

DIVINE AGENCY IN MODERN MISSIONS.*

THE agency of God is not more manifest in creation than in history. Signs of His handiwork may be seen in every age. Historians bear testimony that the whole period bears marks of a comprehensive, all-embracing plan, with a unity and harmony which no human foresight could have designed, nor human energy have wrought out.

The design of this paper is to show forth this Divine agency as revealed in that part of history which relates to modern missions. In the mission work of the early Christian church, whose record is in Acts, the presence and agency of God were clearly manifested and recognized. The entire work in its inception, history, and progress was of God. He selected and prepared the missionaries, gave them a door of access to the Gentiles, and accompanied their preaching with mighty signs following.

In the history and progress of modern missions, the same supernatural agency is as clearly visible. The workings of Him who alone doth wondrous things may be traced all along the line. The whole period is as a burning bush, every twig of which is aflame with the Divine presence.

A field so vast and varied might be viewed from many stand-points; but it will not be possible, in the space of this paper, to do more than indicate, in broad outline, the leading paths of Divine activity.

Viewing the history of modern missions as a whole, the agency of God is first seen in preparing the church to engage in this work. For centuries previous to the modern-mission era, little mission work had been either attempted or accomplished. The reason is not difficult to find. The church was asleep. Spiritual death was brooding over her. Probably at no time since the Reformation was spiritual life so low as about the middle of last century. Spiritual desolation was widespread. In France, infidelity permeated the nation; in Britain, ritualism, free thought, Socinian and other "isms" paralyzed the life of the church; in America, as

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