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PRIMARY REQUISITES FOR THE SPEEDY EVANGELISATION OF CHINA

ARTICLE IV

THE CHURCH

THE chief human agency in the evangelisation of China is not the paid workers but the Church. She is the body of Christ left to carry on His work and glorify Him on earth. She is the Bride of Christ who, with the Spirit and every one who heareth, is to say "Come." As in Apostolic days, it is the Church through which a knowledge of the Gospel is most widely broadcasted, and it is the Church through which the strongest witness is borne to its reality and power. It was the Church which Christ loved, and to purchase which He shed His precious blood, and it was the Church which the great evangelist Peter was especially commissioned to feed and tend and strengthen, and to which the great foreign missionary Paul wrote his immortal epistles and upon which he spent a very large part of his care and energy. The plan upon which Paul worked for the evangelisation of the world was precisely that of the Great Commission at the close of Matthew's Gospel. He first won disciples for Christ, then gathered them into Churches and then carefully trained them. Through direct evangelism, he planted Churches in important places and diligently nurtured and trained the members collectively and individually until they not only stood alone but became mighty self-propagating centres, sending forth the Gospel light to the regions round about and planting other Churches of similar character. The Christian leader in China, foreign or native, who would make his life count for most in the evangelisation of that land must exercise the same statesmanship. He must relate his efforts definitely to the development of a self-reliant and self-propagating Christian Church. He must devote himself to the highest welfare of that Church, believing in it as God's chosen instrument for the saving of the Chinese people. He must see in it China's only hope in this present age. He must realise himself and do all he can to impress upon others the fact that the greatest good anyone can do to China is to do his full

part toward furnishing her with a Church after Christ's own heart.¹ Such a Church is not built up without much prayer and faithful toil. The successful evangelist must have a pastor's heart. Having travailed for the rebirth of men, he must travail for them again until Christ be formed in them. While it retained its early love, the Church at Ephesus was probably the very strongest local centre of evangelising power. It was here that Paul by the space of three years ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears declaring unto them the whole counsel of God and teaching them not only publicly but from house to house. How different the results would have been had Paul tried to manage that outstation from his arm-chair at Antioch with perhaps one or two brief visits a year for the purpose of baptising new members, disciplining the older ones of whose sins he might chance to learn, holding Communion, and taking up a collection. It is the missionary who, in spite of privations and discomforts and often of spiritual loneliness, gives of his time and heart ungrudgingly to his outstations, giving them his very self along with the Gospel,—it is that one who receives the rich reward of him who sows in tears. The old-style missionaries like Dr. Corbett and Dr. Nevius did this very thing; and, thank God, there are today in China many who are following in their steps; but the most urgent need in that land today is for more men, foreign and Chinese, with the true shepherd heart to tend the flock of the Lord which He has purchased with His blood for His special ownership and use. If, in the development of institutional work, this all-important branch of Christian service be allowed to lag behind, the other forms of work will be of small avail. Christian students will not be recruited for the schools and Christian service, and those trained in the schools for such service will lack the guidance and inspiration in the work which might well be of more practical

¹ One of the most disappointing things about our great Union Universities in China is their failure to impress this fact upon their students. Prof. Richard H. Ritter, of Yenching, says of the students there, "Christian students in Yenching are frankly wary of the Church. They don't like the very word itself because of associations which they have brought with them from wherever they came . . . they don't wish to enter the ministry . . . they seem to have an over-mastering preference to teach in Christian schools or align themselves with Christian institutions and yet their Christian idealism is in many cases highly inspiring and even surprising."

Experience of an entirely different nature with students in institutions where the unique place and supreme importance of the church are emphasised, as well as Prof. Ritter's own very evident attitude, causes one to doubt the reason given by him for the deplorable feeling of the Yenching students toward the institution without which there is no hope in this age for China nor any other land. Whatever its cause, this general feeling toward the church in many of our higher institutions must be changed if they are to take any considerable part in the accomplishment of our great work.

help than all they got in school. Whatever else is done or left undone, the all-important work of building up the Church *must not be neglected.*

Here it is especially imperative that God's plummet be kept in hand. Through the faithful preaching of the true evangel, the Church must have been founded on the Rock Christ Jesus; but upon this Rock the builders are warned of God to take heed how they build. From a careful study of our Lord's prayer for His Church and His seven letters to it, we may, I think, sum up His ideals for it in about seven words. He desires it to be a living, growing, holy, working, praying, loyal and united church. A living church must be composed of those who have been born again and who possess a living faith in the Son of God who redeemed them with His blood. The Church in China shows decided signs of life but, I fear, is suffering seriously in many places from auto-intoxication as a result of too much dead and decaying matter within its system. In the natural desire for numerical growth, care has been too much relaxed in the reception of new members. The Church officers should be trained and expected to demand of candidates for admission a really credible profession of their faith, a profession satisfactorily evidenced by a fair knowledge of saving truth and an earnest desire for more knowledge, true repentance of sin, a promise to take Christ as the absolute Lord of his life, and a clear indication in the outward life that this promise is not an empty one.

The spiritual growth of the Church through the diligent use of the means of grace should be promoted in every possible way. As the settling of native pastors over local churches or districts frees the foreign pastors more and more for the holding of special meetings and classes for the instruction and training of the Christians, this form of work should be greatly enlarged. In the wonderful results obtained in Korea from the great station classes into which so large a proportion of the church membership is gathered for several days each year, we have an indication of what it would mean for the Chinese Church if they could be induced more generally to enter such classes. By far the chief drawback to the Church's growth in grace, is in its failure to keep the Sabbath day. The duty and blessing of strict Sabbath keeping should be stressed by faithful admonition and example, a better provision for a profitable use of the day, and, as a last resort, the discipline of those in actual control of their own time

who obstinately refuse to keep the day. A turning from their besetting sin of Sabbath desecration would bring an untold blessing to the Church. It would go far towards deepening their prayer-life as individuals and as families and would prove a wonderful aid to the sorely needed promotion of Bible study and knowledge. The inability of a considerable portion of the Church even to read the Bible is both appalling and inexcusable. By the faithful use of a considerable portion of each Sabbath day and a few minutes each week day, even the dullest old woman should be able to acquire a reading knowledge of God's Word especially if she had been taught the phonetic script. Holiness should be most earnestly prayed and worked for in the Church. The members should be lovingly and earnestly warned that they who practise the works of the flesh shall not inherit the kingdom of God. The entire Church membership should be taught that the toleration of sin not only destroys their influence on outsiders but keeps them from God's blessing. Their testimony against sin should be so strong as to make it well-nigh intolerable for the Achans within their midst. The responsibility for cleaning up each Church should be thrown upon the local officers and membership. He that saith, "I know Him and keepeth not His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him." But Holiness is not merely an absence of moral uncleanness. That is only its negative side. On the positive side, it involves whole-souled consecration to Christ. It is not only a dying unto sin but a *living* unto God. In all those whom He has bought with a price, Christ deserves and demands such consecration. He claims all they have and are. These claims should be pressed upon the consciences of the Chinese Church and the way of holiness as well as its obligation should be clearly and lovingly pointed out. Much has been done along this line at the summer conferences under the auspices of the Milton Stewart Fund and elsewhere by powerful spiritual leaders and many spiritually minded pastors, but the need is great for many more spirit-filled men and women who can lead the Church to higher ground in its devotion to the Master. The evangelisation of China still waits for a *holy* Church whose heart and hand entirely belong to Christ.

With 999 outside the Church to every member in it, the cause of Christ certainly demands a working Church, and every effort should be made to put its entire membership to work. It is a force to be used quite as truly as a flock to be fed. Each

member should be made to hear the Master's voice saying, "Son, go work today in the vineyard." The Church must be encouraged to take more responsibility for and initiative in the work. Long dependence upon the foreign missionary for the financing and planning of the work has largely paralysed the Church. The average member is too prone to look upon the evangelisation of his country as a foreign enterprise backed by resources which are well-nigh inexhaustible. He is the recipient of grace and is grateful for what he has received, but is all too slow to realise his obligation to devote his very life to passing on the blessing. Those whom the foreigners esteem worthy a part in the work, they hire with their foreign funds. Being incapable, he has not been given work; what has he to do but passively receive his benefits? To overcome this lethargy, responsibility must more and more be thrown upon the *Church* where it belongs. It must be made to feel that the task belongs to *it*, and that the missionaries are there merely to do all they can to help. It must be taken into confidence and frankly made to understand the immensity of the task and the comparative smallness of the resources. Its counsel should constantly be sought and respected as to the use of men and expenditure of money. It should be encouraged to take the initiative in planning and providing for new work, asking mission help only after it has exhausted its own resources. The Stations of the Shantung Mission have for many years put the use of their annual appropriations, with the exception of missionary salaries, repairs, and a few minor items, into the charge of co-operative committees composed of an equal number of Chinese representatives of Presbytery and foreign representatives of the Station. These committees have had final power to distribute the appropriations to the various branches of the work. They have decided upon the personnel and salaries of the Chinese employees of the Mission and are empowered to make any necessary transfers they see fit within the budget. This plan has proven so successful in enlisting interest in the work that recently the Chinese have been given considerably more than equal representation on the so-called Church Councils which have taken the place of the co-operative committees. In addition to the lack of an adequate sense of responsibility discussed above, there are other serious difficulties in the way of self-support in China, such as mutual distrust in the handling of large sums of money, the extreme poverty of the people, a

large proportion of whom are always near the verge of famine, and the family, rather than the individual, control of income. However, by far the most fundamental difficulty is a general lack of willingness to consecrate to the Lord the possessions which they *do* have and control.

In urging *self-support* as the motive for their giving, we are suggesting a motive which is entirely too low. To *pay* for Gospel privileges for one's self or family or community because one *has* to or even because one *ought* to, is not a very inspiring reason for Christian giving. It is far better if one can be persuaded to give to supply the needs of others outside his little circle, as when he gives to the support of a Home Missionary in a distant province, the building of a church in another country, or the relief of famine sufferers several hundred miles away. Perhaps the most natural first step in altruistic giving is when the missionary gets a group of Christians to feel a responsibility for the relief of local suffering. They will be sure to ask the missionary for his contribution but, if he is wise, he will wait until they have put theirs on the table first. But even the supply of need is not high enough to be the chief motive for Christian giving. There is nothing that can take the place of gratitude to Christ for all that He has given up and suffered for our redemption. This alone can cause us to first give ourselves to the Lord and then cheerfully put all that we possess at His disposal, to use whatever portion He sees fit "that His house may have bread," returning the remainder to us for the supply of our own needs. Really to impress this lesson on the heart of any one is to make him a cheerful and constant giver for all the rest of his life. Many a humble Chinese Christian has learned this lesson in a wonderful way and, like the Macedonians of old, insists on giving far beyond his power. Many out of their poverty give a tithe or more. I well remember a poor half-blind farm hand who, out of his monthly wage of fifty cents, regularly gave five cents. If all the Chinese Christians did as well, there would be no problem of the church's self-support. Unfortunately they do not. With shame we have to admit that most country Christians probably give less to the Lord's cause than they gave to idol worship before they became Christians. Possibly their greatest stumbling-block along this line is the way we missionaries live. To really teach these Chinese the lesson of sacrificial giving, we should have to deny ourselves many of what we have been accustomed to

consider the necessities of life. While we could not expect to live as the Chinese do without seriously hampering our efficiency and jeopardising our health or even our lives, perhaps a real honest experiment would teach us that many of these "necessities," though exceedingly convenient, are really far from necessary. The very fact of our trying our best to save for the Lord's cause, not merely by depriving ourselves of many of the comforts to which the Christians knew we were accustomed, but even by gladly suffering serious physical hardship for our Redeemer, would not fail to exert its influence, and bear fruit in other lives. With the challenge of an unparalleled opportunity to evangelise one-fourth the population of the globe, there is a call upon the little church in China for heroic work and sacrifice. There is a call as strong as there was in Apostolic times to endure hardness, physical as well as spiritual, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and the missionary and his Chinese colleague who would retain the leadership, must keep in the van, or at least as near to it as possible. May they all prove willing in the day of God's power!

If our Lord's cause in China needs a working Church, it much more needs a praying Church, which shall claim in that work the promised resources of almighty power. Indeed, if we would *put* the Church to work, we must first get it on its knees. If its work is to count at all, we must keep it there. There is nothing which encourages me so much about the Church in China as the fact that it is becoming more and more a praying Church. If the spirit of supplication should be poured out upon the entire Church in that great land as it has been done in many places, the Church would soon put its shoulder to the task with a willingness and strength beyond our fondest dreams and the task would soon be finished. The leadership that Church most needs today is one which the Holy Spirit can use with might in teaching it to pray, for it can advance and do its work only on its knees.

The Church to please its Lord must also be a *loyal* Church. It must be prepared to witness for Him even with its very life-blood. The test of fiery persecutions has shown this true of the Chinese Church to a remarkable degree. This is one of our strongest encouragements to believe that the Church actually has taken root in China and has become indigenous. But there is another phase of loyalty which is equally essential and more urgently required at the present time. It is intolerance of treason in the camp. Two kinds of traitors or false brethren were declared

anathema by Paul: those who professed to be the followers of Christ, yet did not love Him, and those who professed to be ministers of the Gospel, yet perverted the one true Gospel by substituting a false one. According to the plain teaching of our Lord and His Apostles, Christian fellowship with either of these two classes involves disloyalty to Him. It is wrong for a church not to exclude from its fellowship those who, by this wilful refusal to keep Christ's commandments clearly show that they do not love Him. It is far from kind to them and most dishonouring to Christ to permit them to continue to defile His Church to which they do not really belong. After much faithful prayer and admonition and ample opportunity for repentance, they should, if persistent, be suspended from communion and ultimately excommunicated from the Church. One of the weakest features of the Chinese Church is their hesitancy to deal with this class of members, especially when it is composed of rich or influential men. Were it not for the influence of the foreign missionaries and a few of the more conscientious of the native ministers and elders, they would be little if any better in this respect than the average American Church where discipline seems to have become a thing of the forgotten past, and a Nehemiah is badly needed to mourn over and rebuild the walls between the city of God and the surrounding world. This, rather than the love of power, is the principal reason for the hesitancy of many missionaries to turn their country charges over to the Chinese. They are afraid the walls they have built with such meticulous care will be allowed to crumble. However, the missionary makes a great mistake when he allows the officers and members of the Church to throw upon *him* the main responsibility of preserving the purity of the Church. Paul's method was to put the responsibility upon the local Church where it belonged, and to do his utmost to persuade them to take the initiative in matters of discipline. As Mr. Roland Allan, formerly of North China, shows so well in his excellent book on *Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?* the great missionary Apostle wisely preferred to deal with offenders indirectly through the local Church rather than directly. The testimony against the evil is far stronger thus and the discipline more keenly felt. So the missionary pastor will do his most effective work in this way by arousing the consciences of his flock upon the evil of condoning gross sin within their midst and impressing upon them

the fact that it is *their own* Church which will suffer. As soon as men can be found possessing the New Testament qualifications for elders, he should urge the organisation of churches in the field under his care. Until they are forthcoming, he should advise his people to pray and wait for them. When suitable Chinese pastors with real shepherd hearts are raised up by the Lord, he should thankfully consent to divide his large responsibility with them. Tactfulness and sympathy will still go far toward insuring the carrying on of his wise policies; and even though serious mistakes are sometimes made, his Chinese colleagues will learn by experience the wisdom of his counsels, and what discipline is exerted will come with far more force from a Chinese than from a foreigner. A Church with an uncompromising testimony against those who betray their Lord by sinful lives, a Church which has no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather even reproves them, such a Church alone can retain its self-respect and the real esteem of men. Best of all, it will please its Lord and receive His blessing. This is the Church we must have in China.

Equally essential to its life and usefulness is it for a Church to show its loyalty to Christ in intolerance of false teachers who would pervert the Gospel. Here the Chinese Church is at a double disadvantage. It belongs to a race which is noted for its politeness and its readiness to compromise in order to avoid offending others. In its effort to please men, it sometimes is tempted to fall short in fulfilling its obligations as a servant of Jesus Christ. Then, too, false teaching is often brought to it from foreign lands by missionaries sent out by trusted mission boards, men who control its principal source of funds and to whom they naturally look for leadership. Not infrequently these missionaries are of a strong personality which wins the respect and affection of their Chinese constituency, and they are skilled, as are their colleagues in America, in the fine art of concealing their real doctrinal position by the use of orthodox terminology in unusual senses. In this way, they obtain a following to whom they may gradually disclose their destructive views. It is natural for this class of missionaries to prefer teaching to preaching; so many of them find their way into schools of higher learning, where among the immature minds of students their plausible errors spread as does a gangrene. Taken at this two-fold disadvantage, the general attitude of the Chinese Church has been

one of strongly but vainly protesting toleration. They have not yet shown that splendid courage of conviction which their sister Church in Korea has shown in refusing to accept the help of unsound missionaries, though there are some of the latter who doubtless are wise in not attempting to transfer their membership to the Church in China. With the growth of nationalism and the proposed federated union of truly evangelical Churches in China, it is to be hoped that the loyalty and courage of at least one large section of the Church will rise to the occasion, and insist that all who work under or in co-operation with them ring true to the Word of God and the fundamentals of Christian faith. The Chinese Church should, in loyalty to Christ, keep a close watch over the religious instruction given in all the Christian schools, from kindergarten to university, which minister to its constituency. It should decline recognition to any school whose teaching in any essential point is contrary to the Scriptures, or leads its students to doubt their claim to be the Word of God. It should demand the safeguarding of that teaching by an annual subscription of all the teachers and directors to a satisfactory doctrinal statement.

The Church in China, if it would meet with the approval of its Master, must be a united Church, united in the Father and the Son even as they are one in a deep vital loving spiritual unity. This is the Church's greatest testimony to the divine mission of its Redeemer and to God's love. Its members must give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond, not of enforced uniformity of government, but of peace. Where there is one life, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father, this unity already exists and may manifest itself in the very deepest way quite apart from outward church union ; but without that foundation, no amount of mere organisation can bring it about. Where there is fundamental agreement, some form of close co-operation or union, federated or organic, is most desirable, and is being earnestly sought in China on all sides ; but neither co-operation nor union in distinctively Christian work can ever meet with divine approval, which is accomplished at the expense of loyalty to Him and to His truth. The unequal yoking together of believers and unbelievers in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity can never please our Lord nor prove the bond of peace. How can two walk together unless they be agreed ? For the two fundamentally antagonistic forms of faith represented

in the Protestant Churches of China today to be bound together in the same inclusive organisation cannot fail to promote discord and become an intolerable strain to Christ's true followers. It is the failure of a large portion of the Church to see this that, if persisted in, will bring about the gathering of most of China's Christians into two instead of one church union.

The recently organised Church Union initiated by the Congregationalists and Presbyterians and known as the Church of Christ (in China), while it has been incorrectly represented as having been formed on a strictly evangelical basis, was confessedly built upon the principle of a broad inclusiveness, which would not only obliterate denominational differences, but would tolerate within its ministry denial of some of the most vital doctrines.

Following as closely as possible the authoritative Chinese version of the three brief articles which comprise their "credal statement of fundamentals," we read:—

"(1) We believe in Jesus Christ as Redeemer and as the Foundation of the Church, and our aim is the establishment of His Kingdom throughout the earth.

"(2) We accept the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and the supreme authority in matters of faith and duty.

"(3) We acknowledge the Apostles' Creed as a fair expression of (literally 'capable of expressing') important doctrines believed in common by the orthodox church."

While a superficial reading of these articles may not reveal anything alarming, a careful scrutiny cannot fail to convince anyone who is really awake to the actual world-wide condition of the Church, that this doctrinal basis forms a very inadequate protection against the so-called "modernism" which is seeking so persistently to pervert the one true Gospel of the Grace of God. Among other things, it should be carefully noted that the doctrinal basis does not definitely commit the ministers and other officers of "The Church of Christ in China" to the essential doctrines of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Atonement, the Plenary Inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice, or even the Apostles' creed, as a statement of their own faith. If these important doctrines had

¹ The following account of the doctrinal position of the "Church of Christ in China" is taken largely from an article of mine entitled "On an Unsafe Basis" which appeared in the April, 1929, number of the *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*.

been inadvertently omitted it would have been serious enough ; but the fact is that in the Provisional General Assembly of " The Church of Christ in China " of 1922, which submitted the basis of union to the district associations and presbyteries, most earnest attempts were made to incorporate in the doctrinal basis definite affirmations of all of these vital doctrines ; but, with the single exception of the substitution of " Redeemer " for " Saviour and Lord " in the first article by a very close vote, these attempts were all resolutely voted down. Moreover, by ratifying the doctrinal basis as submitted, those district associations and presbyteries which entered the union put themselves on record as not deeming any change in that doctrinal basis essential. Many Chinese and even some unsophisticated foreigners have been misled by the insertion of the word " Redeemer " in the article referred to above ; but few " liberals " would admit that that word in itself would bind anyone to an acceptance of the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, especially as the Provisional General Assembly, in voting down even the simple statements that Christ " shed His blood to redeem us from our sins " or that He suffered death for that purpose, declined to commit itself as to how He redeemed us. Article 2 appears to be a fairly strong statement, too strong in fact to suit some of the more " liberal," but by no means strong enough for safety in view of the fact that the Provisional General Assembly *refused* to state that the Scriptures were *in their entirety* the Word of God, or that they were *all* inspired, or that they were *the only infallible* or *perfect* rule of faith and practice ; and, in the argument, a number of statements of Scripture, such as the creation of the world in six days, were boldly pointed out as false and misleading. The contention of some that the acknowledgment of the Apostles' Creed in Article 3 does commit the Church to some of the essential doctrines in question is absolutely unsound in that that article is so worded that any historian, however rationalistic, would doubtless be willing to subscribe to it, but that no one would be bound by it to a personal acceptance of the Apostles' Creed. In fact, an amendment was lost to make the article read, " I acknowledge the Apostles' Creed in its entirety as a statement of important doctrines of *my* faith." In opposing this amendment, speakers pointed out a number of statements in the Apostles' Creed to which they could not assent or to which assent should not be required. The result was that the wording of

this article was allowed to remain in such shape that it could be subscribed to without committing one's self to any particular article of that historic creed, be it the resurrection of the body, the descent of Christ into Hades, His virgin birth, or even His deity itself. Therefore it is clearly misleading to represent Article 3 as binding anyone to any of the doctrines omitted in the rest of the doctrinal basis. It may be added, by the way, that one would look in vain even in the Apostles' Creed for any mention of the Atonement or the Scriptures or any adequate statement of the Trinity. From the above facts, to which my personal testimony is corroborated by statements signed by fellow-commissioners to the 1922 meeting, is it not clear that the doctrinal basis of the newly constituted "Church of Christ in China," as it reads at present, is of far too large a mesh to screen the infant Church against the rationalistic and "modernistic" influx from state universities and apostate church schools in the west, as well as an increasing number of unsound ministerial candidates from mission schools in China?

In behalf of the Chinese, it is gratifying to observe that the doctrinal basis was not of their making, nor would it, in our opinion, have been adopted by them had they fully understood the issue. It was formulated by a sub-committee of seven foreigners and only four Chinese chosen by a committee a majority of whom were foreigners; and it and the entire constitution were rushed through the Provisional General Assembly with less than one and a half days' discussion in the Chinese language, during which, the delegates were earnestly pleaded with not to try to make any more changes than necessary in a doctrinal basis arrived at by the committee after much consultation and prayer. The votes in the presbyteries were very materially affected by the prevailing impression that to oppose the doctrinal basis as it stood was to block the way to union. Thus the very natural desire for a permanent outward expression of Christian unity in China became a powerful incentive to vote through a particular basis of union which was so far from satisfactory, to the Presbyterians at least that, in their first vote, eight presbyteries declined to ratify the basis of union (six of them by unanimous vote), and others voted with distinct amendments.¹ Indeed, the negative

¹ Some of these were subsequently brought into the union by the unauthorised and, in an organically united Church, thoroughly impracticable promise of the Executive Committee to allow each Synod to retain its own creed in addition to the union creed, if it so chose.

vote was so strong that three presbyteries, the Synod of North China and many individual ministers and elders solemnly declined to acknowledge the correctness of the announcement in 1925 by the Executive Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in China that the union overture had received the required two-thirds vote of the presbyteries, 16 to 8. Among other things, they challenged the status of one presbytery in relation to the General Assembly, and the right of another synodless presbytery to divide itself and so to cast two votes instead of one. A request to arrange for a careful and impartial investigation of these protests was ignored by the hurried dissolving Presbyterian General Assembly of 1927, an Assembly which, like its predecessor in 1922, was illegally constituted in that a large proportion of its commissioners were appointed by presbyteries which had actually left the Presbyterian Church and were then governed by the union constitution. The protest of the Synod of North China against this illegality was also completely ignored by the Assembly of 1927, probably from lack of time and a failure to appreciate the real sense of injustice behind that and other protests. Inasmuch as it had been officially announced beforehand that this meeting was for the purpose of dissolving the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in China, few commissioners opposed to the union overture felt it worth while to attend. The majority, through the error of counting the votes of a number of presbyteries which, by the confession of the Executive Secretary of the Church of Christ in China, were already functioning under the constitution of that Church, were led to acquiesce in the announcement of the Executive Committee and the declaration of the Moderator that more than the required two-thirds of the presbyteries had voted in favour of union, and to pass a resolution to dissolve the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in China.

But the Presbyterian Church in China was not dissolved. It continues as the Synod of North China, some thirteen thousand strong, and at least one large independent presbytery, who are determined to stand firm for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. These loyal thousands are continuing as Presbyterians, not from any disinclination to church union, but because they are opposed to union on the entirely too "liberal" basis which was adopted. The Synod of North China has made a definite proposal to all other Christian bodies in China for the formation

of a federated union church to be known as the League of Christian Churches on a doctrinal basis which rings clear and true on the great fundamental truths of God's Word : so, in prayerful dependence upon God for His grace and blessing, we may confidently look forward to at least one great united interdenominational church body in China through which uncompromisingly loyal testimony to the glorious Gospel of our Blessed Lord will continue to be given in that dark land where such testimony is needed so profoundly. We would plead for your earnest prayers for the presbyteries and congregations of sound evangelical faith that have been induced to enter the Union Church known as "The Church of Christ in China," that they may be kept true to Christ, and may eventually see their mistake and either effect the needed revision of their doctrinal basis or withdraw from that Church, if it persists in refusing to utter clear testimony on some of the absolutely essential doctrines of the Christian faith. In any case, it is to be earnestly hoped that they may also join the League of Christian Churches and stand with it for the truth.

This plan for a thoroughly evangelical League of Christian Churches is meeting with a wide and enthusiastic welcome. Many are earnestly hoping that it may prove a powerful instrument in the Lord's hand, not only for rescuing His Church throughout China from the inroads of unbelief but also for leading it on to that place where He can fully own and use it in the early accomplishment of the work He has for it to do in that great land.

The purpose of these lectures has been to show that the evangelisation of China is the greatest task before Christ's Church today, and that it is the Church's grandest opportunity, that there is every reason to believe that the task can be speedily accomplished, that we may look for this accomplishment not by human might nor power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, and that we may confidently expect that Spirit to work with almighty power through instruments, however weak in themselves, which meet with His approval. Upon the basis of these truths, we have tried faithfully to apply the plummet of God's revealed will to the character and work of those men and women who are giving their lives to China's evangelisation, to the message which they are proclaiming, and to the Church which they are establishing. In no spirit of unkind criticism, but in earnest and loving

solicitude for the great work which is dearer to him than life itself, along with the most hopeful expectation for its outcome, the author of these lectures has frankly confessed its faults—faults for which he humbly acknowledges his share of responsibility. He has done this that you may have a more intelligent understanding of the nature and importance of our problems and unite with us in every possible way in a great determined spiritual struggle to overcome them all through the almighty help of God, and to finish the work which He gave us to do over there in China, the greatest of all mission fields. Let us plead with God and give Him no rest until, for His own glory and the salvation of untold millions of precious souls, He abundantly supplies all the requisites for the speedy evangelisation of China!

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(Concluded.)