

shall arise and His glory shall be seen. One of the most encouraging and inspiring things in God's Word is the assurance of the final victory of heavenly forces, and the triumph of the kingdom of God. And in the prophet's ecstatic vision may be seen the consummation of the glory of the Lord in our own day.

1. A FAR-REACHING QUESTION.—Who are those that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows? asks Isaiah, as he saw the vision; and their weapons of rebellion, from the distant regions of the earth to the Church of God. Who are they? Well, as to their original condition, they had forsaken Jehovah and were in circumstances of distress and misery, without God and without hope in the world. But a change has taken place; they have heard the glad tidings, they have set aside their weapons of rebellion, they have abandoned their evil ways, they have accepted Christ as Saviour and Lord, they are hastening to lay their tribute of praise and honor and righteous lives at the feet of their Redeemer. And what has brought about this transformation, this abandonment of heathenism, this avowing of Christianity? Nothing less than the preaching of the Gospel, nothing less than the missionary efforts of the Christian Church, nothing less than the money contributions, and the prayerful solicitude of individual believers. And this includes me, includes you, young Christian, includes all who have faithfully fulfilled their part in obeying the Saviour's command to evangelize the world. Up to the present time, with but few exceptions, the world has been evangelized slowly. Progress for the most part has been gradual. May we not expect that very soon the vision of the prophet shall be realized? They shall come still as individuals, for men cannot be saved by the mass, but so many will come together that they shall seem to be crowding to Christ as doves to their windows at feeding time.

2. THE MEANS TO THE END.—The result referred to in the foregoing implies a means adequate to the end attained; and this means of instrumentality is the divine influence. Nothing can be done without the Spirit of God. Lacking this,

"The best concerted schemes are vain,  
And never can succeed."

We may give our money, and send our missionaries, but without the help of the Spirit, both in the home Church and in the foreign field, little can be accomplished. Where the Spirit is not, there can be no securing of the designs and purposes of eternal love. The Gospel must be proclaimed, accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit, before the multitudes of whom the prophet speaks shall return to God. The preaching of the Cross is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. How important, then, that prayer should be continually made for the presence and power of the Holy Spirit both at home and abroad; and for the effective proclamation of the heavenly message of redemption; and for lives separated from sin and consecrated to God, so that we may not withhold our part in the happy consummation of the universal sway of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

3. THE MESSAGE OF THE MULTITUDE.—The idea of the prophet, as he saw the hosts flocking to a place of divine safety, indicates the manner of the return of the wanderers to their Father's home. It is a most engaging sight.

(a) *Engagement*.—The clouds are supposed to be driven by the wind to one point, and the doves hasten with speed to the windows of the dove-cotes. This engendered a desire and feature of the soul's desire to return to God, when the truth is known, and conviction seizes the heart. Look up the following examples of spiritual eagerness: Matt. 11: 12; Luke 18: 13; 23: 42; Acts 2: 37; 16: 29, 30. And is there not reason for this eagerness? Consider, the knowledge of guilt, the

fear of danger, the prospect of peace and security, and the hope of privilege here and hereafter—all of which thrills in the heathen breast when the truth has entered.

(b) *Numbers*.—The cloud is an emblem of number. The figure of the doves implies also a multitude. The number of witnesses to the power of faith are described by the apostle as "a great cloud of witnesses." These poetical figures of speech refer to the great accession which the church, in after ages should receive. (See also vs. 4, 7.) The mercy of God, and the response of men was to go forward to the boundaries of the habitable globe. (See Isa. 49: 5, 6, 22, 23.) Christ himself restated this grand fact. (See Matt. 8: 11; 24: 14; Mark 16: 15). Observe the history of the progress of the Gospel. In early times it had remarkable increase. In one day three thousand converts were made; and the word of God grew mightily and prevailed. The temples of heathen superstition were deserted, and the truth of Christ in all its purity was established. And myriads have since been gathered. Think of it! In the first fifteen hundred years, Christianity gained one hundred millions of adherents. In the next three hundred years it gained one hundred millions more; but in the last one hundred years two hundred and ten millions more. In the three hundred years after the Reformation Christianity gained as many adherents as in the fifteen hundred years preceding it. And such has been the marvellous growth in the present century, that during the last ninety years, the religion of Jesus has gained more followers than in the previous eighteen centuries. The eternal morning has dawned, and the sun is climbing towards its meridian splendor.

(c) *Unity*.—The clouds are supposed to fly in one body and to be driven to one part of the horizon; the doves fly together to reach the one resting place. So it will be with all who have been conducted by the Spirit into the way of everlasting life in heathen countries, and in home lands. There may be minor differences in non-essentials, but God's people seek the one salvation; they are influenced by the same principles; they depend on the same atonement; they exhibit the same holiness; they partake of the same spirit; they obey the same commandments; they are heirs of the same inheritance; they are pressing forward to the same heavenly reward. God's people are *one*, whether in lands barbarous or civilized, and it is a duty, a privilege, a luxury, to feel the kinship of souls redeemed by the life and death of Jesus Christ. Enter into this feeling, young people, more than ever, and learn the brotherhood of the children of God, and the oneness of the Church universal.

#### A SHORT CATECHISM.

How many people are there in the world? About 1,400,000,000.  
How many of these people are nominal Christians? About 400,000,000.  
How many non-Christians, then, are there in the world? About 1,000,000,000.  
Don't you think this is a very large number of people to be without the blessings of the Gospel? A very large number indeed.  
How many missionaries are laboring among this vast host? About 10,000.  
How many people has each missionary to look after on an average? 100,000 people.  
Do you think that one man could do a missionary's work among so many? It would be impossible.  
What is the proportion of ordained ministers to the population of China? One minister to every 500,000 Chinese.  
What do you think of this? It is sadly wrong, when there is a minister for every 700 people in this country.  
How many heathens die every day? They are dying at the rate of 100,000 a day.  
How can this dreadful state of affairs be improved? By sending more missionaries.  
Are more missionaries available? Yes, thousands are waiting to be sent.

Why don't they go? Because there is no money to pay their way, and support them. Why is there no money? Because Christians don't give enough for missions.

How much do they give? Each Christian gives one cent a year for each heathen soul. Don't you think this is very small? Yes. It is shamefully small and very ungrateful to God.

What's to be done? We must give more to God for the spread of His Kingdom.

Where shall we begin? Begin with me, and our League and our Church. And let all Christians pray, with the non-Christian world in view, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

#### A WORD TO THE LEADER.

Remember this is a missionary meeting. Select the hymns accordingly. By the way, did you begin the last meeting on time? As far as you can direct, have prayers and Bible selections, and discussion all bear on the subject of missions. Read the foregoing catechism before the League. Inquire publicly how much your League is giving for missions. (Speak to the secretary before hand, so the answer will be ready.) Then plan, if possible, for an increase in givings. Have you adopted the Fulton scheme of two cents a week from each member? It is a splendid plan. If every Epworth League in Canada would do this, \$87,000 would be raised annually for missions. Have some one prepare a short paper on "What has been done, and what is yet to do, for the heathen world?" Give a week for its preparation, and have it read at this meeting. Get help from your pastor if need be.

#### APRIL 23—"HOW CHRIST MAKES USE OF COMMON LIVES. THE MAN WITH THE PITCHER."

Mark 11: 12-16.

#### HOME READINGS.

Mon. Apr. 17. The fishermen of Galilee. Matt. 4: 18, 22.  
Tues. Apr. 18. The Samaritan. Matt. 23: 37.  
Wed. Apr. 19. The women of Galilee. Matt. 9: 9-13.  
Thurs. Apr. 20. The lad with fishes. John 6: 5-9, 14.  
Fri. Apr. 21. The widow in the temple. Mark 12: 41-44.  
Sat. Apr. 22. The goodman of the house. Luke 22: 14-14.

The incident related by Mark occurred just before the crucifixion. Jesus had spent the most of the day in the quiet of the Bethany home, where he so often resorted. Towards evening he sends two of his most intimate disciples to prepare the passover. He tells them to go into the city, and there they will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Him they are to follow, and in the house where he will enter they will find a room in which the passover is to be prepared. This man with the pitcher is evidently not the master of the house. He is probably a slave of the householder in whose dwelling was located the upper room. Only a common every-day sort of man, and yet the Saviour used him while in the faithful discharge of his allotted duty to carry out his great plans for the advancement of his kingdom.

1. A *Common Man*.—In the true sense, there is no such thing as a common man. No immortal soul can properly be called common. The fact that Christ gave his life for each individual member of the human family, exalts every soul of mankind. Peter was taught this lesson, exclusive Peter with Jewish prejudices, when he had the vision of the vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth (see Acts 10: 9-28). "What God hath cleansed call not thou common," was the message, teaching that a redeemed soul is not a common soul. And yet we do make distinctions, and we call the man with so-called menial work to perform, with small wages, a common man; and the man with a large salary, fine house, or great abilities, an uncommon man. We shall accept the distinction.