

the altar of every Christian church. There are two sides to missions: the spiritual and the secular. Every Sabbath School ought to know that the Church of God attained the maximum of its spiritual power only when it had reached the maximum of interest in gospel missions. There never was a time in the whole history of the Christian Church when the flame of missionary zeal glowed more intensely than in the first century. Those disciples had got so near to our Lord that they caught the divine fire, the divine contagion, and those Galilean fishermen and tax-gatherers had kindled the fires of Pentecost throughout Palestine, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Greece and Rome, fires destined to set the kingdoms in a blaze. Soon the Parthenon of Athens and the heathen temples of Rome were overthrown, and millions of idols which centuries of superstition had raised up were hurled down to the dust by the power of their preaching, and the lowly Nazarene had become enthroned in their stead. In the fourth century the once hated and despised cross was seen emblazoned upon the banners of Rome, and in the person of Constantine ascended that giddy height of throne and swayed the sceptre of the Cæsars. If Christianity had continued to make conquest at the same ratio from then until now this world would have been placed at the foot of the cross as the trophy of redeeming grace. No fewer than two million souls were added to the Church in the second century. Now, I want to look along the secular side, because the spiritual side of missions has been pretty much anticipated by the address of Dr. Thomas of this afternoon. I can never forget what took place at our missionary breakfast in Toronto about a year and a half ago. Dr. Leonard, of New York, said, "Mr. Chairman, to me this missionary breakfast forms a milestone in the great highway of human progress, for," said he, "there is a great difference between our sitting down to eat a missionary breakfast, and our forefathers sitting down to eat a missionary for their breakfast." The remark evoked peals of laughter, but showed the great distance we have travelled since that time, because if our forefathers did not eat missionaries, they offered human sacrifices to their gods. When I arrived in a western town one Saturday evening about two years ago I learned that a certain man had come from the other side to lecture upon the failure of modern or Christian civilization. He went into rhapsodies of eloquence over the glories of the civilization of ancient Greece and Rome. After he had finished, I asked if I might be permitted to say a few words, and I said, if he had been at Rome at the time he depicted, as a Briton, he would have been a slave, a slave fighting as a gladiator in the amphitheatre, or (as he was a very corpulent man) perhaps in his case he would have been cut down into thin slices as a delicacy for the emperor's fish. What were the so-called splendors of Athens! What were the so-called coruscations of imperial Rome? They were full of political corruption and social decay. Obscenities were perpetrated which if reproduced now would make the whole Christian

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