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## PRIMARY REQUISITES FOR THE SPEEDY EVANGELISATION OF CHINA

[Dr. A. B. Dodd, the writer of these Articles, was "Students' Lecturer on Missions" at Princeton for the year 1928-1929. The first two of five lectures on that foundation appeared as articles in consecutive issues of *The Princeton Theological Review* (XXVII, 245, 367). The remaining three are to appear in this QUARTERLY. To help our readers we give the following summary of the first two:—I. The evangelisation of China is the Church's most stupendous task, and, in spite of much heroic work, it is still only begun. The work begun has not been fruitless. There is a more friendly and open-minded attitude to the Christian message than ever before. Yet this vast country is not one per cent. evangelised in the truest sense. But, within the past twenty-eight years, the Church has made more headway than in the ten preceding decades. There has been a great growth in active evangelising agencies. In recent times God's mighty hand has been laid heavily upon China and His Church there. The Church was becoming nerveless and passionless and she was rapidly becoming an organisation for social, moral and industrial reforms. The early Missionaries, with their "intense burden of souls," were followed by alumni of Western Colleges imbued with ideas that were alien to the old Gospel. The tragedies and sufferings of recent times have, however, greatly mellowed the Church, and made her keenly conscious of her need. There is, therefore, now a unique opportunity for Christian missions. The primary requisite for the evangelisation of this new China is on that account that all labourers should keep in the very centre of God's will—a privileged place of abounding blessing and overcoming power.]

II. The missionary for this task must himself be effectually called and divinely prepared; he must also be physically fit. He must be a man of warm Christian sympathies. Not only should the workers to go there be *twice born*, but they must be consecrated. They should experience the distinct call of God to this holy service before venturing to undertake it. They must work with a strength and wisdom not their own, and *wait* for God to work for them. This was characteristic of China's most noted workers in the past, both native and foreign. Missionaries should carefully avoid doing what may be unseemly in the eyes of the natives, and they should be faithful in the performance of all their Christian duties. They should set an example of self-sacrifice. Further, they should be patient and humble. In China, as elsewhere, the work of an evangelist is to present earnestly and effectively the revealed way of salvation. No man-made Gospel, and no social reformation, or synthesis of Christianity and the native religions, can save China. Gospel preaching should not be confined to churches, chapels and halls, but it should be in the lanes and highways. Most valuable accessories are Christian literature, educational, medical and philanthropic agencies, saturated with the true Christian spirit. Mercenary motives should, therefore, be unknown in such institutions, and among their staffs. Bible study should have a place of pre-eminence in all schools, and no teacher who doubts its veracity should be on the staff. The main objective of all enterprises should be the training of the entire Church in the Word of God, and by precept and example to teach its membership to give implicit obedience to God's will.—*Edo.*]

### ARTICLE III

#### THE EVANGELIST—HIS MESSAGE

It is, or, at least, ought to be, self-evident that the first requisite is care that it be God's message that we take to China. There can be no evangelisation without an evangel and there is only one Evangel. Perhaps the statement of such a truism as this would scarcely have been necessary fifty years ago, but it is necessary in this day of theological chaos when trumpets of uncertain sound are heard on every side. As my friend, your honoured Professor, Dr. Machen, has so clearly and convincingly pointed out, there are within Christ's visible church to-day, in deadly struggle for the mastery, two thoroughly antagonistic systems of religion: Christianity and so-called "Liberalism." One is

according to God and is based upon God's Word, taken as the only infallible rule of faith and practice; the other is according to man, and is based mainly upon man's foolish reasoning. Though both are equally insistent in their claim of loyalty to Christ, one receives, while the other rejects the Only Begotten Son of God as He is offered to us in God's Word. One gladly accepts the redemption which He purchased for us when He bore our sins in His own body on the tree and there died in our stead to "satisfy divine justice and to reconcile us to God," while the other would substitute therefor a man-made perversion of that Gospel of God's pure grace.

The arena of this conflict has become world-wide. It could no more be localised than could the World War, which suddenly thrust upon unsuspecting peoples living in peaceful security in the far corners of the earth the harrowing sights and sounds of a strife which it was impossible for them either to comprehend or to escape. Similarly would you and I have been distressed to see this desperate struggle between historic Christianity and its rival system extending itself from theological seminary and college down into the Y.M.C.A., the Young People's Society and even into the Sabbath School. How gladly we would have sheltered the tender hearts and immature minds of little children from the confusing and, to them, disheartening controversy, but we could not! In spite of all we could do, it was thrust upon them. Just so, upon the foreign field, we would gladly, if we could, have spared for many years to come the childlike minds and simple faith of the infant churches from the distracting struggles of the Church in Western lands over the very fundamentals of the faith, but it was impossible. With the influx of self-styled "modernism" from the West, mentioned in our first lecture, the confused and troubled minds of the Chinese Church members were bewildered and, alas, too often dazzled by a deluge of new terms introduced by the advocates of the so-called "new interpretation of Christianity." Of these, the terms, "New Theology," "Liberal and Conservative," "New School" and "Old School" soon came into general use by Christian students and the wider circles reached by them, and the use is all too often to the disparagement of the old and conservative and in praise of the new and "liberal." The presentation by preachers of the New School type of Christianity as a Way of Life, in the sense of a way of living rather than the only Way to Eternal Life is becoming

more and more common. They present Jesus as an example rather than as Redeemer, and people are exhorted to seek after the faith of Jesus rather than faith in Jesus. In a Christmas letter of a year ago written by Rev. L. K. Lee, Executive Secretary of the Chinese Home Missionary Society, he tells of a very successful evangelistic trip in South-East China. A number of the churches, to secure the acceptance of their invitations, felt called upon to assure them that they believed the whole Bible the same as the evangelists themselves did! Though they blamed their pastors for too much indifference in announcing the meetings, the churches were packed by those who "found something fresh in hearing the old simple Gospel of Jesus Christ." Mr. Lee states at the close of his letter his conviction that "there are too few real evangelists, and many of the pulpits are giving intellectual lectures instead of preaching the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ, which results in many empty seats in the church. This need is not a need only in South China but throughout the country."

This New Theology is rapidly being spread through the printed page. "Modernistic" books like those of Fosdick are being translated into Chinese and others are being written in Chinese. Some of them are widely read. Until very recently, the only comprehensive Bible Dictionary in Chinese was one based upon Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, a work which you all know is honey-combed with "modern" doubts. The nature of the Chinese version may be judged from the following incident related in the English *Bible League Quarterly*, July, 1920, and quoted by Dr. Griffith Thomas in his article on "Modernism in China" (*Princeton Theological Review*, October, 1921, page 669):

In the Province of Shansi in China, there is a Bible training school. The students heard that Dr. Hastings' Bible Dictionary was being translated into Chinese. So eager were they to get all the help they could in Bible study that they saved up their money to buy it as soon as it was out. The books arrived, the students received their sets with the greatest enthusiasm and went to their rooms to study their new possessions and to hunt up various subjects on which they wanted light. The next day the missionary found himself in a difficulty. The men came to him and said, "The Bible says so and so, the Dictionary says differently. What are we to do?" The missionary offered to buy back the volumes at half price, and together they would burn the lot. It was a touching sight to see those young Chinese handing in the volumes to be burned, for a nice looking book is dear to the heart of a Chinese.

Through the indefatigable labour of Dr. Henry M. Woods, of the Southern Presbyterian Mission, a thoroughly sound Bible Dictionary based on the works of Dr. Davis and Dr. Orr, has been

provided in Chinese, but his efforts to obtain funds for this publication were balked for a long time by influential missionaries who assured the Southern Presbyterian Executive Committee for Foreign Missions that there was no need for another Bible Encyclopædia.

Another dangerous book was reviewed with severest adverse criticism last year in *The Bible for China*. It is a remarkable joint publication of the Society for Advancing Buddhism and a Mr. Shen, Chinese Secretary of the National Christian Literature Association [though we are assured by Mr. Shen that that Association "has never as an institution had any connection whatever with it."]. In addition to the compromise thoroughly disloyal to Christ which this book would make between Christianity and Buddhism, identifying the mercy of Christ with that of the Goddess of Mercy, and affirming that all men are God incarnate, we are told by the reviewer, Rev. George A. Clayton, that Mr. Shen in it advocates an indigenous Bible for China made by cutting out unnecessary portions thereof as used in the West. To this end he recommends Kent's *Shorter Bible* or Tolstoi's reduction of the Gospel to the Lord's Prayer and a dozen sentences from the lips of Christ, flatly denying the inspiration of the Bible as a whole, which forsooth presents God in the light of a devil and may be called the devil's classic!

By far the ablest and most attractive religious magazine in Chinese is devoted to the promulgation of the "New Theology" and its social programme. Through liberal financial backing, from the West as I am informed, this monthly magazine is able to pay high prices to first-rate writers for their articles and to reduce its subscription in groups of ten to the ridiculously low price of seventy cents Chinese currency a year, the equivalent of less than thirty-five cents United States currency. This magazine which is only one of several of a similar theological complexion, is being widely circulated and having a most deplorable effect upon educated people, young and old, within the Christian Church, and the great pity of it is that there is as yet no equally good Chinese theological magazine of the evangelical type to counteract this dangerous influence.

Another very dangerous religious magazine is one published in Peking under the name of *The Life* in both English and Chinese, with professors of the Yenching Christian University among its editors and contributors. In the July 1925 number of this

magazine, an American missionary, Mr. John L. Childs of the Young Men's Christian Association, had an article in which he said: "It is apparent that our present view of God is in certain respects different, and I believe, superior to the view held by Jesus. . . . In calling attention to these inadequacies in Jesus' thought . . . I do desire to point out . . . that Jesus was by no means infallible, and that in some of our ethical and religious thought we have gone beyond Him. Moreover, in making Him our God, instead of one of the great human leaders of the race, we have robbed Him of much of His vitality. . . . Jesus was not as unique as we had supposed. As long as we as missionaries believe that in Jesus or in the Christian experience we have something that is uniquely final in the sense that it is directly God-given, I believe that we shall be shut out from the most rewarding fellowship with non-Christian Chinese." As Rev. J. W. Lowrie, D.D., exclaimed in the *Bible for China*, February, 1926, "We cannot keep silent! The modernist microbe in a friendly culture is multiplying with amazing and characteristic virulence. It is our duty to call the attention of the lovers of the real Lord Jesus Christ in China and abroad, to this pathological symptom of a perilous disease that threatens the very existence of the Christian Church in China. Our hearts are concerned about the multitudes who, receiving such wholly misguided representations of the person of Christ as these, are beguiled into dreaming that they have obtained the faith and are Christians indeed, when in reality they are no nearer the Christian's experience than the Unitarian himself."

The confusion and perplexity thus forced upon the infant Church is well described from sad personal experience by my esteemed missionary colleague, Rev. Courtenay Hughes Fenn, of Peking, in an article in the October 1927 number of the *Princeton Theological Review*, entitled "Is Christianity Responsible for China's Troubles?" In his final paragraph, he says: "We conclude the consideration of China's chief present troubles by referring to a serious disturbance of the Church itself, both directly and indirectly affecting the entire Chinese people. The existence of divided counsels, primarily among the foreigners who have gone from their home lands to help China, but latterly also among Chinese Christian leaders, serious divergences of opinion as to the Christian message, the missionary motive, the function of the Church, the education of its ministry and the aim of

Christian education in general, interferes sadly with unity of plan and harmony of effort toward the Christianisation of that great land. This cleavage is far more serious in its fact and in its portent, than any of the old differences between the denominations, which have always been less sharply marked on the foreign mission field than in the home lands, and of late years have yielded to many union movements. But now the tendency in China is for the young Chinese leaders, held back by none of the foreign inheritance of reverence for Christian tradition or early associations, to carry the radical theories brought to them by their foreign teachers, ruthlessly to their logical conclusion, throwing out of the way any venerable articles of faith which seem to stand in the way, and calmly planning an all-inclusive, practically creedless, 'Christian' Church. The present emphasis on nationalism and autonomy and on the religious values of ancient Chinese culture, tends to accentuate this tendency and lead to the apprehension that either there will be one Church in China so liberal as hardly to merit the name of Christian, or else two Churches so sharply contrasted in faith and aim as to have little in common. Several union movements have already been halted by these conditions, while others already consummated have been dissolved because of the increasingly wide divergence of views, of policies and of methods. There have been partings of chief friends, reluctant organisations for the defence of the Bible, grief over the trend of large institutions, many heart-burnings, some heart-breakings. The fearless, self-sacrificing preaching of the simple Gospel has played so large a part, during the last century, in awakening China, . . . that it is strongly to be hoped that the Christian Church will not revert to compromise methods simply because 'a scientific age demands the abandonment of the supernatural'. Nothing but the supernatural would have sufficed to produce Christianity's record in China in the past: nothing else than the supernatural is capable of regenerating the troubled 'Land of Sinim'."

This testimony of Dr. Fenn is abundantly confirmed by a letter of a large group of evangelical missionaries from various missions gathered in Tsingtao in the summer of 1927 to the "Missionary Constituencies in the Home Lands," a letter which met with such hearty approval at a subsequent meeting of the Chinese Bible Union's Committee of One Hundred that they voted to have it published in the next issue of their magazine,

*The Bible for China*, and Dr. J. W. Lowrie, editor of that magazine and Honorary Chairman of the Presbyterian China Council, recommended that letter most unreservedly. Speaking of conditions which then prevailed, the letter states: "It is well known that a communism which is atheistic in its tendency and teaching has created much confusion, doubt and unrest, even among some of our Christians, as well as in China generally. But, back of all this and leading up to it, with sorrow of heart we are driven to confess, that the character of the teaching in many of our schools at home has helped to make ready this sad situation in China, by placing not a few missionaries of the Cross on the field who have proven themselves unfitted to build upon the Evangelic Faith which the veteran missionaries have planted in China. This has especially been true of some occupying positions in some mission High Schools and Colleges. These men, by casting doubt upon the Word of God and some of its fundamental doctrines, have created fertile soil for the progress of Bolshevism and unbelief even within the walls of these professedly Christian institutions. Inasmuch as this upheaval has resulted in the return of a large majority of China missionaries to the home lands, we with all humility and love, beg our boards and constituencies at home by all means to avoid sending back to China any who hold modernistic views. Surely in spreading the Gospel, we have enough to meet in the ancient heathenism of China without introducing this modern philosophy in the guise of Christianity which is calculated to deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect. Therefore with hearts aching for the little flock of Chinese already saved and the millions yet in darkness, we implore our friends and all friends of missions in responsible places to see to it that no more modernists are sent out to China, for they can only discredit the integrity of the Bible and undermine faith therein as the very truth of God." Dr. Lowrie, in an editorial in the *Bible for China* in 1928, No. 33, says of this letter, "The letter is so clear and comprehensive, so direct and concise, and expresses so well the general convictions of members of the Bible Union of China in the present missionary situation, that at the recent meeting of the Committee of One Hundred it was voted to give it a place in the next issue of the *Bible for China*. We believe that it expresses also the views and desires of most of those evangelical missionaries, not actually members of the Bible Union but sympathetic with it, who are personally engaged in



giving the Gospel to the Chinese people. Would that it might be so fixed in the consciousness and grafted into the heart of those in the West, who give and pray for evangelical missions, as to bear fruit in a mission force sifted of dubious and wavering witnesses to the Cross and Resurrection of the Lord Jesus and recruited with bearers of an authoritative, unmutilated Bible to the wistful and wandering multitudes of China." This same Dr. Lowrie, one of the most honoured and beloved missionaries in China, an unusually sweet spirited man, but a man of keen insight and long experience, is reported by no less an authority than Dr. Griffith Thomas to have said some years ago at a public meeting in Shanghai against so-called "Modernism," that Evangelicals had been silent a long time in the hope of improvement being seen, but this attitude had become an impossible one; that now there are two schools of missionaries, the fundamental difference between them being whether or not the Bible can be trusted; that for many years past he had seen a weakening in the preaching of the New Testament Christ; and that it should be declared to the infant Church of China that to substitute anything for salvation from sin was to proclaim another Gospel. This testimony was reinforced by that of Mr. D. E. Hoste, Director of the China Inland Mission, a veteran missionary, highly respected for his fair and judicial mind and for his conciliatory attitude, the man, indeed, who, more than any other, saved a decided split in the National Christian Conference at Shanghai in the spring of 1922 over the demand for and refusal to grant a doctrinal basis for the proposed National Christian Council, and secured the entrance of his own mission in that Council without such a basis, though they have since seen their mistake and withdrawn. Mr. Hoste said, in reinforcing Dr. Lowrie's testimony, that it was not necessary to speak of dividing the missionaries, because they were already divided, and that while he had sympathy with all possible forms of co-operation in missionary work, he was conscious that beneath the co-operation there was fundamental difference as to the message. Not only is this the conviction of conservatives. It is being voiced in liberal circles as well. In an editorial in the February 1926 number of the *Chinese Recorder*, whose decided "liberal" trend in theological matters has alienated many of its conservative readers, the editor confesses, "We have never known such widespread diversity of opinion on all aspects of Christian work and the Christian message as is apparent in China to-day."

There are, however, two important differences of view-point between the strict evangelicals and the liberals on this subject, which it is only fair to note here. The first is that suggested by the two words, *difference* and *diversity*. The former emphasise the fact, as we have done above, that essentially the conflict is between two great opposing systems of theological thought; while the latter think this is a misrepresentation of the facts and would not have it overlooked that there are many grades of doctrinal views running all the way from what they are pleased to call ultra-conservatism on the one hand to out-and-out unitarianism on the other. The second is that suggested by the word *fundamental* in the above quotation from the Director of the China Inland Mission. The "liberals," and many others who are not really awake to present-day conditions in the Church, think of the differences as of comparative unimportance, and that the thing for us to do is to follow the exhortation of Dr. Timothy Liu, Dean of Yenching Theological Seminary, and "agree to differ but resolve to love"; while those evangelical workers whose eyes have been opened to the situation realise that the conflict of views reaches down into the very centre of the Christian message and upon its issue depends the eternal destiny of untold millions of our fellow men; and, underneath the sweet-sounding slogan of Dr. Liu, they see an invitation to lay down their arms and join ranks with those who would stealthily substitute for God's only way of salvation another, human, gospel which cannot save.

Now, as to the first point at issue, two admissions must be made. First, while it is true that the conflict is essentially one between two great irreconcilable doctrinal systems, one based on God's Word, and the other ultimately on man's reasoning, there is in China, as elsewhere, a gradation of views extending from absolute loyalty to God's Word and plan of salvation, on the one hand, to a rationalistic unitarianism on the other. Secondly, there is by no means unanimity of thought within either of the two opposing parties in the Church. Neither of these facts are strange in view of the suddenness with which the conflict has arisen among us. Through unenlightenment as to actual conditions and confusion of thought as to the issues involved, a majority of those who actually belong in the conflict have as yet failed to find their proper ranks, and some have magnified side issues beyond their proper proportions; but every great thought movement inevitably will be pushed to its logical conclusion.

Every missionary who is toying with destructive higher criticism and some of the "assured results of modern scholarship" should remember that he is starting on a course which, if not checked, will lead him or his spiritual descendants to a rejection of God's plan of salvation. One would hardly expect unanimity among those who were developing a gospel according to man to take the place of that according to God; nevertheless, through such universal characteristics as man's love of sin, his pride and his desire to exclude God from his world, together with the directing hand of the "God of this world," this false gospel is assuming a remarkable degree of essential unity, especially on its negative side of anti-supernaturalism. Those true to God's Word, on the other hand, are more and more coming to a realisation of the actual oneness of their faith and to distinguish between the essentials and the non-essentials of that faith, as witness the Bible Union of China composed of nearly three thousand missionaries representing almost all the missions and banded together for the defence of the integrity of God's Word and His true Gospel, the North China Theological Seminary at Tenghsien, Shantung Province, China, the largest Seminary in China, where evangelical students of a dozen or more denominations have been working together and praying together in the very closest spirit of Christian unity, and the movement initiated by the Presbyterian Synod of North China and meeting with wide-spread interest in other communions for the organisation of a nation-wide federated union of churches on a thoroughly evangelical basis. In fact the great obstacle to the widest success of union movements in China as well as the great stumbling block to outsiders, is "modernism" rather than denominationalism. Your speaker's wide experience in country evangelism leads him to the conclusion that only a very small percentage of the people know even the name of the denomination working in their midst, though most of them can tell you it is the "Jesus Church" or that it is the British or American or Swedish Church; and two denominations which may happen to be working in juxtaposition, if they enjoy mutual confidence and fellowship, will give the impression of being "i gê shih", "one piece affair." Hence it is more profoundly expressive of the true situation to speak of a great difference as to the message than to speak of a wide-spread diversity of opinion as to it.

Moreover this divergence of views as to the message is fundamental; for we have shown that it involves the acceptance or

rejection of God's Word to us even concerning His only begotten Son and His atoning work for us, and Jesus Himself has said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life and cometh not into judgment." As sure as the Word of God is true, belief in the deity of Christ and His blood atonement for our sins are essential elements of saving faith. There can be no question as to John's meaning when he says in his first Epistle (iv. 15) : "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him and he in God," and (in v. 4, 5) : "For whatsoever is begotten of God overcome the world ; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith. And who is he that overcome the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God." Nor is there question of Jesus' meaning when He says : "Except ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins" (John viii. 24), or when He says (in John vi. 53) : "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life" ; nor of Paul's meaning when he said (in Romans iii. 24 and 25) : "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom God set forth to be a propitiation by faith in His blood."

Now, my hearers, are these great doctrines about which there certainly are divided councils in mission boards working in China, among the missionaries and in the Chinese Church itself, matters of comparative indifference about which we can afford to "agree to differ, but resolve to love" ? If we do so tolerate the presence of the "leaven of the Sadducees" in our work in China are we not in danger of losing our evangel and rendering the evangelisation of the land by us impossible ? There is the very real need therefore for the greatest care lest, in this time of crisis and unexcelled opportunity for the speedy evangelisation of China, the progress of the work be disastrously delayed by the loss of the only evangel which can save. While most of the missionaries and Chinese preachers are still preaching the essentials of the Faith, there are too many who are not. Not for an instant would I give the impression that this need is peculiar to mission work in China. On the contrary, from what I hear and read, my conviction is that the need is equally as acute in other lands. Perhaps the very frankness with which we raise our voices in protest against

the encroachment of modern forms of unbelief upon the Church in China is a wholesome sign, but we now are addressing ourselves particularly to that need in China.

It is an occasion for profound thankfulness that one-third of the entire missionary force in the Chinese Republic have perceived this need with sufficient clearness to enter the Bible Union of China, a society organised in the summer of 1920 for the purpose of "contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints," on the basis of a common conviction "that the state of both the Christian and non-Christian world demands unity of purpose and steadfastness of effort in preaching and teaching the fundamental and saving truths revealed in the Bible, especially those now being assailed, such as the deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His atoning sacrifice for sin, and His bodily resurrection from the dead; the miracles both of the Old and New Testaments; the personality and work of the Holy Spirit; the new birth of the individual and the necessity of this as the pre-requisite to Christian social service; as well as a re-affirmation of faith in the whole Bible as 'the inspired Word of God and the ultimate source of authority for Christian faith and practice.'" In its programme, it very wisely gives first place to prayer "that God may so direct this movement as to arouse the Church of God as to its deep need of a firmer grasp on the fundamentals of the Christian faith and a fresh realisation of the power and sufficiency of the simple Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the preaching and teaching of which has been blessed of God since the beginning of missionary work." Then in the midst of a number of practical and constructive plans for the prosecution of its aims, it places one for the presenting "to our home boards and supporters the vital importance of accepting for missionary service only such candidates as accept the truths referred to above." To ignore the united testimony of this large body of level-headed and true-hearted missionaries in China to the serious menace which confronts the Christian message in that land would be to shut our eyes to evidence which is irrefragable. To disregard its most earnest warning and appeal, as some, alas, of the foreign boards and many of the supporters of missions are still continuing to do, is but to invite a great disaster. To fail to pray this movement through to a full accomplishment of its holy aim, is to neglect, in a matter of supreme importance, to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

The problem of the preservation of the evangel in China is a very real and vital one. It will involve on the part of the individual Christian worker :—

1. The real possession of it by him or, if you please, the real possession of him by it. Every minister in particular and indeed every Christian worker, should have a clear accurate knowledge of what that evangel is : he should possess it as his very own in fulness of faith, and so far as possible should be prepared to explain it to others in a clear attractive way. The content of that evangel is Jesus Christ and Him crucified, or, in other words, Christ and His atoning work as presented to us throughout the pages of God's Holy Word. It will include, of course, a proclamation and explanation of all the great revealed facts connected with our Lord such as His deity, His pre-existence, His incarnation through a virgin birth, His life, His death, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of God the Father and His second coming, personal, bodily, and immanent, to judge the quick and the dead.

2. Hence it will involve also a firm belief in the entire Bible as the very Word of God and as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. Without such implicit belief in the Bible, the bias of the human heart will inevitably lead to departures from the truth as it is in Jesus.

3. It will involve an earnest prayerful desire and effort to win men to saving faith in that evangel and to recruit them to aid in extending it to others. It is a peculiarity of the Gospel that it will soon fail to exert its power in the life or to command the living faith of one who does not strive to pass it on to others.

4. It will involve an earnest contention for the precious saving truth against all who would in any way pervert it. If this is done in the right spirit, it will no more detract from one's zeal in proclaiming that truth than it did in the case of Paul, or John, or Martin Luther. Times of controversy in the history of the Church over really vital matters have often been times of greatest numerical growth and deepening of Christian life.

On the part of organisations, ecclesiastical or mission, on the field, it involves :—

1. A careful discrimination between *essentials* and *non-essentials* of the faith. Every doctrine of God's Word is an important doctrine and well worth defending and propagating if its proper proportions in relation to other doctrines are observed,

as they are much more likely to be on the foreign field where the Church is facing heathenism than in Western lands; but not every important doctrine is so essential to the system of saving truth as to justify withholding Christian fellowship or co-operation from those to whom the truth of that doctrine has not been made clear. On the other hand, it is the plain teaching of God's Word that there are doctrines which are so essential. Of these, some, such as the personal existence of God, the deity of Christ and His substitutionary atonement, are clearly indicated as essential elements of saving faith and a credible profession of belief in them should be required of all applicants for church membership. Aside from these, there are other doctrines which are directly or indirectly essential to the maintenance of saving faith; so that fellowship and co-operation with officially recognised Christian leaders who reject them may be nothing less than disloyalty to Christ. Among these, the members of the Bible Union of China, as we have seen, following the lead of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in repeated utterances on the subject, and indeed that of the historic position of the Christian Church very generally, have put themselves on record, and I believe rightly so, as including such doctrines as the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth and the bodily resurrection of our Lord. The inevitable logical and actual tendency of the denial of these doctrines is to destroy faith in saving truth. Hence those who reject them can only be regarded as hinderers of the great work of spreading the Good News of Salvation among those who know it not. The problem of discriminating between the essentials and non-essentials of Christian faith is one of the most important problems before our work to-day. To err on either side would be most detrimental to our work. To mistake non-essentials for essentials would lead to factions among Christ's true followers and destroy the spirit of Christian unity for which Christ prayed. To treat essentials as non-essentials would be to countenance the official propagation of deadly error in the Church. The present danger in China, I believe, is almost altogether on the side of ultra-toleration. There is little disposition among the Chinese to magnify a denominationalism imported from the West and there is generally still less on the part of modern missionaries to import such a denominationalism. Facing heathenism, all recognise the absolute necessity of all the real unity of Christian forces which can be mustered, and there is

a growing realisation that the issues upon which the denominations were divided have faded into comparative insignificance before the much more vital ones which have arisen within most of the denominations. Ninety-nine one-hundredths of the danger to-day is that of failing to recognise essentials as such, and church and mission leaders should give themselves afresh to a deep, prayerful Scriptural investigation along this line.

2. The problem of the preservation of the evangel in China further involves a careful investigation on the part of church and mission workers of the actual doctrinal position of other bodies with which co-operation or union is entered into. It is scarcely conceivable that China mission bodies of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America would have entered into the co-operative and union undertakings they have with certain other Missions had they been in full possession of the facts disclosed with very convincing proofs in such books as *The Leaven of the Sadducees*, or had they taken the trouble to investigate for themselves the actual theological positions of the membership of those Missions.

3. It involves further an insistence on a doctrinal basis for every union or co-operative institution or organisation definitely committing them to the great fundamentals of the Christian faith and on a loyal adherence to this doctrinal basis by all concerned. Not to do this, especially in the present crisis, is to prove unfaithful to a most sacred trust. Yet this has been neglected even in the National Christian Council and in great union institutions entered into with Missions which refuse to be bound by doctrinal statements, even those merely covering the essentials. It is disconcerting to realise that our Presbyterian mission bodies are co-operating in a number of creedless educational institutions with a Mission which withdrew from a union Bible training school of many years' standing because our North China Mission refused to comply with its demand to have the so-called "modern" theological view-point represented on its faculty<sup>2</sup>, especially when an American spokesman for the world-wide work of this withdrawing Mission is quoted in the *Leaven of the Sadducees* as saying: "It would be a magnanimous and at the same time practical step toward Christian unity if some of the Unitarian Churches as churches would resume their interest in, say, the— [his own]

<sup>2</sup> For proof see file of Minutes of the North Chinese Mission (Presbyterian) and Bases of Union of Yenching University, Shantung Christian University, North China American School, Constitution of the National Christian Council, etc.



Board, by contributing as churches to the educational and medical work done by it. Indeed, now, when so many stations are being occupied by the younger men, I feel that it is more and more the case that the actual preaching and teaching of the missionaries of the Board is largely along the line that would be approved by both sections of our faith": and a former President of their Board as saying of the Unitarians, "It is from our own ancestors in the faith that we are separated rather than from one another." Would that we Presbyterians could show that same courage of our convictions in demanding clear doctrinal statements that our fellow missionaries of that and several other missions show in demanding exemption from such statements! It would keep us from many a disloyal and disastrous compromise in union work.

On the part of the Boards and home constituencies, the situation calls for the utmost vigilance to see that no unsound missionaries are sent out or retained in service. Our own Board requires all its new missionaries to answer the two questions prescribed for our Presbyterian candidates for ordination. This is good so far as it goes, and is doubtless a real protection to us; but the Board's responsibility for the theological views of those it accepts as missionaries should not be thought to end with the propounding of these two general questions. It should feel itself obliged to make the same careful examination of each applicant's theological views that a faithful church session should make of those of a candidate for the pastorate of its church. Would it not do much to relieve the minds of all concerned if the Board could report of all its new missionaries, for instance, that they had given unequivocal assent to the five points of doctrine repeatedly declared by our General Assembly to be essential to the system of doctrine contained in our standards and the Word of God, as well as out-and-out affirmative answers to the two questions mentioned above?

If we would preserve in China our evangel in its saving and conquering power, it is of the utmost importance that there be a general realisation of the serious peril it is in and a loyal rally of all its friends around its banner. If we lose it, our cause is lost; but we must not, and by God's help we shall not, lose it. With it, we shall surely win the victory.

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*(To be continued.)*