

## MEETING OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The House of Bishops met in special session, at the See House, Lafayette Place, Tuesday, Feb. 3rd. The meetings were held in the hall of the diocesan library. Forty-two bishops were in attendance, an unusual number for an extra session. The Bishop of Connecticut, presiding Bishop of the Church, was present, and occupied the chair. At the opening session, the Rt. Rev. Edward R. Atwill, D.D., the new Bishop of West Missouri, was formally introduced and took his seat as a member of the House.

Announcement was made of the death, Nov. 23rd last, of the Rt. Rev. John W. Beckwith, D.D., Bishop of Georgia. Nominations were received for the vacant missionary episcopate of Yeddo, Japan, and were laid over, under the rules of the House, for action on the following day. Wednesday morning there was a celebration of the Holy Communion in the chantry of Grace Church, at 9:30 o'clock, after which the House resumed its sessions at the See House, adjourning the same day at 6 p.m.

The condition of the work in Japan was deemed so interesting, and the relation of the American Church to the rapidly moving events there so important, that it was deemed wise to send Bishop Hare, of South Dakota, the former secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, out there immediately, to administer the affairs of the missionary jurisdiction of Yeddo, so far as practicable, for six months or a year, at his option, or until the arrival of the new Bishop. This action was unanimously taken by the assembled Bishops. It was provided that Bishop Hare shall represent the American Church while the conference of Christians expected next April, is in session. A committee having been appointed for the purpose prepared and presented the following statement of this action, for the Church at large, which was approved and adopted:

**Resolved:** That the Bishop of South Dakota be requested, on behalf of this House and as its representative, to proceed to Japan for the purpose, so far as may be practicable, of administering the affairs of that jurisdiction, for six months or a year, at his option, unless a Bishop shall be earlier elected and consecrated for the missionary jurisdiction of Yeddo.

This action was unanimous. In taking it the Bishops desire to make known to the Church that they were reluctant to call the Bishop of South Dakota from his special field of labor even for a time, in view of the peculiar trials through which it has been passing of late and the promise which it gives of yielding to earnest effort in the future, even a larger measure of success than in the past. And they desire especially to call the attention of the Church to the fact that the pecuniary obligations which the Bishop constantly bears will press with peculiar weight upon him by reason of his absence.

They therefore earnestly call upon the friends of the missionary work of the Church to relieve him of anxiety in this regard, and generously to sustain the work during his absence.

The House of Bishops thinks it due to the Church at large, and especially to the mission in Japan, to state that their present action is taken after the fullest consideration, and for what they deem the best interests of the mission in Japan, at the present crisis in its history; and that they were moved to the choice of the Bishop of South Dakota in view of his special fitness for the delicate and important mission on which he goes at their

bidding, because of his long and intricate relation to the Foreign work of the Church.

From the Minutes,

Attest: WILLIAM TATLOOK,  
Secretary of the House of Bishops.

A committee was also appointed, with power to draw up instructions for the guidance of the Bishop of South Dakota in his mission to Japan.

The Rev. Henry Christian Swentzel, Rector of St. Luke's Church, Soranton, in the diocese of Central Pennsylvania, was unanimously elected to be Missionary Bishop of Yeddo. This is the third election to the Bishopric of Yeddo since the resignation of Bishop C. M. Williams in 1889 the former Bishops elect having been the Rev. Edward Abbott, D.D., of St. James' Church, Cambridge, Mass., and the Rev. W. S. Langford, D. D., Secretary of the Board of Missions. The Rev. Mr. Swentzel has for many years been a conspicuous figure in Pennsylvania, his prominence being due in large measure to his pulpit power, his qualifications as a disputant on theological questions, and his intimate acquaintance with the polity of the Church; but no less, also, to his organizing faculty, and to the ability disclosed by him in reaching out and gathering congregations from among the laboring population of the State.

In addition to this, touching our Foreign Missions, the House took important action for the domestic missionary field, by separating the Indian Territory and Oklahoma from the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Arkansas, and erecting them into a new missionary jurisdiction.

### THE LINCOLN JUDGMENT.

The Bishop of Chichester has addressed the following letter to the clergy of his diocese:—

"Reverend and Dear Brethren,—The Archdeacons and Rural Deans assembled in our annual meeting have unanimously represented to me that the clergy generally desire an expression of my opinion as to the authority which the Judgment pronounced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the case of the Bishop of Lincoln, ought to command in this diocese. Such a request is more than an invitation; it is a call to me to speak plainly, as I ought to speak.

"No one can contend that Bishops are exempt from obedience to the law ecclesiastical, or that they are not subject to correction and penalties for the breach. Doubts, indeed, may be entertained as to the proper constitution of a Court for the trial of a Bishop, but the question of jurisdiction has been practically settled, and to this I need not advert. The Archbishop of Canterbury has delivered his Judgment, to which the Bishop of Lincoln has loyally submitted.

"I, for my part, am prepared to accept it in the same spirit, and I give my Episcopal and Canonical sanction to the Judgment, so far as the same may be required in order to give it force in the Diocese of Chichester. But beyond this formal communication to the clergy, with the purpose of commending the Judgment to general acceptance, I will state certain grounds upon which it appears to me to claim and to deserve respect and obedience.

"The Judgment has been delivered in a spiritual case by a Court confessedly spiritual. The Archbishop, Primate of all England, and Metropolitan, heard the cause, with five grave and learned Bishops, his Assessors. The judge, the highest person in the Anglican hierarchy in place and dignity combining in himself all the just powers and traditions belonging to his ancient see, after long pleadings and arguments on either side, pronounced the sentence. The Assessors, with one exception, and that on

one point only, assented to his conclusions. Objections based on the constitution of other Courts in which lay judges preside and decide, cannot attach to the Court of the Archbishop, which is simply and wholly spiritual.

The Judgment is independent, and stands on its own merits. The Archbishop, indeed, professes his respect for the decision of the eminent persons before whom, in their several courts, similar questions have been tried and determined; but he does not follow with servile fidelity the precedents they have set. He claims the right to examine each point for himself, and to draw his own conclusions from such evidence, whether old or new, as he has been able to obtain. Patient research, careful balancing of testimony, strict impartiality, judicial calmness, are the characteristics of this remarkable Judgment. By general consent the Judgment is admitted to be a great Judgment, and the Archbishop to have proved himself a great judge. It is also a ground of satisfaction that the Archbishop gave out that the Court had not to 'consider expediency, but legality.' This is an important *dictum*, because there is a suspicion widely prevalent that some former decisions were influenced by that motive of expediency which in this instance the judge disclaims.

'Farther, the Archbishop laid down that the position of the celebrant at the Lord's table is, in itself, a thing indifferent, and possessing no doctrinal significance. No doubt such significance may be attached to it on both sides; those who suspect and oppose the Eastward Position arguing that it has a sacrificial character, and sets forth the doctrine of a material sacrifice and of the continually repeated immolation of our Lord's body; those who adopt it contending that it does indeed involve the doctrine of a sacrifice, but of an eucharistic sacrifice, spiritual and commemorative, such as our Church, in accordance with the greatest teachers of primitive antiquity, sanctions. The Archbishop holds that there is no such doctrinal significance in the position of the celebrant, inasmuch as such significance cannot be proved, and men who maintained the highest doctrine in regard to that holy sacrament (for example, Archbishop Laud and the non-jurors) stood at the north end of the holy table during the whole Communion service. And so the Judgment, while permitting the Eastward Position, provided the manual acts prescribed by the rubric are so done as to be seen by the congregation, allows that the position of the celebrant at the north end of the table is a good liturgical use. In the opinion of the judge, in which I concur, it is not allowable to attach an arbitrary significance to any liturgical use. The piety and imagination of devout persons have always been disposed to discover and dwell upon inward meanings in outward ceremonies. But such inward meaning cannot be simply assumed; it must be proved either by Holy Scripture, or the testimony of councils, or by the teaching of the Church universal, accepted and ratified by the formularies of our own branch of the Church. No such decisive authority can be alleged in favour of the doctrinal significance of the celebrant's position.

'The principle thus stated, if cordially admitted and acted upon, will be of material force and value. It may induce faithful members of the Church of England to look with less distrust upon usages pronounced by the highest authority not to be illegal, and to possess no doctrinal significance. Thus unfounded suspicion may be dispelled, and Christian concord and unity promoted.

'My Reverend Brethren,—You will not fail to observe the distinction, drawn in the Judgment, between such practices as are enjoined and such as are permitted. Where the Archbishop, the spiritual judge, has given a plain direction, there duty and conscience require cheerful obedience. But where certain practices are declared to be lawful, but are not en-