

PIONEER LAYMEN OF NORTH AMERICA

Elijah White, in a letter to the *Oregon Spectator* of November 12, 1846, says: "Indeed, the red men of that region would almost seem to be of a different order from those with whom we have been in more familiar intercourse." Parker himself often remarked upon the reverence and attention with which the Flatheads and Nez Percés listened to his devotional exercises, in which they joined with an intelligence that surprised him. The effect of the teaching they had some time had was apparent in the exhibition of that hospitality, care for others, and general good conduct to which he often referred. On one of his journeys with these people he says:

"One sabbath day, about eight in the morning, some of the chiefs came to me and asked where they should assemble. I asked them if they could not be accommodated in the willows which skirted the stream of water on which we were encamped. They thought not. I then inquired if they could not take the poles of some of their lodges and construct a shade. They thought they could; and without any other directions went and made preparation, and about eleven o'clock came and said they were ready for worship. I found them all assembled, men, women and children, between four and five hundred, in what I would call a sanctuary of God, constructed with their lodges, nearly one hundred feet long, and about twenty feet wide, and all were arranged in rows, through the length of the building, upon their knees, with a narrow space in the middle, lengthwise, resembling an aisle. The whole area within was carpeted with their dressed skins, and they were all attired in their best. The chiefs were arranged in a semicircle at the end which I was to occupy. I could not have believed they had the means, or could have known how to have constructed so convenient and so decent a place for worship, and especially as it was the first time they had had public worship. The whole sight taken together sensibly affected me and filled me with astonishment; and I felt as though it was the house of God and the gate of heaven. They all continued in their kneeling position during singing and prayer, and when I closed prayer with amen, they all said what was equivalent in their language to amen. And when I commenced the sermon they sunk back upon their heels. Nothing could be more evident than that at some time some influential and competent teacher had laid the foun-