

THE PASTORAL ADDRESS

OF THE BAY OF QUINTE CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH TO THE CHURCHES UNDER ITS CARE.

From the beautiful town of Peterboro' we send you our annual greeting; "For God is our witness, how we long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus." Remembering the goodness which is ours, we join you in saying "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

You will be anxious to know the evidences of our prosperity. Have we visible tokens of God's presence with us, as of old? As to our membership, the spirit of the Lord has been attending the preaching of the Word, and we can report a total membership of 38,832, with a net increase of 1,281. In connection with our Sabbath Schools there are reported 2,009 conversions. The praise belongeth unto God. The Missionary cause has not been forgotten by our people, and for this purpose there has been paid to the General Fund the sum of \$22,754.94; while, in addition to this, the Woman's Missionary Society returns \$4,744.11, as raised for their work. The various other funds have also been well sustained.

But, brethren, while grateful for these evidences of success, we are profoundly impressed with the solemn importance of promoting your spiritual growth. Our deliberations, plans, and labors will prove of little avail unless they aid in promoting your spirituality. The reasons for this are many and weighty. The most precious heritage, short of Christ and heaven, which the Church can enjoy, is a holy membership associated with a consecrated ministry.

The growth of Methodism is one of the marvels of history; but, instead of drifting into a habit of boasting on that account, let us apply ourselves earnestly to the perpetuation and broadening of the progressive spirit. "An oak will grow as long as it has life." No less certainly will vital religion produce soul growth. A living church will be a progressive church; like her Divine Head, she will "Grow in stature and favor with God and man."

We are constantly and emphatically told that these times differ from those which are past. This is true only to a certain extent. Human nature is the same in every age, and the grace of God never changes. But there are times of lesson and responsibility, as well as of gracious opportunity. A general agricultural and mercantile depression has passed over the world; times have been hard, work has been scarce, and in every land a cry has come up of want and loss. While thankful to God that in Canada we have not suffered above what we are able to