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CHANGES IN THE RUSSIAN CHURCH

THE Commission headed by Hon. Elihu Root has returned to America with encouraging reports on the outlook for permanent progress and reform in Russia. Mr. Charles R. Crane, another member of the Commission, who is an authority on Slavic affairs, reports remarkable changes in the Russian Church as the result of the revolution. He says that since the Church has been separated from the State and is managing its own affairs, it is making more rapid progress toward adjusting itself to new conditions than the State. More changes were made in the Church during the month of May than in two centuries previous. The process has been one of democratization; every priest has had to have his position confirmed by a vote from the people of his parish. Twelve Bishops have been dismissed, including the bishop of Petrograd, and new bishops have been installed only after election by congregations.

The property of the churches has been transferred from the State and is to be administered by the congregations, the clergy and bishops occupying themselves solely with religious affairs. Two very significant assemblies of the Church have taken place at Moscow: One is that of "Old Believers," who include some 15,000,000 people representing the oldest and most uncompromising division of the Russian people. The other is that of the Orthodox Church, the former State Church, and is the first of the kind to meet in some 250 years. They are the most representative gatherings possible to have in Russia, and the delegates come from every corner of the empire, two priests and two laymen being elected to represent every 100 churches, the whole body numbering 1,268 delegates. The Russians are exceedingly religious, and may be expected to become more Christian as they are free from ecclesiasticism.

The Church and the World Today*

BY ROBERT E. SPEER.* NEW YORK

Secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, U. S. A.

IF ever there was a time when selfishness in individuals or in nations appeared mean and insufferable, that time is now. Almost all the peoples of the world are calling out for help and for sympathy. We are told in the life of Saint Paul that one night he dreamed that a man from the Balkans came and asked him to cross over the Hellespont and do some work in Europe. In response to that call of one man the whole course of Saint Paul's life was changed. The whole course of human history was changed as well. We are concerned today, not with one man whom we hear speaking to us in a dream, but we are seeing in the flesh hundreds of millions of men who are asking us to give our help and our sympathy to the lands to which they belong.

In response to this appeal one may see very clearly two diverse tendencies acting inside the Christian Church. One is the tendency of contraction, the Church huddling in upon herself or upon the soil of her own nation, or, maybe, enlarging her sympathies so as to take in the needs of allies in the great war, but as regards the far ends of the earth asking whether she would not better now abridge and curtail somewhat those distant and remote activities. There is a second tendency of postponement, the Church talking about the world conditions that are to prevail when the great war is done, and the part she is to have in the great tasks of reconstruction.

We make our protest against these two tendencies. The Christian Church is doomed, if, on the one hand, she begins now to limit the performance of her duties and to abridge the outgo of her world sympathy, and if, on the other hand, today she begins to talk not of the work that she is to do this very hour in the world, but of the work that she intends to do one year, two years, three years, four years, or even five years from now. We protest against these two tendencies because we believe that the only Christianity that can have any living power in our own nation today, or that can have any power in the work of reconstruction when the war is done, is a Christianity that does not shirk any of its duties today, but that meets the demands of its entire world task.

After all, if there is not vitality enough in a religion to carry it out to its work at the ends of the earth there is not vitality enough in that religion to do its work standing still. All the religion in the world today that has any power or vitality is "going religion," religion that is both the product and source of the foreign missionary undertaking. The

*An address at the Sunday Tabernacle, New York. Reported for the *MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD*.

churches and universities that we see around us would not be here if it were not for foreign missions. As a matter of fact there is no Christianity in the world today except the Christianity that is due to the foreign missionary activity of the Church. Christianity utterly died out in the land of its origin. There is no Christianity, even in the land where Christianity began, except what was brought back as a reimport from the result of the missionary activities of Saint Paul and the early Church. We would have no Christianity and no Christian Church on earth if it were not for what the foreign missionary enterprise had done to perpetuate it. Religion dies if it does not attempt always and resolutely to conquer the whole world.

DISCARD OR DISTRIBUTE

We protest against these two tendencies, not only for the sake of the life of Christianity, but also in the name of fairness and common honesty. Either Christianity is a good thing or it is not a good thing. If it is not a good thing, then we ought to discard it. If it is a good thing, then we ought to distribute it. And we have no right to set any bounds around that distribution. If Christianity is a good thing for us, we are under obligation to give it to all men everywhere in the world. If it is any good for me, it is because it is good for every man, and I am bound to pass it on to every other man. There is no Christianity in the world to which any man can lay claim as exclusively his own, by which he can separately develop himself, by which—I will dare say it—he can merely save his own soul and stop there. The only corporate Christianity in the world that the Master and Founder would recognize as His is the Christianity which its possessors try to share with every man—not only with the man who is their near neighbor. We have something that we are bound to share with all the world, not with New York City alone, not with the American nation only, not with the western races of the world only, but which we are bound to carry to every man and every woman and every child everywhere.

We protest against these tendencies because every need that led to the establishment of the missionary enterprise in the past exists, intensified and accentuated, today. If men have needed Jesus Christ in the years gone by, does any one of us need to be told that they need Him just as much, and that this old world needs Him more today, that if we need Him, every man, woman, and child in the world needs Him, in the same way? And if the people of China or India can get along without Him, the people of New York can get along without Him just as well. Men object to our carrying Jesus Christ to the Far East and to the Far South today. They have no quarrel with us. Their quarrel is with the Incarnation, for if it is not necessary for Christ to go to China today, it was not necessary for Christ to come to Palestine nineteen hundred

years ago. He was less needed for Judaism than He is needed for Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and paganism today.

THE NEED OF THE WORLD

All the need that there was for the Atonement in the beginning exists today in every nation of the world. Men need Christ and they need Him now. They need Him for their bodies' sake. Where in the world are men hungry today except where the Gospel has not come really home to the lives of men? Did you ever stop to think that the great deserts are within the bounds of the non-Christian religions, and that many of these deserts were made by these religions? The great racial assassinations have been under the aegis of great non-Christian faiths. Only where Christ has gone have men's lives been deemed sacred, have men's bodies been fed, have the common, elementary needs of life been met. If Christ were King in the world today, there would not be a hungry mouth anywhere under the sun, nor one little crying child.

Men need Christ today not for their bodies' sake only. The moral needs of the world are as deep now as they were when Christ came, and they are everywhere. If they are in America, they are in every land. Where Christ's influence has never been felt even so slightly as in our own land there those moral needs are deeper and darker still. Christianity is the only religion in the world that forbids polygamy. Every other religion either allows it or encourages or enjoins it. In a world like this there are abysmal moral needs rooted, many of them, in the unjust treatment of womanhood, that call for Christ.

There are everywhere, as there are in our hearts, deep, unsatisfied spiritual needs. Nothing else ever contented us until we found Him. Nothing else will ever content them until they find Him. "Thou, O Christ," we sing, "art all I want"—and Christ is all that every man wants. We protest against any denial of Christ to the world. It has a title in Him equal to any title that we have. The world calls for Him because He is as indispensable to its life as He is to ours.

Was there ever a day when, not for all men one by one, for the wants of their individual homes and hearts, but in one great mass of want, the world's need of Christ was so sharp and imperious as it is today? Who but Jesus Christ can ever bind this torn and discordant world together? We tried to do it with trade, and it could not be done. We tried to do it with diplomacy, but diplomacy failed. We have tried to do it with secular education, but secular education has been unequal to the task. There is only one way in which the world ever can be united in one: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," said Jesus Christ, "will draw all men unto Me." In the one Head of all humanity, the one Shepherd of the whole flock of every race and every people and

every tongue—only there can any hope of human unity ever be found. In a day when we are weary of the strife and hatred and war of the world, the need of the world for Christ protests against any abridgment of our will and purpose to share Him now with all the life of men.

And we believe in not only maintaining all that we have begun, but in even now enlarging and extending every effort to carry Christ to-day—not when the war is over, but today—to the last ends of the world, because we know what carrying Christ will signify and what nothing else will signify to mankind.

Men often say that they do not believe in the missionary undertaking. What is it in the undertaking that they do not believe in? Twenty-five thousand men and women have gone out, not for money's sake, not for honor or earthly gain, for they bury themselves out of sight. They have given up everything and have settled in the midst of uncultured, unappreciative millions of people. They have made friends with them. They have made their own lives a part of their life. The missionaries are there for nothing else than to be kind and Christlike to the peoples to whom they have gone. Is there anything in that ministry in which a man cannot believe?

They have gathered over two million little boys and girls together in schools in those lands to prepare them for the manhood and the womanhood that is remaking the nations of the earth. Is there anything in that with which anyone can disagree?

They treated in their hospitals this last year more people than the entire population of Greater New York, opening the eyes of the blind, enabling the lame to walk, enabling the deaf to hear, curing sickness and disease and banishing pain. Is there anything in that with which men will disagree?

They lay down their lives for their brethren as they did in China during the Boxer uprising. Is there a greater love than that that men can have?

The only life that ever can be wasted is life that is not laid down in ways like that. Life that is laid down, seed fashion in the soil—there is no waste to that. It springs up and bears abundant harvest in changing things, in changing the world, in the fruitage that lasts beyond death and the grave.

Because we know, having seen it with our own eyes and shared in it with our own hands, what the enterprise of Christ is accomplishing throughout the world, we protest tonight against the common tendency in men's thoughts that would now hold that enterprise in abeyance until some future day.

There are great needs in Europe. The Red Cross work for our own troops and our allies is an imperative and unmistakable need to which we can and must respond to the full measure of its every need. There are hungry people to be fed in Belgium and Serbia and Poland,

and there are thirty millions of human beings in India who never know what it is to have enough to eat, who say if only they could be fed adequately for two days they would be willing to lie down and die. There are millions of little children in Asia every night who cry themselves to sleep in their hunger and want of bread. For the sake of the world's need, which only Christ's Gospel can supply, we make our appeal today more earnestly and imperatively than in any past day, that Christ's last command should not be postponed now for an interval of a few months or years. It is valid now.

It would be easy to gather up the witnesses and let them bear testimony to the truth of these statements.

You may have read what the Chinese Ambassador to Washington recently said in Chicago, when without anybody's suggestion, he bore his testimony to what his nation needed, and to the men and to the women who were meeting his nation's need. He said:

"I have outlined the work of the American missionaries in my land in order to show their activities and the utter unselfishness of their purpose. Some of them devote five or ten years to China, while others spend their whole lives there. But whether for a longer or for a shorter period, they all do it with the desire to give and without the hope of gain to themselves beyond the gain of satisfaction in service rendered and in duty done. These men penetrate the innermost parts of our country and mingle with the people as members of the local community. Neither hardships nor difficulties deter them. In the last half century troubles sometimes arose between them and the local people; but they were always peaceably settled without the display of military or naval power on the part of the United States, and without the loss of political or territorial rights on the part of China, so that by contrast and comparison the people of China have long come to recognize the difference between the missionaries from the United States and the people from other lands. For this reason, they have manifested their readiness to receive and welcome them with open arms. Nothing which individual Americans have done in China has more strongly impressed the Chinese mind with the sincerity and genuineness and altruism of American friendship for China than this spirit of service and self-sacrifice so beautifully demonstrated by American missionaries." And he was thinking not merely of social benefits rendered. "As religious teachers," he added, "they have made the Christian faith known to the millions of China who had not heard its truths before and thereby gave them new hope and a new source of inspiration. It is impossible to estimate how much happiness and comfort they have brought to those who found life miserable because of its lack of spiritual vision."

In a little spot near the wall of Mukden, that old capital of China away up in Manchuria, is a grave, and nearby a tablet placed on the wall of the new medical school and hospital. Two years ago I stood in front of that tablet to the memory of young Arthur Jackson, who led his school at Liverpool, and who was one of the best-known athletes and scholars of his day in Cambridge University. He went out in the fall of 1910 as a medical missionary to Manchuria. A month later the pneumonic plague began to come down from the north. The Chinese hunters had been sending down their marmot skins, and the deadly germs had been

carried in them. Before the Chinese Government had taken adequate precaution, the pestilence had worked its way down from Harbin to Mukden. The death rate was one hundred per cent. Not one man, woman, or child attacked recovered. When China learned what an awful terror was moving down upon her four hundred millions, she stood dumb and aghast. Arthur Jackson laid down all his other work, went down to the railroad station at Mukden to erect a barrier between that on-coming pestilence and the helpless masses of Chinese behind him. Day after day, clothed in oilskin boots and a long white robe, with a bag over his head, breathing through a sponge, he went about his work segregating the diseased and visiting every railway car that came in and separating every suspected Chinese, until at last he had stemmed the fatal tide. Then when his work was done he discovered one day in his own sputum the blood traces that told him of the inevitable end, and in a few hours the great Christlike life had come to its close. They carried him around the walls by night and buried him outside the gates. Two days afterwards, in the British Consulate, they held their little memorial service. The old Chinese Viceroy made a speech. He never had known of anything like this, and had never seen a man lay down his life in sacrificial love. All this was the revelation of a new principle of life and character. He said:

"We have shown ourselves unworthy of the great trust laid upon us by our Emperor. We have allowed a dire pestilence to overrun the sacred capital. His Majesty the King of Great Britain shows sympathy with every country that calamity overtakes, and his subject, Doctor Jackson, moved by his sovereign spirit, with the heart of the Saviour who gave His life to deliver the world, responded nobly, and we asked him to help our country in its need. He went forth to help us in our fight daily. Where the pestilence lay thickest, amidst the groans of the dying, he struggled to cure the stricken and to find medicine to stay the evil. Worn by his efforts, the pestilence seized him, and took him from us long before his time. Our sorrow is beyond all measure; our grief too deep for words. Doctor Jackson"—I am still quoting the old Chinese—"was a young man of high education and great natural ability. He came to Manchuria with the intention of spreading medical knowledge, religious comfort, and other blessings on the eastern people. In the pursuit of his ideal, he was cut down. The mission has lost a recruit of great promise; the Chinese Government, a man who gave his life in his desire to help them. O Spirit of Doctor Jackson, we pray thee intercede for the twenty million people of Manchuria and ask the Lord of Heaven to take away this pestilence, so that we may once more lay our heads in peace upon our pillows. In life you were brave; now you are an exalted spirit. O noble spirit who sacrificed your life, please help us still and look down in kindness upon us all."

Remembering the men like him, the thousands and thousands of them, scattered up and down the non-Christian lands amid pestilence that will not postpone itself until the war is done, amid sin and moral and spiritual needs that are present and insistent realities, we plead with Christian men and women to make of their lives a new consecration, and to resolve, in the face of the new conditions that we confront today, upon

a larger and fuller measure of obedience. Our fathers, in darker days than these, did not feel justified in demitting their missionary responsibilities. In the darkest days of the Civil War they maintained and enlarged their undertaking. Our own board testified in the fourth year of the war that it had never withdrawn a single missionary or shut up a single station or withheld, for financial reasons, a single man or woman. The Scotch, Canadian and English churches are not surrendering today. The Methodist Church in Canada had the largest missionary income in its history last year, and the English Wesleyan and London Missionary Societies in Great Britain the same. Shall we, with vastly more wealth than they, not do our full duty? If there ever was an hour when this cause was needed, it is needed now. This is no day to surrender any international bond, any instrumentality of Christianity that overleaps racial division and bridges the chasms that separate the peoples of mankind. This is the day for us with every last sacrifice we can make to maintain and expand our activities to make Christ known to the whole world. We have been singing again and again up and down this land those words of Julia Ward Howe:

"He hath sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat";
"He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat."

How is He sifting them out? By watching whether or not they, in this day, follow the call that sounds no retreat. The Church is not now, if ever, warranted in huddling in upon herself, in drawing back from her most distant and complete devotion. Now of all days we are called to the ends of the world.

You remember the incident—it may be apocryphal, but it has truth in it—of the drummer boy in one of Napoleon's campaigns to whom the great commander turned in an hour when the cause for the day seemed lost and said, "Boy, beat me a retreat!" And to him the lad dared to reply, "Sire, I know not how. Desaix never taught me that; but I can beat a charge that will make the dead fall into line! I beat that charge at Lodi; I beat it at the Pyramids. Let me beat it now!" And without waiting for the word, he beat his charge and over the dead and the wounded, and over the breastworks and the batterymen, he led the way to victory. Today let us not know how to beat any retreat. Let us hear the voice calling now more clearly and more appealingly than it ever called in any of the days gone by, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments."

What did He command? In those very last moments, His chance for one final word, until the sky grows ruddy with the hope of His coming again, there before the clouds caught Him up out of sight of men, He said, "Ye shall be my witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the world." And the thunder of the guns across the battlefields of northern France cannot drown in the heart of any Christian man the summons, the deathless abiding summons, of those last words.