

Hilo, Oct. 23, 1837

Dear Brother Cooke It is morning now, and having just heard that the Becket will probably sail about noon for Honolulu, I have concluded to write you a few lines. Vessels have sailed back and forth, yet hitherto I have written you nothing. This has been owing in part to the cares and labors which have pressed upon me, and partly to no substantial reason. My health has been good since my coming here, and I think the climate upon the whole agrees with me better than that of Honolulu. I have a writing school 3 mornings weekly, some of my scholars write on paper, and some on slates. Mrs. W. and I go into the children's schools at one o'clock, P. M. At 3 o'clock the ~~the~~ teachers' school commences, and continues till 5. Of this I have the charge 3 days in the week, and Br. Coan 2. In all our schools except the writing-school, we have the assistance of native teachers. This is indispensable, as our scholars are necessarily divided into several classes, and our acquaintance with the language is very limited. The number of our ^{total} scholars. I am sorry to say, is very fluctuating. This is owing to several causes. One is, the inhabitants are much scattered. Another is, that between the schoolhouses and many of the scholars there is a considerable stream of water, which, by the frequent rains is often so swollen as to prevent their crossing it. I find it to be much labor to go out and hunt my scholars, and yet there is no alternative but to do so, or have the schools dwindle away. Many of the children are very wild, and on my approach, (which I endeavor to do in the most gentle manner) will shriek and run as if they had never seen a man before. They are truly wild children, as rude and uncultivated as the wild cattle on these Hawaiian mountains; and if they are ever taken in the Gospel net and tamed, I think it will require the labor of years. Br. C. and myself have been through the district of Puna since visiting schools. Examined 44 schools embracing 1680 scholars, children and adults. We were well received; the people ~~was~~ pressed, literally pressed upon us to hear the word of God, and the Spirit seemed to bless the ^{preaching} ~~preaching~~ of the word. I cannot but think that some were present in heart. O this dying people! perishing for lack of what? of vision? O no, I think not. Perishing, I fear because there is little faith, prayer, holy living, and effort on the part of us missionaries! Dear Brother—what else hinders the conversion of thousands on these Islands? Why is not the Holy Spirit poured out and a great work of grace carried on at all the stations?

Thousands certainly have light — they hear the gospel steadily preached, they read the scriptures, which are able to save their souls, and they are instructed in Sabbath-schools — and yet are not converted. There is guilt somewhere; and may we so live and act, that in the great day, neither our own hearts, this people, nor our Judge shall condemn us as the destroyers of their souls! — ~~My~~ unites with me in kind salutations to yourself and wife.

Sincerely yours,
Abner Wilcox.

Mr. Amos J. Cooke,

Honolulu,

Oahu.

Abner Wilcox, Hilo
Oct. 23/37 Recd 30th
and before hand