiers to protect him, and no necessity for his afterwards appealing unto Caesar.

The *Record* says, "For ten years there has been no white man killed on Tanna, 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;" and this is said to be the natural fruit of those proceedings; and the inference seems to be that if we had left well alone, Tanna would soon have been a well conditioned island. Mr. Gordon has by anticipation answered this objection in a letter published in the same number of the *Record*. In referring to Peacock's murder he says, "A native of Port Resolution who was in the boat shot the man who did it; so it would appear the thing was not done to avenge the visit of the men-of-war."—Were I to hazard a conjecture, when so little is known of the cause, I should say that the report of Fletcher's murder on Erromanga, two months or so before, had probably a good deal to do with it. The only account I have heard of the matter, and it is from parties who had the best means of knowing all that could be known says, that the man was shot by an inland chief, who was eager to obtain the body of a white man for a cannibal feast. If this was his object, the murder of Fletcher may have emboldened him in his attempt to gratify his desire. But the statement in the *Record* is not correct. In 1858 two boats' crews were attacked on the west side of Tanna, at different places and within a few months; in the first case a white man was killed, and I think also a native; in the other case the captain of the vessel, and if I remember aright, one or two of his men. Shortly afterwards, H. M. S. *Iris*, Commo-

dore Loring, inflicted a severe punishment on the village where the latter outrage was committed.

But suppose we admit that the statement in the *Record* is correct in the main, and that there is only an error of about three years as to the time, may it not have been their fear of a man-of-war that has kept them so long quiet. They saw that traders would be protected, and they were afraid to injure them. During those seven years there has been more trading, especially along the west side of Tanna, than at any former period, and the natives have obtained more tomahawks, muskets, and ammunition, than perhaps all they ever received since white men began to trade with them, yet the traders were unmolested. On the other side of the island, however, all the trials of the mission occurred during that period; and at Port Resolution the natives had latterly become so insolent and troublesome, that even the traders had in a great measure ceased to call there.

Any one reading the article in the *Record* would be led to believe, if he knew nothing of these islands, that but for wicked traders and injudicious missionaries there would be no difficulty in getting along with the natives, and comparatively little danger in living among them. No doubt were all the traders good, and the missionaries judicious, the dangers and difficulties would be greatly reduced, but even were that the case they would still be sufficiently numerous. Bishops Selwyn and Patteson are held up to us as models; they are wise as serpents and harmless as doves. I yield to man in my respect for those two courageous and self-denying missionaries; but even they are not always safe. Innate cruelty is a prominent characteristic of the natives of this and of the adjoining groups. Perhaps in no part of the heathen world is human life, especially the lives of foreigners, held so cheap. In 1851 Bishop Selwyn and the Bishop of Newcastle were in great danger of their life from the natives of Mallicolla; although H. M. S. "Havannah" had made a very friendly visit at the same place the year before; and, so far as I am aware, no trading vessel had ever been there up to that time. And about three years ago, in an island to the north of this group, Bishop Patteson's boat was attacked, after friendly intercourse on shore, while pulling off from the reef; three of his seamen were wounded with poisoned arrows, two of them mortally, who died a few days afterwards; and the third recovered with difficulty. When the *Curacoa* left us at Fate, it was to meet Bishop Patteson at one of Banks's islands, and, as we understood, to see if any thing could be done to insure for him greater safety.

Bishop Selwyn made his first visit to the

South Sea Islands on board a man-of-war, the first voyage he made in his own mission vessel was under the shadow of a man-of-war, and when watering at Black Beach, the very spot where poor Peacock was killed, as the natives were assuming a threatening attitude, a boat, with an armed crew, was sent to protect him; and in another voyage, at least, he was part of the time in company with a man-of-war; so that he commenced his missionary voyages among these islands, with all the advantages which man-of-war influence could secure for him, which was vastly more efficacious than if he himself had sailed armed to the teeth.

And even Mr. Geddie himself—the unerring and immaculate of the *Record*—accompanied H. M. S. *Iris* to Erromanga and Tanna, in very much the same capacity as that in which we accompanied the *Curacoa*, when the *Iris* was winding up proceedings of a greatly more questionable character than anything undertaken last year by the *Curacoa*. Alas for men who live in glass houses when their friends begin to throw stones at their neighbours! Be it observed, I am not blaming those esteemed brethren for any of these things. I have no fault whatever to find with Mr. Geddie for his connexion with the *Iris*. I mention these things simply in self-defence; and, that if we are to be condemned for this crime, that the witnesses who are summoned to appear against us, may be brought into court with clean hands, and that the world may know for what it is, that we are so severely censured, and our friends so highly eulogized.

The *Record* holds, in *terrorum* over our heads, the frowns and censures of the agents of the London Missionary Society. I happen to be personally acquainted with the greater number of those in the South Seas. Since the *Curacoa* was here, we have been in communication with nearly every one of them within fifteen hundred miles of the New Hebrides; and as yet no vote of censure or disapprobation, either official or private has reached us from any of them. When the first exaggerated reports of the affair were published in Sydney, the Presbytery of the Union Church there, afraid of being compromised, owing to their connection with this mission, appointed a committee to enquire into our conduct, and report. That committee instituted a searching investigation; but when the report was given in, "it was unanimously agreed, that the presbytery thank the committee for its diligence, and without pronouncing judgment on the matters dealt with in the report, agree to receive said report *simpliciter*." Dr. Johnson says that "the Lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few." In our circumstances,

where misapprehension and misrepresentation are so easy, to have escaped censure from these two quarters, is about as much praise as we could reasonably have expected.

But to come to the facts of the case. It is made to appear in the *Record*, that the main, if not the sole, cause of the *Curacoa's* doings on Tanna, was to take revenge for the loss of some trumpery property belonging to Mr. Paton. Is this true? I aver that it is not: property is valuable on the New Hebrides, even the most trumpery kind of it; but we do not value it at a price so high as is asserted in the *Record*. In order to understand the merits of the case, various considerations must be taken into account. In order to comprehend our position, in order to estimate the criminality of the natives, and the necessity of inflicting some punishment, it is necessary to take into account the history of these islands, the customs of the natives, the position occupied by those punished, and the treatment they have received both from missionaries and men of war. Tanna and Erromanga have had a history peculiarly their own for the last quarter of a century; unparalleled, I believe, in the South Seas. For treachery, cruelty, and murder, they are become proverbial. It is of no use, for the sake of criminating others, to palliate the conduct of the natives. It is of little use to say that they killed Williams and Harris by mistake, and that they were grieved for it afterwards. Kani'ai, the murderer of Williams, is still alive, and is considered both by Mr. Gordon and the traders, as one of the most designing and dangerous men on the island, an instigator of all kinds of mischief. To say that the death of the Gordons was "the result of ignorance and the misrepresentations of white men," is a very incorrect statement: indeed that mode of indiscriminately charging all white men, as being the cause of all outrages on these islands, is not only unjust to the natives, but very injurious to the mission. About two years ago I saw the murderer of Mr. Gordon, and a more impudent, a worse looking fellow, I have perhaps never seen; a man apparently fit for any thing. When less was known of the natives these views might have been accepted; but now they are quite untenable. And it is certainly much better to look the character of the natives fairly in the face, and prepare ourselves accordingly, than allow ourselves to be deceived, where so much evidence is lying before us.

In no island in the Pacific, so far as I know, have four missionaries been killed by the natives, except on Erromanga. On Tanna the results have not been so tragical; but in no island in these seas, so far as I remember, has a mission been twice broken

up, and the missionaries made to flee for their lives, except on Tanna. First Messrs. Turner and Nisbet with their wives were driven away from Port Resolution; subsequently one of the teachers left by them was murdered there; a party from Port Resolution caused the murder of the Samoan teachers on Fotuna about the same time. Two men from Port Resolution killed one of our Aneiteum teachers on Aniwa, and left a second apparently dead. A chief of Port Resolution killed one of our Aneiteum teachers living with Mr. Paton; at least he abused him so that he died of his wounds. It is well known that Mr. Johnston's life was attempted, and it is believed by many that his death was caused by the shock his nervous system received on that occasion. You wrote me at the time to the effect, that you looked upon Mr. Johnston as being as much a martyr, as if he had fallen beneath the club of the savage. But be that as it may, murder was attempted. It is also well known that various attempts were made on Mr. Paton's life; and that, finally, to save his life he had to flee from the island. Mr. and Mrs. Matheson had to do the same, and the hardships they endured in their flight hurried them both to their graves. I say nothing of a white man who was killed by a chief of Port Resolution in 1857, or of two other white men, the one killed and the other seriously wounded at Aniwa, at the instigation of Port Resolution natives. I confine myself to the mission; because I know that the conduct of all connected with it was peaceful; although I heard of no outrage committed by those white men at Port Resolution.

So much for life; and now as regards property; it was not simply a few things belonging to Mr. Paton that were lost; two mission stations of nearly four years standing were broken up, containing buildings erected at considerable expense to the mission, and very great labour to the missionaries and teachers; besides a considerable amount of both mission property and private property belonging to the missionaries; and to obtain possession of which was probably a chief cause of many of the outrages that were committed. At least it is now known that on Fate the chief with whom they were living killed the Rarotongan teachers, or caused them to be killed, to obtain possession of the contents of their boxes.

But to understand the state of things at Port Resolution, it is necessary also to know that the present residents there, virtually serve themselves heirs to all the murders and acts of violence committed there for the last twenty-five years, both on Tanna and Erromanga. It is said, they count on their fingers the number of people

they have killed without punishment, and boast of the number of outrages they have committed with impunity. Moreover, whenever an outrage is committed either on Tanna or Erromanga, it is a motive and a stimulus for the natives of the other island to do the same. When the Gordons were killed, a number of Erromangans accompanied a Tahitian in a boat to Port Resolution, to stir up the Tannese to kill the missionaries and all connected with them, and then to proceed to Aneiteum to complete the work of destruction. They had heard that Mr. Geddie's church had been burned, and that all the natives had become heathen. But when they reached Tanna and heard the true state of affairs; that the burning of the church was the act of one man only, and that he was a prisoner for his crime; after creating some excitement they returned home.

It must be borne in mind that, as a general rule, on these islands no deliberate outrage upon life or property is ever committed, except on the authority of the chief; because to do so is to declare war, and unless a chief is prepared to go to war he will not allow an outrage to be committed; but when committed the whole tribe assume the responsibility of the act. Little can be said on behalf of their bravery or courage; but they are naturally cunning and deceitful; and when wishing to commit an outrage on a white man living ostensibly under their protection, they will bring natives from a distance to perpetrate the deed, and then profess they cannot help it. One of the few acts of stealing that have occurred on this island for a long time back, and which took place some months since, was conducted on this principle, effected by proxy.

The plea of ignorance can no longer be set up on their behalf, as excusing or palliating their conduct towards missionaries. This might have been used with some show of reason twenty-five years ago, but not now. Since that time, both on Tanna and Erromanga, they have had continuous intercourse, with missionaries, teachers, and mission ships; and for four years before the last outrages, missionaries had been living among them. They knew that the missionaries and all connected with them were peaceable; that they injured no one, but were ever ready to do good, as opportunity occurred. These crimes, whatever they might be, were not crimes of ignorance.

Besides this, the principle of blood for blood, or life for life, the *lex talionis*, is a principle which every native, even the most ignorant and degraded, understands perfectly well. Every one knows that if he kills a man, or commits any similar outrage, he is doing an act for which a like punishment will be inflicted, as soon as the

friends of the injured have it in their power to do so. On this point above all others, the law of God is still legibly written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to their crimes, and their thoughts accusing them of guilt. Hence, whenever a native commits an outrage on the life or property of a missionary, he knows that he is committing a crime which exposes himself and his tribe to punishment, on his own acknowledged principles. He expects that punishment will be inflicted on him if it be possible. He may think himself beyond the reach of punishment, and rejoice in his crimes; but he knows well what he has merited, and if punishment does not reach him, he ascribes it to the weakness, not to the forgiving spirit, of the parties injured. Men-of-war had often visited these islands; but for the earlier and lesser outrages no punishment had been inflicted; the natives had been admonished, cautioned, and threatened, till they concluded that every visit would end only in words.

It must also be understood that Port Resolution is the centre of political power on Tanna; the influence of the tribes around the harbor is felt over the whole island. It was through their influence that Mr. Matheson's station was broken up, as well as Mr. Paton's. Two years ago Mr. Copeland found their mischievous influence at work on the opposite side of the island at Black Beach; and it was owing chiefly to the same influence, that our teachers were driven away last year, and that same station broken up. But for the kindness of the captain of a trading vessel, who gave them a passage to Erromanga, it is probable that the *Dayspring*, on her visit there last year, might have found the party all killed. To repress crime at Port Resolution, is to repress it over the whole island.

Such being the history of the two islands; such being their mutual influence for evil; such being the principles on which outrages are committed; such being their hopes of committing crime with impunity; and such being the leading position of the tribes around Port Resolution for instigating evil, that, in all the circumstances of the case, it appeared to be necessary, that the natives should be made distinctly to understand that missionaries, as well as other British subjects, were cared for, and would be protected by the representative of the British Government.

I come now to state our connexion with the man-of-war, and how that connexion originated. After the murder of the Gordons, a man-of-war, the *Pyllorus*, Commodore Seymour was sent down here to enquire into the matter. The Commodore visited Aneiteum, Tanna, and Erromanga; but did nothing in the way of inflicting punishment on any of those connected with

the murders on Erromanga. Whatever Mr. Geddie's sentiments may be about the *Curacoa*, it is certain that he expressed himself as very much disappointed, that Commodore Seymour did nothing at Erromanga. He considered the visit as worse than useless, because nothing was done. If Mr. Geddie's sentiments are fairly represented by the *Record*, he may possibly account for this apparent contradiction, by saying, it was only Rangî, a Malay, whom he regarded as the instigator of the murder, and not the murderers themselves, whom he wished to be punished, because Rangî, being understood to be a British subject, was to be held amenable to British law. If this should be the ground taken up in the defence, and it is the most probable that I can think of, I confess that I am unable to see on what principle it could be thought right to ask the captain of a man-of-war to punish a Mohamedan, born at Singapore, but living on Erromanga, and ignorant and superstitious as any heathen, for instigating the murders, and yet count it wrong to ask him to punish two heathens, born on Erromanga for actually committing the murders; but such, if the *Record* is correct, are the sentiments held by Mr. Geddie.

We gave in Rangî's name to the Commodore, as well as those of the two murderers, with a statement of the evidence, on which Mr. Geddie and the missionaries then in the field considered him guilty. The Commodore told us, however, that in Commodore Seymour's report to the admiralty, a copy of which he had on board, it was stated, that he had examined the charges preferred against Rangî, but that on comparing the evidence for and against him, he had felt it to be his duty to acquit him; so that nothing more could be done in his case. Moreover, Mr. Gordon himself, from facts that have since come to his knowledge, is now satisfied that Rangî did not instigate the murders. Mr. Gordon, I think, has made a slight mistake, however, when he says "the Commodore expressed sympathy, but said he could not go back to 1861." At first he demurred; but finding that no action had been taken in the case of the murderers, it was only Rangî's case that he considered closed.

After the breaking up of the mission on Tanna, in 1862, a very influential deputation in Sydney, consisting of the principal friends of this mission there, waited upon the Governor, with a requisition to send down a man-of-war, to enquire into the outrages committed in the New Hebrides. I was at home at that time, but I always understood that Mr. Geddie and the other missionaries then in the field concurred with this requisition. The loss of H.M.S. *Acheron* and her gallant commander off the coast of New Zealand, and the Maori war, prevented

anything being done at that time; and the first visit of a man-of-war to this group, since 1861, was last year, when the *Esk* and *Curacoa* met in Aneiteum harbour.

When we came to Erromanga in the *Dayspring* in July last, we found that, a month before our arrival, a very inoffensive white man, and twelve or fourteen natives, chiefly of Fate, in the employment of the sandal wood establishment, had been barbarously murdered by the Erromangans. Mr. Gordon could hear of no specific cause or grievance alleged, as leading to the outrage; moreover the sandal wood establishment was besieged by about five hundred natives collected from all parts of the Island; a message also had been sent off to Sydney, praying for the visit of a man-of-war. We remained a few days, to afford a means of escape to the white people, if necessary: in the meantime using whatever influence we possessed in the interests of peace; and we had the satisfaction of seeing a treaty of peace concluded on board the *Dayspring*, between the representatives of the sandal wood establishment and the representatives of the belligerent natives, and also the breaking up of the war party, and their return to their respective homes. It was, however, stipulated in the treaty, that nothing that was done would prevent a man-of-war from enquiring into the late murders, and punishing those found to be guilty.

On our arrival at Aneiteum, we found the *Esk* direct from Sydney, and learned that the "*Curacoa*" was expected daily from Fiji. We of course reported the state of things on Erromanga. When we held our annual meeting, the question naturally came up, what action was to be taken in these matters? Here was a man-of-war sent down to visit these islands, one of its chief objects being to enquire into the murders and outrages committed on the New Hebrides, in answer to the Sydney memorial referred to above; in which as I have already said, I understood Mr. Geddie and every member of the mission then in the field to concur. Were we to stultify ourselves and our friends, by approaching the commodore and addressing him somewhat as follows: "We are very much obliged to our friends in Sydney, and very much obliged to you; no doubt you all mean very well; but we are missionaries to the heathen; we are the servants of the Prince of Peace, and we look upon it as sinful to seek either redress or protection from a man-of-war. We trust to God alone, and we can accept of no help from man?" On the contrary, as all the documents detailing the facts of the case, had been lost in the *Acheron*, we agreed unanimously to draw up a brief memorial, giving the names of the parties chiefly implicated in the more recent murders and



outrages committed on Tanna, Erromanga, and Fate, requesting the Commodore to take such steps as he might think best calculated to prevent the repetition of such deeds, and render life and property more safe in time to come. Our brethren had suffered, not only to the spoiling of their goods, but to the loss of their lives, and in our circumstances, we thought it but just to them, to the mission, and to the interests of humanity, to follow up the steps taken in Sydney, and lay a statement of the leading facts before the representative of the British government, for his information and guidance. The Commodore evinced a most friendly spirit; but said he could do nothing without interpreters; he could do nothing without first letting the natives understand distinctly what his object and intentions were. He said also, that he would like the *Dayspring* to accompany him, that he might have the benefit of Captain Fraser's experience, when necessary, to act as pilot. With these apparently reasonable requests we felt it our duty to comply. Mr. Paton was appointed to interpret at Tanna, Mr. Gordon at Erromanga, and Mr. Morrison at Fate. The meeting also appointed me to accompany the party in the *Dayspring*, to give any assistance that I could.

I come now to state the most important facts of all, namely, what was done. At each of the islands the Commodore got on board, or met on shore, the principal chiefs near the harbour, and through the interpreters explained to them the object of his visit, that it was to enquire into the complaints which British subjects had against them, and to hear if they had any complaints against British subjects. The Queen had not sent him, he said, to compel them to become christians, or to punish them because they had not become christians; she left them to do as they liked in the matter, but she was very angry with them on another account; they had encouraged her subjects to come and live among them, had sold them land, and promised to protect them; yet afterwards they had murdered them, or attempted to murder them, and had stolen or destroyed their property; that the inhabitants of those islands are now talked about over the whole world, for treachery, cruelty, and murder; that the Queen would no longer allow them to murder or injure those of her subjects who were living peaceably among them, either as missionaries or traders; that she would send a ship of war here every year to enquire into their conduct, and to see that her subjects were not molested, while living peaceably among the natives; and that if any white man injured any native, they were to tell the captain of the man-of-war, and the white man would be punished as fast as the black, it was the Queen's word,

that her subjects should do ill to nobody, and that nobody should do ill to them.

At Port Resolution the chief ringleaders in the more recent outrages, were summoned to answer for the charges preferred against them, with certification that, if they did not appear by next day at noon, their villages would be shelled. In the article referred to in the *Record*, Mr. Geddie's wisdom and humanity, in negotiating for the *Pylorus*, are held up in striking contrast to our reckless folly in connexion with the *Caracoa*. Now, without my being aware of how Mr. Geddie had acted on that occasion, it so happened that Mr. Paton and I gave the same, or equally strong, assurances to those summoned that Mr. Geddie had given, but greater guilt had produced greater fear, and they preferred to fight the big ship. Indeed the unfriendly natives were quite in ecstasies of joy about fighting, they boasted of having plenty of guns, powder, and shot, and that it was very good for them to fight. They seemed to think that a party of men would be sent on shore to attack them in their own villages, and that as the fighting would be in the bush, they would soon have the best of it. It was not till every pacific measure failed, and till every precaution was taken to prevent injury to life; not after a warning of two hours only, as the *Record* asserts, but after a warning of nearly two days,—that the Commodore shelled two villages, both of which had been centres of mischief for many a long year, and in both of which gaily parties were living and being protected.—The object was to spare life, but destroy property, and make such a display of power, as should dispel the illusion under which the Tannese, particularly at Port Resolution, had been living for a long time past, that act as they might, especially towards missionaries, and those belonging to them, they would not be called to account.

The loss of life, whatever it may have been, was accidental. By the bursting of a shell, some days afterwards, three natives were killed, and four wounded. The loss of the seaman's life was also accidental.—The party sent ashore were to destroy property, not to attack the natives, and were to confine themselves to one of the villages or districts that had been shelled, and where it was all but certain no natives could be found. But unfortunately they had no native guides; before the firing began, the friendly natives were afraid of acting as guides, lest they should become marked men afterwards, although when the firing was over, and they saw the power of a man of war, any number could have been got.—When the party got into the bush, they took a wrong path which led them beyond the district that had been shelled; there they fell in with a chief and a party of na-

tives from the south side of the island, who had come to take part in the fighting.— These were soon put to flight; but the chief, who had concealed himself in a tree, shot one of the seaman, when it was supposed that all danger was over. An officer ran up to the tree, and cut down the native with his sword; but as he crawled away under some bushes and got out of sight, he was pursued no farther. The Tannese were astonished and awe-struck beyond measure, by those demonstrations of power; they seemed to be like men waking out of a dream; they seemed to have realized for the first time a thorough consciousness of their own weakness in the presence of such overwhelming forces, and that all opposition to such was utterly hopeless. So that, however much the loss of life is to be deplored, it is likely to prove the means of a great saving of life in time to come. From all that I have learned, the conduct of the Tannese at Port Resolution, since that time, has been very different to strangers from what it was formerly. When the *Dayspring* landed our teachers there in November, the natives appeared very humble, and the burden of their talk, was, "Tanna man no more fight white man."

As the same principles were acted on at Erromanga, I need not enter into any further particulars.

The Board need be under no apprehension that we are about to inaugurate new principles, or a new policy, in the way of conducting this mission; or that we are transferring our trust from the living God to place it on an arm of flesh. I can speak with some freedom on this point. I have been a missionary for nearly twenty-three years, I have lived, labored, sailed, and travelled, among the worst of heathens; yet I have never, during all that time, either owned or used either fire arms or lethal weapons of any kind. I am, I believe, as much averse to apply to a man-of-war, as any member of the Board; not that I think it unlawful, but for the most part it is inexpedient and unavailing. It is in general so little that a man-of-war can do. Their visits are few and far between, and when they do come, it is next to impossible to reach the guilty parties. Even in islands that are christianized, it is often difficult to do so; but it is greatly more so when the natives are heathen. Some years ago H. M. S. *Cordelia* lay about six weeks in Samoa, and destroyed several hundred pounds worth of native property, before they could apprehend a chief who had killed a white man. If an attempt is made to punish them through their property, they have so little that there is scarcely any thing that can be destroyed. Hence it is seldom that any thing effectual can be done, and unless something effectual can be done, it

is better to attempt nothing, to attempt and fail only aggravates the evil. But in the present instance, on Tanna especially, there was a combination of circumstances which rendered the course pursued fully justifiable. the punishment was not only just, but likely to be followed by beneficial consequences. It was not a crusade to force missionaries and christianity on the Tannese; it was a demonstration of power in the interests of justice and humanity, and one that is likely to render life and property much more secure in time to come. The justice of the proceedings would be recognized all over Tanna.

There is a principle involved in this question, ignored I think by the *Record*, but which I should be unwilling to surrender. The *Record* evidently holds that missionaries ought never to apply to their own government for protection against the heathen, or for redress of grievances. But if magistracy is an ordinance of God, if the magistrate bears the sword that he may be a terror to evil doers; and if all governments protect their own subjects in all lands, as far as they are able, are missionaries alone of all men to be regarded as a kind of outlaws? Is the gospel of Christ such a spiritual unearthly thing, that all earthly protection must be withdrawn from the messengers who bear it? In the middle ages, the left hand extreme to which the Church of Rome held, was to get her clergy exempt from all civil punishment. In these days it would appear that a right hand extreme to which we are to be pushed, is this, that missionaries are to be debarred from all civil protection. A christian certainly never forfeits the rights of a man. When I became a missionary, it never once occurred to me, that I should be expected to forfeit the rights of a British subject, and that it would be unlawful for me on all occasions, as the *Record* seems to teach, to appeal to British authority against the heathen. Paul appealed to Cæsar, and availed himself repeatedly of his privileges as a Roman citizen, to protect himself against his enemies. It has indeed been urged, that Paul appealed for protection only, not for redress of grievances, or for punishment of injuries formerly received. But if Paul, or any missionary, appeal to the magistrate for protection, it makes no difference in the principle, whether it is to be secured by punishment for the past, or threatening for the future; he puts himself under the protection of carnal weapons; the sword may or may not require to be drawn; but it is the fear of the sword, in such a case, that renders his life safe. To restrain from evil by fear, is a principle in the divine government, as well as to draw men to that which is good by love; the same principle is sanctioned in all forms of human govern-

ment—the most ignorant of the heathens understand this principle, as well as the most enlightened of mankind. To appeal in this way may be often inexpedient; but I hold it to be always lawful. I would be slow, very slow, to invoke strong measures; but when, as a last resort, they are felt to be necessary, and have to be employed, I would, so as justice would warrant, have such a blow given, and given in such a manner as would produce the greatest amount of terror, and most effectually secure the end contemplated.

After this statement of facts and principles connected with this case, it is for the Board to decide, to what extent we are blameworthy in the course we have followed, or to what extent we have been misrepresented and unjustly censured in the official organ of the mission. It is not the first time in my missionary life that I have been misunderstood, misrepresented, and censured without just cause; yet afterwards in the providence of God fully vindicated. I trust it will yet be so in the present case.—I have implicit faith in God's over-ruling providence; I have great faith in the principles of Christian men; I have the utmost confidence in the Mission Board; I believe the Board to be morally incapable of intentionally cherishing an uncharitable thought, far less of uttering an uncharitable word, against any one connected with this mission. But our position here was very peculiar; a position particularly liable to be misunderstood and misrepresented. When the Board had before them only the scanty information supplied at first by the missionaries, and the very incorrect and grossly exaggerated accounts published at first in Sydney, it was very natural that their fears should be excited, their minds perplexed, and their utterances hasty; but when they fully understand the facts of the case, and the principles on which we acted, I feel confident we shall receive ample justice at their hands, for "charity never faileth."

I remain, my dear Sir,

Yours very truly,

JOHN INGLIS.

P. S.—*June 1.*—Since writing the above, the *Dayspring* has returned from Fate and Erromanga. Mr. McCullagh and I afterwards accompanied her to Fotuna, Aniwa, and Tanna. If the most satisfactory consequences can be accepted as a vindication of the proceedings of the *Curacoa*, then the course pursued last year may be regarded as amply vindicated. On all the five islands, from Tanna to Fate, the effects for good have been most striking. This year the natives, in most places, are almost like a different race; the wicked and ill-disposed are laid under restraint, and the well-inclined and well-disposed can act up to their

inclinations. The *Dayspring* lay for two days and two nights at Port Resolution, as quietly, and with as little apprehension or danger, as if she had been anchored at Aneiteum. As appears to me, our expected brethren will reach the field at a very favourable juncture. May we all have grace given us to improve it wisely! J. I.

#### LETTER FROM REV. DR. GEDDIE.

ANEITEUM, NEW HEBRIDES, }  
Dec. 26th, 1866. }

*My Dear Sir,*—I have read Mr. Inglis' letter to you, in answer to the article on the *Curacoa's* visit to Tanna, &c., which appeared in the February number of the *Home and Foreign Record*. I regret to see my name introduced into that letter, in a way which it would be improper to pass over without notice. If my friend thought that he had been injured by me in connection with the offensive article, he ought to have stated his charges frankly, and not chosen the mode of attack which he has done. In this instance, at least, he has departed from his favorite principle of acting only on the "defensive."

The article of which Mr. Inglis complains was written after I left Nova Scotia; and I was not aware before my departure that such a thing was in prospect. It overtook me in Britain, and when I read it there I did not know the author of it, and only obtained this knowledge from a private letter. I certainly did not *knowingly* furnish material to the author for it. It seems to be based partly on the letters of the missionaries whose conduct it denounces; but chiefly on my own letters to the Board of Missions, on my journals which the author had in his possession for a time, and on conversations with myself about the New Hebrides mission. The writer must have had most, if not all his information about the islands, long before the startling tidings of the *Curacoa's* visit reached home. It is not my habit to speak or write at random about our mission, and I now assume the responsibility of all information obtained from me, and challenge the most rigid investigation of it. The writer has I believe stated the naked truth, in strong, and sometimes offensive language, and I am sure that no-

thing but a deep concern for the spirituality of the Redeemer's cause, and a fear that the mission was verging to a worldly policy, has led him to express sentiments as painful to himself, as they have been wounding to others. The appearance of the article was no doubt premature, and a little delay might have averted difficulties which have since arisen. Had the missionaries been fully consulted about the *Curacoa's* visit, before any public expression of opinion had been given, this would have fully removed all ground of complaint on their part. I regret also, that in so serious a matter, you did not consult the Mission Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, who are wise and good men, and the result might have been such a united expression of opinion about past events, as would be beneficial to the cause in all time to come. The attention of all parties is now diverted to some extent from the great question itself, to the manner in which it has been dealt with.

It would be tedious to enter into all the details of Mr. Inglis' long letter, but there are some things in it which seem to require notice. I regret first of all that there is such an unsparing use of the expressions, "ignorance," "exaggeration," "misrepresentation," "want of charity," &c. If there were no want of christian courtesy in the use of such language, it comes with ill-grace from the writer, as many of his own statements, taken at second-hand, turn out to be incorrect. I am sure that if the letter were re-written it would appear in a modified form. I object, moreover, to the manner in which Mr. Inglis writes about the case of Rangî. He says, "Mr. Gordon himself, from facts which have come to his knowledge, is now satisfied that Rangî did not instigate the murder." I asked Mr. Gordon, in the presence of Mr. Inglis and some other brethren, if he had ever made such a statement as the above. His answer was, that he was not aware of saying anything from which such an inference could be drawn; he confirmed all that Mr. Copeland and I had charged him with; he even went further, and said that it was not Rangî's fault that his brother was not killed

sooner. The late Mr. Gordon once remarked to me on Erromanga, that he had more to fear from that man, than from any other cause, and his fears were unhappily realized. I think, also, that Mr. Inglis has done injustice to the natives in the recital of their cruel deeds. We are told of the murders of white men by these islanders, but we are not told that in almost every instance those deeds were intended to revenge similar cruelties on themselves. Capt. Erskine, of H.M.S. *Zavanna*, who visited these islands some years ago, and enquired into the massacres committed by them, was of opinion that in most cases our own countrymen were the aggressors, and provoked the vengeance of the natives. The islanders are no doubt dark, degraded, and cruel savages, but we ought not to make them worse than they really are. If natives do not receive justice from missionaries, where can they expect to find it. I have had far more intercourse with the savages of these islands than my missionary brother, and I would be slow to endorse his views of them. It is true that they have much innate cruelty, and are ready to plunge into every crime of which human nature is capable, but it is equally true that when we acquire their confidence, so far as to convince them that we are their friends and not their enemies, we have comparatively little to fear from them. They are human beings, and have reason, conscience and feeling; and need only the word and grace of God to make them what we are ourselves.

There was no part of Mr. Inglis' letter that I read with more surprise than the following statement, "My firm impression was, from all that I knew of Mr. Geddie's sentiments, that in this case, had he been present, and in our circumstances, he would have acted just as we did." I am not aware that I have ever said or done anything to warrant such an impression as this. My views on the subject of calling in men-of-war to our aid are stated in the June number of the *Home and Foreign Record* for 1863, which Mr. Inglis receives, but which he may not have read. I beg to make the following extract on the subject, "The interference of men-of-war with the natives

at our desire would be a positive calamity to our mission. Our enterprise is one of mercy and not of judgment, and we forget our high office when we invoke the vengeance of earthly power on the benighted natives around us. If we would succeed among these islanders we must draw them with the cords of love, and beware of everything that would repel them. The rebuke of Christ to the two disciples who wished fire from heaven to consume their enemies is always memorable, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." My own practise has always been in accordance with my views. During the early years of the Aneiteum mission I passed through many perils, and suffered the los. of property also; but the idea of requesting a man-of-war to punish the natives never occurred to my mind, and no complaint was ever made by me. I may state also that after the death of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon on Erromanga, when Commodore Seymour spoke of shelling the district in which the murderers lived, I opposed this on the ground that the natives had acted under the influence of surperstition and at the instigation of others, and so instead of being "greatly disappointed that nothing was done at Erromanga," I was greatly pleased that no punishment was inflicted on the natives. I think the general impression of missionaries and others who know me is, that I would have taken no part in late events if I had been here at the time. The first missionary of the London Society who wrote me after the *Curacoa's* visit to Tanna, says, "I do not think that you would have gone on such an expedition." A sandal wood trader, in speaking to me lately on the same subject, said, "This would not have happened if you had been here." It is due to Mr. Inglis to say that the subject was not a practical one before he left the islands for Britain, and there was little said about it after his return.

I come now to speak of the *Curacoa's* visit to the islands, and I shall confine my remarks to her doings on Tanna; as this is the only island on which anything effective was done. At the time of her arrival the

missionary brethren were holding their annual meeting on Aneiteum. They felt it to be their duty to present a memorial to Commodore Wiseman stating grievances against the natives, and asking for the redress of these; they wished him also to take such steps as he might deem proper to render life and property more safe in time to come. The brethren saw their way more clear to this, because they understood that a request had already been presented by this mission to the Governor-General of New South Wales for a man-of-war to visit these islands, and investigate the murders and outrages committed on them. I understood, says Mr. Inglis, that "Mr. Geddie and every member of the mission then in the field concurred in it;" and this was the understanding of others also. This must refer to a memorial signed by Mr. Copeland and myself in which there is a simple request for the removal of a dangerous British subject from Erromanga, and there is not a word of complaint against the natives in it. Our brethren could scarcely have entered on so serious a matter as calling in a man-of-war under more disadvantageous circumstances. All the events complained of against the Tannese had taken place before Messrs. Morrison, Gordon and McCullagh had arrived at the islands; and most of them during the absence of Mr. Inglis to Britain. It was most unfortunate that Mr. Paton, the chief complainant, should have been alone at such a time, for we know that from the depressing effects of disease and harassing trials, he was often led to take too gloomy a view of passing events. All parties we believe acted for the best, and if any error has been committed their peculiar circumstances must be the excuse.

The missionaries having prepared their memorial waited on the Commodore, who courteously received them, and promised to do every thing in his power to carry out their wishes. As he could not hold intercourse with the natives he requested that some of their number should act as interpreters, and that the *Dayspring* should go in company also. These requests being acceded to the expedition sailed for the island

of Tanna. On arriving at Port Resolution the chiefs received a summons to go on board of the ship, which they did not obey. The summons was repeated with a threat, but it was unheeded still. The threat drew from the natives a message which amounted to something like a challenge. The Commodore now thought that his honour was at stake, and that he must give the natives a practical demonstration of his power; and so the ship was cleared out for action. A bombardment was commenced which lasted for some hours, during which nearly two hundred shots were fired from large guns, besides hosts of rifle shots, and a proportionate number of rockets. A party was also sent on shore to "destroy canoes, houses, plantations, and property of every description that was accessible." The whole scene is described by the spectators as grand, impressive and terrible. I am sure that my missionary brethren must have felt themselves for once out of their proper element; and more than the Tannese will be inclined to say that Rom. x. 15 would be inappropriate to them at the time, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." The effect of all this display of physical power was the destruction of a large amount of property, from which the Tannese will suffer for years to come. This would have been bad enough, but we have to deplore the loss of life also. One man belonging to the ship was shot by a native who had concealed himself in a tree. A native was cut down also, and thought to be killed, but has since recovered from his wounds. Three natives were instantly destroyed by the bursting of an unexploded shell after the ship left, and some others were wounded. The wife of one of the men killed by the shell went and hanged herself from respect or grief for her husband. A few months later the daughter of a friendly chief who had assisted the missionaries to interpret was shot to revenge his conduct, and he was severely beaten. Such are the results of the *Curacoa's* visit to Tanna, and her achievements there will add but little to the lustre of the British name. I ought to mention that my brethren decline the responsi-

bility of what has been done. They consider that their duty ended when their complaint was made, and that the Commodore is responsible for the rest. This melancholy case teaches solemn lessons, and if we had no higher considerations for our guidance, it ought to make us pause before we invoke a power to our aid over which we have no control.

The question now arises why were the Tannese so severely dealt with? One charge against them is breach of promise to protect their missionary. If this means a promise of protection against enemies outside of the tribe in whose district he lived, no such promise was ever made. Indeed the late Mr. Gordon would have been settled at Port Resolution had not Miaki the chief positively refused all protection against neighbouring tribes. I made arrangements about the settlement of Mr. Paton before his arrival on the islands, and all that I asked of the chief was that his people should not molest him. As far as I know of the history of the mission he adhered to the spirit of this request to the last.

Another charge against the Tannese is the destruction of human life. The first case is that of Vasa, a Samoan teacher, who, during the prevalence of a fatal disease, was waylaid by some natives and killed, under the impression that the new religion was the cause of it. The deed was committed more than twenty years ago when Tanna was the mission field of the London Missionary Society. As the brethren of that Society had made no complaint against the natives, respect for their views and feelings should have prevented the revival of this case after such a lapse of time. Another case, mentioned in a letter of one of the missionaries, is the murder of a white man at Port Resolution. This happened before Mr. Paton left Scotland for the islands. I was there a few days after the deed took place. The account given to me was as follows:—"The white man had a quarrel with one of the chiefs about some trifle, and angry words passed between them. The former seized his gun and aimed it at the native, but the gun missed fire. He next raised the gun to strike him,

but the native evaded the blow. The latter then threw a piece of iron at the white man which struck him on the head, and the wound inflicted was so severe that he died soon after." The man who was killed is reported to have treated the natives with much harshness, and he was obliged to flee from Erromanga only a few weeks before for shooting a native of that island. Capt. Vernon of H. M. S. *Cordelia* visited the islands soon after, and upon enquiry in the case dismissed it. His opinion evidently was that the deed was a justifiable homicide. He said in my hearing that if white men treated natives so they must abide by the consequences. The last case of violence was an assault on an Aneiteum teacher.—A stone was one day thrown at him by a heathen native. He was in a decline at the time, and the blow received may have accelerated his death. The chiefs of the village to which the offender belonged seized him, tied him hand and foot, which is a disgraceful punishment among natives, and then sent for Mr. Paton to come and see what they had done. They asked the missionary if the punishment inflicted were sufficient, or if they should increase it. He expressed himself satisfied, gave the man some good advice, and either requested that he should be released, or released him with his own hands. These are the murders charged against the people of Port Resolution—the first committed more than twenty years ago—the second disposed of by a British officer—and the third punished by the native authorities. Had a full statement of these cases, especially the two latter, been given, no British Commander would have risked his reputation, perhaps something more, by interfering with matters already settled. There has been no white man killed at or around Port Resolution, so far as I am aware, (except the case already noticed,) from the time that Capt. Cook visited that place in 1794 until the arrival of the *Curacoa* in 1865. The story of twenty or thirty Europeans being killed and eaten by the natives within the last few years, which I heard both in Scotland and Australia, and which reconciled the minds of many excellent people to late events, is a cruel fiction.

The last charge against the Tannese is the destruction of Mr. Paton's property. This occurred during a civil war among the natives. The residence of Mr. Paton on Tanna had nothing to do with that war. The friends and enemies of the mission were united on opposite sides. It so happened that the mission premises were on the borders of two districts which is the usual fighting ground of the natives. Our teachers affirm that when war was inevitable, the chief Miaki went to Mr. Paton, told him that their enemies were coming to fight

them, and advised him to leave his premises, and offered also to remove his property to a place of safety; but he would not consent, as he thought the natives intended to steal. The chief's warning soon proved to be true, for war broke out, and Mr. Paton was obliged to leave his house, which was afterwards broken into and his property stolen, with the exception of a portion saved by the teachers and natives, and afterwards brought to this island. Mr. Paton says that he has no recollection of the chief's warning to him, but it is quite possible that many things may have escaped his memory amidst accumulated trials, when he expected every hour to be his last. I may state here that Nauka, the present chief of Port Resolution, went after night, at personal risk, and nailed up Mr. Paton's house after he left to save his property, and the latter is now aware of this fact. This man is one of the chiefs whose district was laid waste by the *Curacoa*. He was punished for the destruction of property which he made every effort to save. This is one of the dark features connected with that memorable visit. I regret, for the sake of our character as christian missionaries, that so much has been said about the loss of property on Tanna, which after all was not a very serious affair. It would be much better for the churches engaged in the mission to give aid, when worldly losses occur, rather than have so uncongenial a subject so much obtruded on public notice. I may just add that the late Mr. Johnston, one of our missionaries, had only been a few months on the islands when he died. He had not been long dead when his widow lost her outfit, and nearly all that belonged to her, by a destructive fire on this island, the work of an incendiary. In her case complaint might have been excusable, but no person in or out of the mission ever heard the language of murmuring from her lips. She took joyfully the spoiling of her goods; and so little was said about the matter, that few friends of the mission seem to know or remember any thing about it. This is the true spirit of the christian missionary.

These are the crimes for which the Tannese were punished; and most persons looking at the ignorance, deep degradation, and misery of the natives, will be inclined to say that missionaries, instead of calling for vengeance on them, would only be following the example of Christ and of his inspired apostles, had they said, "forgive them for they know not what they do."

I regret that Mr. Inglis should have misunderstood Mr. Copeland and myself, when we proposed the removal of Mr. Paton from Tanna for a time. We never intended the suspension of the mission, but the reverse. I know too much about the anxieties, dangers, and trials of opening up new stations

on these islands, to be willing hastily to abandon them. It was evident, however, that the island was in a very unsettled state, and that there were prejudices against the missionaries which impaired their usefulness. Under these circumstances, we thought that if Messrs. Paton and Matheson would make this island their head quarters for a season, it would be a positive advantage to the cause. Our proposal was that the teachers should take charge of the mission premises, and carry on the work to the best of their ability, while the missionaries, having the *John Knox* at their disposal, might visit them often, and direct their labors. Their partial absence we hoped would cause the natives to value their presence more, and lead them to invite their return to the island. The Bishop of New Zealand, whom Mr. Inglis approvingly quotes, would not have dissented from this plan, for it would only be carrying out his own favourite idea of a floating mission, and his objection to our mission is that we risk too much. Had our advice been taken, the Tanna mission would probably not have been broken up, and we should have escaped many of the troubles which have since befallen us. To justify the course which Mr. Paton took in declining the advice given to him, Mr. Inglis adduces the case of Paul, who went from Cesarea to Jerusalem, in opposition to the views of his missionary brethren: he might have told us also, that the same apostle fled from Iconium to Lystra and Derbe, when he knew that there was a plot against him; and he no doubt did what was right in both cases. We wanted neither an obstinate resistance among a dark minded and irritable people against their expressed wishes, nor a disastrous flight; it was a middle course which we proposed, and we had scripture authority for this also. When Paul's enemies followed him to Berea, and stirred up the people against him, "the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to sea; but *Silas and Timothy abode there still.*" It has always been a matter of regret to me, that Mr. Paton, who suffered so much for the Tannese, should have made such a smash up of the mission when he left there. Our venerable teacher Abraham told me, on his return to this island, that Miaki, the chief, wished a teacher to remain, expressed his belief that there was little or no danger to fear, and said that he was willing to go back to Tanna, if we thought it his duty to do so. It is no easy matter, however, to re-establish a mission after it has been broken up.

I am sorrow that Mr. Inglis speaks so lightly about what he calls the "frowns and censures" of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society. These islands were transferred to us by these brethren with the

understanding that our missions should be conducted according to the principles on which they act, as far as peculiar circumstances admit. Any serious departure from these I should regard as a breach of moral obligation. My missionary brother flatters himself that all is right, because no expression of disapproval of late events, either official or private, has come from that quarter. Some men would be inclined to regard this silence as ominous. I happen to know the views of many of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society about the *Curacoa's* visit to the New Hebrides, and there is but one feeling of deep and intense regret that our mission should have been identified with her doings. After what Mr. Inglis has written, I would be doing injustice to these brethren to withhold all information about their views. An excellent brother of that Society writes as follows; "We have all been deeply grieved on account of the sad, sad doings at Tanna last year. Oh! is it not deplorable that our missionary brethren should have involved themselves in proceedings so entirely alien to the spirit that should characterize us as the servants of Him who declared that He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them? Nothing, I think, so deplorable has ever occurred in connection with our mission in these seas, and bitter will be the fruits for years to come. I was greatly rejoiced at the noble protest of your Church," &c. The *Curacoa's* doings do not appear to be regarded with much favor even by men of the world. It is true that the Admiralty have approved of Commodore Wiseman's punishment of the Tannese, under the impression, no doubt, that they have been guilty of atrocities, which have yet to be proved against them. A gentleman, however, who read the dispatch, says that the approval is of the most qualified nature. It expresses strong doubts as to the expediency of such a vigorous mode of dealing with a savage people, which may defeat rather than promote the security of European life and property among them. It wisely suggests that if white men cannot live safely on one island, they should just remove to another. An injunction is given also to those in Her Majesty's service to be more cautious about interfering with such matters in time to come. Another of H. M. Ships visited these islands shortly before my return, the Captain of which disapproves of the manner in which the Tannese have been dealt with. His views coincide with those of the missionaries of the London Missionary Society with whom he had previous intercourse. He says that whatever explanation may be given of that affair, it will always be regarded as a missionary war, and this he considers a contradiction in language. When one of



the brethrn spoke of his rights as a British subject, he said that he ought to take higher ground, and remember that he was a christian missionary. As Mr. Inglis has quoted authorities to vindicate the course which he has taken, he cannot find fault with me, when I avail myself of a similar privilege.

I must now say, that I believe the punishment of the Tannese was a great, but unintentional mistake. My missionary brethren never could have anticipated the fearful results, or they would never have invoked the interposition of a man-of-war. As this is the first thing of the kind that happened in the mission, so I hope that it will be the last. The weapons of our warfare in the glorious work to which we have devoted ourselves, must be spiritual, and not carnal. We shall do far more to subdue, humanize and elevate these natives with Bibles in our hands, than with the whole British navy at our backs. It is the grace of God alone which can change the disposition of the heart, and bring these savage islanders, clothed and in their right mind, to the feet of Jesus.

The Tannese have much of my sympathy under the disasters which have befallen them. I visited them for years before they had any missionary of their own, and their treatment of me was all that I could expect from a heathen people. They have not been guilty of any crimes to warrant the severe punishment inflicted on them. I regret the bombardment of Tanna because this proceeding seems to be opposed to the teaching and example of Christ, who did "not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." His kingdom is not of this world, and the gospel is the only instrument which his servants are warranted to employ in the extension of his cause on earth. Our holy religion uniformly breathes a spirit of benevolence, and designs good to all men, and injury to none. I regret the bombardment of Tanna, because it may endanger, rather than add to the security of life and property on these islands. A missionary at Port Resolution and some other vulnerable points may be safer than before; but this temporary advantage will not compensate for the insecurity which it will cause in other places, where no man-of-war can reach the people. I believe that I am correct in saying that for more than eight years previous to the visit of the *Curacoa* not more than five Europeans had been killed in the New Hebrides, but she had not been away from the islands more than sixteen months, when the same number were cut down by the natives. The exercise of physical power is far more likely to irritate than soothe the passions of savage men. The excellent Bishop Pattison, speaking of missionaries, says, "their very defencelessness is their

best protection;" and my own opinion is that the less these islanders have to fear from us, the less we have to fear from them. I regret the bombardment of Tanna because it endangers our friendly relations with the London Society's missionaries who have still a deep interest in the New Hebrides group. They have in no instance resorted to harsh measures with the natives. After the death of Mr. Williams on Erromanga a man-of-war was sent to the islands to punish the deed, but the missionaries on Samoa would not consent to this, so the ship made a pacific visit, and recovered some of the bones of the martyred missionary, which are now buried on Samoa.—The Rev. Messrs. Turner and Nisbet were likewise driven from Tanna, and their perils were great, and their worldly losses considerable; but they cheerfully endured all for Jesus's sake and the gospels'. I may add also that no less than six devoted teachers, four women and two children from Samoa and Raratonga, in the service of the London Missionary Society, have found martyr's graves on the New Hebrides, but there has been no call for vengeance on the natives. I regret the bombardment of Tanna also, because this act sweeps away at one stroke the character which we have been endeavouring for years to establish as ambassadors of the Prince of Peace. Natives walk by sight, rather than by faith, and understand actions better than words. We may now tell these islanders that we come to them with a message of love, but the case of Tanna will arise in their minds. The mission on these islands has now a character to redeem, as well as a character to maintain.

I must now close my long letter. It has been a matter of deep regret to me that my name has been dragged into this unhappy controversy. I hoped to return to the work which I love without any public expression of opinion about events which occurred during my absence. The past, whether right or wrong, cannot be recalled, and the sooner it is sunk into oblivion the better. Instead, therefore, of indulging in uncharitable reflections on any party, let us rather endeavour to eclipse the warlike visit of the *Curacoa* to Tanna, by a bold, an earnest, and a prayerful effort, to give these poor islanders the gospel, which brings peace on earth, and good will towards men.

Ever yours, &c.,

JOHN GEDDIE.

Rev. James Bayne, D.D., Sec. B. F. M.,  
P. C. L. P.

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