

Pastoral Letter

TO THE MEMBERS AND ADHERENTS OF ST. PAUL'S CHURCH.

In prefacing the annual congregational report, I wish to express sincere thankfulness for the peace and prosperity by which the past year has been marked. The attendances at Divine Worship have been large and regular. The contributions in nearly every department have increased, and in all branches of the congregation's life and work there are evidences of vigour and promises of growth and success. The statistics will be found in the various reports, and in so far as these are a guarantee of prosperity, they are very gratifying. There is a tendency, however, in the present day to magnify statistics—to attach an undue meaning and value to them—to make the numbers on a communion roll and the sum of contributions the test of a congregation's welfare. This is neither wise nor well, and amid our divisions and rivalries has sometimes led to the adoption of very undesirable expedients to swell the numbers on the roll and the amounts on the contribution list. Above every other institution a Christian Church should be composed of members who are drawn to it and who give to its work from love. Let our gifts put into God's treasury above all our other gifts, be gifts of love, of love to Christ, not offerings constrained by desire of praise or fear of reproach. A far deeper cause of thankfulness to me than the symptoms of prosperity attested by figures is the evidence again and again experienced that the services of the sanctuary and the efforts of the different branches of work have been greatly blessed in awakening and deepening spiritual life, and creating a more living and loving interest in the Master's cause and work.

I cordially thank the Trustees and Elders for their unvarying and sympathetic support in all my pastoral work; they have the welfare of the congregation at heart, and readily and generously give their encouragement and assistance to everything that promises to promote its best interests.

I am greatly indebted to the Trustees for the increased and improved accommodation they have provided for the Sunday School and Bible Classes, and other work, enabling the organization of the Church to be conducted alike with greater comfort and greater efficiency.