

PAOING,  
Szechwan.

9th November, 1925.

Dear Friends,

We feel you will all want to have a short connected account of our dear Bishop's last days on earth, and so I am beginning to write while the memory of them is still so fresh in our minds. Mrs. Cassels lies dangerously ill, and it is uncertain whether she can survive the shock. It was exactly a fortnight ago (October 26) on Monday evening that the Bishop first began to feel unwell. Needless to say, he continued at work as usual, and on Tuesday afternoon played a game of tennis with Mr. Bruce, hoping that this might help him to shake off what he thought to be a slight indisposition. On Wednesday morning he conducted the missionary prayer meeting, giving an address on "Numbering based on the records in Numbers and showing how legitimate and important is the recording of statistics in connection with the Lord's work, if the dangers which caused such havoc in David's time are avoided, and all glory is given to God for progress made. He told us of the ten thousand baptized during these 40 years, of the 6000 odd confirmed, of the pastors, catechists, voluntary workers and the 140 foreign missionaries in the diocese - and, finally, of the 538 whom it had been necessary to excommunicate or suspend from the Lord's Table. His address was a ~~as he spent the work which he was so soon to lay down, and we all felt~~ ~~one dreamed that his work was nearly complete, and that within ten days~~ ~~he was to enter into the Presence of the Master Himself and receive his~~ ~~reward.~~ ~~On the same day he had a severe rigor, and gradually became~~ ~~very feverish.~~ ~~Most of us thought it was an attack of malaria, and he~~ ~~began taking the usual remedies.~~ ~~On Thursday Mrs. Cassels too had a~~ ~~high temperature, and Friday was a bad day for both.~~ ~~Then on~~ ~~Saturday the Bishop's temperature was much lower, and he attended to his~~ ~~correspondence as usual, though we all begged his to go to bed.~~ ~~He~~ ~~had promised to preach in the Cathedral on Sunday morning, and was very~~ ~~apologetic that he was obliged to refuse to speak at some special~~ ~~meetings in the Training College on Saturday.~~ ~~But from Sunday onwards~~ ~~it became clear that the illness was very different from an ordinary~~ ~~attack of malaria, and Dr. Lawrence became convinced that they were~~ ~~suffering from the same fever as one of the Training College students,~~ ~~who had already been laid up with a high temperature for some time.~~ ~~In view of the infectious nature of the illness most of us were forbidden~~ ~~to enter the room, but Miss Deeks undertook the night nursing, and of~~ ~~course my wife was constantly attending to their needs.~~ ~~The Bishop~~ ~~was constantly talking and thinking of others, and giving directions in~~ ~~regard to some of his letters.~~ ~~It was a great relief to him that the~~ ~~Archdeacon was soon returning, and that his letters gave evidence that~~ ~~God had been hearing the Bishop's almost hourly prayers for him.~~ ~~When we heard that Mr. Ku was expected on Thursday, the Bishop sent the~~ ~~office-boy across the river with his card to welcome him back, and to~~ ~~explain how sorry he was that he could not come in person.~~

It was on Thursday evening that a messenger was finally sent to ask Dr. Lechler to come from Mienchuh to consult with the doctors here.



A telegram to the same effect was sent to Mienchow to be forwarded. Of course this made us realise how seriously the doctors regarded the illness, but personally I was anticipating that the disease would gradually relax its grip after, perhaps, some weeks of fever. Certainly on Friday morning no one dreamed that the end was near, though the Bishop remarked to my wife that, though the temperature was a little lower, he did not feel so well as on the previous day. It was a very trying day for him, and he had more than one severe rigor in the afternoon. Obviously his heart was in a poor condition, and the doctors decided to remain over here all night. By 1.30, when my wife and I were called up, the temperature had gone down to 97.4, and the doctors feared collapse. We went into the room, and he recognised us at once, and told us that we ought to be in bed. Almost immediately he asked after Mr. Tang, the Training College student, and was glad to know that he was a little better. But we were shocked to find that his hands were already very cold. From that time began the final fight for his life. Mr. and Mrs. Bruce had been sent for, and tremendous efforts were made by all, while I and others spent most of the time in prayer. The temperature ran down rapidly to 95.4, and my wife did all she could to prepare Mrs. Cassels for what was to come. But she had been wandering a good deal during the day, and in the evening had had a sleeping-draught, so she could not rouse herself sufficiently to realise the position, though she and the Bishop did manage to exchange a word or two. He was very grateful for a message which I delivered to him from Mr. Parsons (Psalm 33/21,22) and also for other comforting promises which I quoted to him. Gradually he seemed to get warmer, his temperature rose a little, and after 4 o'clock we began to hope that the crisis was over. But a few minutes before 5 a.m. his breathing became difficult, and he did not speak again. It was almost 5 o'clock exactly when he passed into the Presence of the Lord.

Later. Nov. 11th.

I cannot tell now of how the news was broken to Mrs. Cassels. Gradually during the next two days she realised her loss, and since then, as she has been able to bear it, we have sung and prayed with her, and on the whole she has been wonderfully sustained, and has sometimes been able to tell us her wishes in regard to various people. As far as we can judge, her life is gradually ebbing away, and we are almost hourly expecting the end.

The Archdeacon finally arrived on Friday afternoon, and sent a message to say that he would come round the following morning. Of course we sent for him as soon as the Bishop had passed away, and he and other Chinese Christians came along immediately. Their grief was very real and touching. The Churchwarden, Mr. Shang, has allowed his own coffin to be used, and the Bishop was dressed in his robes and laid in the coffin about 1 p.m. on Saturday. We had a short service conducted by the Archdeacon. At the earnest request of the Chinese, the funeral has been postponed till Bishop Mowll can arrive, so the date can not be absolutely fixed. Meanwhile the coffin has been placed in the upper "t'ing" of the Bishop's house. The Sunday services were very impressive, the sermons being preached by two of the Bishop's oldest friends - Mr. Ku and Mr. Parsons. But most impressive of all was the service on Sunday evening in the courtyard of the Bishop's house, when after hymnsinging, the Archdeacon gave a noble address, confessing his



comparative coldness during the last few years, and telling how nearly he had resigned from the work. He gave us all the details of his journey to Chungking, and told us how the Bishop's letters, the Bishop's prayers, and above all the Bishop's faith in him, praying and pleading with him, but never acting or speaking in any overbearing, impatient, or dictatorial way, had drawn him back to Paoning. He was returning, he said, full of new zeal, encouraged by what he had seen and heard in several of the stations which he had visited, hoping to work more earnestly and wholeheartedly with the Bishop, that God might be glorified and that he (Mr. Ku) might as it were begin to repay the debt which he owes to the Bishop. He concluded by urging us all to consecrate ourselves to the Lord for the carrying on and completion of the work which the Bishop has laid down. Most of us broke down altogether, and I trust many did dedicate themselves to the Lord for His service.

Nov. 13th.

Mrs. Cassels lingers on, but we dare not say there is real hope of her recovery. Please continue in prayer, that God's Will may be done in her case.

F. HOUGHTON.