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ADDRESS TO THE METHODIST LOCAL PREACHERS.

BY THE REV. W. ARTHUR, M.A.

By the request of the Wesleyan Methodist Local Preacher's Society an address was given in the morning Chapel, City-road, on Wednesday evening, the 10th inst., by the Rev. W. Arthur, M. A. to the local preachers of the various Methodist bodies in the London circuits. The chair was occupied by the President of the Conference, (Rev. Dr. James), and there was a large attendance.

The singing of the 440th Hymn began the proceedings—

"Thou, Jesu, Thou, my breast inspire,
And touch my lips with hallow'd fire."

Prayer having been offered by the Rev. R. Tabraham and Mr. W. Jameson,

The President said he rejoiced to be in the midst of so goodly a number of fellow laborers, especially at a gathering, such as he had never seen before, of local preachers. The sight was eminently gratifying to him. Indeed, he could not find himself in such circumstances without looking back to the beginning of his public life, forty years ago, when he was received as a local preacher in that very room. (Applause.) The keen eyes of Theophilus Lessey were fixed upon him all the time he preached his trial sermon there. (Laughter.) So vivid were his recollections of that occasion that he could never forget them; but his feelings were at any rate shared by a number of fellow-sufferers and sympathisers, who were in much the same plight as himself. He had received many mercies since then. (Hear, hear.) Earnestly praying that God would be pleased abundantly to bless the local preachers with the influence of his Spirit and with great prosperity in their work, he concluded by calling upon one who, he remarked, needed no introduction at a Methodist meeting.

The Rev. W. Arthur, on rising was received with a burst of applause. The Rev. gentleman after a few prefatory remarks, said: with regard to the particular subject before us, I scarcely know what shape it should take. When one speaks of "local preachers," I feel there is something in the expression that forces one's thoughts to Methodism as a particular form of Christianity. We never speak of Methodism as anything else—we never speak of it as being the trunk or origin of Christianity—and the less we speak of it in any magnifying sense the better for ourselves, and the better for others. I believe if there be one branch of the Church in which it is a special sin to be narrow and sectarian, that branch is the Methodist branch—the heir and debtor of every pre-existing form of Christianity. We inherit much from the early Apostolic Churches; we inherit very much from the Mediæval Church, which we often abuse, and not without cause; but remember, that with all the faults of the Church of the middle age, it was the only Church existing, and all the good that was done it did, such as it was. We inherit immensely from the Reformed Church. Let us never forget that the Reformed Church was not a movement in one direction. That is the popular illusion—that it was a movement in one direction, and in one only. No, no; the Reformation was the lever of a double movement in two opposite directions—the one I shall call "reformation," the other "confirmation." The Mediæval Church existed in a double form, an authorative and a traditional form. It existed with authorised doctrines and standards, acknowledged by all Churches, and handed down from the earliest times. Side by side with these acknowledged doctrines and standards, there had come in from the heathen, from the Jews, from the Buddhists, and from numberless other sources, no end of traditions and superstitions, all of which obtained a particular hold here and there, and in some instances a very extensive hold, upon the professing churches. The question came whether all these traditions and superstitions were to be formally accredited and taken into the Church as doctrines; or whether they were to be cast out, and the Church to go back to the Bible. And here the double movement occurred. The Reformers said: "Back to the Bible!" Rome said: "Take in all the new doctrines!" The Council of Trent met; its first act was to say: "This is the only and sufficient basis and symbol of the Christian faith," and then it recited and printed the Nicene Creed. That was the faith of the Church, even of the Church of Rome, when that Council met. There was no other creed, no other doctrine was accredited or accepted; but before the Council of Trent separated it had assimilated the whole multitude of mediæval superstitions, gathered from the heathen, the Jews, and endless other sources, and put them into the creed, adding them to the old doctrines; so that when the Council parted, instead of reciting the Nicene Creed as the creed of the Christian Church, it recited all the articles of the Council of Trent in addition, and gave the world a new religion. Out of that great movement sprang the Reformed Churches. We owe much to them—we owe to the Lutheran, to the Calvanist, and to the Anglican, which were the three great branches of the Reformation. We owe much to the Puritans, which was an offset, and came more from the Calvinist than from any other body. I hold that the two great English forms of Christianity—the Puritan and the Anglican—were better represented under the roof of the rectory at Epworth than under that of any other house in England; and, therefore, in the early training of the first agents of Methodism, we had both those forms of Reformed Christianity doing what they could to prepare for that upspringing of Methodism. After they had done their best, Oxford did all *it* could do; and when Oxford had done its best, then Providence takes the future messengers of Methodism; and upon the waves of the Atlantic He brings, in addition to what Epworth had done and what Oxford had done, the influence of the German mind and the simple form of the Moravian Brethren, who act upon the cultivated and superior spirit of the Greek Professor from Oxford, and teach him the way of faith as he had never been taught it, either by Anglican or Puritan, mystic, or anyone else with whom he had had to do. No—God never meant Methodism to be of one race, one country, or one time. It had hardly started when it came under the influence of Moravian and German thought; and German feeling, German sympathy, German faith, and German social influences had a vast deal to do with the earlier years of Methodist work. And when it was beginning to grow strong, the vivid incisive passion, the pure, bright French mind of Fletcher came in the midst of the active stirring English mind and the somewhat dreamy German minds that were then at work, incorporating them with great power; and so God prepared the way.

But in the midst of this sprang up what *we* call "local preachers." How did they come? For about three-quarters of a century there had been a strange and narrow reign of Christianity in England. The Reformed Church at first did not develop lay agency as it ought to have done. Reform had rather been directed in other ways; it had not brought lay agency and spiritual membership to the front of the Church concerns as it ought to have done, but still it had not been a narrow, sectarian Church. There came, however, a time when the Church was made very narrow and very sectarian; and in one day 2,000 of the best men were driven out, because they would not confirm to the new narrow tests. From that time for about three quarters of a century, the new narrow Church had possession and power in the land, and religion went down, terribly down. How far it would have gone down God only knows, but that in his mercy He poured out his Spirit. In the midst of the outpouring sprang up this particular form of Methodism— not by any preconcert, not by any result of argumentation but simply as the outgrowth of life. A little of it had been seen, now and then, on the Continent, during the progress of the Reformation; for, wherever the spirit of prophecy—the spirit of divine power—is really shed down upon the Church, there will arise, even under the greatest prejudice and depression, or the severest ecclesiastical discipline, an exercise of the gift. But here it *sprang* up. The word went to John Wesley that Richard Maxfield was beginning to preach; and John Wesley was alarmed. He went to see what it was; he did see, he heard, and felt that God's hand was in it. And so one and then another got up to preach not because they had been taught that they ought to preach, not because any one had sent them to preach, not because they were planned, not because they had a good chapel to preach in—but simply because they felt in their hearts *they could not help it*. That is the only account you can give of the origin of local preaching. Put it into scriptural language and it is just this: the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if kied for all, then were all dead and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.

I hold that as an outgrowth of life, lay preaching will always exist in a living Church. I do not mean, of course, to put that in any cast-iron form, so as to say that Churches that do not admit of any lay preaching are absolutely dead. I do not wish to be understood as uttering anything that would unchurch other people. I distinctly guard myself against that. I hold that where man's forms do not imperiously come in the way of the free work of God's Spirit, and where that Spirit is left to distribute to every man severally as He will, and to add to his own attested power in his own way, the exercise of spiritual gifts will never be confined to the separated ministry. These gifts will be distributed among the brethren generally—to one man the gift of prayer, to another the gift of intercession, to another the gift of supplication, to another the gift of exhortation, to another the word of warning, to another the word of faith, and so on—and it is the sovereignty and headship of the Lord to give these gifts to every man severally as He will. The present power of God, witnessing in his Church by gifts distributed upon his people generally, is one of the forces of Christianity that can never die; and the self-propagating power of the Gospel lies very much in the free gift of God.

Then local preaching we look upon, not merely as an outgrowth of spiritual life, but also as the great and the only legitimate training-ground for the ministry. Of all preposterous things—using the word in that strict sense of putting the after thing before, and the before thing after—nothing can be more preposterous than putting ordination first, and the trial—whether a man can do the work of the ministry—second. But I see no hope for any alternative in any Church where you have not faith in a spiritual laity—faith in the presence of the converting power of the Holy Ghost to raise up in succession, spiritual men to do God's work. If you are first to have the proof that a man is fit to be a minister, and then ordain him, you must have lay labourers. Not in regard to what are called the secularities of the Church only: I never like that distinction, and yet it is useful. The secular things of the Church are very sacred; and I know nothing more sacred than when a man takes the money he has earned by hard labor and sacrifices it to God. But many persons who are very willing that the laity should have a great deal to do with the secularities of the Church—to do anything they can in church building, or in raising money or in relieving the poor—say, "I cannot understand how a layman is to give you spiritual advice, and how a layman is really to understand to pray with you if you are in distress, and point you to Christ, or give you counsel in finding absolution from sin, or in any of those other great and deep questions of the soul." Now I believe it there is anything miserable in the thought of being a Christian minister, it ought to be in the conception of the office as involving a monopoly of spiritual gifts—to stand alone invested with spiritual power, and looking out upon the whole of the people, to say they are merely to be recipients, and not to be fellow-helpers one with another. That to me is a most miserable and lean conception of the office of the Christian minister. How infinitely better that there should be men and women anointed with the spirit of prayer, gifted with the gift of faith, blessed with power to work, and speak, and think for God! To talk about God and Christ, about the Word, about justification, about regeneration, about all the deep and blessed things of the Gospel, is not the professional talk of the clergy, but it is the *business* of every Christian man. Whether we are local preachers or not local preachers, class-leaders or not class-leaders, every man ought to be able to talk of these things, and if occasion be to take his part in defending them. Where you have a number of men beginning to exercise their gifts in the class-meeting, I do not think there is anything better, unless it be at the family prayer—than calling upon a new convert to pray. He does not feel strong enough; but the leader says, "You *must* pray," and encourages him. How many have begun in that way to lisp the first word in prayer of a connected and public kind. Perhaps he breaks down in the attempt. "I can't pray," he says, but he is urged to try another time. At last it begins to come; and by-and-bye that poor lad that trembled so and "could not pray," is heard pouring out such a flood of heaven-taught language as makes those who knew him before wonder where it comes from; and all they can say is, "The Lord must have taught him; it is the Spirit," it is a thousand times more than if he gave any impression of talent or culture. Speaking of the inherent energy of the Church, and of the future that is before the Church, where a number of men are found under the influence and teaching of the Spirit, each one endeavoring to do what he can in the name of the Lord, there will come out the remark of the old woman—"The Lord is working for that man," while the old men say, "If that lad keeps humble, he will have a bright crown." For my own part, I would give a great deal more for that spirit-talk than for any academicals. When one hears of a mother meeting the superintendent of the circuit, and talking of young Mr. So-and-so, who has been preaching in such a place, where she says, "My wild lad was converted under him," one is disposed to believe that the superintendent takes an early opportunity of going to hear him preach, and to see what is in the young man. It is in the conversion of souls that we find the credentials—the credentials that a man has the gift of the Spirit, and that God works with him. The Methodist plan is the scriptural plan—training *for* the work is training *in* the work.

(To be continued.)

ACTS THAT TELL.

BY THE REV. J. L. HARRIS.

Are you a Christian? If so, improve every favorable opportunity to recommend the religion of Jesus to those with whom you associate. Are you doing this? How long have you lived by that unconverted neighbor without speaking to him about his soul? A whole year, perhaps five! If he should die suddenly, and in his sins, how would you feel when you come to stand at his coffin-side? A word from you at one of the thousand opportunities you have had might have saved him. One invitation might have brought him to the Saviour, but, alas! you never gave it.

How often have you passed by that group of idle boys without noticing them? Stop and speak to them. Invite them to the Sunday-school. Take them by the hand and lead them there. Angels will rejoice at the sight. Speak a kind word to that sorrowing brother when you meet him; kind words can never die. Cast a smile upon that weary wanderer. It may keep his heart from breaking. Scatter smiles as you go, sweet smiles; they are brighter than sunshine.

It is the small things that go to make a great and grand life. The pious Dr. Bonar says: "Did a pious life consist of one or two holy deeds—some signal specimens of doing, enduring, or suffering—we might account for the failure, or reckon it small dishonor to turn back in such a conflict. But a holy life is made up of small things of the hour, and not the great things of the age. The avoidance of little evils, little inconsistencies, little weaknesses, little follies, little indiscretions, little indulgences of self, little acts of indolence, or indecision, or slovenliness, or cowardice, little equivocations, or abbrrations from high integrity, little bits of covetousness and penuriousness, little exhibitions of worldliness and gaiety, little indifferences to the feelings and wishes of others, little outbreaks of temper, selfishness, or vanity. The avoidance of such little things as these goes far to make up, at least, the negative beauty of a holy life.

"And then attention to the little duties of the day and hour, in public transactions, or private dealings, or family arrangements; to little words, and looks, and tones; little self-denials, and self-restraints, and self-forgetfulness; little plans of kindness, and thoughtful consideration for others—these are the active developments of a holy and useful life, the devine mosaics of which it is composed.

"And he who will acknowledge no life great save that which is made up of great things, will find little in any Bible character to admire or copy."

JESUS HEARS ME.

"I can't make a very smooth prayer, but Jesus hears me," were among the dying words of a friend of mine. The eighteen years of his life, though obscured by constant invalidism, had yet been very bright and full of pleasure. When his last sickness came, and his friends stood around his bed with serene faces, he was serene, and almost shining. "Why, the angels are around me," he said again and again. "If you could see them as I do you would be glad too."

Two or three days before his death some one was talking to him about prayer—the expression "gifted in prayer," being used. F. looked up and said the words with which I have begun, "I can't make a veay smooth prayer, but Jesus hears me!" The child coming to his father for bread, asks in his simplest way, "My father, I am hungry; please feed me!" The blind beggar by the wayside went with no set petition to the healer when the noise of tramping feet and the sound of many voices told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. The publican said only, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is not the prayer of sonorous length, or of the most melodious phrase, that soonest reaches the throne; it is the heart-cry for peace and pardon that, sent up in faith, reaches the ear of Jesus.

My dear young friend, are you sure that Jesus hears you? He is ever ready to hear, but do you pray to him? How many real prayers for pardon, for life everlasting, have you put up to him who is ever waiting to be gracious? Whether life to you be long or short, it is most important that it be spent in Christ's service, and blessed with Christ's love, and illumined by the hope of life with Christ in heaven. Before you rest again say to yourself, "Jesus hears me," and go with him in humble, believing prayer.—*S. S. Times.*

PRAYER.

Spiritual good after all is the one thing of worth. What we have is little; what we are is all. To heal the body is not worth while if the soul be left sick; it only gives us health to sin and sink still more. A whole man in any true sense is a holy one; the words means the same—whole, healthy, sound every way. Soul healing is the restoring of harmony between our wills and that of God; bringing us to feel that there should only be one will between heaven and earth and that is his. Effecting this, prayer in any case of giving or keeping from us, is unspeakably blessed. To be brought into cheerful, calm accord with the will of the Ever Good; to feel that he and we are as one—that the voice which speaks from above wakes a spontaneous amen in our hearts—is to be filled with the peace that dwells in the breast of the Eternal. It was thus even with Christ himself. What was his prayer first in the garden, but "Father, let me have my own will if it be possible!" but it brought no peace though thrice repeated. It was only when instead, there rose, "Not my will but thine be done," that the cloud passed, and his soul was no longer troubled. To be brought to this is, above all, the grand aim to be sought; finding it, we have heaven in us before we are in it.—*Sunday Magazine.*

FIFTY-THREE SUNDAYS.

The year just closed has had fifty-three Sabbaths in it. If Sunday is the best day in the week, the crown and joy of the seven, this year ought to be specially rich.

Sunday is the day of days for worship, thought, reading, progress in holy life, stepping heavenward.

If it is worth so much more than any other to man as a moral, intellectual, and responsible being, it is amazing that he sets so light a price upon it. It is the happiest day in the week, and he who esteems days by the enjoyment they bring him, ought to find Sunday worth all the rest.

The mail of life is on the six. This alone is pure and sweet and full of rest The others are of the earth, earthly. This is of heaven, and for heaven. The six are for the body, the Sabbath is for the soul. It is the best of all.

And this has been a great year for Sundays—fifty-three of them. If years are to be reckoned by the good they bring us, and this year has been improved, it should be a notable year in our calendar.

Thank God for Sunday! It was made for man. He is foolish who does not enjoy it.—*New York Observer.*

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH SOUTH.

The Rev. Dr. McFerrin, thus writes of its CONDITION AND PROSPECTS, in the St. Louis *Christian Advocate*:—

MESSRS EDITORS: Having taken a pretty extensive tour since August last, and having enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing the condition and prospects of our Church, I have been requested to give the result of my observations, and to state the impressions made on my mind. I comply in a brief article.

1. Our Bishops are all at work, and manifest a zeal commendable. It at fault at all, it is that they are laboring beyond their strength. Surely the office of a Bishop in our Church is no sinecure. One pleasing feature in this connection is, that they are everywhere welcome, and universally popular. The preachers and people receive them joyfully as ministers of Christ, as messengers of the churches. They give satisfactory proof that they are in "the succession" and are true Bishops after the apostolic pattern.

2. The preachers, traveling and local, are in great harmony. I know of no parties, jars, or divisions. The preachers and people are a unit in doctrine and government. Now and then some disappointed, restless spirit, who is not as highly esteemed by others as by himself, *slides into obscurity*. Such losses are, in the end, gain—gain to Methodism, but a loss to the poor, deluded souls who are led astray. In all the old Conferences there is a full supply of workers. Many young men of promise are coming into the ministry. We are not dependent on others for preachers. I pity a Church that has not the ability to supply itself with ministers. It must be a sickly parentage that has next to no offspring, and lives only by adopting the children of the more prosperous. I know a Church, "*so-called*," that has but few children except proselytes; their preachers are nearly all orphans, and go into orders for bread—*and butter*.

3. The great body of the membership is becoming more and more interested in the Church. Hence there is a liberality in the support of the institutions of the Church which never before existed. In proportion to their means, there is an advance of 100 per cent. within the last seven years. Many more persons now aid in the support of the Church than formerly. The preachers are more generously sustained, and other interests are more favorably considered.

4. The cause of Sunday schools is rapidly advancing, and the children are receiving more attention and more thorough instruction.

5. The spirit of church-building is pervading the whole Connection. More good houses of worship have been projected and completed, or old ones enlarged, repaired, and made more comfortable, than in any one year since 1860—perhaps since the time of our organization.

6. The education of the youth of the land is demanding more attention, and the number of pupils in our Conference schools is increasing.

7. Notwithstanding the hardness of the times in money matters, I think our missionary collections, including what has been contributed in payment of the old debt, will exceed those of any year since 1865, by several thousand dollars. And I find more preachers than at any former period willing and anxious to enter new fields of ministerial toil. Scores are just waiting till the Church can afford a little means to aid them in removing to destitute places.

8. There has been a general revival of religion within the past twelve months. I think the net increase the year closing will reach nearly fifty thousand.

Now, in view of the foregoing facts, the impression on my mind is, that we as a Church have reason to thank God and take courage.

There are several particulars in which we need improvement:

1. We need more spirituality, both in the pulpit and in the congregation; more family religion and private devotion.

2. We need more attention to class meeting, the prayer meeting, and the reading of the Scriptures.

3. We need more good singing in congregational worship. Too many of the people take no part in this delightful portion of God's worship.

4. We need more of the spirit of self-denial and generosity. Every man, woman and child must learn to be a cheerful giver," as God hath prospered each.

OUR DANGER.

1. We are in danger of pride and self-sufficiency. The sympathies of the people are with us, and our church has become a great power. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." *Our sufficiency is of God.* Let this be deeply graven on every heart.

2. We are in danger of worldly-mindness, and of being conformed to worldly fashions. There is too much gaudy apparel, and too much jewelry worn by Church members. This to say nothing of the wrong in itself keeps hundreds from the house of God, because they have no suitable clothing. Our sisters should always be plain in dress, and especially at the Church of God.

CONCLUSION.

Let us cherish the good and avoid the evil, and God will make us a thousand times more than we are.

I have been a Methodist from early life, and I love the church more and more; and the last six months have constituted the most pleasant period of my labors since I have been Missionary Secretary.

J. B. MCFERRIN.

THE CHRISTIAN LADY AND THE DRUNKARD.

The world needs just such a presentment of religion as the women of the Church can make. Not teaching nor argument, but the presence of a simple, positive faith; words of Christian testimony and experience; a spirit of sympathy and love. Before such a presence, doubt and skepticism would give way, passion and prejudice yield, and human hearts soften to receive the truth of Christ.

Multitudes are perishing all around our costliest churches for lack of just such words of sympathy and love as the women of the Church can and ought to speak. Men are not reached through their heads, but through their hearts, and women know the most direct channels to the human heart; and their ready tact prepares them to make the most of unexpected opportunities to work for the Master.

A few months ago, a Christian lady passing down one of the streets of Camden, N. J., met a drunken man.

The Spirit suggested, "You might speak to that man." But the cross was heavy and the duty unusual, and she allowed him to pass without a word.

Her heart condemned her, and she remembered that God was greater than her heart, and he would condemn her also; and she resolved that if ever she should have such another opportunity she would speak.

She had not walked one square till she met a young man, and he was intoxicated.

As he came staggering toward her, she said, "Young man, I want to speak with you."

He stopped and straightened himself up before her.

"Oh, I am sorry to see that you have been drinking," she continued.

But he answered, "I don't drink much."

Men never do drink much till they get down into the gutter, and can't get up again.

"I am sorry you drink at all, can't you give this up?" And before the interview closed, it was arranged that she should visit him the next morning at his own house.

She found him awaiting her coming the next day, and he was sober now and an intelligent listener. Before the visit was over he had promised to abstain from drink, and to go with her that very evening to the church.

At the appointed hour he accompanied her to the church, and before the services had closed he was kneeling at the altar, and she was kneeling beside him, pointing him to the Saviour of sinners. Shortly afterward he was brought to the knowledge of the truth in Christ, and his name was registered on the church book.

The Lord has wonderfully qualified the women to go into the homes of the people, and sit down by the fireside, or in the family group, and talk of Jesus and duty and heaven. They can go without restraint, and they will be received with confidence.—*Woman's Work for Jesus.*

THRILLING INCIDENTS IN A SAILOR'S LIFE.

I was early trained by a pious mother to reverence the word and house of God, with all things else that were pure; but, to my shame be it said. I rejected her counsels and determined to escape and go to sea; which I did when near twelve years of age.

Under the influence of an ungodly crew every vestige of a mother's efforts to elevate and purify was quickly, and to all appearance for ever obliterated. The utmost impurities filled the void, and I [plunged headlong into every vice to which unholy man may fall a victim.

Blaspheming, gambling, drunkenness, and kindred evils were followed by renouncing the Bible, cursing the God who made me, and avowing myself an infidel.]

Fired by the zeal of hatred to all good, I sought to disseminate its unholy principles whenever and wherever I could, boasting that it was as good as any other form of religion. My captain was a holy man and the light of his religion shone forth always in the pious example of his life, but despite this standing rebuke of my wickedness, I sank still deeper into sin. * * * * * * * * * * *

"WEIGHED IN THE BALANCES AND FOUND WANTING."

While I was chief mate of the vessel there was at one time a severe test of the principles of the Christian and the infidel.

We lay becalmed many hours near a dangerous and rocky coast. Towards night the wind rose, the waves lifted their heads, grew wild, were lashed into foam, and finally the sails were torn away from the spars by the fury of the tempest.

Near midnight the ship sprang aleak, and all hands were called to the pumps, while but a few miles away a tearful lee shore frowned upon its expected victims who were whirled at the mercy of the waves through the terrible darkness.

We were told now that we were rushing wildly into the eternal world, and in a brief space must meet the grim monster. The voice of our pious captain rang out above the roar of the tempest: "Who is prepared to meet his God?"

Not one of the crew could answer a word, but all stood shivering, despairing, on the brink of fate.

"Without one cheering beam of hope,
Or spark of glimmering day."

What a contrast! The dear old captain lifting his hands reverently towards heaven exclaimed with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown;" and his face lighted up with an ecstacy of joy.

Was there a cry from the infidel crew? Yes, one; a wild piercing appeal to God for mercy. But what was the answer? "Many years have I called ye, but ye would not hearken to my voice. Now I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

The only hope to which I clung was that God would at least hear a mother's and a captain's prayer.

He did. The ship was saved barely and we escaped with our lives.

FOOCHOW MISSION OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

The last mail from China, received on Saturday last, brought us two articles from Rev. Dr. R. S. Maclay, Superintendent of our mission work in China, one of them giving a fuller account of the Foochow Mission Conference than the one which we published two or three weeks since, and the other containing an exceedingly interesting report of the Chinese "Annual Meeting Love feast." The latter will be given to our readers next week. The former we make room for as follows:

The eleventh annual meeting of the Foochow Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church has just closed its session, and I beg to forward you a brief account of it. The session was held in Foochiu city, situated some forty miles southward from Foochow. The city is surrounded by a substantial wall, contains a population say of 30,000, and is the capital of the Foochiu District, which comprises a population estimated at 400,000 and an area about 2,000 square miles. The surface of the country is diversified by hills and mountains, inclosing valleys of rare fertility and beauty. The district is one of the richest in the Foochow prefecture.

Seven years ago the Methodist Mission commenced its evangelistic labors in the Foochiu District, at which time there was not one Christian within its limits. The present statistics for the district, as reported at the late meeting are as follows, namely: Members, 416; probationers, 274; baptized children, 92; total 782. Fourteen native preachers are employed in the district, and one fourth of their salaries is paid by the native Churches, with the understanding that the portion paid by them is annually to increase, while the portion drawn from the Missionary Society is annually to decrease.

The entire field now covered by the operations of the mission comprises five districts of the Foochow prefecture, and all of the Hingwa prefecture, and of all the Yenping prefecture. It should be noted that in *three* of the districts of the Foochow prefecture the Methodist Mission operates conjointly with the Mission of the American Board, and that of the Church of England; in the other portion of the field it is the only Protestant evangelizing agency. The area embraced in this field is about 30,000 square miles, population, 6,500,000. The active field force of the mission comprises *four* missionaries from America, who act as Presiding Elders, each one in charge of what is called a Presiding Elder's district; *four* ordained native elders; *two* ordained native deacons; *ten* unordained native preachers, and *fifty* unordained native preachers on trial. In addition to this field force, the native portion of which is paid jointly by the Mission and the native Churches, there is also what may be called an unpaid *corps de reserve*, comprising *local* preachers and exhorters, licensed by the native Church and responsible to it, who live at the homes, pursue the prescribed course of study and exercise their gifts, under the direction of the native elders, and hold themselves in readiness to fill any vacancy in the regular work to which they may be called, or to open up work in a new field whenever appointed by the missionary in charge. The members of this *corps de reserve* do not participate in the business of the annual meeting, and are not required to attend its sessions.

The recent session of the annual meeting extended over six days, commencing November 1 and closing November 6. From nine o'clock A. M. till noon, and from two to four P. M. of each day—Sunday excepted—the time was devoted to the transaction of business; the evenings were occupied by anniversary exercises. The opening sermon was delivered on the evening of the first by one of the missionaries. The self-support anniversary was held on the evening of the 2d, and I hope to send you translations of the two speeches delivered on the occasion by native preachers. On the evening of the 3d was held the Bible Anniversary; the anti opium meeting occurred on the evening of the 4th and the missionary meeting on the 5th closed the anniversary programme. It is but moderate praise to say of these meetings that were all intensely interesting, that the speeches were very effective, and that their influence on our work is highly beneficial. The annual examination of the preachers were not held at this annual meeting In consequence of the *Shan sin-fan* excitement, which at one time threatened to make it impracticable for us to hold the annual meeting at Foochiu, the missionaries, as a precautionary measure, had conducted all these examinations at the quarterly conferences held a short time before the meeting.

The importance of placing the native Churches as soon as possible on a self-supporting basis was perhaps the most absorbing topic before the meeting. As some of your readers may remember, the Foochow Methodist Mission, at its annual meeting held in November, 1870, initiated a definitr plan on this subject, and incorporated it, as a cardinal principle, with the administration of the Mission. The difficulties necessarily confronting us in trying to introduce the new policy were greatly aggravated during the year by the *Shan-sin-fan* excitement and other causes, so that it was not without solicitude we awaited the results of the experiment, to be made apparent at the annual meeting. It was to us all, therefore, a source of profound joy and gratitude to God to find that the results of the experiment were eminently satisfactory. During the meeting the plan in all its principles and bearings, was thoroughly discussed, every objection and difficulty were carefully examined, and the result was an unanimous verdict of approval. At the close of the self support anniversary, while one of the missionaries was speaking, and in response to his question, the audience vocally expressed hearty approval of the plan. Wishing to give greater distinctness and impressiveness to this expression of approval, the missionary then said, "All who cordially accept this plan, and are determined, in the fear of God, to do all you can toward making it successful, rise to your feet." Instantly the entire audience rose, and remained standing for some minutes, till they were requested to kneel in prayer, one of the ordained preachers leading the devotions, and the great burden of his prayer being earnest supplications to God that all who had given this public pledge might have grace given them to fulfil it. One year ago the Rev. Sia Sek Ong, one of our preachers relinquished his claim upon the Missionary Society for support, and cast himself and family on the native Church. During the year he has been one of our most efficient preachers, and has not drawn a cent from the Missionary Society. A friend said to him, "Do you not regret your decision in entering on your present course?" "No," he replied; "not the thousandth part of a regret has entered my mind on that account." When it was suggested to him that his supply from native sources might fail, and himself and family be left destitute, he answered, "I do not think the supply will fail; but if it does fail, if I come to a place where there is before me no open door, no road, I shall then just stand still and, looking up to my Saviour, say, 'Lord, whither wilt thou lead me?' During the session of the annual meeting he made a most touching address, describing his experience since entering on his new course, and announcing his purpose, with God's blessing, to continue in this way while he lives. He seems to be perfectly happy. It may interest some of our readers to know that at our late meeting *two* more of our preachers, Revs. Li Cha Mi and Ting Mi Ai, announced publicly their purpose to trust henceforth to native support, and have entered on their career. All the other preachers cheerfully assented to further reduction of the portion of their salary drawn from the Missionary Society, to take effect immediately.

The present statistics of the mission are members, 1,007; increase over last year, 78; probationers, 653; decrease as compared with last year, 316; baptized children, 250, increase 11.

The following schedule of our mission works for 1874—72 will convey some idea of our system of operations. The entire field occupied by us is arranged in *four* districts, and a foreign missionary is placed in each district as Presiding Elder. Each district is divided into circuits, and, as a rule, two native preachers are placed on each circuit, though occasionally only one preacher is sent to a circuit. Each circuit has some central station where (one or both of) the preachers have their home, and from which they travel over the adjacent country, visiting other Christian societies, or carrying the Gospel to heathen villages or hamlets. These circuits are united in quarterly conferences held at prominent points, where once a quarter under the direction of the Presiding Elder, the preachers meet for examination in their studies and for the transaction of Church business.—*Christian Advocate.*

EVANGELIZATION OF CHINA.

An excellent article from the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Mission, published simultaneously in the Presbyterian papers, makes a brief but encouraging report of the progress of Christian Missions in China. The work of bringing the Mongolian races in discipleship to the feet of Jesus is seen to be of vast magnitude, and not without its difficulties. Some idea of what is to be done may be obtained from the following processional picture of these races, as described in a tract published by the American Board:

Let us assume 400,000,000 as the population of the Empire, and let us suppose them to pass before us, say five abreast, at the pace of one mile an hour. From morning to night, from night to morning, the ear is burdened by their heavy incessant tread. Who will stand and wait till the last detachment shall have marched by? A procession of a few thousand becomes to the spectator a painful, weariness. But these dusky forms, these children of dark hearts, *will consume seven years in defiling before us*, a long, unresting funereal train. We are awe-struck and confounded—myriads upon myriads, millions upon millions, all journeying like ourselves to the judgment seat, and all ignorant of the way of life.

To sanctify these vast masses and lift them up into Gospel light, will require time as well as immense expenditures of men and means. But continued effort will accomplish this result. The past so proclaims; and God's word makes good the fulfillment of the prediction. From only four missionaries in China in 1841, working under great disadvantage, the working force has now run up to encouraging figures There are over four hundred stations and out stations, occupying forty walled cities and three hundred and sixty villages; and there are over four hundred native preachers now laboring for Christ, with a church membership exceeding seven thousand.