

Wesleyan Missions.

Anniversary of the Parent Society.

(From the London Watchman, May 7th.)

The region south of Madras is somewhat barren for upwards of 100 miles, and you do not find in that district many Brahminical temples. The few you meet with are very insignificant; but the moment you approach the rich delta in the south, where you have a rich alluvial soil teeming with wealth, then commence the splendid edifices of Brahma. The first spectacle which attracts your observation is the city of Combaconum, where there are enormous pagodas. Each pagoda is a temple-system rather than a temple. The mode in which the pagodas within the Madras Presidency are usually constructed is this:—you have an enormous edifice in the form of a square surrounded by high and thick walls, and in the centre of each wall there is an entrance or gateway, over which rises a great tower or pagoda. These pagodas shoot up far above the palm trees and other foliage, and when you enter you find yourself in the midst of thousands of Brahmins and tens of thousands of worshippers. You pass from one place to another; in every village there is a temple; and there are large villages with large temples, and larger villages with systems of temples. In Combaconum you have a great pagoda system. It is a city of pagodas, just as Cambridge and Oxford are cities of colleges. Multitudes come there from all quarters to bathe their feet in its sacred tank. The lies of Brahminism do not exceed the lies of Popery. The Brahmins tell us that the genuine Ganges actually comes up to the tank or pond at Combaconum every twelve years, and a hundred thousand people will swear it is so. They say that once on a time the Ganges, personified to the worshipper as a female deity, came according to the sacred legend to the god Sheva with sad complaints. "What is the matter? Why are you so sad?" asked the god. "Why, only look at me," was the answer; "see what a piece of ugliness and deformity I have become. Once I was the greatest beauty in heaven, and now I am the ugliest being on earth." "What is the cause of this?" asked Sheva. "Why replied the Ganges, "you see how every year millions of those wretched sinners come and wash their sins away in my waters, they leave all their defilements behind, and I am covered with them. How can I be otherwise than ugly?" Taking pity upon her Sheva said, "I will bring up the genuine undisturbed waters of the Ganges to the celestial city of Combaconum; come there; bring all your thousands of thousands of followers, and you shall be made pure." To this sacred tank the worshippers resort in crowds to perform their ablutions, under the full persuasion of the truth of this legend. There are two Christian labourers at Combaconum—one agent of the London Missionary Society, the only Missionary that Society has in all the province of Tanjore; the other a Missionary of the Propagation Society. Here you have only two Missionaries standing in the midst of this immense crowd of heathens; and yet you say India is evangelised, and Tanjore is in many respects the most favoured province in India! (Hear, hear.) In the city of Tanjore itself, where the system of pagodas exists, you have but one solitary Missionary. On the rugged rock of Trichinopoly, in the midst of everlasting foliage, you see rising a circular building, like the cupola of some great cathedral. That is the pagoda of the Brahminical temple; and on either side are the edifices of idolatry, and the residence of the Brahmins. Thither resort every year hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, who climb the rock to worship. It is but a year or two ago that some of these unfortunate persons having slipped, fell back upon the others, and in a few minutes upwards of 400 dead were carried from the foot of the rock. One Missionary is there, in the midst of this crowd of idolaters; and yet India is evangelised! In Seringham you have the hugest heathen temple that can probably be found from the north to the south pole. It is a square, each side being a mile in length, so that it is four miles round. Talk of your Crystal

Palace! Why, as a man would put a penny into his pocket, you might put your Crystal Palace into the pocket of this huge Pagoda. The walls are 25 feet high, and 4 or 5 feet thick, and in the centre of each wall rises a lofty tower. Entering the first square you come to another, with a wall as high, and with four more towers. Within that square there is another, and within that square another—and you find seven squares one within another, crowded by thousands of Brahmins. The great hall for pilgrims is supported by a thousand pillars, each cut out of a single block of stone. In that place there is no Missionary at all, and yet India is evangelised! I am speaking now, remember, only of those places which are occupied by Missionary labourers.—Proceeding seaward to the south east we come to Manargoody, a station of this society. There I met Mr. and Mrs. Batchelor, who are labouring as assiduously as it is possible to do. But how can I express to you the difficulties they have to encounter! They are in a place where there are 150,000 idolaters—where the heathen population appear to spread out endlessly. Why, when you ask for the Mission Bungalow, it is, to use a vulgar expression, something like searching for a needle in a hay-stack. Proceeding eastward a distance of about 30 miles, you come to Negapatam, where there is a station of this society. The Jesuits have made that place their head-quarters, and within the last ten or twelve years they have put forth mighty efforts to recover their ground. I had interviews with several of the leading Jesuits in that place, and they told me undisguisedly what their plans were, and that their determination was to recover the whole of their lost ground. There are 30 clever Jesuits in that town, and they are erecting an immense college. While they are thus carrying on their operations, we are satisfied with sending to this heathen city one Missionary, who, after a residence of two or three years is, probably, removed to another station, and his place is supplied by a new man, who has everything to learn. (Hear, hear.) This certainly is not the way to go on. (Applause.) There is in the report an appeal for an increase of the funds of your society. Now, while no plan of usefulness ought to be abridged or limited in any part of the world, let me plead most earnestly for those regions of the east which have come so entirely under our sway and sceptre, and which are part and parcel of the British dominions. If this society were to put forth a noble effort, here would be the place for establishing itself, without taking away a Missionary from any other station. (Hear, hear.) Why not send out ten or twelve men to storm Negapatam, and confound the Jesuits. (Hear and cheers.) Sure I am, as the system of Wesleyanism has wrought so effectively in England—and I have seen how thoroughly it has worked, and I have been amazed at the extent to which it has taken up masses of the population that seemed to be wholly untouched and unreachd by any existing Christian agency in this land—sure I am, knowing this, and knowing that there are men among the members of the committee of this society distinguished for sage-like experience, and known and honoured by all the churches in Christendom, (loud and enthusiastic cheering, which was reiterated several times, and continued for several moments,) that if after twenty or thirty years of long experience they were to come to you and say, "Wesleyan Methodism has wrought wonders in this land; the system is in every way adapted to the ends we have in view; but when we go into a foreign region, among a new people, with new circumstances totally diverse and contradictory from the circumstances of the people of this country, we find some modification of the system required there—not any organic change, but a modification in the way of concentrating men upon a particular spot, and keeping them there, and saying 'That is your station; you are not to be taken away after three years' residence, but to be kept there during your life;' " (hear, hear;) I say, after many years' experience, these sage-like men, connected with your committee, were to make such a proposal, I cannot doubt that the whole body of Wesleyans would come

forward and say, "If the fitness of things requires it, let it be done." (Loud cheers.) Well, then, this being the case, you might have altogether, from the Wesleyan Body, the London Missionary Society, and the Propagation Society, some twenty Missions throughout the Province of Tanjore, where are at least 1,000,000 of inhabitants. I was struck in reading the report of the London City Mission to find one district in this metropolis marked out where there were some 200,000 inhabitants, one-half of whom were stated to require Christian instruction and visitation, and that not fewer than 56 Missionaries were required for that purpose. What, 56 Missionaries required to overtake a population of 100,000, in a district of London where there are already so many Churches of so many denominations, and all the churches of Great Britain do not send 20 men to teach the 1,000,000 of heathen in the province of Tanjore! And India is evangelised of course! The theory will not do at all. We must mend our ways, or else heathenism will go on, as far as we are concerned—we must mend our ways and must come down with something like real force upon those masses of heathenism. (Cheers.) You think I am beside myself, talking in this manner. But go you and stand where it was my lot to stand; and then tell me if I am so. Tanjore is one of the most highly favoured provinces of Bengal, I entered one province with a million of inhabitants and asked, "Who is the Missionary here?" There was none at all. In another, with two millions of people, I asked, "Who is the Missionary here?" No one at all. I went to another, and another, and another, containing equal numbers of people, and found no Missionary at all. You may go the whole course of the Ganges, and say the same thing. In the province of Oude, containing 3,000,000 of inhabitants, there is no Missionary. If you go northward to any of the provinces where there is a population of 4,000,000, and ask, "who is the Missionary here?"—the answer will be, "Never was there a missionary at all." And yet India is evangelised! (Applause.) The thing, to me, is most shocking and monstrous. If you go to the province of Tanjore—and I have fixed upon it because it has been taken up by this society—you will find two stations there. I desire, instead of sending one man to the Negapatam station, you should send at least a dozen, and at least the same number to the other stations. Don't let us be multiplying working stations, and scattering them over the country, but let us concentrate our forces. Go into the regions of Brahminism and look at the tens of thousands of persons coming from all directions. Go to Trichinopoly and other places, and you are surrounded by tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of heathens, the greater portion of whom never heard of the existence of a Saviour at all. Stand there and look at yourselves, one solitary being in the midst of the crowd, and what are you to do? Are you really thus to enlighten these masses of people? Is it competent for me, or the society that sent me, to do so? I am not talking of what God can do; but what we ought to do. God can do any thing without means at all. He could destroy the host of Pharaoh, in crossing the Red Sea. He could bring down the walls of Jericho, and smite the whole host of the Assyrians; and with feeble means rout confederate kings; and make little David bring down the high giant Goliath. Nay, contrary to means, he could work, for he could save one from the mouth of ravenous lions, another from the devouring flames, and another from being drowned in the sea. But are we going to make the measure of God's omnipotence the measure of our duty? The question is, not what God can do, but what we are bound to do in obedience to the Divine commands. (Loud Applause.) I will have it, that God does proportion, ordinarily speaking, success to the means that are put forth. I say, "ordinarily speaking." If he tells me to go, do I say, "It is of no use thou canst do it thyself?" Does God work miracles to make up for our indolence, is the question? No. The church at home is not awake to a title of the importance of the question. It is a great thing to get £104,000 as you

have done. But will any man tell me, if the spirit were poured out from on high, you could not in this society, bring in a whole million within a month? (Applause.) Look on the sums expended in fripperies and fooleries, and tell me if there could be no self-denial in that direction so as to bring in something to the cause of God and Christ. (Applause.) I have great ideas of the capabilities of the land, provided you all take the matter to heart; and I have no hesitation in appealing to you now to come forward. I would say, this society has been highly honoured. I would say, it is only the period of human life since the commencement of foreign missions at all, on the part of your society. I was exceedingly struck, somehow, to find that it was in the year '69, in which, on the birthday of the Duke of Wellington who is still living, hale and hearty among us; and long may he continue so to live among a grateful and admiring body of his fellow-subjects;—(applause)—but it was only in the very year of his birth that an assembly of Wesleyan Ministers took place at Leeds, at which the venerable John Wesley put this question—"who will go over to help our brethren in America?" At this time there was but one Wesleyan chapel in York. Two men offered to go out, and £50 was collected. Truly the "little one has become a thousand," or rather 3,000, for there are now upwards of 3,000 ministers—a vaster achievement for time and for eternity, than all the victorious campaigns of the peninsula, or even that on the field of Waterloo, glorious as they were. (Applause.) Not then, to be detaining you much longer, I would say to this society, that there are many susceptible men amongst you Wesleyans, people who often talk of their outretness and nondescriptness in some of their measures and operations. Now this outretness and nondescriptness seem to me to be the very fitnesses of the Wesleyan Society for the ends and objects they have in view. Driven up and down, as one is, in all the regions of the earth, one must feel that, to carry out your actions, the staff of Procrustes, like a fixed form, is the great perfection of ridiculousness. You must adapt the means to the end; maintain your principles; but mould your means like the plastic clay. It is because I feel that there is a fire in the body of the Wesleyan Methodists, that I should like to see it make a prodigious effort for the next year, and fasten on some feasible object, such as getting up a grand Wesleyan College at Negapatam; (applause;) and for this purpose, to raise at once the sum of £50,000. Why not? It would be a glorious achievement. But whether it be so or not, you must excuse me for saying, that when one goes and stands in the midst of these heathens—when one finds their pagodas, a mile square, with all their intricate labyrinths and windings, all their receptacles for pilgrims, and their multitudes of Brahmins—when one goes and stands in the midst of all this, and looks around,—I ask you to say if we have begun the evangelization of India, in the real, or apostolic sense of the term? (Hear, hear.) I speak the plain truth. Looking around, over all these immense multitudes, comparing them with the smallness and utter inadequacy of the agency brought to bear upon them, it seems like the attempt by means of a few twinkling tapers to turn the darkness of the cloudy night into the meridian brightness of unclouded day,—or, with a few spades, to go and at once level the Appenines and the Alps,—or, with a few buckets, to go and drain the German and Atlantic oceans,—or, with a few pocket-knives, go and cut down the Hungarian forests,—or, with a few squibs and crackers to go and assail the fortress of Gibraltar,—or, with a web of gossamer, to go and capture the crocodile of the Nile,—or the whale of the ocean. (Loud applause.) It looks almost like idiosyncrasy run mad; like absurdity in hysterics, like illusion dancing in the maddest frenzy, like the unsubstantial dream or vision of the dreamer, who dreams that he has been dreaming. (Hear, hear.) This is the sensation conveyed. Hundreds may say, "This is exaggeration, oriental figure, or hyperbole." I don't care by what name you may stigmatize it. It is my wish to convey an impression of something real, something ac-