

Book Notices.

The Unknown God: or, Inspiration Among Pre-Christian Races. By C. LORING BRACE. 8v, pp. xii-336. New York: A. C. Armstrong & Co.; Methodist Book Rooms, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax.

Many of our readers will remember with much pleasure Mr. Brace's former admirable volume "*Cesta Christi, a History of Humane Progress under Christianity*"—a volume whose distinguished merits have carried it into a fifth edition. The present work is a worthy successor to that book. It is marked by the same wide reading, the same devout spirit, the same literary style. We cannot better express the purpose of this book than by a short extract from its preface, it is designed by the comparative study of the ethnic or heathen religions "to see how the man of other races and times regarded the problems of the universe. What was his conception of the Primeval Cause, what he considered his relation to that strange power; and how far that relation affected his daily life and practical morals. . . How he regarded the great darkness beyond life . . . what moral ideals and conceptions he transferred to another existence, and how far he succeeded in lifting the great veil which hangs before it." In this study Mr. Brace finds "foot-prints of the Divine Being on the shifting sands of remote history." In the mythologies and superstitions of ancient lands and peoples he finds evidences of the inspiration of the Divine Spirit; proofs that those ancient religions reflected "broken lights" of the true revelation of God; that in every age the more thoughtful souls of men have been stretching out blind hands of faith and prayer "feeling after God if haply they may find him;" or, as Longfellow beautifully expresses it:

"The feeble hands and helpless
Groping blindly in the darkness,

Touch God's right hand in the
darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened."

Our author begins with the early Hamitic civilization of Egypt, and finds in the symbolism and religion of the old land of Nile strong foregleams of the clearer light of later times. The traditions of Ra and Thoth, of Orus and Osiris, and the solemn liturgies of the Book of the Dead, all give evidence of a profound belief in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the rewarder of good and of evil.

Then we have in the "Penitential Psalms" of the old Akkadian race the proofs of a deeply religious spirit, akin to that of another Semitic race, the Hebrews, whom God made the especial depositaries of His revealed will.

Especially in the literatures and religions of the Aryan races is it apparent that God has not left Himself without a witness in the hearts of men. In the Greek mysteries; in their symbolical worship; in the ancient hymns to Zeus and Apollo, in the avenging deities of the Greek dramatists, Æschylus and Sophocles; in the high philosophy of Socrates and Plato and the Stoics; in the pure morality of Seneca and Epicuretus and Marcus Aurelius—these glimpses and glances of the Divine are seen.

Our author then turns to the venerable religions of the Orient, the mystic teachings of Zoroaster, the ancient Vedic hymns of the Hindus, the sacred writings of the Buddhists and the blameless life of Gautama for additional reflections and refractions of the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

This noble volume is but an expansion of the argument of St. Paul with the Athenian worshippers of the "Unknown God." The Divine