

this hour seem to require so personal a discourse this morning; but I must hide behind the example of the great Apostle who gave me my text. Because he reviewed his ministry among his spiritual children of Thessalonica, I may be allowed to review my own, too, standing here this morning under such peculiar circumstances. These thirty years have been to me years of unbounded joy. Sorrows I have had, when death paid four visits to my house; but the sorrow taught sympathy with the grief of others. Sins I have committed—too many of them; your patient love has never cast a stone. The faults of my ministry have been my own. The successes of my ministry have been largely due, under God, to your co-operation, and above all, to the amazing goodness of our Heavenly Father. Looking my long pastorate squarely in the face, I think I can honestly say that I have been no man's man. I have never courted the rich, nor willfully neglected the poor. I have never blunted the sword of the Spirit, lest it should cut your consciences, or concealed a truth that it might save a soul.

In no large church is there a perfect community of tastes as to preaching. I do not doubt that there are some of you that are quite ready for the experiment of a new face in this pulpit, and perhaps there may be some who are lusting after the fat quail of elaborate or philosophic discourse; for during thirty years I have tried to feed you on nothing but manna. Whatever the difference of taste, you have always stood by me true as steel. This has been your spiritual home, and you have drunk every Sunday from your own well, and though the water of life has not always been passed up to you in a richly embossed silver cup, it was drawn up, the undiluted Gospel from the inspired fountain head. To hear the truth, heed the truth, to "back" the truth with prayer and toil, has been the delight of the staunchest members of this church.

O the children of this church are inexpressibly dear to me! There are hundreds here to day that never had any other home, nor ever knew any other pastor. I think I can say that "every baptism has baptised us into closer fellowship, every marriage has married us into closer union, every funeral that bore away your beloved dead, only bound us more strongly to the living." Every invitation from another church—and I have had some very attractive ones that I never told you about—every invitation from another church has always been promptly declined, for I long ago determined never to be pastor of any other than Lafayette-avenue Church. What is my joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye—ye—in the presence of Christ

at His coming? Why then under a tie that is bound to every fibre of my inmost heart? I will tell you. I will answer you frankly. There must be no concealments or false pretences between us. In the first place, as I told you two months ago, I have determined to make my thirtieth anniversary the terminal point of my present pastorate. I determined not to outstay my fullest capacity for the enormous work demanded here. The extent of that demanded work increases every twelvemonth. The requirements of preaching twice every Sunday, to visit the vast number of families directly connected with this church, attending funeral services, conferring with committees about Christian work of various kinds, and numberless other duties—all these requirements are prodigious. Thus far, by the divine help, I have carried that load. My health to-day is as firm as usual, and I thank God that forces of heart and brain as He has given to me, are unabated. The chronic catarrh that long ago muffled my ears to many a strain of sweet music, has never made me too deaf to hear the sweet accents of your love. But I understand my constitution well enough, to know that I could not carry the undivided load of this great church a great while longer, without the risk of breaking down; and there must be no risk run with you or with myself. I also desire to assist you in transferring this magnificent vessel to the next pilot whom God shall appoint, and I wish to transfer it while it is well-manned, well-equipped, and on the clear sea of an unbroken financial and spiritual prosperity. No man shall ever say that I so far presumed on the generous kindness of this dear church, as to linger here until I had outlived my usefulness.

For these reasons I present to-day my resignation of this sacred, precious charge. It is my honest desire and purpose that this day must terminate my present pastorate. For presenting this resignation I alone am responsible before God, before this church and before the world. When you shall have accepted my resignation the whole responsibility for the welfare of this beloved church will rest on your shoulders—not on mine. My earnest prayer is that you may soon be directed to the right man to be your minister, to one who shall unite all hearts and all hands and carry forward the high and holy mission to which God has called you. He will find in me not a jealous critic, but a hearty ally in everything that he may regard for the welfare of this church. As for myself, I do not purpose to sit down on the veranda and watch the sun of life wheel downward in the West. The labors of the pen and of a ministry at large will afford me no lack of em-