A CIRCULAR

Address from the subscribers, Local Preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church, residing in the City and vicinity of Baltimore, to their Local Brethren throughout the United States of America.

Dear Brethren,

We assume the liberty of addressing you on this eventful occasion, as witnesses—and we trust that when you consider our Local situation, you will not be displeased, should we subjoin a few remarks which are elicited from us by this new epoch, this new mode of existence, which we have at this moment received, in the following

RESOLUTIONS ON LOCAL PREACHERS.

First—Resolved by the delegates of the Annual Conference, in General Conference assembled: That there shall be held annually, in each Presiding Elder's district, a District Conference, of which all the Local Preachers in the district, who shall have been licensed two years shall be members; and of which the Presiding Elder of the district for the time being, shall be President; or in case of his absence, the Conference shall have authority to elect a president pro tem. It shall be the duty of the Presiding Elder of each district, to appoint the time and place of the first Conference; after which, the Presiding Elders shall appoint the time, and the Conference the place of its own sitting.

Second.—That the District Conference shall have authority to license proper persons to preach and renew their license, to recommend suitable candidates to the Annual Conferences for Deacons or Elder's orders in the Local connexion, for admission on trial in the travelling connexion, and to try, suspend, expel, or acquit any Local Preacher in the district against whom charges may be brought.—Provided, That no person shall be licensed without being first recommended by the Quarterly Conference of the circuit or station to which he belongs; nor shall any one be licensed to preach, or recommended to the Annual Conference for ordination without first being examined in the District Conference on the subjects of doctrine and discipline.

Third.—That the District Conference shall take cognisance of all the Local Preachers in the district, and shall enquire into the gifts, labours and usefulness of each preacher by name.

Fourth.—That when charges are preferred against any Local Preacher, it shall be the duty of the preacher in charge to call a committee, consisting of three or more Local Preachers within the station, circuit, or district, before whom it shall be the duty of the accused to appear, and by whom he shall be acquitted, or, if found guilty, be suspended until the meeting of the next District Conference.

Fifth.—That our form of discipline, so far as relates to Local Preachers, be so altered as to be rendered conformable with this report.——A true copy, from the Journals.

Alexander McCaine, Secretary.

We can hardly say which has given us the greater satisfaction, the thing itself, or the manner in which it has been imparted. If we may trust to words, which in deliberative bodies are generally pretty sure indications of their disposition, we may presume, that the General Conference have an high, if not an entire confidence in the Local Ministry, and if there be a mind among us incapable of appreciating and reciprocating this disposition, such a mind must be unfit for any correspondence.

We have no doubt, all felt the want of something which would render our efforts towards mental improvement and general usefulness, more efficient. But from the entire want of social organization, and from the remoteness of our situation from each other, we have not been able to form any thing like union of sentiment respecting the nature or extent of the remedy so generally desired.

One of the radical defects under which the connection has suffered, was the want of a proper division of labour. For however desirable a correct division of power may be in the social compact, modern economists have demonstrated that a division of labour is equally necessary to the practical purposes of social life.

Much has been said, and we are sorry to add, somewhat invidiously upon the subject of "Preacher Making;" as rational efforts to improve our young men, have been quaintly called; but let not the adage be forgotten, that "Every thing must have a beginning"—and that the intervention of human agency is made necessary to all human purposes by the adorable Creator himself; and let us unanimously give attendance to reading as well as to exhortation and doctrine.

Let us set such examples before our young men, that they may revere our admonitions, when we shall dwell upon the instruction of Paul to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." Who can estimate the additional dignity and usefulness which a few years of careful study and research on the part of the local ministry, would secure to the Methodist Episcopal Church?—It is due to God and to the community, that this important interest should be realized.
We have intimated that the General Conference have reposed almost entire confidence in the Local Ministry. And so, we trust it will appear to you, when you shall have reflected upon the nature and consequences of this recent act of legislation. Is it not as though they had said? Who shall act the part of parents or guardians for our spiritual children? Answer. The Local Preachers. Where shall the nursery be formed to discipline and prepare our young men for the important work of the Ministry? Answer. Among the Local Preachers. Where shall our exhausted and aged Travelling Preachers, who are able and willing to live above dependence upon their brethren, retire? Answer. Among the Local Preachers. If we consider brethren, that according to the universally admitted maxim, “it is in the nursery that the future man is formed,” and that however the youthful heart may bound from the trammels and restraints of Parental control, or advice, Age and experience revive our filial affections. We may perceive that in addition to the great and important work, that has been apportioned unto us, we have the best security for our hold upon the affections of the travelling connection. For while the mother will ever cherish a tender remembrance of the children she has nurtured, the recollections of a parent’s affection and services, will be equally endearing on the part of her children.

It is true brethren, that under the present order of things we shall have no immediate suffrage in the choice of our legislative and executive officers. But when we consider that in a few years of successful operation, all those by whomsoever chosen, will be as dear to us as our own children, and will themselves so completely associate with our names, the image of our loving fathers, that ambition and revolution will be as rare among us, and as little to be dreaded, as unnatural affection and parricide; and like those shocking enormities will appear sufficiently odious to carry their own corrections with them. With becoming sentiments of brotherly love, we are your fellow labourers in the kingdom and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NICHOLAS SNEHEN,
JOHN HAGERTY,
SAMUEL K. JENNINGS,
JOSEPH SHANE,
DANIEL EVANS REESE,
SAMUEL WILLIAMS,
LODMAN ELBERT,
GREENBURY RIDGELY,
JAMES R. WILLIAMS,
JOHN VALIANT,

EDWARD HALL,
JACOB KING,
THOMAS PERKINS,
WILLIAM KESLEY,
JAMES ARMSTRONG,
THOMAS MCCORMICK,
GEORGE REDDING,
JOHN ROBB,
JOHN S. REESE,
WILLIAM MITCHELL,

Nantucket June 19th, 1820.

Dear Brother,
The Circular from Baltimore will inform you what the G. Conference have done; & these lines will inform you that a local preacher in this station is to take his trial under the new law. It is in contemplation to commence his trial on Wednesday the 15th instant. On that day the Conference commences its session.

You are hereby notified that you are appointed on the bar of trial. I hope you will attend without fail. If you should not be able to get together on that day we must take the day following.

Yours respectfully,
T. Merritt
P.S. Your communication on the subject of the revival in Provincetown will appear in the next number of the Mag. i.e. for June.

T. M.