

LETTER AND RESOLUTIONS
OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE BISHOPS

OF THE
Anglican Communion

IN CHINA AND HONGKONG

HELD AT SHANGHAI

OCTOBER 19th-23rd, 1903.

Letter.

To the

CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION IN CHINA AND HONGKONG.

Greeting.

WE, Bishops of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, having jurisdiction in China and Hongkong, assembled at Shanghai under the presidency of the Right Reverend GEORGE EVANS MOULE, by Divine Providence Bishop of the Church of England in Mid-China, after receiving in Holy Trinity Church the Blessed Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood and meeting 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.

After a conference of two days in association with several of the most experienced Priests of our respective dioceses,* we met on the third day for final consultation, and the Resolutions here appended were passed by us unanimously; it being, nevertheless, clearly understood, as on former occasions, that no resolution of the Conference would be held binding on the clergy and people of our respective dioceses merely in virtue of such resolution.

Since the last Conference, held in Shanghai in October 1899, the number of Bishoprics in China has been increased by two, through the establishment of the Missionary diocese of Hankow (American Church)

* In the case of the North China diocese it was impossible to secure the attendance of a priest.

in Central China, and that of Shantung (Church of England) in North China. The Bishop of Hankow, the Right Reverend JAMES ADDISON INGLE, was happily able to be present. The Bishop designate for Shantung, the Right Reverend GEOFFREY DURNFORD ILIFF is (D.V.) to be consecrated in England on S.S. Simon's and Jude's day.

The Conference deeply regretted the unavoidable absence of two of the Bishops: Bishop CASSELLS of Western China, who from the great distance of his sphere of work, and the consequent isolation, especially values these opportunities of conferring with his brother bishops and clergy; and Bishop CORFE of Corea, to whose initiation the Conference largely owes its existence; while his keen and practical interest in its work was a most valuable and stimulating element in its deliberations.

We feel it is impossible in a letter addressed to all the clergy and laity of our communion in China, to pass by, without some notice, however brief, the great upheaval of 1900, involving, as it did, the violent deaths of several of our own clergy and native brethren, severe and protracted sufferings on the part of many, fears and alarms over wide areas ultimately spared in the mercy of God, a great sifting of the Christians themselves, and much wanton destruction of property; and moreover bringing in its train many consequences of which we cannot at present predict the ultimate issue. That all who suffered may be comforted, that waste and desolate places may be restored, that interrupted work may be resumed, and that each of us may learn what God would teach us by that awful discipline, is our earnest prayer; while yet in humble self-abasement we dare to thank Him for brethren and sisters, Foreign and Native, of our own and other communions, who were "faithful unto death,"

and gave evidence to all the world that the Christian Faith now as of old is still powerful to enable men and women, and even children, to brave danger, torture and death.

Our gathering has been solemnized, if deeply saddened, by the sudden removal of one loved and honoured by us all, whether Foreigners or Natives, for his Christian character and work—the Reverend H. C. HODGES, Chaplain of the Cathedral—one gratefully remembered too for kind and generous hospitality constantly extended to us, and to many of yourselves. You will, before this letter reaches you, have made your prayers to “the God of all comfort” for her upon whom this great sorrow has come: for him, who has thus been taken from our midst, we rest on those words of the refrain which we sang in the bright Autumn sunshine, by his grave:

“Father, in Thy gracious keeping,
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping.”

Thanking God once more for the manifest presence of His Holy Spirit in our deliberations, and praying that the same Spirit may more and more join us and our clergy and their flocks in “the bond of peace,”

We are, with brotherly love,

Your servants for Christ's sake,

G. E. MOULE, Bishop in Mid-China,—President.
C. P. SCOTT, Bishop in North China.
F. R. GRAVES, Bishop of Shanghai.
J. C. VICTORIA, With missionary jurisdiction in South China.
J. A. INGLE, Bishop of Hankow.

SHANGHAI, *October 23rd, 1903.*

Resolutions.

That the fact that this Church, in the providence of God, possesses at the same time a pure faith and apostolic order is at once a call to her to hand on the same to the Chinese, and fits her to have a special part in the Christianisation of China. And we therefore earnestly urge the Church at home to use greater efforts to extend the work of the Church to all parts of this Empire.

In carrying out the above object, we consider that the Church should bear in mind the following points :

1. It should be made an aim to occupy strongly one or more stations in each Province, rather than to establish many weak stations ;
2. The men sent out should be thoroughly well qualified men.
3. No men should be sent to establish new stations unless they have had adequate experience in existing stations or can be sent under the guidance of experienced missionaries ;
4. Women workers should also be called for, but should only be sent to established stations in which they can be under proper protection.

That there be published yearly, in English and Chinese, a list of Chinese and foreign clergy and statistical tables of all the work of the Anglican Communion in China, the particular form to be determined by the Standing Committee.

III.

That at the next meeting of this Conference arrangements be made for a representation of the Presbyters of each Diocese, the details of the scheme to be left to the Standing Committee, special attention being paid to the following points :

1. Attendant Presbyters,—to be foreign only, or Chinese also?
2. Attendant Presbyters to be all elected, or partly nominated by the Bishop?
3. Electorate—confined to foreign Clergy or to embrace native Clergy also?
4. Proportion of representatives to the whole number of those eligible.
5. Powers and order of voting.
6. The arrangements for selection of subjects.

The report on the scheme to be submitted by the Standing Committee to the other Bishops for their consent.

IV.

The Conference appointed a Standing Committee to which all matters of common interest might be referred in the intervals between the meetings of Conferences, and as a means by which the opinions of the Bishops generally might be obtained on some important point without actually meeting. Bishop Moule and Bishop Graves were elected as the Committee, with a Presbyter to act as Secretary.

V.

That the Conference meet again in Shanghai in October 1906.