

CANNON GEORGE QUAYLE

MY FIRST MISSION

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My First Mission:

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George Q. Cannon

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Preface to the First Edition

The first chapter of this little work I wrote as a sketch for the perusal of the youthful readers of the *Juvenile Instructor*. It was written hastily – as were those which followed it – and without any author's name, or any intention, at the time, of adding any more to it. Afterwards, I concluded to write a series of missionary sketches; but when these were written I did not have any intention of publishing them in their present form. They were penned in a plain, familiar and personal style, for the purpose of securing the interest of young people.

When a youth, it was my good fortune to live in the family of President John Taylor. It was my chief delight in those days, to listen to him and other Elders relate their experience as missionaries. Such conversations were very fascinating to me. They made a deep impression upon me. The days of which they spoke, were the days of poverty, when Elders traveled without purse and scrip, among strange people who were ignorant of our principles, and too many of whom were ready to mob and persecute. They traveled by faith, and were pioneers for the Lord in strange lands, and He was their only reliance. Their missions

were rich in instances of His power exhibited in their behalf. What I heard strengthened my faith and increased the desire in my heart to be a missionary. No calling was so noble in my eyes as that of a standard-bearer of the gospel.

The thought which prompts me to publish *My First Mission* is that perhaps it may have the effect upon some of the youth of Zion that the recitals of faithful Elders had upon me. I hope that this will soon be followed by other little volumes of this, the *Faith-Promoting Series*. I have thought that the missionary spirit did not burn as brightly in some of our young men as it should – that they did not understand the value of human souls in the sight of the Lord and the precious rewards which He bestows upon those who seek, in the proper way, to save them. And yet there never was greater need of faithful men as missionaries than there is to-day. “The field is white already to harvest,” and there is no limit in the field to the opportunities of those who desire to labor.

If this little work shall have the effect to awaken and strengthen the missionary spirit, if the remembrance of its incidents, shall comfort the hearts and promote the faith of any when they go upon missions, the utmost desire will be gratified of

The Author

September 1879

Preface to the Second Edition

Two-and-a-half years have elapsed since the first edition of *My First Mission* was published. It was the first work of the kind issued, and the success of the venture, financially, was by no means certain at that time. It is not too much to say now, that our most sanguine expectations in commencing the publication of the *Faith-Promoting Series* have been more than realized. *My First Mission* soon became popular; the 6,000 copies of the first edition are all disposed of, and there is a demand for more. Four other volumes of the same series have also been issued, and received with equal favor; indeed, it seems that each volume issued creates a taste for another. We expect very soon to issue the sixth volume of the series and that will be followed by others as fast as our circumstances will permit. The good that has already been accomplished by these books, if we may accept the numerous testimonies we are constantly receiving, cannot be estimated; and yet we feel that the work in this direction has only just commenced. That it may continue until such works will abound in the midst of the Saints, and until the youth will be influenced by them to live lives of purity and perform deeds of righteousness, is the earnest desire of

The Publisher

March 1882

Chapter 1

Timidity When Attempting to Speak in Public –
Determination to Persevere, Relying Upon God – Assuring
Manifestation of the Presence of the Spirit of God

The writer will probably never forget his first attempts at speaking in public. While yet a youth he was ordained one of the Seventy Elders. The quorum of which he became a member was organized the day he was ordained, and he was chosen to be its clerk. At the meetings of the quorum it was the custom of those of the Presidents who were present to make a few remarks, and then the members were called upon to speak.

On such occasions he would get so nervous that he would have to stop writing some time before it came his turn to speak; and then, when he did get up, he scarcely knew what he said, his fright was so great.

He constantly suffered from this feeling of fear whenever he attempted to speak at quorum meetings, or testimony meetings, and in fact, for some time after starting on a preaching mission.

There was one resolve that he made in the beginning, which he always kept, and which he desires to impress upon every boy and girl in Zion.

He made up his mind that, whenever called upon, he would, with the help of the Lord, always ask a blessing, or pray, or speak,

and not try to excuse himself.

No matter how many have been present, nor how awkward and frightened he has felt, he has always done what was requested of him. But how many times he has seen young men and women decline to speak and to pray when called upon! He has both pitied and felt ashamed for them.

Such persons acquire a habit of *balking*, and *balky* men and women are as bad in their places as balky horses are in theirs.

Many persons think that because they are bashful, and are not in the habit of asking a blessing or praying aloud that, therefore, they can excuse themselves when called upon to do so. But right-feeling people admire boys and girls, young men and young women, who have the courage and good manners to comply with a request of this kind, even if they should make awkward blunders, far more than they would if they refused to do so.

What is called bashfulness is frequently nothing more than pride. Those who are troubled with it are generally anxious to appear to advantage; they desire the approbation of their fellows; and the fear that they will say or do something that will not come up to the standard, oppresses them and makes them nervous.

The first time the writer was called upon to speak to a mixed congregation of Saints and inquirers he was in the company of nine Elders. There were only two or three of them who had ever spoken in public; but as he was the youngest of the party, and felt that he was but a boy, he thought they would all be called upon before him. To his surprise, however, the Elder who was

presiding called first upon him.

True to his resolve, he arose and commenced. For two or three, or probably five minutes, he did pretty well. Then he got confused, his ideas were in a jumble, and he forgot all he ever knew. If the bottom had dropped out of his memory, it could not have been worse. He sat down, feeling a little ashamed; but not discouraged. He was on a mission, and he was determined not to back down and fail. But it is very mortifying to get up to speak and then break down.

After this, he took a three weeks' voyage to the country to which he was appointed on a mission. After landing, he attended a public meeting of strangers who had never heard the gospel. It was held in a Seamen's Bethel, the minister having kindly offered it to the Elders for their meeting. One of the Elders spoke on the first principles; the writer followed him and bore testimony and made some other remarks. He was much frightened and embarrassed; but he spoke at greater length than he did before.

After this, circumstances required him to go out among the people alone. In that country, where they had no bells to ring, they called the people together by blowing a conch shell. When skillfully blown, one of these can be heard at a long distance. As the hour approached for meeting, it was customary to commence blowing the shell, and then our young missionary would be seized with trembling. The feeling of dread was terrible. He had been in places of peril where life was in danger; but he never felt as he did about preaching. He was alone and a stranger, and among a

strange people. But he would not shrink. He knew that the gospel was true, that he had the authority to preach it, that the people had to be warned, and, therefore, with all his fear, he could not hold his tongue. He felt like Paul did when he said to the Corinthians: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel."

About six weeks after he commenced his ministry alone two messengers arrived from a distant town to invite him to come there and preach. They had heard about the doctrine he taught, and the people he had baptized, and they wanted to learn more about the principles. He returned with the messengers. A large meeting house was obtained in which to preach. It was crowded, for the people had never before had the privilege of hearing a sermon delivered by a Latter-day Saint. You can imagine how he felt. Here was a people anxious to hear, and yet how weak he was, and how full of fear and trembling! When he arose to give out the hymn the sound of his voice in that large building scared him. Then he prayed, and afterwards gave out another hymn. He had called mightily upon God for help. When he commenced to speak the Spirit of the Lord rested upon him as it never had done before. The people had faith, and their hearts were prepared to receive the truth. For upwards of an hour he spoke, and he was so carried away in the Spirit, that he was like a man in a trance. Joy filled his heart and the hearts of the people. They wept like children, and that day was the beginning of a good work in that place.

I shall not attempt to describe to you the gladness that our

young missionary felt. He had been a slave; but now he was free. God had broken the bands of fear, and he felt to glorify Him for His goodness. From that day to this he has never suffered from those dreadful feelings which oppressed him. Still, there are but few public speakers, especially in this Church, who do not have a nervous feeling when they first arise to speak; and it is frequently the case that when they feel the most nervous they are enabled to speak with the greatest power. They feel their own weakness, and they seek unto God for help.

Many of the readers of this may yet be sent on missions, and a recollection of this sketch may help them to persevere. Never decline to ask a blessing, to pray or to speak when called upon, and God will help you to overcome all feelings of fear.

Chapter 2

From San Francisco to Honolulu – Storm and Seasickness

In early days in California everything was valued at a high price. There were ten of us, Elders, who wanted to get passage from San Francisco to Honolulu, the principal town on the Sandwich Islands. After trying for some days we succeeded in obtaining a passage between decks on the good ship *Imaum of Muscat*, Captain Ritches, commander. We had to find our own bedding; but the captain agreed to furnish us food, which we were told was to be the same as they had in the cabin.

Either this part of the contract was not fulfilled, or they lived poorly in the cabin; for our fare was not very inviting. But we thought we were fortunate in not having to pay more than \$40 in gold for the passage and these privileges.

I have seen places that were more comfortable than our quarters between decks. I have been on the sea many times since, and I believe, if I had my choice, I would take a trip as a cabin passenger on a Cunard steamship in preference to a voyage on the *Imaum of Muscat*, with its cabin fare and the privilege of sleeping in my own blankets.

The *Imaum* was low between decks, and then it was so dark there, that for a few minutes after descending, we could see

nothing. We had had some rough experience, however, since leaving our homes, and we were not disposed to find fault with our ship or her accommodations.

For one week after embarking we lay in the bay of San Francisco, head winds preventing our sailing. This was tiresome to us, and did not suit the captain, for he had to feed us, at least a part of the time. Probably this week's delay helped him to conclude that cabin fare was too good for us. As soon as the wind became at all favorable, the pilot thought it best to get ready for sea, and when the tide turned to go out, about one o'clock in the afternoon, we hoisted sail and started.

My recollections of passing out of the Golden Gate, as the mouth of San Francisco harbor is called, are not very pleasant. We had to beat out, that is, tack from side to side, and the swell came in from the ocean in large, heavy, rolling waves. On each side we could see a long line of breakers running seaward, the foam looking in the distance like large banks of snow.

We had not passed through the Gate when we began to be seasick. Those ocean swells will produce sea-sickness very quickly. There was no place on deck to be sick without being in the way, so we ran below. I vomited freely and felt relieved, and then went on deck again. The sun was declining in the west, and the sky was angry-looking and threatening, giving every indication of a storm. We were outside the heads, and before us stretched the great Pacific; but there were islands around, of which the captain knew but little. He did not like the idea of the pilot leaving him

in such a position with darkness approaching and every prospect of a storm.

If the captain was anxious to have the pilot remain, the latter was equally desirous of getting away from the ship before nightfall. He had no wish to remain through the storm and to run the risk of being carried out to sea; so when a pilot boat hove in sight, he hailed it, and descended into the little yawl which came from it for him in such haste that he forgot his water-proof coat.

It was very natural, I suppose, for him after piloting the ship out of the harbor, to be eager to get back before the storm broke upon us; but I believe we all should have felt better if he had remained with us.

The captain, especially, felt the responsibility of his position. Here he was outside of a strange harbor, on a dangerous coast, with a strong wind blowing directly on shore, and darkness upon him and he ignorant of his surroundings!

We had no time to indulge in many reflections upon the subject. Our time was occupied in another direction, for we were all suffering severely from the effects of sea-sickness; and notwithstanding the dangers of our situation, the sense of the ridiculous, in my case – only one bucket among us for every purpose – overcame fear, and I could not help laughing.

Many of our Elders and foreign settlers have been in a similar position, and all such can imagine our feelings better than I can describe them. My levity, however, under circumstances so inconvenient and perplexing, offended one of the Elders so much

that he reprimanded me for it.

While we were thus engaged, the noise on deck was very great. The captain had as first mate a half-caste East Indian, and the most of his hands were Malays. His orders to the mate, and the latter's cries to the hands, and their chattering to one another, made a clamor that sounded loud above the noise of the storm.

Right in the midst of our sickness we heard the startling cry from the mate of "breakers ahead," and that we were close upon them. At any other time this would have excited us; but we were so sick we did not mind it.

Shortly after this, we felt the vessel strike something solid, and she trembled from stem to stem; this was directly followed by a grating sound and a thumping at the stern. The first thought was that she had struck a reef; but as we felt her settle in the trough of the sea, we knew that if she had struck, she had passed over it.

The shock that we felt was caused by a heavy breaker striking us; it had broken the wheel ropes, and the grating noise that we heard was the thumping of the helm. Had the breaker gone over us it would have swept the decks clean, or, had the wheel ropes broken a short time before, it is probable the vessel would have been lost.

In considering our narrow escape, afterwards, we felt to give the glory of our deliverance to God. We were His servants, and on His business, and He had preserved us.

That night was one of great anxiety to the captain, officers and crew. Notwithstanding our sickness, we also realized that we

were in a critical position, and exerted all the faith we could.

The captain had his wife with him, and so little hope did he have at one time of saving the vessel, that he told her to prepare for eternity, for he did not think we would ever see daylight in this world again.

At last the morning dawned, the storm died away, and we were enabled to take our course.

Oh, the blessed daylight! How joyfully it was hailed on board that vessel! It did not relieve us from our sea-sickness, but it did from our peril.

Several days elapsed before the captain recovered from his fatigue and hoarseness, caused by shouting his orders that night.

The *Imaum of Muscat* was bound for the East Indies, but was to touch at the Sandwich Islands. We were glad that we had to go no farther, so it was with positive delight that we learned after being nearly four weeks on board, that we would soon be at the end of our voyage.

The sight of land is most welcome to those who have been weeks at sea, especially if they have suffered from sea-sickness. To our eyes, therefore, the rough, mountainous isles of the Hawaiian group were very beautiful. We longed to tread upon them.

For myself, I was scarcely intended for a sailor. I am very easily made sick by the motion of a vessel on the water, and no amount of going to sea prevents this. Some years since, while crossing the Atlantic, I lay sea-sick in my berth, and to divert my

mind, I tried to recall the number of different times I had been in that condition. I counted upwards of fifty distinct occasions that I had suffered from this sensation, and I have been sea-sick a number of times since.

During the night we passed the island of Hawaii, the largest of the group, and the one on which Captain Cook, the first white man (so far as known) who discovered these islands, was killed.

The next morning the island of Maui was seen in the distance. Then Molokai and Lanai; and the morning following, when we arose, we were sailing alongside of Oahu, the island on which the town of Honolulu, the capital of the kingdom, is situated.

Chapter 3

Honolulu, Its Location and Harbor – Prayer to the Almighty – The Elders Separate, and Commence Labor on the Four Principal Islands

Honolulu is built on an extensive flat, of great fertility. The town is pretty, and wears a tropical look; but, since the time of which I write, its buildings and surroundings have been greatly improved. Groves of cocoa-nut trees, with their long feathery leaves, and tall graceful trunks, were growing here and there in the vicinity of the town, and trees of other kinds were also abundant in and around it. Behind Honolulu stretches what is called the Nuuanu valley, a beautiful country, which, even when we first visited it, was selected as a proper locality for the villas and country residences and gardens of the officers of the government, the missionaries and merchants.

On the right of the harbor of Honolulu is “Punch Bowl Hill,” a large hill where once a volcano burned, but which is now extinct. The name is very suitable, for the volcano has left it more in the shape of a punch bowl than anything else.

While yet some miles from the mouth of the harbor we met several canoes, containing natives of the islands, who were out fishing. These canoes were merely logs hollowed out; but they were easily managed, and, with the aid of sails, their progress

through the water was very rapid. To prevent their turning over, they had outriggers fastened to their sides.

A coral reef, over which the sea breaks with a tremendous roar, even in calm weather, extends nearly around the harbor of Honolulu. The entrance is very narrow, and seemed difficult of access, and as we entered, guided by a skillful pilot, a man was kept busy throwing the lead to learn the depth of the water. On the reef were the wrecks of several vessels. The water was beautifully clear, and it was easy to distinguish the bottom as we sailed along.

No sooner was the anchor dropped than the decks were crowded with natives; some trying to sell bananas, oranges, cocoanuts, melons and other fruits (this was in the month of December), and others anxious to take us ashore. The monotonous character of their language, their rapid utterance, their numerous gestures, caused us to watch them with interest. We thought them a strange people. I little thought at that time that I would ever learn their language, or become as familiar with their customs as I afterwards did; for, though we had been sent on missions to the Islands, we supposed our time would be occupied in preaching to the whites.

Our first duty, after securing lodgings, was to repair to a convenient mountain, on the top of which we found a steep knob that rose suddenly and formed a table of thirty or thirty-five feet in width.

On the way up we picked up a rock apiece, with which we

formed a rude altar. We then sang a hymn, and each one, in his turn, expressed his desires. The oldest, who was also the president, was selected to be mouth in prayer. He embodied our desires in his prayer. They were that the Lord would make speedy work on those islands, open an effectual door for the preaching of the gospel, confound all opposers, help us to gather out the honest-in-heart, and spare our lives to return home in safety.

Having thus dedicated the land and ourselves to the Lord, one of the Elders spoke in tongues and uttered many comforting promises, and another interpreted. The spirit of the Lord rested powerfully upon us, and we were filled with exceeding great joy. I had the satisfaction, afterwards of witnessing the fulfillment of the promise made on that occasion.

The sun was sinking low in the heavens when we got through. Our descent was quickly made, for we felt joyful, and when men are joyful and the Spirit of God rests upon them, they feel lithe and active. We had been in the presence of the Lord, and had felt His power, and why should we not be happy?

The president of the mission had chosen as his companion the next oldest man. The most suitable place for them to remain, we all felt, was at Honolulu. But what must the rest do? Scatter among the other islands, or remain on that island – Oahu – until they learned more of the condition of affairs? It was decided that to go to the various islands would be the wiser plan.

There were four islands of importance yet to be occupied, and there were eight of us remaining. But who were to be partners,

and how should we decide which island each couple should go to? The president did not like to pair us off, nor to say which of the islands we should go to; but he consented, with his partner, to select four out of the eight to preside, one on each of the islands.

We withdrew while they discussed this matter, and made their selection. To my great surprise, when we returned, I found that I was chosen as one of the four. Never in my life did I feel my weakness more sensibly than on that occasion. I was the youngest of the party, and felt that I was the least able of all to perform the duties assigned me.

The next thing was to select partners and islands; and how do you think we did this? You read in the Bible about casting lots. We cast lots. Four pieces of paper were marked: *one, two, three* and *four*. The one who drew *one* had the first choice of partners; so with the second, third and fourth numbers. Then the islands were marked on slips of paper in the same manner, and we drew for them. Number one fell to my lot. I had the first choice.

My mind had not rested on any one as my choice for partner, and I was at a loss for a few moments whom to select. Then the spirit of the Lord plainly told me to choose Brother James Keeler. I did so.

I was both surprised and pleased at the manner in which he received my choice; for I, being so young, and he so much my senior, had thought that he would prefer a partner of more mature years and experience.

He afterwards told me that when the four were chosen, and

he found that I was one of them, he had slipped out and prayed to the Lord that I might be led to select him to go with me. His prayer was heard and answered, and we both were gratified.

In casting lots for islands, Maui fell to us. When we were sailing past it my feelings were drawn towards that island, and I felt that I would like that to be my field of labor. I knew not why this should have been so, except that the Lord gave me the feeling, for I knew nothing concerning it that would make it a desirable place in my eyes.

My joy was very great that evening, because of these precious manifestations of God's goodness. I felt that he was near at hand to hear and answer prayer, and to grant the righteous desires of our hearts; and how could we doubt His providence for and care over us in the future?

Children, I know of no feeling that can fill the human breast with such unspeakable happiness, joy and confidence as faith in God. If God be with us who can be against us?

As I have already mentioned, there were eight of us Elders, besides the two who were to remain at Honolulu. Their names were Hiram Clark, the president, and his fellow-laborer, Thomas Whittle. The island on which we first landed was to be their field. The four who were chosen to preside on the other islands were: Henry W. Bigler, whose partner was Thomas Morris, and to whom the island of Molokai fell by lot; John Dixon, whose partner was William Farrer, and whose field was the island of Kauai; James Hawkins, who chose Hiram Blackwell as his

companion, and to whom the island of Hawaii fell as a field of labor; and George Q. Cannon, whose fellow-laborer was James Keeler, and their field the island of Maui.

As the president counseled Brother Morris to go to work at Honolulu, and Brother Bigler was, therefore, alone, and his island lay convenient to Maui, he concluded to accompany the two last-named Elders to Maui.

The thought of parting from his companions in a foreign land produces lonely feelings in the breast of an Elder, but particularly if he be young and inexperienced. Our consolation on this occasion was that we were taking the plan whereby we might reap more abundant joy.

Chapter 4

Our House on Maui – Interviews With the Consul and Governor – Our First Public Preaching – We Determine to Learn the Language and Proclaim the Gospel to the Natives

Lahaina is the principal town on Maui. It has no harbor, but vessels anchor in what is called the roadstead. Looking from the sea at the town, it is not very imposing. It lies on a level strip of land, and is stretched along the beach, and the houses are almost hidden by the foliage. Groves of cocoa-nut trees are to be seen, which give the place a tropical look.

We had considerable difficulty in procuring a suitable place to stop. There was a hotel and some boarding houses; but we could not live at any of them very long, for our funds were low. We secured a native house of one room, at a rent of four dollars per week.

These native houses are built by putting posts in the ground, on which a board is laid as a plate for the rafters to rest upon. When the frame of posts and rafters is built, poles, about the size of hoop-poles, are lashed horizontally, about six inches apart, on to the posts and rafters. The house is then thatched by fastening a durable grass, which they have in that country, on to the poles. When finished, a house looks, in shape and size, like a well built hay stack.

Such houses are only suited to a warm country where they never have frost. Inside the house they have no board floors. The ground is covered with grass, on which mats are laid. The making of these mats constitutes one of the chief employments of the women, and a good housewife in that country is known by the quantity and fineness of the mats in her home. Such a woman is very particular to have no dirt brought into her house; for the mats answer the purpose of beds, tables and chairs. They sit upon them; when they eat, their food, is placed upon them, and they form their bed, though in many houses they have the place of sleeping raised above the ordinary floor; but even then, they have mats spread out, upon which to sleep.

In consideration of our being white men, the man of whom we rented the house procured a table and three chairs for us. We employed him to cook our food, which consisted principally of sweet potatoes and fish, or meat, with occasionally a little bread, bought at a bakery in town. In those days no native thought of using bread as an article of diet. Their food I shall describe more fully to you in a future chapter.

We had an interview with the American consul, Mr. Bunker, and solicited through him an introduction to the governor of the Island. He readily complied with our request, and in our intercourse with Mr. Bunker he treated us very kindly.

Our mission we felt to be of such importance that we wished to introduce it to the highest authority we could find. I made it a rule on those islands never to go into a place without waiting upon

the leading and prominent men, stating my business, testifying to the work which God had commenced and asking their aid to enable me to lay the proclamation of which I was the bearer before the people. In this way I had interviews with princes, nobles, governors, officers of the government, missionaries and the leading men in every locality where I visited.

This course might not be a wise one in every nation and under all circumstances; but I was led to take it there, and the effects were good. I had a fearlessness and a strength given me which I would not have had if I had kept myself in a corner, and acted as though I was ashamed of my mission. I gained influence also with the people, and they learned to respect me; for, however much men may differ in their views about religion and other matters, they generally respect sincerity and courage.

The governor was named James Young. He was a half-white, his father being a friend of Kamehameha the First, and one of the first white men who settled among the Hawaiians. We requested the use of the palace, which was not then occupied by the royal family, to preach in. He promised to write to his brother, the minister of the interior, about it. We called a number of times afterwards to see him; but could get no definite answer. It was very evident to us that he dare not grant us any favors.

Rev. Mr. Taylor was the chaplain of the Bethel Chapel at Lahaina, where seamen and most of the white residents went to worship. We introduced ourselves to him, told him where we were from and our business, and asked the privilege of holding

meeting in his chapel. He held meetings in the morning and evening. He consented, and gave out notice to the people in the morning that we would hold meeting in the afternoon. Elder Henry W. Bigler delivered the discourse, and Brother Keeler and I bore testimony. We soon became satisfied that if we confined our labors to the whites, our mission to those islands would be a short one.

The white people were not numerous at Lahaina, and there were but very few at any other place on the island of Maui. Preaching to them with the hope of convincing them of the truth seemed a hopeless labor. The question arose directly, "Shall we confine our labors to the white people?" It is true that we had not been particularly told to preach to the natives of the islands, but we were in their midst, had full authority to declare unto them the message of salvation, and if we did not declare it unto them, some other Elders would have to come and do so, in order to fulfill the command of God to his servants.

For my part I felt it to be clearly my duty to warn all men, white and red; and no sooner did I learn the condition of the population than I made up my mind to acquire the language, preach the gospel to the natives and to the whites whenever I could obtain an opportunity, and thus fill my mission. I felt resolved to stay there, master the language and warn the people of those islands, if I had to do it alone; for I felt that I could not do otherwise and be free from condemnation; the spirit of it was upon me. Elders Bigler and Keeler felt the same.

I mention this, because it was a point upon which a difference of opinion afterwards arose, some of the Elders being of the opinion that our mission was to the whites, and that when we had warned them, we were at liberty to return. How do you think such differences of views and opinions can be settled? Had the president of the mission exercised the authority to dictate, he could have decided between these views; but he would not. He left each one to act for himself. We were in a foreign land, far distant from the Apostles and First Presidency, and, therefore, could not appeal to them. Our only resource was to obtain revelation from the Lord for ourselves. This is the privilege of every man and woman in the Church. If Latter-day Saints will seek for knowledge, God will give it to them to guide them in all the details of life, subject, of course, to the presiding authority and its teachings and counsels. By this means we were able, on the Sandwich Islands, to know what course to take.

White men who go to the Sandwich Islands do not always behave themselves as they should. We saw some who acted most disgracefully. They seemed to think that, because they were among the natives, they could abandon all decency. The natives are very close observers. They soon saw that we were not like many of the whites whom they had seen, and they began to take an interest in us. They readily helped us to pronounce and read their language. The want of books was a great drawback at first; but we sent to Honolulu for them.

My desire to learn to speak was very strong; it was present

with me night and day, and I never permitted an opportunity of talking with the natives to pass without improving it. I also tried to exercise faith before the Lord to obtain the gift of talking and understanding the language. One evening, while sitting on the mats conversing with some neighbors who had dropped in, I felt an uncommonly great desire to understand what they said. All at once I felt a peculiar sensation in my ears; I jumped to my feet, with my hands at the sides of my head, and exclaimed to Elders Bigler and Keeler who sat at the table, that I believed I had received the gift of interpretation! And it was so.

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