

The subject of conversation and discussion was one of deep interest, but it seemed also to have been of a perplexing nature, for their language was that of doubt and uncertainty, struggling with hope and rising confidence. "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon," was the announcement that filled every heart with wondering, yet joyful, expectation. While they talked thus among themselves, new confirmation was given to their awakened hopes and expectations, by the sudden arrival of two friends, who had not long before left Jerusalem to go down to Emmaus; their unexpected appearance, the ardent expression of their countenances, the haste which had evidently attended their return, plainly showed that some occurrence of no ordinary nature had taken place, and bespoke them the heralds of no common tidings. And what were these tidings? "The Lord is risen indeed," had been tremblingly whispered by the eleven. "The Lord is risen indeed," was plainly and distinctly confirmed by these midnight travellers, as they related, with burning hearts, to their companions, what things were done in the way, and how he was made known to them in breaking of bread. With eager, breathless attention, they listened to the wondrous story of the speakers, and while still listening, and scarce believing for very joy of heart, lo! Jesus himself stood in the midst of them; they heard him not, they did not see him enter among them, the doors were shut, and the first thing that broke the spell of their absorbing meditations, was the sound of that well-known, much-loved voice, saying, "Peace be unto you."

And what was the particular object of Jesus in thus appearing to them? It was to strengthen their faith, show them, by many infallible signs, that it was he himself risen from the dead, as he had foretold. And it was to give them their commission, and ordain them as missionaries, and this is why we have called it the first Missionary Meeting.

The commission was "to preach repentance and remission of sins, in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Before this time the gospel had never been sent "to all nations," to "every creature," to "the uttermost part of the earth; even when Jesus sent out the seventy disciples, it was only to go to every city where he himself should come; they, like John