

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

at will, they must also have possessed the power of writing it; and if they did possess this, how can we account for their not having exercised it? When we consider how slow and difficult is the process of translating a book into a foreign language, how imperfectly it is accomplished even where the greatest labour has been bestowed, how tamely in a translation passages fall on the ear, which in the original are full of life and power—we shall recognise the fact, of which none could ever have been more cognisant than the Apostles themselves, that no translation can ever really fill the place of an original work. If, then, an Apostle, when he went to preach in Gaul, in Scythia, in Abyssinia, could have written an original gospel in Gallic, in Scythian, in Abyssinian, which he could have left behind him to future generations, is it credible that he should not have done it? The labour would not have been very great. A week or two would have been the longest time it could have occupied; but its value would have exceeded all possibility of computation. One thing alone, I think, prevented their performance of this work—their inability to do it.

H. C. ADAMS.

Review.

Explorations and Adventures in New Guinea. By Captain JOHN STRACHAN, F.R.G.S., F.R.C.I., of Sydney. Pp. 300. Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington.

THIS volume contains a good deal of graphic description, including many phases of native life, with a well-written narrative of perilous adventures, in three expeditions; and it has points of interest for readers of more than one class. To those who watch the progress of Missions the book will be especially welcome. The author, in a modest preface, remarks that it has been no part of his plan to aspire to literary renown; he has sought rather, in the plain, homely language of a British sailor, to tell his tale as simply as possible. Nevertheless, the record of his energetic and patient explorations, with hairbreadth escapes, is very readable; it shows the rough work of pioneering in the Papuan Group; and the sympathetic presentation of the work performed by the London Missionary Society, in Southern New Guinea, gives the book a distinct value.

On his first expedition, in 1884, Captain Strachan went up an unknown river. As to his adventures there, we quote a single sentence: "As I sat on the damp ground, nursing my rifle, reflecting on the fact that I had lost my fine little craft, and that within a mile of us were 1,200 cannibals, who were thirsting for our blood, my condition was not to be envied by the proverbial English gentlemen who sit at home at ease." In 1885, the gallant Captain, on the suggestion of some of the leading citizens of Sydney, prepared a second expedition, and sailed again. His third

expedition, in 1886, took him to the north-western part of New Guinea. "There is no doubt in my mind," he says, "that the abundance of sago, the ease with which a large supply of fish can be procured, together with the value of the nutmeg crop and the association with the Mahometan traders, have injuriously affected the natives of these parts both physically and morally. Having little need to labour to procure the necessaries of life, rich in valuable commodities which they exchange for what is not only luxurious but pernicious, viz., strong drink and opium, together with fine clothing, brass guns, gongs, powder and muskets, instead of advancing in civilization, they are, in my opinion, a rapidly decaying race, lazy, treacherous, cruel, thieves and liars, who, without the appearance of any violent epidemic disease, are rapidly disappearing from the face of the earth. In a sojourn of two months and a half in the Gulf, the death-rate was amazingly large, and failing to trace anything like an epidemic among those people, I came to the conclusion that the fiat had gone forth that they should disappear, to make room for a better and a nobler people." (P. 198.)

On the question of the relative influence of Mahometanism and Christianity, Captain Strachan writes with effect. At Cape York, March, 1887, he writes :

"The work performed during this last expedition was of a most comprehensive character, and disclosed not only many varieties of life and different traits of character in peoples living within short distances of each other, but also conclusively proved to me the influence of the different religious teachings upon the human race.

"The bulk of the greater proportion of the tribes met with in the north-west were followers of Islam, and, as the narrative proves to demonstration, they are a race of liars, thieves and murderers, whose main object in life seems to be to deceive. Devoid of all principles of honesty and honour, they cannot recognise nor appreciate such principles as in others. The prince and two rajahs from Tidore, so frequently spoken of, were co-religionists of these people, and their master, the Sultan, was Lord Paramount of the land. Yet no religious feeling nor any sentiment of loyalty to their lord restrained them from brutally murdering these unfortunate chiefs when they were their guests.

"I have read much of the rights of hospitality as practised among the Mahometan races, but from a long experience I am led to the conclusion that these sacred rights so much talked of by travellers, do not exist.

"On the other hand, the savages, or, as they are called by their Mahometan neighbours, Kafirs—a word which has been imported by the Arab traders, and which signifies heathen—are a more reliable people, more honest in their dealings, and ever willing to show a kindness to the stranger.

"When, however, we contrast either the Kafir or the Mahometan with those who some years ago were wild cannibals on the south, but who, through the efforts made by the noble band of men representing the London Missionary Society, have within the last twelve or fourteen years been brought to a knowledge of the Christian religion, the difference is most marked. On the one hand we see bloodthirstiness, treachery and cunning, and on the other, child-like simplicity and innocent trust." (Pp. 295-297.)

In heartily recommending this interesting book, we must add that it is admirably printed in clear type, and has both illustrations and maps.

