

THE CHALLENGE OF MISSIONS

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Simpson's work on the missionary movement and global evangelization, discussing prayer, missions, the fruits of missionary work, and the Lord's coming in relation to world evangelism.

6 Chapters

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The Challenge of Missions

1. THE LAST HANDFUL

"Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go, and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah" (1 Kings 17: 13-16).

The darkest hour of Israel's sin was marked by the advent of the greatest of Israel's prophets. As men place their best lighthouses on the most dangerous coasts, so where sin abounds, there God's grace doth much more abound. Elijah represents the ministers of God and the messengers of heaven in every age. Like a flaming star he had flashed across the reign of the wicked Ahab and had hurled in his face the awful message of judgment, "As the Lord God liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, but according to my word." And then as suddenly as the meteor vanishes he had passed out of sight and the angry and distracted king sought for him in vain over all the land. But God was taking care of His servant. Away up on the banks of the Jordan, and perhaps on the border of the land of Gilead, his own country, the prophet was safely hid by the brook Cherith, and the ravens were bringing him morning and evening his daily portion of bread, while he drank of the water of the flowing brook.

But soon even the little mountain brook dried up and the prophet must look elsewhere for his support. And so the command comes to him, "Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there; behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee." And across the breadth of the land he takes his journey and enters at eventide the gates of the little city. Just at this moment his hostess comes out to gather a few sticks to prepare the last meal for her-self and her little son, for the famine had sorely stricken this land also, and there was neither bread nor water except of the scantiest measure. At the word of the Lord the prophet accosts her, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." and as she went to fetch, he called again as though the Lord would gradually and gently prepare her mind for the great test that He was bringing. "Bring me also, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand." Then it was that her spirit broke. The water she would spare, but the bread was too much as yet for her hos-pitality to venture. How pathetic the cry of her dis-tress, "As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die." Then comes the mighty message of faith, "Fear not; go, and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal sha not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth." How simple and sublime the story and the sequel. "And sh went, and did according to the saying of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days," or a the margin says, a full year, "and the barrel of mea wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah."

What has this beautiful ancient picture to do with missions?

I. We have here a beautiful picture of fellowship in service and missionary work. Elijah represents the missionary and this widow his supporter. For a whole year this humble and destitute woman supported a missionary all alone to show us what faith can still do through us in the Master's work. The work of missions is mutual. God intends that the two sides of it shall always be jointly maintained. It is not a matter for the independent worker who takes a notion to go to some distant field and preach the Gospel, but it is just as much the responsibility of you and me at home, if we cannot go, to stand back of some one else who can. And therefore the first missionaries were sent forth from Antioch while the church at Antioch stood behind them, commending them to the grace of God, welcoming them back and then sending them forth again. God might just as well have still continued to support Elijah by the ravens of the wilderness, but He wanted to establish this precedent and leave this pattern for other workers in all the coming ages. He might still send an army of angels to proclaim His message to the world, or supply the needs of those who do it, but He has chosen to make His people partners in this glorious trust. "One soweth, another reapeth." One scatters the seed with diligent hands while another acts as willing feet to carry the sower wherever he may go. You can still be as truly a missionary as the man you support in Africa or China, and when the day of recompense shall come, the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together, and you shall have your part as well as he.

II. Further we learn that God loves to use the humble and the poor as His chosen instruments of highest service. He did not send Elijah to be the guest of Obadiah, the wealthy and noble cabinet minister of Ahab who was his loyal friend, and who could have cared for him without the slightest sacrifice. But He sent him to a poor widow in the heathen country of Sidon. We sometimes wonder why God does not lead the Rockefellers and Vanderbilts to give their millions to God for the world's evangelization, but instead He seems to be dependent upon "a poor and despised company" of obscure people like ourselves and most of those who are sustaining the work of missions today. The truth is, God never has cared to lean upon the rich, the great, the wise or the strong, lest men should claim the glory. This is no mere accident, but the rule in the Kingdom of God. "Ye see your calling, brethren," the apostle says, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty...are called," but God hath chosen "the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." So the founders of Christianity were the poor fishermen of Galilee. The first testimony of the leading apostle was, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." One of the old saints well said, "When the church ceased to say, silver and gold have I none, she also ceased to say, in the Name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk." The pioneers of modern missions were poor people. It was a lot of humble peasants, without influence or money, who led Zinzendorf to form the great Moravian missionary society, and to begin the most glorious work of modern times. Today a great proportion of the missionary money of the Church comes from people like the widow of Zarephath. Do not, therefore, excuse yourself from the responsibility or be discouraged in your efforts, because you are humble and poor. God is simply asking the five barley loaves and two fishes, the two mites that make a farthing, the thing that is "in thine hand," and His power will make it "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds."

III. Next we learn the place of sacrifice in the service of God. Already this woman had drunk of the cup of sorrow. She was a widow, she was poor and she had a little fatherless child dependent on

her. She had even come to the uttermost straits and already had seen the bottom of the meal barrel and was gathering just two little sticks with which to make a flash of fire to bake a few grains that still remained and taste once more with her little son the sweet taste of food, and then lie down and die of starvation. And it is this woman from whom God asks the last handful of meal and the uttermost sacrifice of which she was capable. The reason He asks such sacrifices is because He wants us first, and sacrifice is the only test of self-surrender. "Make first a cake for me," is the touchstone of all consecration. It is God first and last and all in all. Beloved, is this your consecration? This is the Divine standard for all that will ever pass current in the world above. Abraham must give up his Isaac, Moses must give up his crown. Hannah must give up her boy. The widow must leave her life and her child's life at the mercy of Elijah's God and surrender the last link between them and every human possibility of escape from death.

Why does a loving father call for such sacrifices? Simply because His own love has made a greater sacrifice and He knows that we never can be partners in that kingdom of which love is the keynote and the fundamental law unless we too have learned the same great secret of love. The Kingdom of Christ is the kingdom of love, just as the kingdoms of earth are realms of selfishness and ruled by self-love. Men live for what they can get out of one another, and a good many Christians seem to think the business of religion is to get all they can out of God. But we do not belong to the kingdom of heaven until we become partakers of the Divine nature, and that is love. The sacrifice of Calvary was never offered to purchase at such tremendous cost for selfish, ease-loving men and women a cheap reprieve from punishment, a release from all sacrifice, and a Divine indulgence to go on living for self-gratification. We have not truly come into Christ's atonement until the spirit of that cross has been repeated in our lives and we have learned to say, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

Beloved, is there any such cross as that in your life? I do not mean the cross where He died for you, but where you have died with Him; some hour of self-renunciation, some conflict with the flesh and the heart that almost crushed you, some place where you laid down an idol, or gave up an ambition, or renounced a bright and alluring future and went forth with Him, saying:

"Jesus, I my cross have taken

All to leave and follow Thee."

And a sweet undertone seemed to whisper in your heart for many a day,

"Now I know thou lovest me."

IV. We learn further that the true secret of every sacrifice and service is faith. Not without a promise from the prophet could she have ventured on this surrender. God did not ask her to give up one world without offering to her another. He is too faith-ful to demand of us a blind surrender. Even Abraham's mighty sacrifice was not made in blank despair, but in living faith. He gave up Isaac, "accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead." A sister once told me that she had been trying desperately for months to be so surrendered to the Lord that she was willing to be lost for Christ's sake. No wonder she failed. God asks us to give ourselves up, not to an executioner, but to a father's arms, because He has much more to give us in return.

When Richard Cecil wished to teach his little daughter the meaning of consecration and faith, he took her on his knee in his library one day and asked her if she loved him well enough to give up a little necklace of glass beads which she greatly prized. She looked up with tears in her face, and sobbed, "Yes, papa." "Well," said he, "you take them off and throw them into the grate." With heaving bosom and hesitating steps, she made the great renunciation and then flew back to his arms and sobbed herself to rest, while he patted the little golden head and gently said, "Now papa knows you love him." Nothing more was said for several days, but on her birthday her father called her to him, and, opening a little casket, handed to her a chain of real pearls and asked her to put them on her neck as the gift of his love to her, She looked him full in the face and then a great light broke upon her countenance, and again throwing herself on his bosom, she cried, "Oh, papa, forgive me; I did not understand, but now I do."

That is the consecration God loves and loves to recompense. Our sacrifices are real investments that will bring us infinite returns in that day when He shall give us diadems for tears, cities for pounds and ten thousand per cent compound interest on all we have laid down for His sake. The poor widow made no mistake in investing a little handful of meal for thrice three hundred and sixty-five good meals. The farmer who throws away a lot of good grain in the furrowed field may seem to his thoughtless child to be a great waster, but when the golden harvest comes and gives him back some sixty and some an hundredfold, then the little one will understand.

We shall give to God just in proportion to our confidence in Him. We shall put our money into His cause just so far as we believe it is the best cause in the world. We are doing this already or failing to do it and our lives are telling the story of our faith. Shall we hear Him calling to us and saying, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it?"

The story is told of a selfish and stingy elder in the Church of God who had refused to give anything in the offering for missions and had told the collector that he would be much obliged if she would not call upon him again. That night he had a dream, and in his dream the Lord seemed to be discussing this matter with him. "John," the voice seemed to say, "have you ever asked me for anything?" "Oh, yes," he answered, "I have asked you for something every day and I could not get on without continually asking for needed blessings." "How is it, then," said the voice, "that I asked you today for something and you refused Me? Now," the Lord continued, "what have you got from Me in all these years? Do you remember asking Me once to forgive your sins and save your soul, and I gave you what you asked?" "Yes," was the answer. "Do you remember asking Me a great many times to forgive your faults and later sins and restore you to My peace and favor, and did I not always answer you?" "Yes," was the reply. "Did you not ask Me to prosper you in your business and I gave you good crops and a splendid farm, and enabled you to lay up a lot of money in the bank?" "Yes," still came the answer. "Do you remember once when you were ill and given up to die and you pleaded with Me for your life and I gave it back to you and raised you up again and have kept you in health until this day?" "Yes," sobbed out the farmer. "Did you not ask Me to bless your home and I gave you a loving wife and sons and daughters and have kept them from going astray and have made them a joy and comfort to you?" "Oh, yes," groaned out the farmer. "Well, now," said the Lord, "all this must be changed from this day and we shall simply understand each other; that I am never to ask you again for anything and you are never to ask Me for

anything." "Oh, no, Lord," cried out the farmer; "forgive me, I cannot do without Thee and I gladly acknowledge that I and all I have are Thine and shall give to Thee as Thou hast given to me."

V. The blessing that came through this act of faith and sacrifice. First, her own supplies were multiplied, her own needs were met, her life was saved, her child was fed and all her future was guarded and blessed by Him whom she had obeyed and trusted.

In the next place, she was used to perform a great and noble service. She became the instrument of God in keeping His prophet. She actually supported a missionary for twelve months out of a single handful of meal, and thus was made a fellow-worker with the greatest of the prophets and her name enrolled in the annals of eternity among the witnesses of faith and the servants of the Lord. What a glorious return for one little act of faith and love. How like the little lad who gave his loaves and fishes to feed the multitudes and got back his own dinner and twelve basketsful of fragments. In this connection God continually reminds us in His Word that we may expect His rich temporal blessing when we deal bountifully with Him. It is with reference to giving of our means to God that He says, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so that thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

VI. This woman's act of faith and love was but a steppingstone to a higher experience and a greater blessing. This was not the end of it by any means. A few months passed and lo, a great sorrow came to that happy home. Her loved boy was stricken with deadly sickness and in a few hours lay cold and lifeless in his mother's arms. And then there came back to her the remembrance of a life of sin and she burst forth with a bitter cry before the man of God, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" How little we know when we are obeying the Spirit's voice in some solemn hour like this, how soon some tremendous need for God is going to come into our lives and that in His farseeing mercy God is just preparing us now by this very act of faith to trust Him then for something higher and harder. How glad she was an hour later when that loved son was given to her joyful embrace that she had not said "No" to God when He first had called her. It is not that God deals with us on the principle of bargain and sale, giving us His blessings because we have earned them, but it is forever true that the hearts that hearken when He calls and learn to obey in quick response, are the people that shall be able to go with confidence to Him when the great emergencies of life come. Our hearts would faint and fail were we not able to claim Him as our present help in time of trouble. In contrast with this, how dreadful that other picture of the selfish worldling who refuses to listen to the call of God and some day himself shall call on God in vain. Listen, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

VII. Finally, the Lord has been pleased to give this act of faith and love an everlasting memorial. It is not a little remarkable that in our Saviour's first sermon on earth in the synagogue at Nazareth, recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke, He should call special attention to this very case. In speaking of the work of Elijah this is the only incident that He mentions. "There were many widows

in Israel in the days of Elijah, but to none of them was he sent but to Sarepta, a city of Sidon. unto a woman that was a widow." Why should He make mention of this very case? Perhaps for the same reason that He Himself has told us, wherever this Gospel is preached, to tell of the love of Mary of Bethany in anointing Him for burial. It was no chance occurrence that the prophet should meet this woman. God had chosen her to be the instrument of blessing and service, and the Lord Jesus puts His own emphatic seal upon that divine choice. Beloved, when God comes to you with some special opportunity of holy service, it is a high and heavenly calling for which you will forever thank and bless Him unless you are foolish enough to neglect and refuse it. So He is coming to you today in these last and closing days of time and condescending to give you some noble part in the most glorious enterprise in all the annals of all the ages, a part in the bringing back of the King of kings and the establishment of His kingdom in the earth. What though you be poor and little known? He is rich enough and great enough to take your humble gift and multiply it a millionfold and to be pleased with your loving sacrifice and reward it some day with a crown of glory that fadeth not away. It is not the Christian and Missionary Alliance that is calling for your help. It is not a case of charity, humanity, or conventional religious work. It is the Lord Jesus who hath need of you and is saying to some of His missionaries, "I have commanded a widow to sustain thee." Shall we be true to our heavenly calling and some day hear Him say, "Ye did it unto me?"

2. PRAYER AND MISSIONS

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).

This passage is quoted twice in connection with the life of Christ. He seems to have uttered this sentence several times. Once it fell from His lips as He gazed at the multitudes on the Galilean hills at the time of the feeding of the five thousand. His heart, we are told, was moved with compassion when He saw the multitudes scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Again He uttered these words when sending the seventy disciples to preach the Gospel in every city and village whither He Himself would come. This act was, in a sense, the beginning of a great missionary movement which followed the day of Pentecost. The seventy evangelists whom He sent forth were types of the great missionary army and the number "seventy" is suggestive of the seventy gentile nations into which the heathen world was supposed to be divided in ancient times. As He sent these forth as pioneers He saw behind them the mighty army that were to follow and precede His coming. As these seventy went forth, the message they bore was really the message that He was coming behind them; and so they represent very finely the missionary movement of today in which we go forth, not to call attention to ourselves but to tell of Him, and especially to remind those we visit that He Himself is following close behind us and will soon be here in His personal advent.

I. Our Saviour's emphatic language on both these occasions gives us a vivid view of the world's harvest as He saw it. "The harvest truly is great." His words suggest to us that it is harvest time. It is the time for reaping and harvest time is always an urgent and a swiftly passing season. It will not wait our convenience. It must be reaped when it is ripe, or it will rot upon the field. This is the condition of the world today. It is ripe for the reapers of the kingdom or the pit. The mind and heart of the heathen world is opening up from the sleep of ages and eagerly receiving new light from the progress of modern civilization, and it is just as ready to absorb the devil's lies as the Lord's truth. It is a crisis age, and what we do we must do quickly.

Then, too, the great reaper, Death, is mowing down the generation at the awful rate of more than thirty millions a year and if these immortal souls are to hear of Jesus they must hear at once. It is harvest time. Let the reapers be ready.

But again, the Master reminds us that the harvest is great. It is of great extent. It is almost impossible to realize the vastness of earth's Christless millions. There is no arithmetic that can make the picture. Let them march past us in four lines of moving men, two of them composed of Chinese, one of African and one of Hindu. Let this column four deep march by us. It would take a generation for them to pass, and when they had gone a new generation would be marching at their heels, and so forever, four deep, they are marching past to judgment and darkness, one hundred thousand dying every day. It is like a mighty city blotted out every twenty-four hours by a calamity greater than earthquake or flame.

But this harvest is great, not only in extent, but in value. These are immortal souls capable of joy or woe. They were once made in the image of God. They are destined to live forever. Under the influence of Divine grace they are capable of rising to the highest and noblest possibilities of goodness and usefulness. The humblest and most worthless of them was worthy of the sacrifice of Christ's life, and the shedding of His precious blood. It is a mighty harvest. Better let all the wheat fields of America be blighted, better let all the gold of the Klondike and California perish, better let a constellation go out into darkness, than that these souls should be lost.

The harvest is also great in its difficulties. It is a task impossible to man. All the power of Satan, all the prejudices of race and caste, all the deep love of sin in the human soul, all the power of evil habit and natural corruption conformed by ages of degradation and strengthened by ten thousand selfish and earthly motives combine to hold men in the power of Satan and to lead them to reject the Gospel. Even if we had the missionaries and the means, the difficulties would still be immense. The work is superhuman. Properly to reach this vast harvest field we need a missionary for every ten thousand men, and this would require the forces of one hundred thousand missionaries and fifty million dollars a year to sustain them. This would not be considered too great for human ambition and imperial power. The immediate evangelization of the world ought to have such an army and such an equipment. And before such figures our feeble resources and limited means dwarf into insignificance, our hearts fall back on God and are relieved, when we hear the Master say "Pray." This is a task too great for us. God must undertake it.

Again, the Master glances at the laborers and He tells us they "are few." They were few in His own day when twelve apostles and seventy disciples went forth on the first Evangel. They are still few, although the numbers have increased. Instead of one missionary for every ten thousand human beings, there are vast provinces and destitute fields where it is one missionary to half a million, and sometimes one missionary to several millions. This is not for lack of material, for the Church has millions of members in this country, and one volunteer out of every hundred members would give us from America alone a missionary army sufficient to evangelize the globe. But instead of one out of every hundred we have about one out of every fifty thousand church members from this country in the foreign land. While the wealth of our people increases, and our Christian agencies are crowded with professional workers, the mission fields are neglected and even the workers that would go forth are hindered for lack of means, and the Lord's heart aches as He cries: "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

II. The great need of the work is suggested by the Master's language respecting the prayer of the disciples: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." The force of this expression is lost in our translation. The Greek word for "send" literally means "thrust forth." It describes an emergency movement, an extensive and intensely rapid and earnest sending forth of laborers. It describes the great missionary movement in which many workers are suddenly called to the field and go forth with intense earnestness, enthusiasm and power. It is just such a missionary movement as started forth from Pentecost, and as we have occasional intimations of in the history of such great evangelistic movements as the labors of Colomba in Scotland, Anselm in Germany, the Moravian movement, Pastor Harms and Pastor Gossler and one or two more aggressive missionary movements of these last days. The work of the China Inland Mission, the rise of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Student Volunteers, give some intimation of what such a movement might be under the direction of the Holy Ghost if the

Church of Christ were only aroused to a full realization of the need of the world, the opportunities of the time and the urgency of the call. It is just such a movement as this that the Church of Christ and the heathen world needs. Nothing short of it can meet the awful destitution of the world and the apathy, indifference and selfishness of the Church. It would be a greater revival if such a crusade would be begun and sustained for a single decade on the part of all the consecrated children of God. It is not too much to say that the whole world might be occupied in half a generation and the Lord's coming hastened in our time. Such a thrusting forth implies the breaking down of barriers, the upheaval of old forms of thought and feeling, the breaking up of selfishness, stagnancy, conservatism, and the letting loose of the spirit of love and Christian enthusiasm amid all ranks and classes of the Church of God, to bring back the freshness, the self-sacrifice and the supernatural power of the days of Pentecost. It would usher in an era of glory and spiritual quickening such as the Church has not witnessed since the days of Paul. What a worthy object of prayer! Let us ask God for something as large-hearted and magnificent in the name of Christ as the world is supplying in the name of commerce and enterprise. Many think nothing of investing tens of millions in vast speculations, transcontinental railways, great trusts and selfish combinations. Oh, for a missionary trust, a combination of idle capital and the elevated minds and glowing hearts of the Church of God to accomplish in a prodigious enterprise as much for God as Mammon is doing in a thousand directions for selfishness and pleasure! How small our Christian enterprise, how timid our expectations and efforts! How we wonder when a man gives a few thousands to things incalculably more important than absorb hundreds of millions from the votaries of the world!

This thrusting forth will have two sides to it. It will involve on one hand a great army of volunteers for the field, of which we have some intimation in the Students' Volunteer movement, when men will pour out their lives for the evangelization of the nations as they poured out their lives once for country and the freedom of our people.

It will also witness the outpouring of money in the spirit of magnificent giving and self-sacrifice, and it will not be called a strange thing for one man to take a whole province in China and give his tens of millions for its evangelization; for another to take Anam and become a trustee for its evangelization; for a syndicate of Christians to assume the responsibility of the evangelization of the Soudan, and open up great railways to the heart of Africa and send forth their equipped and consecrated pioneers, not by the tens but by the thousands, to occupy the land for Christ.

The language implies that it will need great power to accomplish such a movement. The whole bent of human nature is against it. Selfishness will lead the workers to tarry at home and hoard their means for enterprises of profit and pleasure, but God can send such a tidal wave of love, power and self-denial as will break up these icy barriers and pour, like the freshets of spring, in torrents of holy zeal, through every channel of Christian life and service. Oh, for such a day to dawn! Oh, for such a thrusting forth of laborers into the harvest! Oh, for the old Psalm to be fulfilled, "The Lord gave the word, great was the company that published it!" Oh, for such a baptism from on high! Then shall it be true, "Thy people shall be a freewill offering in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

III. Our Master indicates the source from which this need is to be supplied and this remedy provided, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest." It is to come through believing prayer. Such a

movement as we have described is so much in advance of what we see, is so unspeakably greater than our feeble, timid and trifling attempts at the world's evangelization, that no power is equal to it but God's, and no means can accomplish it but prayer. As one passes even hastily over heathen lands he becomes utterly oppressed with the massive and almost impenetrable barriers against the Gospel that confront him on every side; and as he looks upon the overwhelming millions under the power of superstition, sensuality and grossest wickedness, with but here and there a feeble ray of holy light shining in the darkness, he cries almost in despair, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Thank God there is one remedy, the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is equal to the need, and He can raise up just such a movement, and send forth just such an army.

Oh, that a few hearts might be filled with this Divine ambition to be God's intercessors and remembrancers of such a blessing.

1. Prayer will send forth the workers and the right kind of workers. It will reach them with a heavenly call, train them in the school of God, send them to the right fields and sustain them when they go.

2. Prayer will supply the means. God can reach the pocketbooks that we cannot. The Holy Ghost can take a hundred of our young, consecrated business men, who are ready to dedicate themselves and whatever wealth God may give them to this great enterprise, and then in a very few years, by the rapid turns of prosperity which lie back of hundreds of business careers, can load them with boundless wealth and make them His trustees for the greatest work in the world. Perhaps there are a hundred people reading these lines, who might, if God could only trust them with such a ministry, become possessed of unlimited resources for His cause and the spread of the Gospel. Yes, and God can touch those that are now possessed of wealth in ways that the petitioner may never see.

A few years ago in a New England town three women met one afternoon and prayed God to do something for foreign missions which would mark that hour in the history of its cause. That very afternoon a rich man in the same city made his will and left more than a million dollars to support the Gospel in heathen lands. These are things He loves to do, if He can but find people that will only trust Him, and whom He can fully trust.

3. Prayer can remove the difficulties and open the doors of the mission field. Prayer has opened almost every land to the Gospel in the last fifty years. It is but a little while since the principal mission fields of the world were practically closed. In a single generation we have seen India, China, Central Africa and South America, all prepared by the mighty hand of God's providence for the seed of the Gospel. Hudson Taylor has told us how, through prayer, the ship on which he was sailing to China, as it was becalmed and drifting on a cannibal shore, was saved by prayer, through the breaking forth of a sudden breeze while the missionary prayed below and the captain unreefed the sails above, and just as the savages were waiting for their prey, they saw the vessel turn and dash away from the perilous shore as if wafted by the very breath of God.

A missionary in China tells us how a native Christian was about to be murdered by his elder brother because he insisted on giving a Christian burial to his aged mother. The native churches prayed, and the faithful Christian stood firm, when suddenly the hand of God struck this wicked brother, and he died in fearful torment, declaring that the demons had come for his soul, and a

great awe fell on all the community because it was the hand of God.

Dr. Chamberlain tells us how in India through simple prayer he and a large party were saved in a jungle in the darkness of night, and they were supernaturally led to a place on the bank of the river where there was no ferry or possible way of escape at ordinary times; but, just as they reached it they found that a ferry had been provided and held there by means that could not have been provided by man, and the boatmen were waiting, they knew not why, and they carried them safely across the swollen river and from the jungle with its awful perils.

Dr. Paton has told us what prayer has accomplished in the New Hebrides, and the whole story of missions is full of the supernatural working of God in answer to His people's prayer. He is ready to go before us as literally as the pillar of cloud and fire moved before Israel in the wilderness of old. All He asks of us is that we fully trust Him, and that we step forth in obedience to His will and in confidence in His care.

4. Prayer will break down the prejudices of the heathen and open their minds and hearts to the Gospel. Many of us will recall the history told by Dr. Mahan of the good minister in Ohio, who used to pray in his last days almost constantly for the heathen world. He took the map of the world as his prayer book, and kneeling down in his closet he daily traversed the world, stopping at the different mission stations and praying for them, one by one. After he was gone, it was found from the missionary periodicals, that God's blessing had swept across these fields in great missionary revivals in exact accordance with the order of his prayer, and the blessing had traveled around the globe just behind the pillared cloud of the Holy Ghost as it went before in this good man's closet. It will be found some day, no doubt, that the wonderful revivals of Madagascar and the Sandwich Islands, the Telugu mission and the work in Northern India, and the outpourings of the Holy Ghost in China, are just the answer to some humble and perhaps unknown child of God, who, in the secret place of prayer, has gone before bearing the censor of holy intercession and blowing a trumpet of victorious faith around the walls of Jericho.

Beloved, let us pray, let us "pray the Lord of the harvest," that in these last days He will revive Israel, make bare His arm, bring forth a great missionary crusade and "thrust forth laborers into His harvest."

3. THE FRUITS OF MISSIONS

"The tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22: 2).

While of course this lofty symbolism has a literal meaning and some day will be actually fulfilled in the city of glory, yet it is not straining any principle of Scripture interpretation to apply it figuratively to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the great salvation which that Gospel brings. We propose therefore to consider in the light of this striking image what the Gospel has done for the healing of the nations and the feeding of the heart hunger of a perishing world. Perhaps the leaves of the tree of life may refer more particularly to the physical and the temporal blessings which the Gospel brings to mankind, while the fruits of the tree have a more general reference to the spiritual benefits of Christianity to our race. We shall, however, at this time make no forced distinction between the two parts of this double figure, but in a general way endeavor to trace twelve of the chief fruits of Christianity among the nations to whom it has been proclaimed and is being today proclaimed with new energy in the world of worldwide evangelization.

1. The first fruit of the tree of life is salvation. Man's lost condition is the root of all his misery and the merely physical and social conditions of our race can never be remedied until we begin at the beginning, by removing that root of bitterness and death and restore humanity to its true relation to God as a reconciled Father in the face of Jesus Christ. This is what no other religion offers or even attempts. There is nothing in paganism or Mohammedanism that even remotely approximates to the message of reconciliation through Jesus Christ. Other religions try to ameliorate some of the conditions of man's state, but none of them are able to change it as the Gospel does and lift them up to the favor and fellowship of the God from whom he has been separated by sin. Until humanity is thus brought back to God the world is a wandering star, cut off from its center and ever traveling farther and farther into the blackness of darkness forever. The Gospel makes men right with God, cancels the curse of sin, opens all the avenues of fellowship, confidence, prayer and love and brings the outcast to his Father's house and makes the criminal a child of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Oh, is it not worth our while to spend and be spent to give to the world such a Gospel of salvation? Compared with this how petty all our efforts at civilization, education and mere self-improvement. The first and the essential thing is to cure the dread disease of sin and restore the interrupted channel of life and communion with Him apart from whom there can be no life or happiness.

2. The second fruit of Christianity is righteousness. The Gospel not only provides for the forgiveness of sins on a sure and immovable basis, but it also provides for the transformation of human nature, for the removal of man's natural tendency to sin, for the purifying of his heart and life and for the implanting of all those divine forces which work for righteousness and holiness. It is idle to say that the righteous judge will not deal harshly even with the heathen if they have tried to do their best and lived up to the light they had. This is only begging the question, for the heathen do not live up to the light they have and cannot do their best, without some new spiritual force,

stronger than good resolutions, lofty examples or high ethical teaching. The very essence of sin is that it paralyzes our moral power and leaves us without strength, and the very essence of Christianity is that when we were without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly and "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath done by making us free from the law of sin and death." The Gospel is a divine secret of life and righteousness and wherever it is truly received it takes away man's natural love of sin and works in him to will and do of God's good will and pleasure. Christ says about it, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The Apostle Paul says about it, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace." The Apostle John says about it, "He that abideth in him sinneth not." The Apostle Peter says about it, "His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness whereby we are made partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust." Therefore, we find that wherever this Gospel goes it conquers the selfishness, uncleanness, deceitfulness, cruelty and wickedness of human hearts and bears the fruit of love, joy, peace, long suffering, goodness, meekness, temperance, faith. Even the infidel historian Gibbon confesses that the early triumphs of the Gospel were largely due to the influence of the pure and lofty lives lived by the early Christians and the great naturalist Darwin has left on record his testimony of wonder and admiration at the transformation which the Gospel had wrought among the Indians of Terra del Fuego and the savages of the South Sea Islands.

3. Happiness is the next fruit of Christianity among the heathen. There is little happiness among the Christless nations. Sin has left its dreadful impress even upon the countenance. A traveler among these races cannot fail to notice the downlook of the great masses whose life seems like one long funeral march to the grave, and is instantly struck with the different appearance of the sweet girl students in the mission schools and the shining faces of the coarsest and most ordinary men as one sees them in one of the native congregations when singing the praises of the Redeemer. A Japanese woman asked a missionary teacher of a girls' school if they only took pretty girls as students, and the teacher replied, "No we do not make any condition about personal appearance at all." "Well," she said, "I would like to send my daughter to your school not to learn her Christianity, for you must not teach her that, but in order to get the look on her face that all your girls have."

4. The next fruit of Christianity is the home. There is no character for home in Chinese. We believe the character used for this also represents a pigpen. How can there be a happy home amid all the jealousies and strifes of polygamy with half a dozen wives and different families intriguing and contending? In South America and the West Indies the writer was constantly finding that the conditions of family life among the poor were such as to lead inevitably to immorality and corruption among the young from the very earliest years. There is but one family room as a rule where both sexes sleep together and all the privacies which are considered decent in Christian homes are utterly unknown and the youngest children know all about the family secrets and everything pertaining to birth and life and death, which no Christian mother would permit her child to know. Therefore, the establishing of one Christian home among the heathen is an object lesson of infinite value, and when family life can be rightly established, as it is in every Christian mission, three-fourths of the difficulties of Christian living on the part of the native converts are removed. Never before did we so profoundly realize the preciousness of the Christian home as the fruit of

the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Shall we give these little ones, these wronged and helpless women, these homeless orphaned children of the night the blessing of a Christian home?

5. Social elevation, education and material improvement. Archdeacon Phair, of Winnipeg, loves to tell how he can always know, when he enters an Indian cabin, whether the family is converted or not. If they are still pagans they all sit on the ground and their household goods are scattered in filth and confusion in every direction; but if they are Christians, they sit on stools and they have shelves around the walls to store their things and the higher up they are in the scale of Christianity the more traces are there of refinement and order. The same results appear in the matter of dress, and Dr. Paton tells how, in the South Sea Islands, a single shirt would be prized by a native Christian above all estimation, and he would regularly wear it to church on Sunday without another article of dress and feel himself many degrees higher in the scale of progress and dignity for that one item in his wardrobe. How Christianity has transformed the very appearance of the lands that once were like a desolate wilderness, but are now rejoicing and blossoming as the rose. As a rule people of unChristian races are utterly illiterate. The Gospel brings education, knowledge and intellectual improvement and progress. And the marvelous transformation of many of the rising communities of today in the Orient is chiefly due in its original causes to the mission schools.

6. National elevation is a result of Christianity. Where shall we look for a more striking example of this than in the story of Japan? The entrance of the Bible and the missionary, marks the first chapter of new Japan and the aspirations kindled by the Gospel had as much to do as the contact with western civilization in the great revival which has put Japan in the very front of Eastern nations. We have beheld the same evolution in China with the difference that the larger body is moving more slowly, but no intelligent observer can for a moment question that the marvelous progress of the past decade is chiefly due to the uplift of the Gospel among the thinking classes and the ideas which have come originally through the impulse of Christianity. The advent of Christianity in India marked the beginning of a new political condition; new ideas and influences began to work before which false methods of government were compelled to retire. Educational facilities were multiplied. The national mind was inspired with hopes. Industrial and commercial conditions were advanced on corresponding lines of improvement and a new India is emerging with the Gospel of Jesus Christ rapidly spreading among its people at a ratio thirty times as great as Buddhism and sixty times as fast as the increase of the population. Look at South Africa today and compare it with the Africa to which Moffat and Livingstone first went. Look at Uganda today and compare it with conditions a quarter of a century ago, even on lines of material progress, and every intelligent statesman will acknowledge that the transformation is largely due to the impulse derived from Christian missions.

7. One of the most precious fruits of missions is the improvement in the condition of woman. The Gospel is the charter of woman's liberty everywhere. And nothing is more marked as evidence of the difference between Christianity and paganism than woman's place. In the lower forms of idolatrous worship as we find in Africa, woman is the slave of man's lust and laziness. She contributes to his baser passions and increases his wealth by her unrequited toil as the cultivator of his fields and one of his beasts of burden. In India the child widow is the most hapless and helpless of all creatures. In Mohammedan countries woman is degraded and paralyzed by the low estimate her religion puts upon her, and the utter eliminating of every noble motive or hope from her breast. Christianity changes all this and restores her to a place as man's equal and helper.

And nothing is more beautiful than the development of womanly character and capacity which immediately follows her enfranchisement through the Gospel. There are hundreds of such women in India today of whom Ramabi is but a single example. They are intellectual, and even highly gifted with leadership and social power, but at the same time are truly womanly and domestic. The wives of many of the public men of Japan are Christian women who were educated in mission schools. One of the most brilliant princes of India was attracted by a sweet Christian girl in one of the schools of Egypt and made her his wife, and for years afterwards continued to contribute munificently to the mission to which he owed her. I have looked into the faces of Hindu women and scarcely could believe that once they were depraved girls rescued through mission schools, but are now the wives of Christian ministers, and women of whom no one could be ashamed to call sister or even daughter, and myriads more in the quiet home life of missionary lands are exercising the modest ministries, and blessing God for that Gospel of liberty and love that lifted them from degradation and bondage to happiness, hope and heaven.

8. The same might be said of what the Gospel has done for the children of heathen lands. In the Fiji Islands before the Gospel came one-third of all the children were the victims of infanticide. Until recently and still to some extent the baby girl of China is likely to be flung into the river as an incumbrance and a disappointment. The children of Africa are the absolute property of their chief and may be claimed by him even for human sacrifices at his will. One little girl from every family in India is liable to be married to the gods, that is, to be devoted from her childhood to public prostitution in the name of religion in the village temple. In almost all Christless countries the children are brought up indiscriminately, both sexes sleeping in the same room, and the young mind and heart familiarized with sins and associations that degrade from his earliest years. The little girls of India are wives and mothers often before they are women, and the brutal cruelties which they have to suffer are indescribable. Ignorance is the common lot of seventy-five percent of most of the children of unChristian lands. Compare with this the happy boys and girls of our mission school and our orphanages with the privileges of education, improvement and useful and successful lives and ask the Master if He is not saying to you, "Lovest thou me, shepherd my lambs."

The evangelization of their own people by native agency is one of the most glorious fruits of Christian missions. It would indeed be very discouraging if we had indefinitely to maintain a system of foreign evangelization in these distant heathen lands. It would be, in fact, the most conclusive evidence that the Gospel was not adapted to these peoples, because it did not have in it that principle of self-propagation which is the first law both of nature and of grace, but we have only to look at such countries as Cuba, Chili, Korea, Japan, the Philippines and many parts of India, China and Africa, to see how mightily the responsibility for the evangelization of their own people is possessing the minds and hearts of the Christians of these lands. Dr. Ross, of Manchuria, publicly stated that out of thirty thousand converts gathered into the Church in Manchuria, all but one hundred were directly the result of native agency. The most fruitful of our own mission fields during the past few years has been the Congo, and this is chiefly due to the fact that we have there an army of native workers, and during the past years tens of thousands of visitations and meetings were conducted by these native workers with the most fruitful results. In the great forward movement in Korea, the chief part has been borne by the native Christians themselves, and the forward movement was their own inspiration and suggestion. A new form of collection has been

originated in Korea. Instead of giving money, men and women give their time, and recently seven hundred Christians dedicated fifteen days each to a missionary campaign among their neighbors in one of the principal stations, and the result was an extraordinary revival. A Gospel that can produce such a spirit among its subjects is indeed a vital and a divine force, and is bound to become a worldwide propaganda. One is reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul in speaking to the Thessalonians, "So that from you went out the word of the Lord through all Macedonia and Achaia; . . .so that we need not to speak anything."

10. One of the most glorious fruits of the Gospel in heathen lands is the high quality of personal character developed through its influence. It is too late to slur the products of Christian missions and talk of the converts as rice Christians. It required more than the attraction of a little rice to sustain those heroic sacrifices made by the native Christians of North China in the Boxer rebellion which so impressed their murderers that they marveled and wondered what could be the secret of such heroic fortitude.

Where shall we find a nobler type of consecrated womanhood and tactful missionary service than Pandita Ramabai of India? Where shall we look for higher types of apostolic faith and evangelistic power than Pastor Shi and Evangelist Lee of China? What nobler character shines out from Christian biography than Chief Khama, the head of the Matabele tribe in South Africa; or Africaner, the friend of Moffat and the man of whom the old Dutch Boers used to say as they contrasted his Christian spirit with his former savagery, that he was the eighth wonder of the world. Time would fail to tell of the beautiful testimonies that come to us from every mission field—true, loyal, saintly men and women, whom Christ has been gathering from the most degraded tribes of earth as jewels for His crown, any one of whom would well repay all that Christian missions has ever cost.

11. One of the most precious fruits of missions is found in the missionaries themselves. How could our Christian biographers spare these noble, glorious lives? What an army of martyrs they have enrolled! Williams, Gordon, Chalmers, and the martyrs of the Boxer rebellion. What a glorious band of scholars, saints and heroes they form today. What an education it is to an ordinary minister or Christian to be honored with the discipline and training of a missionary career. How our boys and girls become developed, refined, sweetened, trained, deepened and filled with the gifts and graces of the Spirit, so that we scarcely recognize them as they come back to us on their periodical furloughs and we feel that they themselves are among the richest products of the missionary enterprise.

12. Finally the reflex blessing of missions upon the church at home. The glory it brings to the name of Jesus. The inspiration it affords to every Christian life and its glorious bearing upon the coming of our Lord, hastening that blessed event as nothing else can. Surely, in view of this and all that we have tried to say before, the missionary Gospel is loaded with heavenly fruits and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

4. THE LORD'S COMING AND MISSIONS

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations: and then shall the end come" (Mat. 24:14).

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him: for the hour of his judgment is come" (Rev. 14:6-7).

These two passages present to us the evangelization of the world in the light of the Lord's coming. Surely the double message which the Holy Spirit has been echoing and re-echoing all through these days is, "Behold, I come quickly" "Go ye."

I. The coming of Christ is the great end of creation and redemption. This is the day for which all other days were made, the one event to which all other things are tending.

Even nature itself foreshadows the New Creation. This fallen world with its minor key of sadness echoes in every tone the cry for something better than nature knows. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Every radiant morn, every returning spring, every bursting bud and breathing blossom, and every humming insect emerging from its wintry tomb and opening chrysalis is but the prophecy of the resurrection and the Palingenesis, when He that sitteth upon the throne shall say, "Behold I make all things new."

Man's highest philanthropy aims to develop and improve the conditions of this old earth of ours so that some day it shall fulfill the dreams of that golden age of which poets have sung.

But it were a poor reflection upon God if this old world at its best were the best that His power and goodness have for the human race. When we think of the ravages of sickness, sin and sorrow, when we realize the malign elements in the earthquake, the tempest and the devouring sea, and when we look at the mouldering dust and the hopelessness and agony of death and remember that after all the fairest scenes of earth are but cemeteries and the spots that tell of broken hearts and blighted hopes, Well may we say,

"Were this poor world our only rest,
Living or dying, none were blessed."

Or as the Apostle has expressed it, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

No, God's wisdom and love have something better for our race than civilization, reformation, social reform and scientific progress; something better even than a spiritual millennium and the world-wide triumph of the Gospel and the grace of God.

Just as for the individual God's highest thought is not self-improvement, nor reformation, not the best possible result out of natural character and human culture, but a new creation, a regeneration so complete that old things pass away and all things are made new; so for the world itself God's plan is the same. The mark of the cross must pass upon the earth itself and through death and resurrection it must come forth a new earth to take its place with God's new heavens in the coming age. The City of God, does not spring up from the earth, but, as the new Jerusalem, it comes down from heaven. Jesus Christ is the "Nobleman who went into a fair country to receive for Himself a kingdom" and return. Ages have passed since He went away and He has been from generation to generation gathering the stones for that glorious city which in a little while will burst from the heavens upon an astonished world and take the place of all our puny structures and all our petty plans.

This was the vision of the ancient prophets, this was the promise of the departing Lord, and this is the great perspective that climaxes the vision of faith and hope throughout the whole New Testament.

The first chapter of Acts gives us a magnificent example of this perspective.

First we have the "Passion" or death of our precious Lord which stands in the foreground of the future. Next we have His resurrection in the nearer distance. Then just beyond is the promise of the Holy Ghost and the commission to be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth which fills up the Christian age.

Too long the church of God has closed the vision with this scene, and we have been working as though the establishment of the church and the conversion of the world was the real end for which the Spirit was working in this age. But if we look at the inspired record we find there is yet another scene in the picture that lifts our thoughts to a higher plane and a more distant horizon. It begins in the tenth verse, where two men stood by them in white apparel saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Ah, this was needed to complete the perspective. Away beyond the church, the mission field, the present age, stretches the vista of millennial years with the glorious light of the Lord's return as the real goal toward which redemption is ever moving forward and the Holy Ghost is ever leading on. Until we get this fully in view we have not grasped the whole conception of God's great plan, we have not got our eye upon the true goal and our course will be unsteady and our work unbalanced.

It was for this the Apostolic church was ever watching, praying, working and waiting. This was the message which the Apostle preached to the Thessalonians and which made them "turn from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven." This was the comfort He held out to the bereaved and sorrowing saints as they bade farewell to the martyred forms of their beloved ones, that Christ was coming soon and they should be "caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air." This was the joy and crown of his own intense ministry that he might present his people to the heavenly Bridegroom in the day of His coming as his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of Christ at His coming." And this was his own inspiring hope as he was about to lay down his ministry and meet his Lord, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, that righteous judge, will give me in that day."

Thus it was the supreme end which they ever kept in view. And to make it more impressive and emphatic, the Lord Jesus Himself came back to John at Patmos for one last revelation, and gave him the vision of the Apocalypse and the picture of His coming and His kingdom as "things that must shortly come to pass" and left him with this as the burden of the church's latest prayer and the Master's latest promise, "Surely I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

When the apostles were starting out to the great task of the world's evangelization a great council was held in Jerusalem to settle certain principles for the guidance of the church of the present age. And to that council the Holy Ghost revealed through its leader, the Apostle James, as he quoted from the ancient prophet Amos, the divine order of events in the program of the Lord. The first of these steps was stated thus, "At the first God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." The second stage was as definitely stated in the next sentence, "After this I will return and build again the tabernacle of David that is fallen down." Here we find the Lord's coming presented as the sequel of their immediate ministry, the great event for which they were gathering out a people from the Gentile nations. If the church had ever kept this in view she would have saved herself the waste of much vain effort and bitter disappointment in her attempts to build up a permanent earthly institution and create on earth a kingdom without the King. For the church itself has been as much at fault in her objects and ambitions as the world in its mere human policy. Men have tried to found their kingdoms and cities as if they should reign forever and make this earth a paradise of pleasure without the Lord. And sin has cursed all their ambitions and policies and turned the vision of earthly pride and power into that fearful menagerie of wild beasts which Daniel saw when he looked at the governments of the earth as they appeared in the light of heaven. But just as foolish and short-sighted is the policy of the Christian worker who aims to establish even through the church the Gospel and the religion of Jesus Christ an earthly millennium. Earth offers no foundation stable enough for the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Our business is to gather stones, timbers and jewels for that glorious edifice and pass them on to the great Architect that is building over yonder "The city that hath foundations" and the "kingdom that cannot be moved." We are just like Hiram's carpenters and Solomon's stonecutters, working in the mountains of Lebanon and the quarries of Judah and passing the cedar and the granite to its future site. One by one we are gathering the souls which He is fitting into the living temple and in a little while the vision of its glory will burst upon our view and admiring angels will say, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." And we shall behold "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; . . . And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; . . . and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And the city had no need of the sun, nor of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which were saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it."

Beloved, this is God's glorious goal. This is the future toward which the cross of Calvary and the Holy Ghost are leading the generations on. This is the true end for which it is worth our while to work and pray. This is the transcendent outlook of faith and hope and love. This is the kingdom that Daniel saw, superseding the pride and power of Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, when "the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and whose

dominion shall never pass away." This is the glorious consummation which the voices of heaven celebrate in the eleventh chapter of Revelation when they cry, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, . . . because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." This is what the Master meant when He said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and bend yourselves back, for the hour of your redemption draweth nigh." And this is the glorious thought of Peter when he admonishes us to be "looking for and hasting on the coming of the day of God."

That glorious day is to bring our full redemption. It is to give us transfigured bodies and glorified spirits, conformed to His beauty and glory and immortality. It is to restore to our arms the long divided friends of time and wipe away earth's latest tear of sorrow. It is to end earth's story of sickness and sin and death, to sheath the cruel sword of war, to silence the battle drum and to make real over all the earth the Bethlehem song, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men." And that day is to bring our glorious and long rejected Christ, His kingdom and His throne. Best of all, it is to bring us to be with Him and to be like Him as the partners of His throne and the bride of His love. Oh, do not our hearts exult to think, to know as we see the signs of His appearing in earth and heaven today that it is near and answer back,

"Morn of Morns, O haste Thy glad appearing,

Day of days, speed on, speed on."

II. The work of missions is the great means of hastening that end. The work of the Holy Ghost through the church was chiefly intended to gather out from all nations a people for His name, a bride for the Lamb. It was not God's purpose at the present time by any stronger compulsion than the persuasion of the Gospel and the influence of the Holy Spirit to bring men to acceptance of Christ as their Saviour and King. In the next age every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord, but at the present time the Gospel is preached to men as a witness, the opportunity is given to everyone and then it is left to their voluntary choice. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." The purpose of the present dispensation is to give this universal Probation for a brief time to all the races of mankind, and after the opportunity has been given and all that are willing to come to Him have accepted the gracious invitation to close the day of grace and bring the nations before Him in judgment and then establish a visible kingdom on earth which shall compel the subjection of all mankind and bring earth's millions without exception to bow to His scepter. This is clearly intimated in the passage already quoted in part in connection with the council at Jerusalem. "God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name," that is the present mission of the church and the object of foreign missions. When this is accomplished the second stage will come, "After this will I return, saith the Lord." Then comes the final stage after His coming, "That the residue of men may seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called." Then the whole race shall be brought under the Gospel and the reign of Christ and earth's generations for a thousand years in millions and billions shall own His sway and crown Him Lord of all. But today it is the few that He is calling, not the subjects, but the rulers of the coming age. Just as David called out the heroes that followed him in the days of his exile and afterwards made them the princes of his kingdom, so the Lord Jesus today is training the men and women who will share with Him the

government of the age to come. This is our high honor and privilege to be kings and priests unto God and to reign with Him upon the earth.

Until the whole number of His elect shall have thus been called and gathered home, He cannot come. This elect company is universal in its scope, while limited in its numbers. It embraces the people of every language, tribe and tongue. The angel of the Apocalypse had the everlasting Gospel to preach unto every nation and kindred and tribe and tongue. Therefore, today the work of missions must be world-wide. It is not enough for us to be zealous in gathering a great number of converts among the favored people in Christian lands; God wants us to bring representatives of every earthly tongue, and when this shall have been done, then, He tells us, the end shall come. The bride of the Lamb, like the Son of man, must represent humanity as a whole. The Lord Jesus is not a Jew, an Anglo-Saxon or a Greek, but He is the Son of Man, the representative of every race, the universal man. So His bride must be the daughter of humanity, the composite photograph, embracing every feature, every color and every kindred of the human family.

III. The practical bearing of all this on the work of missions.

Many persons who do not believe in the literal return of Jesus Christ try to prejudice this truth by saying that its tendency is to paralyze missions and to discredit the Holy Spirit and His work in the present age.

It is no discredit to the Holy Spirit for us to teach that the world will not be converted under His agencies, because Christ never said it would be. The Holy Ghost came simply to carry out Christ's plan, and His plan in the present age is to gather out of the world His own people. When He appeared to Paul in Corinth, He did not tell him that all Corinth would be converted, but He said, "I have much people in this place." There will be an age during which "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea." But that is not the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Of this age we have been told that "iniquity shall abound and the love of many shall wax cold." Again it is said that "in the last days perilous times shall come," that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse" and that "when the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth?" It is, therefore, no dishonor to the Spirit for us to express the very conditions that Christ Himself predicted.

In regard to the other objection, that the Lord's coming paralyzes missionary effort, it would seem to be enough to say that the men and women who are today most prominent, earnest and successful in prosecuting the evangelization of the world, are in the majority of instances ardent believers in the personal and pre-millennial coming of Christ.

Consider some reasons why the hope of Christ's coming should rather encourage and inspire missionary efforts.

I. It gives us a definite and practicable plan of work. It does not send us out in some vague way to sweep in wholesale all earth's multitudes. But it teaches us that God's plan in the present age is "to visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." He is only visiting the Gentiles; they are having their turn as the Jews had, and the day of opportunity is limited. The visit will end in due time.

And He is not doing this with the expectation of gathering them all into His kingdom, but rather of gathering out of them "a people for His name." It is a taking out, rather than a taking in. It is an election and selection, only each one has the casting vote for himself. It is not arbitrary, but voluntary. Knowing this to be God's present plan, our work is very clear and specific. We know that He has some people in every nation whom His Providence and Spirit are preparing to accept the Gospel, and our business is to find them and bring them to Him. We cast our nets into the great sea, but we do not gather all the fish that are in the sea, and when we shall have gathered all who are willing to accept the Gospel message, this commission is ended.

Now this is an extremely encouraging and practicable plan. If we were sent to convert whole nations we might well be discouraged. The Master did not do this; the early Church did not do this; the modern Church has not done this, even in Christian lands, during the past century. We are told that the number of heathen and Mohammedans has increased two hundred millions, so that numerically we are not making any headway in converting the whole world. Our hearts might well sink in despair, if this were our aim.

But if, on the contrary, we are seeking "the other sheep whom He must bring," there is no failure; there is no discouragement. We are gathering first fruits; He Himself will gather the full harvest. We are "sampling" the race. We are seeking and finding the "little flock," the chosen bride, the hidden ones who are to unite from every land and tribe and tongue to sing the millennial chorus that is to Welcome the coming King.

2. Not only does this give us a practicable plan, but it also gives us a powerful motive and incentive. We know that our missionary work is not in vain but, in addition to the blessing it is to bring to the souls we lead to Christ, best of all it is to bring Christ Himself back again. It puts in our hands the key to the bridal chamber and the lever that will hasten His return. What a glorious privilege. What a mighty incentive. Do we long to see Him in His glory and to meet our loved ones once more? Then we shall work with re-doubled energy to spread the Gospel, to tell the story, to evangelize the world and to "prepare the way of the Lord."

3. The hope of the Lord's coming gives us also a message to the heathen. It was Jonah's message of the God that reigned in heaven and earth, and that was coming in judgment to Nineveh, that awakened that wicked city; and it is the message of the coming judge that is most fitted to awaken a careless world. Paul says of the Thessalonian Christians that, "they turned from idols to wait for His Son from Heaven." Paul had told them He was coming and thus aroused them to prepare to meet Him. Our missionaries sometimes tell us how the native chiefs of Africa listen with awe as they proclaim to these savage men that the Great Chief is coming soon to call them to account and to reward them if they are found true to Him.

In the fourteenth chapter of Revelation we have the vision of an angel flying in the midst of heaven, saying "the everlasting Gospel" to preach to all the tribes of earth, and we are told his message was, "Fear God and keep His commandments, for the hour of His judgment has come." Does this mean that in the last days the voice of our missionaries is to be raised in solemn and authoritative announcement of the immediate coming of the Lord, and that this message is to bring conviction to the heathen and to be followed and vindicated by the glorious coming of the Lord Himself?

O let us then His coming haste!
O let us end this awful waste
Of souls that never die!
A thousand millions still are lost,
A Saviour's blood has paid the cost.
O hear their dying cry!
The Master's coming draweth near,
The Son of man will soon appear,
His Kingdom is at hand.
But ere that glorious day can be,
This Gospel of the Kingdom we
Must preach in every land.

5. OUR TRUST

"A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me" (1 Cor. 9: 17).

This is an age of specialists. Modern science and all our secular and industrial lines of activity are running more and more into particular departments and men are becoming experts not in some general branch of knowledge or industry, but in some particular detail. Medical science has its numerous subdivisions and specialists. The business world has its great financiers, its railroad kings, its mechanical experts, and the extraordinary progress of our time in material wealth and enterprise is chiefly due to the genius of these "Captains of Industry."

And so in Christian work the Lord gives "to every man his work" and each of us has some divine calling if we have but the discernment of the Spirit to recognize it and the faithfulness to fulfill it. Peter is the Apostle of the Dispersion; James of the Jews in Jerusalem; Paul of the Gentiles; Timothy and Priscilla are helpers in Christ Jesus; Athanasius is the champion of the divinity of Christ, and Augustine the father of the doctrine of grace. Wycliffe is commissioned to give the English Bible to his nation and Luther to restore the doctrines of the cross. Wesley is sent to teach a formal age the necessity of regeneration and Christian experience, and Calvin in a time when the Pope was usurping the throne of human consciences was raised up to impress upon the world the great doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. Pastor Blumhardt comes as the discoverer of the old doctrine of Divine Healing. George Muller teaches an unbelieving age to have faith in God, and Hudson Taylor summons a faithless church to the great pioneer work of giving the Gospel to the unevangelized nations. The Plymouth Brethren rise up as the exponents of justification and assurance of faith, and the blessed hope of the Lord's coming, and when they become too rigid and narrow and substitute a mere state for a living experience, the Holiness Movement is brought to the front to emphasize the indispensable necessity not only of our standing right with God, but our having all that we stand for made living, real and experimental in a purified heart and a victorious life. The Salvation Army is raised up by the great Head of the Church to emphasize the Gospel of Salvation for the poor and outcast, and the Alliance has its place and calling to lead the people of God farther on into all the heights and depths of the life of Christ and farther out into all the aggressive work which the children of God have so long neglected. We must not think of any of these men or movements as having a monopoly of truth or grace or service. It takes more than one color to make a rainbow, more than one finger to make a body, more than one feature to make a face, more than one saint or company of saints to make the whole body and bride of the Lamb. And so we must learn to recognize Christ in all His members and see the good in all the movements of His providence and grace without becoming bigoted or narrow in our exclusive attachment to any single one. At the same time along with this larger charity, we need to know the standard under which we fight, recognize "our own company," and be true to the special trust which God has assigned to us. While we belong to the army as a whole, we must belong still more to our own regiment. While we cherish our common citizenship, yet we must still more value our own family circle and the hearthstone of our home.

What is the special calling of this work for which the present gathering stands? What is the trust committed to the Christian and Missionary Alliance? Briefly let us note a few of the things which this question suggests and then dwell particularly on the last.

OUR TRUST

1. This movement stands primarily as a witness to the supernatural, to the living God, to a religion which is wholly divine, a book which is wholly divine, a life that is wholly divine, and a church which is supernatural in its nature, power and ministry.
2. It stands for a living and indwelling Christ and the power of His resurrection to make and keep us holy, to heal our bodies, and to satisfy every need of our being.
3. It stands for the blessed hope of the Lord's coming as the goal of the Christian age and the remedy for all earth's wrongs.
4. It stands for emergency work in preparation for the Lord's coming, and especially the neglected work of the Church and the world today.
5. It stands particularly for the great work of world-wide evangelization. That was the dispensation particularly committed to Paul, and that is our supreme trust. Let us look at it in some of its special features.

1. It is the work of publishing the Gospel as a witness to all nations. This is something quite different from the ordinary idea of missions as an attempt to convert the world. We are not attempting to convert the world, for if we were we should fail as completely as the Church has failed to convert America, Great Britain or any so-called Christian land. The best we are doing in Great Britain and America is to give to all the people the opportunity of hearing the Gospel and succeed in bringing a small proportion of perhaps one in ten to really accept it with all their heart. It would be a great deal to say that one in ten of the millions of America are out-and-out followers of Jesus. And it is doubtful if any larger proportion of them are true Christians than a hundred years ago. We are making no progress in converting America. We are simply continuing to give them the offer of the Gospel, and some believe and some believe not, as in the days of old. Therefore, our mission in heathen lands is not to aim at their conversion as nations, but to endeavor to give to every one of their people the Gospel as a witness, that is, the offer and opportunity of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. That is a very different thing from attempting the conversion of whole communities and mighty nations. Our business is to evangelize them, to make known to them the way of salvation through the name of Jesus. This is a possible, reasonable, practicable proposition and in no way beyond the ability of the Christian Church today.

2. In the next place our aim is to publish this Gospel to the whole of the present generation. The generation that is gone and the generation that is coming are both beyond our reach. But a whole world of more than a thousand millions of people are living today and accessible to us today, and in a generation they will all be gone. This is our trust, our task, our high and holy calling for the Christians of this generation to give to the non-Christians of this generation the message of salvation and the chance of eternal life. This is a solemn trust. This is an urgent trust. This is an immediate responsibility.

They are passing, passing, fast away,

A hundred thousand souls a day

In Christless guilt and gloom.

O Church of God, what wilt thou say,

When in that awful judgment day

They charge thee with their doom?

3. Still further our purpose and aim is to gather out of the nations of this world a "people for His name." As the New Testament explains the precise purpose of the Gospel ministry it is this: To reach the people of every race and clime who are to form the bride of the Lamb, and the one great millennial host who are to welcome Jesus at His coming and share with Him the dominion of the new age which His advent is to bring. The standpoint of this great missionary movement is what is known as pre-millennialism. That is to say, we do not expect the world to be transformed by the present forces at work even on Christian lines, but the same conditions of good and evil to go on together as the Lord has taught us in the parable of the tares and the fishing net, until the final separation when Jesus comes. There will still be the same mingled condition of good and evil, of saints and sinners, of light and darkness. Indeed, the evil will grow worse as the days go by and the good will grow better. The wheat will ripen for the garner of the Lord, and the vintage will ripen for the winepress of His wrath. The call of the Gospel is intended to feel after and find and gather out and bring to God the people of every race and clime who are to form that new redeemed race, who will share with Jesus Christ the dominion of the millennial earth. We know not who these people are. God only knows. But there are some of them in every land and of them the Lord is saying as He said to Paul of old, "I have much people in this place." He knows who they are and where they are, and sends us to seek and find them and bring them home. We are not discouraged, therefore, if multitudes refuse our message any more than Paul was discouraged because Agrippa, Felix and Nero refused to accept his message. We know that as many as are disposed to eternal life will believe and that when the last of this glorious company shall have been gathered home, the age will close and the Lord will come.

4. In thus gathering out this chosen people for the Lord we are primarily preparing for the Lord's return. This, and not the conversion of the world, is the one definite goal and glorious hope of the Christian age. We are not looking forward to a golden age;

"When the war drum throbs no longer, and the battle flag is furled

In the parliament of nations and federation of the world."

But we are looking for Him to come and bring His kingdom with Him and put down all authority and power and reign on earth a thousand years. And the Lord has told us when this shall come to pass, "When this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, then shall the end come." How very clear is our perspective. How very explicit are our marching orders. How very practical is our program. How inspiring and glorious is our outlook.

5. It aims to reach the most neglected fields, to avoid the beaten tracks of other laborers, to press on to the regions beyond and instead of building upon another man's foundation to preach the Gospel where Christ has not been named. Therefore, it has been our privilege and high honor to

plant the Gospel in two of the unoccupied provinces of China, to carry it across the borders of neglected Tibet, to be the first witness for Christ in our Philippine field, to the dark Soudan and the down-trodden Congo, to have a mission field far removed from all competition by other workers and to have a field almost entirely our own in India, in Argentine, in Chile, and in Ecuador. Had this movement never gone forward there are many regions today shining in the light of the Gospel which would have still been in deepest heathen darkness. Where can you find in the homeland a field so inviting and a need so intensely moving?

II. THE SPIRIT IN WHICH WE SHOULD MEET THIS TRUST. HOW VERY FINELY PAUL EXPRESSES THIS IN THE LAST VERSES OF THIS CHAPTER.

1. It is a spirit of solemn responsibility. "Necessity is laid on me, yea, woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel." This great trust of missions is not an optional matter. It is an imperative obligation, and to neglect it is to bring upon us a dreadful woe. This alone is the true starting point for every missionary appeal. God is not addressing the sympathy and compassion of His people chiefly, but their consciences. The obligation to give the Gospel to the heathen world in the present generation is absolute and irresistible. Every Christian owes it as a debt of common honesty that he shall give at least to one of the present generation of Christless men and women one chance for eternal life. The woe Paul felt may not be felt by you, but it is none the less real. It is a very awful thing to neglect this trust and you cannot do it without bringing upon yourselves the displeasure and judgment of God. Multitudes have suffered that woe without knowing its cause. This is why perhaps your work has not prospered, your children have not been saved, your church has not been blessed, your life has been a disappointment, because your hand is stained with the blood of souls and your ears are deaf to the cry of the perishing and the last commandment of your Lord.

2. A Willing Response. "If I do this thing willingly, I have a reward, but if not, necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." The obligation was the same whether he accepted it or not, but he joyfully accepted it and willingly gave up his life to fulfill a sacred trust. God counts duty doubly done when it is seconded by love. While He bids us to go He waits for us to volunteer. He loves the services of devoted hearts and surrendered hands. Shall He have our willing offerings, our yielded lives and our glad response, "Here am I, send me," "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God"?

3. A Spirit of Independence and Self-Sacrifice. Not only did Paul willingly respond to this call and take up this trust, but he went farther. He asked the privilege, as the highest proof of his love, to do it without charge and in a spirit of complete self-sacrifice. In the mere preaching of the Gospel he says there is no glory and no place for special reward. That is merely duty. If there is to be any glory there must be suffering, self-denial and sacrifice. Therefore, he asked the privilege of sacrificing that regular support to which he was entitled as a minister of the Gospel, and giving his whole life in unrequited labor at his own charges for God and men. In this he throws no reflection upon missionaries who accept the support of their brethren. Indeed, he argues for their right to such support. But as a matter of personal liberty he claims permission for himself to stand on a higher plane and to labor without earthly recompense. This may not be literally possible in all our lives, but surely it may represent any other form of sacrifice which we choose to gladly offer to the Lord. The Lord does not want it if it is not freely offered. It is no sin for you to enjoy in a moderate

way the comfort and even luxuries which God may have given you in your station. You are the steward of your own means and He leaves you free to use them as you choose. But if God puts in your heart a love so great that it is a joy to give up comfort, ease and luxury and to endure toil, privation and even poverty, or at least to stoop to the simple necessities of life, that you may have more to give to send others unto the heathen fields, it is a very beautiful and acceptable offering and it will bring a distinct and eternal reward. Salvation is God's free gift, but glory is the reward of sacrifice and suffering. And so God gives opportunities for these higher planes of sacrificial service and only accepts them when the heart of His servants is constrained by the love that considers it a luxury to count all things but loss for Christ. Abraham's sacrifice on Mount Moriah was dear to God because it meant the giving up of all, and He forever signalized that spot. The poor widow's mite won the public and loving recognition of Jesus because it had in it this element of sacrifice and was her all. Mary's broken vase of precious ointment had something in it of infinitely more value than its intrinsic worth. It was colored by the crimson touch of sacrificial love. And so God is waiting today not only for the tithes, but for the offerings. The tithes represent the standard of duty, but the offering the overflow of love.

4. It is the spirit of adjustment, adaption and single-hearted love for souls. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. We see here a spirit so possessed with one supreme object to gain men for Christ that it sweeps over every other consideration in its overmastering purpose of love. If it can better reach the slaves of Jamaica by stooping to their level, it leads the early missionaries of Jamaica to become slaves that it may win them. If it can better reach China by wearing Chinese dress and living in Chinese houses, it gives up the customs and comforts of civilization that it may gain some. If it can awaken confidence by eating Tibetan food, as one of our missionaries lately told us, it claims a miracle of grace and digestion and swallows the whole mixture with a smile of triumphant love. If it can reach the heart of the suspicious Chinese by kissing their dirty babies, it learns this lesson also. It goes with Livingstone to the hearts and homes of degraded Africa; with Paton and Hunt to the cannibals of Tana and Fiji. Or if the door must be slowly opened, the worker must learn to wait as well as work, it sits down with Morrison in a factory in Canton, or with Carey at a printing press at Serampore, until the walls of Jericho fall down. It does not stand for mere doctrinal creeds, or church forms. It does not waste its strength in planting a dozen denominational churches in every little town while whole nations are without a single missionary. But it counts the minor questions nothing compared with the sending of the Gospel and the saving of the lost. And here in the homeland it has that holy tact that seeks to make all classes, all ages, all activities bend toward the one great business of evangelizing the world.

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