

AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
St. Andrew's Church Mission,
FROM
A. D. 1856 TO A. D. 1887.
CHIEFLY COMPILED
FROM THE RECORD
OF ITS PROCEEDINGS
KEPT IN
St. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL.

W. H. G.

SINGAPORE:
"THE SINGAPORE AND STRAITS PRINTING OFFICE."

1888.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH MISSION.

The St. Andrew's Church Mission was established in 1856 to enable the St. Andrew's Church (now Cathedral) to discharge its duty of making the Gospel known to the heathen around. The circumstances which led to it were as follows. The opening of China led to the removal thither of the London Missionary Society's agents from Singapore. Mr. Keasberry, who was formerly attached to the London Missionary Printing Establishment, preferred to remain on his own account ; and, through his individual zeal and disinterested labour, carried on a Malay Mission, maintaining himself by the profits of a general Press he had in town.

The next Missionary Establishment was that of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, which maintained a well ordered boarding

School for Chinese girls, numbering at the time about 38 of various ages. Nothing of importance was attempted by any other religious bodies.

On Whit-Sunday, 1856, the Rev. W. T. Humphrey, Chaplain of Singapore, addressed the congregation of St. Andrew's Church on the subject of Missions, suggesting to them the duty and feasibility of supporting a Mission of their own. The Malay part of the population was cared for by the zeal and piety of Mr. Keasberry; but for the Chinese and Tamil and general native population of the Island, it was high time that the Church of England should begin to make some spiritual provision. Mr. Humphrey concluded his address by making grateful mention of the labours of the Chinese Female Education Society, and earnestly urging that it was the duty of the congregation to start a Mission of their own. "I am thankful to observe," he said, "that through the blessing of God on the operation of the Chinese Female Mission, we continue to have many enquirers, whom we have every reason to believe to be sincere in desiring to enter

the fold of Christ. Thus we cannot stop if we would. We cannot withhold our attention from those, who so pleasingly require it; so that the congregation of St. Andrew's must, in spite of itself, become a Missionary congregation,—a centre of diffusing to others the light, and comfort, and peace of the knowledge of Christ and Him crucified: and when one thinks that a Dollar a month from each attendant would, if regularly paid, serve to defray the cost of what might be a perfectly organised Mission, I do not, I hope, ask too much when I beg you all to consider, if this cannot be effected."

His appeal was responded to, and on the 25th of June, at a meeting held at the Fort, a Committee was organised to collect monthly, and periodical subscriptions and donations for the purpose of engaging the services of a native Chinese christian as a Catechist for the Chinese, and a native christian of Madras for the like office among the Tamil people. The Chaplain as Honorary Secretary was requested to address the Church Missionary Society in London to ascertain the possibility of their being able to

send out an European Missionary to supervise the operations of the newly formed Mission.

At the end of October, Peter Ty-chicus, a Catechist of the Tamil people, arrived from Madras. He had been long engaged in his native land in Missionary work, and brought with him very satisfactory testimonials. He commenced his work among the immigrant Christians, Mohammedans and Heathens, holding services on Sundays in the lower room of his dwelling.

In the Chinese department of the work some difficulty and delay were experienced in obtaining suitable native agents; still progress was made through the zealous labours in the way of cottage meetings, and other means, of the ladies connected with the Chinese Girls' School.

After a while Yan Quey was engaged as a Reader and Catechist, and Miss Cooke, the agent of the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, kindly allowed the use of a small building in the School compound as a Mission Chapel for Chinese preaching and worship, in which Divine Service was held

every Sunday at 3 p.m. The Chaplain paid periodical visits for the purpose of administering Holy Communion.

At this time the Secretary of the Church Missionary Society sent a reply to the application above mentioned, stating that it was with great regret they found themselves unable from want of men to hold out hopes of undertaking a Mission at so important a place as Singapore. The Committee agreed to defer for the present any direct application to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and go on with native agency under the superintendence of the Chaplain.

The Rev. T. C. Smyth succeeded in 1858, the Rev. W. T. Humphrey, in the Chaplaincy, and for 18 months carried on the Mission as Honorary Secretary, superintending the work of the native agents. Ah See, Sim Kam Tong, and Phoah Sin Soe laboured among the Chinese; but the native congregation, which then numbered some 40 persons, were mainly brought together through the labours of Miss Cooke in visiting and teaching the young women, who were married from her School.

In 1860, the Rev. A. D. Nicholson was appointed Chaplain and undertook the duties of Honorary Secretary. Through his efforts, with the support of the community, the operations of the St. Andrew's Church Mission were extended so as to include a Mission to sailors, but after a time the connection was considered undesirable as friends to seamen were frequently not willing to subscribe towards the work going on among the heathen and vice versâ.

In January 1862, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent out the Rev. E. S. Venn to open a Mission to the heathen in Singapore. In this year the Lord Bishop of Calcutta visited this distant portion of his Diocese; and at a Committee Meeting, at which his Lordship was present, the desirableness of an arrangement for the co-operation of the St. Andrew's Church Mission, and the Mission of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was discussed. The propositions submitted as a basis of union were approved by the Bishop. The temporal concerns of the Mission, and the objects to which particular sums should

be devoted were, as hitherto, to be under the control of the St. A. C. M. Committee, who collect the money for its support, and superintend its application. Mr. Venn, as a clergyman of the English Church, had, as his superior; the Bishop of the Diocese, and was responsible to him on all points of doctrine, morals, and the due discharge of his spiritual functions; but it was deemed right that he should report to the Committee the progress of his work, should consult with them, and do his utmost to carry out their wishes, as to the general direction of his operations.

Three Catechists—Tye Kim, Eng See, and Chok Loi Fat laboured under Mr. Venn, Peter Tychicus still continuing as Catechist to the Tamils. A school for boys was carried on successfully under the superintendence of the Missionary, while encouraging results were manifest in the increasing number that attended the Services. But Mr. Venn's career was cut short by his death which took place in 1866.

At this period, the Rev. C. J. Waterhouse was Chaplain and Honorary Secre-

tary; and the Mission according to the Treasurer's financial statement was in debt,—owing to the departure of friends, and also to great Mercantile depression. The Tamil branch of the Mission was in consequence closed for a time, as the available income from all sources was inadequate for current expenses. The Tamil Catechist had gone away to Madras, and overstayed his leave for three months. This enabled the Committee to close temporarily the Tamil department without injustice to him. On account of Peter Tychicus' faithful service for 10 or 11 years, six months' notice was given him of the Committee's intention to dispense with his services, during which time his pay was continued.

In 1868 the Rev. J. A. Beckles arrived in Singapore as Colonial Chaplain; and the Mission was made over to him with a very heavy debt on it—amounting to about \$1000 and a list of very few subscribers. Appeals for subscriptions were made, but the residents were not disposed to subscribe towards the debt, or really towards the Mission while so

weighted, and the result was that the one Chinese Catechist, Chok Loi Fat, then in the employ of the Mission, was discharged.

Under the circumstances Mr. Beckles requested the Honorary Treasurer to separate the Mission itself from the debt, with which it was encumbered, on the promise that efforts would be made to liquidate it. The Treasurer, Mr. R. Baker, of Messrs. Martin Dyce & Co. who, till that time, had borne the burden of the debt, kindly consented to do so. Through the praiseworthy exertions of the Honorary Secretary the debt was paid off. The sum of \$400 was raised by three amateur concerts, and special collections, towards which the Chaplain himself contributed liberally, amounting to \$500, were made. Upon the payment of these two amounts, the balance was waived by the Treasurer, and thereby the debt was wiped off. The Committee "tendered their sincere thanks to Messrs. Martin, Dyce & Co., and especially to Robert Baker and Wm. Cathcart Hannay Esquires for the great kindness they had shewn to the Mission, in various ways, not the

least of which was their having waited upwards of four years without pressing for the settlement of an over draft on the Mission account of about \$1000 or charging interest upon it.

As soon as the Mission was freed from the burden of the debt, new subscriptions gradually fell in, and the Mission was able to enter again upon its work of usefulness. Peter Tychicus, and the Chinese Catechist were re-engaged, but it was felt that a Missionary in Holy Orders was wanted, not only to conduct the Mission, but to inaugurate new efforts for the evangelization of the heathen. An earnest application was made to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to send out a man in place of Mr. Venn. The Right Rev. Dr. Chambers, Bishop of the Diocese, sent the Rev. C. W. Hawkins to be in temporary charge pending the decision of the Society.

In September 1871, a reply was received from the S. P. G. consenting to support a Missionary on the understanding that a sufficient sum was raised, by local efforts, to defray all the expenses of Catechists, Schools, and all the neces-

sary machinery for the work of the Mission.

In 1872, the Rev. Wm. H. Gomes, who had long and varied experience of Missionary work in Sarawak and Ceylon, was appointed S. P. G. Missionary and Superintendent of the local Mission. Three classes of people in Singapore demanded the attention of the Missionary. The Eurasians and Straits-born Chinese, who speak Malay; the immigrants from China, who understand no other language but their own; and the immigrants from India speaking the Tamil language. Efforts were directed towards holding Services in the three languages—Malay, Chinese, and Tamil.

The Rev. J. A. Beckles was compelled to resign the Colonial Chaplaincy on account of ill-health, and the Rev. G. F. Hose succeeded him. The Committee on learning that the Rev. J. A. Beckles would not return to Singapore, "placed on record their sense of the many valuable services rendered by him to the Mission; and especially that of having freed it, by his energy and good management, in the years 1869 and 1870 from the large debt

with which the Mission was burdened at the time Mr. Beckles assumed the office of Honorary Secretary."

An event of great importance to the welfare of the Mission has now to be recorded, and that is, in October 1873, the Straits Government made a grant of land to the Mission for the purpose of erecting a School, and other necessary buildings. At the time a house was rented for the Missionary, another for the School; and the buildings, besides being expensive, were very unsuitable, and widely separated from each other. Great inconvenience was also sustained from the necessity of collecting the small body of native Christians for prayer and instruction in the Cathedral,—a building singularly unfitted for such Services. Moreover the English Services, three on Sundays with the Sunday School which is also held in the Cathedral, would not allow of that building being used to the extent required.

It was proposed therefore to build a Mission Church, which could be used for a School on week days; and it was hoped that this would eventually

be followed by a School and a Mission House.

With pecuniary aid rendered by Dr. Chambers, the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, the Tamil branch of the Mission was re-opened in April 1874. Through the kindness of Dr. Kennett, Secretary to the Christian Knowledge Society, Madras, the services of Francis Samuel, a Catechist of some experience, were secured, under an agreement to serve the Mission for 3 years.

On the 14th of February, 1875, the Mission Chapel was opened for Divine Service. It was built by local subscriptions, and by aid from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In the appeal made for funds the native Christians responded most liberally. The Chinese and Tamil congregations contributed upwards of \$200, some of them giving a month's wages to be paid in four instalments. This voluntary self-denial was a gratifying proof of religious earnestness, for it should be remembered that the migratory character of the people in the Straits does not leave at any time a large body of Christians in Singapore, and the

majority belong to the labouring class. Services and Missionary Meetings have since been held in the Chapel in the four languages—English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil. The steady increase of the congregations, who assemble there for worship, and the evident interest taken by the native Christians shew how greatly such an edifice was needed.

In 1877, the second of the three buildings, originally proposed to raise on the Mission land, *viz.*, a Mission House, with accommodation for native students in divinity, was put up. Shortly after it was finished a Chinese lad from the Sarawak School was sent with a view to undertaking work as a Catechist, and eventually receiving Holy Orders. He was an inmate in the Mission House, and studied under the Missionary for over two years, but at last preferred secular employment. Another student, Matthew Balavendrum, the son of the Rev. R. Balavendrum of Penang, received instruction in theology for 3 years; and was afterwards sent to the S. P. G. Theological College in Madras. His expenses during the whole time were

paid by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He has since returned and is now in charge of the Tamil congregation.

In the year 1876, a new Mission station was opened out in Jurong. This district is 12 miles by land, or 25 miles by water from the town of Singapore, and is covered with gambier and pepper plantations. The circumstances under which the Mission was opened are peculiar. A planter, who was residing for the last 12 years at the place, came to the Missionary seeking for instruction, and requesting that a Catechist should be sent to teach his people. He had been, according to his own statement, a great opposer of our holy religion, and had tried to the utmost of his power to check the spread of Christianity among his countrymen, and had been guilty of various acts of petty tyranny and oppression towards such as had embraced it. But God was pleased by his grace to lead him to the truth, and convince him of the sinfulness of his past life. He said, that notwithstanding his wickedness God had prospered him: and he was there-

fore anxious to spend and be spent in His service. At his own expense, he built a small Chapel on his estate, with a view to help in that way to spread the Gospel among his countrymen scattered over the different plantations. On one occasion when the Bishop of the Diocese, and the Rev. G. F. Hose, Chaplain and Honorary Secretary, visited this station, the latter recorded his impression, in the annual Report for 1878, as follows :—" During the year the Bishop visited the distant out-station on the Jurong river, accompanied by Mr. Gomes and myself. It was a working day, but the labourers in the gambier and pepper plantations left their work, and, with their employer, came to Service in the little rustic Chapel, which they have built themselves. The building was quite full, and it was a heart-stirring spectacle to see these rough coolies using their Prayer Books, at least as intelligently as Bedfordshire villagers did fifteen years ago, joining in all the responses, saying the alternate verses of the Canticles, singing most heartily if not *very* musically. And shewing in every

possible way that they had learnt the meaning and use of *common* prayer. During the addresses that followed, they listened with the greatest attention, and I thought as I looked upon the changing expression of their faces, that it was by no means an uncritical audience."

When the Venerable Archdeacon Hose went to England for his consecration as Bishop of the Diocese, he enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of some friends, especially of Mrs. Whitchurch, the widow of Nathaniel Whitchurch, Esq., of Great Barford House, Bedfordshire, and through their liberality, which was afterwards supplemented by a generous donation from A. L. Donaldson Esq., of Singapore, a suitable and permanent Church has been put up on a piece of ground kindly granted by the Straits Government. It was consecrated on 4th February 1884, and dedicated under the name of the Apostle St. John. The Service was solemn and interesting, and the Church full. Thirty-one persons partook of the Holy Communion. On the 23rd of March, five adults were baptized, who had been under instruction, and waited to make

their open profession of faith in the new Church. As in Singapore, so in Jurong, the consecration of a building specially set apart for the worship of God, seemed to bring together a larger number of worshippers.

Chiu Sin Wha, the Chinese Catechist died in 1882. For ten years he laboured zealously and successfully among his countrymen, and was instrumental, under God's blessing, in leading many to a saving knowledge of the truth. He was baptized in Malacca in connection with the Church Mission there; and from the time of his conversion, he laboured as an earnest evangelist, at first on his own account, and latterly as an employé of the St. Andrew's Church Mission. He left all he had, about \$300, to be laid out at interest for the benefit of the Mission. Another Christian shortly before his death gave \$50 for the same object. This Bequest Fund, the interest of which is paid yearly to the Mission Account, it is hoped will be the nucleus of an Endowment Fund, for maintaining native agents. The amount is deposited in the Government Savings Bank.

The Mission School for boys has steadily increased, and is supported by the results-grant and school fees. It pays its own expenses, but this is only because it is held in the Mission Chapel, and is not therefore burdened with the heavy charge for house-rent. At the Government Inspection in December, 1884, it obtained 93 per cent. of passes—"a result," said the Inspector, "which is very satisfactory." The Inspector urged the necessity of putting up a separate building for the School, now that the pupils had so greatly increased. He wrote:—"The attendance during the year has been regular, averaging 81 per cent. of those in average enrollment. The number of pupils attending the School is now so large, the average enrollment for the past year being 126, that the Mission building in which the School is now held, scarcely affords sufficient accommodation for the pupils, and the time seems to have come, when it is very desirable that an effort should be made to complete the original scheme under which the erection of a separate School building was contemplated in

addition to the Mission House and Chapel."

Instead of having one Chinese Catechist, who could speak several dialects, the plan has been adopted of employing from amongst our converts those who shew an aptitude for teaching, and are anxious to employ themselves in spreading a knowledge of the Gospel among their countrymen. In this way, upon comparatively small salaries, five Chinese Catechists are at work among the Hokien, Tey chew, Cantonese, and Keh people. The Services in the Mission Chapel, Singapore, on Sundays are three—in Chinese at 9 a.m., in Tamil at 11 a.m., and Malay at 7-30 p.m. In St. John's Church, Jurong, there are two Services in Chinese on Sundays. The Missionary pays monthly visits to this station to inspect the work that is going on, and administer Holy Communion.

The Chinese congregation, in Singapore, is made up of members, who speak distinct dialects or languages, and to conduct the Service in one dialect would be unintelligible to many. The difficulty is partially met by reading the

prayers in one, and the lessons in two other dialects. The sermon is in Hokien, which is rendered into Cantonese by one of the congregation.

In the Report for 1885 it is stated that the conduct of the Native Christians generally has been consistent and exemplary. "They continue to afford proof of their self-denial and appreciation of the benefits conferred through the Mission. A remarkable instance was given in the liberality with which they responded to the appeal for aid to build a Church in Thaipeng, Perak, for Europeans and Natives. The congregations at the two Chapels in Singapore and Jurong subscribed towards this object \$100.23. Considering that the money was for an extraneous purpose this voluntary contribution, according to and "beyond their power" is an indication of spiritual health. And what is more, this liberality did not affect materially their usual half-yearly contribution towards the support of the local Mission, which was given shortly after. The collections on Advent Sunday, and Whit Sunday for the current expenses of St. Andrew's

Church Mission amounted to \$171.65. Besides *these two* amounts, they contributed during the year for the sick and needy, and the expenses connected with the up-keep of the Chapels the sum of \$274.74."

"In a place like Singapore where our Christians are continually leaving the Settlement in search of employment elsewhere, or to return to their own country, it is difficult to estimate numerically the state of the Mission. But the attendance at the services has been good. The largest attendance during the year, at one Service in the Mission Chapel was 128, and communicants 66."

At Jurong on Sunday, the 11th of December, 1887, when the Bishop visited the Mission, preached and celebrated the Holy Communion, the congregation was nearly sixty, and there were 26 communicants.

While thankful for the success vouchsafed by God, in the past, to our necessarily limited means and endeavours, let us, with renewed perseverance, do *our* part, hand in hand with other Missions in the place, to further the object dear to

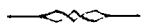
the hearts of all Christians, of extending the Redeemer's Kingdom, by "making His way known upon earth, His saving health among all nations.

At the present time (December 1887) there is a special necessity for additional local support. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which has so long and so generously aided the efforts that have been made here, has announced that the time has come when a portion of its grant should be applied to new work in another part of the Diocese. The practical result of this is that the income available for Missionary purposes in Singapore will be reduced in 1888 by £100. In a sermon preached in the Cathedral on Advent Sunday, the Bishop appealed to the residents in Singapore to supply this deficiency. The appeal has already been responded to by some of the subscribers, who have doubled the amount of their annual contributions. But the thing, which is most earnestly desired is that the interest of new friends should be enlisted for this work. And it is hoped that this will be secured by bringing the story of the Mission and its

claims before them by means of this historical statement. And that, not only the income will be maintained at its present amount, but that the means will be supplied of announcing the message of the Gospel in new centres by additional agents.

W. H. G.

December, 1887.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH MISSION.

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Committee of Management.

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The Trustees of the Cathedral
(if subscribers).

The Rev. W. H. Gomes.
St. V. B. Down.
J. Cooper.

—o—

President—The Hon'ble A. M. Skinner.
Hon. Secretary—The Ven'ble Archdeacon Meredith, M.A.
Hon. Treasurer—St. V. B. Down.
Sup. of the Mission—The Rev. W. H. Gomes, B.D.
Catechist—Eng Hok...for the *Hokiens*.
" —Yun Sin...for the *Kehs*.
" —Ah Man...for the *Cantonese*.
" —Yeuk Han...for the *Cantonese*.
" —Hoai To...for the *They Chew*.
" —M. Balavendrum for the *Tamils*.

SERVICES

in connection with the

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH MISSION.

Daily 8-30 a.m.—Morning Prayer *in English* in the Mission Chapel.

Sunday 9 a.m.—Service in *Malay* on first Sunday of the month; in *Chinese* on other Sundays.

„ 11 a.m.—Service in *Tamil*.

„ 7-30 p.m.—Service in *Malay*.

Monday 7-30 p.m.—Service in *Chinese* in Victoria Street.

Tuesday 8 p.m.—Bible Class in *Chinese* in Mission House.

Friday 7-30 p.m.—Service in *Malay* in Mission Chapel.

Saturday 7-30 p.m.—Service in *Chinese* in Victoria Street.

Jurong 9 a.m. { Service in *Chinese* on
and 3 p.m. { Sundays in St. John's
Church.

Celebration of Holy Communion in *Malay* on the first Sunday of the month and on the great Festivals; in *Chinese* on the third Sunday of the month.