

THE ANNUAL ADDRESS

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

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHERN,—Once again, through the tender mercy of our God, we send you, from our Annual Conference, our greetings and counsels. Receive them as a renewed assurance of the unfeigned love which we cherish for your souls, and of our earnest solicitude that you should always increase “with the increase of God.” The pastoral office which has been committed to us by “the Great Shepherd of the sheep,” is invested with unspeakable importance, and surrounded with the gravest responsibilities. We cannot forget that we are successors of men who were pre-eminent for holiness, and for the unexampled success of their labors; and we are deeply anxious lest in any wise we dishonor their memories, or betray the deposit of holy privileges which they have bequeathed to us. “Brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified,” as it was in the days of our fathers. Our holiest and best interests are inseparably blended with yours: “For what is our hope or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming: for ye are our glory and joy?”

We devoutly acknowledge the tokens of the Divine presence with us during the past year. The revival spirit has been blessedly enjoyed in our hearts and churches. “Showers of blessing” have been experienced in nearly all our charges; and, as a result of this increased activity and zeal, a net increase of 1,568 members has been reported from the various Districts. If this work is to continue, we must remember that the means which originated Methodism are the only means which, under God’s blessing, will perpetuate Methodism; the existence and prosperity of the Church depends on the personal godliness of its members. No congregation of unconverted men can ever constitute a true Church. Vital union with the Head is essential to organic growth in the members. Our fathers welcomed to their fellowship all who had “a sincere desire to flee from the wrath to come,” but were not satisfied unless the people of their charges were living in the enjoyment of the witness of the Spirit, and were panting after the maturity of Christian love. The great want of the day is an intelligent, ardent, uniform, and practical godliness in all the members of the Church,—a godliness which is nourished by devout and habitual fellowship with God. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.” The claims of the family, of the world, or even of the Church, must not be allowed to interfere with the claims of the closet. Men of prayer are men of power. Emulate the examples of holy men presented in Scripture history and religious biography, and you will not only advance the life of God in your souls, but become the instruments of much good to others also.

We commend to your prayerful sympathy and hearty support the

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