

JOHN McLOUGHLIN

they, that they would not raise their camps on Sunday, nor fish, hunt, or trade on that day except in cases of severe necessity, but passed a portion of the day in religious ceremonies, the chiefs leading the devotions, and afterward giving a sort of sermon upon abstaining from lying, stealing, cheating and quarreling, and the duty of being hospitable to strangers. Prayers and exhortations were also made in the morning on week-days, often by the chief on horseback, moving slowly about the camp, and giving his instructions in a loud voice, the people listening with attention, and at the end of every sentence responding one word in unison, apparently equivalent to amen. While these ceremonials were going on, every employment was suspended. If an Indian was riding by, he dismounted and attended with reverence until the conclusion. When the chief had finished, he said, 'I have done,' upon which there was an exclamation in unison. With these religious services, probably derived from the white men, the tribes above mentioned mingle some of their old Indian ceremonials, such as dancing to the cadence of song or ballad, which is generally done in a large lodge provided for the purpose. Besides Sundays, they likewise observe the cardinal holidays of the Roman Catholic Church." (Irving's "Bonneville's Adventures," pp. 389-90.)

"John Wyeth, who also gives these savages a good character, says:

"I know not what to say of their religion. I saw nothing like images or any objects of worship whatever, and yet they appeared to keep a sabbath, for there is a day on which they do not hunt nor gamble, but sit moping all day and look like fools. There certainly appeared among them an honor, or conscience, and sense of justice. They would do what they promised, and return our strayed horses and lost articles." ("Oregon," p. 54.)

Townsend was equally struck with the religious character of the Nez Percés and Cayuses, and after describing their family worship, concludes by saying:

"I never was more gratified by an exhibition in my life. The humble, subdued, and beseeching looks of the poor untutored beings who were calling upon their Heavenly Father to forgive their sins, and continue His mercies to them, and the evident and heartfelt sincerity which characterized the whole scene, was truly affecting, and very impressive." (Nar. p. 107.)