

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF

WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.

FEBRUARY 3RD, 1884.

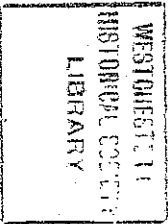
UPON THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS PASTORATE
OF THE CHURCH

BY

REV. EDGAR L. HEERMANCE.

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I COR., XIII., 13: AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, LOVE—
THESE THREE; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

TEN years' experience as pastor of this Church has helped me realize the truth of the text. How, will best be shown after a review of my pastorate, and to this I proceed, prefacing it with a brief *resumé* of the history of the Church.

My first service in this pulpit was on the last Sabbath of 1873. Although old, the Church as then seen was small and weak. It had had a strange history, and brought little beside a history from out its checked past.

It was nearly a century and a half old, the day I note. In 1660, English settlers from Greenwich, Conn., came to what we know as Rye. In 1683, they purchased from the Indians a tract of ground called *Quarropas*, or, as they named it, "The White Plains." The title they acquired was disputed, on grounds of previous purchase, by Mr. John Richbell, of Mamaroneck, whose claim to ownership by purchase from the Indians in 1660, had been confirmed by the Dutch authorities of New Netherland in 1662, and by the English Government of New York in 1668. Upon Mr. Richbell's death near the end of the century, his property in this section came into the possession of the Hon. Caleb Heathcote, well known as the Manor Lord of Scarsdale. Mr. Heathcote seems to have been disposed to treat the Rye claimants to the White Plains fairly, and arrangements were in progress to settle the question of their ownership at the time of his death in 1706, and his heirs appear to have surrendered all

claim to said lands. But the dispute operated to prevent a settlement of the Plains until about 1720.

In 1721, certain persons living in what we call White Plains, obtained for themselves and their associates a grant from the British Government of 4,435 acres, and divided the land. An old map shows the manner of division. Among the owners we find the well known town names of Underhill, Hatfield, Horton and Brown.

"The Settlement of the White Plains," says Dr. Baird, in his history of Rye, "drew largely on the strength of the settlement at Rye. Several of its most enterprising inhabitants removed thither about this time. Some branches of nearly all the ancient families established themselves there, and indeed these families are now (when he wrote in 1870) represented there more numerously than in the parent settlement."

Thus, for some years, commencing about 1720, White Plains and Rye had much in common. The people of the two places often met by way of an Indian path on the line of what we call North street. Such community of life especially appeared in Church affairs. The settlers of Rye, some of whom came, as noted, to White Plains, were English Puritans, whose doctrine was Calvinistic, and whose Church system was largely Presbyterian. In Connecticut, a first care of such settlers had been to provide each town with a church. In 1669, nine years after the settlement of Rye, the General Court of Connecticut was informed that the people there "are yet destitute of an Orthodox minister," and that "they do not take due care to procure such a one as might carry on the work of the Lord on the Sabbath." Efforts to supply the deficiency were made, with the result of occasional services in Rye until 1677, when the Rev. Thomas Denham was settled as pastor. He and his successors ministered to the Church of Rye until about 1704. Then occurred a gross act of ecclesiastical robbery, by

which the property of the Presbyterian body there established was seized by the Episcopal Church. Fletcher, when Governor of New York, had prepared the way. His aim was "to make the Church of England the established Church of the land." He endeavored to carry his point by vote of the Provincial Assembly, and when the Assembly refused to favor his plan, he claimed authority to execute it without their warrant. In due time, this usurped authority was exercised.

In Rye, *e. g.*, in 1704, Governor Cornbury, acting upon Fletcher's theory, ordered all the ecclesiastical property of the town to be passed over to a rector appointed to establish an Episcopal Church, and so the people were deprived of the land they had set apart for religious use and of the building they had built thereon. To-day the Episcopal Church of Rye has benefit from property thus obtained.

In 1720, about the time our town was settled by families from Rye, the Presbyterian Church there was re-established under the pastoral charge of the Rev. Stephen Buckingham, which re-establishment was thus described by an Episcopal minister writing to the Gospel Propagation Society of the Church of England, who says: "The want of a missionary (a missionary of the Society) so long at Rye has introduced (I suppose he meant induced, but he wrote "introduced") has introduced a dissenter to build his nest there." The dissenter in question, Rev. Mr. Buckingham, remained in Rye two years, and brought together the Presbyterian congregation. Doubtless he ministered to the White Plains settlers, as well as to those in Rye. The Rev. John Walton, graduated at Yale in 1720, was called to Rye in 1723. The Episcopal rector wrote of him, "This Walton, being a bold, noisy fellow, of a voluble (voluble) tongue, drew the greatest part of the town after him." During Mr. Walton's pastorate, the predecessor, once removed,

of this Church building, was erected. In 1727, a "Humble Memorial of ye Presbyterians of Ry and the White Plains, to the Honourable Governor and Council Assembled at Hartford (Conn.), May 11th, A. D., 1727," says, that they have built "a suitable Meeting House at ye White Plains and have covered the same so that we have once met in it," and asks that they be helped to build another Church "down in Ry Town (wch is six miles distant from ye White Plains)."

This application to the Connecticut Assembly failed, but the Trustees of Yale College advised its renewal the next year, saying "we shall be on the spot at the time, and you may expect our countenance in that affair; in what may be agreeable to dissenting principles." Thus encouraged, the petition was renewed in 1728, and by the potent influence of Yale as a lobbyist, the aid asked was obtained, and so there came to be "a suitable Meeting House" for the Presbyterians in "Ry Town," as there already was one in "ye White Plains." Mr. Walton was succeeded as minister of the Rye and White Plains Churches in 1728 by the Rev. Edmund Ward, another graduate of Yale. Of this change the Episcopal rector wrote, "The haughty, insolent behaviour of Walton drew upon him the displeasure of the dissenting leaders (he refers to the Association of Fairfield County, Conn.), on which account he removed from the parish a few days ago, but introduced a young man to be his successor, who holds forth one Sunday at White Plains, and another in the Town of Rye, alternately, for which they give him £50 per annum, which they raise by subscription. They have besides given him money to purchase a house and land, but how much I can't tell." Among the signatures to Mr. Ward's call I find Samuel Horton, Joseph Purdy, Henry Dushinbery, of White Plains, Monmouth Hart, of Rye Neck, and William Anderson, of Harrison. Mr. Ward left his

joint charge in 1729, and had no settled successor until 1742. The Church of England missionary in Rye writes in July, 1729, "The dissenters have no teacher among them. Many of them come to Church and bring their children to be baptized, but I cannot depend upon their being so reconciled but that they will leave the Church again, if one Independent teacher comes to town." In 1731, he writes, "My endeavors have been so far blessed with success that the Independents can get no teacher among them," but he complains that the Connecticut ministers hold occasional services in the Rye and White Plains Churches.

Now came "The Great Awakening," or revival of 1740. Whitefield, Tennant, Dickinson and others were the agents of the conversion of thousands in the colonies, and of a great renewal of interest in their Churches. Such awakening pervaded all this section, and led to the installment of Rev. John Smith as pastor at Rye and the White Plains. Mr. Smith, whose tablet is on yonder wall, and whose tomb-stone is immediately behind this church, was a remarkable man, born in England in 1702, graduated at Yale in 1727, and pastor of this and the Rye Churches, from 1742 to 1771. He was an intimate friend of Jonathan Edwards, had for his wife a great grand-daughter of the famous Thomas Hooker, of Hartford, and very plainly was a man to exert helpful influence upon Churches under his care. At first, during his two-fold pastorate, he resided in Rye, but afterwards in a house still standing on the edge of our village, a little to the north-east of where the North street road leaves Westchester Avenue. While pastor of the Rye and White Plains Churches, Mr. Smith also occasionally preached in Sing Sing. In 1768, he asked for a colleague, and on the 11th of October, 1768, the Presbytery of Dutchess county met here, and ordained Mr. Ichabod Lewis to said office. Mr. Smith died in February, 1771, and was buried behind the White Plains church, in which

he so long had preached. When the present church was built, it was extended over his grave, and his tombstone was placed outside the rear wall, and the tablet yonder was placed on the inside of this wall north of the pulpit. The tablet was put in its present place when the church was repaired in 1873. The tombstone is well worth inspection for its quaint shape and curious inscription. The latter ends this way:

“By Faith He Lived, In Faith He Died and Faith
 “Forsees a Rising Day, When Jesus Comes, While
 “Hope Assumes and Boasts His Joy Among the
 “Tombs, O Death, O Grave, Where is thy Victory?
 “Thanks be to God which Giveth us the
 “Victory Through our Lord Jesus Christ”

As far as appears, Rev. Ichabod Lewis, made colleague of Dr. Smith in 1768, continued to serve this Church until the war of the Revolution. A week after the battle of White Plains, the 28th of October, 1776, *i. e.*, on the 4th of November, in the night, the Church building here was burned, having been set on fire, with the court house and other buildings, by parties coming out from the army under Washington, which had retreated into “The Hills” the night after the battle. During the disturbed period of the war, on this neutral ground, so harried by Cow-boys and Skinners, it was hardly to be expected that an attempt would be made to replace the burned church. But after the war it should have been done, and doubtless could have been had there been a right leadership of the people. None such appeared for nearly half a century after the church was burned. In the meantime the Methodists were commendably active, and in 1795 built what is called the Old Methodist Church. This was the only Church edifice in White Plains until 1825. Occasionally the Presbyterians, who still owned the land where the burned Church had been, had services in the rebuilt court house, which stood

where Mr. Fiero's house now stands, but they had no Church building, and no organized life. Very naturally, not a few of the families who formerly belonged to them identified themselves with the only regularly established Church of the town, the Methodist. This explains why, among the old settled families of the town, so few are Presbyterians to-day. Before the Revolutionary war the most of them were connected with the Church then existing on this spot, but while for nearly fifty years there was no Church here, they took the very proper step of connecting themselves with the only Church regularly open for their attendance.

In 1820, the Rev. Thomas G. Smith, a Reformed Dutch pastor at Parrytown, was engaged to preach to the Presbyterians of White Plains, every second or third Sabbath. He so preached in the court house until 1823. Others followed him in the conduct of like services until April 25, 1824, when the Church was formally reorganized with a membership of six persons, Isaac Hunt, David and Sarah Palmer, Samuel Dixon, Mary, wife of Monmouth Hart, and Eliza, wife of Cyrus Mead.

Soon after this a new church was built, of wood, on the site of the one burned in 1776, which is very nearly the spot occupied by the edifice in which we meet to-day. This wooden church took fire while being used the first Sabbath in November, 1854, and was destroyed. Steps were immediately taken to erect the present Church building, and it was dedicated to the service of God, Thursday, August 28, 1856. In the summer of 1873, it was renovated and refurnished, and made to be essentially as we now see.

In the fifty years between the reorganization of the churches in 1824, and my settlement as pastor in 1874, it had seven pastors or stated supplies. The longest term of such service was that of Rev. David Teese. Before him the list of pastors is as follows: Samuel

Robertson, April, 1824, to October, 1825; Chester Long, October, 1825, to October, 1833; Edward Wright, November, 1835, to January, 1844; Elias S. Schenck, July, 1844, to April, 1849; Bronson B. Beardsley, January to July, 1850; Joseph Forsyth, July, 1850, to July, 1853. Although the Church gladly would have installed Mr. Teese pastor, he was unwilling, and served it as stated supply from July 17, 1853, until July 7, 1864, a period of eleven years, less ten days. Mr. Teese then resigned his charge of the Church, but was requested to reconsider his decision, and was re-appointed stated supply and granted a leave of absence. He returned to service in the Church the first Sabbath of August, 1865, and continued to serve it until the fall of 1869. This made the period embraced by Mr. Teese's practical pastorate to be over sixteen years, or, deducting his absence in '64 and '65, over fifteen years. With a single exception, the time of Mr. Teese's ministry was one of growth and general prosperity for the Church. The culmination of this was in 1863. Then the membership of the Church came to be above 100, and the Church was freed from debt. I find in the session book, under date of July 19, 1863, the following entry, "The session record with much satisfaction the announcement of the Trustees of this Church by their Treasurer, S. G. Bogert, Esq., of the payment in full of the Church debt, the credit of which is mainly due to the liberality of the Board of Trustees, and the zeal and energy of their Treasurer. The amount paid was \$3,086 91."

Some now present doubtless remember the joy felt at the announcement in July, 1863, that the debt remaining from when the new church was built in 1856 had been paid.

But the joy thus moved, was soon disturbed. Difference arose between Mr. Teese and prominent members of the congregation on the one side, and leading members of the Church on the other side, respecting

the civil war then raging in the land. Those opposed to Mr. Teese charged that he was not sufficiently in sympathy with the Federal Government in its struggle against the Secession of the Southern States. There is no occasion for me to express an opinion to-day about the right or wrong of the difference named. It is enough now to note its sad result, viz., a separation from the Church of some of its most active members and most influential families; so large a separation of such that the strength of the Church was greatly impaired.

Most of those who left the Church as just noted, united with others to establish a Reformed Church. This body built what is now the Baptist Church building, but ceased to exist in 1872. Some of the persons and families who had gone from this Church to said Reformed Church returned to this body upon the dissolution named, but others have been permanently lost from this congregation.

Rev. T. C. Steele became pastor of the Church June 20, 1871, and so served until November, 1873, when he requested to be relieved from his pastoral charge because of ill health, and the request was granted by Presbytery.

Soon after the pulpit was declared vacant, the 30th of November, 1873, Elder O. R. Willis, in behalf of the Church, invited me to preach to the congregation. I knew nothing of White Plains, or of the Presbyterian Church there established, and was not sorry that a previous engagement gave me warrant to decline to come as invited. Dr. Willis then sent a second invitation, and it was arranged that I should occupy the pulpit the last Sabbath of the year, the 25th of December, 1873. Pursuant to this arrangement, I came to White Plains from New York the preceding evening. I well remember how, in the darkness, as I rode from the depot to the house of Dr. Willis, I tried to determine which of the churches passed was the

Presbyterian, and what it was like. The tedious ride in a poorly lighted car of a Harlem way train, as such trains then were, and in a shabby White Plains hack, had made me ready for the warmth and cheer of Dr. Willis's parlor, and the kind cordiality of my reception by himself and family.

Upon coming to the church the next day I was pleasantly impressed with its interior, then fresh and new after its just completed renovation. The attendance at the two services of the day was small, but the attention was good, and I had freedom in conducting them. The result of that day's experience was, that although I had a call to a Church in New York before me, another from a Church on Long Island only waiting my encouragement to come, and a third one from a Connecticut Church very likely to be tendered—the result, I say, of my first Sabbath's experience here was such, that despite the inducements named to let this first Sabbath in White Plains be the last, I accepted an invitation to occupy the pulpit the following Sabbath. I then was the guest of Mrs. Harriet Tompkins, with whom at that time boarded Mr. Henry P. Stewart, a trustee of the Church, and well acquainted with it, Dr. Willis wisely arranging to give me opportunity to see White Plains and learn of the Church from a point of view other than that of the preceding Sunday. I also came for a third Sabbath, and was the guest of Mrs. Charles Halsey Mitchell. These three Sabbaths in White Plains, with their opportunity of looking at the field from different standpoints, and to learn about the Church from different persons, made me ready to encourage the movement to call me to be its pastor. The call was made at a meeting of the Church and congregation January 19, 1874, the Rev. Ezra F. Mundy, of Port Chester being the moderator of the meeting. Said call was approved by Presbytery the next day, and in acceptance of it I began to serve the Church regularly the first Sabbath of Feb-

February, which was also the first day of the month, ten years ago.

Ten years ago! We say it in a moment, often without any movement of feeling, and yet what a stretch of time, and what experiences are covered when we say, "Ten years ago!"

The Church as then seen was feeble, but with plain promise of possible growth. My report to friends about it was, "Actualities small, possibilities large," and the ten years between then and now have only confirmed that first opinion. Soon after my pastorate began, I asked for a list of the Church members. A list of 52 persons was given me. Some of these I found had left the Church to return no more. In the course of time I found members of the Church whose names were not on the list in question. Adding to and subtracting from said list, as the facts demanded, the number of actual members in the Church ten years ago was 57. Since then 167 new members have been received, 66 upon confession of faith in Christ and 91 by letter. During this time 47 members of the Church have died or been dismissed to other Churches. The full statement then as to membership in the Church for the last ten years is, at their commencement 57 members, received during their progress 167, total of members ministered to during my pastorate 214, died or dismissed during this period 47, number now upon the Church record 167, of which number five have so left the town that we know not where they are, and should be deducted from the list of members known about, leaving the number of these 162.

Ten years ago the Sabbath School roll numbered less than 30, and the modus operandi of the school was not efficient. To-day the list of teachers and scholars is 112, and the method and tone of the school make it to be second to none in White Plains as a place pleasant and profitable to those attending it.

When asked to take charge of the Church, I was

told that its debt amounted to about \$3,000, and that it would be paid as soon as the congregation became consolidated under a pastor. The debt proved to be more than double the amount given me, and has been allowed to remain beyond what was promised, but has finally been removed, *i. e.*, the money for the last \$1,000 of it has been subscribed.

Early in the period we consider, the Board of Church Trustees was reorganized, and a more business like way of managing the secular affairs of the Church was instituted, and in this very important part of the Church's life February of 1884 shows great advance upon February of 1874.

I think, also, that the Church has gained as to its spiritual administration. In July of 1875, after careful consideration, I put before the session the question of changing the eldership from the permanent to what is called the rotary form. The session voted to submit the matter to the Church, and on the first Sunday of August, 1875, with only one opposing vote the Church decided so to change. In view of action by the Presbytery, we thought that the change voted only applied to new members of the session, and B. F. Butler and Wm. Partison were elected to be elders for three years with the five elders already in office, who were supposed to be elders for life. The next General Assembly decided that such combination of permanent and rotary elders was not allowable, and in the Summer of 1876, the Church again voted upon the matter, and decided that all its elders should be elected for periods of three years. Since then, *i. e.*, for seven and one-half years, the Church has tried this new method of ordering its spiritual government, and I am convinced that you have already gained by the change, and that in it is the possibility of yet greater infusion of vigor into the administration of your spiritual affairs.

The Church has unmistakably gained as to expres-

sion of its spiritual affections these last ten years. Our Friday evening meetings are very different in numbers present, and religious interest shown in prayer and address from what they used to be.

Our Sabbath services, too, I think, are more expressive of and conducive to Godliness than formerly. We have greatly gained in getting rid of a paid choir, and in having our service of praise led by those who may be thought to be taking part therein more from love to God than from desire for gold. The change in the position of the organ and choir has helped that these should not so much perform sacred music for the titillation of your ears, as to lead heavenward the honoring emotions of your hearts.

Beside the change in the music part, we have moved forward not a little towards making our Sunday services times of positive personal engagement with God. After the invocation prayer, each Sabbath morning, I repeat the Lord's Prayer, and some of you with me thus lift up the voice to the All-Father, and I hope that more of you will embrace this privilege. Soon I put before you what God says should be done or not done in the conduct of daily life, and the choir represent you in asking that God will help you keep His law. Then we join in reading sections of Scripture, not a formal lesson for a set day of the month, without regard to its being appropriate to the day or not, but a passage chosen with reference to the time when used, and helpful to order of thought and temper of heart then and there to be desired in the Lord's house on the Lord's day.

Compare our Sabbath service now with what it was ten years ago, and I think you will see that it is much more what such a service should be, viz., a means to the expression of pious affections to God, and at the same time an agent to kindle and strengthen such affections.

In the Missionary Society of the Sunday School,

in the Ladies' Aid Society when working for the poor, in the Ladies' Missionary Society regularly sending support to workers in the field which is the world—in these, not as fully as may be desired, but yet actually, is to be found evidence that the Church and congregation is becoming intised with the spirit of Him who counted it all joy to spend and be spent working His Father's will doing good to men.

"Ten years ago," and now! Yes, there is change, advancement, not all that might have been, but enough to make us glad to-day.

And how has this advancement been gained, this change effected?

Faith, Hope, Love, these, on the human side of it, have done the work which makes us glad.

By Faith, I mean, the soul state which actualizes the unseen things of God, and enables one to plan, and labor, and endure as seeing God.

By Hope, I mean, the phase of Faith which expects to succeed when doing God's work, and in due time to get satisfying results therefrom.

By Love, I mean, the temper and habit of soul which binds one to God as being the highest and best of all with whom we have to do, and so truly makes one to be God's child, that the one so moved naturally, irresistibly, has interest in, regard for, disposition to help, all for whom God cares.

Such Faith, Hope, Love, on the human side of it, have effected whatever of improvement, advancement the years we study show.

They have prompted, sustained, guided, the so useful labor in the choir and Sabbath School of him who for the most of these years has practiced and led the choir, and been Superintendent of the Sabbath School*, and they are to be credited that our organism, seeing the need thereof, qualified herself to play our

* Wm. A. Woodworth, Esq. † Miss Lanthe Willis.

organ, and year after year so faithfully without salary has served the Church.

And so far as good work has been done in Friday evening meetings, and with Sabbath School classes, and by those who have helped Mr. Woodworth to make our service of song uplifting and quickening, and by those who engaged in our missionary societies, and in care for the poor—so far, as in these parts the work of the Lord has prospered in our hands these last ten years, it has been the union of life with God, which is Faith; and the expectation of good from Him, which is Hope; and the desire to please Him in moving efforts to benefit men, which is Love—these three, it is, which have done the work. And these have moved the effort, year after year, to make sweet the house of God with plants and flowers whose beauty and purity have not a little, I am confident, helped those worshipping here to see the King in His beauty, and to offer Him praise sweeter than rose of Sharon, or lily of Judaea.

And when our ladies began to do the work the men thought could not be done of paying the bonded debt of the Church, what then but the piety which is the outcome of Faith, Hope and Love, led Julia Harvie to bring, without being asked, \$400 saved from her wages at domestic service, towards payment of the debt? And what but like engagement of soul with heavenly things led two other members of the Church to increase this sum to over \$1,000, that one of the notes held against the Church, principal and interest, might be paid? Surely, surely, without a Faith which makes God movingly real to souls, and a Hope which leads to laying up treasure where moth and rust do not corrupt, and a love which delights more in giving at God's call than in keeping for self use—surely, surely, without these, the gifts named, and the other gifts of effort and of money which have rid the Church of debt, would not have been.

Yes, in the Church and congregation Faith, Hope and Love have been present, moving to do the things whereof we are glad to-day.

And somewhat they have helped me these ten years. Without them, I could not have done and endured as these years have made occasion. I have done some hard work, friends, these years, endured some hard things. Never once have I failed in person, or by proper representative, to be at my post here as you expected. Sometimes, some of you, without providential warrant, have failed to meet me here that together we might honor God; and it has often been a great burden upon my soul that for slight reasons, or no reasons at all, some even of the members of the Church have absented themselves from the services which they in their way were as much obliged to attend as I was in mine.

In preparation to meet you here, I have studied not a little, and this sometimes when weakness of the flesh has made the work very hard. I have, as a rule, called as pastor at your houses twice each year, and where sickness, or affliction, or special religious interest made occasion, many times beside.

Some of you have always cheered and helped me by evidence of kind personal regard, and due appreciation of my sacred relation to you. Others may have had like feelings, but they have not taken the pains to let it appear, and this always tries a pastor's heart. While certain ones among you have shown devotion to this Church of Christ, and to his cause elsewhere, which was most encouraging response to my efforts to lead you the Christward way of life, others have not thus encouraged me. When, at annual collections for such great departments of Christian endeavor as Home and Foreign Missions, the whole Church and congregation would give less than \$50, I have been sorely pained, and made to be greatly ashamed.

Some of you have denied yourselves to help pay the current expenses of the Church and to rid it of old debts. Others have been satisfied to simply pay pew rent, and have sometimes done this as though it were an act of benevolence, when it was simply an act of business, like as when one pays the rent of a house erected and furnished and kept in order for his use. Some, I am told, have not even paid pew rent, although appearing to be able to do their part towards the maintenance of this Sunday home for themselves and families. For the last seven years and more, I have found occasion to relinquish from my salary from five to seven hundred dollars each year to keep the Church from running into debt, and have done this, not from surplus income, but from funds needed to support the pastor of this Church. It has been hard, friends, to impair my family's property and to use the kindness of relatives to pay the cost of giving you your Church privileges. When you have shown willingness to deny yourselves for the Church's good, you have helped me bear this burden. How do you think it has been when you have not shown readiness to deny yourselves for the Church's sake? When, *e. g.*, some, years ago, gave from surplus income towards the Church debt, and this year appeared to think it strange to be again asked likewise to give, how do you suppose this affected me for over seven years, giving as has been named to keep the Church from running into debt? I have the ordinary amount of human nature, and human nature is tried by what I note.

Yes, as Faith, Hope and Love have helped some of you these last ten years to do and endure as to-day makes us glad, so I think they must have helped me, and for this evidence that God's grace has been with me, I give Him thanks.

One thing especially makes me confident that very imperfectly but yet really Faith, Hope and Love have made me live with and unto God while your pastor.

This is, that I have never, as the chief thing to do, tried to please you. Very imperfectly, but yet really, the question with me has been, not what you wanted me to do, but what God wanted me to do? I have not been indifferent to you. I have attended to you a great deal, have tried diligently to learn what you were thinking, how you were feeling. But it was not that I might trim my sails to catch the breeze of your favor. It was that I might learn what you needed for confirmation in things right, and conversion from things wrong. I have put what I saw in you and learned about you by the side of God's revealed word, and of His revelation in nature and history, and have asked Him what I had better do in the case. So sometimes I have been led to speak pleasant things to you, and at other times things which I knew you would not be pleased to hear. To please you was pleasant, to displease you was trying; but neither such pleasure nor such pain should be the main object of the pastor's concern, but God's will in the case, which surely is that he who ministers in Christ's name should minister in the spirit of Christ, which, however tender towards weakness, was as a consuming fire towards depravity. Doubtless I have often made mistakes in my preaching, both in matter and manner; but it has been fully as much from want of Christian earnestness against what ought not to be, as from the excess in such earnestness which some of you have charged. Weak as I have been, friends, in my devotion to you, I think my love has been strong enough to enable me to forego your passing favor for the sake of your lasting good, and that, on the manward side, is the love our text magnifies, the love, *viz.*, which moves to secure to others what in wisdom we would seek for self.

"And now abide the Faith, Hope, Love—these three; but the greatest of these is Love."

The years go. Those with whom we begin them, one after another drop on the way, and as to them we must go on alone. Fortunes often vanish. Health and strength cannot but fail. Ten years from now will show great changes in this congregation, even as have the last ten years. But amid changes to come as in changes gone, God cannot change. And the Faith which actualizes God to us as chiefest of all with whom we have to do, the Hope which joins us to Him in glad expectation, the Love which with pleasurable constraint compels us to do His will, seeking to do others good—these never fail in power to satisfy our souls, to uplift and glorify our lives. Last year, and this year, and next year, and on, and on, forever, the soul thus moved has God, in the infinite fullness of His power to satisfy, for portion and for joy.

God be thanked for what we have learned of this in years gone by. God help us to learn more about it while longer together as pastor and people in the communion of this earthly Church, and then in the communion of those who see God face to face, and are made perfect in the blessedness of which Faith, Hope and Love give foretaste here, and bring completion there.