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S E R M O N X V I .

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THE MISSIONARY A WITNESS FOR CHRIST.

“Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.”—MARK 5: 19.

Two things concerning Christ are incidentally suggested by the text, which ought not to be overlooked. Home seems to have been as dear to the Saviour as to us. Most of his earthly life was spent with Joseph and Mary in their humble home at Nazareth. Humble it must have been, for they were poor; and holy it must also have been, for they were pious. Joseph and Mary were “both righteous before God, walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless.” There was an altar in that house, and the morning incense, and the evening oblation. No outward sign distinguished it from the other houses in Nazareth. No cloud hovering above, no angel standing by the door. We

must pass the threshold, join the little circle, and tarry until the dawn, if we would know what makes the place so dear to Jesus. We think he tarried there so many years, because that earthly home was more like the heaven which he had just left than any other spot.

And if we need further proof that home was as dear to Jesus as to us—that he was not indifferent to its sweet attractions—we have only to recollect that about the last thing he did, and that, too, on the cross, and in his agony, was to provide a home for his mother. “When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son; then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.” Let me remind you, before leaving this thought, for we shall have it in mind during the discourse, that home is an expansive word. It may be so expanded as to include the community in which we dwell, and so expanded still further, as to include our country, our dear fatherland. It is only extending the walls, throwing up a higher and broader roof, and spreading a little larger table.

The other thing incidentally suggested by the text, is the fact that our Lord owned and honored all the lawful relations of life. He honored these relations *directly* by assuming and fulfilling them. He became a son, and as such he was subject to his parents. He consented to be a citizen, and as such paid tribute to Cæsar—fulfilled all righteousness. And if a man would know whether patriotism is a virtue, and to be commended, let him think how Jesus loved Judea, and never left it—how his heart went out after the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and how he wept over Jerusalem when he could not save it. No man can be like Jesus, and not love his country. And so he *indirectly* honored the relations of life. He honored them when he gave the son of the widow of Nain back to his mother; and he honored them when he sent this man, who had his dwelling among the tombs, to his home and his friends. This fact is very distinctly brought out by the Evangelist, and no man should pass it with a careless glance. “And when he (Christ) was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil, prayed him that he might be with him.” But this was a request which *even Jesus* could not grant. “Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.” The devil had taken this man away from home, had compelled him to leave his own, and have his dwelling among the tombs. And the Saviour sent him back—commanded him to take up his duties just where he left off, and show that he was no longer possessed, by fulfilling those relations which God hath ordained, and he voluntarily assumed. It is the devil who

takes a man from home, and Christ who sends him back. These men who can not live with their wives, these wives who can not tarry with their husbands, these fathers and mothers who have cast their own children out of their hearts—we know by whom they are possessed. “Let no one think,” says the great Reformer, “that the devil is dead, for as he that keepeth Israel, so he that hateth Israel, neither slumbers nor sleeps.” Let me ask you to notice here, that this man seems to have understood as well as you and I, that home is an expansive word. He put a liberal construction on the Saviour’s command. He did not consider himself as bound never to pass his own door-sill, nor cross the confines of his native town. As all throughout the region had seen him among the tombs, so all should see him clothed in his right mind—nothing but meekness, and gentleness, and love—the tears falling faster than two hands could wipe them away. “And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel.” We shall see, before we close, why they marveled, why his story created such a sensation, and filled every heart with wonder, if nothing more.

As I am to speak this evening of Christ, I could not refrain from alluding to these two things incidentally suggested by the text; and now I will call your attention to some things which have a more intimate relation to the Saviour’s words. What I have to say will be in the following order. *Christ is ready to do all for his disciples which he consistently can do. Christians are bound to tell all which Christ has done for them. Christians should seek to know more of Christ, that they may have more to tell. The reason why Christ does no more for many of his disciples. If Christians had more to tell of their Master’s wonderful works in them, and were more faithful in telling it, our country would sooner be brought to Christ. It is the work of the American Home Missionary Society to send forth men to tell what great things the Lord hath done for them. The men sent forth and sustained by this Society, of all men have most to tell.*

Let me say, in the outset, that in this discussion I include the whole work of Christ, his objective as well as subjective work. Before the Lord touched your heart, or mine, he laid aside his glory, took on him the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death. His humiliation, and death, and resurrection, and ascension preceded our peace. And yet while the whole work of Christ is included, I have special reference to his work in us.

1. *We were to show in the first place, that Christ is ready to do all for his people that he consistently can do.*

That Christ is able to do great things for his people, exceeding “abundantly above all that we ask or think,” we can not deny without taking the crown from his head. Who shall limit his power, who “stretched the north over the empty place and hung

the world upon nothing"? And that Christ is *inclined* to use this great power in behalf of his people, is evident enough, from what he has already done—done for them. We send the doubter to Bethlehem, or Gethsemane, to the judgment-hall, to Calvary, and to the sepulcher in the garden. He who left a throne, and such a throne, and endured all this for his disciples, is there any thing that he will not do for them—do for them unless their unbelief interpose a barrier? And if the man has been to the manger, and the cross, and the tomb, and come away a doubter still, then we would remind him of the *relations* which Christ's people sustain to their Lord; and ask him whether in these he can not find more evidence than even he may need? We are Christ's sheep—will not a man do all that he can for his sheep? We are Christ's friends—will not a man do all that he can for his friends? We are Christ's brethren—will not a man do all that he can for his brethren? We are Christ's body—will not a man do all that he can for his body? Would we have, with his own consent, a halting limb, or a withered arm, or a blemished eye—willingly wear a deformity through life? Beloved in the Lord, we will not tarry here; we will take it for granted that Christ is ready to do all for his people that he consistently can do, that, if they are ever straitened or stinted, we must not look to the right hand of the Father for the reason. The last thing to impeach is that heart which the spear pierced, and from which the water and the blood flowed forth. We pass to show,

2. *That Christians are bound to tell all that Christ has done for them.*

And here some may remind me of the leper, who met Jesus as he came down from the mount. This leper is a favorite character with the silent disciple, and must not be passed unnoticed. "And behold there came a leper and worshiped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed; and Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself unto the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them." And what do I learn from this—what, but that a man is bound to tell what Christ has done for him, unless Christ himself forbids? If a man has received a positive prohibition, a Thou shalt *not*, then let him hold his peace; then let him pass among the multitude with a silent tongue, as if before he met Jesus, he were not a tainted thing whom no man would touch, not daring to enter his own house, or put his hand on the head of his own child. Besides this, we know that the Saviour then had a reason for commanding silence which he can not have now. A premature publication of his wonderful works, would have hastened the end; and he was not ready for the end. He had much to say and do

before he reached Calvary. The leper can not help the silent believer. He must go in another direction to find an excuse for silence; and whither to go I can not say.

The rulers of the people thought it very unbecoming in the apostles to tell what the Lord had done for them. They tried to silence them, and might as well have tried to silence the sea or the sky. "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard." This was Peter's reason for speaking; he could not help it. It was just as natural and almost as necessary for him to speak as for the sea or the sky to utter their voice. Had the Messiah lived and died and risen again—had the desire of all nations come and finished his work, and returned to the Father, and could they keep it all to themselves?

There was a time, brother, when you had something to say for Christ. Will you ever forget that morning when you awoke with a new hope in your heart, and a new song in your mouth? "Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new." What a bright day it was! Your heart was so full of joy and joyful anticipations, that if an angel had appeared suddenly by your side, you would hardly have been surprised; and had the firmament parted, and through the broken sky you had seen the land which is very far off, it would have seemed quite natural. You were looking for something great. When you went abroad into the city, you thought that all the bells ought to be ringing, that all the children ought to be out with palm branches in their hands, and that every man should be spreading his garment in the way; for you felt, oh! you felt that the Son of David had come. And the next Sabbath as you went to the house of God, your mother leaning on your arm; she so happy, and you so happy; it seemed as if the very stones were singing under your feet. Then you could not hold your peace; then you must speak. Nothing but a command—a command from God, and that straight and clear as the light—could have sealed your mouth. And if your heart—will you allow me, in all kindness, to say it?—if your heart were as full of love now as then, you would not ask me to prove that a man should tell what great things the Lord hath done for him. And if any one should forbid, you would answer with Peter before the Sanhedrim, "I can not but speak the things which I have seen and heard;" or with Luther before the Diet at Worms: "Here I stand, I can not do otherwise. God help me. Amen." For one, if I had no tongue, I would talk with my fingers; and if I had no fingers, I would manage to make my features, inexpressive as they may be, say something for Christ.

3. *Christians should seek to know more of Christ, that is, more experimentally, that they may have more to tell.*

It is enough to state this proposition ; it carries its own evidence, and no man who believes that the love of Christ is worth knowing and worth telling, will question it. It is important that, just here, I should drop a word of caution. There is a wide difference between seeking for ourselves and seeking for others—between gathering to hoard, and gathering to give ; and Christ's disciples oftentimes make the sad mistake of seeking for themselves, and gathering to hoard. They would have more faith, more love, more peace, more joy, a brighter hope and a stronger assurance, and have them to keep, not to impart. It is not of the multitude passing by their door, on the way to death, nor of the world lying in the wicked one, that they think. They are engrossed with their own doubts, and fears, and forebodings. *They* would be delivered—they would be comforted and arrive at the last station on the celestial highway ahead of time. And this is one reason—we shall look at another in a moment—why Christ does so little for them. They seek grace just as the miser seeks gold, the one to put it in his chest, and the other to hide it in his heart.

And as we are urging you here to know more of Christ, that you may have more to tell, perhaps this is the place to say, that a man never speaks so effectively as when he speaks from experience. When the demoniac told his story, they all marveled, because it was his story. This is the man who dwelt among the tombs ; this the man whom no chains could bind ; this the man whose frantic wail “awoke the echoes of the mountain, and startled the fishermen in their lonely night-watch on the sea.” Yes, I am the man ; and among the tombs, and with the dead, and frantic as ever I should have been, had I not met the Son of David.

Yes, they all marveled, for this was the demoniac himself, and he told his own story. Would you convince me that Christ can heal, bring hither the man who had a withered hand, a hand that, before he met Jesus, could not lift to the mouth the food which the other hand earned. Would you convince me that Christ can open the eyes of the blind, bring hither Bartimeus who sat by the wayside begging ; let me look on the eyeballs that had searched so long for the light, and would have been searching still, had not some good friend said : Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Would you convince me that Christ can raise the dead, bring hither the man who had been in the grave four days ; let me see the head that was bound about with a napkin, and hear the tongue that could not answer a sister's call ; and, oh ! would you convince me that Christ can do a still greater work—that he can raise such as are dead in trespasses and sins—that he can open the sepulcher of the soul and awake it to newness of life—find some man who has heard the

life-giving call—some man who has laid aside his grave-clothes, and come forth. Conduct me into the prison-house, and let me see Manasseh—lead me through the street called Straight, into the house of Judas, and let me see Saul. We want the man who can show his broken fetters, who can point to his discarded burden, and let us look into his empty sepulcher.

Perhaps we should not leave this part of our subject without guarding against another misapprehension. We are pleading with men, not to tell what they have done for Christ, but what Christ hath done for them. It is not what we have said, but he hath said—not what we have given, but he hath given—not what we have wrought, but he hath wrought. Pride prompts a man to speak of himself; gratitude and love urge him to speak of Christ, and it is to gratitude and love that the Christian should give heed.

4. *Let us now look at the reason why Christ does no more for many of his disciples.*

It will not be denied, I think, that Christ does far more for some of his disciples than for others. Some of God's children seem to have attained "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;" they are full-grown men, can bear a man's burden, and do a man's work. These favored ones look down on the storm; they have pitched their tent higher than the clouds can climb, and live on that sunny summit where the darkness and the light no more divide the day. Others of God's children seem to be stunted from their birth. If they grew at all, it is so slowly as not to be perceptible to an ordinary eye. I have seen a child nearly twenty years old, in a cradle; and I have seen a Christian who numbered as many years of the new life, in a cradle. He never leaves the cradle, eating only as he is fed, and sleeping only as he is rocked—living for no purpose, unless it be that others may have something to do—*cradle Christians*—the Church of God is full of them. Now whence this difference? Why do some receive so much more than others? The chief reason—not by any means the only one—but the chief reason is, that we do not make an honest surrender of ourselves and ours to the Lord; and are not willing to be brought into those exigencies where alone he can do great things for us. Are we in his hands as the clay in the hands of the potter? Can he make any thing of us that he pleases? The clay never resists, never protests. He may make it a vessel unto honor or dishonor, and the clay interposes no objection. He may take the lump and form an article sacred as the urn which contains the ashes of the dead, or common as the bowl from which the poor man takes his mid-day meal, and the clay never asks why. "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What maketh thou?" Are we the clay? May he make us any thing that he pleases, and put us to any use that his glory demands? Perhaps an honest scrutiny would show that no one thing in our inventory,

is entirely at God's disposal—no one thing, unless it should be "the torn, and the lame, and the sick." Alas! some bring nothing to the altar except what the shamble rejects. If our self-surrender were sincere—if according to the motto on Calvin's seal, we have "given all to God—kept nothing for ourselves," how is it that there is never a demand on God's part without a struggle on ours? How is it that we shrink as if by a sinful instinct, from every strait where the arm of the Lord might be made bare? And thus struggling, and thus shrinking, we still ask, Why hath not the Lord done greater things for us? We want Joseph's patience, without going into the pit. We want Daniel's faith, without entering the lions' den. We want Paul's joy, without passing into the inner prison. We want John's raptures, without an exile in Patmos. We sigh for Abraham's faith, pray for it, wonder that it is not given, when the voice and the vision of God could not bring us one step towards Moriah. We would have the waters part, without approaching the sea—eat the manna and drink of the water which comes from the rock, without entering the desert, and feast on the clusters of Canaan, without foregoing the flesh-pots of Egypt.

5. *We are to show, in the next place, that if Christians had more to tell of the Saviour's wonderful works in them, and were more faithful in telling it, our country would sooner be brought to Christ.*

And we believe that this country is to be brought to Christ. We can not deny that there are many omens of evil, clouds in the sky, voices in the air, and sounds under our feet, which foretell any thing but peace. And yet we can also discover omens of good. If there are clouds in the firmament, there are also broader patches of clear sky; and the sounds over head and under foot are not all portentous. God "has not forgotten to be gracious, nor hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies," as this great awakening shows. The altars are not all cold, nor the intercessors all dead, nor has the Shekinah departed from our sanctuaries. Until the Lord shall forsake his own house, disown his own word, and deny his own child, until he refuses to hear, and forbears to help, we will not despair for the republic, although the sun should become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon wade in blood. We can not believe, that, in digging these channels, and constructing these roads—in redeeming these waste places, and founding these cities—in planting these institutions of learning, and erecting these houses of mercy, and these houses of prayer, we have only been extending the dominion of sin—only been adding another province to the empire of Satan. Our fathers took possession of this land for God, and when they died left it to God; and will not God take care of his own? If Jonah is on board, Jonah must be cast into the sea. If Judas is in the com-

pany, Judas must go to his own place; and if the name of these traitors to truth, and these fugitives from God should be legion, yet our text will not suffer us to forget that there is One who can cast the legion out. We do not then despair for the republic. We can not believe that the loom of destiny is weaving our shroud. Others think that they can hear the sound of the shuttle, but we suspect it is only a ringing in their ears.

To bring our country to Christ will involve much work, and many conflicts; blood may be shed, lives lost, and some win a martyr's crown. But we have tried weapons and trusty allies—God is on our side, and legions of angels about our banner; nay, the very stones of the field are in league with us, and the stars that fought against Sisera will not stand aloof from the battle. And, our country safe, the world is safe. Allured by our example, and guided by our light, people after people will join the smiling brotherhood of Christian nations, and swell the hosannas that welcome the returning King.

Now if our country is to be brought to Christ, would not the work be sooner done if every disciple of our ascended Lord had more to tell, and were more faithful in telling it? Malachi, in speaking of the latter day, the day which ought to be here, says: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard." It seems *he* was interested in the conversation, and most deeply interested too, "for a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name." Oh! if we spake often one to another—if we had more to tell, and told it—if our hearts were so full of the love of Christ that we could not hold our peace—if we went every where, like the scattered disciples, preaching the word—if every Christian man were, what every Christian man ought to be, a witness for God, how much longer would that morning without clouds delay, or that chariot which is to bring the King, tarry? Oh! it is a sin and a shame—and you and I must come in for a share—that Christ has been kept so long out of his rightful possessions, and especially that he is not now the undisputed Lord of this favored, but faithless, and yet we hope, not forsaken land.

6. *We hasten to show, in the next place, that it is the work of the American Home Missionary Society, to send forth men to tell what great things the Lord hath done for them.*

They send forth *men*, and that is something not to be overlooked; and not men merely, but men whom God has called, whom God has qualified, and who have spared no cost or pains, to fit themselves for the work.

I believe in the tract. Although but a leaf from the tree of life; yet it is from the tree of life, and must have healing virtue. But a man is better than a tract. I believe in a book, a good book;

for although it can not open itself, nor get into a man's hand whether he will or no, yet it has its work to do, and does it well; but a man is better than a book. And I believe in *the* book, the book which God gave, which he hangs as a light in my tabernacle, and holds before my feet as I walk the highway; but inasmuch as there is more power in the spoken than the written word, I believe that a man with the Bible in his heart, and the Bible in his mouth, is the best edition of the book. Then I have great faith in the colporteur. I believe that the colporteur is one of our grand discoveries; and that we shall have the millennium here the sooner, because he has harnessed himself so willingly to the chariot of the King. But an ordained minister of Christ—one who can baptize the children, bury the dead, spread the table of the Lord in the wilderness, and be a shepherd to the scattered sheep, must be better than a colporteur.

And this Society sends forth these men to tell what great things the Lord hath done for them. They are not sent forth to preach denominational peculiarities, the things which keep us apart, and which never, since the "tried stone, the precious stone on which all must build, was laid in Zion," brought one sinner to Christ. They are not sent forth to run dividing lines and build separating walls—and build probably with stones stolen from another man's foundation. They go to tell what the Lord hath done for them, and is ready to do for all who will believe on his name. They take the attitude of the first disciples: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The forgiveness on which they dwell is a forgiveness which they feel. The peace which they offer is a peace which they possess; and the joy of which they beg every man to partake, is a joy which came from God, and has made their hearts its earthly home. Oh! it is not so much Christ in the manger whom they preach, or Christ in the garden, or Christ on the cross, or Christ in the grave, or even Christ in glory, but Christ in them. And it is surprising what a sympathy such men as these seem to have with the Saviour. As a humble disciple of the Lord Jesus once said to me: "I have followed my Saviour all the way through. I have been with him every where." Others read how Jesus wrestled in the garden—they wrestle with him. Others read how he was set at naught at the judgment-seat—they are set at naught with him, put on the purple robe and wear the crown of thorns. Others read how Jesus was crucified—they are crucified with him. Others read how he was buried in the sepulcher which no mortal relics had profaned—they are buried with him. Others read how he rose again—they arise with him; with him endure the humiliation of the grave, and with him share the glory of the resurrection.

We would not imply that these men do nothing but tell what

great things the Lord hath done for them. This is their chief, but not their sole mission. They have a hand and a heart for every good work. No opportunity is missed, no opening neglected. Never too disheartened to toil, nor too weary to pray, like the Lord they go from the multitude to the mountain, and then back again from the mountain to the multitude. They lay the foundations of society, and put in the braces which bind the superstructure together. Nor is there a thing in the community which time will spare and God guard, that does not bear the imprint of their hands.

7. But this brings us to our last thought: the men sent forth and sustained by this Society, of all men have most to tell.

The Apostle to the Gentiles speaks of the Lord Jesus as the "finisher of our faith." There is such a thing as a finished faith—a faith which never wavers, never hesitates; a faith which asks no questions, and seeks no supports; a faith which looks the calmest when the sky lowers, and walks the steadiest when the earth reels; the faith of Noah when he laid down the keel of the ark; the faith of Abraham when he bound the unresisting victim to the wood; the faith of Jacob, when he wrestled all night with the angel and prevailed; the faith of Joshua, when he called on the sun and moon to stand still, and they obeyed; the faith of Elijah, when he raised the windows of heaven, and let the willing water come; the faith of our Lord Jesus, when he opened the door of the grave, and brought his friend Lazarus back.

Faith, beloved in the Lord, is a strange plant. It does best in darkness, grows strongest in a chilly air and under a wintry sky, and never looks so fresh and green as when every thing beside is withering with the frost. Nothing like the vigor of an arctic winter for faith. It is the balmy air, the transparent atmosphere, the summer's sun, that are most fatal to faith. This is the reason why the cup comes round so often to the believer, why he must take deeper draughts from the bitter bowl, than his neighbor; this is the reason why he must be planted on the north side of the wall, in the shade and the cold, away from the sun. Faith requires a northern exposure. Long droughts, hard winters, and such skies as Paul found in the stormy Adriatic, when "neither sun nor stars appeared for many days," these are the things which make faith thrive, which "finish" faith.

Now, no men are so favorably situated for securing a finished faith as our Home Missionaries. They live, emphatically, on the north side of the wall. What hardships they undergo; what privations they endure—the wolf outside the door, and perhaps something more dreadful than the wolf within. Alas! is that the word to use? Alas! they must trust or die. And yet, and for this very reason, these are the men who know most of the loving-kindness, and the everlasting faithfulness of the Lord. Christ

always does most for those who do least for themselves. "Who-soever shall seek to save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall save it." That is the law of the kingdom. Would we know what Christ is? I am afraid that many who call him Lord, do not know what he is. Would we know what Christ is, we must start for the West; we must press on to the outposts of civilization; we must enter that cabin, free alike to the rain, and the snow, and the wayfarer's foot, and the angel's wing, and find the man who has suffered most for the Master. He can tell you what Christ is. Perhaps he is on a bed of sickness; perhaps he is watching by the side of his dying wife; now feeling at the wrist if the pulse still beats; now bending down to the lips, if the lungs still heave. Perhaps he has just closed the eyes of his last child, and is kneeling down by the cold clay, to ask the Lord for a shroud and a coffin. Oh! how can he deny the dust so dear a decent burial? Brother, did you ever go to the mercy-seat on an errand like that? This man can tell you what Christ is. Oh! he can tell you what Christ is! Not an angel before the throne knows so much, it may be, of the Saviour, has tasted so much of his goodness, or gazed so often on his glory. Many a time has he left toil, and care, and sorrow behind, ascended Tabor and seen the Lord transfigured. Such a man has been under my own roof; and it seemed better, even, than entertaining an angel—it was a little like a visit from the Lord himself. No, I am not going back to the past, nor speaking of the dead. Such men are now in the land; and that is one reason why the land is yet above the waters.

And shall not these men be sustained—sustained whatever the cost? They ask only food and raiment, nothing more than the day-laborer's wages, just enough to keep the lamp from going out. And shall they not be sustained? What could we do which would better please the Lord, who loves us all, and would more certainly secure his blessing? Nor let any say that it can not be done. Have we parted with our last luxury? Do we carry our whole wardrobe on our backs? Have we been brought to one meal a day? Have we nothing left but hope? Let us stand by these men of God so long as one undivided loaf remains. If we neglect them, if we suffer them to be brought into still greater straits, how can we meet that Judge who, although he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor—so rich and so poor that he had not where to lay the head, which, but for us, would never have needed a place to rest.

And should we not also sustain that *Society*, which has sent these men forth, and, in our behalf, assumed the responsibility of their support? My interest in the American Home Missionary Society, is not of recent origin. Living, then, in this my native city, I may say that I was by when it was born. I knew it when

it wore its swaddling clothes; and a goodly child it was. I was present, I think, when for the first time, it celebrated its birthday; and since, I have been more familiar than most persons with its operations. It has been my privilege, in various ways, to cooperate with it; and my whole ministry has been spent in a region of our country for which it has done great things. Western New-York, it is my heart-felt conviction, would never have been Western New-York, but for the American Home Missionary Society. This, I know, will in some quarters be regarded as questionable praise. Some associate nothing but evil with our name. And it can not be denied that, in more senses than one, we have a prolific soil, a soil that abhors barrenness, as nature abhors a vacuum. It *will* bring forth. No one knows this better than the adversary. He hath sowed tares, and gathered, as every one who sows there does, a large increase. And many think that we grow nothing but tares. They overlook the wheat—the wheat, I mean, which goes to God's garner. They forget the great Husbandman. We have schools in Western New-York, schools of the humbler and higher grades, and we have as many churches as schools. We have asylums and hospitals, homes for the friendless and homes for the fatherless. We have two colleges, two universities, and two theological seminaries—which it will be glory enough for the metropolis to excel; and we have one State prison, which we are enabled to keep full only by *importation*. Are there any churches in the land which, according to their ability, do more or give more than ours?—any churches where there is so much activity, with so little extravagance, so much freedom of opinion, with so little error?—churches which God has more significantly owned and honored? It is true, we believe, that any form of life is preferable to death, that the heart had better beat too fast than not beat at all, and we have no partiality for a religion laid out, no matter how fine the shroud or costly the coffin. That we have had things to lament and put away, we will not deny. We have experienced the evils incidental to new settlements, to society in its infancy. But we have outgrown these things. When we became men, we put away childish things; and yet some will still upbraid us with the tottering, and stumbling, and occasional falls of our childhood. We wonder if our brethren, who are so dissatisfied with us, are themselves enjoying a millennial state? Instead of their standing aloof and warning others to beware, let them come and see us. We give them a cordial invitation, begging them only not to leave their eyes behind. A blind man will find nothing but darkness. There are some, estimable men too, that we never expect to convince. Nor could we convince them of error if they were pleased to believe that our fertile valleys are salt plains, and our beautiful lakes dead seas; that nothing can grow in the one, or live in the other.

Now, as I believe in Western New-York, so do I believe in the Home Missionary Society; for this Society has done more than any other agency in making us what we are. The first missionaries who came among us—Seth Williston, Jedediah Bushnell, and Amasa Jerome, now in glory—were sent by New-England Missionary Societies, and as early as the year 1799. So that we, with all the world, owe something to New-England; and we are not ashamed to acknowledge it, nor do we mean to forget it. Not that New-England needs any man's patronage or praise. Her patron is on the throne, her glory God will guard. While, however, we are indebted to other institutions, our heaviest debt is due to the Society whose anniversary has called us together. This Society fed us when too weak to feed ourselves, and even now scatters the morning manna about many a tent. And we mean to stand by it, for the best of all reasons, because it stood by us. To forsake the American Home Missionary Society, or even cleave to it with a divided heart, would seem like treason to the memory of our fathers; and as to rending it, we would as soon rend the shroud that wraps our dead.

This allusion to the dead reminds us of that dispensation by which, during the year past, Western New-York and this Society have been both bereaved. Our honored and revered President, one of the founders of this Society, ever its fast friend, and who loved it unto the end, is with us no more. HENRY DWIGHT, the bearer of an illustrious name, which he received and transmitted untarnished, was a man of refinement and culture, of a sound judgment, a far-seeing eye, a conciliating spirit, and a heart true to Christ as the needle to the north. Our brother and father died "in a good old age, an old man, and full of years, and was gathered unto his people." The angel of the Lord found him sleeping in this world-wide prison-house, and said unto him: "Arise up quickly and follow me." As the angel spoke, his fleshy fetters fell, and "the gate which leadeth unto the city opened unto him of his own accord." To find him we have only to follow his footprints, and the same footprints will lead us to the Lamb. *Here*, our brother was a light on the headlands overlooking the sea of life; *there*, he is a star in one of the constellations which burn about the throne of God.

In conclusion, let me say, that I never loved this Society better than to-night. It has done nothing for me to forgive. Of all our benevolent societies, it has always had the first place in my heart; and that place it shall hold, until it changes its constitution, ignores its history, and denies itself. And is this the time to stand aloof, cast suspicious looks, and utter distrustful words? Now, when its work, and its responsibility, and its need, are greater than ever, shall we tie its hands, muzzle its mouth, and repress

the pulsations of its mighty heart? Let us rally around our own Home Missionary Society, yield it a heartier support, give it a larger income, and thus enable it to fulfill its threefold mission—bless the people, save the republic, and welcome the coming generation to a land of light, and love, and liberty, and life—a land whose walls shall be salvation, and whose gates shall be praise, GOD HER GLORY, THE LORD HER EVERLASTING LIGHT.

SERMON XVII.

BY THE REV. C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.,

OF PHILADELPHIA.

UNITY, PEACE, AND BLESSEDNESS.*

"Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."—2 Cor. 13 : 11.

UNITY, peace, and blessedness are the three thoughts which shine forth from the text, in the blended rays of divine truth.

May the Head of the Church help us to speak and to hear to the glory of his name.

I. "*Be of one mind.*" Be unanimous in your general views of religion. So this part of the text may be interpreted. Let there be no division among us in regard to Bible doctrine, Christian experience, or religious duty.

1. *Doctrines* are the glory of revelation. When sin had smitten with death the souls of our original parents, the dawn of the first promise of a Redeemer came to the world, with the joy of angels, and with hope to lost men. The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is revelations, substance, and glory. As our blessed Lord was born and ascended to heaven again, with the retinue of witnessing and glorifying angels, so his atonement upon the cross receives the homage of all the promises, prophecies, and providences of unfolding redemption. Every promise in the darkness of the old dispensation, twinkled with the God-light of Jesus Christ. The prophecies, like attending guards, relieved each other with renewed strength to watch over the advent of the Son of man.

* A sermon preached at the opening of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the First Presbyterian Church, New-Orleans, May 6th, 1858. By the Rev. C. VAN RENSSELAER, D.D., the last Moderator.