

PASTORAL LETTER.

My Dear Friends :—

We have every reason to look back with gratitude upon our congregational history throughout the past year. During my long absence from you, it gladdened my heart, and I believe, helped forward my recovery, to learn from time to time of your faithful attendance upon the public services of the church and your zeal for its interests. I feel a great indebtedness to the brethren who came to our aid, and rendered such efficient service in the pulpit and in pastoral work ; and I rejoice to know that, apart from the unusual burden of expense imposed upon you by my domestic afflictions, no substantial injury was otherwise sustained. Your most cordial welcome on my return, completed the acts of kind remembrance which I shall always associate with that period. And though the past year was one of much trial to me, I believe it will be instrumental in binding us still closer together, as pastor and people, in the bonds of christian sympathy.

Each year, while it brings new faces around us, takes away some with whom we have long held sweet fellowship, and some, too, who were just beginning lives of christian promise. What the near future has in store for those who remain, God alone can tell. We shall best cherish the memory of those who are gone before, by earnest service in the Master's vineyard while it is called day.

Since I resumed my duties, I have been much encouraged by the regular presence of most of you at the Sunday services. There are some, perhaps, who might be with us twice who are there but once ; and I ask you to guard against the growing tendency of our time to secularize the evening hours of the Lord's Day. While it is a great pleasure to all of us to welcome the large number of strangers who join our worship, it is to the members of the congregation that I look chiefly for that constant attendance and personal sympathy which are such great aids to effective preaching. As it is my main business to try to instruct those who come to church, I invite your assistance in bringing to the house of God, any who from indifference or carelessness or other cause, needlessly absent themselves from it. There is no reason why

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