

MISSIONARY LETTERS, 1818-1869

7 LETTERS  
OF  
LEVI CHAMBERLAIN  
TO  
REV. DWIGHT BALDWIN  
LAHAINA, MAUI

IN  
THE

ROBERT E. VANDYKE COLLECTION  
OF  
HAWAIIANA

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BY

DAVID FORBES  
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1975*

LETTERS  
OF  
LEVI CHAMBERLAIN  
1847-1848

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Honolulu October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1847

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

Yours of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. together with the basket of specimens left behind by my son James, came to hand yesterday. The incident of leaving the basket may be a lesson to the youth, which shall be remembered as long as life lasts. A circumstance sometimes proves to be like a nail in a sure place. It is not always, that a fact is important in itself, that it becomes instructive but from something else. A mere trifle sometimes serves as an index to an important chapter. The asses of Kish strayed from home and Saul went in search of them : instead of the asses he found a kingdom. I have no wish to have my children elevated to high stations, but I would desire they may be qualified for useful ones. The character of our children is a subject of great moment. Some parents are very anxious that their children should appear well. And some children seem inspired with an ambition to show well in the eyes of strangers. There is scarcely nothing in which children so much differ as in this trait. The ambition of some is to appear in good clothing, others well in carriage and manners, another thinks much of both, and has a taste for cleanness and neatness. [Good taste seems innate with some children. Others are apparently reckless to every thing connected with taste, manners and behaviour.]

Children are men and women of smaller growth. How do you feel in regard to the prospects of your children? Perhaps it is unwise to ask such a question. An answer to it would lay open a sacred repository which cannot but be stored with deposits of the tenderest kind. Intense feelings are laid up there. What are the wishes of a parent? Do I not know them! Aye: I do: but it is one thing to wish, and quite another to do. I

wish my children enjoyed the advantages of the best schools and academies of our native land, and breathed the moral atmosphere of piety, good morals and steady habits.] I wish they had the prospect of settlement for life in some honorable, usefull of benevolent employment--either in the secular or clerical lines. This great gulf between them and the theater on which the youth of our happy land are acting, is dark and chilly in prospect; and it is an unanswered question, When will it be passed--Will it ever be passed? and how will my children act on such a stage for which they have not been educated? Many strange questions of unbelief are started and my weak faith finds no satisfactory answer for them. Perhaps your stronger faith is able to dispose of all perplexities, and can answer these staggering questions. Is it the duty of the parents of this mission to leave the field either temporarily or permanently to go home that they may dispose of their children? Or is it the duty of our missionaries to leave the question unanswered whether their children shall remain here or be placed in different circumstances? I am aware that every parent must act for himself in view of his own peculiar state and views. But there is no such peculiarity of circumstances in our case or of any one of us--that the decision of one should not have any influence on another. The decision of one to remain in the islands and take the chance of society here cannot otherwise than have an influence on the decisions of others or at least have a moral influence or bearing upon the conscience.

The Lord direct us all in our conclusions and in our investigations, and inquiries after duty.

Very truly

your brother,

Levi Chamberlain

Rev. Dwight Baldwin  
Lahaina,  
Maui.

Honolulu Sept. 6, 1847

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

A circular was sometime ago forwarded to the stations requesting the brethren to make out a schedule of church statistics such as is embraced in the Reports of Stations presented at the Genl Meetings of the missionx. also statistics of schools as complete as practicable. A majority of the Stations have made the required statements, and a general list is almost being completed, but a report from your station is lacking. Will it not be convenient for you to forward the Report by the Kamehameha on her return?

My health is about as usual- not of course good, but such as to admit of my keeping about, consulting as need be with my brethren and doing light work.

Brother Richards continues to be in a dangerous state, but a little more comfortable in some respects than for some days previous. The Lord's ways are not as ours in this laying aside one whose services seemed to be so much needed by the Government. How can his place be filled? Who is there to occupy it?

Do you meet with the people on Wednesday or Thursday to reciprocate with the Board in their Ann. Meeting? Bro. Armstrong intends to have a meeting on Thursday and the Communion will be administered in the forenoon for the families and for such of the natives near us who may be able to attend.

Excuse my brevity & haste. My eyes are in rather a bad state.

Very truly  
your brother  
Levi Chamberlain

Rev. D. Baldwin,  
Lahaina,  
Maui.

Honolulu Sept 17, 1847

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

Your favor of the 8<sup>th</sup> and another with statistics of church and schools was recieved in due time. Thank you for them. I am filling up a table as fast as the reports come in, and I hope all will be recieved in season to completethe list to go by an early opportunity this fall.

I am sorry to hear of the ill health of Mrs. Baldwin. She needs relief from her many cares and labors which come on her at Lahaina \_\_\_\_\_: She has had an unusual share the last season. It is not an easy matter to get up after being run down, especially when the elasticity of the system is exhausted. Time also is having something to do with our physical texture: there must be a giving away of some of the parts that are over worked: wear and tear and time cannot fail to affect the system but for the worse, unless great pains are taken to repair injuries and forstall ravages, and there is ~~no~~ ~~chance~~ not much chance for this in the harness and yet how can one get out of it when there is no one else to do the work.

As to myself. I remain much as I have been for the last month. I do not think I am losing. It would not be strange since I have been so long an invalid, that I should continue so, without absolutely failing, for a considerable length of time. I hope I shall have patience to bear with my own infirmities, and I may have occasion to beg the indulgence of others. The Lord can doubtless employ the most worthless to glorify his grace. And if he sees fit to spare an unprofitable life for his own glory, wh should doubtless be willing and even hapoy to have it so.

Time is flying fast and another year will soon be round-- when I look upon(our?) children growing up and stretching their prospective powers, I cannot but feel unready, and could wish

time to delay until some more inviting prospects open to invite them forward to maturity. Nothing connected with personal affairs is of so difficult solution as the question, What shall we do with our children? Those whose children are approaching nearest to the period when something must be done, will feel the most deeply, I have to leave all with the Lord and hope for the best.

Very sincerely your brother,  
Levi Chamberlain

Honolulu June 30, 1848

Dear Bro. Hall & Baldwin

I understand from one of Bro Baldwins letters or remarks that there are natives getting into the land attached to the Richards place. We think this ought not to be permitted and that prompt measures should be taken to prevent it. In relation to the vacant places at Lahaina Mr. C(astle) and I come I believe in the following views. 1<sup>st</sup> We shall wish to keep the Richards house in repair & this will be attended annually with considerable expense. 2 We shall not deem it best to spend any considerable sum on the Chapin house. 3<sup>rd</sup> If we can rent the Richards house to Mr. Taylor for a sum sufficient to keep it in good repair as he is ~~xxx~~ a man to whom Bro. Baldwin would not object as a neighbor, we had better rent it. Mrs. Taylor too will probably aid in entertaining missionary company. 4<sup>th</sup> That the Chapin premises be disposed of as shall seem best to any suitable person, that is, not deeming the same qualifications necessary to make an acceptable occupant that we should on the other premises on acc. of their proximity to Bro. Baldwins. You will please consult together upon this subject. At what time could Mr. Taylor probably have the house. I would say in relation to the lath there are none to be had in the market & I see no prospect of any at present. The Czar which sailed for Tahiti & Honolulu in March & will probably arrive here in October may have them but of course we can't tell.

What would be a safe sum to keep the Richards house in good repair?

Yours Truly,  
S. N. Castle

the signature is  
Castle's, the rest  
Levi Chamberlains

*no*



P.S. Brother Castle has requested me to express my views in respect to renting the Richards house and disposing of the Chapin house. I concur in the views which he has expressed. A rent that will keep the house in as good state as it is now in would perhaps be as much as considering the nature of the Seamen's Friend Society we ought to charge: but the rent should be sufficient to keep the house in repair & to perpetuate the buildings, etc.

Very truly yours,  
Levi Chamberlain

Rev. D. Balbwin  
Lahaina,  
Maui.

Honolulu August 29<sup>th</sup> 1848

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

Your letters of the 16<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> are recieved. I do not think we differ materially in principle. I admit that the Board ought to grant us the means of a comfortable; and what is a comfortable support should be settled on just and common principles. I did not in any thing I said to you in a former letter, to which you allude, intend to convey the idea that you would ask something over and above an equitable support." An equitable support you ought to receive, and you ought not for such a support to be obliged to draw on private sources. When I have said this, I have said only what applies to every missionary of the Board.

All of the missionaries except those living at Honolulu have equal salaries: we have \$50. more, for reasons that have been frequently argued. I do not suppose that those who receive \$450. per ann. are precisely alike in their circumstances--have all the same advantages and disadvantages. I do not undertake to say that any of them would be as comfortable as the Board ought to make them with a less sum: but I do suppose that with this sum some of the families will be more comfortable than others: Now it may be maintained that because some are more comfortable than others-- that all should be made equal to the most comfortable. This could not be effected without raising the salary of the less comfortable of the families.

It seems that two years ago this very point was brought up at the General Meeting. How it was argued I do not know, for I was, as you know, absent. Why the brethren of Lahaina did not insist on an increase of their salary I do not know. How the point was turned I do not know. I think your families ought to be made as comfortable as the families at Honolulu. I take comfortable in the common sense meaning of the word. Just as a family 50 miles in the interior would understand

comfort as compared with a family in the metropolis in the application of the term. There might be some room for quibbling as to its meaning but none as its common sense import. Here I admit you would have the argument as to horse hire: for the man 50 miles in the interior might keep six horses without the expense of a dollar a year, while the city dweller must pay \$1 per week for every unit of the animal. But because one could keep six horses without expense in the country, it would not of course follow that the person dwelling in the city would need the same number of horses. I am well aware that the argument is a long one, and I would not undertake to go through with it.

I think you have a claim upon the mission and on the Board for means of support which will make you as comfortable as the brethren at Honolulu, and I am ready to vote such a support. But we have no land at Honolulu no glebe for cultivation. It is true we can send our cattle to the Kula & our horses too if we would trust them to run at large, I would most readily award to you the full amount of what I would award to myself: and I think more.

I have seen your letter to Mr. Castle on the subject of the land, and you confirm me in the opinion that all the advantages of the land are not an offset of the trouble and inconvenience of holding it: especially as you say "At present the whole land would hardly yield us \$10. a year/" There is in my opinion a kakalaioa in the whole claim/ which Mr. Richards considered his. I question whether natives can be easily dispossessed of it: especially those that profess to be ohua of Mr. Richards.

I will not as yet advise anything more than this. Do nothing which will make the natives feel that they are wronged. Mr. Castle will see Judge Lee and find out if he can, whether the land you name has been presented to the Land Commission.

My health is no worse than it was at the close of the General Meeting: it may be the will of the Lord that I shall live to see a closing up of the missionary work at the islands. It was more than I expected: but the Lord's ~~ways~~ ways are unsearchable and past finding out. I feel a strong desire to do something

to promote his Kingdom: but I seem to be a bird with a broken wing. I may pray, however, that the Lord would carry on his own work & hasten forward his good cause in the hearts of the people. My hearts desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved.

With very kind regards to Mrs. Baldwin,  
I remain, very truly,  
your friend & bro.  
Levi Chamberlain

Rev. D. Baldwin  
Lahaina,  
Maui.

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Honolulu October 30, 1848

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

Though I do not make it my business to read over every letter which comes to the Depository, Yet I sometimes read letters, and undertake to answer them or to answer in part.

In your letter of the 26<sup>th</sup> you make some remarks about not having received the New York Mercury, and of having engaged Mr. Forbes to stop the copy which had come to you direct from the publishers and to direct that in future it be sent through the Missionary House.

As long ago as last February, you made some explanation of the step of yours in employing Mr. Forbes to transact that business for you, and in order that there should be no mistake or failure of the publication I wrote to Mr. Hill to see that the paper came to you with the rest of the subscribers of the mission, ~~through~~ <sup>through</sup> the Missionary House. But you cannot expect to receive the first no. for 1849.

Illustrated Botany will doubtless come in due time. No numbers have yet been rec'd for any of the subscribers. The first nos. that come will probably be for Jan'y 1849.

You ask how the others receive the Mercury, I answer, the paper comes in packages from the Missionary House each number corresponding to the number of subscribers and they are gathered and addressed at the Depository.

We find spare numbers of the Mercury which I shall send. They will serve you as far as they go instead of a regular file.

There is much sickness among the people. Our congregation yesterday did not exceed 200. All our depository men are sick, Kahu pipi and many of the domestics of our families.

There are not as many deaths as is sometimes the case when the influenza is prevalent but I fear the imprudence of the natives will yet lead to much mortality.

This is a dying world, "and death's shafts must fly thick

to strike down a thousand millions of earth's inhabitants in about the space of thirty years. The agents of death are active and always employed and the King of Terrors sits on his horrible throne giving his mandates as does no earthly potentate. But it has been so from the time the penalty of death was incurred. and the declaration passed the Eternal, "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return."

Very truly,  
your friend & bro.  
Levi Chamberlain

Honolulu December 26, 1848

Dear Bro. Baldwin,

I forgot in my letter of yesterday to reply to your inquiry respecting letting the Chapin house to Kalai kini.

I think the house should be let to somebody-- that is to say, if somebody wants it, and will pay something more for the use than the injury which will result from the occupancy. It would be better to allow the house to be occupied at \$50. pr. year than to allow it to stay vacant, except from necessity.

It is not probable that Mr. Taylor will hire the building without doubt he will not unless he should alter his mind: for he distinctly stated to me that the house would not answer the purpose for which he wants a room makai.

The Agents will approve of your letting the house to Kalaikini for \$50. a year, if that is as much as the house is worth; and you perhaps are as good a judge as we.

It occurs to me to add to what I said in my other letter, this: viz. If you desire that Mr. Taylor should be without any justifying reason for continuing in the room which he now occupies do you ~~xxx~~ vacate the room in the basement story of the Chapel: for while the question can be ~~xxxx~~ asked, by what right does Mr. Baldwin make use of a room in the Chapel building for a work shop? It will be difficult to show why the room in question may not be occupied for a study.

As ever yours

Levi Chamberlain

Perhaps if you should transfer your work shop to that room, you would find it equally convenient and it might save remarks? query,--- save or cause?