

# THE LIFE WORK

OF

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Columbia, S. C.

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COMPILED AND EDITED

BY

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## CHAPTER V

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### PASTORATE AFTER THE WAR

By THOS. H. LAW, D. D.

When the Confederacy fell and hostilities between the North and the South ceased, Rev. J. L. Girardeau was languishing as a prisoner of war on Johnson's Island. For three years or more he had been serving faithfully, zealously and acceptably as chaplain of the Twenty-third South Carolina Regiment, and on the final retreat of the Army of Northern Virginia, although a non-combatant and pursuing strictly his spiritual duties, he was taken prisoner along with other chaplains, surgeons and non-combatants, who, according to the rules of civilized warfare, should have been undisturbed, and hustled off, first to Washington City, and then, despite the remonstrances against such unwarranted treatment, to the Federal prison on Johnson's Island. And here he was held a prisoner, under all the hardships and cruelties which have made that prison infamous, until late in June, long after the war had actually ceased and the Confederate armies had been disbanded.

Upon his release, as soon as he could procure the necessary funds for traveling expenses and decent clothing, by the sale of his watch and the aid of friends in Philadelphia, he returned to his family, at their refugee home, near Timmons ville, S. C. Here I visited him soon after his arrival, heard from his own lips the story of his capture and prolonged imprisonment, sympathized with him in his keen disappoint-

ment at the sad and unexpected result of the contest for States' rights and Southern independence, and shared his righteous indignation at the manner in which the Federal authorities had dealt with those who had been so unfortunate as to fall into their cruel and vengeful hands.

Mr. Girardeau was now nearly forty years of age, in the prime of a mature and vigorous manhood, and through his splendid work among the negroes in Charleston and among the soldiers in the army, stood at the height of his reputation as a preacher. Accordingly, he was in constant demand for pulpit services. Of course, in the unsettled condition of things and the interruption of railroad travel just succeeding the war, he could not go far; but pastors nearby were frequently calling upon him to preach. I myself was among them, and at Florence, Hartsville and Darlington I heard many noble and delightful sermons from him in those dark and trying days.

But what about regular work in the future? His mind naturally turned to his beloved Zion Church in Charleston, and his heart yearned to be with that dear flock again. But it had been scattered to the four winds through the exigencies of the war. Hostilities began at Charleston in 1861; and the city had constantly been threatened with attack ever afterwards and was frequently shelled by the enemy's batteries on Morris Island. Consequently, the white population, as far as practicable, abandoned the city early in the dread conflict and removed their slaves also to places of greater security. And at this date the white citizens were only beginning to return, and the negroes, now emancipated, were scattered all over the country.

Thus Mr. Girardeau could hardly expect for the present to resume work with his own former charge.

But about this time, September, 1865, he began to receive overtures from the Presbyterian young men in Charleston, many of whom had returned to the smitten old city and taken up the struggle to recuperate their lost fortunes and do the work of life, to come down and preach for them. And as none of the Presbyterian pastors had yet gotten back to their homes, this seemed a reasonable proposition, and, at the same time, offered him a favorable opportunity for regular work in the ministry, and for the support of his family, which, under the proposed arrangement, was to come entirely from the weekly Sabbath offerings of the congregation.

After due consideration Mr. Girardeau accepted this proposition, and early in September returned to the old city, which held a very warm place in his loving heart, and once more resumed his ministerial labors there, occupying the pulpit of the stately and commodious old Second Church building.

At this time there were five Presbyterian Churches in Charleston: the First or Scotch Church, situated down town on the corner of Meeting and Tradd Streets and served as pastor by the Rev. Dr. John Forrest, but holding an independent relation, not being as yet connected with Charleston Presbytery; the Second Church, situated higher up on Meeting Street, facing Wragg Square and the Citadel, whose pastor was the eloquent and devoted Dr. Thomas Smyth; the Central Church (now Westminster), whose beautiful and classic building stood also on Meeting near Society Street, between the two already named, whose pastor was the Rev. W. C. Dana; Glebe Street Church, at

this time without a pastor; and Zion Church, whose immense building had been erected by white Presbyterians for the use of the large congregation of colored people, whom, together with a small white element, Mr. Girardeau had been serving as pastor. The members of these several congregations, as far as they had yet returned to the city, united in worshipping under Mr. Girardeau's ministry, in the Second Church building.

But soon the question came up as to permanent arrangements for the future when all the people of the city should have returned to their homes. Mr. Girardeau was absolutely shut out of his own church building, which had been taken possession of by a missionary of the Northern Presbyterian Church and held by the Freedman's Bureau, under the authority of the United States Government, and its occupancy positively denied to its legal owners and regularly installed pastor. And the old arrangement of a small white element owning and controlling the church and meeting in worship with the negroes, seemed neither desirable nor practicable under the new conditions resulting from the war. Consequently, propositions came from both the Second and Glebe Street Churches to the white element and the popular pastor of Zion Church to come over and unite, Dr. Smyth, who had long since been crippled, though not disabled, by paralysis, tendering his resignation as pastor of the Second Church, so as to open the way for the proposed union with that church. But Mr. Girardeau was unwilling to adopt a measure which might appear to push the venerable, beloved and devoted pastor of the Second Church out of his long and eminently useful pastorate. He, therefore, with his white congregation of Zion Church, accepted the proposition of the Glebe Street

Church, and, accordingly, this church, in April, 1866, by order of the Presbytery, was consolidated with the Zion Church, retaining the officers of both congregations in the united church, including the pastor, and holding the name of Zion Church, the regular worship being conducted in the building on Glebe Street. And thus Mr. Girardeau entered upon his memorable pastorate in Charleston after the war.

At this point in my narrative I pause to give my impressions of Mr. Girardeau as a preacher. He was a man of superb physique, tall (about five feet ten or eleven inches), rather slender at this time, though he grew stouter as age advanced; muscular, agile and with fine use of his body in every way. And in the pulpit his action was energetic, graceful and exceedingly impressive—a gesture often thrilling the hearer. His voice was keen and penetrating, but, at the same time, smooth and musical. His mind was quick and logical, with well trained faculties and strongly disposed to reading and study. His taste was poetic—he often composed beautiful hymns—his imagination vivid, and his descriptive powers wonderful. His temperament was ardent and his emotions strong. His demeanor in the pulpit was dignified, grave and earnest, indicating that he fully realized his responsibility as an ambassador of Christ and a minister to dying men. I can never forget the solemn countenance he carried into the pulpit and the earnestness with which he read the hymns and conducted the services. And he threw his whole self, body, mind and spirit, into his preaching, speaking with a fervor such as I have rarely seen equalled in the pulpit, and which deeply impressed his hearers with his zeal for God and for their souls.



He was, too, most faithful in preaching Divine truth. He received the Bible with unwavering faith and ardent devotion as the very word of God, and he never turned aside from it to preach science or philosophy or any other doctrines of men. He was very plain in preaching, not blinking to discuss sin, judgment and hell, declaring, as Paul did to the Ephesians, the whole counsel of God and keeping back nothing that was profitable to his people. At the same time, he was thoroughly evangelical, glorying in the doctrines of grace, and constantly appealing with passionate fervor unto sinners to believe and be saved.

✓ Mr. Girardeau had a remarkable use of the best English and great fluency of speech. He wrote elegantly and beautifully, and sometimes on special occasions used a manuscript in the pulpit; but very rarely, and greatly to the disadvantage of his preaching. He was a splendid orator, and was at his best when, unhampered by paper, he spoke extempore and freely, out of the abundance of his mind and heart. He was also very happy and forcible in the use of illustrations, which he introduced with a keen appreciation and relish, but never employed to redundancy.

Mr. Girardeau seemed to be fond of preaching in series, and often used that method in his pulpit ministrations. I recall one series of five sermons, all of which I heard with great interest and pleasure, when he was preaching to his negro congregation on Anson Street. They were all founded upon a single short text, John 5:40—"And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life," and were distinguished by the emphasis placed upon the several leading words of this text—(1) "And ye *will* not come to Me"; (2) "And ye will not *come* to Me"; (3) "And ye will not come to *Me*";



(4) "And ye will not come to Me that ye might have life"; and (5) *Not* coming to Me ye cannot have life. And also during his later ministry in the Glebe Street Church, I remember that he preached series on "Prayer" and on "Adoption," some of which I heard and can testify that they were excellent and noble discourses, always very instructive and very edifying.

Mr. Girardeau clearly stood in the front rank of the great preachers of his day. Without doubt the three greatest preachers ever produced by our Presbyterian Church in South Carolina—than whom there were no others superior—were Drs. James H. Thornwell, Benjamin M. Palmer and John L. Girardeau. And I had the rare privilege, in early life, of sitting, more or less frequently, under the ministrations of each of these three distinguished divines. Dr. Thornwell I regard as *facile princeps*—the greatest preacher I ever heard. His bodily presence was not imposing, his voice was not strong or sweet, his gestures were not specially graceful; and his language was decidedly scholastic—too much so for the ordinary hearer. But his clear and sweeping logic, his profound and masterly unfolding of the truth out of a rich experience of it, and his overpowering earnestness in presenting it, impressed me as no other preacher has ever done. Dr. Palmer I regard as the most magnificent pulpit orator I have ever heard. With perfect mastery of himself in the pulpit, with a rich, deep melodious voice that appealed at once to the ear, with graceful and appropriate action delightful to behold, and with profound treatment of the great doctrines of religion in a practical and experimental way, he was superb. Dr. Girardeau, as I conceive, stood just between the two. He wielded the logic on fire of Thornwell, with much of

the graceful oratory of Palmer; and through his long training in preaching to negroes, he used simple and plain language adapted to the common people. And so, as a preacher for the masses, he was no doubt as popular and as efficient as either of his distinguished, admired and beloved fellow Presbyters.

The conditions in Charleston under which Mr. Girardeau entered upon his Glebe Street pastorate were peculiar. Our people had just emerged from a long and desolating war in which the cause for which they had so loyally and devotedly contended had been lost; multitudes of their sons had been sacrificed upon the altar of their country, their property, for the most part, had been destroyed, their homes in many cases had been broken up, and their social and economical system had been uprooted. And Charleston had been most deeply affected in all these ways. In the early part of the war a very destructive and extensive conflagration had swept across the city, destroying much property and consuming many homes. For years the city had been under the continual storm of shot and shell from the enemy's batteries, which, besides the injury to houses, public and private, made it an unsafe habitation for its citizens who were scattered as refugees all over the country. And now, as the people returned to the city, it was to find themselves impoverished, thrown out of business, upset in their domestic arrangements, and that peculiar charm of old Charleston, its social life, well-nigh broken up. Besides these things, the city was subject to the galling yoke of military rule, administered by our late adversaries, many of whose unprincipled officers seemed to delight in lording it over a subjugated and helpless people. And this was followed by the horrible and detestable

Reconstruction oppression in South Carolina, which dragged its slimy course of corruption and fraud and misrule and degradation of a high-toned people throughout the whole period of Dr. Girardeau's pastorate of Zion Church, Glebe Street. And it was under the constant pressure of these abnormal conditions that he pursued his work.

And with what success?

Large congregations of attentive and interested hearers filled the church regularly at its two services, Sabbath after Sabbath, despite its unfavorable situation on a short, narrow side-street. So that soon it became necessary to enlarge the building in order to accommodate the attendants. And this was without any other attraction than the eloquent, earnest, faithful preaching of the old Gospel, "the faith which was once delivered to the saints." There was no display of music; not even an organ or a set choir. Dr. Girardeau, like Dr. Thornwell and Dr. Adger, was conscientiously opposed to the use of instrumental music in the public worship of God, and never would allow one in the churches which he regularly served. Not because he lacked taste for good music. He was himself a fine singer and often led this part of the worship in his services. But, in his opinion, the use of instruments in the worship of God's house under the New Testament dispensation lacked Divine authority, and he would therefore rigidly exclude them. It will be remembered that the first volume which he ever issued from the press was an argument against the use of instrumental music in public worship.

Neither had he in Glebe Street Church a trained choir to dispense beautiful, artistic music through the services. For a good part of the time he had a pre-

centor, an earnest, Christian man, with a clear, strong, well-trained voice, who arose after the reading of the hymn, raised the tune, and led the singing throughout, assisted at some times by cultivated vocalists.

Neither was there any reading in concert, or repeating of creeds and prayers; but only the simple, old-time Presbyterian worship, handed down to us by our fathers, consisting of solemn, earnest prayers led by the minister, plain congregational singing, the impressive reading of the Scripture, and the zealous, faithful exposition and application of the Word, followed by an offering for the service of the Lord. This was the plain bill of spiritual fare which Dr. Girardeau set before those who attended his ministry in Glebe Street Church. But the crowds came and partook of it, and were nourished; and they came again; and they continued to come throughout his ten years' ministry in that place.

Early in 1867, after much correspondence, and delay through provoking obstacles thrown in the way, Dr. Girardeau and the owners of the large Zion Church on Calhoun Street, in which he had previously preached the Gospel to thousands of negroes, succeeded in getting possession of their building, and he felt it to be his duty to minister again, as far as practicable, to his former colored flock. From the records of the Session it appears that he was ready even to surrender his white congregation and his work in Glebe Street, and throw himself once more fully into the service of the colored people. But the upshot of the matter was, after earnest and prayerful consideration on the part of pastor and people, an agreement that he should give up one preaching service on the Sabbath in Glebe Street Church so that he might be able to serve also

the colored congregation regularly in Calhoun Street Church.

This, however, was only a temporary arrangement. And as the negroes and whites would not now, under the new conditions, worship together as formerly, a little later on, at the call of the church, he secured an assistant in the relation of a co-pastor, in order that full services might be maintained in both churches. The Rev. J. B. Mack, then pastor of Salem (B. R.) Church in Sumter County, S. C., was called to this position and was duly installed with Dr. Girardeau as co-pastor of Zion Church, the consolidated organization, which still included both the white and colored congregations. This arrangement was effected about the end of 1867, the formal installation occurring December the 29th.

But the colored flock had long been "as sheep without a shepherd"; they had been sadly scattered and torn, misled by ignorant and designing teachers, and filled with new notions as the result of emancipation and the changed conditions in the South. Hence, while a goodly number—even more than we might have expected under the circumstances—especially of the more sober and thoughtful ones among them, were ready to come back to their old church and remained loyal to their former faithful and devoted pastor, and sometimes large congregations attended the services, yet the ante-bellum congregation could never be gathered together again.

While another presents more fully this part of Dr. Girardeau's work, I deem it proper to note its bearing upon his Glebe Street pastorate. It was like a first-love with him to serve these children of Africa, and with all the burdens and the attractions and the

encouragements of a large and influential white city congregation to minister unto, his heart ever yearned for the salvation of the negro and his development into efficient Christian service. It is indeed pathetic to follow the struggles which he made in this direction as they appear in the records of the church. But he had finally to yield to that ordering of Providence which sundered the negroes of the South from their former white preachers, and give his energies as pastor wholly to the Glebe Street congregation.

This work among the whites continued to prosper. Church statistics were very defective in those days, especially as to the aggregate of communicant membership, in consequence of the unsettled condition of our people. But the annual reports of Zion Church show steady and considerable accessions on profession of faith.

These came largely from the Sabbath School, of which the pastor kept a close and continual oversight, and which was conducted fully under the control of the Session. This was before the days of the widespread and vigorous influence and leadership of the International Sunday School Association and the general use, which came later, of the Uniform Lesson System. It will therefore be interesting, no doubt, to know the method which Dr. Girardeau and his church employed in this important Sabbath School work. I was myself, as the pastor at Spartanburg, S. C., struggling with the same problems; and, always appreciating his advice, I wrote to him, asking a statement of his plan. The following letter in reply explains it:

“You ask what our method of Sabbath school instruction is. The best reply I can make is, by sending you the book we use. I will mail it at the same time with this letter. It is entitled,



as you will see, 'A Key to the Shorter Catechism, etc.' Besides the excellent arrangement of Scripture proofs which it gives, it presents in connection with each answer a scheme of analytical questions which attracted my attention to it. This exercise I regard as having great value on two accounts: First, because a very clear and definite understanding of the answer is secured by this means; and secondly, because the mental energies of the pupil are exercised and developed—an end which no sort of education, secular or spiritual, can afford to dispense with. I have often been surprised and gratified by the evidence of its success in this respect. The scholars are kept on the alert, the attention is cultivated, and the mind is incited to promptness of action. I have never seen any results equal to those which are secured by this method. I am delighted with it. And this I say from constant observation, for I attend the Sabbath school regularly and take charge of the main question and the analytical exercise when the school is brought together *en masse*. Indeed, one of the capital advantages of this plan is, that after every class has separately recited, all the classes brought together into one great class—the school itself—can be as easily taught as each. First, I ask the girls to recite all together the main answer, then the boys, then boys and girls at the same time. The two sexes thus hear each other recite and the stimulus is strong to answer correctly. Then the analytical questions are propounded to the whole school. Then I either ask questions extemporaneously, or address the school in reference to the lesson, endeavoring with all my might to stamp on the scholars the main thoughts, and practically applying them to their consciences and hearts. Oh, it is a glorious privilege and a grand opportunity. I regard the exercise as one of the most important and the most promising in the circle of pastoral labors. We are trying to train the scholars as *Presbyterian* Christians. For that end there is nothing like the Shorter Catechism, and I know no form in which that Catechism can be taught superior to this. All dryness disappears. I have never seen scholars so intensely interested in any other mode of Sabbath school instruction.

“The superintendent hears the recitation, in mass, of the Scripture proofs. The whole school recites the same lesson, except the infant class, which studies Brown’s Short Catechism,



which I consider far better than the Introduction to the Shorter Catechism.

“Along with the key, the school also studies the American Sunday School Union’s ‘Child’s Scripture Question Book,’ on the obvious principle that the historical facts of Scripture ought to be taught as well as its doctrines. We have also a good hymn. We select about fifty of the best hymns, and the idea is to make the school go over them again and again until they are so fixed in memory that the feeble faculties of the dying may recall them.

“This is our method. Had I room and time I would like to assign the reasons which have led to its adoption; but I must defer their statement until I can talk with you face to face. Should you, however, require them before you adopt this plan, so excellent do I regard it, that it will give me pleasure to communicate them. Would that our whole Church would pursue this method! And why not? Are not our Catechisms our interpretation of the Bible? And does not this plan store the memory with the very words of Scripture in theological relations? I cannot understand why the Church (as in the Baptismal service) should urge upon parents the teaching of our standards to their children, and decline to teach them herself. The family and the Sabbath school ought to be complementary to each other.

“We are now working five Sabbath schools, the school of my own church, three white mission schools, and one colored. The same method is pursued in all of them; and there is but one testimony from all—that it is the best method the teachers have ever tried. It is surprising to me to hear the colored school recite. I have never witnessed the like among *them*. I am disposed to think that you would never regret making the experiment. The books can be got in any quantity from the Carters in New York.

“But enough! I shall tire you. May the Lord bless you in your Sabbath school work! The spirit of the age has substituted it for the plan of pastoral instruction of families at home—that is, of the children by Catechism. Let us get aboard, and take our turn at the wheel.”

Another development of his work which was specially encouraging was that the sons of Zion were

going into the Gospel ministry. During these years no less than three business men of the congregation, two of them married and with families to support, heeded the call of God to preach, left their worldly occupations, and became faithful and efficient ministers of the Word. These were the Rev. Jas. E. Fogartie, D. D., Rev. George A. Trenholm, D. D., both of whom were generously aided by the congregation in their preparation for the ministry, and Rev. W. G. Vardell, who had long served as precentor of the church. Three others, Rev. J. B. Warren, D. D., Rev. C. E. Chichester and Rev. T. B. Trenholm, who had been active and useful as workers in Zion Church, but moved to other fields, later on also entered the ministry. All these brethren, I venture to say, drew their inspiration and encouragement for the higher work from their consecrated and ever zealous pastor.

Under his wise and efficient leadership, Zion Church also engaged largely in city mission work. This was conducted chiefly through that most practicable and efficient means of reaching the destitute, disseminating the truth, and laying the foundation for new churches, the Mission Sabbath School. The regular Sabbath School of the church, as an indispensable agency for teaching and training the children and youth of the congregation and as many others as could be brought into it, enlisted the constant and earnest attention of pastor, elders and other zealous and faithful workers. But, besides this, four mission schools, including that among the colored people at the Calhoun Street Church, were organized in different parts of the city, and conducted under the direct supervision and control of the Session, to which they regularly reported, and which provided for their support. One of these,

in connection with which for a time a chapel was maintained and supplied by a regular minister, supported by this church, grew into a separate, though never self-sustaining, church, located in the upper part of the city.

But the interest and efforts of Dr. Girardeau and the noble flock which he led were by no means confined to Charleston. As a consequence of the war, the churches of the Presbytery had been sadly broken up and disabled. Outside the cities of Charleston and Columbia, in 1866 there were only three churches in the Presbytery which had ministers to serve them regularly. These were Orangeburg, served by the Rev. A. F. Dickson; Walterboro, by the Rev. Edward Palmer, and John's Island and Wadmalaw, by the Rev. John R. Dow, who shortly afterwards also removed to another field. This distressing condition of the country churches and of Presbyterianism in the low country of South Carolina, deeply moved Dr. Girardeau's heart. And early in 1867 I was induced by the Presbytery's committee, through the urgency of his pathetic pleas, to remove to Charleston and undertake the work of evangelist of Charleston Presbytery, laboring under his constant counsel and direction as the chairman of the Presbytery's Executive Committee of Domestic Missions. It is impossible for me to express my appreciation of his cordial interest, the helpful advice and the earnest support which he ever gave to me in this work. I continued for two or three years, until the feeble churches began to get on their feet again; and which Dr. Girardeau ever afterward contended was the saving of our weak churches and of the cause of Presbyterianism in that section. And it is due to him to say that this work

was made practicable only by the loyal and generous financial support of him and his people. The impoverished and disorganized little churches to which I ministered, were too poor to sustain the evangelist or do anything considerable for the support of his work; but, despite their limited means and heavy burdens, the noble people of Zion Church contributed with wonderful liberality, and the Session appropriated out of their weekly Sabbath collections much the larger part of the uncertain and indefinite salary that I received as evangelist. At the end of every month the Session, a fine body of intelligent, earnest men, who faithfully co-operated with the pastor in all his efforts for the advancement of Christ's cause, regularly assigned one-half of all the funds taken up at the Sunday morning services, to this work. And Dr. Girardeau often afterwards instanced and justified this course as a wise measure in meeting an important emergency in the history of our Church.

Besides this, under the inspiration of the pastor's zeal, who himself served for several years as a faithful and valuable member of the Assembly's Executive Committee of Foreign Missions and Sustentation, the church contributed liberally also to foreign missions, education and other causes, always responding to the calls of the General Assembly. As a more definite statement of the church's liberality and progress at this time, I quote from Dr. Mack's letter of resignation as co-pastor, bearing date September 24, 1869, the following: "In less than two years a heavy debt has been paid; the obligations of a double work fully met, nearly \$4,000 given to missionary objects and about 160 persons added to the church. We have indeed been wonderfully blessed; and now, with Israel, can we say,

'The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' "

During these years Dr. Girardeau grew in the estimation of the Church in general, as well as in the love and appreciation of his own people. He received, from time to time, overtures from other fields of labor; but he was singularly attached to his native State of South Carolina and to his devoted people in Charleston; and so he promptly rejected all such approaches.

He had, however, like other pastors, his seasons of discouragement and depression. And his throat began to give him some trouble and anxiety, inducing a doubt whether he should continue in this work. And all this assumed such form that on one occasion, in the early summer of 1871, he felt constrained, in the face of the vigorous opposition of the Session and the earnest remonstrance of the people, to tender his resignation, which he pressed so urgently that the pastoral relation was actually dissolved by the Presbytery. But when he came to deliver his farewell discourse, the demonstration of continued affection on the part of the people, and their earnest desire that he should remain as their pastor had taken such shape that he decided at once not to leave them; and the congregation proceeded to call him again, and the Presbytery, after a season of rest on his part, reinstated him pastor without his having separated from his cherished and devoted flock.

The record of this remarkable and unique episode in Dr. Girardeau's pastoral experience is so interesting, and so beautifully portrays the feelings which prevailed on the part of both pastor and people, that I here insert the letter which he addressed to the congregation and submitted through the Session—after



they had first pleaded with him to withdraw it and offered him an indefinite vacation—to the congregation, and the paper which they adopted in reply:

“Charleston, June 5, 1871.

“To the Congregation of Zion Presbyterian Church.

“Beloved Brethren and Friends: With the profoundest respect, affection and regret, I hereby tender to you my resignation of my pastoral charge, and ask you to unite with me in requesting the Presbytery to dissolve the relation existing between us.

“The reasons which have governed me in taking this painful step are the following:

“First, the condition of my voice and chest appears to me to necessitate a change; and, secondly, I am convinced that a longer continuance of my pastoral relation would not tend to promote the growth of the congregation.

“I will not multiply words which are so easy of employment on an occasion like this. If my past course has not persuaded you of my affection for you, no phrases which might now be used would produce that impression. This, however, will I say, that it has cost me many a tear and many a pang to come to this decision; and with such tears as one sheds at finally separating from near kindred, do I pen these lines, which looks to the severance of a union which has been and is so dear to my heart. Only a sense of duty impels me to write them.

“I can scarcely bear the thought of parting with you—no more to preach to you the precious gospel of Christ, no more to mingle my prayers and praises with yours on earth, no more to minister to you in times of affliction and distress. There is not one of you whom I am not conscious of tenderly loving in Christ Jesus, and I would fain believe, not one of you who does not feel affectionately towards me.

“For Jesus' sake, dear friends, forgive me all my deficiencies in the preaching of the gospel and in the performance of pastoral duty among you. If *you* forgive them not, as I hope my compassionate Master has, my separation from you would indeed be a cause to me of inconsolable grief.

“Accept my heartfelt thanks for the tenderness with which you have borne with all my defects, for the loving concessions

which you have made to some of the views which I have advocated, and with which, perhaps not all of you were able to concur, and for the great kindness which you have ever evinced for me and mine. May the Lord requite you according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

"I have no complaint to make of you—no fault to find with you. On the contrary, your cordial attachment to a simple and unadulterated gospel, your Berean disposition to abide by the Word of God as your only standard of judgment, your missionary zeal and noble spirit of liberality, have won for you the deepest admiration of my heart. It will be for a praise and an honor to me that I have served such a people.

"I do not ask a dissolution of the relation between us because I have preferred another field of labor. I could not gain my own consent to leave you so long as I feared that a change might prove detrimental to your interests. But I trust that the church has now arrived at that stage at which a change will not only not injure, but promote its prosperity.

"It will cost me a bitter pang not only to part with you, but to leave Charleston. Her very dust is dear to me. And I pray God that if it is His blessed will, I may not be sent out of South Carolina, but be permitted to suffer with her in her present trials, and to contribute what labor I am capable of for the interests of her beloved and afflicted people. But, wherever I may go, I shall to life's latest day bear with me the affectionate remembrance of your loving kindness, and dedicate to you a chief place in the profoundest affection of my soul.

"Returning to your hands the pastoral trust which, by your suffrages, you reposed in me, I am, dear brethren and friends,

"Your Servant in the Glorious Gospel of Christ,

"JOHN L. GIRARDEAU."

This letter was duly submitted to the congregation at a meeting called by the Session, and a committee of five to whom it was referred, after earnest and careful consideration, presented the following in reply, which was adopted by a well-nigh unanimous vote:

"The committee to which the letter of the Rev. J. L. Girardeau, D. D., resigning the pastoral charge of this church and congregation and asking us to unite with him 'in requesting the



Presbytery to dissolve the relation existing between us' was referred, would respectfully submit the following report and resolutions:

"It is impossible for your committee to describe the absolutely stunning effect produced by this letter upon the congregation. Some received it with unutterable amazement, some with mute astonishment, others with tears and sobs—the outward evidence of deep anguish of soul—and all, with one accord, with the exclamation, '*No, no—this cannot be; we cannot, must not let our beloved pastor go.*' This intense feeling is not confined to this congregation alone. The announcement of the resignation of the Rev. Dr. Girardeau has sent a thrill through this community and the entire church, and with united voice they all cry, '*You must not let him go!*'

"But however deeply our feelings may be moved, let us calmly consider the reasons assigned by our dear pastor for this step. We quote his own language: 'The reasons which govern me in taking this painful step are the following: First, the condition of my voice appears to me to necessitate a change; and secondly, I am convinced that a longer continuance of my pastoral relation would not tend to promote the growth of the congregation.'

"The first reason assigned is easily disposed of. It has been a source of painful anxiety to us for some time that our pastor was laboring beyond the limits assigned for the safe exercise of the mental and physical powers of any man; and we look forward to the period of repairs to our church edifice as an opportune occasion to grant him, not only the usual summer vacation, but a more protracted leave of absence, in the confident hope that he would return to us fully restored. But we are willing and ready to do more, and say to him cheerfully and in the most sincere frankness, '*Go and take a leave of absence for six, twelve, eighteen months, or longer if necessary, for the restoration of his physical powers; we grant it freely.*' The second reason assigned is in these words: '*I am convinced that a longer continuance of my pastoral relation would not tend to promote the growth of the congregation.*'

"We approach the consideration of this reason with mingled feelings of unfeigned surprise and the most profound emotions. What has been the history of this church since the close of the

war? When Dr. Girardeau took charge, it was constituted of a few fragments of two congregations, almost strangers to each other, and so limited in pecuniary resources that they were barely able to place the church edifice in habitable order, not even removing the unsightly effects of the rude hand of war. We have now but to look around to see the evidences of shot and shell upon its defaced walls. As an evidence of its steady and regular advance from that period, in its full organization and equipment, as a living and working church, we appeal to the words of our teacher and pastor. The devotion of this little band to the principles of the pure gospel, which he has so eloquently, earnestly and unceasingly preached to us, is but described in his own words. He remarked in his letter, which has just been read to you: 'I have no complaint to make of you—no fault to find with you. On the contrary, your cordial attachment to a simple and unadulterated gospel, your Berean disposition to abide by the Word of God as your only standard of judgment, your missionary zeal and noble spirit of liberality, have won for you the deepest admiration of my heart. It will be for a praise and an honor to me that I have served such a people.'

"Under his ministry the church has steadily increased in numbers, and the congregation almost outgrown the capacity of the building. It is unnecessary to go into a detailed statement of the various enterprises for the spread and building up of the Master's Kingdom, which have been inaugurated and sustained, under Providence, by his influence. Look at the evangelistic field in the bounds of our own Presbytery. A few evenings since, our beloved pastor stated that this congregation had contributed to that work more than all the congregations in the Presbytery put together; besides liberal donations to all the other benevolent operations of the Church at large. Look at the work among the colored population in the Calhoun Street Church, which has been almost exclusively sustained by contributions from the members of this congregation. Look at the Mission Chapel in the northwestern portion of the city, and the flourishing Sunday school gathered there. Look at the noble efforts of the ladies of the congregation to educate and equip young men for the ministry. In a word—since Dr. Girardeau took charge of this flock, up to the termination of the last

fiscal year, this congregation has contributed over \$60,000 for the maintenance of a preached gospel, and the various benevolent and charitable enterprises of the Southern Church.

“These are the fruits of the labor and zeal under Providence of our beloved pastor. And above all, how many souls in this church, and throughout the region where his influence has been felt, call him their spiritual father, and point to his preaching, under the providence of God, as the instrument of turning them from the broad road that leads to destruction, to that straight and narrow way which conducts to the communion of Christ ascended on high, and the eternal glory of the Father? We can fully appreciate his feelings when he declares: ‘It will cost me a bitter pang, not only to part with you, but to leave Charleston.’ In view of these facts, not to speak of the good which he has accomplished by those silent influences upon the young throughout the wide circle of his acquaintance and among the numerous strangers who seek to listen to the simple gospel of Jesus Christ so forcibly and eloquently expounded by him, we most solemnly and affectionately ask the question, ‘How could he have come to the conclusion that “the longer continuance of his pastoral relation would not tend to the growth of this congregation”?’ We feel assured that, with restored health and a judicious curtailment of labor, his usefulness, in this congregation and the community at large, is not at an end. In this we are upheld by an abiding faith, and are willing to wait in the confident expectation that, as God has given us the former rain of the Spirit, He will also give us the latter rain in a Pentecostal shower, which will develop a rich harvest to the glory of that blessed Redeemer who poured out His precious blood to save sinners from eternal death.

“We judge of the future by the past. The sun which shines today, bright, beautiful and glorious, will rise again tomorrow; but it may be that his rays will be intercepted by the clouds that surround our earth. This will be only for a season; when these clouds are dispersed the bright orb will again shine forth in all his splendor and majesty. So with the Holy Spirit. He may withhold His power for a season; but, true to the promises of the Divine Master, He will pour out His resistless influences to the salvation of sinners and the glory of God.

"The committee would submit the following resolutions for the consideration of the congregation, and respectfully recommend their adoption:

*"Resolved, First,* That we have received the letter of resignation of our beloved pastor, the Rev. J. L. Girardeau, D. D., with unfeigned surprise and profound sorrow, and cannot bring ourselves to believe that Providence designs to take him from us.

*"Resolved, Second,* That we as a Church and congregation fully and affectionately reciprocate the kind feelings of confidence and regard so touchingly expressed in his letter, and deeply sympathise with him in this the hour of his affliction and trial, and pray that God in His wisdom and mercy may restore him to health, and point out to him clearly the path of duty and usefulness.

*"Resolved, Third,* That we cordially tender to him a leave of absence from pastoral labor for such a length of time as may be necessary for the restoration of his health. We cannot, however, obtain our consent voluntarily to unite with him 'in requesting the Presbytery to dissolve the relation existing between us'; but as we claim to be true Presbyterians—willing to abide by the Constitution and Standards of our Church—we will consent that the subject be placed before Presbytery, and if that body accedes to the request of our pastor, we shall be constrained to submit to the decision, however painful it may be.

"Respectfully submitted,

"F. M. ROBERTSON, Chairman."

After this very unusual episode which so severely tested and strikingly brought out the relations existing between pastor and people, Dr. Girardeau, consenting to the re-establishment of the pastoral relation, took a much needed rest, while the church building was undergoing repairs and his people were scattered on account of the prevalence of yellow fever in Charleston. But in the autumn he resumed his regular ministrations in Zion Church, took up again the important mission work which had before been inaugurated, and continued to prosecute his pastoral duties

with his accustomed zeal and efficiency. It has been very interesting to note, in searching the records of this church, how wide and thorough was the work done by this noble congregation under the faithful leadership of this able pastor. The preaching services were faithfully conducted and well attended. The Sabbath School was carefully looked after in its organization and its instruction. The women were organized into societies which did efficient service. The missions were maintained and diligently worked. Infants in large numbers were baptized, and discipline was not neglected. And the blessing of the Lord seemed to rest continually upon the work.

But at the General Assembly of 1875 in St. Louis, Mo., the Columbia Theological Seminary being then under the control of the Assembly, which elected the Directors and the Professors, Dr. Girardeau was unanimously chosen, against his earnest protest, to the chair of Didactic and Polemic Theology in that institution, just vacated by the venerable Dr. William S. Plumer, who had been transferred to the chair of Pastoral, Casuistic and Historic Theology. Dr. Girardeau, however, in his humble estimate of himself, seriously discounted his qualifications for the high and responsible position, and promptly declined it. At the next meeting of the Synod of South Carolina, the Rev. Dr. J. O. Lindsay, on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Seminary, requested the Synod to unite with the Board in urging Dr. Girardeau to withdraw his declination and accept the place, which the Synod did by a hearty, rising vote. But Dr. Girardeau still persisted in declining. I well remember a private interview which Dr. J. L. Martin, then pastor of the Abbeville Church, and I had with him,

in which we zealously pleaded with him to yield to the judgment of his brethren, so clearly, strongly and repeatedly expressed, and accept. Dr. Girardeau while held a prisoner on Johnson's Island so long, had taught a class of ministers and theological students with such marked ability and success that the report of this work had gone abroad throughout the Church, and the conviction that he had, in an eminent degree, the qualifications of mind and heart and person and culture to fill this chair and take up the work laid down by the illustrious Dr. Thornwell at his premature decease. Besides, his continuance in the pulpit, with the excessive demands upon his voice seemed precarious. And the Seminary, through a recent disturbance, had lost two of its distinguished professors, Drs. John B. Adger and Jos. R. Wilson, so that its condition was such as to cause its friends serious anxiety. Thus all eyes seemed to turn to Dr. Girardeau, and many hearts were set upon him as the man, put by Divine Providence in the hands of the Church, to take up the leading professorship in the institution and lift it out of its depressed condition. Hence the pressure which we brought to bear upon him. But while he would not give us an affirmative answer at Yorkville, where the Synod was convened, a few weeks' later he wrote to me as Stated Clerk of the Synod, signifying his accession to the expressed wishes of his brethren and his acceptance of the professorship, provided the Board of Directors, after considering a statement of his views on certain questions which had arisen in the late disturbance in the Seminary, still urged his going. The statement referred to, which it is not necessary here to record, was duly laid before the Board, and with hearty unanimity they continued



to urge his acceptance. Accordingly, he again tendered his resignation as pastor of Zion Church, which this time, in view of the peculiar circumstances of the situation, reluctantly yielded to his request, and the Presbytery finally dissolved the pastoral relation.

In order to show that there was no cause in the church itself for the sundering of this relation, that the work was still progressing prosperously, and that the same old feeling of affectionate devotion prevailed to the end between pastor and people, I here once more copy Dr. Girardeau's letter requesting that the church concur in his release, and the reply of the Session, which was endorsed by a meeting of the congregation. Both are worthy of careful consideration and hearty admiration:

“Charleston, December 20th, 1875.

“To the Congregation of Zion Presbyterian Church.

Beloved Brethren and Friends: It is known to you that the General Assembly of our Church, which sat last May in the City of St. Louis, elected me Professor of Didactic and Polemic Theology in the Seminary at Columbia. The call was one which I found it difficult to resist, but I deemed it my duty to decline compliance with it. The Board of Directors of the Seminary, at their stated meeting in the fall, requested me to withdraw the letter to the Assembly in which I declined the professorship, and to accept the position. With that request, also, I thought it my duty to decline compliance. Subsequently the Synod of South Carolina urged me to reconsider the question and accept the position to which I had been called by the Assembly. In that action the Synod of Georgia concurred. This persistent pressure of the question upon me by the courts of the Church, impressed me, and I was led to the conclusion that if I could consistently with the course I have pursued with reference to some events which had occurred in connection with the Seminary, obey the voice of the Church, I ought to do so. Accordingly I addressed a communication to the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary, containing a frank exposition of my



views, accompanied by the remark that if, with the statement before them, the board should deem it inexpedient that I should go to the Seminary, the matter would be dropped; but if, on the other hand, they should judge that it was expedient for me to go, I would withdraw my letter of declination. The action of the board at its late meeting was unanimous and hearty in favor of my going to the Seminary, and I accordingly stand pledged to take such steps as contemplate a dissolution of my pastoral relation and my entrance upon the duties of the professorship. I, therefore, respectfully request that you will unite with me in asking Charleston Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relation now subsisting between us.

“A little more than four years ago I deemed it my duty to make a similar request, but it pleased Providence to order that I should not then depart from you. I would now, with new emphasis, express the feelings to which I gave utterance on that occasion. Your affectionate and generous conduct towards me has increased my obligations to you, and bound my heart to you more closely than ever. I am profoundly grateful to you for all your kindness; I love you tenderly and deeply; and only a conviction of duty impels me to take this painful step. We are poor, blind creatures—liable to err. But I have sincerely prayed for guidance; and the construction which I have been led to place on providential indications in the case makes me feel that I ought to go. I have pleaded with the Church, I have pleaded with God, that I might not be sent to Columbia. The call, however, has been repeated again and again, and in such a way as to create the fear that I might be found to fight against Providence by refusing to go. I flatter myself that you are reluctant to part the bond which unites us. So am I. Were such the will of the Lord, gladly would I stay with you; but He seems to order otherwise, and I beg you to acquiesce in the action of the upper courts of the Church.

“Praying that the Holy Spirit may direct you in this matter, and that grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ may be multiplied abundantly unto you, I am, my dear brethren and friends,

“Your unworthy brother and servant in Jesus,

“JOHN L. GIRARDEAU.”

To this letter, presented at a meeting of the congregation on December 27, 1875, the following preamble and resolutions presented by Dr. F. M. Robertson, were unanimously adopted in response:

“The ordeal through which this church has been called to pass impresses upon us a lesson which can never be forgotten, and which should not be permitted to pass by without an appropriate recognition and record of the deep feeling which has moved the entire congregation. From the moment the remarkable proceedings of the General Assembly of our Church, at its meeting in the City of St. Louis in May last, calling our beloved pastor, with an almost unprecedented unanimity and emphasis, to fill a vacant chair in the Theological Seminary in Columbia, S. C., was made known to us, our hearts have been alternately agitated with fear and hope.

“If the question of his acceptance of the position had been submitted to this church and congregation, no doubt the answer would have been an emphatic unwillingness to part with him. And it was a sad trial for us to refrain from entering a direct plea in behalf of the little flock in Glebe street, who felt that the removal of their gifted, able, eloquent and beloved pastor would have tested the grace of acquiescence in the wishes of the General Assembly, the highest court of our Church, to the last degree.

“The possibility of the severance of our relation as pastor and flock has now and then been presented to us, but our answer has been uniformly the same, *‘We desire no change.’* Our attachment to him has grown with each rolling year. We have earnestly prayed that the day of our separation as pastor and people might be far, far distant, and that our Divine Master would strengthen the cords, and more firmly cement the bonds of our union, and enable us to add fresh proof from year to year of our heartfelt devotion to him.

“But an All-wise Providence has directed that he should be transferred to another sphere of labor in the vineyard of the Lord. He tells us, in his letter to the congregation, that the reiterated, unanimous and cordial calls from the General Assembly, Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary, and the Synods of South Carolina and Georgia appeal to him in such a

manner as to force upon him the conviction that it would be flying in the face of Providence to refuse to comply. In his letter to the Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary he states, 'Among the moral reasons which have influenced me, unwillingness to give up my present field of labor did not have a place. It would indeed be a great wrench to my feelings to be obliged to leave my people, who have always treated me so generously and affectionately, but I admitted the power of the Assembly to order the transfer.'

"Under these circumstances it becomes us to pause before we adopt such a course as may embarrass him in following what he considers the path of paramount duty. It is unfortunately true that the very idea of our separation awakens gloomy forebodings in the minds of many as to the future of our church. But let us remember, beloved friends, this is God's church. He who has watched over us in the past, and used us, as we humbly trust, as instruments to extend His kingdom, and for the promotion of His glory, will sustain us in the future. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but God alone can give the increase. Let us present a united and harmonious front. With an unwavering faith let us be true to God's Church, and be assured He will be true to us. Our mission as a church and congregation is not a mere declaration of words. No, no. Let us show our faith by our works. Look around. Even within the bounds of our own Presbytery, and particularly on the seaboard, behold prostrate churches and souls starving for the want of heavenly bread. Let us hold together; cry to the Master for help; redouble our efforts to resuscitate these prostrate churches and send a pure gospel to the destitute.

"1. *Resolved*, That it is with the most unfeigned regret and sorrow that we have received the letter of our beloved pastor, the Rev. J. L. Girardeau, D. D., in which, under the pressure of Providential indications, he has felt it to be his duty to accept a call to a vacant chair in the Theological Seminary, and tender his resignation as pastor of this church.

"2. *Resolved*, That after a calm and prayerful consideration of the correspondence between the directors of the Theological Seminary and the Rev. Dr. Girardeau, and a careful review of his letter to this congregation, we feel reluctantly constrained

to unite with him in asking the Charleston Presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relations now existing between us.

"3. *Resolved*, That the session of this church be requested to ask the Rev. Dr. Girardeau, if not inconsistent with his other duties, to supply the pulpit of this church until the 1st of April next, when our fiscal year will terminate, and to earnestly urge him to comply with this request.

"4. *Resolved*, That an authenticated copy of the foregoing preamble and resolutions be forwarded to Charleston Presbytery, through the representative of this church to that body. Also that a copy be handed to the Rev. Dr. Girardeau.

"5. *Resolved*, That the action of this meeting touching the resignation of the Rev. Dr. Girardeau of his pastoral charge of this church and congregation be published in the *Southern Presbyterian*, and that the Session be requested to have the same spread upon the Sessional Records of this church."

The Charleston Presbytery shortly afterwards, at a *pro-ac-rata* meeting, dissolved the pastoral relation; and while Dr. Girardeau, in compliance with the request of the congregation, continued to supply the pulpit for several months, he promptly removed to Columbia and took up the work in the Theological Seminary. And thus terminated his happy and successful pastorate of ten years in Zion Church, Glebe Street.