

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS  
OF THE  
MANITOBA CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH  
TO THE  
CONGREGATIONS UNDER ITS CARE.

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DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,—

Once more, assembled in our Annual Conference, we have the privilege of addressing you in words of fraternal greeting and affectionate counsel.

The Church of the living God is one body, but there are many members, with different functions. The pastoral office is entrusted with the weighty responsibility of the oversight of all; but we recognize equally the importance of the laity; and only by a harmonious union of the two, in pursuit of the highest moral and spiritual results, can the Christian Church fulfil the mission for which it was called into existence. Our Conference, as now constituted of equal numbers of ministers and laymen, is a striking example of the unity in sympathy and interest whereby a Church will grow strong for God, and true to its tremendous responsibility.

Our most marked peculiarity—the itinerant system—probably subjects the relations between ministers and people to a severer strain, at times, than is often felt where no such system prevails. The necessary breaking up of cherished associations, the parting with friends endeared by intimate intercourse under the most sacred and interesting circumstances of life, and then the admission of entire strangers into the same holy confidence, is alone a pretty severe tax to lay upon the best affections of human nature. Add to this, that it is not always easy to see that wisdom, justice, and kindness have prevailed in arranging the annual appointments of pastors. Genuine worth on the part of some ministers may appear to have been underestimated. The reputation and character built up by years of successful service to the Church establish claims which a stranger does not easily recognize. On the other hand,