

## THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

### OF THE MINISTERS OF THE HAMILTON CONFERENCE TO THE CHURCHES UNDER THEIR CARE.

Once again, dear brethren, in the providence of God, we send you greetings from our Annual Conference. We trust our love fills the measure of apostolic salutation to the full, "Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

We are pleased to assure you that our Conference has been made joyful by the presence of the Holy Ghost, and that we are enabled, therefore, to address you with fidelity and tenderness. On the other hand, never were we so confident that our words will receive your attention and affectionate response. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write that our joy may be fulfilled." (1 John i. 3, 4.)

Brethren, the various meetings of our Conference have clearly established this fact: that it has already passed from a theory to a principle and from a conviction to a profound belief that the unit of strength and success for our cherished Methodism as well as for our glorious Christianity is the capture of the child for Christ. This means more than a cordial recognition of the truth that it is possible for a child to bear testimony to his acceptance with God; it rather means that all morally educative, and likewise, all inspirational forces and agencies for the well-being of humanity, and for the manifestation of its brotherhood in Jesus Christ, must aim at, and adapt themselves to, the securing of that testimony. These forces and agencies, of necessity, must be attractive, and counter-attractive. The devil has always a seductively bright environment for the child, into which he would have him enter from any one of innumerable and tempting avenues. Is the Church of Jesus Christ to be without the power, or the Methodist denomination in its several societies without the equipment, that is counter-attractive? The question must be answered by our architecture and literature and methods of service. Our places of meeting must be suitable, and always available and open. Our literature must be sparkling, instructive and valuable, and all that is such encouraged. Our methods of service must circumvent the young by every feature that may win the eyes or charm the heart. Moreover there must ever be before the children of our Methodism, in the home and out of it, in the Church and out of it, the constantly persuasive and helpful sight of living piety and cheerful righteousness. This calls for social enterprise and intercourse upon the part of the Church through the exercise of morally healthy and sanctified gifts and agencies; for the day has gone when the Church or community does wisely that caters to the whims of

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