

The  
Impact of the West  
Upon the East  
Must be  
Christianized

BY ROBERT E. SPEER

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## THE IMPACT OF THE WEST UPON THE EAST MUST BE CHRISTIANIZED.\*

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The impact of the West upon the East must be Christianized. We imply, then, that it has not been Christian. Are we prepared to admit that? Without qualification, some of us are not prepared to do so. We believe that the net result of the dealings of the so-called Christian nations with the non-Christian world, with all the evil that has seamed and defaced that contact, has been for good. We believe this for two reasons: First, because we believe in God and that God has been governing the world, and that He has not allowed these relations between the different races of men without Himself participating in those relationships, and seeing to it that the great purposes of good which He had formed for men were not altogether frustrated. We are sure that in spite of the evil that we see through the world, the development of man's life has not slipped between the fingers of God, and that in the ages past He has been leading on His world.

We believe it in the second place because we can see all over the non-Christian world the penetrating and creative influence of great Christian principles. It is not the same heathen world on which we look out to-day that our fathers looked out on one hundred years ago. Great Christian principles of morality, equality and justice and its new idea of God have been slowly making their way into the thought of

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mankind, and deeply as we lament all the evil that has defaced our past relations with the East, we still rejoice that God has overruled this, and that we ourselves can see the slow fashioning of the nations to a better and truer life.

But when we have said this, then we are prepared to admit that there are still, as there have been in all the years, great non-Christian elements in the impact of the West upon the East which must be Christianized. We recognize clearly, and confess with shame, that in our political impact upon the non-Christian world there have been radically non-Christian elements. There is no time here this morning to make the detailed confession. Those great wrongs from which the Chinese Empire suffered before the Boxer uprising are a sufficient evidence of the non-Christian character of much of our dealing with the non-Christian world.

I recall an article in the *Nippon Shimbum* commenting on the curious notions of humanity and honesty displayed by the West toward China in the proceedings which led up to the Boxer storm. The *Japan Mail* summarized the article at the time:

"The ethics of Westerners are to the *Nippon* very inexplicable. It proceeds to quote Chwang tze on the European politicians. The sage was asked whether morality existed among thieves. He replied much as follows: 'Is there any place morality does not exist? The five virtues are all exemplified by thieves. In perceiving that there are treasures in people's houses they show *sagacity*. In each striving to be first to get into a house they display *courage*. In not striving to be the first to escape from a house they show a *regard for what is right*. In determining whether a house should be entered or not they display *intelli-*

*gence*; and in the consideration they show to each other in dividing the spoil they display *benevolence*. Without these five virtues no big robbery would succeed.' This applies to the doings of Europeans on the neighboring continent. If this conduct is to be the standard of humanity, a pretty low level will be reached."

And Dr. Kato, of the Imperial University in Tokyo, discussing at the same time the evolution of morality and the law, held that the example of Western states shows that they do not recognize any universal ethical principles, and are indeed unqualifiedly un-Christian in their dealing with alien nations.

When a great empire had practically not a single port left in which she could anchor her own fleet along thousands of miles of seacoast without getting the consent of a foreign power; when she heard the whole world talking about her dismemberment and the partition of her territory among foreign nations, we cannot wonder that that nation and the neighboring nations failed to discern in the political attitude of the West a Christian spirit toward the non-Christian world.

In the second place, there have been in our trade impact on the non-Christian world, great un-Christian elements. One needs only to recall the slave traffic, thank God, a thing of the past now, but with its memories still living. One needs only to remember that little canoe drifting out from shore to sea in which the body of Coleridge Patterson was lying with five wounds upon it, like the wounds upon his Master's body, and two fronds of palm crossed upon his breast, an expression of the wrath of the South Sea Islanders against the Christian traffic in human flesh, to realize with shame the devilish elements that have stained

much of our intercourse with the non-Christian world. And there are still the opium trade with China and the rum traffic with Africa.

In the third place, there have been non-Christian elements in our personal impact upon the non-Christian world. Some of you have doubtless read recently a very interesting but a very sad book written by a graduate of one of our Western universities, who went on a tramp around the world, and who, penniless, made his way across Europe and across Asia and back to the United States again, right down on the bones of life over all the world. I say it is interesting because any such experience would inevitably be interesting; but also it is sad because of the instances of the domineering assertion of the sense of racial superiority, and of the way in which Western men by the thousands have gone out over the Eastern world and have affronted the fundamental principles of human brotherhood and equality. Again and again our personal touch with the non-Christian world has been radically un-Christian. I cite but one other illustration, of which I was reminded the other day, of a dinner given by the French Consul in a certain Chinese city, where, after the French Government had opened a hospital for the purpose of conciliating the people, the Consul invited a number of guests to a dinner, and behind every guest's chair he had thoughtfully provided a girl from one of the brothels, having been mindful, not of their tastes only, but also of their lusts. And that is unhappily no exceptional illustration of an ethical behavior that has been too common in our impact upon the non-Christian world.

And our civilization itself is not altogether Christian. We see in it here at home radically un-Christian elements. Our Lord himself is not Lord yet of all

our corporate and organized life; and just so far as we carry our civilization, with its mingled good and evil, with its non-Christian elements tainting and defiling its Christian elements over all the world, just to that extent is our impact upon the East non-Christian. It is that impact which must be Christianized.

Now, in the second place, how big is that "must"? We say that the impact of the West upon the East must be Christianized. How deeply do we feel that? Why must it be Christianized? It must be Christianized, first of all, because if it is necessary for every individual to be a Christian in his relationships with others, it is necessary for every collection of individuals to be Christians in their relations to others. There are no different types of ethics, some for the individual, some for society, some for the nation and some for the race. It is just as obligatory for the nation and the race to do right as it is for the individual to do right, and to do right is to be a Christian; to live up to Christian principles, to embody in all our acts and relationships the ideals and the conceptions and laws and spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to do right in all our relationships with the East as nations and as races, just because we are bound to do right and to be Christians as individual men.

In the second place, our impact upon the East must be Christianized because we are moving out upon the East in very many different ways, and those ways are sure steadily to increase. Mr. Benjamin Kidd has pointed out in his little book on "The Control of the Tropics" that the efficient nations are certain to move out over all the world that is occupied by the inefficient peoples to teach those in-

efficient peoples the secrets of efficiency and the lesson of stewardship of life and in life. And you cannot separate the different forms in which that movement of the West upon the East is taking place. They are all of them inextricably intertwined. And every one of them is bound to suffer or to benefit from the character of the rest. Christianity is sure to be damaged in its pure form of expression in the missionary enterprise by everything that is non-Christian in all the other forms of the movement of the West upon the non-Christian world. We have got to Christianize our impact from the West upon the East in the interest of our distinctively missionary propaganda.

You cannot go out to the West and preach one doctrine to it by the lives of your missionaries, and another doctrine to it by the lives of your merchants. You cannot go out to the East and without great difficulty teach it a theoretical message which is not confirmed in the actual diplomacy and conduct of our Western peoples. In the interest of Christianity and our missionary enterprise, we must penetrate with Christian principle all those forms of our conduct with the non-Christian world with which, for good or ill, our Christian impact is inseparably intertwined.

But, in the third place, we must Christianize this impact in the interest of the impact itself. As we look back across the years we see that just in proportion as our impact upon the East has been Christian, has it been powerful for good. Our best diplomacy has been the diplomacy which we have exercised through Christian men. We never had happier relations with China than when S. Wells Williams was the brain and soul of our legation in Peking. And also as we look back across the years we see that our commercial and diplomatic relationship with the

non-Christian world has been powerful for good precisely in proportion as it has been dominated by the Christian principle. We see that our impact upon the East has been practically impotent save as Christian principle has wrought in it and through it. It has certainly been so in Africa and the South Sea Islands.

There is a great passage in James Stewart's book, "Down in the Dark Continent," in which he quotes James Chalmers as setting forth a principle that Stewart said he had seen again and again exemplified in the life of Africa. Said James Chalmers:

"I have never seen a savage whom civilization without Christianity had succeeded in civilizing." As far as he had known the South Sea Islands, whatever uplift of life had been there, had come only in so far as Christianity had found access to the life of these peoples, and James Stewart, out of one of the largest experiences ever given to any man in Africa, has borne testimony to the same truth regarding the Dark Continent.

And we can go farther than this; it is not only true that the past impact of the West upon the East has been largely ineffective, has, indeed, been altogether impotent for good, except as it embodied Christian principles—we can go further than that and say that so far as it has not embodied Christian principle it has been positively bad. If you ask me for my proof I can give it to you in one word, Constantinople. For generations the Western civilization has touched the Eastern civilization in the city of Constantinople, and every man who lives in Constantinople will tell you what the result has been. Dr. H. O. Dwight, a long-time resident of Constantinople, has set forth the facts plainly in his book, "Constantinople and Its Problems."



Civilization represented by Western commercial enterprise and isolated from religious principle has been in contact with the people of Constantinople for many, many years. Since the Crimean war it has had untrammelled sway. Some of the externals of environment have benefited from this contact. Individuals may sometimes have been lifted out of the quagmires of the mass of the population by glimpses of what manhood really is. But there is no question as to the general result. The result has been the moral deterioration of the city and the strengthening of the repulsion felt by Turks toward the West. One of the leading Turkish papers of Constantinople dealt with this subject not long ago. It said that the one positive influence of Western civilization is against God and in favor of drunkenness and debauchery. It pointed to the great number of disorderly houses in Pera, which engulfed and destroyed large numbers of Mohammedan youth, and it declared in open terms that the family life of Europeans living in Pera is such as to lead to the supposition that marital fidelity is not known there. "We want none of this Christian civilization," said the Turk.

Save in so far as our Christianity has permeated our Western impact upon the East, that impact has been positively harmful and bad. It has broken down what was innocent and good; it has destroyed the moral and industrial organization of old societies, and, save as in some measure Christian principles have been embodied in it, it has been a visibly deteriorating and destructive power.

In the fourth place, we are bound to Christianize the impact of the West upon the East, because inevitably that impact is a religious impact. You cannot have any impact of the West upon the East, I

do not care how you think you are secularizing it, you cannot have any such impact that is not distinctively religious alike in its character and in its results. The ideal of a religious neutrality is a purely chimerical idea. You cannot have such a thing; every man is either for God or against God. Every man is either for the Gospel of Christ or against the Gospel of Christ. And there is no such thing as a non-religious connection between two men or nations, or two halves of the world. All our contact with the non-Christian peoples is religiously destructive. We are paralyzing and overthrowing all their old systems of ethical and religious belief. We are doing that even if we do not send a missionary to those shores, and we are bound to make this impact of the West upon the East, not only not a destructive impact, but also a constructive and creative impact for good. We can only do this by penetrating it with Christian principle and with Christian love.

And, once more, we are bound to Christianize our impact upon the East because Christianity is the only racially unifying bond. You cannot unite permanently dissimilar races by any commercial institutes. You cannot bind them together by any political ties. The whole history of the world tells us that the only unifying racial bond is a great common religious faith. England is able to govern India today and has been able to hold India all these years, because India has never been unified. In one of the most illuminating books on history that has appeared in our generation, I mean Professor Seeley's "Expansion of England," one of the best books we have on the American Revolution and on Great Britain's colonial policy in India, Seeley points this out and says that the whole policy of Great Britain in India has been, and must

be, to unify the masses of that land, because only by unifying them can the land be prepared for its proper destination, and the only way, he goes on to say, in which these diverse races can ever be unified is by giving them one great common religious hope and faith. Our Christianity is the only permanently harmonizing racial or national bond, and we are bound to Christianize our impact upon the world, because we do not want to turn this world into a hell of antagonistic races.

Sir Alfred Lyall, in his "Asiatic Studies," has set forth the principle which I am presenting.

"It is impossible not to admit that in many instances the successful propagation of a superior or stronger creed has been favorable to political amalgamation, nor can there be any doubt of the intense fusing power that belongs to a common religion. In our day the decree of divorce between religion and politics has been made absolute by the judgment of every statesman, above all for Christian rulers in non-Christian countries; nevertheless, the religion of the Spaniards was a part of their policy in the New World, and this of course, is still true in regard to Mohammedans everywhere. There have been many periods, and there are still many countries, in which an army composed of different religious sects could hardly hold together. And it is certain that for ages identity of religious belief has been, and still is in many parts of the world, one of the strongest guarantees of combined action on the battlefield. It has often shown itself far more effective, as a bond of union, than territorial patriotism; it has even summoned tribal or racial antipathies, and its advantages as a palliative of foreign ascendancy have been indisputable. The attitude of religious neutrality is now

manifestly and incontestibly incumbent on all civilized rulerships over an alien people; it is a principle that is just, right and politic; but there is nothing in its influence that makes for that kind of assimilation which broadens the base of dominion. Religion and intermarriage are the bonds that amalgamate or isolate social groups all the world over, especially in Asia, and their influence for or against political consolidation has lost very little of its efficiency anywhere."

We want to build out of this world the one great brotherhood of the family of God, and we can only do that by penetrating all our relationships with the non-Christian world with the principle of that Gospel by which alone the world can ever be made one. The Western impact upon the East must be Christianized, and it must be Christianized upon these grounds.

And now, finally, how can it be Christianized? It can be Christianized, first of all, by our practicing Christianity as a nation, just as we practice it as individuals; by penetrating all of our relationships with non-Christian powers with the Christian principle and the Christian spirit. I was handed yesterday by one of our missionaries from Japan a letter from a common friend of ours living in a great city in Japan. I want to read just a part of this letter, because it illustrates more vividly than anything else could this first form in which we are to Christianize our impact upon the East:

"I want to write you a word about international relations. There is no doubt that the certain degree of alienation between Japan and America that has come to exist in the past few years has an unfavorable influence upon Christian work in Japan. It is also within the range of possibility that if the agitation is kept up war may eventually come. The diplo-

matic relations even now, I have good reason for saying, are delicate. Such an event, as we all realize, would be an unspeakable calamity, both from the standpoint of religion and of humanity. The East and the West are bound to come closely together during this century, but all is at stake in their coming together peacefully and sympathetically.

“Now it seems to me that if in some way the Christian element of the population of America could at this time make itself more strongly felt in reference to this question it would be eminently fortunate. It is quite possible to restrict immigration into America in an amicable way, I believe. The essential thing is that the Japanese nation be not treated as an inferior race; that the nation’s honor be not infringed upon. It is clear in all diplomatic negotiations commercial interests are kept in mind. It seems to me not only worthy of, but right for the government of a civilized nation to take the missionary problem into consideration also—that is, to be extremely careful to avoid, if possible, doing anything that will hinder the Christianization of these great Eastern nations. Rather special effort should be made to show the Christian spirit, and to help and also to receive help. Comparatively speaking, America has not a bad record in this respect, but as she becomes more imperialistic there is more danger.

Then, as to the question whether Japan is true to her pledges on the subject of the open door in Manchuria and the integrity of China, it is specially necessary that really competent observation be made. We all know how easy it is for a man to get into a certain atmosphere here in the East in which he can see absolutely no good in the Japanese, and in which only suspicion and mistrust and misrepresentation pre-

vail, and when a man with such a bias makes a report one can imagine the result. It is difficult to stop foolish and wicked war talk on the part of the newspapers and individuals, and also to restrain anti-Japanese agitation on the west coast, but there is at least the influence of public sentiment that can be brought to bear upon the situation."

Now, what I mean is this: We have a right to demand that the attitude of this nation towards every non-Christian nation should be a Christian attitude. The idea of war between the American people and any Asiatic people is preposterous. There are no possible conflicts in sight that justify us in any other attitude towards the whole non-Christian world than an attitude of sympathy and brotherhood and peace. And we are bound to practice in our national relations with all of these nations the same spirit of restraint, of generous confidence in another's good will, of unselfish regard for another's interest which we regard ourselves as under obligations to practice in our relationship one to another as Christian men. Our newspapers should realize this and behave with decency. That is the first thing.

In the second place, we can do it by making sure that the men who go out to represent this country in commerce and in trade really represent that which is best and truest in this land. The Government is not to go into the business of religious propagandizing.

But this country is a Christian country. We have the judgment of the United States Supreme Court, written by the late lamented Justice Brewer, the highest possible authority there could be in this land, for declaring that the United States is not a non-religious nation; that the United States is a Christian nation. We have a duty to seek to make sure that

all that goes out from this nation to the rest of the world, whether politically or commercially, should justly represent the true character of our people. It is not a right thing, for example, to send a man who drinks freely to represent us at a Moslem court. There have been in the past great bodies of noble men who have gone out to represent the Western nations to the Eastern world. A long list of those names at once suggests itself to us—men like Chinese Gordon, and John and Henry Lawrence, and Herbert Edwardes, and Townsend Harris, and Commodore Perry—and the list might be indefinitely multiplied of statesmen and merchants who carried their Christian character with them and who, wherever they were and in all that they did, stood unabashed but faithful as Christian men. We can Christianize the impact of the West upon the East by making sure that that kind of man goes out to represent us there.

In the third place, we must do it by Christianizing our trade. A great many of our Western business men are outraged today because Japan is stealing our Western trade marks, because Japan is discriminating in favor of her own merchants wherever she is able to do so. In what school did Japan learn those lessons? We cannot expect to conduct our trade with the East upon non-Christian principles, and then have the East turn the other cheek to us and practice Christian principles in trade with us. We are bound to carry on our trade with other nations on a Christian basis; I mean with honesty, and with unselfishness and a desire for mutual helpfulness and good.

In the fourth place, we can do it by Christianizing our educational impact. When these young men

come over from Asia to study in our own schools, as they are coming by the hundreds, we can make sure that they receive a Christian education here. The university, whether it be a private university or a State university, that educates in pure secularism a young man who comes here from the East to study in our schools, and sends him back with the idea that human culture is possible without religious faith, is an enemy to the good of the world and to the right relations between the Western and the Eastern nations. We are bound to Christianize not only our educational impact upon the East when it comes to the West, but we are bound to do it when we carry that educational impact out to the East. If we seek to benefit the nations, we must beware how we lay up peril for the generations that are to come after us; we must make sure that the education by which we seek to benefit the world is given, and that the larger power which it brings is held under the constraints of a loyal and simple and true-hearted religious faith. We are bound to Christianize our educational impact upon the world.

And, last of all, we must remember that it is by our national conduct and our national character that we are evangelizing the world, as truly as by the missionaries whom we send ten thousand miles away to represent us there. You cannot escape from the evangelization of national example. Again and again we have seen the results of it. The Iwakura Embassy, that forty years ago went out from Japan, came to the West and visited us and Europe and returned, and men in that embassy went back with the supreme idea that what Japan needed was the Christian gospel, and the Christian home, and they got that idea from Christian men and the Christian homes



with which they had been in contact here in the Western lands. I was interested in noting in a Japanese paper the other day the impression of the different members of the Japanese Embassy that came here representing the business men of Japan only last year. Four of the men who gave their impressions spoke of the attitude of the American people towards women as the one thing that most supremely impressed them here. Thank God there are elements of good in our Western life, which, when Eastern men come in contact with them, bear faithful testimony to the Christian principles of our gospel.

But you remember how the Gaekwar of Baroda went back to India, where he is one of the leading men of the land, with a radically different opinion of our Western life, proclaiming to the people of India that they had only one thing to learn from the West, and that was its secret of industrial power, its ability to produce wealth, and that that was the only contribution the West had to make to the non-Christian world. We must beware of the gospel we are preaching by day and by night, by what we are as a nation.

We come home here to the great home missionary obligation, the duty of making this land of ours a Christian land, in order that by what we are, as well as by what we say, we may convey our gospel to the whole world. I know that there are men who say that there cannot be any such thing as a Christian nation. I have a good friend with whom I have been carrying on a correspondence as to what the fundamental missionary motive is, and in his last letter he said he did not think it was possible to say that there would or could be any such thing as Christian nations. I suppose he meant that Christianity is a matter of the individual relationship with God. Well,

I have no doubt there is a great truth there, but can there be any such thing as a Christian home, or a Christian family? May I and my little children not know ourselves to be one in a corporate family Christian life that is as really Christian as the relation which binds each of us to the gospel of God, the Father of us all? There can be such things as Christian families. And if there are Christian families, why cannot there be groups of Christian families making Christian communities, and if there can be Christian communities, there can be many Christian communities, there can be Christian lands.

When the Lord taught his disciples to pray, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven," he surely meant that it was to be done by families, by communities, by nations, as well as by individual men. The kingdom of God was a kingdom in which in all their corporate relations, in all their racial ties, men fulfilled the will of our Father Who is in Heaven. Nations have no right to live except as they fulfil that law. There dare not be in that Kingdom of God any nations that are not Christian. There is no contact of any Western nation with other nations which dare be other than a Christian contact. There is no impact open to it upon the Eastern world which is not a Christian impact. We are given this gospel that it may make us, one by one, individually the followers of the King of all the earth. We are given it also that it may be the basis of all our family and our corporate and our national life, and it must find utterance in all the outgoing of our effort and our sympathy toward the non-Christian world.

And I am not sure that after all this may not prove to be one point where great emphasis needs now

to be laid. It is futile for us to hope that with a little band of individuals sent out over the world we can preach to the world the gospel of peace, if in all of our organized national life in the West we are preaching the gospel of strife. It is futile to hope that a little band of men, however much they may attempt to isolate themselves from the national and racial life out of which they came, can preach to the world the gospel of love, if in our corporate and national life we are preaching the gospel of selfishness and of distrust. It is futile to hope that we can send to all the world the message of the love of God in Christ, by those who go out to represent our Christian churches, if we are preaching to the world by other tongues, tongues so loud that they almost drown the still small voice of the missionary enterprise, a message of hate and discord and the waste of life. And it is in our hands to determine whether or not now, at last, not by one single expression, by the outgoing of one separated body of men, but by the whole impact of our Christian nations upon the non-Christian world, we shall commend to all mankind that one God who is the Father of every race—Anglo-Saxon, Japanese, Chinese, Hindu and African—and who would draw together in one, in the only way in which they can ever be drawn together in one, namely, in the gospel of His Son, all those races of men whom he made of one blood and whom he would bind in one brotherhood.

