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CENTENNIAL

1902

OF

HOME MISSIONS

IN CONNECTION WITH THE ONE HUNDRED
AND FOURTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NEW YORK CITY, MAY 16-20, 1902



PHILADELPHIA

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FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

BY THE

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PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Fathers and Brethren:—

“MISERY,” so runs the proverb, “loves company.” But misery is not the only thing that loves company. Joy loves company. When the woman found the piece of silver which she had lost she called her friends and neighbors together to rejoice with her. That is what the Home Board has done to-day,—called her neighbors and her friends to rejoice with her, and they are here to do it with all their hearts; and I take it that there is no one of them nearer, and, I trust, dearer to the Board of Home Missions than the Board of Education. The Board of Home Missions early felt its need of the Board of Education, and a friend in need is always a friend indeed. The Board of Home Missions wanted men; they found it hard to get them; and they said, “We must have an educating board to furnish us men.” They could have got men of a certain stamp, but they could not get the men they wanted and the men that they imperatively required. For anyone who

knows anything about the home mission work knows that it is of no use to send to the front those who are not in every sense of the word men,—men of God and thoroughly furnished to do the work of God. This is the function and the glory of the Board of Education to give to the Church well furnished, thoroughly educated men. These are the only men to send to the front. The well organized and rich and quietly going churches of the East can sometimes carry a dull man, carry him for some time; those churches out there on the frontier can't and won't. They must have strong men and they must have men who are thoroughly educated to meet the peculiar conditions under which, in the providence of God, they are placed. Brethren, this is a good opportunity for me to say that there are certain persons who know very little, who are exceedingly ignorant of the facts in the case (God pity their ignorance!), who have some way or other got it into their heads that the furnishing of help, of pecuniary help, to a man while he is preparing for the ministry takes out his manhood; that he cannot go into the ministry quite the man he would be if he had stubbornly refused to take one cent of the church's money. I have often wished that if it were right the names might be published,—the names of those ministers in the Presbyterian Church who have received aid, and the names of those who have not. I will not say whether I received aid or not, but I would rather be in the list of those who have. Some of these men I have seen and known personally. It was my privilege for ten years to be chairman of the Synod's

Committee of Home Missions in Michigan. I used to go among these men. I used to go into their homes. I used to see them at their work, and I had then awakened in me an admiration for them, a respect for them, and an estimate of them, which I have carried all through my life, and which has always made me feel that they are the men whom the Church ought to honor above all others.

We are here to-day to congratulate the Board of Home Missions. Well, its history for one hundred years is the best congratulation. That tells the story. What a glorious record it is! It has entered into the life of the nation. It has molded the people. We are so different from what we would have been had it not been for what home missions have done for us. We recognize the perils which confront us at the present time. Dear Dr. Cyrus Dixon (how well I remember his sayings on the platform of the General Assembly) said in his own inimitable way, "The nations of the earth have lifted up their feet and are come hither." How true it was; and they are lifting them up still. Oh, this ceaseless tramp, tramp, tramp, as the peoples of all the world come up upon our shores! Can we stand it? Can we endure the strain? Can we assimilate them? These are the questions that often worry us, trouble us, bring us to our knees before God. Yes, brethren, given another hundred years of home missions like the hundred years that are gone, and all will be well. That is the hope,—as has been said more than once here this afternoon,—that is the hope of the nation. Well may the President

of these United States, the head and representative of the nation, come here to-night, perhaps at much inconvenience, to speak his word in praise and recognition of home missions. He, and men like him, discerning men, men wise to know the times, realize that this is the hope of the nation, and that it is the only hope of the nation. Oh, if rich Christians, all rich Christians, realized it to the full! Brethren, you know that in these days money is being poured out like water for secular education, for the endowment of non-religious universities and colleges, and the establishment of non-religious libraries. There is a peril facing us, not the peril of ignorance, but the peril of Godless education. The institutions and the men and women who, with all their education, spell God with a small g. The salvation of the country is not in education, it is in Christian education, in the very education that this Board of Home Missions is giving the country to-day, and has been giving the country for one hundred years, in the pulpit and in the school. Oh, that there might be a revival of giving in the direction of supporting missions, home missions! Foreign missions will take care of themselves if home missions are supported to the extent and in the way they ought to be.

God bless the Board of Home Missions. The Board of Education is glad to give you men, glad to give you the best men we have. We wish we had more to give you. We wish you had the money to take more. God bless the Board of Home Missions. God bless the Secretaries, those of to-day. Ah, what secretaries the Board has had in all its history! Henry Kendall! What a

giant! What a general! He made an epoch in the Church of God in home missions. Let us thank God for these men, let us thank him for those men upon the Board of Directors who give their time and their brains without a cent of compensation in the service of God and the Church and the country. God bless the missionaries and their wives. He only knows how much their wives have to do with their success under the conditions in which they are placed. And God be thanked for the Church which stands behind the Board of Home Missions and gives it the sinews of war,—money. And last, but not least, let us thank him to-day for the prayer of faith in the nation's God, which is ever going up from our churches and our homes.