

THE PASTORAL ADDRESS

OF THE BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH UNDER ITS CARE.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—Your ministers and representatives, assembled in Annual Conference, desire to enlist afresh your interest and sympathy in the work of God in which we are all engaged, and seek your co-operation in every good word and work.

And first, before devotion to any forms or agencies, we would that you continue to cherish with us the true spirit and life of Christianity, without which the fairest Church organization can be at best only a body without a soul, and may be at worst a living body possessed of evil spirits. It is not enough that in revival and conversion the unclean spirit should go out of a man. The heart and life must be filled with love and service according to the words of the Master, who said, "If a man love Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love Him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." But if we merely aim at ceasing to do evil and go not on to do well, then the unclean spirit will return into the house found empty, swept and garnished, bringing with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and the last state is worse than the first. Therefore, we pray you to join us in taking heed to the exhortation of the apostle, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobate."

By cherishing this inner spiritual life we not only make our own calling and election sure, but even when we may be least conscious of it, we exert the strongest influence in spreading true religion, for, as a famous Christian teacher has said, "Nothing is more powerful in spreading holy affections than having in our hearts the fountain of holy affections." No arguments of the unbeliever tell against the faith with such disastrous force as the life of a professing Christian who is devoted to pleasure or to gain, or who is inflamed with envy and hate; but, on the other hand, no argument for the truth of Christianity is so convincing as a true Christian life, marked by the beauty and strength of love and good works.

In looking out over the various duties to which we are called, we give our first attention to the care of the young and the duty of bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is the nearest to us in the order of nature, and all experience and history prove that it brings the richest rewards. We commend to you, therefore, the continuance of your good work in the Sunday-schools. Let the best be done that circumstances will allow—1st, in securing teachers well qualified in mind and heart for the work; 2nd, in careful, yet generous provision of papers and books, eliminating whatever would not tend to the development of a broad and pure Christian life; and 3rd, in the provision of such school-rooms as will compare favorably with our homes in comfort and beauty, and tend to foster a spirit of admiration and reverence.

We further commend to you our University and Colleges. It is not pretended that they are perfect in every respect, but they are at least unsurpassed, if not the best, in the country. They are ours, bequeathed to us by the generous gifts and faithful labors of the past; ours to use for the best moral and intellectual advantage of our sons and daughters; and ours to hand on to the next generation, improved and developed according to the utmost of our power, and the growing demands of the times. Not to do this is to prove unfaithful to the past, to the present, and to the future.