

MISCELLANEOUS.

Written for this Paper.

IN DISTANT SAMOA.

SALREVALU, Savaii, Samoa

February 4th, 1895.

I trust that a few items from the sunny green isles of Samoa will be read and appreciated at least by relatives, our co-laborers in the ministry, both at home and abroad, and by all who are zealously laboring in and praying for the establishment of truth on earth, for the overthrow of the works of darkness, for the fulfillment of all that has been promised through the mouths of holy prophets, both ancient and modern, "that righteousness might sweep the earth as with a flood," and the earth cease to groan because of the wickedness and abomination upon her face," as was promised to father Enoch.

We have just received and read our monthly mail from Zion, dear Zion, home of the free, "where the pure breezes blow and the clear streamlets flow;" yet speaking for my companion and myself we do not "desire to gather with thee" this winter; for here in the southern seas we need no overcoats, no fur-caps, no overshoes to keep "Jack Frost" away. And again we do not feel that it is affliction to bear the vessels of the Lord, and, we learn to have more faith in the promises of the Lord, through His fulfilling unto us so many blessings which have been promised us, our burdens grow lighter and we have more courage and hope to press forward to the goal for which we are all seeking, that we may at least gain admittance into one of the "mansions" which Christ went to prepare for the laborers of His vineyard.

We spent the hallowed day of rest yesterday more pleasantly than we have for many weeks. In our meetings the Lord greatly poured out His Spirit upon both the listeners and the speaker; but strange to all but Latter-day Saints, I believe the speaker was the most blessed, for through him and his words the Spirit flowed to all present. Between and after meetings we read to ourselves and to each other, sermons and missionary's letters, over which we had one of the sweetest and most heavenly feasts I ever experienced. It just seemed that the same Holy Spirit which prompted the Apostles when speaking and the Elders when writing was embodied in their words and came pouring into our souls, which are ever hungry and thirsty for inspiration which is conveyed unto us by the Spirit of truth. Indeed the words of Solomon are fulfilled in our case, when he said: "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." And I dare say it is ten times more so unto us humble wanderers, hunting and fishing for the pure in heart and the true seed of Abraham.

I wish to re-echo from Samoa that even to this distant land the words of Elder Grant struck with force wherein he complained so bitterly of "not being able to persuade even authorities in high standing to keep the Word of Wisdom." I appreciate and sympathize with him from the very bottom of my

heart, and while my companion and I do not drink whisky, tea nor coffee, use tobacco or bad language, we have resolved that Brother Grant nor any one else will ever have an occasion to feel discouraged over us "breaking the Word of Wisdom." And I hope and pray that his words will have some effect to comfort and strengthen other Elders who are in any way disheartened, even as they have strengthened me; and that we nor Brother Grant will ever again be discouraged because of the slowness of the comprehension and the hardness of the hearts of our erring brothers and sisters as well as of those who to their own condemnation will not accept the Gospel of peace, love and righteousness.

Now occurs to my mind a subject which I have thought about, talked about, and read about. Not counting new missionaries just arrived, there are on Samoa twenty Elders and two Sisters. All are engaged from day to day according to instructions and the best light we have, striving to raise this benighted branch of Israel to a knowledge of the Redeemer and His many promises to their fathers in days of old, and although this work has been going on about the same as at present for six or seven years, it seems that the work is in its infancy. Is this not proving that the Lord is more merciful to the remnants of Israel than He is to all the other nations of the earth? From accounts of Elders in the Eastern States, we see that after counties are thoroughly canvassed, they are then left and new ones opened; while here on Samoa we travel the same roads over every week, if we travel that often, but the majority of the time is spent teaching a little primary school of from five to twenty, and preaching the Gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath with very nearly the same few Saints to preach to every Sunday, with once in a while a few strangers present. Thus it can easily be seen that we have to study the Gospel earnestly and do a great deal of praying in order to keep from being discouraged and weary in our labors.

Since our last October conference we have found the natives, as a whole, much more willing to listen to our message, and with more questions to ask than heretofore. And, with most with whom we converse they say they believe our Church is the true one, but it is hard for them to embrace the truth, owing to Samoan custom, which they truthfully say is "faigata lava," (very hard). In many villages the people are compelled to remain Catholic, Protestant, or whatever they are, on penalty of being driven out of the town; with house and property burned and plundered, just as the chiefs of the town see fit. This being the case, I have made it a rule to first try and gain the friendship of leading men of the villages who, as a rule, walk hand in hand with teachers and priests of the towns—they too having learned that to keep the masses together they must obtain and keep the fellowship of "Alis" and "Tulaleles," (chiefs and talkingmen). Those upon whom we have prevailed sufficiently to wish to join the Church always manage to ask, "Will you, and when will you give us a missionary to come and live with us and teach our

children, who are growing up in ignorance?" etc. If you tell them that you will come to visit them often, etc., they very soon decide that they cannot join a Church that is unable to furnish them a preacher and a teacher free. The Samoans seem to think we are out here on a pleasure trip, seeking ease because of the hard times home; and I believe the best thinkers believe that we would gladly furnish them missionaries according to their demands, if they would only "lotu mai," (join the Church). They must think that Mormon Elders are as thick as people in India, and increasing faster, by their acts and talk at times.

We are the best known of all men or animals on Samoa, or the most talked about; for even babies one year old who can only say ten words know us at first sight, although according to their memories they never before saw us. On entering strange villages I have seen babes just beginning to walk call out, "Aue Mamoana," which is literally, "Hurrah Mormons." Thus proving to us beyond all dispute that we are constantly upon the lips of their parents.

The Samoans have been and are ever anxious to hear, believe and scatter broadcast all the lies that are started up by some teachers or hireling priests, about us and what we teach. And above all people upon earth, I believe there are no such gossippers and backbiters as are the Samoans. They will give a caller the very best in the house to eat free and with three scores of smiles, but as soon as the person's back is turned, oh, how they will score him! Yet, for all this, they are a branch of God's covenant children, whom He has declared He would make mighty in the last days, "in the days of wickedness and vengeance." Therefore, as I am a twig of a wild olive tree, grafted in, I hope the Lord will help me to have charity for and assist to redeem fallen Israel; seeing that such great blessings have been conferred upon me and my fathers, having been made heirs of adoption into the new and everlasting covenant, which so long has been broken.

Since we returned from October conference at Fagalii my companion and I have traveled Fridays and Saturdays every week but one, seeking to scatter the seeds of righteousness and truth, and that we might rid our garments of the blood of this sinful, hard-hearing generation in which we are called to labor. Since the 15th of December we have baptized three into the fold, and blessed three. We hope that by or before our April gathering at Fagalii we will have baptized and blessed several more. News came from Tutuila last Friday that five baptisms had been attended to at one branch since leaving Fagalii the middle of October last. Elder Barrus also explained the circumstance of a woman being healed the day she was baptized, who for four months had not stood upon her feet. About a year ago now there was at this place a man healed the day he was baptized, who for five months had been blind. And from time to time very remarkable cases of healing occur through our instrumentality, thus confirming our labors by signs following the believers, to our joy and praise to the Lord, but to the condemnation of those who witness these things and still harden their hearts.

Ever praying for the gathering of Israel and God's blessing upon Zion.

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