

*The Revd. C. J. D. Piddell
from the Bishop of Sydney*

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

AT A MEETING

OF THE

METROPOLITAN AND SUFFRAGAN

BISHOPS

OF THE

PROVINCE OF AUSTRALASIA,

HELD AT SYDNEY,

FROM OCTOBER 1ST TO NOVEMBER 1ST,

A.D. 1850.

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MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

METROPOLITAN AND SUBURBAN

BISHOPS

PROVINCE OF TERRAS

HELD AT BIRNEY

FROM OCTOBER 10 TO NOVEMBER 10

A.D. 1856

11

REPORT.

THE Metropolitan and Bishops of the Province of Australasia, having, by the good Providence of God, been permitted to assemble themselves together in the Metropolitan City of Sydney, on the first day of October, in the year of our Lord 1850, and having consulted together on such matters as concern the progress of true Religion, and the welfare of the Church in the said Province and in the several Dioceses thereof, did agree to the decisions and opinions contained in the following Report.

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I. OBJECTS OF THE CONFERENCE.

WE, the undersigned Metropolitan and Bishops of the Province of Australasia, in consequence of doubts existing how far we are inhibited by the Queen's Supremacy from exercising the powers of an Ecclesiastical Synod, resolve not to exercise such powers on the present occasion.

But we desire to consult together upon the various difficulties in which we are at present placed by the doubtful application to the Church in this Province of the Ecclesiastical Laws, which are now in force in England; and to suggest such measures as may seem to be most suitable for removing our present embarrassments; to consider such questions as affect the progress of true religion, and the preservation of Ecclesiastical order in the several Dioceses of this Province—and finally, in reliance on Divine Providence, to adopt plans for the propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen races of Australasia, and the adjacent islands of the Western Pacific.

We request The Right Reverend The Lord Bishop of Newcastle to act as our Secretary, and to embody our resolutions in a Report, to be transmitted to the Archbishops and Bishops of the United Church of England and Ireland.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

C. MELBOURNE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

II. CANONS OF A.D. 1603—4.

We are of opinion that the Constitutions and Canons agreed upon with the King's Majesty's license, in the Synod begun at London A.D. 1603, and published for the due observation of them by His Majesty's authority, under the Great Seal of England, form part of the established constitution of our Church, and are generally binding upon ourselves, and the clergy of our respective Dioceses.

Where they cannot be literally complied with, in consequence of the altered state of circumstances since the enactment of the Canons, we are of opinion that they must be, as far as possible, complied with in substance.

We concur also in thinking that a revisal and fresh adaptation of the Canons to suit the present condition of the Church is much to be desired, so soon as it can be lawfully undertaken by persons possessing due authority in that behalf.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

C. MELBOURNE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

III. FUTURE SYNODS AND CONVENTIONS, PROVINCIAL AND DIOCESAN.

We are of opinion that there are many questions of great importance to the well-being of the Church in our Province, which cannot be settled without duly constituted Provincial and Diocesan Synods.

Without defining the exact meaning of the word Synod as used in the Church of England, whenever the words "Provincial Synod" or "Diocesan Synod" shall be used in the following resolutions, we understand a body composed of one or more Bishops, with representatives chosen from among the clergy, meeting at such times and in such manner as may not be inconsistent with any Law of Church or State.

We understand the Functions of Provincial and Diocesan Synods to be these:—

1. To consult and agree upon Rules of practice and Ecclesiastical Order within the limits of the Province or Diocese.

2. To conduct the processes necessary for carrying such rules into effect. But not to alter the Thirty-nine Articles, the Book of Common Prayer, or the Authorised version of the Holy Scriptures.

(2.) *Sub-division of Dioceses, and Consecration of Bishops.*

1. We are of opinion that it appertains to a Provincial Synod, with the concurrence of the Diocesan Synod, from time to time, to decide upon plans for such sub-division of Dioceses as may be necessary for the more efficient discharge of the Episcopal duties, and to recommend those plans for adoption in accordance with the Laws which shall be in force at the time.

2. We submit that no sub-division of any Colonial Diocese should be determined on in England without previous communication with the Bishop of that Diocese, in order that the proposed measures may be laid before the Diocesan and Provincial Synods, before they be finally adopted.

3. We would further express our opinion, that if the Provincial Synod should recommend a Colonial Clergyman for appointment to fill a new or vacant See, the recommendation should be favourably considered by the authorities in England, and that the person designated to such See should, in conformity with ancient practice, be consecrated by the Metropolitan and Bishops of the Province, unless grave inconvenience be likely to ensue.

(3.) *Provincial and Diocesan Conventions.*

1. We are of opinion that the Laity acting by their Representatives duly elected, should meet in Diocesan and Provincial Conventions simultaneously with the Diocesan and Provincial Synods, that the Clergy and Laity may severally consult and decide upon all questions affecting the temporalities of the Church, and that no act of either order relating thereto should be valid without the consent of the other.

2. That any change of Constitution affecting the whole body of the Church should be first proposed and approved in the Provincial Synod, but should not be valid without the consent of the Provincial Convention.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

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C. MELBOURNE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

IV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

We acknowledge as Members of the Church of England all persons who, having been duly baptised with water, in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost, are conformable to the Doctrine, Government, Rites and Ceremonies, contained in the Book of Common Prayer; it being understood that they are entitled to claim at the hands of its Ministers the rites and ceremonies of our Church, so long only as they shall continue conformable to the extent above required.

By a Member of the Church of England in full communion, we understand every one, who being conformable as aforesaid, is a partaker of the Holy Communion, as required by the rules of the Church.

While we would leave the Synods and Conventions which may hereafter be appointed, to fix the qualification of electors, we would express our decided conviction that all persons elected to serve as members of Diocesan and Provincial Conventions should be members of the Church in full communion.

W. G. SYDNEY.

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W. NEWCASTLE.

V. DISCIPLINE.

(1.) *Bishops and Clergy.*

In consequence of statements which have been made in various places, of the arbitrary power possessed by Bishops to suspend or revoke at their own discretion the licenses of clergymen, we disclaim all wish to exercise any such power, and we are of opinion, that in all cases of doctrinal error, or other Ecclesiastical offences, the Bishops of the Province should be the Court for the trial of a Bishop, and that the Diocesan Synod should be the Court for the trial of a Presbyter or Deacon, and that the Metropolitan and the Bishop of the Diocese respectively should be ex-officio Presidents of such Courts, either in person, or by their Commissaries.

Further, it would appear to be necessary that any Bishop or other Clergyman suspended or deposed by due sentence of the Court, should be legally incapable of continuing to hold possession of any Church, Chapel, Stipend, House, Glebe, or other temporalities, which he may have held by virtue of his office.

We are also of opinion, that the form of procedure in all cases of Appeal requires to be defined.

(2.) *Laity.*

Bearing in mind the wish expressed in the Communion Service, that the Godly discipline of the Primitive Church may be restored, we are of opinion

1. That it is the duty of every Church to seek by spiritual admonitions to reclaim those of its members who are living in notorious sin.

We therefore hold it to be the duty of every Clergyman having cure of souls, privately to admonish all evil livers among those committed to his charge, "as need shall require, and occasion shall be given." We would also remind the Lay Members of the

Church, that the Clergy are required by the Rubric to repel from the Holy Communion all persons who are living in sin so open and notorious as that the congregation is thereby offended, and who after due admonition shall continue impenitent, and without amendment of life.

Provided always, that every Minister so repelling any shall give an account of the same to the Bishop of the Diocese within fourteen days after, at the farthest. And we are of opinion, that it is the duty of the Bishop earnestly to admonish every person so repelled to qualify himself by repentance for readmission to Holy communion.

Until the establishment of a form of process by a Provincial Synod with the concurrence of a Provincial Convention, we are of opinion that in cases where all spiritual admonitions have failed to reclaim members of the Church, who are living in notorious sin, it may become the duty of the Bishop, with the aid and concurrence of his Presbyters, to pronounce such persons excommunicate so far as to release any clergyman from the obligation to use the burial service, if they should die without sufficient proof of repentance.

But remembering the solemn charge which we have received at our consecration, to "bind up the broken, to bring again the outcasts, to seek the lost, to be so merciful as not to be too remiss, and so to minister discipline that we forget not mercy," we are of opinion that it is our duty, as in every case, so especially in those which have been here noticed, to use faithful and affectionate admonition before we proceed to any strict exercise of the discipline of the Church.

W. G. SYDNEY.
G. A. NEW ZEALAND.
F. R. TASMANIA.
AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.
C. MELBOURNE.
W. NEWCASTLE.

VI. STATUS OF CLERGY.

1. We desire to express our opinion, that no clergyman who shall have been duly appointed and licensed to any Church or permanent cure of souls, should be removable therefrom, except by sentence pronounced, after judicial enquiry, before the Diocesan Synod.

2. That this rule should not apply to those clergymen who have been appointed and licensed by the Bishop to any charge expressly understood to be of a temporary nature.

3. At the same time we consider it to be most desirable in the present state of the Church of England in our Dioceses, that candidates for Holy Orders should devote themselves to the service of the Church, in that willing spirit which would induce them to place themselves at the disposal of their Bishop for some definite term of years, and leave to him the responsibility of appointing and changing their station during such period.

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C. MELBOURNE.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

VII. LITURGY.

(1.) *Division of Services.*

We are of opinion that the Bishop of each Diocese, as Ordinary, has a discretion to authorise clergymen, in cases of necessity, to divide the morning service, by using either the Morning Prayer, the Litany, or the Communion Service separately; but that each of the services so used should be read entire.

(2.) *The Administration of Holy Communion.*

In parishes where the number of communicants is very great, the Communion Service may be used separately, and the Lord's Supper administered at an early hour, besides the usual administration at the morning service.

In places where there is no morning service, the administration of the Holy Communion may be in the afternoon if necessity so require.

When the Holy Communion cannot be administered in a Church, or other building duly licensed for the celebration of Divine Service, it may be administered in such places as necessity shall require.

(3.) *Occasional Services.*

We are of opinion that no clergyman has authority at his own discretion to abridge or alter any of the occasional services of the Church.

(4.) *Rules for Service on Saints' days falling on Sundays, &c.*

Should a Saint's Day fall on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, or

Easter Eve, or on Easter Sunday, Ascension Day, Whit Sunday, or Trinity Sunday, or on Monday or Tuesday in Easter and Whitsun weeks, the Lessons, Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for those days are to be used.

When a Saint's day shall fall on any other Sunday, the Lessons of the Saint's Day (unless they be from the Apocrypha) are to be used, and the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Saint's day, with the Collect for the Sunday.

(5.) *Of Persons for whom the Prayers of the Congregation are desired.*

It is convenient that the names of the persons for whom the prayers of the congregation are desired should be mentioned either before the Litany or before the Prayer for all conditions of men, as the case may be.

The words, "especially those for whom our prayers are desired," may be inserted in the Litany in their appropriate place.

(6.) *Thanksgiving Service.*

It is convenient that the names of the persons who desire to return thanks should be mentioned before the General Thanksgiving.

The words, "particularly to those who desire now to offer up their praises and thanksgivings for thy late mercies vouchsafed unto them," may be used for persons who have not been specially prayed for.

(7.) *Offertory.*

We are of opinion that no clergyman can justly be suspected of holding opinions at variance with the sound teaching of the Church, in consequence of his complying with the Rubric, which directs "that upon the Sundays and other Holy Days (if there be no Communion) shall be said all that is appointed at the Communion, until the end of the General Prayer, [for the whole state of

Christ's Church Militant here on earth,] together with one or more of the Collects, concluding with the blessing."

(8.) *Sponsors.*

Being aware that the Clergy have felt the great importance of having duly qualified Sponsors at Holy Baptism, we recommend that the most earnest endeavours be used by them to convey correct impressions upon that subject to their several flocks, in the hope that suitable persons may be in all cases provided to discharge the duties of that office.

(9.) *Marriage.*

(a.) *Within prohibited Degrees.*

Inasmuch as it is directed by the 99th Canon, that "no person shall marry within the degrees prohibited by the laws of God, and expressed in a Table set forth by authority, in the year of our Lord God, 1563"; we are of opinion that any clergyman of the Province, who shall solemnize matrimony between persons so related, will be acting in violation of the Law of the Church.

Referring also to Canons 26 and 109, and to the Rubrics prefixed to the Communion Service, we are further of opinion that persons so marrying within the prohibited degrees are liable to be repelled from the Holy Communion until they have repented and be reformed.

(b.) *Of Persons neither of whom belongs to the Church.*

We are of opinion that Ministers of the Church of England ought not to solemnize marriage between persons neither of whom is of our own communion, except in cases where the marriage cannot, without extreme difficulty, be solemnized in any other way.

(c.) *Irregularly Solemnized.*

While we recognise the validity of all marriages contracted in conformity with the laws of the State, provided that they be not

contrary to the laws of the Church, we would earnestly impress upon all members of the Church of England the duty of having their marriages solemnized according to the rites of the Church, and in no other way.

(d.) Caution to be used.

1. We desire to draw the attention of the Clergy to the necessity of exercising due caution before they proceed to solemnize marriage.

2. We therefore recommend that the banns be thrice published, except in case of marriage by license, once at least in the licensed place of worship which is nearest to the residence of the parties desiring to be married.

3. And that the Registers of Marriage, Baptism, and Burial be accurately kept, and copies sent at the times required by Law.

(10.) Churching of Women.

We are of opinion, from the Rubric at the end of the service for the Churching of Women, that that service is not intended to be used for persons who are living in such a state as would justify the Minister in repelling them from the Holy Communion.

(11.) Ministering to Dissenters.

We are of opinion that the general principle of Colonial Legislation, by which the equality of all religious denominations is recognized, releases the Clergy of the Church of England in these colonies from the obligation to perform religious services for persons who are not members of our own Church.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

C. MELBOURNE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

VIII. HOLY BAPTISM.

As Bishops engaged in the charge of extensive Dioceses, and debarred from frequent opportunities of conference, we do not presume to think that we can inform or guide the judgment of the Church at large; but at a time when the minds of pious and thoughtful men are in perplexity, we cannot remain altogether silent, nor refrain from stating what we believe to be the just interpretation of the Creed, Articles, and Liturgy of the Church of England respecting the Regeneration of Infants in Holy Baptism.

We believe Regeneration to be the work of God in the Sacrament of Baptism, by which infants baptized with water, in the name of the Father Son and Holy Ghost, die unto sin, and rise again unto righteousness, and are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

We believe this regeneration to be the particular grace prayed for, and expected, and thankfully acknowledged to have been received in the baptismal services.

We believe that it is the doctrine of our Church that all infants do by baptism receive this grace of regeneration. But remembering the words of our Lord instituting the Holy Sacrament of Baptism, (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), which enjoin that they who are baptized are to be made disciples and to be taught, we are of opinion that whensoever an infant is baptized, an assurance ought to be given at the same time on its behalf (by some one or more baptized persons) that it will be brought up in the faith of Christ.

We do not recognise in the infant itself any unfitness which disqualifies it from receiving in baptism this grace of regeneration,

for our Lord Jesus Christ does not deny his grace and mercy unto such infants, but most lovingly doth call them unto him.

We do not believe that unworthiness in Ministers, Parents, or Sponsors, hinders this effect of the love of Christ.

We believe that a wilful neglect of the means of grace does not prove that the gift of regeneration was never received, but in those who so fall away after baptism, we believe that the consequence of their having been regenerated is to aggravate their guilt.

Finally, we would express, First, our cordial and entire agreement with the Articles and Formularies of our Church, in their plain and full meaning, and in their literal and grammatical sense. Secondly, our willing disposition to accept and use them all in the manner which is appointed; and, with especial reference to our present subject, to carry on the work of Christian education in the firm belief that infants do receive in baptism the grace of regeneration. Thirdly, above all, we would express our unfeigned thankfulness to Almighty God for the gift and preservation of these inestimable blessings.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

HOLY BAPTISM.

Upon this subject the Bishop of Melbourne preferred to state his views as follows:—

The doctrine of our Church concerning the nature and efficacy of Holy Baptism may, in my opinion, be stated in the eight following propositions.

1. Regeneration is that operation of the Spirit of God upon the heart, which produces a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. By regeneration we are made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

2. Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration, which is the particular grace prayed for, expected, and thankfully acknowledged to have been received in the baptismal service.

3. The work of regeneration is wrought in all, whether they be adults or infants, who receive baptism rightly, (Art. xxvii.), but in none others. (Art. xxv.)

4. The Church in her office for the baptism of infants, and in that for the baptism of adults, uses the language of faith and hope, and is not to be understood as declaring positively a fact which it cannot certainly know, viz., that every baptized infant, or every baptized adult, is regenerate.

5. The statement put into the mouth of a Catechumen, that he was in baptism made a member of Christ, &c., is to be understood in the same qualified application as the declaration which almost immediately follows, that by God's help he will do as his god-fathers and godmothers had promised for him, and that he heartily thanks his heavenly Father that He hath called him, &c.

6. Repentance and faith are required of those who come to be baptized, but the Church is silent as to the fitness, or unfitness, of an infant, who is incapable of repentance and faith, for receiving regeneration in baptism.

7. The unworthiness of a Minister does not take away the effect of baptism, either in the case of adults or infants. (Art. xxvi.)

8. Parents are nowhere mentioned in the Articles, or in the baptismal service, but infants are baptized, because they promise repentance and faith by their sureties. These sureties or sponsors, are to be duly qualified persons, and no one is to be admitted godfather or godmother before the said person so undertaking has received the Holy Communion. (Canon xxix.) The Church, however, has not positively affirmed that the unworthiness of sponsors disqualifies an infant for receiving the grace of baptism.

The truth of the following four additional propositions may also, I think, be gathered from the Scriptures, and is perfectly consistent with the general tenor of the Articles and formularies of our Church, viz. :—

9. Sponsors, who themselves repent and believe, may and ought to expect most confidently the grace of regeneration for the children whom they bring to be baptised.

10. While the Church may, and ought to, use the language of faith and hope respecting all infants brought to be baptized, impenitent and unbelieving sponsors are not entitled to expect any blessing from an ordinance which they only profane.

11. Children who have been baptized are to be taught to regard God as their Father, and to love and trust in Him as having redeemed them by his Son, and sanctified them by His Spirit—to pray that being regenerate, and made the children of God, by adoption and grace, they may daily be renewed by the holy Ghost, (Collect for Christmas Day), to consider the guilt of any sins which they may commit against God, as aggravated by their having been baptized, and brought up in the faith of the Gospel.

12. Our own personal repentance and faith are the only sure evidence of our being spiritually the children of God.

Having thus stated my own views of the doctrine of our Church concerning Holy Baptism, I would unite with my Right Reverend Brethern in expressing

1. My cordial and entire agreement with all the Articles and Formularies of our Church in their plain and full meaning, and in their literal and grammatical sense.

2. My willing disposition to accept and use them in the manner which is appointed; and (with especial reference to our present subject) to carry on the work of Christian education in the firm belief that infants do receive in baptism the grace of regeneration.

3. Above all, my unfeigned thankfulness to Almighty God for the gift and preservation of these inestimable blessings.

C. MELBOURNE.

IX. EDUCATION.

(1.) *Schools.*

We cannot incur the responsibility of seeming to countenance any system of erroneous, defective, or indefinite religious instruction by incorporating ourselves with the Boards, either general or local, which have the regulation and superintendence of schools so conducted.

But wherever a Church of England School cannot be established, the clergy, after communication with the Bishop, should consider it their duty to remedy, as far as possible, the evils or defects of any schools to which Church children may be sent by their parents.

(2.) *University.*

We are of opinion that the establishment of the University of Sydney may promote the growth of sound learning, and may in many ways assist the Collegiate Institutions of the Church of England in our respective Dioceses.

But while we are not unwilling that the Students in our Diocesan Colleges and Schools should compete with all other classes of Students in such public University examinations, on general literature and science, as may be established by a Senate, appointed under ordinance of the Colonial Legislature, we should decidedly object to any University system which might have the effect of withdrawing from our own Collegiate rule the students educated in our separate Diocesan Institutions.

W. G. SYDNEY.

G. A. NEW ZEALAND.

F. R. TASMANIA.

AUGUSTUS ADELAIDE.

C. MELBOURNE.

W. NEWCASTLE.

X. AUSTRALASIAN BOARD OF MISSIONS.

The objects of the Australasian Board of Missions are twofold—Domestic and Foreign.

1. DOMESTIC.—The conversion and civilization of the Australian Blacks.

2. FOREIGN.—The conversion and civilization of the Heathen races in all the Islands of the Western Pacific.

The difficulties to be expected in this work, perhaps to a greater extent than in other Missions, are—

1. The low state of barbarism in which these races now are.
2. In the Australian blacks the unsettled habits of the race.
3. The multiplicity of languages and dialects throughout the whole field of operations.
4. The unhealthiness of many of the Australasian Islands in certain seasons of the year, especially from January to April.

These peculiar difficulties must be met by a plan of Missionary action deviating in many respects from the practice of other Missions.

1. The low state of barbarism in which these races now are seems to require that a select number should be brought under the most careful training at a distance from their own tribes.

2. The unsettled habits of the Australian blacks require the same corrective, and further suggest the necessity of providing religious instruction for them rather by means of visiting Missionaries than by fixed Mission stations.

3. The multiplicity of languages makes it necessary to conduct instruction in some one language common to all, which must be English.

4. The unhealthiness of many of the islands makes it advisable that Missionary action should be carried on rather by long visits of the English Missionaries during the healthy season, than by the occupation of permanent Mission stations.

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