

*Deputation of London Missionary Society to Marsden*

Huahine Oct. 26 – 1822

Rev<sup>d</sup> & Dear Sir

Though more than a Twelvemonth has elapsed since our arrival at the Society islands, and one or two Ships have sailed from thence to the Colony within that period, yet we have to regret, that no oppertunity [sic] has been given us till now of doing ourselves the pleasure of writing you. You have been apprised we doubt not that we have the honour of visiting these Islands on a deputation from the London Missionary Society. We sailed from England in May 1821 and after a Voyage of only four months and four days through a kind providence we landed on the Shores of Tahiti in safety and in health. After remaining a few Weeks on that Island, we proceeded to Huahine where we commenced our important undertaking with an intention after we have visited the different Missionary stations in the Leeward Islands, of returning again to the Windward, to Tahiti and Eimeo. While here, in February 1822 The Mermaid Cutter Capt Kent arrived with a Schooner as a present from the British Government to the King of Owhyhee when an opportunity was given us of visiting the Sandwich Islands on our way to the Marquesas, where we intended to leave some natives of this island to attempt to introduce the Gospel among them, and prepare the way for some Missionaries who we hoped might soon follow. Such was our arrangements; but God had other designs to answer by our visit to Owhyhee. We arrived there in the Month of April. The King being then at the Island of Woahoo (properly called Oahu) we

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proceeded thither where we met with the kindest reception from His Majesty and also from the [f] American Missionaries who had resided there something more than two years. We remained with these excellent persons about four months, during which time we had an opportunity [sic] of taking a leisurely view of the state of things in those interesting Islands. More than two years before the King and the people had turned from dumb Idols; but alas! We found them in a state of gross Heathanism [sic]; for they had not turned to the living and true God—Darkness covered the Earth, and gross Darkness all the people. Yet that fine Missionary field appeared white to the Harvest, all prepared of the Lord to be reaped but the labourers were few and as yet unacquainted with the language of the people, and of course unable to declare unto them the wonderful works of God, excepting through the medium of an interpreter. (Mr Ellis, one of our pious and worthy Missionaries in this island, and whom you probably recollect, accompanied us, In the course of two months he was able to preach fluently and acceptably in the Owhyhean Language, so strongly does it resemble the Tahitian, when great attention was excited to the Gospel. We had the pleasure of seeing congregations of four or five hundred Natives attending with great decency and apparent seriousness to the word, among whom were the king, his wives and most of the principal chiefs. We also had the pleasure to see a concern discover itself to learn to read among them from the King down to the lowest orders of Society to a considerable extent. One most interesting visit terminated in a request made by the

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King, the principal Chiefs, the people and the American Missionaries for Mr Ellis and one of the persons and his wife, whom we intended to have left at the Marquesas, to settle among them and join that Mission. The path of duty was obvious and with great pleasure we consented to gratify a wish that [f] was so generally expressed. We have every reason to hope that Mr Ellis and his pious coadjutors, natives of this island will prove extensive blessings in that wife and promising Sphere of Missionary Labour.— Mr E. returned with us, and will with his family, we hope soon enter upon his new field of exertion. We had a tedious, yet merciful voyage back again to this island, where we arrived at the beginning of the Month. Before we reached it, driven by winds to our views, contrary, we had an opportunity [sic] of visiting a small Island in the Neighbourhood called Rurutu into which the Gospel was introduced about fifteen Months before by our Missionaries; and we rejoiced to find the people in so desirable a state. In this short time they have built a large and comfortable place of worship, where nearly the whole population of the island attend with the greatest propriety. They are all under instruction, and have for their teachers pious Natives from the island of Raiatia [sic]. Had not our eyes witnessed the change, it is so surprising that we should have felt it difficult to give credit to a mere description of it. Surely we may exclaim, what has God wrought! He has done great things for them whereof we are Glad. We have not yet seen all the Missionary stations in the Society islands, but we have seen enough to fill our hearts with Joy and gladness, and to be able to

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assure you that the descriptions which we heard of this mighty change in our own country is far exceeded by the fact. We have nearly completed our visit to this favoured Island, and are able to speak as to its spiritual and moral condition. We do not mean to speak of society here as having arrived at perfection.— No— Human Nature is the same every where. But we can assure you that religion is in the most flourishing state— The Lords day is universally regarded— a spacious place of worship, 100 ft by 65 is filled three times every Sabbath and numerous attended several times in the Week— All the people are in a state of religious and moral instruction— [f] Crimes are few and paltry— Civilization goes hand in hand with religion— a large and flourishing Town is growing up rapidly at the Missionary Settlement, where the far greater part of the Inhabitants of this island reside— The Houses are neat and comfortable, built after European style— plastered & white washed. Many of them are furnished with sofas and other conveniencies [sic] which the people themselves, have manufactured for their own use. The influence of the Gospel has reached the whole order of things here, and effected a change so radical, that not a vestige of their former superstitions remains. We feel no difficulty in saying that these islands are the most completely and consistently Christian of any upon the face of the Globe.

Raiatea Nov—12—1822

Since writing the above we have left Huahine, in order to pay our visit at the Missionary Station at Raiatea, where Mess<sup>rs</sup> Threlkeld and Williams are

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labouring in the vineyard of the Gospel. It affords us great pleasure to say, that the same astonishing change has taken place in this Island as that which we have described with reference to Huahine. Religion and Civilization are also here going hand in hand, aiding and adorning each other and confounding all opposition [sic]. The Kings and Chiefs are the foremost in supporting the best of causes. This is one of the Singular and extraordinary characteristics of this Mighty work. The only opposition that the present order of things has to contend with, arises from Thirty or Forty persons in Each island, generally profligate young men, who, though they do not wish to return to the Idolatrous System desire to put down all Law and order that they may abandon themselves to every evil work without restraint or punishment. But what is singular, [f] even these persons attend generally the public ordinances of Religion, and keep up family prayer in their Houses. Some Ships, we hear. Have lately touched [sic] at Tahiti – and have done much harm by vending Spirituous Liquors among the people in some places there. Indeed from the commencement of this Mission to the present time, the greatest difficulties have arisen from the presence and influence of our own Countrymen. But we shall not now enter into detail – That we shall reserve till we have the pleasure of seeing you, this pleasure we anticipate after we have completed our visits to all these islands which have embraced the Gospel.

To you Dear Sir, the London Missionary Society, and the Missionaries here, are indebted beyond what it is in their power to express. In you we have ever

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found a steady friend to the Mission. Had not Providence stationed you in N.S. Wales and inclined your heart to take a lively interest in its welfare, long ago, it most probably must have been abandoned and these Islands must have remained in a state of Heathenism. In proceeding in your good work, we are aware you have had to encounter difficulties not a few – but what has been done cannot but afford a satisfaction to your mind more than equal to all the trials which you have met with in supporting this cause. We unite with the Society at Home in the most cordial expressions of gratitude – & we can assure you that our Brethren the Missionaries are most deeply sensible of their obligations to you whom they regard as their warm and steady friend. May the Most High compensate you in a way which it is not in our power to do. –

Since commencing this Letter, we have [f] had the pleasure of receiving a Letter from you by Mr Williams, for which we thank you. We are aware of the difficulties which you have to encounter both in the Colony and in New Zealand – but rejoice to hear that both you and the cause of Missions are likely to find a friend in Sir Tho<sup>s</sup>. Brisbane, to whom we are greatly obliged for his Kind attentions to Mr. Williams, and his friendly expressions towards this Mission.

We are greatly astonished at the mistake which has taken place with reference to the Missionaries here, by a letter from Mr. Hankey to you, forbidding supplies to be forwarded to them from the Colony. The Missionaries were put upon a New plan from the first of January 1821 from which time they were to be

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allowed regular Salaries, and consequently they had a right to order what they thought proper at the Colony or elsewhere, on their own responsibility and the Society had no right to interfere. The goods which we brought out from England were a present from the Society to the Missionaries completely independent of their Salaries - but to hear that you had received Letters from England forbidding supplies to be sent, and saying that ample supplies for the year had been sent by us, fills us with an astonishment which we cannot express. However we are fully assured that it is a mistake on the part of the writer of such Letters - and conceive that he only meant to say, that as the Missionaries were now put upon a new plan, Supplies must be sent them not on the responsibility of the Society, but on their own responsibility. All the Missionaries here have a full right to draw upon the Society for their Salaries in the course of the year, in what way they think proper - & such Bills will always be punctually Honoured.

We suppose that you have been requested by the Treasurer or Secretary of the London Missionary [f] Society to charter a Comfortable Vessel to fetch us from hence to the Colony by about next May (1823). - should there be no such vessel here to your Knowledge about that time by virtue of our agreement with the Society, a Vessel was to be sent for us two years after we left England which was in May 1821. However as our unexpected voyage to Owhyhee [Hawaii] took up Seven Months, we shall not be able to complete our visit to these Islands till about this time Twelvemonth.

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We hope other opportunities of writing you will offer before then - but should they not - & should you know of no Ship here about Nov<sup>r</sup> or Dec<sup>r</sup> 1823 (we are not particular as to a Month or two) you will have the goodness to engage a vessel to fetch us at that time. - As we may wish to detain her to carry us to other Islands, it will be advisable to agree with the Captain or owner, for so much per Week, during the time we may detain the Vessel for such purposes after her arrival here.

To the Captain of the Mermaid Cutter

Cap.<sup>t</sup> Kent we feel ourselves greatly obliged for his Kindness in giving us a passage on board that Vessel to the Sandwich Islands, and back again, and for his obliging Conduct towards us while on the voyage. Should you feel at liberty to speak a good word for him to his Excellency the Governor, we should feel a favour conferred upon ourselves. We feel that an apology is due from us on taking such a liberty - but we feel assured that you will pardon our freedom. We are anxious if possible in some way or other to compensate the Captain for his many Civilities - Sir T. Brisbane will have it in his power to place him in a situation superior to that which he now occupies, and for which we doubt not he possesses Talents & principles worthy of Confidence.

Whenever opportunities offer of [f] writing us while here, we beg the favour of hearing from you - it will afford us great pleasure - We beg that you will present our united regards to M<sup>rs</sup>. Marsden & family. Wishing you much of the



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presence of God, & great success in all your exertions to promote his Glory in the  
Salvation of Men, we beg to assure you, that we are

Rev<sup>d</sup>. & Dear Sir

yours Affectionately

in the bonds of the Gospel

Dan<sup>l</sup>. Tyerman

George Bennet

To

The Rev<sup>d</sup>. S. Marsden

Paramatta

N. S. Wales -