

The New Biography of William Carey.

WILLIAM CAREY,

By S. Pearce Carey, M.A.

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THIS is a book for all time. "The last and best word on Carey," and yet perhaps it is more truly the book for the hour—to-day's crisis in human history. Here is the author's graphic delineation of the times in which Carey first saw visions—the words reveal his biographer's terse and vivid descriptive power:—

"Carey was fortunèd, as we have seen, in his English environment. Education was arriving for the children of the poor. Wonder was reborn at the beauty of Nature. Our Empire was getting established in America and India. Captain Cook was charting the isle-strewn Pacific and outlining south coasts for Britain's inheritance. Sons of the Pilgrim Fathers were buying new freedoms with blood. Home fights were being won for the people, Parliament and Press. Free churchmen were challenging statutes that denied them fair citizenship. France was in the birth-pangs of a juster day. Britain was blushing for her slave trade. A fresh vision was dawning for the possibilities of Man. Compassion was waking for the imprisoned and insane. Westminster was protecting India from British greed. Clergy were called to devout social service by the life of William Law. Wesley was publishing the vitalizing evangel. Redeemed ones were quickened to poetry and praise. Rigid Calvinisms were yielding. Churches, weary of inefficient isolation, were beginning to combine. Collective prayer was becoming a contagion, scientific studies were pregnant with unimagined results. Industrial, commercial and social change was at the doors. Britain's business world was being reasoned into an opening of closed gates. The unevangelized peoples were burdening at least a few British consciences, and constraining them towards paths of missionary toil. This was the environment of Carey's English years."

History repeats itself. "There is sorrow on the sea, it cannot be quiet." This Life of William Carey suggests the only true solution for human restlessness—Christ, and a world-wide proclamation of the Evangel of God. Why should not the Baptist Church of Great Britain and America lead the way to-day, as they did then? A Church ablaze with holy zeal to win a world for Christ would cast out the devils that infest Europe, and bring a new Pentecost. This thrilling record sounds the trumpet-call of the Gospel of Christ for the world. Jehovah asks again, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

A recent review of the biography of Archbishop Benson, by his son, says, "The biographical fashion of to-day encourages an intimacy and frankness that were hardly permissible in years gone by. Frankness means only the unveiling of affection." So it has been with Pearce Carey. It took him ten years to gather "the whole worth-while story" of his hero, and his aim, in which he has been wonderfully successful, was personal—the disclosure of a man rather than the history of a movement. He makes his hero intimate with all who read his life. Readers of this volume put it down with the feeling that the founder of modern Protestant missions is no dim haloed personality of the early nineteenth century. He lives. You know him, you see him. He grips you. He touches your heartstrings. In him and with him you see anew the prophetic vision of Christ and the world problem. "Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the East, and His voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shined with His glory." And he stands beckoning to you. A man of like passions with ourselves, of weakness and frailty and sin, humbled every time he gazed into his soul's depths, cheered as he recognized who had loved him and chosen him, and thrust him forth to fight the stupendous powers of evil in heathen lands. "This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubabel, thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone with shoutings of Grace, grace upon it."

The Baptists of the Midlands have cause to rejoice in the part their fathers played during Carey's thirty-two English years. Pearce Carey calls us once again to take heed unto the glory of the village—the village church, the village pastor, the village children. It was not Canterbury, York, London, Liverpool, Glasgow, in which the Almighty searched for a man after Christ's own heart, a man to lead the forward movement—the aim of which was to win a lost world for God. It was

Paulers Pury, Hackleton, Piddington, and Moulton. "But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, which art little to be among the houses of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth, unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from Everlasting." Many great missionaries have been, like their Master, village bred men and women. And yet it was the cities that saved the movement in the great crises of its early years. God needs His Jerusalem as well as His Nazareth. Paul was city bred and city born, even though most of the Apostles were villagers. Let Baptists not forget to glory in their villages and in all their infirmities.

William Carey was fortunate in his friends—and in his colleagues. Pearce Carey gives bright cameos of many worthies as he threads the pilgrim way of his famous relative. Above all others, Andrew Fuller—whose portrait we miss from the illustrations that so fittingly adorn the story—Robert Hall, John Ryland, Samuel Pearce, John Sutcliffe, Reynold Hogg: and on the foreign field, Marshman and Ward—names "to remember in the early morning"—John Thomas, Yates, Mack, Chater, and others. And the members of Carey's own family, too,—Felix, Jabez, Eustace, and William,—are also thrown upon the screen in faithful portraiture. They cause both anguish and joy to the doctor's heart: and the faithful historian is true to life in his fashioning of the prosaic, the romantic and the tragic play of plastic circumstance. This is one of the abiding values of his record.

Pearce Carey has been a discoverer—and his discoveries add to the charm of his beautiful story. He discovered John Warr—to whom he reverently dedicates his book—"John Warr, of Yardley Gobion, Potters Pury, the fellow apprentice to whose importunity Carey owed his early quest for God." Listen to this call to personal evangelism, the quest for the soul of a friend.

"Meanwhile John Warr sought God with all his strength, till Christ became his conscious Saviour and his living Lord. He learned what it was to be reborn from above. There was he vastly rich: only a shoemaker's apprentice, but having struck the treasure of the field. God's pearl was his, and in his hand. God's pearl was in his soul. Desire to share his secret soon possessed him. He talked of Christ to Carey and his master, not for discussion, but to win them for his Lord. Says Carey, 'He became importunate with me.'"

Pearce Carey has discovered the heroism of a woman—the Doctor's first wife, and the mother of all his children—whom other biographers have only dispraised. Dorothy Carey was illiterate, a home bird who "had never so much as seen

the sea." She was within "a month of motherhood" when her husband came to tell her of his appointment to the foreign field; and she would not—would not, consent to his going. Like the church at which he was pastor, at first she resisted, and rebelled. Then she gave him Felix—their eight-year-old, bright, gifted boy to go with him. They parted in anguish. But God blessed the way. The vessel on which his passage had been taken left without them. Some weeks' delay gave him time to revisit the cottage home. John Thomas pleaded with Dorothy to make the sacrifice. At last she cried, "I'll go—if my sister here will go with me." She went—and it cost her health, and happiness, and a mental disorder which harrowed her and her house for the next thirteen years. Her spirit passed into a permanent gloom. It was the price she paid for daring to go to India in those unsheltered years." And she died in the first week of December 1807, "offered upon the service and sacrifice of the Faith." It is a pathetic story, tragic in its illumination of the home atmosphere in which Dr. Carey laid the foundations of his glorious work. Pearce Carey has discovered "the song in the mud of things." We join him in laying a wreath of roses upon her grave. We should have appreciated a portrait of her, and of Charlotte Carey.

Pearce Carey has discovered for some of us a new angle of vision for what he terms "the woe,"—the schism between the home authority and the Serampore trio that darkened the period 1817 to 1830. It was a claim to equal comradeship and freedom against a demand for control and possession of property and funds. It is a dead controversy, and God forbid that it should be repeated. We agree with Smith that the dispute brought "into Christlike relief the personality of Carey." Yet it is not without its message for to-day. Controversy is in the air. The Bible League is denying freedom, and industriously disseminating mistrust and false charges. Even our denominational leaders are quarrelling over Christian unity. Some mission stations, too, are weak and ineffective because of the lack of love among the brethren and sisters. Christ's service is not that way. The world vision calls to humility and fellowship in love and sacrifice and service. Let us close up the ranks, as Browning says, Pearce Carey's love for whom adds to the wealth of his story,

Where the serpent's tooth is,
Shun the tree.

"And the word of the Lord came to Zechariah, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother, and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, nor the stranger, nor the poor, and let none of you imagine evil

against his brother in your heart." It is passing strange how long it takes Christ's disciples to get level even with Old Testament ethics.

One misses the ring of laughter in the lives of the missionary giants of those days. Their letters were over emphasized with other-worldliness. Friends of the modern descendants of the Carey family associate the name with peals of merriment, with human joy, with boysome friskiness. Dr. Carey, with his neat and antiquated dress, his mind and benevolent face, seems to have been able to smile, but never to laugh. He had one hobby—only one. "To watch things grow was his dear recreation" in childhood and into oldest age. The experiences of his wonderful and famous College garden were the experiences of his life, and of the Mission. The under gardeners were a trial to his faith and patience. He had a hunger for new specimens. Storms and inundations destroyed in a few hours the work of years, even as the Press fire, and the sad controversy, sought to blast the value of a life's vigorous toil. But Carey was a giant in faith, and a believer in the omnipotence of prayer. He watched things grow—slowly, wonderfully, beautifully. His converts grew, till Krishna Pal became a thousand: his colleagues grew, till weird John Thomas became the staff of thirteen stations: and his translations grew, until the early attempts at Bengali saw six whole Bibles, twenty-three New Testaments, and Gospels or portions in five other languages. Well might William Carey be a lover of the prophets, and especially of Isaiah. We know no fitter words with which to close this review, and to commend this book, well printed, beautifully illustrated, to every pastor, every Sunday-school teacher, and to all who are lovers of Christ and His triumphant course:

"My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear, and he feared Me and stood in awe of My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his life. He walked with Me in peace, and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity."

HERBERT ANDERSON.