

RESOLUTIONS AND APPEAL

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE

Conference of Protestant Missionaries

General Conference of the Protestant
missionaries - China, Shanghai, 1877

AT

SHANGHAI, MAY 16TH, 1877.



SHANGHAI:
METHODIST MISSION PRESS.

MDCCCLXXVII.



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CONFERENCE OF PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES

AT SHANGHAI, MAY 16TH, 1877.

In view of the magnitude of the field of labor and of the inadequacy of the present mission force in China to occupy the fields white unto the harvest, therefore

Resolved. That a Committee be appointed consisting of the following persons :—

- Mr. A. Wylie, of the British and Foreign Bible Society.
- Rev. L. H. Gulick, M.D., of the American Bible Society.
- Rev. A. Williamson, LL.D., of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.
- Rev. C. Douglas, LL.D., of the English Presbyterian Church.
- Rev. C. Goodrich, of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.
- Rev. G. John, of the London Missionary Society.
- Rev. M. T. Yates, D.D., of the Southern Baptist Convention, U.S.A.
- Rev. J. H. Taylor, M.D., of the China Inland Mission.
- Rev. J. W. Lambuth, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, U. S. A.
- Rev. E. H. Thomson, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, U. S. A.
- Rev. S. L. Baldwin, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, U. S. A.
- Rev. J. V. N. Talmage, D.D., of the Reformed Church, U. S. A.
- Rev. J. R. Goddard, of the Baptist Missionary Union, U. S. A.
- Rev. C. R. Mills, of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.
- Rev. B. Helm, of the Southern Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.
- Rev. D. Hill, of the Wesleyan Missionary Society.
- Rev. F. F. Gough, of the Church' Missionary Society.
- Rev. R. Lechler, of the Basel Mission.
- Rev. C. P. Scott, of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
- Rev. W. N. Hall, of the Methodist New Connection, England.
- Rev. R. Swallow, of the United Methodist Free Church, England.

Resolved. That said Committee prepare, in behalf of this Conference of over one hundred missionaries, a fervid and earnest appeal to the various Mission Boards, Colleges and Churches of the world, for more men and women for China.

Resolved. That an edition of four thousand copies of the Programme of this Conference, these Resolutions and the Appeal, be printed, to be circulated by the missionaries of the different Mission Boards among all the centres of influence in their respective connexions.

In accordance with the foregoing resolutions, the Committee invite the most earnest attention of their brethren throughout the whole world to the following facts and thoughts:—

I. China is by far the largest heathen country in the world. Including its dependencies, it embraces a territory larger than the whole continent of Europe; or, excluding the Mohammedan kingdoms, it is about equal to all the rest of the heathen nations combined.

II. It is also beyond all question the most important. The discoveries of Livingstone revealed a grand future for Africa; the wealth of India is well known; but no heathen country in the world can for one moment be compared to China. Its mineral resources alone rival those of the Western States of America, and indicate that China will be one of the great nations of the future.

III. The Chinese, though the oldest nation in the world, are as full of vigor and promise as ever. Intellectually they are fit for anything. In diplomacy and mercantile enterprise they have proved themselves a match for the ablest and most far reaching minds among ourselves. There are those among them who have mastered every new art and science we have set before them. Their enterprise and perseverance are proverbial.

IV. At the present moment, one feature of the Chinese character deserves special notice. They are the great colonizers of the East. The natives of Cambodia, Sumatra, Java, the Philippine Islands, Timor, Borneo, the Sandwich Islands, etc., fall before civilization. Europeans cannot cope with the insalubrity of these climates. The Chinese alone have proved themselves able to maintain vigorous physical life in these regions. They are entering them by thousands, and in some cases tens of thousands, every year, and that in an ever-increasing ratio. They are also rapidly colonizing Manchuria, Mongolia, and Thibet. It is clear, therefore, that the Chinese will ultimately become the dominant race in all these vast countries.

V. A stream of immigration has of late set in towards Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific States of America, which is widening every year. It will prove a blessing or a curse just in proportion as the fountain is cared for.

We will not pursue this line of thought further: the dark features of Chinese life and character oppress us.

Chinese civilization has been set against Christian civilization. Those who draw this comparison cannot have mingled with the Chinese people. Underneath their showy exterior, the most pitiful, debasing and cruel customs prevail. The highest authority in the land testifies to this. The *Peking Gazette*, day by day, demonstrates the prevalence of the grossest superstitions among all classes, from the emperor downwards.

We will not seek to harrow your feelings by entering into details. Of old it was said that men "changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." The Chinese go further than this. They not only worship the dead, and idols of wood and stone, but also, in many districts, the most loathsome creatures. Mere civilization is no criterion of the moral condition of the people. We have all read of the debasing worship of the ancient Egyptians, the horrid rites of the cultivated Phoenicians, and have stood aghast at the immorality of Greece and Rome during the most glorious epochs of their history. We do not say that the Chinese have reached the same depths of iniquity, but we do affirm that, with the exception of immoral rites in religious services, parallels can be pointed out in China, at the present day, to almost every form of degradation, cruelty and vice which prevailed in those ancient kingdoms. Human nature is the same in all ages, and, left to itself, more or less faithfully fulfills the appalling picture drawn by the apostle Paul. And what aggravates the case is that the *litterati* and rulers of all grades—notwithstanding occasional proclamations to the contrary—make use of the prevailing superstitions to influence and govern the people. Thus the educated, instead of seeking to enlighten and elevate the masses, only bind the fetters of ignorance more effectually upon them. *There is therefore no hope for China in itself.*

Under these circumstances millions pass into eternity every year! What an agonizing thought! Souls of men, endowed with the most glorious faculties, perishing for lack of that knowledge which has been entrusted to us for diffusion!—Souls which might be emancipated from sin, transferred into the kingdom of God, and thus established in a career of ever-widening intelligence, and ever-deepening joy, to "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever."

How long shall this fearful ruin of souls continue? Ought we not to make an effort to save China *in this generation*? Is God's power limited? Is the efficacy of prayer limited? This grand achievement is in the hands of the Church. If we faithfully bring our tithes into the storehouse, and preach the Gospel everywhere, then the windows of heaven shall be opened, and blessings showered down upon us, till there be not room enough to receive them.

There are many indications of promise (1) Thirty-seven years ago, there were only three native Christians in all China, in connection with Protestant Missions. Now there are at least twelve or thirteen thousand. (2). A much larger proportion have applied for baptism during the past year than in any previous year, and the candidates have been generally of a higher type of character. (3). The empire is more open than ever for the preaching of the Word, and the Chefoo Convention of last year, together with the proclamations agreed upon, is proving a mighty instrument towards the more effectual opening up of the vast interior. (4). Not only is the country open to our efforts, but the minds of many, in different quarters, have been more or less aroused from their lethargy. (5). Multitudes are reading our books; and not a few are eagerly investigating the nature and bearing of Western innovations.

We earnestly appeal to the whole Christian world for help. There are still eight Provinces in which there is not one resident Missionary. In others there are only two or three; and taking China as a whole, we stand as one Missionary for Massachusetts, or two for Scotland.

Young men, first of all, we appeal to you. Standing on the threshold of life, it is clearly your duty to consider how you may employ the talents God has given you, so as in the highest degree to promote His glory. There is no field in the world where devoted Christian workers may so effectively and extensively serve their generation as in China; and where the foundation work of the present is connected with such grand results in the future.

If, after careful consideration and earnest prayer, this call awakens a response in your heart, say not hastily that you have no qualifications. Perhaps you are better qualified than you suppose; or it may be your duty to qualify yourself for this service. There is in China a wide sphere for all kinds of talent. While we chiefly need men able to preach

the Word, to instruct the converts, and watch over the native church, training it for self-government; we also need medical men, to heal the sick and train up native physicians; men of science, to elucidate the works of God; and men of literary tastes, to translate or compose books and to wield the power of the press in guiding and moulding public opinion; also, teachers, colporteurs, printers, etc; and last, but not least, devoted women, to penetrate the homes of the people and save the women of the country—their Chinese sisters.

Young men, let us freely speak to you. You hold in your hands the incorruptible seed of the Word, fitted to awaken eternal life in dead souls, and transform worms of the dust into heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. Can you hesitate to respond to our call? Can you prefer to spend your lives in comparatively narrow spheres, when you might exert an influence on vast multitudes? The fields are white unto the harvest, and everything is inviting you to noble service. It is a field where the most varied gifts and graces, the loftiest talents, the most extensive and accurate erudition will find abundant room for their highest exercise. It is a service in which an archangel would rejoice. Can you turn a deaf ear to our solemn appeal, to the call of God,—and the silent cry of the millions of China. In the name of Christ **ARISE**. Let the dead bury their dead; go ye, and preach the kingdom of God.

Fathers and Mothers, we commend these thoughts to you. Your affections are centred on your sons and daughters, growing up in strength and beauty, and your highest ambition is that their powers may be utilized in the utmost possible degree. Draw their attention to this land, so vast and varied, so rich and populous, in which the people are just beginning to arise from the ashes of the dead past, and, instead of restraining them, rather rejoice if God inclines the hearts of your children to bring to this people that light and guidance which they so urgently need, and which Christianity alone can impart.

Pastors of churches, heads of schools and colleges, and all in charge of the young, we appeal also to you. We are in dead earnest. We do not know what to do for lack of men. The country opens; the work grows. Think of stations with only one man to hold his own against the surging tide of heathenism! We are ready to be overwhelmed by the

vastness of the work. Many among us are tempted to undertake too many duties. Hence the broken health and early death of not a few of our best men. We beseech you, therefore, to place this matter before the minds of the young. Show especially to students that the completion of their curriculum synchronizes with China's need, and that they are therefore under the most solemn obligations to give the claims of this empire their earnest, unbiassed, and prayerful consideration.

We want China emancipated from the thralldom of sin *in this generation*. It is possible. Our Lord has said, "According to your faith be it unto you." The church of God *can do it*, if she be only faithful to her great commission. When will young men press into the mission field as they struggle for positions of worldly honor and affluence? When will parents consecrate their sons and daughters to missionary work as they search for rare openings of worldly influence and honor? When will Christians give for missions as they give for luxuries and amusements? When will they learn to deny themselves for the work of God as they deny themselves for such earthly objects as are dear to their hearts? Or, rather, when will they count it no self-denial, but the highest joy and privilege, to give with the utmost liberality for the spread of the Gospel among the heathen?

Standing on the borders of this vast empire, we, therefore—one hundred and twenty missionaries, from almost every evangelical religious denomination in Europe and America, assembled in General Conference at Shanghai, and representing the whole body of Protestant Missionaries in China,—feeling our utter insufficiency for the great work so rapidly expanding, do most earnestly plead, with one voice, calling upon the whole Church of God for more laborers. And we will as earnestly and unitedly plead at the Throne of Grace that the spirit of God may move the hearts of all, to whom this appeal comes, to cry,—“Lord, what wilt thou have *me* to do?” And may this spirit be communicated from heart to heart, from church to church, from continent to continent, until the whole Christian world shall be aroused, and every soldier of the cross shall come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

PROGRAMME OF MISSIONARY CONFERENCE.

- May 10th, 11 A.M. Sermon, *The Missionary Work*, Rev. J. V. N. Talmage, D.D.—2.30 P.M. Election of Officers. Address, *Prayer for the Holy Spirit in Connection with our work*.—7.30 P.M. Prayer Meeting; subject, *Entire Consecration essential to Missionary success*, Rev. R. Nelson, D.D.
- „ 11th, 9.30 A.M. *The field of labour in all its Magnitude*, Rev. A. Williamson, LL.D.; *Confucianism in relation to Christianity*, Rev. James Legge, D.D., LL.D., Rev. C. Holcombe.—2.30 P.M. *Taouism and Buddhism, Popular Aspects*, Rev. J. Edkins, D.D.
- „ 12th, 9.30 A.M. *Preaching to the Heathen, Matter and Manner*, Rev. W. Muirhead; *Itineration, far and near, as an Evangelizing agency*; Rev. B. Helm; Rev. J. H. Taylor.
- „ 14th, 9.30. A.M. *Medical Missions*, J. G. Kerr, M.D., W. Gauld, M.D. *Feet Binding*, Miss S. H. Woolston.—2.30 P.M. *Woman's Work for Woman*, Rev. A. P. Happer, D.D., Mrs. M. F. Crawford.
- „ 15th, 9.30 A.M. *Relation of Protestant Missions to Education*, Rev. R. Lechler, Rev. C. W. Mateer; *Day Schools, Male and Female*, Rev. S. Dodd, Miss M. Lawrence.
- „ 16th, 9.30 A.M. *Christian Literature, What has been done and what is needed*, Rev. C. C. Baldwin, D.D. *Importance of a Vernacular Christian Literature with special reference to the Mandarin*, Rev. C. Goodrich.—2.30 P.M. *Secular Literature*, Rev. W. A. P. Martin, D.D., LL.D., Rev. Y. J. Allen.
- „ 17th, 9.30 A.M. *Standard of Admission to full Church membership*, Rev. J. W. Lambuth, Rev. C. A. Stanley. *The Best Means of Elevating the Moral and Spiritual Tone of the Native Church*, Rev. F. F. Gough, Rev. H. L. Mackenzie.—7.30 P.M. *On the Duty of the Foreign Residents Aiding in the Evangelization of China, and the best means of doing so*. Very Rev. Dean Butcher, D.D.
- „ 18th, 9.30 A.M. *Self-support of the Native Church*, Rev. J. Goddard; Rev. S. L. Baldwin. *The Native Pastorate*, Rev. H. Corbett; Rev. J. Butler.—2.30 P.M. *The Training of Native Agents*, Rev. W. McGregor.

- „ 19th, 9.30 A.M. *Advantages and Disadvantages of the Employment of Native Assistants*, Rev. T. P. Crawford, Rev. N. Sites. *How shall the Native Church be stimulated to more aggressive Christian work?* Rev. R. H. Graves, M.D.—2.30 P.M. *The use of Opium, and its bearing on the spread of Christianity in China*, Rev. A. E. Moule, J. Dudgeon, M.D.
- „ 21st, 9.30 A.M. *Ancestral Worship*, Rev. M. T. Yates, D.D. *Questionable Practices connected with Marriage and Funeral Ceremonies*, Rev. C. Hartwell, Rev. D. Z. Sheffield.—2.30 P.M. *The Treaty Rights of Native Christians and the Duty of Missionaries in regard to their Vindication*, Rev. J. A. Leyenberger.
- „ 22nd, 9.30 A.M. *Principles of Translation into Chinese*, Rev. J. S. Roberts. *Should the Native Church in China be united ecclesiastically and independent of Foreign Churches and Societies*, Rev. J. V. N. Talmage, D.D.—2.30 P.M. *Inadequacy of the present means for the Evangelization of China, and the necessity for far greater effort and more systematic Co-operation on the part of different Societies, so as to occupy the Whole field*, Rev. C. Douglas, LL.D.



NOTICE.

THE RECORDS OF THE GENERAL
MISSIONARY CONFERENCE, con-
taining *Essays, as per programme, Dis-*
cussions, a Map of China, shewing
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