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SERMON BY THE RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD
BISHOP OF MONTREAL, LL.D.

Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.—JOHN, XVI. 7.

Aye, Jesus told His disciples the truth, though it was hard to receive it, as it is hard to receive many another divine truth,—that great advantage would be theirs through His going away, even the blessing of another Comforter who should abide with them for ever. It was hard to receive it, for they, as we do, walked and lived so much by sight rather than by faith, and while Jesus was with them they had no hope and wish beyond His presence. With Him on the mountain apart they were happy : in the desert place, with little food, they were contented : on the rough waves, nay, amidst the fierce multitudes, they feared no evil ; but without Him they seemed never happy : they were terrified by winds and waves, and confounded by the people, and from their missions of preaching and healing they gladly returned to tell Him of their doings. They knew the fullness that dwelt in him, and the “all” they had forsaken was as nothing to the pearl of great price they had found.

It was hard to receive it, therefore, that it was expedient for them that He should go away. They knew Jesus, but they knew not the promised Comforter, and therefore sorrow had filled their hearts.

We do not wonder at their sorrow ; it is hard to give up those we love ; very hard to see them go away and feel that we shall know no more their sweet counsel, their warm embrace, their confiding heart,—that which gives to human love its value and its test,—the sympathy and oneness of a kindred and responsive soul,—who knows not how hard it is, and that no word of expediency and profit prevails much to abate our sorrow ? In