

**CHRISTIANITY IN
POLYNESIA: A STUDY
AND A DEFENCE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649512690

Christianity in Polynesia: A Study and a Defence by Joseph King

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JOSEPH KING

**CHRISTIANITY IN
POLYNESIA: A STUDY
AND A DEFENCE**

Christianity in Polynesia

A STUDY AND A DEFENCE

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH KING

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SYDNEY

WILLIAM BROOKS AND CO.

PUBLISHERS

1899

*Dedicated to the Memory of the
South Sea Island Evangelists,
who, during this century, have
laid down their lives in the effort
to spread a knowledge of the Gospel
of Jesus Christ throughout Polynesia.*

"This Gospel."

MATTHEW XXI

Stephen Spaulding man. coll.
521285. Trans. Apr. 1938

Major Thomas M. Spaulding
gt.
2-7-1924

PREFACE.

THE READERS of this volume will find in its pages condensed information which will be useful to those who wish to obtain reliable data respecting the Protestant mission fields of the Pacific. In such a work as this an exhaustive history is impossible, but I have endeavoured, from my own knowledge of Polynesia and from my reading, to give a full sketch of the main features of the operations of the different missionary societies, and I have been specially careful to assure myself of the absolute accuracy of my facts. Concealing nothing I have striven to produce a series of faithful pictures.

I have in my sub-title called this volume "A Study and a Defence." I have called it a study because the subject cannot fail to supply material for studious thought. The transition from Paganism to the spiritual conceptions and ethical standards of the Gospel brings into conflict so many alien forces that the story of the struggle affords scope for manifold reflection. I have called it a defence because, although within Church circles there is a stronger and more intelligent faith in missions than in any past period, there are still some who show an indifference born of doubt. I do not refer to ignorant scoffers, who for various motives make such missions a butt for their ridicule, but to honest doubters who are looking for proofs of success and reasons for active participation in the work.

PREFACE.

The sources to which I have gone for information cannot be enumerated, but must be gratefully acknowledged. If I could have doubled the number of my pages, and could have ignored the demand for the publication of this work by a certain date, many deficiencies might have been supplied. I have found intense pleasure and satisfaction in the survey which the writing of this book has necessitated, and I send it forth, praying that its readers may see how truly, through the Gospel of the Cross and the manifold operations of His Spirit, God is working in the mission fields of to-day.

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CHAPTER I.

PRE-HISTORIC CONDITION AND PRE-MISSIONARY IMMIGRATION.

As a passing visitor, I stood once within a pre-historic stone age interior; it was at the Fly River, New Guinea, and in one of those remarkable houses which belong neither to the Doric, Ionic nor Corinthian order of architecture, but to the order which may be called Papuan, and of which there are so many quaint and interesting varieties. The night fires were burning on the many hearths from end to end of the rudely constructed arcade, and extemporised lighted torches added to the illumination as I shook hands with group after group of undressed, unkempt, uncivilised men, women, and children. Geographically the Fly River is not so far from Melbourne, where I am now writing, but to cover the distance between a modern Anglo-Saxon interior and that communal barracks at Kiwai is to go back thousands of years. In that primitive dwelling, surrounded by the weird sights and uncanny sounds of savage life, I felt I was breathing the atmosphere of a dim pre-historic past.

New Guinea is not within the geographical area to which the name of Polynesia is applied, but it is included in that missionary field which I have under review, and for my present purpose the people may be regarded as one, this treatment being further justified by racial affinity and similarity of social and moral condition. In this volume I shall use the term "Polynesia" in a sense more comprehensive than its technical meaning, and include in my survey the whole group of Protestant missions in the Pacific.

In the primitive condition of these peoples there were redeeming features. Savage life is not always wholly savage. When those wild-looking men at Kiwai, busy as they were