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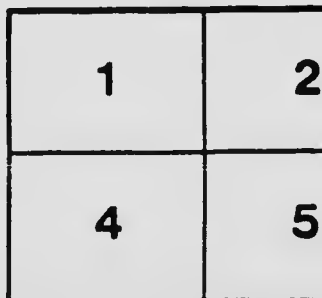
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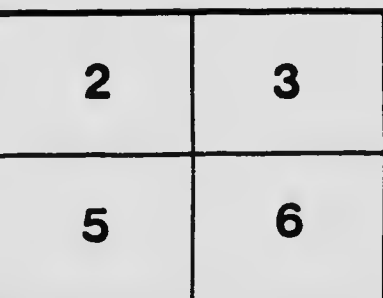
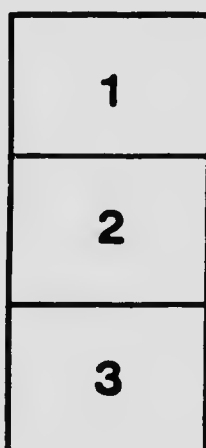
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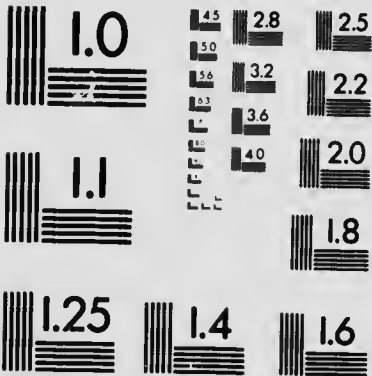
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# British Columbia Conference

MAY 1914, KAMLOOPS, B.C.

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## PASTORAL ADDRESS

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### BELOVED BRETHREN—

We have passed through a time of stress and strain which has been felt from one end of the land to the other. The reasons are not far to seek, but concern us here only in part. It would be unwise to say that the period of strain is wholly past. The unstable equilibrium of world powers; the still more unstable equilibrium of the industrial situation, and, not less, unsettled conditions in the religious world, confront us with problems which press for instant and adequate treatment with a view to satisfactory solution.

These facts in themselves form no ground for gloomy forebodings. On the reverse they are a call rather to revise our estimates and renew our zeal. God is calling us back to the bold and daring challenges of faith.

The pause in the feverish activity provides opportunity for self-recovery. It is to be feared that not a few were in imminent danger of yielding to the glamor of outward material prosperity. They were in cases too many to dwell upon in danger of forgetting God. Many, very many, it is feared, throughout the length and breadth of the land, fell into the snare and made the fatal choice in the rival claims of mammon and God. The fancied security of abounding prosperity served as a lure that could only lead in the end to self-destruction.

God is calling us all back, in His own way, to the old and immovable foundations of eternal truth, to the principles to which we all of us in our best moments would fain give heed.

Dangers beset our path. There is danger in over-busy-ing ourselves; so that we cannot find time for self-collectedness. Like the invited guests in the classic story we are content to put aside invitations from high and holy sources, with a faint and feeble excuse. The cavalier treatment of the gracious act of God brings its own immediate and irremediable punishment in self-exclusion. The invitation is not renewed. To be so immersed in business as to surrender ourselves to the tyranny of things is poor business.

The question for all to face, at a time like this, is to decide whether or not we believe, and believe intensely, in religion, in the religion which we profess? Do we believe in ourselves and in our mission—the mission entrusted to us of God?

The union negotiations may have incidentally added to the unsettledness. It is possible that some may have been persuaded to relax rather than accentuate their endeavors as a result. It is possible some have thought it did not much matter as we should soon all be one. If union comes to pass we gain nothing by slackening effort. We lose much by weakening conviction. If union does not come to pass slackening effort could only be regarded as disaster.

Beloved, believe it, we are called of God to a high world mission—the mission of our high call. We must get it squarely before us and let it squarely before us that this world mission is our destiny. If union is effected it will be to continue more effectively its pursuit. In any event the mission remains and Methodism cannot escape its solemn responsibility. During all the time we are debuting people live and die and go to their account; and we must labor in their behalf with the gospel in our right hand.

The shifting emphasis reacts on the general attitude towards the ministry. We must raise up a ministry from among our own borders and challenge our own sons. The office of the ministry holds the strategic position with regard to everything pertaining to the church. This is not a matter of changing fashions; but one on which, humanly speaking, both the weal of the church and the salvation of the world is made in a large degree to hinge. The ministry is not less, but more important today; and like Paul, we need to magnify that high and holy office. The problems are at our doors. Whatever intellectual phases we may pass through, the fact abides that men and women do not cease from dying. We need a reawakening of concern, touched with high and noble motive and mighty endeavor.

Dangers beset the ministry. It has come to pass that a minister finds it difficult to fulfil his vocation by reason of multiplied claims, the multiplicity barring him from the very end for which he is ordained. Whoever is charged ultimately with the business of the church, the ministry is primarily charged with the souls of the people. It is still not meet to forsake the Word of God to serve tables. The church gives its blessing to every wholesome demand, made in behalf of the people, for recreation and entertainment, but these are means not end. Many are in danger of mistaking the one for the other.

We need to rally the spirit of our people all over the land. We have every reason to glory in our heritage and traditions—and to see that the rising generation does not grow up in ignorance of its history. The romance of all church history is an unfading possession. The romance of our own history is not less enthralling in its individual aspect

than in its general setting, and cries aloud to be brought home to the heart and imagination of our youth. Only so can be really intelligent and consuming devotion, in pressing the claims of God to the uttermost on the lives and services of every individual man, woman and child. Fashions come and go, but the Word of God knows no passing, but abides forever.

Brethren, may we urge upon you to cultivate the Christian grace of candor and transparency of character? The single eye, the single heart! Doublemindedness leads to doubleness in general—twofacedness. The spirit of Christianity is found in the guilelessness of heart of a little child. Simplicity and kindness maintain their everlasting place and permanent appeal in unison with the possession of strong masculine sense. It will always be true, though I have the tongue of angels and men, if I have not the higher qualifications, that my most elaborate performances will be only so much sounding brass and clashing cymbals; and this applies equally to all.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews there is a reference to the making of things according to the pattern shown in the mount. That is precisely the function of Christianity—to recreate all things after the pattern of Christ.

We need to correct our individual judgments by the general Christian consensus. Only thus shall we be saved from narrowness and schism, within our own borders and within the larger body of the Church of God. Making the mood of the moment the measure of the universe leads to sad perplexity, and exposes the man to the danger of exalting himself above God. We must not dwell too much on our fluctuating states and feelings, nor fix our eyes only on what takes place within. As a splendid corrective, study and sing the Te Deum—that most noble hymn of the Universal Church from the earliest times.

Dangers attend all our steps. May we commend to you the Christian requirement to carry on business as an actual part of the service of Christ. You are not called to do the biggest business in the community—of necessity you are called so to do your business as to make it business as service for Christ. Thus only can business be Christianised, and thus with so large a part of the common life. You are not to grasp every dollar in sight—you are not, if you are a Christian, to grasp at all; but to be diligent, conscientious, considerate and upright, and leave events to God. They that are minded to be rich, as an end to be reached, fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition, and nothing can ever change the portentous fact that the love of money is at the bottom of evil of every kind, which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

We instance, in certain other dangers, the need of earnest watchfulness with regard to claims put forward by the Roman Catholic Church. The question raised in Quebec and elsewhere as to the marriage relation can never be allowed to rest until it has been permanently settled. Neither



can we have a double set of schools at the public expense. The use of a religious garb in teaching has its own value in its own place, but that place is not in a mixed school, when the garb is significant of a single denomination. We are actuated by no animosity to the Roman Catholic Church; we recognize its place in the historic development, and could wish that to Rome might come also the clearer vision of the Son of God. But we cannot consent to any attempt to reverse the dial of time.

Beware of the virus of militarism. Every country has a right to can on its own sons in its own defence; but this is a very different thing from inoculating youth with the military ideal. Two countries such as Canada and the United States in such close juxtaposition can exist side by side only by each side putting a permanent ban on militaristic tendencies. In this year of grace particularly is the welcome truth brought home when both countries are busy with their preparations in celebration of an unbroken record of a century of peace.

We commend to your thoughtful consideration the report of the Public Welfare Department of our Church, which will be found to include data of first hand importance. On every page a fresh setting will be found to the old time utterance that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but none the less are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin. Study it, and use it, and extend the zone of effective operation. Drink must go, and no more gladdening news has been brought than the indications in all directions that it is on the move—in retreat. The action of the United States naval secretary can only be acclaimed. The time is surely approaching when we ought to undertake a nation-wide movement for prohibition. This one reform would go far to prepare the way for a whole train of others.

Surveying the field at large occupied by the forces of the Christian Church, we cannot help wondering at times whether we are operating with the maximum or the minimum efficiency, by present methods. We cannot by merely uttering the word change the situation, and others are involved as well as ourselves; but surely the lesson to be learned by Christian forces the world over is one of cohesion. We stand or fall together. Our various gifts can all be requisitioned, but rivalry is unhallowed and banned. It is this state of Christendom broken up into numberless factions that constitutes a bar to the impact of Christianity on the world. The matter ought always to be uppermost in the thought of Christian people as an object of earnest prayer and endeavor. Wherever it is possible to cooperate it should not be too difficult to bring Christians of all persuasions together; and in this behalf, by reason of the catholic spirit essentially belonging to their history and nurture we rejoice to be sure of finding Methodists in the lead.

The approach of General Conference offers a special occasion for intercession. Too much no doubt can be expected of new departures, whether in legislation or administration, though the need may be urgent; but more important—ininitely more important—than either is the fanning of a new

flame and quickening of a new interest. Questions of great and grave importance are to be discussed, and we commend the proceedings which will be found in the pages of the Christian Guardian to your careful and prayerful perusal.

This year has been marked by unprecedented losses in the personnel of our Conference, losses which in a Christian mind are quite capable of being received with mingled joy and grief. We mourn their loss for ourselves and for those other mourners still more intimately concerned. May God in His loving kindness grant to all such His rich consolation! But we raise also our song of exultation. The name of Crosby is an imperishable possession. With him Brothers Green and Thompson and Hicks and Lett are all gone to their rich reward; for the sorrow that is conjoined with hope is a very precious fact in our Christian faith. Nevertheless the solemn warning comes to us all to have our lamps trimmed and burning, our loins always girt for the exigent summons!

Brethren, we must be Christians, at all times, at all costs, as boards, as a people, as individual members, and have a Christian policy for a Christian Church. Remember, we are not to carry worldly procedure, worldly diplomacy, the worldly spirit into the church. We are to carry the opposite spirit into the world. He only is a Christian who holds to Christ. We trust you will encourage your pastors and strengthen their hands to do the work for which they are called of God and set apart. It would be the most unpardonable foolishness to incur all the trouble and all the expense to train men and send them out if in the end the purpose for which they are sent is not fulfilled.

We would ask your considerate attention to the appearance and orderliness of our Church properties. We trust that the General Conference may see its way to arrange for the suitable planning of church edifices by a central committee. There are other sins against the Holy Ghost besides those usually specified, and among the number may be put down dirty churches and bad ventilation. The damaging effect on the souls of men is greater than the careless offenders concerned can readily imagine. An aesthetic instinct springs into fresh life under every touch of Christ.

A silent revolution is going on of vast meaning which may be also a vast menace to our youth. The complexion of the constituency is swiftly changing all over the world by the agency of the motion picture. This constitutes an entirely new problem which organized Christianity has never before had to face. It must of necessity profoundly influence our mode of preaching, in the end. The vivid visual presentations call for equally vivid presentations in preaching. The motion picture itself must be captured and Christianised if we are not to repeat the dismal error of the acted drama. And we must have some clear discriminating guidance to give to our youth. With this whole question we expect the church of God at large to become engaged in the working out of a Christian solution.

In like manner music is taking on new forms, so that the very tastes of the people are liable to be depraved at their source. Who can regard

with unconcern the general prevalence of ragtime love ditties, with all their crudities and subtle suggestiveness? What avails the singing of a few hymns once or twice a day one day in seven when this powerful agent is everywhere operative? We would affectionately impress upon our people who are parents wisdom in the choice of pieces played and sung at home. It is here where corrupting influence on a wholesale scale is at work by tacit acquiescence. True music and wholesome songs have their part in the Christian development; and the instincts which lie behind music and drama must be definitely guided in the Christian interest unless we are prepared to see the ground slipping from under our feet. No more can be here said, but the whole question is one which should most earnestly occupy the mind of the Church. Can we not call Methodist youth to the high ideals of the worthies of other days, and of our noble founder, John Wesley, speaking in the name of Our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ Himself? What have we to do with debasing things whether appeals to eye or ear? Stand clear!

Hold with tight grip the right of rest, of every man, high and low, of one day in seven. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. In this regard the Lord's Day Alliance is safeguarding the very foundations of all higher being.

Let Methodists remember the call to the perfect Christian life. This is the one thing by reason of which Methodism specifically finds a justification for its existence. We cannot surrender the exalted conception of Christian Perfection. It must be brought once more to the front and re-preached with all the glowing glories of the Word of God.

We must rise above localisms. Cannot we cultivate a fuller note of catholicity? We must get out into the broad reaches of the purpose of God and breathe the unconfined air of the Kingdom of the Heavens. We were not made to breathe the stifling air of restricted assemblies when we have an indefeasible claim to share in the general assembly of the Church of God. None has a better title to be called catholic than Methodists. We should not gratuitously give this away; we should be very careful of distinguishing between the Holy Catholic Church and the Church of Rome, which is at the best but the Roman Catholic Church. There is only one Christ and one Universal Church; and Methodists have the best of claims thereto—unless they are backsliders. We cannot consent to cut ourselves off and deprive ourselves of the right to acclaim, each for himself—

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen!

In fact, brethren, every affirmation in this mighty pronouncement we might do well to acclaim in exultant tones in the gatherings of the sanctuary. Look it all over again—it is part of our Methodist standards; recite it; chant it in unison; until its bold language of exulting confidence strikes home with something of the thrill which it inspired when its utter-

ance was first accustomed to fall from Christian lips. O, it is a mighty challenge to the world to be able to stand up and say, with exulting confidence, on all these heads, "I believe!"

Let all the activities of the Church in all its channels be co-ordinated to the one end. Sabbath School and Epworth League, the stated services of the sanctuary—everything exists not for itself, but for the explicit recognition of the claims of God on the lives of men and the furtherance of His cause in the world. A critical attitude will react on itself. The over-critical will meet with criticism; and will be criticised with exactly the same measure of criticism that they mete out to others. This is the very pith and point of the classic saying: "Judge not that ye be not judged!"

The Church is a reticulated body in which each part has its own particular place. Some are called to be administrators, and some with equal definiteness are called to be scholars. We must do our best endeavors to enable each to discover his rightful place. As we are to raise our own ministers, so are we to raise our own scholars. The man who produces a work of thought is influencing a larger audience than if he faced a congregation, for he addresses a whole country and a whole generation. Methodism must contrive to provide the necessary condition of leisure that she may have fruit of her ministry in this regard, also, in proportion to her numbers and strength. We want men who can study the problems of the time and point the way to their solution. We may also require to work out a new adaptation to local conditions to exercise an effective influence in a community. A group ministry may require in given cases to supersede the individual in dealing with country life; and the larger settlement in the midst of city populations will come more and more to be applied.

Unless we give a man scope it will be futile to expect to secure the men we want. Is a little church dotted here and there with its little handful of faithful souls big enough to claim the whole time and energy of the highest type of men? This undoubtedly points the way to re-adjustments on a large scale.

Brethren, keep jealous watch over your spirit. Beware of double standards. The standard you expect of your minister is the standard God expects of you. There is one law for the layman and the minister—the one unchanging law of love in all its heights and depths and lengths and breadths. Will it be considered very old-fashioned if we say, we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love, for their works' sake. We must have courage to apply with boldness all the postulates of Christianity.

Lastly, give—give heartily—give unstintingly—give with the open hand; give proportionately, give systematically, give as you have been given. It is a new doctrine, in its full meaning, to some who have read get for give. Getting grows upon the getter and is the worst of all lusts. Giving is good. It is a delight. It shows spontaneity. It associates the giver with the gift and makes both blessed.

No ship can navigate without a head. A store requires management. In both cases authority goes with responsibility. If either captain or business manager has no power to say so things soon come to grief. It is not very different with the Church. Discipline on paper is one thing, and another thing entirely in action. Here is the weak spot in Church policy. We perhaps would hesitate to characterise some as disorderly walkers who nevertheless are a constant source of trouble. Brethren, this goes to the quick! Discipline is one of the indispensable factors in the continuance of vital Christianity. Stop and ask yourself, What does a Church exist for? And what does your Church exist for? And is it carrying out the object for which it exists?

There is danger in so many directions, lest we forget! Lest, for instance, choirs forget that they exist for the Church and not the Church for them. We must cultivate very much more congregational singing. Anthems have their use if sung in the spirit of worship. But anthems that are unintelligible to an audience are woefully out of place—just as much as sermons indistinctly mumbled. It is feared that the over-emphasis of the anthem is killing worship—or at least curtailing that free expression of worship in song which belongs of right to the people. Certainly the function of the choir is not to supersede the right of the congregation to sing its own praise to God!

Can we not have an increase of reverence in our deportment and dismissal from the House of God—and the same might not be out of place in the sessions of Conference? It is a truly Christian principle that everything be done decently and in order. The House of God by its associations ought not to be confused with a playhouse, and surely a grave and reverent demeanor becomes us in our approaches to our Creator? Early Methodism was a standing rebuke to the frivolous and irresponsible attitude of the gay young things of the times, as constant reference in the Journals of Wesley amply testifies. There might be shouts of joy which were nowise inconsistent with a sense of awe, a grave and becoming deportment; and oftimes there was

The speechless awe that dares not move  
And all the silent heaven of love.

The statement of tabulated results will, we doubt not, afford interest. Blessed be the Most High that He has granted us favors so beyond our desserts; gratitude be ours that we live in a land so richly endowed! To many it will prove to be as the promised land. We are living in the midst of great movements and for this we find cause for thanksgiving. But for the primal fact of all that we have such a glorious God to serve, and love—a Lover-God—in all the mystery of His manifestation—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—rich in mercy, plenteous in redemption—we ascribe unto Him glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and forever, world without end. Amen!



