

CONFERENCE OF THE BISHOPS OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN CHINA AND COREA

The Bishops of the American and English Churches in China and Corea, who met in conference last April at St. John's College, Shanghai, issued the following letter:—

TO THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN CHINA AND COREA, GREETING!

We, Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, all of us being lawfully commissioned to exercise episcopal function in China or Corea, assembled at St. John's College, Shanghai, under the presidency of the Right Rev. George Evans Moule, by Divine Providence Bishop of the Church of England in Mid China, after receiving in St. John's Chapel the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, and uniting in prayer for the guidance, of the Holy Spirit, have taken into consideration various questions affecting the welfare of God's people and the condition of the Church in these lands.

It seemed good to us to associate with ourselves in the discussion of these questions several of the most experienced priests of our respective dioceses, and, after such discussion, which lasted during two whole days, to meet by ourselves alone for the purpose of final consideration of the questions involved, and for passing such resolutions as were deemed suitable and beneficial.

The whole of the resolutions here appended were passed by us unanimously; it being, nevertheless, clearly understood from the first that no resolution of the conference would be held to be binding merely in virtue of such resolution.

We are sure that the importance of most if not all of them will be acknowledged by the clergy, whether Native or foreign, and that all the members of our communion (we would fain hope, in some cases those who are beyond our borders) will be thankful if they should be found to contribute in any measure towards a solution of the questions involved.

On three of the subjects discussed* we have thought the appointment of a committee to investigate further and report to the president would be of real practical advantage in bringing about a wider concurrence of usage.

Two other subjects were discussed by ourselves alone: (1) the subdivision of existing dioceses of the Anglican Church in China, Manchuria, and Corea, and (2) the relation of the American and English branches of the Church in China and Corea, and a resolution was passed on each. These are not incorporated with the other resolutions, since the initiative in any action involved rests rather with our home Churches than with ourselves, and it seems to us that no good end would be served by the publication of our opinions at this time.

We would call upon you all to join us in giving thanks to Almighty God for His goodness in permitting us thus to meet in conference together, and for His favour manifested to us all during these meetings. We earnestly commend to your prayers the labours of the committee appointed to report on several of the subjects discussed, and of those responsible for the issue of the Church periodical in Chinese.

We pray that the deepened sense of our oneness in Christ Jesus and in the bonds of our common communion which have been vouchsafed to ourselves during this Conference may be abundantly

granted to our clergy and their flocks also; and further, that our having been permitted thus to manifest the real unity of the Anglican Communion in these countries, notwithstanding the different nationalities, various missionary agencies, and divergent schools of thought represented, may in the good providence of God prove to be one step onward in the direction of that perfect unity which we believe to be according to the mind of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

We are, with brotherly love,

Your servants, for His sake,

G. E. MOTILE, Bishop in Mid China, President.

CHARLES PERSY SCOTT, Bishop of North China.

CHAELES JOHN CORFE, Bishop of the Church of England in Corea and Shingking.

F. B. GBAVES, Bishop of Shanghai and the Lower Yang-tse Valley.

W. W. CASSELS, Bishop in Western China.

Shanghai, April 6th, 1897.

RESOLUTIONS

I. In view of current misunderstandings arising out of the two terms, "religion of the Lord of Heaven" and "religion of Jesus," as though the two were fundamentally distinct religions, this Conference recommends that all branches of the Anglican Communion should use and promote the use of "religion of Christ" as equivalent of Christianity.

II. That as a term to designate all Churches in China and Corea within the Anglican Communion this Conference recommends the adoption of "Tsung Ku Chiao Hwei" as the equivalent of "Anglican Communion."

III. In view of the two renderings of the baptismal formula in use in the various Missions of the Anglican Church in China and Corea—the variety mainly turning on the question whether the formula should come from the Latin, as in our English Prayer-book, or direct from the original Greek—this Conference proposes to appoint a committee to investigate this question with a view to a uniform use hereafter.

IV. That this Conference, without any hesitation, reaffirms the sanctity and the importance to the life of the Church of the Lord's Day [see Report of Lambeth Conference, 1888], but nevertheless is convinced that under present conditions in these lands, clergy in charge of congregations and Bishops in judging cases referred to them are bound to give due consideration to circumstances in dealing with Christians who absent themselves from Divine service and plead the requirements of their occupation or trade as reason.

V. That a committee be appointed to consider the various methods of discipline existing amongst us at present and to report at the next meeting of this Conference.

VI. This Conference, after full and careful consideration of the important letter addressed to them by many of their clergy in 1896, asking for a common classical version of the Book of Common Prayer, convinced as they are of the desirableness of uniformity in the rendering of theological and

liturgical formula, nevertheless feel that in view of the difference in some minor but important respects, besides the Canon of the Holy Communion, between the American and English Prayer books, it is impossible at present to secure a common version in classical Chinese for all our dioceses. Meantime, deeming on the one hand the widely used Prayer-book of Bishop Burdon to stand in need of revision in respect both of terminology and arrangement, and aware that the American Mission has bestowed much labour on the revision of their Prayer-book, and is now approaching its completion and publication, advises the postponement of the undertaking until the Bishops and their clergy shall have had an opportunity of studying that revision with a view to its possible adoption, at least in respect of theological terminology.

VII. That this Conference adopts the report of the provisional committee on the publication of a Church periodical subject to the acceptance of the office by the proposed editors.

VIII. Seeing that the existing method of reckoning the days of the week which has been commonly used by the non-Roman Catholic Churches in China since the early part of the century is inconvenient and misleading, this Conference resolves that it is most desirable that in all branches of the Church in China and Corea distinct efforts should be made to change the phraseology, so that whilst "Lord Day" stands for Sunday, Monday is always spoken of as the second day of the week.

IX. This Conference recognizes with thankfulness the amount of unanimity already attained on the point of common terms for the Holy Ministry, and inasmuch as the chief diversity appears in the rendering adopted for the second order of the Ministry, the Conference resolves to appoint a committee for the consideration of this particular question, not excluding powers of considering reporting on the names for the other orders of the Ministry.

X. This Conference records its sense of deep thankfulness to Almighty God for His assistance vouchsafed during the three days' session now ended, and resolves that, God willing, a similar Conference be convened, at Shanghai by the senior Bishop in the autumn of 1899.

XI. That a letter in English and Chinese, accompanying the above resolutions be sent to the clergy and Christians in China and Corea.

G. E. MOULE, Bishop of the Church of England in Mid China, President.
CHABLES PEEBY SOOTT, Bishop of the Church in England in North China.
CHARLES JOHN CORFE, Bishop of the Church of England in Corea and Shingking.
FBBDEBIOK ROOEKS GRAVES, Bishop of Shanghai and the Lower Yang-tse Valley.
WILLIAM WHARTON OASSELS, Bishop in Western China.

* A common formula for Holy Baptism, common terms (or the three orders of the Holy Ministry, and Church discipline.