

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

Dr. Laws had a wonderful story of success in the Livingstonia Mission to lay before his audience at the recent missionary meeting of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Just thirty-four years ago he sailed with some others to begin the work. They found the people so ignorant that when an illustrated newspaper was shown them they could see nothing in the pictures but black lines and smudges; now languages have been reduced in writing, and the complete New Testament is printed in five of them. Then children had to be paid to attend school, and when it was proposed to keep some of them as boarders, the rumour was started that the missionaries wanted something to eat with their porridge; now the schools have 41,000 names on their rolls, and the pupils pay fees. There are 4,500 communicants in the Mission; the baptized adherents who are not communicants are almost equal in number; and the native contributions amounted in 1908 to £848, though wages in the country are only 1d. or 1½d. per day. Unhappily, it may be necessary for financial reasons to abandon one of the eight stations.



The Bible at Work.

BY THE REV. W. FISHER, M.A.

THERE are at least 1,500 tongues in the world in daily use which might commonly be called obscure, of which for the most part the philologist knows little but their names, and which unitedly do not contain one verse of the Bible. Such might have been said at one time of many of the great modern languages. It is true of what is now English, which contains the Master Bible of the world. Latin was once but the tongue of a tribe; it became the tongue of an empire, and for a thousand years the chief conservator of the Bible in Christian Europe. The infancy of Hebrew and Greek is unknown, yet to these were first committed the oracles of God, and to these must belong the distinction of "originals" as long as the Bible shall last. To no obscure tongue to-day can come such honour, yet of none can anyone dare to say what cannot or what shall not be. An interest, not altogether of romantic imagination, belongs to any new version, however far off from common knowledge, and however strange its name.



The Bible Society last year added to its list six new versions—namely, Kanauri, Rabha, Ora, Ndau, Lau, and Mailu. Kanauri is spoken by some 20,000 people in the Kanawar country, which lies to the north and north-east of Simla, on the borders of Tibet. Rabha is the tongue of about 18,000 people, living on the north bank of the Brahmaputra in Northern Assam. Ora belongs to a tribe containing about 15,000 people living in Southern Nigeria. Ndau is the language of a tribe on the eastern edge of Rhodesia. Lau is for a race of fishermen, numbering about 6,000, who occupy an island named Mwala in the Solomon Group; and Mailu is a Papuan language, the mother tongue of the natives of Toulon Island, off the south-east coast of British

New Guinea. Small as the peoples are, these versions stand as types of that Gospel which is for all nations and tongues and tribes, and regards with the same charity the lowest as well as the largest. The most immediately interesting, perhaps, is the Ora, in that it is the work of an Ora native who was carried as a slave to Yoruba, where he heard and accepted the Gospel. Captivity has thus been turned captive in that the tongue of the captor has been made servant for Christ to his own tribesmen.



Only a short while ago Korea was "The Hermit Kingdom." Some anticipate for it the distinction of being the first Eastern nation to become Christian. Dr. Underwood of America is the senior Protestant Missionary, being the first to enter Korea. Twenty-five years ago, he says, there was not a Christian in the country, now there are 1,500 self-supporting Churches with more than 200,000 Christians. He tells of a doctor who bought the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles in Seoul, and returned with them to his home 150 miles away. They were noticed by another doctor who got them for himself and read them to his neighbours. So great was their interest that they sent to Seoul to ask for a teacher. When, years after, Dr. Underwood arrived, he found the whole place evangelized by the books that had gone before. He tells of another village visited by a colporteur, where there is not a heathen left, and where on the site of the temple is a Christian Church.



It is noticeable that most, if not all, the great religions of to-day include a man and a book. Christianity has Christ and the Bible; the Jew has Moses and the Old Testament; the Moslem has Mahomet and the Koran; the Buddhist has Buddha, and the Tripitaka and other books; the Confucianist has Confucius and the Sacred Classics; the Hindu has Krishna and the Mahabharata as well as Rama and the Ramayana; while the Zoroastrian has Zoroaster and the Zend Avesta. Yet in Christianity alone is the religion identified with the Person, according to the words, "He that hath the Son hath life." "I am the vine, ye are the branches . . . without (apart from) Me ye can do nothing." And in no religion is there such identity between the Book and the Man. "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ," said St. Jerome. Not only so, but there is a deeper and more spiritual identity, for while the Word is full of Christ and fulfilled in Christ Christ is also fulfilled in the Word. "The words that I speak . . . are spirit and life." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words." "He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him." In this spiritual identity a supremely important work belongs to the Bible, which can and does belong to nothing else.



When will the author, or authors, appear who shall deal, or attempt to deal, with the indebtedness of English character and nationality, as well as English religion, to the Bible? It is hinted at and touched upon occasionally. In a recent speech, Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, M.P., said: "You cannot cut that Bible out of the literature and out of the character of the

English race. There is no article hastily written by any modern journalist, there is no poem composed with greater or less ability by any modern poet, there is scarcely any interchange of ordinary speech between man and man, which does not consciously or unconsciously find itself influenced by and committed to the phraseology of the English Bible." Yet even stronger is the testimony of Mr. H. W. Hoare, in "The Evolution of the English Bible." "It interweaves itself with the momentous crisis of the nation's fortune. . . . It has quickened, moulded, and sustained what is best and strongest in our individual and corporate life . . . it has exercised upon English character an influence, moral, social and political, which it is not possible to measure." If a great statesman can say that about half a dozen lines of Burns' had had more influence upon political thought and action than all the millions of leading articles ever written, what shall be said of the Bible? What could be said by a competent man would be particularly interesting and particularly valuable as well as powerful argument for its wider circulation. Moreover, if the destiny of England is at all related to the cry Imperial, the Bible must, of necessity, have for this country a very important function yet to discharge.



Literary Notes.

AMONG the new forthcoming books of Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co. is an historical volume entitled "Explorers in the New World: Before and After Columbus, and the Story of the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay." The author is Marion McMurrugh Mulhall, among whose previous books are "Between the Amazon and Andes," and "The Celtic Sources of the Divina Commedia." To this new book will be added some very interesting pre-Columbian maps. Another attractive item in the Longmans' announcement is "The Gilds of China, with an Account of the Gild Merchant, or Co-Hong of Canton," by Hosea Ballou Morse, some time Inspector-General of Customs, China. "Studies in Christian Ethics" is also nearly ready. This volume has been prepared by Canon Ottley, of Christ Church, and Regius Professor of Pastoral Theology in the University of Oxford. I am also glad to call attention to the new volume in "The Anglican Church Handbooks," by the Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall, D.D. The subject is "Comparative Religion." There are two other readable books on the same firm's list. One is "A History of Malta during the Period of the French and British Occupation, 1798-1802." This book was written by the late William Hardman, of Valetta, and edited by Dr. Holland Rose, who has added a number of important notes, as well as an introduction. Included in the volume is an epitome of subsequent events, while there are several reproductions of historic documents. The other volume is a work entitled "Historical Letters and Memoirs of Catholics, 1625-1793," by the Rev. W. Forbes Leith.

