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CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP.

A

FAREWELL SERMON

DELIVERED IN THE

FOURTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

NEW YORK,

SABBATH MORNING, NOV. 15, 1863.

BY

REV. ASA D. SMITH, D. D.

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH,

No. 683 BROADWAY.

1863.

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NEW YORK, November 17, 1863.

DEAR PASTOR :

Having listened, with deep interest, to your Farewell Discourse, delivered last Sabbath, and desiring that its record of your pastoral labors with this Church be put in permanent form for distribution among the people, the Session, in behalf of the Church, request you to favor them with a copy of the manuscript, for publication.

WILLIAM A. BOOTH,
JOHN McCHAIN,
LUCIUS HART,
OLIVER R. KINGSBURY,
JOSEPH F. JOY,
STEPHEN CUTTER,
SALEM H. WALES,
WILLIAM T. BOOTH,
EDWARD C. CHAPIN. } *Elders.*

NEW YORK, December 5, 1863.

To the Session of the Fourteenth Street Presbyterian Church,

DEAR BRETHREN :

The Sermon of which you speak was prepared, as you know, under an extraordinary pressure of cares and engagements, connected with the transition to which Providence had called me. Yet, as containing facts of interest to the congregation, and simple utterances of an affection which can never die, I submit it to your disposal.

Yours most truly,

ASA. D. SMITH.

SERMON.

“Give an account of thy stewardship.”—LUKE xvi. 2.

THE parable from which these words are taken, has been one of the vexed places of Scripture, both to ancient and modern commentators. It has had various, discordant, and often, as we judge, erroneous interpretation. Both the variety and the error have resulted, in great part, from the undue magnifying of particulars—the mere back ground of a vivid and impressive picture—and the consequent disparagement of the few great lessons which our Lord designed to teach. For our present purpose, we need not so much as approach the rocks which have so often proved fatal. We are called to no extended and minute explication of the parable. We only fasten, as the clause in hand leads us to do, on certain principal thoughts—thoughts, which if they include not the culminating point or moral of the passage, do at least underlie it, while they are variously and abundantly set forth in all the Word of God. We shall consider, in the first place, the RELATION presented in the text, and in the second place, the RESPONSIBILITY

connected therewith. We shall find both these points, as we proceed, quite relevant to the present occasion. For myself, I could scarce pursue, this morning, any other line of thought. As the fast falling sands of time have been bringing me near to this day, not of gloom but of tender solemnity, ever have these words been ringing in my ears : "Give an account of thy stewardship."

I. The text suggests to us, it has been observed, a RELATION. I need not say, it is a relation of man to his God. What we are and what we owe, in this view, the Scriptures set forth in divers forms. They employ, largely, figurative phraseology, derived sometimes from natural objects, but oftener from our social relationships. No one representation would grasp the complex whole. Now the plastic clay gives its similitude ; now the rod of the smiter ; now the branch drawing life from the vine ; now the flock led by the shepherd. Rising to a higher plane, man is represented as a subject, as a servant, as a pupil, as a son ; nay, in the fullness of his exaltation by grace, as a king and a priest unto God. In the text we have a different figure, derived primarily from domestic life in the days of our Lord, but not unfamiliar to modern times. It is that of stewardship. The steward is one to whom his master's goods are intrusted ; who has the care and disposition of them, in some sense as if they were his own, while yet they are not his own ; while he is bound to

hold and use them as his master's, and with an eye evermore to his pleasure and advantage. A beautiful example of this we have—the first the Bible gives us—in the faithful Eliezer of Damascus.

No figure could better exhibit one of our most important spiritual relations. We are all stewards of God. Whatever we are, whatever we possess, lies within the compass of our trust. We ourselves are not our own ; God has in us the most absolute proprietorship. We are to glorify Him in our bodies and our spirits which are his. Whatever faculties we rejoice in—physical, mental, moral—from the lowest level of sense up to the loftiest range of the reason ; whatever outward possessions are ours—of lands, tenements, securities, hoarded treasures ; whatever influence we possess, flowing out through the various natural and social channels ; whatever opportunities are afforded us, ordinary and extraordinary ; everything which we can grasp and wield, as a means to an end ; though we call them ours, are all really God's, and are just as truly to be used for Him, as the goods in your agent's hands are to be disposed of as you direct, and with supreme regard to your benefit. You may not have acknowledged this relation, you may have studiously ignored it ; but it exists nevertheless—it is one of the fixed facts of the universe. You disregard it at your peril ; nay, in peril of your own best good as well for time as for eternity. There is one point in which the likeness between the earthly and the heavenly stewardship par-

tially fails. "In worldly things," as Trench has well said, "there is not, and there never can be, such absolute identity of interests between a master and a servant, that a servant dealing wholly with reference to his own interests, would at the same time forward in the best manner his lord's. But our interests as servants of a heavenly Lord, that is, our true interests, absolutely coincide in all things with his; so that when we administer the things committed to us for Him, then we lay them out for ourselves, and when for ourselves, for our lasting and eternal gain, then also for Him." A blessed stewardship this—why should it ever seem onerous to us?—in which as we lose we gain, as we give we receive, as we deny and even forget, we immeasurably enrich ourselves!

Life is to all, it has been said, a stewardship; it is so, peculiarly and preëminently, to the Christian. To the goods of nature committed to him, far more valuable spiritual goods have been added. Redeemed from the curse of the law, and adopted into the family of God, he is an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. He has treasures of grace inestimable in possession—not to speak of the greater in reserve; pardon, peace, communion with God and with his people, the privilege of prayer and of praise, the word and the ordinances, with all the manifold opportunities of Christian usefulness. It is a solecism to say that all this, though for himself in part, is for himself alone. It is for others largely, and so for God. If he is in the

vineyard, it is that he may work there. If the light of grace is kindled in him, it is that others may see it, and so honor its Author. If he sings for joy along his upward way, it is that dull ears may be won by the strain. If he has power in prayer, it is not merely that he may draw about himself God's good angels, but that he may prevail to the breaking of the prisoners' chains and the raising of the dead in sin from their graves. Freely he has received, eternity alone will show how largely; and the divinely appointed motto of his life-career is, "freely give." In the closet, in the family, in the church, in the world; in largesses of intercession, of exhortation, of more eloquent example; of gold and silver, which while it perishes may yet save the perishing; he is to be ever giving. So Peter said: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another." God could save souls without us, either directly or by other agents. But it is the plan of his kingdom to make every subject of it his instrument, his almoner, and so his steward. Let us be grateful for a function which the blessed angels might covet.

To reach the highest form of Christian stewardship, however, we must turn to the Gospel Ministry. For so apprehending it, we have specific Scripture warrant. "Who then," said our Lord, with special reference to his ministers, "is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?" "Let a

man so account of us," said Paul to the Corinthians, "as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover," he adds, "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." And again he says to Titus: "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." Preëminently apt, in this relation, is the figure of the text. The Minister of the Gospel is in a high and peculiar sense God's agent. Most weighty is the trust committed to him. Most precious are the blessings, which, in the name of the Master, it is his to dispense. There is scarce room for hyperbole in this regard. Were his every word to drop a pearl upon his pathway, and his every footstep to reveal shining grains of gold; were his breath to infuse health into every breeze, and the glance of his eye to clothe the hills and the valleys with verdure and fruitage; were the robes and the crowns of an earthly royalty at his disposal, could he give to every man a continent as a kingdom; it would be but a poor service compared with that to which, as a "steward of the mysteries of God," his ordination vows set him apart.

II. Such, both in a general and special view, is the relation presented in the text. Pass we next to glance at the RESPONSIBILITY connected with it. "*Give an account of thy stewardship.*" Under God's government, there is responsibility everywhere. As he appoints our course, so he watches it. Something within tells us ever, what the Bible confirms, that there is a reckoning

before us. And the record for it, however heedless we may be, conscience is ever preparing.

“ See, from behind her secret stand,
The sly informer minutes every fault.”

We are all hastening to the dread judgment-day, when every one of us must give account of himself to God. And death shall, in some sense, anticipate that day. As the silver cord is breaking, how terrible to the worldly, how solemn even to the Christian, is the voice, rising above all farewell utterances : “ Give an account of thy stewardship.” May the grace of God prepare us all to hear it. Nay, it comes to us daily, sounding out from eternity, sounding up from the depths of our own souls. It is well to have frequent settlements with ourselves, preparatory to the final settlement. It is well to pause at those landmarks in life’s journey,—which God has appointed, we doubt not, for that very purpose,—and “ talk with our past hours.” It is well to review our stewardship, at the close of the day, the week, the year. A like retrospect is wise and profitable at the terminus, so far as we can mark it, of each of those great stages into which our earthly course is divided ; as of childhood, of youth, of middle-life. And when any special service has been completed, or any important connection has come to a close, no thoughtful soul can help hearing, as if God uttered it to him in particular, the very injunction on which we have deemed it meet to dwell this morning.

I close to-day a Pastorate, my first and only one, which has continued, by the grace of God—taking no note here of a merely formal re-arrangement—more than twenty-nine years. An occurrence of this sort is a rare one in these changeful times, especially in this most changeful city of ours. In the pulpits ecclesiastically connected with this, both in New York and Brooklyn, there remains not a single incumbent whose installation here preceded my own. That of one only, the beloved Pastor of the Madison Square Church, was but a few days later. I refer to this fact of continuance, with thankfulness indeed, but not, I trust, in the way of self-complacency. For if aught of credit is due to any human agency, I would ascribe it to that kindness of my people which has borne with my many infirmities, and that prompt and effective coöperation which has enabled me to bear the burdens and grapple with the difficulties, which, in this surging sea of life, meet every Minister of Christ. You will pardon, I am sure, in the review of a Pastorate so protracted, and in such a field of labor, something of detail; and you will allow me, in an hour so marked by tender memories and associations, to speak with the freedom of a father surrounded by his children. Life can bring me no other such service.

It was on the 12th day of October, 1834, that, in the dew of my youth, fresh from the Theological Seminary, I began my labors in this city. I was called to a church which had been recently organized, chiefly through the

agency of the late lamented Dr. CHARLES HALL, the "Brainerd Church," in the eastern part of the city. That church had its origin in the Great Revival of religion which from 1830 to 1835 blessed our city and our land. It grew, I may add, out of the peculiar type of piety engendered then. For though true religion is ever, in essence, one and the same, it has various forms and manifestations. The period was one of great personal activity on the part of God's people. The spirit of a holy propagandism thrilled their hearts. It gave new life to old believers; young converts caught it—apt as they ever are to be moulded, under God, by the existing Church. It was not enough, Christians felt, to enjoy church privileges themselves; they were moved with compassion for the multitudes perishing around them. Diffusion, and not concentration or monopoly, was the order of the day. Nor was the evangelic impulse limited to itinerant efforts, however wise, to extemporary neighborhood arrangements; it took the higher form of church extension. To a greater degree, perhaps, than at any subsequent period, the local church was held to be not a mere personal convenience, an appendage and an auxiliary of wealth and fashion, but a power for Christ—the chief organic force for the extension of His kingdom. It was held that Christian men and women were here, not simply or mainly for purposes of pleasure or of worldly thrift,—not chiefly for their own religious enjoyment,—but for the conversion of the city. Not that all so felt, but the sentiment had unwonted

currency. It was deemed by many just as fitting that personal and domestic arrangements should be shaped by this great purpose, and that changes of residence, attended even with sacrifice, should be made to achieve it, as that missionaries should arrange for the breaking up of home ties, and for weary voyages to distant barbaric regions. So, while the tract distribution was pushed vigorously forward, and divers improvisations of Christian love were attempted, not a few excellent members of the old strong congregations, left their pleasant places in the beautiful crowded sanctuary, either to strengthen feeble churches where they were needed, or to establish new ones. It were well if there were more of this *spirit*, to say the least, at the present day. Without it, I am sure, the Kingdom of Christ can never be fully established here. Nay, it may be doubted if there can be any adequate substitute for those old methods. Certain it is, that not a few of those who have stood ever since as pillars in the churches, were reared into strength and beauty by the reflex influence of just those processes of evangelism.

The Brainerd Church was organized February 9th, 1834, by the Third Presbytery of New York, with only *sixteen* members. At the outset of the enterprise, several gentlemen, with their families, prominent in the churches to which they had belonged, were induced to connect themselves with it. A majority of them were from the Laight Street Presbyterian Church, then under the pastoral care of the Rev. SAMUEL H. COX, D. D.,

whose white hairs are still among us as a crown of glory. This step of theirs was the result, mainly, of an appeal from Dr. HALL. On the 13th of January, 1833, just after the services of the new congregation were commenced, he wrote me as follows: "On Christmas Day, I sat down and drew up a statement and appeal in behalf of a large section of the city, peculiarly favorable to evangelical effort, and addressed it to four good men, telling them the sacrifices they would have to make in coming to take hold of the work of building up a church there, and then told them *to decline if they dare!* Well, our good people have been praying ever since, and I have strong hope that two of the four will, at a considerable expense of convenience, money, and dear old associations, remove their residences to that section of the city, and bear the burden of the congregation." I have never seen that appeal; I know not that it is in being now; but I have seen its precious fruit, whereof many a golden sheaf has already been gathered into God's garner above.

As the call of the Brainerd Church came to me, in my Senior year at Andover, I had also a call from the old Federal Street Church of Newburyport, beneath whose pulpit the bones of Whitefield repose. I was, for a time, in a strait betwixt two. My decision in favor of the New York pulpit, I attribute largely to the prayers and the personal influence of one of the first Elders of the Brainerd Church, their messenger on the occasion. My first sermon as Pastor elect, on the day

already mentioned, was on that clause in the 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians: "Charity hopeth all things." The specific theme was, "The tendency of love for souls to awaken hope respecting their salvation." I shall be excused, as I pass on, for mentioning the passages preached on at particular junctures. My heart inclines me to do so. Imperfect enough, in review, have my discourses ever seemed to me, but fragrant has always been the memory of the texts. I was ordained by the Third Presbytery of New York, Sabbath evening, November 2d, 1834. The Sermon was by the late Dr. HENRY WHITE, on the passage: "And hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation." The Charge to myself was by the Rev. Dr. COX; the Charge to the people, by the Rev. Dr. JOHN WOODBRIDGE.

Our temporary place of worship, though the best we could secure, was a most incommodious one. It was an upper room, at a noisy corner of Essex and Stanton Street, over a place of low traffic. The Sabbath School children, at first, were seated so near the pulpit, I remember, that their partially suppressed whispers were blent often with the voice of the preacher. But I learned to bear it—nay, almost to love it. Perhaps there was something formative in the fact; for the voices of children, even of the neglected and the outcast, have lingered sweetly on my ears ever since. A lowly sanctuary it was; but I am sure that no sculptured column or vaulted roof, no enamel or tracery of finely arched windows, no long-drawn aisle, or lofty tower, or

spire piercing the skies, would have added to the charm with which, as seen through the vista of departed years, memory invests it.

God blessed us there. His people were refreshed, and as is wont to be the case in such circumstances, were singularly bound together. Said a plain member of the church, now in heaven: "We all went out at one door." Souls were awakened and converted; and so evident and precious were the various tokens of the Spirit's presence, that when, after the lapse of nearly a year, we held our last service there, it was with hearts overflowing with gratitude. I preached then from the text: "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

A convenient and pleasant church edifice had been commenced in Rivington Street, the cost of which, when completed, was about \$28,000; and it was so far advanced on the 27th of September, 1835, that we took possession of the spacious Lecture-Room. It was on our Sacramental Sabbath, and the text that morning was, "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them." The church was dedicated on the 17th of the following January. A recent illness compelled me to forbear preaching myself on that occasion. The first sermon was by the Rev. Dr. EDWIN F. HATFIELD, then my neighbor; whose own pulpit, from which physical

infirmity has obliged him to withdraw, I am, by a touching coincidence, to declare vacant this evening. Allow me to give my reverend brother's text, as it seems, on review, to have been both admonitory and prophetic: "And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her."

That church we occupied, the Lord prospering in all respects our humble endeavors, until Sabbath, May 11, 1851. Our leaving, briefly explained, was on this wise. For some years previous, that northward tendency, inevitable in our city as that of the needle to the pole, had been drawing our members to points considerably above the church. It had been growing more difficult to maintain there a competent working force. A foreign population, besides—various, but predominantly German—had been flowing into the neighborhood, and gradually displacing the native element. It was at length concluded to remove to some point where a new church was needed; and that there might be no loss, but rather a gain to the cause of city evangelization, it was determined to devote our old edifice to the gathering of a German congregation. As we proposed to select a site in the vicinity of Fourteenth Street and Second avenue, the Sixth Street Church, which had at various times meditated the erection of a new edifice for itself, decided at length to unite with us. It was judged best, for divers prudential reasons, to have a new organization. So on the 18th of May, 1851, the "Fourteenth Street Presbyterian Church" was formed,

with a membership numbering two hundred and seventy-four ; of whom one hundred and ninety-five were from the Brainerd Church, seventy-nine from the Sixth Street Church. A considerable portion of the members of the Brainerd Church, unable to remove, united with congregations near them. One neighboring congregation, at least, of history and spirit akin to our own, the Allen Street, received thus, I am happy to remember, a desirable accession of strength. In the old Rivington Street edifice, a German church was soon formed, and there worshipped for years ; the same that now occupies the house relinquished by the Sixth Street Church. In the Rivington Street Church the Gospel is now preached by an excellent Minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Connection.

The corner stone of this edifice was laid, with appropriate services, July 22, 1850. I had fears, at first, that we had gone a little too far up town, for the lots around were mainly vacant ; yet we trusted the population would reach us in due time. We took possession of our Lecture-Room, Sabbath morning, May 18, 1851. My last discourse in the Rivington Street church, was from the text : "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." My first here was on the words : "Always abounding in the work of the Lord." The church was ready for occupancy, and was dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, Sabbath, January 22, 1851. The text of the dedicatory sermon was : "For the palace is not for

man but for the Lord God." The whole cost of the edifice, with all its furniture, at a price for the lots little more than half what they would have since commanded, was not far from \$60,000. There was a moderate debt upon it at first, which was soon extinguished, leaving it, I rejoice to say, as it now stands, without a penny of incumbrance. With the upbuilding around us, our sanctuary was gladdened by a constant incoming; an increase so rapid that, at one time, the Trustees had under serious consideration a plan for the enlargement of our accommodations. The blessing of the Great Head of the Church has been ever upon us; and we are here to-day, after an occupancy of our house for twelve and a-half years, to utter, amid starting tears, the voice of thanksgiving. I could think of no better text for my last discourse in the Lecture-Room, than, "Thine is the glory."

In this series of years, during one of which I was kept from the pulpit by ill health, I have preached to my own people 2,915 times. Sermons delivered abroad, on exchange and otherwise, not including addresses of various kinds, would raise the aggregate much above 3,000. In but one previous year has my home record shown so large a number of discourses as during that preceding the last summer vacation. Of the manner of my stewardship in this regard, it becomes me to speak but briefly. With the deepest sense of my own unworthiness, I may yet say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What

doctrine I have proclaimed, you well know. I have insisted chiefly on the utterly ruined state of man by nature, his alienation from God, and his just exposure to the curse of the law ; on the redemption provided for him in his helplessness—the vicarious atonement of the God-man, and the renewing and sanctifying work of the divine Spirit. I have loved to take my stand beneath the shadow of the Cross, and hold out to perishing men, as written in the blood of the Son of God, the Gospel promise. My doctrinal views have undergone no essential change ; only I think, in the lapse of years, the name of Christ has seemed more and more precious to me, his person and his work more and more central, all-sufficient and glorious. With an increasing confidence and joyfulness, in spite of all cobwebs of metaphysics and all protests of unbelief, have I proclaimed a free salvation. The fullness there is in Christ has more and more revealed itself to me, as meeting all the needs both of saint and sinner. To preach it has been more and more self-rewarding. And were I asked now to sum up my doctrine of salvation, which is the sum of all doctrine, I would say, *Jesus Christ, all and in all—the same yesterday, to-day and forever.* Out of this root, I have sought to educe all good practice, urging upon believers a simple living in and to Christ, a consecration of heart, mind, time, treasure, all, to his service ; especially, a ready diligence and a fervent zeal in seeking the salvation of men. I have preached, as both the word and the ex-

ample of the Good Shepherd bid me, the duty we owe the young—in the family, in the Sabbath School, in the lanes, and streets, and cellars, and garrets of our city. On Gospel grounds I have argued for all good reforms ; for the staying of intemperance, of profaneness, of Sabbath desecration ; for the breaking of every yoke. And when the storm of civil war burst upon our land, I did not hesitate, planting myself on the teachings of the New Testament, to plead the cause of the imperiled Republic.

But I may not enlarge. My imperfect labors, seconded ever by those of my people, have not been unblest. While we have rejoiced habitually in the morning and evening dews, and the gentle showers, God has granted us at times the great rain of his strength. Blessed revivals of religion have marked our history, one of the most precious of which gladdened our last church year. The aggregate of admissions to the communion over which I have watched—not including those who united with us, in the new enterprise, from the Sixth Street Church—is 1,393 ; 627 of them, or an average of over 21 a year, on profession of their faith. Of these about 40 have entered the Gospel ministry, some of whom have labored in the missionary fields of our own land, and others have gone far hence to the Gentiles. During my pastorate in Rivington Street, the aggregate of our pecuniary contributions, including the expenditures on the edifice, was, in round numbers, \$103,000. The annual average since the doors of this

church were opened—not including the cost of the church-edifice—has been something more than \$11,500. I will only add to these details, that there have probably been connected with the various Sabbath Schools under our care, not less, on a moderate estimate, than from ten to fifteen thousand different scholars. To compute the good that has been accomplished through this form of Christian effort—much of it apparent, but more beyond the reach of present observation—were about as impossible as to give statistics of the dew-drops.

The long period of ministerial stewardship at which I have been glancing has been marked by various changes. There has been change in the City. I came to a population of 250,000 ; I leave little less than a million. The up-town region in 1834 was in the neighborhood of Bleeker and Bond Street ; in 1863 it is from Thirtieth to Fiftieth Street. There has been corresponding progress in trade, in manufactures, in art, in finance, in literature, in wealth, in luxury. Would I could be as sure of a progress in goodness. There has been, as I have already hinted, change in the Churches. To speak only of our own denomination, when I came to the city, the earnest, wise, laborious BALDWIN was in the Seventh Church ; the clear-sighted and noble-hearted WHITE in Allen Street ; the amiable and spiritually-minded NORTON in Prince Street ; the fervent DOWNER in the West Church ; the accomplished and eloquent MASON in Bleeker Street. They are all now before the

throne of God. Of the twenty-nine persons who were members of the Brainerd Church at my ordination, *but three* are now enrolled in this. Of the Elders who were with me in the first months of my ministry, but one remains—of the Deacons not one. The children I have baptized have brought their own children to me for baptism. The boy on whose head, I laid, in his first septenary, the hand of pastoral blessing, now sits in the Session. How do such changes admonish us, that we have here no continuing city!

The approach of the hour of parting has been a sore trial to me. A thousand memories, both solemn and tender, have conspired to make it so. I have thought of our dead, who, though not with us, seem still to be of us—of HARLAN PAGE, and BREWSTER, and LEAVITT, and SARGEANT, and COLBY, and DODGE, beloved office-bearers, with others of mature years; of young men and maidens whom we have borne to the grave; of precious lambs, surrendered with many tears, though at the bidding of the Good Shepherd. I have recalled the harmony that has marked our whole history—*not a feud in it all*—no, not one! I have thought of the uniform kindness I have experienced at your hands—both I and all who have pertained to me; kindness which has never flagged; which has cheered me when I was weary, which has watched at my pillow when I was sick; which sent me, a worn invalid, over the great and wide sea, and waited long and patiently for the recuperation of my wasted energies; which has had

patience with all my shortcomings ; which, now that I must leave you, overwhelms me with such manifestations, so delicate, so thoughtful and so generous, as almost break my heart. Yet duty is clear ; so I judge, and you do not question my uprightness in the matter. For your confidence in that regard, I am deeply grateful. And all your love will but constrain me ever to pray, that in the world where the ties of affection are never broken, you may receive God's own free reward of a faithful stewardship.

Though I leave this particular charge, it is with no abatement, you will believe me, of my interest in the Church of Christ. I have somewhere read of a great German scholar, that he was wont to study, with a view, through his window, of the noble Cathedral of his native town. It happened, however, at length, that the extended branches and thickened foliage of an intervening tree, hid from his eyes the magnificent structure. His spirits strangely drooped then ; his ardor in composition flagged ; he could prosecute his once loved work no longer. And it was only as the leafy screen was removed, and the venerable pile revealed itself to him again, that the old inspiration returned, and he could ply his task as aforesaid. So—I may be permitted to say—wherever the Providence of God may place me, it will be only as, from my study window, I can see that spiritual edifice, the Church of the Living God—compared with which every human fabric dwindles into insignificance,—towering in mingled beauty and

sublimity heavenward, that I can prosecute joyfully and hopefully the work committed to me.

What remains now, but that I speak as your Pastor, the "word that makes us linger?" Farewell, then, my dear people. Farewell, yon study, where so many busy, sacred, solemn, anxious, joyful hours have been spent; where I have communed on spiritual things, and knelt at the throne of grace, with not a few now before me—with not a few who have come to me as inquirers for the way of salvation. Farewell, yon Lecture-Room, where I have preached and prayed so often, and have witnessed, with you, such manifestations of God's saving grace. Farewell to this Pulpit, which has been dearer to me than any throne earth could offer. Farewell, ye Elders, with whom I have taken such sweet counsel, and ye Deacons so faithful. Farewell—may I not say it?—to the gray-haired Sexton, so true to his trust; who has been with me through almost my whole Pastorate; who has called me so often to the funeral service, and whose own dead I have aided him to bury out of his sight. Farewell to the Women "that have labored with me in the Gospel"—to the Young Men, who have been such ready helpers—to the Maidens, not less alert in all Christian fidelity. Farewell to the dear Children—the precious, precious lambs, whom I have sought, in some humble way, to bear in my bosom. Farewell to the Young Converts, whom I have welcomed so gladly to the fold. Farewell to those whom I have not been able to win unto Christ—oh, let me win

them now! So far as the Pastoral relation is concerned, farewell to you all—farewell, till we render up together our final account. God grant that we may all be prepared to render it with joy and not with grief, and so be united, to part no more, in the services and the praises of the Church triumphant!

H Y M N,

*Written for the occasion, by a Lady of the Congregation, and
Sung at the close of the Service.*

At Bethany the Saviour wept;
His pitying love He still doth keep,
E'en while He sends the cruel stroke,
Which parts the shepherd from the sheep.

Back roll the years that long have fled,
Filled with the faithful Pastor's care—
Hallowed with memories of the dead;
Fragrant with praises and with prayer.

Great God, before Thy piercing eye,
The past but yesterday appears;
Brief as the shadow of a dream,
Before Thee stand our future years.

Grant us one prayer— When time is o'er,
Room in the heavenly pastures keep,
And there, where partings grieve no more,
Unite the shepherd and the sheep.

APPENDIX.

In giving to the press the manuscript submitted to them by their late Pastor, the Session of the Fourteenth Street Church deem it proper to subjoin the following documents, as historically connected with it.

I.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION.

ADOPTED AT A MEETING HELD TUESDAY EVENING, OCT. 13, 1863.

OUR much esteemed and beloved Pastor, Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D. D., having been unanimously elected to the Presidency of Dartmouth College, and having, after careful and prayerful consideration, decided that duty requires him to accept the appointment, and having requested the Session to concur with him in calling a meeting of the congregation to unite with him in a request to the Presbytery to dissolve his pastoral relations to this church; it was on motion

Resolved, That we recognize with gratitude the good hand of God in giving and continuing so long with us so able, faithful, and devoted a Pastor, under whose ministrations such uninterrupted harmony has prevailed, and so large a number, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, have been added to the Church.

Resolved, That while we recognize the sacredness of the ties that bind an affectionate Pastor and confiding people to each other, especially when these ties have been cemented by many years of mutual confidence and affection, and while we believe that such ties should not be sundered, except for the most urgent reasons, we also recognize our obligations to the Great Head of the Church, to hold ourselves and our Pastor subject to the call of duty.

Resolved, That we shall ever cherish a deep interest in our Pas-

tor, and shall follow him with our prayers, that he may be eminently useful in the new and important sphere to which he has been called.

Resolved, That in concurrence with the request of our Pastor, we unite with him in requesting a meeting of the Presbytery to consider the expediency of dissolving his pastoral relation to this congregation; and that a Committee of Three be appointed to represent this body at the meeting of the Presbytery.

The Committee appointed in accordance with the last Resolution, consisted of MESSRS. WILLIAM A. BOOTH, CHARLES TAYLOR, and ORSON D. MUNN.

II.

ACTION OF THE THIRD PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK

ON THE APPLICATION OF REV. ASA D. SMITH, D. D., FOR A DISSOLUTION OF HIS PASTORAL RELATION TO THE FOURTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION, Nov. 9th, 1863.

THE Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D. D., informed the Presbytery that he had, in due form, been notified of his unanimous election to the Presidency of Dartmouth College; and that the most urgent representations had been made to him, by the Trustees of the College, and other distinguished friends of Education, in relation to the desirableness of his acceptance of the appointment; that, after much consultation, and the most earnest and prayerful consideration, he had been led to the conclusion that the call was of God; and that, therefore, he was constrained to request a dissolution of his pastoral relation to the Fourteenth Street Church and Congregation.

Mr. WILLIAM A. BOOTH appeared and was recognized as a Commissioner from the Church and Congregation, and presented a copy of their proceedings, at a meeting on the 13th ult., duly called; from which it appeared that, with much and painful reluctance, they had united with their Pastor in referring his request to the judgment of the Presbytery.

Whereupon, after the fullest expression of opinion and feeling, it was *Resolved*:

1. That the Presbytery have heard with deep regret the request of Rev. Dr. SMITH, and desire to place on record their high appreciation of his great usefulness in the position that he has so long and honorably held as a Pastor; first, in connection with the Brainerd Church, from its organization in 1834, and then with the Fourteenth Street Church, into which the former Church was resolved in 1851, a period of more than twenty-nine years, during which he has commended himself to the numerous brethren who have been associated with him in the Presbytery, as a ripe scholar, a sound and able theologian, a devout and consistent Christian, an eminently acceptable and successful preacher of the Gospel, a laborious and faithful pastor, a prudent and sagacious counsellor, a true patriot, a lover of good men, and the ardent friend and ready advocate of the cherished enterprises of the Church of Christ for the relief of the oppressed, the elevation of the degraded, the reform of the vicious, the help of the unfortunate, and the advancement of good morals and true religion both at home and abroad.

2. That deeply impressed as they are, with the importance of the pastoral relation, and the great desirableness of its permanency, the Presbytery cannot but regard the position, to which their brother has now been called, as opening before him, in some respects, a much wider field of usefulness than the pastorate of a single congregation; and they judge that he has been wisely guided, in determining to seek a release from his present charge, in order to accept of the appointment, so worthy of him, and so urgently pressed upon him; and the Presbytery, in giving their reluctant consent to his removal, cannot but anticipate for him, should a kind Providence prolong his life and health, as we hope and pray, a Presidential career of honorable and eminent distinction and service.

3. That the Church and Congregation, whom he has so long and faithfully served, and to whose warmest and best affections he has so commended himself, have acted a truly noble part, in yielding so uncomplainingly to the convictions of their Pastor, and consenting to part with him for the greater good of the Redeemer's cause; and are entitled to the warmest sympathy of the Presbytery, which is most fully accorded to them, with the most fervent prayer and the hope that the Great Head of the Church will ere long, for his Great Name's sake, bestow upon them, a pas-

tor after his own heart, who will esteem it both a duty and a privilege to walk in the footsteps of his honored predecessor, and prove to them and theirs a rich and lasting blessing.

4. That, in accordance with these views, the request of Rev. ASA D. SMITH, D. D., be granted, and his pastoral relation to the Fourteenth Street Church and Congregation be dissolved from and after the 15th inst.

Rev. Drs. E. F. HATFIELD and S. D. BURCHARD were appointed to preach and declare the pulpit vacant.

III.

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE CENTRAL SABBATH SCHOOL
OF THE FOURTEENTH STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, AT ITS MORNING
SESSION, NEW YORK, NOV. 15TH, 1863.

WHEREAS, In the providence of God, our beloved Pastor is about to remove from this Church to another field of labor, therefore,

Resolved, 1, That we, as a Sabbath School, desire to unite with the Church in expressing our heartfelt sorrow, in view of that Providence which directs the separation, while, at the same time, we would bow with humble resignation to its will.

Resolved, 2, That our most hearty thanks are due to the blessed Saviour, for continuing our dear Pastor so long in this Church, for his watchful and tender care over the lambs of the flock, for his unwearied efforts to bring them into the fold of the Great Shepherd, and for all the success with which that Great and Good Shepherd has crowned those efforts.

Resolved, 3, That the ties of affection which bind us to him and to his dear family, cannot be impaired by the lapse of time, nor by the distance of separation, but will remain strong and enduring when all earthly relations shall have been severed.

Resolved, 4, That we will not forget to pray to our Heavenly Father, that, in their new home, His blessing may continue to rest upon them.

CHARLES FANNING,

Superintendent.