

13. For many years past there has been a growing desire on the part of the King, chiefs, and people of Tonga to assume a more independent position in the Wesleyan body than that hitherto accorded to them. I find in the year 1874 the Secretary of the Tongan Government addressing the New South Wales and Queensland Conference, to which Tonga was attached as a missionary district, a letter of which I enclose a copy. The Conference appears to have taken this letter into consideration, and to have made some small concession in the direction required; that is to say that, in lieu of the independence asked for, it allowed the formation of a Home Mission Contingent Fund and the admission of the laity to a voice in its distribution. It is to this inadequate treatment of a well-founded complaint that I attribute all the subsequent disputes, and the eventual secession of the Tongan Wesleyan body. I cannot think that this Conference could have been well informed as to the grave discontent that even then existed in the minds of both King and people by reason of so large a sum of money leaving Tonga every year without the people who subscribed it having any real voice in its disposal. Had the concessions made by a subsequent Conference (that of 1881) of making Tonga a separate district been made at this time I have but little doubt but that all these troubles would have been prevented.

14. In December, 1875, the King signed a lease granting to four trustees, for a term of ninety-nine years, the properties then occupied by the Wesleyan Church, on condition of the trustees executing (subject to certain restrictions) sub-leases to trustees to be appointed in accordance with the usages of the Wesleyan Church as expressed in a declaration of trust called the "Model Deed," which was signed by the four trustees at the time of execution of the lease. None of these sub-leases have up to this day been executed. I append copy of the lease and of the "Model Deed." At this date Mr. Baker was the Chairman of the District.

15. In 1879 the Australasian Wesleyan Missionary Society Board of Management sent a Committee to Tonga to inquire into Mr. Baker's conduct, and its report was considered at the New South Wales and Queensland Conference of 1880, the result being the recall of Mr. Baker from Tonga, much, apparently, to the annoyance of the King, who thereupon wrote to the Conference to again ask that Tonga should be constituted an independent district. The consideration of this request was relegated to the General Australasian Methodist Conference to be held in Adelaide in 1881. The King had in the meantime (December, 1880) issued a Proclamation, of which a copy is appended, in which, after expressing his determination that independence should be obtained by the Tongan Wesleyan Church, he called upon his chiefs and people who were related to him or connected with his Government to abstain from subscribing to or aiding the Church. The substance of this the King appears to have conveyed in his speech to his Parliament shortly afterwards. Mr. Baker about this time (April, 1881) accepted the Premiership of the Tongan Government, after having appeared before the New South Wales Conference in January, 1881, and resigned his appointment as a Wesleyan missionary. Mr. Moulton, who had been a missionary in Tonga for many years, and who had a few months previously returned from an absence of some three years, was now appointed Chairman of the Tongan District in the place of Mr. Watkin, who had been appointed Chairman in succession to Mr. Baker, the former gentleman being withdrawn from Tonga and appointed to a station in New South Wales.

16. The General Conference which sat in Adelaide in May, 1881, appears to have granted what was believed to be the desire of the King and people—namely, the erection of Tonga into a district of New South Wales, and its removal from the control of the Board of Missions; and this arrangement appears to have been carried out from the beginning of 1882.

17. I may here state that for several years previous to 1882 the subscriptions of the islanders in support of their Mission were very large, amounting in fact to several thousand pounds in each year. Out of this the expenses of the Mission were defrayed, but there still remained a very considerable sum that was spent away from Tonga; notably in 1876 this surplus is admitted to have reached between £2,000 and £3,000. The King and his supporters had therefore a very real grievance, which grievance would, as I have said before, I think, have been rectified had the Conference which considered the appeal of 1874 acted in the spirit of the Adelaide Conference of 1881.

18. But it was then too late; the King had the idea of absolute separation firmly fixed in his mind. He had the impression that he had not been fairly treated by the New South Wales Conference; Mr. Baker, who had probably used his influence to restrain the King's action before 1881, was no longer the District Chairman, nor even a missionary of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga, and, it may well be believed, was now using his influence in the other direction; and, to crown all, the Conference had directed Mr. Watkin, who was high in the King's favour, to leave Tonga.

19. Mr. Watkin's recall by the New South Wales Conference—a decision, I should remark, that was afterwards revoked at the King's request—made the King very angry, and a communication was received by telegraph from Mr. Baker, then apparently in Auckland, to the President of the Adelaide General Conference, which had closed the day before (28th May), after having, as I have said, created Tonga a separate district, embodying fresh demands—viz., that Tonga should be an independent district attached to New Zealand, and that Mr. Watkin should be reinstated—and threatening secession in the event of refusal. The King appears to have been informed that this demand arrived too late for consideration by the Conference; and no further action was taken until 1884, when the King again applied to the General Conference, this time sitting in Christchurch, New Zealand.

20. I cannot discover when the King's dislike for Mr. Moulton, the newly-appointed Chairman of the District, began. They appear during Mr. Moulton's former stay in Tonga to have been close friends. It is alleged that the King took offence at Mr. Moulton's having translated a petition got up and signed by certain Tongans praying for the annexation of Tonga to Great Britain. This was in 1882. But, whatever may have been the cause, the King appears to have conceived a bitter and irreconcilable dislike to Mr. Moulton about this period. At the district meeting of the Wesleyan Church in Tonga certain charges were preferred against Mr. Moulton, the particulars of which will be found in the Tongan Government Blue Book annexed. These charges