

OBLIGATION TO MISSIONS.

FROM THE DANISH OF V. SORENSEN.

Translated for THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD by REV. C. C. STARBUCK.

IF an honest Chinese refused to retain a New Testament, on the ground that he would not keep such a book in his house so long as he could not live up to it, and only consented to do so after having learned where to find the strength for this, we have no right to retain the Bible in our houses if we are not willing to work for missions. Already, under the Old Covenant, the idea of the salvation of the heathen meets us from the first patriarch, in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed, down to the latest prophets, as when Zechariah describes the Messiah as speaking peace to the nations. And in the New Covenant no one of the Evangelists can relate to us the Lord's life on the earth to the end without placing before us his missionary command, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations;" or, as Mark has it, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation;" and the other two Evangelists communicate equivalent injunctions. Even so do all our Gospels exhibit to us the Lord as the first missionary, sent out by the Father, and exhibit as his last work upon earth that he sends out his apostles as missionaries. But as the work was not brought to its end through them, so neither is the line of missionaries ended in them, but is to be prolonged until the end is come for this earth and the object attained which all God's works on earth have had in view. The next book in our New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, is from first to last a narrative of the progress of the missionary work for and of the spread of God's kingdom from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Rome. And of the Epistles by far the greater part are letters from the great missionary to the Gentiles, Paul, in which we become acquainted with the joys and sorrows of the apostolic missionaries; and when, hastening to the end of our Bible, we arrive at its final page, almost its last line, there are the words: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus." This is the answer of the Spirit and the Bride, which expresses the innermost longing of all God's children. But thou, who wilt have nothing to do with missions to the heathen, hast no right to take these words into thy mouth: for in thy mouth they would not be the truth, inasmuch as the Lord has said to us that he cannot come until the work of missions is at an end; this gospel of the kingdom must be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations—and then shall the end come.