

**JOEL BULU: THE
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A
NATIVE MINISTER
IN THE SOUTH SEAS**

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Joel Bulu: The Autobiography of a Native Minister in the South Seas by Various

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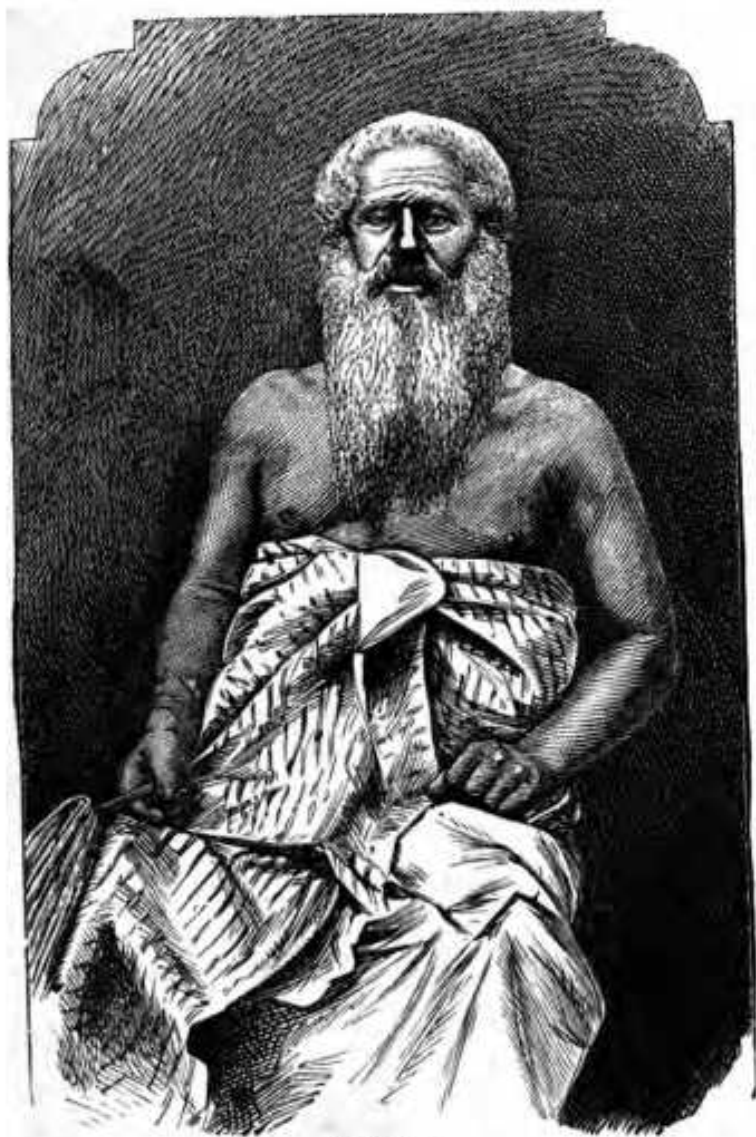
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VARIOUS

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A NATIVE MINISTER
IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

Translated by a Missionary.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

T. WOOLMER, 2, CASTLE STREET, CITY ROAD, E.C.;
AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1884.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following account is called an Autobiography. This requires a word of explanation. Joel Bulu, although a fair scribe, has never written any account of his own life. Many, however, have heard more or less of his narrative from the old man's lips and have wished that the whole history could be made widely known. In the present little book no pretension is made to completeness, considerable periods of Joel's devoted career being passed over in silence; but the chief events are given in his own words, which the Translator carefully noted down after many conversations,—“sometimes at sea, sometimes ashore, sometimes while walking from town to town inspecting the work, and sometimes in a native teacher's

house after the day's work was done,"—and has now put into English, preserving, as far as possible, the peculiar colouring of the Fijian idiom. "I wish," says the Translator, "I could transfer to paper his earnest look, the workings of his face, the twitching of his mouth-corners, his tears, his gestures, and the tones of his voice, as he told me the tale. It would then indeed make an effective book."

To those who have been accustomed to read the periodical records of our missions, the name of Joel Bulu will have long been familiar as of one of a noble class of men, whose existence and work supply the most encouraging feature of Christian missions. For missionary success may be justly considered the greatest when it has, in its results, the greatest reproducing and multiplying power,—when the converts themselves become agents of conversion, and, out of the midst of a people hitherto pagan or savage, men are raised up to spend their lives in the successful preaching of Christ. The fact that there are such men, and that their labours are fruitful in

the turning of many to righteousness, affords the highest of all encouragement, just because it manifests the presence of the Lord, giving His own express sanction to the enterprise, by not only making the first announcement of the Gospel effectual in the salvation of some who have heard it, but by causing the first messengers to see the work spreading *of itself* beyond their power, and by other agency called into being before their eyes.

In no scenes of missionary work have these cheering tokens been more largely given than in some of the groups and single islands of the South Pacific. Very early in the history of the Friendly Islands Mission, natives were employed in the simplest duties of teaching; and soon there grew up well-instructed men, having the best of all qualifications for the preaching of the Gospel,—the triumphant consciousness that it was “the power of God” to their own souls. From amongst these some have always been ready to go forth to other lands to fulfil their ministry. Thus Joel Bulu went to Fiji; and

since then many more have gone there from the Tongan Isles on the same holy errand. Whilst, in the Fijian Archipelago itself, God's work has been always producing most efficient and devoted workers, there have thus been mingled with them, as still there are, men from the other group, toiling—both sowing and reaping—in that field from which have been gathered such great harvests. It should be stated, however, that, for some years past, many of the Tongans employed in the mission work in Fiji have not come thither for that express purpose, but belong to the large immigrant Tongan population settled in some of the Fijian islands.

But the great bulk of the native mission agency in this group is supplied by its own people. It is hardly possible to realize—there are very few men living who can—the vastness of the result betokened by such a fact as this, that there are now at work in Fiji, in the service of Christian teaching, more than eight hundred catechists, six hundred local preachers, and forty-eight assistant missionaries, besides an array of

teachers in day-schools and Sunday-schools, numbering thousands.¹

All these have a recognised and official position in the church; while the "assistant missionaries"² have been solemnly set apart to the full service of the Christian ministry.

"Training institutions for native agents are under the charge of some of these men; others have distant and extensive districts, with numerous societies, on several islands in some cases, to manage. Then they meet weekly the catechists, local preachers, and class-leaders on the island

¹ The above was written for the first edition of this book in 1871. The latest returns are as follows:—

1,240 Chapels and other preaching-places.
11 Missionaries.
51 Native ministers.
32 Catechists.
1,070 Teachers.
1,729 Local preachers.
25,097 Church members.
4,552 Members on trial.
3,310 Class-leaders.
40,882 Scholars.
1,741 Schools.
2,097 School teachers.
103,526 Attendants on public worship.

² Now called Native Ministers.