

BOOK REVIEWS.

I. MISSIONS.

Missions in the Plan of the Ages. By William Owen Carver, M.A., Th.D. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.

Dr. Carver's book is not an addition to the already overcrowded shelves of missionary literature, for it is only remotely connected with them. It stands on a separate shelf, and practically stands alone, by reason of its purpose, its masterly treatment, its splendid achievement. Here are no maps, no statistics, no description of a needy world, no sentiment, no coaxing, no thought of begging for men or money "for missions." All these things are needed, but something far above and beyond them is needed, if the work of preaching the gospel to every creature is to be accomplished. And that "something" has been supplied by Dr. Carver. I am frank to confess that nothing has so taken hold of me for some years as this treatment of an almost threadbare subject. It is strikingly fresh, thrilling with the life of the day-dawn.

"Missions in the Plan of the Ages" takes us back to the eternal foundations of things. The missionary idea—the gospel for the world—is the purpose of God from the beginning. God is the author, Jesus is the Revealer, man—redeemed man—is the Agent by which the plan is to be realized. "World-wide redemption is not an afterthought, but a part of the eternal purpose of the Heavenly Father," says Dr. Carver. Missions have not their inception in the love of man for his fellows, but in the heart of God for the world—the whole of it. The outworking of this overmastering conception of the gospel is fairly astonishing in its discovery of the mighty missionary stream that moves from Genesis to Revelation. What is the best book on missions? The answer of Dr. Carver is, by

wonderful illustration, the Bible. The universality of the gospel is the plan of God, revealed through a common creation, a common law, a universal spirit in the chosen people, the chosen prophets—culminating in Jesus Christ, who is the light of the whole world. Here is the necessity upon the minister to come to a new realization of the world-aspect of the gospel. The average Christian will not realize it if the minister does not. The basis of missions is not in human need—however great; not in sentiment—however beautiful; but in the great purpose and plan of God, fully revealing itself in Jesus Christ, and by him through all his children. “The disciple must ever be the hands through which the heart of the Redeemer lays hold on needy men.” “He [Jesus] indoctrinated the dozen that he might evangelize the millions.” “A redeemed man is Christ’s agent in redemption.” The discussion is not built upon isolated or specially-chosen passages of Scripture, but reveals the veritable breathing of the entire Bible.

When the author comes to discuss the Missionary Message, Plan, Power, and Work, there is the masterly interpretation of what we like to call the “old” gospel, yet coming with the freshness of a revelation. Nothing new is asked for; it is the message and plan of Jesus, “into all the world;” it is the power of Pentecost—the Holy Spirit. The chapter, “The Missionary Power,” is a veritable tract on the place and power of prayer for missionary service, but its application sweeps beyond the missionary meaning, and touches a vital need in every Christian’s heart.

The last chapter, “The Prophecy of Missions,” is the most difficult, perhaps, for the reason that it is easier to interpret the past than to forecast the future. There is room for discussion here, yet in the main Dr. Carver takes the safe path. It is true that the full realization of the kingdom lies in the next world; yet, ought we not to look for a greater manifestation here among men? The question sometimes rises: May we not over-spiritualize the meaning of the message of the kingdom? This is in no sense a criticism; it is the natural suggestion growing out of the spiritual triumphs of the gospel, which the final chapter so strongly emphasizes.

"Missions in the Plan of the Ages" must have a place in every minister's library; it ought to go into every layman's home. We shall have new missionary preaching as we grasp these wonderful studies. It is the sweep of vision that makes a man. This book creates a world vision. There is a world-throb beating through every paragraph, because the author has caught the movement, the rhythm, of the heart of God, pulsating through the Book he has given to us. The Jews misread their scriptures, and so crucified their Lord; we are in danger of misreading the Scriptures, and so defeating the mission of our Lord, and hindering the divine plan of the ages, which is a world redeemed to God. Plainly, then, we see that missions is a synonym for world-evangelism; the modern missionary impulse is the rediscovery of the plan of God. The plan of God must be the working plan of his children. Any other gospel is a misnomer, unworthy a place in the Christian's thought, or in the minister's commission.

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Mission und Evangelisation im Orient. Von D. Julius Richter, Pfarrer in Schwaubeck (Belzig), Herausgeber der *Ev. Missionen*. Gütersloh, 1908. Druck und Verlag von C. Bertelsmann. Seite 320. 4.50 M., gebunden 5:50 M.

Here we have the second volume of Richter's *Allgemeine Evangelische Missionsgeschichte*. It is pleasant to know that the history of evangelical missions has been undertaken on an adequate scale. The first volume which appeared two years ago gave us the history for India. By the Orient as discussed in this volume readers in America will need to be told that the "Nearer East" is meant. The countries in review are the Turkish Empire, discussed in several chapters under its subdivisions; Persia, Egypt and Abyssinia. But first of all we have an extended discussion of the Mohammedan world and the Oriental Churches, in Chapter I. Chapter II. tells of the earlier missionary efforts of Henry Martyn, the Church Missionary Society, and the Basel Mission to the Caucasus. Thence taking up the various political divisions in order the problems and the