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Do We Want War in the Far East?

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DO WE WANT WAR IN THE FAR EAST?

ONE would not usually return from a summer's travel to make of his experiences the subject for a sermon. This summer, however, took me to the Far East. It is the very center of the world's most crucial problems now. What happens there within these next few years spells war or peace for all the world. To be sure, from such swift observation as was within my privilege, no one would dare to speak with dogmatism about the Far East, but after such an opportunity one does welcome the chance to interpret to his friends some of the things which he has seen. The special subject of our morning's thought, "Do we want war in the Far East?" may seem to answer itself. Of course, we do not want war! But, my friends, there is no "of course" about it. When a boy slips into the rapids he does not want to go over the cataract, but the time for him to face the crisis is at the point of slipping. Today the rapids are carrying the world in the direction of an Oriental war, and all the sentimental good will of kindly people will not stop it in the end unless we do some swift, straight, righteous thinking and acting now.

At the very first, let us make clear our right as Christians to be acutely interested in this Far Eastern problem, our right and duty in this place of prayer to speak about it as though it were our special business. Everybody else is concerned about the problem of the Far East. Books, newspapers, magazines, presidential messages and congressional records are full of it. But if the Church of Jesus Christ is as much in earnest about her worldwide campaign for the Gospel as she professes to be, there will be no place where the needs and perils of the Far East will be given more solicitous and careful consideration than in the Christian pulpit. The Gospel has an enormous stake in a possible conflict in the Far East. One thinks of the missionaries there and of the native churches, now reaching out toward self-control and self-support until that glad day shall come when missionaries from abroad will be no longer needed and native churches can stand

upon their own feet. On one mountaintop this summer I spoke twice a day for eight days to an average audience of a thousand missionaries. They came from churches, chapels, schools, colleges and hospitals, often in isolated districts where from one month's end to another they rarely heard their mother tongue and where, amid difficulties that no one can fully appreciate until he sees them, they are trying to lay the foundations of a new Orient. Think what a Far Eastern war would mean to them and to their work! It has been hard enough for these missionaries to preach the unselfishness of Christ during these years when so-called Christian nations were slicing China into spheres of influence and following their economic advantage with ruthless disregard of consequence. It has been hard enough for these missionaries to exalt the love of God in Christ during these last years when all Christendom was drenched with blood. But God pity the missionaries of the Far East if ever they try to preach Christ when nations, whose civilization has had Christ for twenty centuries, are making war in the Far East!

The preacher, then, is no shoemaker off his last who in the name of Christ pleads for a Christian conscience in America about those problems that underlie the President's call for a Disarmament Conference. Some of the dearest things the Church of Christ has set her heart upon and for which she has poured out sacrificial life and means are at stake in the Far East. I bring an appeal from the missionaries and native churches of China and Japan to the Christians of America. "For our sakes," they say, "if for nothing else, settle these Pacific questions now by just reason and fair statesmanship. Do not let them drift into the violent cataclysm which else will be the inevitable issue and which will be a staggering blow to the Gospel in the Orient."

Perfectly sure, therefore, that we are dealing this morning with a question which vitally concerns the Church of Christ, even in her most individualistic ministry, I ask you for a moment to consider with me the two elements that have created the Far Eastern situation. *The first element is the spread of the white race.* The amazing expansion of the white race over all the world, bringing under its domination folk of every tribe and people and

tongue and nation, is, as another has called it, "the most prodigious phenomenon in all recorded history." The white race constitutes hardly one third of the world's population, but by occupation or government they hold nine tenths of the habitable area of the earth. In 1500 A. D., the white race had hardly one tenth of their present land area. Then, first among the races of mankind, they fell upon the secrets of mastering the latent resources of the universe and putting their scientific discoveries at the service of their wants. The mariner's compass made them free-men of the sea. Gunpowder made them masters of war. And like bees they swarmed out from their old hives to suck the economic honey of the earth.

What that process has meant has been evidenced in Africa within the lifetime of most of us here. In 1880 only a small part of Africa was under European control. Within the next ten years before 1890, five million square miles in Africa were seized by Great Britain, France, Germany and other powers. And before 1914, all of Africa, with the exception of Abyssinia and Liberia, was subjugated to European governments. So the white race has swept into its ample net nine tenths of the habitable area of the earth.

For our purposes the significant fact lies here: this expansion of the white race has come at last to the shores of Eastern Asia. Long ago Great Britain took India. In 1886 Britain invaded Burma, deposed her king and annexed her territory. French Indo-China, Java, the Malay States, the Straits Settlements, the Philippines—watch this rising tide of white supremacy that has swept around Asia until it now washes the shores of China and Japan!

Of course, the dominant motive behind this expansion of the white race has been economic. Other motives have been braided into this central strand, but at the basis of this bewildering spread of the white peoples has been the desire for markets and for goods. And China is one of the most exhilarating opportunities for economic expansion that ever was presented to mankind. In Mokanshan this last summer, skilled Chinese carpenters were getting the equivalent of twenty-one American cents a day and

thought themselves well paid. Here are people who can work in heat that would suit a salamander and in cold that would please a seal; who can toil all day on a little rice that would not make for one of us a decent breakfast; a people with a lack of nerves and a capacity for prolonged toil that make them the despair of all competitors; a people so poor, in a land where there is too much population for the means of subsistence, that they will work for almost nothing, and who live in a country whose resources have been almost untouched. See the enormous chance for economic enterprise—cheap labor and vast resources!

So, in 1842, Great Britain, under the guise of forcing the opium trade upon China, made a war on the Chinese Empire, seized Hongkong, opened five treaty ports, and laid the foundations of her vast sphere of special influence that stretches far up the Yangtse Valley. So France, in 1883, seized Tongking and Annam and consolidated her sphere of special influence in the South. So, in 1897 and the year following, Russia took the Liaotung Peninsula, Germany took Shantung, Great Britain took Wei Hai Wei, and France took Kuangchouwan. That is to say, the same process of white expansion that swallowed Africa has been at work in Eastern Asia and when in 1900 the Boxer Rebellion came, it was simply a wild, desperate endeavor of a maddened China to throw off the invasion of the foreigner that seemed to spell ruin. This is the first element in the Far Eastern question.

The second element in the Far Eastern question is the rise of young Japan. The most illuminating single generalization that I heard in the Orient and that explains better than any other truth the difference between backward China and progressive Japan is this: Western civilization came into Japan from the top, by way of the ruling class; Western civilization has been coming into China through the bottom, by way of the student class. The first people to wake up in Japan were the Samurai—the rulers. They first understood the overwhelming power of Western nations. They first foresaw the certain ruin of Japan if she resisted innovation. It was Prince Ito and others like him who came West from Japan in 1871 to learn the secrets of our power. But in China it was not the Mandarins who first awoke. The

Mandarins never have awakened. Poor China is stumbling on under a ruling class that is not awake. In China the real life is in the young students, for the most part from humble and un-influential homes. While China, therefore, with her new life out of the hands of the ruling class, is backward and weak, Japan, guided by her ruling class into the secrets of Western power, has been moving forward with incredible celerity. She has adapted to her purposes Western ideas of education and has actually achieved universal education of elementary grade. Government reports state that in 1916 of the children legally obliged to be in school 99% of the boys and 98% of the girls were actually in attendance. Japan has adopted our Western militarism. First she borrowed from France. Then she made Germany her teacher, and the Japanese army today, gathered by universal conscription that cannot be escaped, is built on Prussian models and imbued with the Prussian spirit. As her army is German, her navy is British. She copies everywhere the best she can find, wherever she can find it. Swiftly she has set herself also to master the secrets of Western engineering skill. Her development in railroads, machine industry and commerce, is astounding. There is nothing she will not try. There is nothing she does not think that she can do. And so proud are the Japanese of these new instruments that the ignorant among them suppose that they were invented in Japan. Said a Japanese to a friend of mine on that excellent electric railway from Tokyo to Yokohama, "Have you any electric railways in America?" To which my friend said, "Yes, a few in the larger cities." And all this advance is guided by a paternal government which started it in the first place and which will not let it stop.

I saw the Crown Prince come home from his trip around the world and arrive in his capital city of Tokyo. No longer did the people prostrate themselves in silence upon the ground as they did before his father. They stood upon the streets in crowds and threw their hats in the air and cried "Banzai!" And the Crown Prince's statement to the press, the first such message, I suspect, a ruler of Japan ever issued, was a ringing call for a forward look. "Still more things to learn from the West," he said.

Do not suppose, however, that this busy copying of Western machinery was motived in the first place by any admiration for or love of Western folk. It was motived rather by fear of the West. When Prince Ito and his group came overseas to learn the magic of the foreigner, they hoped by that same magic to be rid of the foreigner. With the foreigner's machinery they would drive the foreigner out. And while that original motive in its crude form is gone, while Japan knows that, East and West, we must live together and cannot be rid of each other, it still lingers on in new incarnations. Japan fears the West. Japan has seen the white race swallow up nine tenths of the habitable area of the globe. Japan sees the white man now reaching out strong hands for economic enterprise and control in Eastern Asia. And Eastern Asia—Siberia, Manchuria, China—lying at her very doors, seems absolutely indispensable to the very existence of Japan. The goal of all Japanese policy is not to let the white race get that too.

See the Japanese point of view in the words of a liberal Japanese Christian. "Sir," he said, and I thought I saw tears of emotion in his eyes, "you white people have appropriated pretty nearly the whole earth. You have taken the land about the Pacific and in it, from Australia to Alaska, and wherever you go you shut us out. In an area where we have four hundred people in Japan you have only twenty-seven in the United States. We must have primacy in Eastern Asia, not only for surplus population, but for economic enterprise. And you white people do not want us to have it. You want Eastern Asia too. In God's name and humanity's, does the white man want the whole earth?"

The expansion of the white race, reaching at last the shores of China and Japan, is met by the rise of indignant, powerful, forward-moving young Japan: that is the second element in the Far Eastern situation.

Far be it from me to talk of solutions for a bewilderingly complex problem such as this! Here is a situation that will tax all the wisest statesmanship that we can muster. But, as a Christian, I see one principle of action that is indispensable to any solution whatsoever: *the Western nations must recognize in the*

Far Eastern situation a common guilt which they also share. Our Master hated nothing quite so much as hypocrites who thanked God that they were not as other men, or who stoned others for crimes of which they themselves were guilty. He would despise that attitude now in our national relationships. There is no hope of a happy issue so long as in the West we look with indignant condescension on Japan, as though we were internationally holy and elect and she were the one great sinner of us all. The military party in Japan has done, is doing, things in the Far East that we ought to hate with all our hearts. But he that cometh into court must have clean hands. Have the Western nations that?

Upon the contrary, we have given Japan good reason to be militaristic, good reason to trust for her security and peace to the strength of her war establishment. Let me put this for a moment from the Japanese point of view. Every other nation in Asia has felt the hand of white supremacy. India, Burma, Thibet, the Malay States, the Philippines, territory seized along the coast of China and now, under the thin disguise of mandates from the League of Nations, great areas, like Mesopotamia, put into the hands of Western powers—that is the way the situation in Asia looks to the Asiatic. But there is one country that no Western nation ever has invaded. There is one nation that the Western people treat with due respect—Japan. Why is it that Japan alone is never thought of as possible economic prey, that Japan alone is not divided up into spheres of influence or shuffled under mandates to European states? Japan thinks she knows why. It is because she was swift enough in adopting Western militarism to make of herself a nest of hornets that it would be uncomfortable to disturb. Since the Russo-Japanese War, when Japan, with her army and navy, proved that the Colossus of Europe was an image with feet of clay, no one has treated Japan lightly. Wherefore Japan does love her army and navy; she does give to her military rulers control over her civil government: she is the most autocratically militaristic state on earth today. She thinks she won her place in the world that way. She thinks her present peace and her future security depend on that. The West has taught her that her safety

is her force. Again and again as a representative of the West in the East, I had to say, "I hate your tricks, but I must confess we taught them to you."

My friends, pious preachments on humane ideals come with ill grace from Western governments to Eastern Asia! It was a British citizen in the Orient who put the truth with pardonable and picturesque exaggeration: the Western nations have been playing poker in Eastern Asia, but when Japan wanted to join the game, they said, "Let us play parchesi!"

Will you have one example of the thing I mean? We have looked with agony and horror upon Japan's seizure and mistreatment of Korea. Consider then the history of the affair. Korea, as another has put it, is like a dagger pointed from the Asiatic continent at the heart of Japan and the point is only one hundred and twenty miles away. In 1894-5 such was the chaos in Korea that it was a question whether China or Japan would take control. They fought a war over it and Japan won. And Japan, as other nations have been known to do, proceeded to consolidate her gains. She took the Liaotung Peninsula with Port Arthur. Then three Western nations moved. Germany, France and Russia sent a note to Japan to this general effect: "You may not seize the Liaotung Peninsula. Go home from the continent of Asia to your own islands." Japan, unable to resist that combination, withdrew from her new gains with bitterness of heart. Then the three nations who had forced Japan from Asia began to move on Asia. Germany took Kiaochau in Shantung; France demanded new rights in southern China and got them; and the paw of the Russian Bear reached out for the very peninsula of Liaotung which she had refused to Japan—reached further yet across the Yalu River into Korea. Then Japan struck. You remember, our sympathies at that time were all with her. She struck for what she thought was her existence. And when Russia was laid low she listened to the Western nations no more. She thought that they were arrant hypocrites. She took Korea, and kept her and she treated Korea rough!

One wishes to guard himself here against misunderstanding. I am not saying that just now there is no difference between the

attitude of Japan toward China and the attitude of other states. There is a very serious difference. All up and down China I asked every sort of person whom I could buttonhole why it is that China hates Japan supremely, that China would rather have Germany back in Shantung than to have Japan there, that other nations with their spheres of influence seem positively friendly in comparison with Japan. The answer was practically unanimous: the military party of Japan is so anxious about primacy in Eastern Asia that they deliberately plot for a weak, disintegrated China; they took advantage of Western preoccupation in the Great War to make on China the twenty-one demands—an assault upon the sovereignty of a friendly people almost unparalleled in its brazen effrontery; they have in their pay the worst elements in China, like Chang Tso Lin, the ex-bandit ruler of Mukden; and Japan is so close to China that when she comes in at all, she comes in absorbingly. Let it be said with emphasis—the great fear of China is Japan.

That does not mean, however, that what Japan is doing is motivated by principles fundamentally different from those that have controlled the white man in his absorption of nine tenths of the earth's surface. Again and again, as the spectator stands in that bewildering situation in the East, he is forced to say: we must all repent of this *together!* West and East—we have been pretty well tarred with the same stick. Selfishness has controlled our international attitudes. China has been in the eyes of all the world an orange to be squeezed. If the Western nations now will sincerely change their attitude, if they will make it their chief business really to help China, to give her sovereignty back to China, to give China a chance, to give her time, to be Christian in international attitude as we profess to be Christian in faith, then we can go to Japan and say: "You, too, will fall in with this change of heart or you will fall into trouble." But if the Western nations do not repent of their own godless gobbling of the world for selfish purposes, let them not waste time in pious preachments about humanity in Eastern Asia. If the delegates to the conference in Washington sincerely will turn their backs upon this barbarian policy of selfishness which has all but hurled the earth

now into the abyss of hell, there may be some hope. But if they will not repent together, if armament plus selfishness are still to be the world's policy, then we will have war in the Far East. And when it comes it will be a war! *Do you want your sons to go out to fight with Japan's sons in a battle of big business for the economic exploitation of Eastern Asia?*

In this plea for a mutual repentance, we have this hope: we liberal Christians in America have strong allies inside Japan. For Japan is not a unit in international attitude. On one side Japan is a militaristic autocracy. Concerning that side of Japan there is nothing too bad to say. The military party in Japan is at present in control. It can act without accountability to parliament or cabinet; it can override the decisions of the civil government or circumvent them by duplicity; it can send soldiers where it will and mold the foreign policy of the Empire beyond the power of any other party to prevent; and it does all these things ruthlessly. And sometimes out of the heart of that military clique there comes a spokesman as brutal and unrestrained as Bernhardt himself. So writes Lieutenant General Sato: "In order to place our Empire on a firm, permanent foundation of peace, an Empire which has never once submitted to the insult of a foreign nation for three thousand years of her history, we should not permit the Japanese-American relations of today to remain merely as a verbal quarrel across a river. We should by all means appeal to arms and be done with it for once."

If that were the real and only Japan what hope would there be for peace? But I come back with another Japan as the center of my hope. This new Japan is pictured in a Buddhist business man telling me with deep emotion of the fact that of all the boys who wish a high school education only one in three can have one because there are not schools enough. "See," he said, "the millions we spend on armaments! A great cry goes out of the heart of Japan, 'Have done with these armies and navies and give us schools!'" This new Japan is pictured for me in Mr. Ozaki, a Christian, once Minister of Justice and member of parliament, who has just come back from a ten thousand mile trip speaking for disarmament. In his postal card canvass he had thirty thou-

sand replies and of these 94% were in favor of disarmament, 5% against it and 1% neutral. This new Japan is pictured for me in a professor in the Imperial University in Tokyo who recently said that if a canvass were taken of the young men in the university 90% of them would vote to take the Japanese soldiers out of Siberia and Shantung and to give autonomy to Korea. In the midst of a conversation with a group of the Empire's leaders, one of them, pointing out the window, said, "Do you see that red building there? That is the Department of Justice. And that square building beyond is the headquarters of our General Staff, and that is our great enemy." And the hope of this new Japan, whose silent access of strength no repressive measures can ultimately check, lies here: Japan is an ancient warlike nation within whose inherited militarism, now grown old, the new liberalism is rising with fresh life. So President Ebina, that venerable leader of Christian Japan, put it: "Like a chick within the shell, struggling to be born, young liberal Japan is growing up inside the strong, encrusted traditions of her militaristic state and she wants help from without as well as power from within to burst through."

See, then, where the real alignment is! It is not between Japan as a whole and America as a whole. It is between the forward-looking, liberal, humane-spirited people of America and Japan together on the one side and the militaristic and reactionary cliques in both countries on the other. When I talk with a hard-hearted, visionless, militaristic American I will not acknowledge him a member of my spiritual country. When I talk with a liberal, forward-looking, Christian-minded Japanese, I know I have met a citizen of my fatherland.

My friends, if America will, once more now she can be the hope of the world. I have talked about Western nations as though they have all held one attitude, but there are some things America never did. We have had no part in dividing up China. We have no special sphere of influence there. It may be a small thing, but we did give back ten million dollars of the Boxer Indemnity for the sake of friendliness. On the whole, we have tried to play fair, not over much to our credit because we had so vast a country to

exploit ourselves that we were not much tempted to do otherwise. But the fact of it combined with our power in the Pacific gives us a dominant influence and a dominant responsibility. Japanese leaders say that under no circumstances will Japan fight the United States now. As one Japanese said, "If the United States and Japan should fight and Japan should lose, she would be reduced to a tenth rate power. If America should lose, she would still be a first rate power. We have everything to lose and nothing to gain." If the United States today will have a strong, fair, Far Eastern policy, if she will mean business when she says, "Fair play, an open door, disarmament and peace," she can have her way. And if ever there was a time for the Christian people of America to make their public spirit and purpose felt, it is now—for the sake of the world, for the sake of the nation, for the sake of the Church, for the sake of Christ.

PRAYER

Eternal God, our Father, who hath set us in the midst of these tumultuous currents of our generation's life, lay Thy hand upon us, we beseech Thee, and command us clearly concerning Thy purposes that we may not err therein. In particular send Thy guidance upon the President of the United States and all those associated with him in authority. Confirm every right purpose, subdue every unworthy fear and hesitancy and make the whole body of this people to desire with passionate prayer the coming of Thy day. Amen.