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The United Presbyterian

THE TRUTH OF GOD—FORBEARANCE IN LOVE.

Volume LIV.

PITTSBURGH, THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1896.

Number 34.

MISSION WORK AMONG THE WARM SPRINGS INDIANS.

BY C. H. WALKER.

The first time I saw the Warm Springs Agency was in the fall of 1874. There was then a church organization, though with but a small membership. Rev. T. J. Wilson came over quite often, 30 miles from his home on Willow Creek, to hold religious services. There was a day school, to which was attached a training school for girls, who met each afternoon of the school days in a separate building for instruction in plain sewing, etc., given by Mrs. Wilson. At this time I made about a two months' visit, during three weeks of which I taught the day school, the teacher, Mr. William McCoy, having gone home on a visit. My brother, M. W. Walker, was also an employe there. In the summer of 1877, I was called by the agent, Capt. John Smith, to fill a position at Warm Springs, and at or near this agency was my home for the next fifteen years.

The first nine years of my life were spent among the Spokane Indians, where my father and mother were missionaries in company with Rev. C. Bells and wife, from the spring of 1839 to the spring of 1848, or after the Whitman massacre. The 24 years I spent among the Indians I now regard as the most valuable part of my life, that which I look back to with the most satisfaction. In 1877 I found the church at Warm Springs much strengthened by additions. During the previous winter some native Indian preachers had been over from the Yakima reservation, and held meetings, and I was told about 100 Indians professed conversion. Previous to the removal of these Indians from the Dalles, during 1858-59, what religious training they had received was either Roman Catholic or Methodist. In 1847 the Methodists gave up the Dalles mission to the A. B. C. F. M., the society that sent out Whitman, Spaulding, Walker, and Eells, with their wives. The Protestant Indians on the reservation were inclined to the Methodists, but such was their regard for Captain Smith that they esteemed it a privilege to belong to his church, and thus the United Presbyterian church became their spiritual home. In the fall of 1879, after Gen. Howard sent to the agency 37 Piutes that had been taken prisoners in the Bannock war, we had three interpreters for our religious meetings, one each for the Wasco, Warm Springs and Piute Indians. Rev. R. N. Fee was missionary at this time, and quite a number joined the church under his labors.

The Warm Springs tribe proper usually camped for the winter months near the Warm Springs River, and about 9 miles from the agency. Their time during these months was largely spent in gambling.

Up to 1880, to the best of my knowledge, there was not five acres fenced in north of the Warm Springs River, except on the farm of a Wasco named Kish-a-walk, who lived and still lives on Mutton Mountain.

Captain Smith quite frequently visited these Indians, and held services in their lodges, as did also Rev. Fee. Captain Smith finally induced them to go up to the Simnasho Valley and fence it in as one common field. He promised to give them their share of the wagons, plows, harness, etc., which promise was faithfully kept. As agency clerk this property was largely under my care and oversight, and I gladly helped to carry out the captain's promise, though I sometimes incurred the displeasure of the near-by agency Indians. They would say, "No use to give the Warm Springs harness; they'll cut it up. They have no need for hoes, they have no gardens." The Warm Springs Indians wanted a school of their own, so the captain told them to select the site, which they did. Next were school buildings. The captain had the government sawyer to saw the lumber, and then the Indians, almost to a man, turned out and hauled it nearly fifteen miles to Simnasho free of charge. Mr. George McCoy and myself helped Captain Smith to put up the first house built at Simnasho, and the following winter, 1881-82, if I remember aright, was started what we called the Warm Springs Industrial School. Afterwards the name was changed to the Simnasho Boarding School. Sabbath services were commenced about the time the school was started, and were kept up by either some of the employes there, usually Mr. Geo. McCoy, assisted by his faithful wife, or by help occasionally from the agency, until after the fall of 1884, when Rev. R. W. McBride arrived as missionary at the agency. He often employed me to go to Simnasho to conduct the Sabbath services. Sometimes he went himself, while I acted for him at the agency.

Gratitude prompts me to say a few words more regarding the work done by Mr. McBride, and also his noble wife. The first winter he was there alone, and had his quarters

with me. He generously assisted in my duties as clerk, in preparing papers connected with the agency business. In the spring of 1885, he built with his own hands a small cottage, with lumber furnished free by the Indians. This was the home Mrs. McBride entered when she arrived. Their bedroom was a little garret, under the roof, so low they could not stand up straight in it. Here they lived until the mission home was built. During their stay at Warm Springs five different agents were in charge. This of itself was detrimental, not only to the agency, but to the mission interests. Two of these agents Hon. Jason Wheeler and Dr. William W. Dougherty were noble Christian men, but unfortunately most of the employes under them were irreligious persons, some extremely so. Several were young men sent out from the east by the department, some of whom were shamefully immoral. These men were kept in their positions by the department against the protests of agent Wheeler, while he was in charge. Political considerations seemed far above the moral and Christian. The action of the government has nearly always been wrong, for its outcome has been to tear down with one hand nearly as fast as it has built up with the other. Grant's "peace policy" was a notable exception. As I look back and think of the difficulties and inconveniences encountered by Mr. and Mrs. McBride, I almost wonder that any advance at all was made in the mission field at Warm Springs.

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From the time I arrived at the agency in 1877, there were but few Sabbaths that I did not attend church service. When there was no missionary there up to the summer of 1883, Captain Smith usually led the services. When he was absent it usually fell to my lot so to do, though my brother, M. W. Walker, often led. From August, 1883, to November, 1884, I had the Sabbath work nearly all to do, for much of the time I was the only white Christian employe there. Mr. John A. Shaw, now a pastor in New Jersey, greatly helped during the summer of 1884. Captain Smith left in August, 1883, and never returned. He died in East Portland, Jan. 18, 1884. In the spring of this year the agency boarding school was started under agent Alonzo Gesner. Previous to this time there had been only a day school, though for several years, during the later ones of which it was managed by Mr. and Mrs. A. R. McCoy, of Albany, the children were given their dinners from rations furnished by the government. When Mrs. Walker and myself resigned from the agency boarding school in July, 1892, we left what had been under us a flourishing school, more so than ever before, and the church work prospering. There was also a flourishing school at Simnasho, under the management of Mr. and Mrs. F. T. Sampson. We left feeling that the Indians were fast becoming civilized and Christianized.

After three and one-half years of absence, I returned to this agency. I found along some lines of the church work much improvement had been made. The weekly prayer-meetings from house to house up and down the valley in which the agency lies, were well attended. A society of the W. C. T. U. had been organized, and held weekly meetings Thursday afternoons in the mission church. They had over 100 members, over 60 of whom were active. Their work was attracting the attention of the Indians in other reservations. Mrs. Jeanetta C. Alter was the moving spirit, and right royally was she mustering our dusky allies in the temperance cause. I was pleased at the changes made, especially at Simnasho, where neat and comfortable mission buildings had been erected and a beautiful church. In Rev. J. A. Speer and wife, and Miss Black, the Church have zealous and faithful workers. At the agency, Rev. Joseph Alter was rendering efficient service. The Sabbath-school work was particularly interesting. The congregation usually numbered about 100. Sabbath-school came immediately after church service, to which all the Indians remained. In previous years when there was a boarding school, but few attended the Sabbath-school outside of the boarding scholars. While there this time I taught Bro. Alter's class of about 20 English-speaking girls and women. Mrs. Alter taught, through an interpreter, usually Charles Pitt, about 40 uneducated Indians. Dr. Richards, agency physician, taught a class of about 20 English-speaking boys and men, while Mrs. Richards had the children's class of about 15. Mr. and Mrs. Richards are Baptists, hence deserve especial praise for the hearty interest they took in the work of another denomination, a true missionary spirit.

Yet for all this, I saw a change that saddened me. I saw at the agency more long-haired, blanketed Indians than I had seen for years during my sojourn there. I studied upon the problem during the nearly two months I was there, from Dec. 31 to Feb. 19,

and also since my return home. I attribute the change mainly to two things, one of which I call "military despotism." For about three years the agents have been military officers. Were all officers Christians, like Gen. O. O. Howard or Captain M. C. Wilkenson, the military could be made a grand success, for their business methods are fine. As it is, most officers care little for religion, and their greatest concern naturally is to succeed in the business lines connected with their profession, for therein lies the path to future promotion. My experience makes me say boldly and unqualifiedly, that not an agent or employe should be called to serve upon a reservation who is not an earnest Christian, though to have strictly moral persons would be an improved condition over what has sometimes existed.

As for military rule, it is exacting, and has a tendency to enslave. When you make a people feel that they are like slaves, you take away all pride; they care little how they appear. This seems to be the condition at Warm Springs. Again, an agent is the one to dispense favors, and his influence, if it be nothing more than negatively good, is greater than the positive influence wielded by the missionaries. Such influences the Church has had to contend with, intensified, when despotic, on account of military rule.

Now for the other reason. There has been no boarding school at the agency for two winters, and not likely to be next winter. The boarding school at Simnasho was discontinued last fall on account of the burning down of the school buildings, though a day school has been in session during the winter. At the agency the buildings were torn down by order of the agent, under the excuse that they were unsafe and unhealthy, though I know of no reason why they were any more so than when I was superintendent. The boarding school is an object lesson. For the agency Indians to see 30 girls and 40 boys neatly dressed every Sabbath morning, and marched in order up the hill to the mission church, inspired them to dress and appear in like manner; hence long hair on men, and blankets were out of the fashion.

The proposed erection of fine school buildings at the agency, in order to consolidate the reservation schools, is inspiring to think of, but I fear they will never meet the expectations concerning them. The abandonment of the Simnasho school is a wrong to that people. They still speak reverently of Captain Smith, and remember his promises. They should be kept. To change is to injure the educational and missionary work still more. Though a Congregationalist, I feel a deep interest in the missionary work at Warm Springs. Under proper conditions it can be made a grand success. May future changes be such as shall help the cause of missions there.

Albany, Ore.