

PASTORAL ADDRESS, 1895.

The Pastors of the Methodist Church, in Conference assembled, to their Brethren in Christ throughout Newfoundland:—

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God; by whose strong and loving hand we have been brought to see the close of a year which in some respects has been one of the most trying in our history as a Church in this land.

Since last we assembled we have been brought face to face with a condition of affairs which has shown us, in a very clear and painful manner, the vanity and uncertainty of all things earthly, and how little there is here, that we can really call our own. We have seen the things we thought we possessed slip from our grasp, and vanish out of our sight, leaving us only disappointment and distress. But even our reverses have been sanctified by the great Head of the Church to our spiritual good, in that we have been led to understand more clearly that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal." We have also learned, from a painful experience, that while only "righteousness exalteth a nation," "sin is a reproach to any people." As a church we have suffered great temporal losses, and the funds raised for all the different departments of work have been reduced much below the amounts of former years; and we ourselves have had also to share in the general distress. Nevertheless we are not discouraged, for amid the gloom there has been much of gladness, and despite our losses we are richer in that which alone is true wealth to any church. The grace of God which bringeth salvation has been manifested in almost every circuit and mission within the bounds of the Conference, and many wanderers from the fold have been reclaimed, and many who were far off have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

The tabulated results show an increase in our membership of 975, but no figures can fully represent the actual gains in spiritual power and usefulness. Only the figures can be entered in our accounts down here, but the real results of the past year's work are inscribed in the records of heaven. Showers of refreshing have fallen upon many a dry and thirsty corner of the vineyard, making life and fruitfulness spring forth, and resulting in glorious harvesting of souls. This ought to be to every member of the church a new inspiration for further service, and a call for a completer devotion to the Master's blessed will.

It is also our joy to report indications of healthfulness and increase in the various departments of the work, especially in the Sabbath Schools. There are four additional schools, and increase of 104 in the teaching staff, besides an enlargement in the number of our scholars to the extent of 642. The labours of the teachers have been rewarded by the conversion of hundreds of scholars.

And now we look forward to the work of another year, with earnest prayers on your behalf that it may be, in temporal things, more prosperous and pleasant than the past; and that in spiritual matters we may have to rejoice over the settled faith of those who have been saved, and still more abundant ingatherings of precious souls. The harvest still is great—greater than ever before, and the demand of the times is not only for earnest and consecrated pastors, but also for a people set apart entirely to God, to serve Him wherever the demands of duty shall call. Each member of the church has his responsibilities in reference to this great work just as really as has the pastor; and when each individual comes to understand that religion is as much a matter of doing as of getting, and that the success of the whole depends to a great extent upon the efforts of each, then, and only then will we be in a position to rightly fulfil our mission as a church in this land.

The effects of the conscientious work of sixty ministers would be difficult to estimate, but who can even suggest what would be the results of the consecrated and united efforts of 11,642 members of the church. The Church of Christ is not only a fold where His sheep are nurtured and protected, but it is also the garrison of "The Captain of our Salvation," in which every soldier is expected to do noble and constant warfare against the hosts of sin. It is no place for laggards who wish to wile away their days in extatic indolence, but a place that calls for the display of manly courage and effort,