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THE MISSION OF SHELDON JACKSON IN THE WINNING OF THE WEST.

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The General Assembly of 1909—the first Assembly convened within the limits of the Rocky Mountain section—happily synchronized with two important, far-reaching events in the history of the Presbyterian Church. One was the arrival at Denver of the Rev. Louis Hamilton of the Presbytery of St. Joseph, N. S., who came with the first of the gold-seekers who crossed the plains in the spring of 1859—*fifty years before*; the other was the "Iowa Forward Movement," as it is now called, under the leadership of Sheldon Jackson, in the spring of 1869—*forty years before*.

Mr. Hamilton reached the rude settlement on the South Platte, now known as the Queen City of the Plains, on Saturday the 11th of June. On the Sabbath following he preached to a small congregation of residents and transients in an unfinished frame building. At the suggestion of Horace Greeley, who was present at the service, he followed the crowds who were going up into the mountains and preached to a large assembly under the wide-spreading branches of a grove of pines. Giving out the lines of a familiar hymn, Mr. Hamilton requested some one to start the tune. The response came promptly from a smooth-faced lad of nineteen years, clad in the garb of a teamster of the plains, who stood up in the front rank of this strangely assorted assembly. This young adventurer afterwards studied for the ministry

and to-day is widely known and honored as the Rev. Dr. George Lawrence Spining, the friend and eloquent advocate of the Indians of the West; and as the speaker who, in a never-to-be-forgotten address of rare eloquence, pathos and power, nominated Dr. Jackson as a candidate for the moderator's chair in the Assembly of 1897.

To a commissioner in attendance upon the sessions of the Assembly convened in Denver, a half century after the coming of Mr. Hamilton, Dr. Spining gave the following items in the way of reminiscence.

"I think of a day in '59 when that splendid city was sheltered under a limb, and I could have bought all capitol hill for fifty cents an acre; when its site was a Jack rabbit pasture. And I remember how, when dear old Father Hamilton preached in Gregory Gulch, I raised the first hymn tune in those mining camps. It was 'Come thou fount of every blessing,' and the miners and saloon-keepers joined in the singing while they kept right on with their work. I walked all the way coming out to the mountains and drove an ox team. Then there were millions of buffalo, and the Indians roved at will over the plains. Since that day, 'what hath God wrought?' If I were in the Assembly I would call for that dear old hymn."

Father Hamilton, as he was called by his associates on the frontier, preached for several months in the mining camps among the mountains, but owing to the unsettled condition of the floating population of the country did not organize a Presbyterian church. Meanwhile other ministers arrived from the East and on the 6th of December, 1861, the first church of our faith and order was organized in Denver. During the first decade of evangelistic work in Colorado the conditions for growth and expansion were not favorable. It was the decade of the Civil War, and, at its close, the Indians roved over the plains in hostile bands, and for the time arrested all attempts to effect permanent settlements between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. At its close there were only five feeble, dependent churches of the Presbyterian type. In Nebraska there was a little group of

churches which had recently been planted on the west side of the Missouri, but the farthest were less than sixty miles beyond it. In the vast territories of Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah and Arizona there was not—outside of the missions to the Indians—a single Presbyterian church, and in New Mexico there was but one of our name.

The Iowa Movement in the spring of 1869 was simultaneous with the completion of the transcontinental railroad. When peace with its priceless blessings was restored in every portion of the land, the marvellous energies and activities which the long struggle had developed were directed into other channels, and a period of enlargement, extension and prosperity began, which has no parallel in the history of any nation of ancient or modern times. In less than a year after the hostile armies had been disbanded the colossal task of constructing a railway across the continent was commenced from the Pacific side, and at times a force of more than twelve thousand men were employed upon it. About a year later work was commenced from the terminal of the Atlantic side at Omaha. With marvellous rapidity a force of twenty-five thousand laborers on this side reduced the distance between the daily terminals and the force approaching from the Pacific Coast. Many of the graders and builders of this portion of the road were honorably discharged soldiers of the Civil War, and every mile of it was surveyed, located and graded inside the protecting wings of the United States Army, then under command of General Sherman. Day after day this force of laborers stacked their arms on the dumps and were ready at any moment to fall in at the tap of the drum. With all these precautions the losses from Indian attacks were but little short of one thousand men, or one man for every mile on the line between Omaha and Promontary Point, the place of junction of the two roads. In anticipation of the advantages which were sure to follow on the line of this iron trail, multitudes of home seekers had crossed the prairies of Iowa and the valley of the Missouri River as early as the summer of 1868; and still larger numbers were on their track, or were preparing to follow, in the spring of 1869. This was

the last and greatest of all the westward migrations in the history of our land. During one of the years which followed this initial venture more than ten million seven hundred thousand acres—the equivalent in extent of three states the size of Massachusetts—passed from the possession of the Government into private hands. It was the greatest also in point of time, for it was an almost continuous migration for fully a quarter of a century. It ceased not until it had touched the older civilizations of the Pacific coast—the farthest west attainable on the surface of the globe. In the autumn of 1868 the Synod of Iowa, which then bordered the unsettled and unevangelized regions beyond, asked for the appointment of Sheldon Jackson, then a missionary pastor within the bounds of the Synod of St. Paul, to follow up the emigrant hosts who were pushing westward across their territory, and superintend the work of gathering and organizing churches in the newly settled communities, and newly built towns, already occupied in force by the proprietors of the drinking saloons, the dance halls, the gambling dens and every other influence for evil. These demoralizing agencies moved with every shifting camp and were made the first places of public resort in every promising town. In many an embryo city there was nowhere else for the young man, fresh from a Christian home, to go, not even on the Sabbath.

For lack of funds, and possibly for other reasons not mentioned, the request of the Synod of Iowa was declined. To Jackson and his associates at the front this refusal seemed like a virtual surrender of a God-given opportunity in one of the most critical and momentous periods of the Church. To him the call of this new land, supplemented by the call of the Iowa Synod, was the *call of God*; and, in the confident hope that He, in His own way, would provide the means, Sheldon Jackson decided to assume the responsibility which the Board, in its collective capacity, had declined to assume, provided the Presbyteries on the frontier line of Iowa should authorize him, at their spring meetings, so to do.

In writing to the Board after this authorization had been given, he says: "I sought and received the unanimous ap-

pointment of the Presbyteries, because I did not wish to enter the field *without their sanction*. If the Board is ready to undertake the work, the action of these bodies is their endorsement of your appointment. If not, I am instructed by them to coöperate with and labor for the interests of the Board as if commissioned by it. I have made this subject a matter of earnest prayer since last fall and now feel that 'woe is me' if I do not enter upon the work."

To understand the full significance of this undertaking and the measure of his fitness for it we must go back to some of the events and experiences which preceded it, and which properly belong to the preparation period of Sheldon Jackson's life. More potent than all other agencies which we can trace in the making of this remarkable man were the influences of a godly home. From early childhood he was set apart by his parents—who had recently *given themselves* to the Lord—to the work of the gospel ministry in the hope and with the prayer that he might be called to a field of labor in mission lands. This offering, made without reservation, was graciously accepted at their hands. Like Samuel at Shiloh this child of the covenant was privileged to hear the voice of God in early childhood; and, with full consent of mind and heart, accepted the vows and obligations which had been assumed on his behalf. The consciousness that he was thus devoted to a holy mission, as he himself has affirmed, was one of the most potent influences in restraining him from boyish follies and excesses. While at Princeton Seminary he entered with hearty enthusiasm upon the double work of winning souls and enlisting recruits for a little band of devoted men who were committed by covenant engagements to go wherever God in his providence should call them. Notable among the men of this missionary band, who afterwards labored in Laos, China, Siam, India, Brazil and Africa, were David McGilvary, Samuel Gailey, Charles Roger Mills, Jonathan Wilson, Augustus Brodhead, Ashbel Green Simonton and Dr. Robert Hamill Nassau. The autumn of 1857 was a time of unusual interest in missionary and evangelistic work. The breath of God's Spirit had quickened into new life the hearts of multitudes

in every portion of the land. The churches were crowded day after day with earnest worshipers and anxious inquirers; public halls in city, village and hamlet were filled with men and women who were strangely moved to prayer, and a wave of spiritual influence and power swept in resistless might from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This "Great Awakening," coming in the last year of young Jackson's course of theological study, was an important factor in the quickening and development of his spiritual nature. It brought to him and to many of his associates a Divine anointing for the great work to which they were called.

Strong in the conviction, which he had cherished from childhood, that he had been appointed to service in heathen lands, he offered himself to the Board of Foreign Missions without specifying any definite field of labor. Up to this time the outlining and rough-hewing of the plan of his life work had been in line with this avowed purpose, but above the human determination and purpose was the overruling Divinity which finally shaped its end. While the officials of the Board accepted his offer of service they restricted his field of labor to the Indian tribes of the United States. This action was taken because of the unfavorable report of the examining physician, and to Mr. Jackson, at the time, it was a great disappointment. "They thought I was not strong," he once said in reply to the question of a reporter, "but I had an iron constitution, with the exception of dyspepsia."

Near the close of the month of February, 1858, Jackson was notified that he had been commissioned for work among the Indians of the Choctaw nation, and had been assigned to a vacancy in the mission school for boys at Spencer in the Indian Territory. This assignment was not in accord with his wishes or inclinations, but without question he accepted it as the answer to his prayers for Divine guidance.

In the autumn following he and his devoted young wife, after a long and wearisome journey, reached their isolated missionary station and with conscientious fidelity took up the daily routine of their appointed work. From the very beginning of his term of service at Spencer, Mr. Jackson suf-

ferred from serious derangement of his stomach and liver. and within the space of four months had three severe attacks of malarial fever. At length it became apparent to him and to his friends that he could not longer remain in this region in comfort or safety, and in the spring of 1859 he tendered his resignation. Guided mainly by considerations of health he sought a field of labor in the rapidly growing territory of the Northwest, within the limits of the State of Minnesota. Here at length Sheldon Jackson *found himself and his mission*. From this time he became, by Divine ordering and ordination, a missionary bishop to the "regions beyond." In a short time the tonic influences of the clear, crisp atmosphere of Minnesota gave wings to long cherished aspirations and inclinations, which hitherto had been repressed by infirmities and limitations.

Interpreting the commission which he received from the Home Board for work in this new field in accordance with the spirit and intent of the "Great Commission" he did not confine his labors to presbyterial bounds, to state or county lines, but carried the bread of life to the needy across the Mississippi River among the new settlements of Wisconsin, as well as to the perishing in the regions more directly under his care. In Minnesota his preaching circuit, as he regarded it, included *thirteen counties*; in Wisconsin, *five counties*. This district as a whole covered a parish as large as the State of Maryland. His field in Minnesota included for a time nineteen preaching places, the extremes of which were more than one hundred miles apart. Never before, it may be confidently affirmed, did a home mission appropriation of three hundred dollars a year provide for the spiritual wants and pastoral care of a territory so vast, or accomplish so much in the establishment of churches and the bestowment of gospel privileges. When, at length, pastors and supplies were found by him for the more remote groups or settlements, the territory of this itinerant missionary was to that extent curtailed, but he still continued to serve them by securing funds for their houses of worship, literature for their homes and Sabbath schools, missionary boxes for their ministers; and, oftentimes

through influence with friends in the East, permanent supplies for the pulpits.

With La Crescent as a center, Jackson continued his itinerant ministry through winter and summer, with unabated interest for five years, except a brief term of two months of field service at the front under the direction of the United States Christian Commission. This period covered four years of the Civil War. It was a time of unusual hardship and distress in the homes of the missionaries on the frontier.

The treasury of the Board was for a time almost reduced to bankruptcy. The appropriations, hitherto pitifully small, were reduced about one third, and commissions were issued for six months only. In this emergency, and for several years following it, Sheldon Jackson exerted himself to secure from friends and every available source boxes of clothing and additional funds to supplement the salaries of the missionaries thus reduced in his Presbytery and Synod. This free-will offering from individual sources mostly was designated as the "Raven Fund," and many a faithful prophet of the Lord, refusing to leave his post under the stress of famine, or failure to meet present obligations, had cause to bless God for this timely manifestation of his providential care. The record of the gathering and disbursement of this fund is preserved in a little leather-covered book, which on its face tells a very remarkable story, but to those who read between the lines it is one of the most pathetic records in the Home Mission annals of the Presbyterian Church.

With Rochester, Minnesota, as a second center of missionary operations not less strenuous and efficient, Mr. Jackson labored for another term of well nigh five years.

Of these widely extended and singularly diversified ministrations, which covered a decade of the most eventful history of the Church and the nation, no adequate summary can be given in words or statistics. It may be noted, however, as a help toward a better judgment of the man and his work that during this period he organized or assisted in the organization of twenty-three churches; secured for the field by letter, personal solicitation, or by visits to the theological

seminaries, twenty-eight ministers; collected funds for the missionaries, or for their work, amounting to nearly \$13,500; and distributed, directly or indirectly, to the families of his missionary associates more than one hundred and fifty boxes of clothing or household supplies.

Referring to this multiplicity of labors, which were the wonder and amazement of his co-presbyters, Dr. R. B. Abbott, historian of the Presbytery of Winona, says:

"Little of stature, but earnest in spirit, like another Zaccheus, Sheldon Jackson was ever running ahead of the crowd, climbing a hill, scaling a mountain, following a valley, opening a schoolhouse, to see Jesus—who he was, and what he could do for these far-away western people. He was constantly searching out the land, sowing beside all waters, organizing beside all railroads. * * * The recital of such a history recalls the marvels of the heroic age, when men for the love of Christ would undergo any labor, suffer any persecution, so they might finish their course with joy and the testimony which they had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

With these facts before us we can readily see the reason for the choice of Sheldon Jackson as the leader in the Iowa Forward Movement. Up to this time he had served the church and his brethren in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, as a *private* in the Home Mission army of occupation, but the rare ability he had shown for leadership in the decade preceding it had already made him a marked man among his associates at the front.

The Presbytery of Des Moines, in session at Osceola, April 24, sounded the first note of advance and had the honor of leading in this movement. Five days later the Presbytery of Missouri River met at Sioux City. By reason of its unique position it had a place of commanding importance. Its working force, all told, consisted of fifteen ministers and twenty small churches, but its outlying territory extended without a break to the limits of the Presbytery of Stockton on the Pacific coast. The appointed time for the convening of this body was in the evening, and on the afternoon preceding Shel-

don Jackson and two of its missionary pastors—Thomas H. Cleland and John C. Elliott—ascended a bold bluff on the edge of the town to look abroad over the land. On their way to this elevation they saw the victim of a lynching party who was hanging by the neck to a lamp post on one of the streets.

From this outlook portions of Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota and Minnesota were visible. As the men of this trio looked earnestly westward they spoke with bated breath of the vast stretching of unevangelized territory—for long the home of the Indian and the buffalo—opening up everywhere to the adventurer and the settler—in the widening circle—far beyond the sweep of their field of vision. In that broad belt of the beyond, reaching from British America on the north to the borders of Mexico on the south, were the vast territories of Wyoming, Montana, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, Alaska, Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona—an aggregate area of nearly two million square miles, and with the exception of the Indian mission stations there were in all these immense provinces but *eleven Presbyterian churches*. Distributed in sections throughout this new west were as yet unnumbered hosts of deluded Mormons, semi-Pagan Mexicans, sun-worshiping Pueblos, demon-worshiping Alaskans, deeply degraded Eskimos and tens of thousands of Indians on government reservations or roving wild over the mountains or plains.

On the line of the Union Pacific road, which had almost reached the point of junction with the Central Pacific, there was not a single Presbyterian church for a distance *westward of eighteen hundred miles*.

Thrilled by the almost unlimited possibilities of this new land, and stirred with deep emotion as they realized the extent of its spiritual destitution, the men on this mount of vision bared their heads and, kneeling down on the ground, poured out the desires of their hearts to God, dedicating the vast unevangelized domain before them to Christ and His service; and pleading for grace and strength, courage and faith, to enable them manfully to do their part in winning

it for Him. The impressions of the hour and the spirit of this hill-top prayer meeting were carried into the sessions of the Presbytery, and by unanimous action Sheldon Jackson was appointed as their missionary superintendent to the regions beyond or as far as their jurisdiction extended.

A few days later the Presbytery of Fort Dodge ratified this action and at once he entered enthusiastically and without hesitancy upon the work assigned him. It is a noteworthy fact that there were no available funds of any kind to back this appointment; and it was understood by all parties that the new superintendent was expected to sustain himself and also to provide the necessary funds for those whom he should employ on this immense field.

The last spike—a nail of California gold—was driven at the junction of the two roads on the 19th of May. This was only nine days after the action of the Missouri River Presbytery; and yet before that historic event took place Jackson had posted three men on the line of the Union Pacific road at important strategic points between Iowa and Central Utah, a distance of over one thousand miles. In less than a month thereafter four middlemen were assigned to fields, covering from one to five counties each, in Iowa and Nebraska. Before eight months had passed away ten new missionaries were at work in Iowa, Wyoming and Utah. The men who were thus sent without purse or scrip, at the suggestion of their leader, covenanted with God and each other to make special and united prayer that He who sent them out would provide the means for their support. In a very wonderful manner these prayers were answered. Letters written to friends or published in the religious papers brought generous responses, in checks for \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50, \$100 and at one time \$500. When a prominent business man in Wall Street was asked to give help for a dependent church in this field, and was told that Jackson had it in hand, he immediately doubled his gift. "That man," said he, "stands for so much in my esteem and confidence that I will give him double and ask no questions."

It was implicit faith in the man and in his direct, com-

mon-sense methods that won for him friends and support when obliged, as in this case, to act upon his own responsibility, anticipating the slower movements of the Church to which he was so devotedly attached. In a crisis hour of a great battle in our Civil War—as the story goes—the standard bearer of a regiment of colored troops dashed ahead of the line when it was wavering and halting, and called to the men to follow him. Fearing that the colors would be taken by the enemy, the captain of the company called out: “Bring back that flag.” “Marse captain,” was the prompt response, “dis yeh flag don’t nebber go back. Bring up dem men dere.” With a rush the men were brought up and the coveted position was gained. So in this crisis hour of our mission advance, when the line was wavering and halting in the face of a great opportunity, this veteran of the ranks seized the standard of the cross, beneath which fluttered a pennant of blue, advanced it swiftly to the front and, planting it far in advance of the vanguard line, called upon the Presbyterian hosts to come up to it. The fact that the Church did respond promptly to that call is the best justification of his motives and method.

Before the close of the summer of 1869 the Board of Home Missions reconsidered its action and commissioned Mr. Jackson and a number of the missionaries whom he had placed on the field. By this recognition the work was placed under official direction and sanction, but nevertheless it was largely supported by special funds for some months following. From May 1, 1869, to December 31, 1870, the individual offerings sent to Sheldon Jackson for this “Raven Fund” reached an aggregate sum of \$10,037.79; and every man whose support was pledged by him was paid in full before the year of his service had closed. This was preëminently a work of faith and consecration, as marvellous in its inception as it was prompt in its execution and results. In that memorable year this dauntless evangelist of the frontier traveled more than twenty-nine thousand miles in the prosecution of his work; organized twenty-two churches, two of which were sixteen hundred miles apart; and was privileged to plant the blue

banner of the Church of the Presbyter for the first time in the territories of Wyoming, Montana and Mormon Utah. By direction of the General Assembly he called together and constituted the Presbytery of Colorado, within the same limit of time. As thus constituted it consisted of five ministers and eight churches. In extent it covered four of the Rocky Mountain territories and two of its churches were one thousand miles apart. Then, too, were laid the foundations of the Presbyteries of Kearny, Wyoming, Utah and Montana and of the Synod of Colorado, each of which covered an empire of magnificent proportions. With the reunion of 1870 came a change in the administration of the Board of Home Missions. From this time onward the work, so auspiciously begun in this new west, was prosecuted enthusiastically and efficiently by its aid and under its direction.

From whatever standpoint we view it, this Iowa Forward Movement, under the leadership of Sheldon Jackson, was one of the grandest missionary ventures of modern times. It set the pace for the Presbyterian Church and changed its policy from timid conservative waiting to bold, aggressive acting. It opened up to the privileges of the gospel seven great states and three territories, placing the Presbyterian Church in the forefront of every one of them, and giving into our hands a splendid and ever-growing domain now covered by five Synods, twenty-seven Presbyteries and five hundred and seventy-nine churches, with an enrollment of sixty-eight thousand, six hundred and fifty communicants. To this field of labor, so vast in extent, so rich in natural resources, so important in view of its prospective growth, and withal so diverse and incongruous in the elements which made up his native population, Dr. Jackson gave twelve of the best years of his busy life. With unfaltering courage and ready tact he met the difficulties and overcame the obstacles which confronted him on every hand. With apostolic fervor and zeal he explored the "regions beyond" as the advance agent of the Church, preaching the gospel to little groups who had pushed out beyond its privileges, and wherever the way seemed to be open, establishing churches and schools, which

with few exceptions became permanent centers of spiritual life and wholesome influence.

Referring to this period of his busy life, the Rev. Duncan J. McMillan, the well-known ex-secretary of the Board of Home Missions, says:

“Dr. Jackson was the great leader in the Rocky Mountains, not only in church matters, but also in material interests. In those early days, with pen and tongue he did *more than any other* man to make known to the world the resources and possibilities of that region. Gifted with a seer’s vision, the possibilities of our great West were as real to him at the beginning of its development, a generation ago, as the accomplished facts are to every intelligent citizen to-day. He wrought for the future as if it were present, hence he was misunderstood and often censured by men who could not see afar off.”

To meet the urgent necessities of the exceptional population in his great missionary field—comprising all of the Mormon, nearly all of the Mexican, and almost one third of the Indian population—it was absolutely necessary to establish mission schools to prepare the way for the preaching of the gospel, as on the foreign field. But such an adjunct, however, no provision had been made in the constitution or charter of the Home Board. In view of the importance of such work, to meet the changed conditions, this far-seeing missionary leader appealed to the women of the Presbyterian Church—and not in vain—in behalf of the many thousands of benighted women and children, already included within the limits of our newly formed Presbyteries and Synods, who were living without the knowledge of God and were as utterly neglected as the perishing multitudes in the far-away heathen lands.

The great central agency, now known as the Woman’s Board of Home Missions, which last year supported one hundred and sixty-one mission schools and twenty-one evangelistic stations, which received and disbursed more than \$600,000 in connection with its annual work, was *inspired, suggested and advocated* by Sheldon Jackson in its *beginning and early development*; and to him, more than any other one of its

warm, persistent friends, is due the honor of carrying it forward through all its stages of oppositions and discouragements until it gained the sanction of the highest judicatories of the Church.

In the summer of 1877 Sheldon Jackson, conferring not with flesh and blood, for the need was great and the call was urgent, carried the standard of the cross far northward, and planted it in the midst of the debased heathenism of southeastern Alaska. Here again he was in advance of the Church and *all its agencies*, but with implicit faith in the promises of a wonder-working God he planted the first Protestant mission in that long-neglected land; and placing a noble woman, the sole representative of her race, in charge of it, made his appeal to the Christian women of the land to support her in the attempt to inaugurate a larger and more efficient work. In this undertaking, irregular and informal as it was, he afterwards had the official sanction and encouragement of the Board of Home Missions; and, as a matter of fact, he was the recognized agent of the Woman's Executive Committee in the securing of funds and in the founding and establishment of all the mission stations in Alaska.

The assertion that "Sheldon Jackson discovered Alaska to the American people" has more than a modicum of truth as its basis. It had been under the folds of the stars and stripes for ten years before he came to it; and yet to the masses of our people it was a dim, shadowy possession—a land of iceburgs and polar bears which gave no promise of prospective value and for which no man seemed to care. It had no form of government, no formulated code of laws, no church nor school, no missionary nor teacher, except a few half-instructed native converts who had recently come to it from British Columbia. Its native population, numbering about thirty thousand souls, were the prey of the spoiler from every quarter, and thousands of them had never heard the name of the Saviour of sinners. While nominally under one of the most enlightened of the Christian governments of the world, the land itself was literally enshrouded in gross darkness. It was the high mission of Sheldon Jackson to arouse

the leaders alike of Church and State to the shame and the sin of this neglect of privilege and responsibility. By public addresses all over the land, by persistent appeals to congressmen and other officials of the nation and by combining the influences of the various denominations of Christians he at last secured a temporary government for Alaska and awakened an interest in its welfare, which is now bringing forth a rich fruitage of spiritual blessing. "Sheldon Jackson's opening of Alaska," as one has put it, "is as thrilling as any chapter in 'Darkest Africa.' It is American history that he made, and that history will be read with deeper appreciation as the years come and go."

As a fitting recognition of his eminent service in behalf of this land, and its needy dependent people, Dr. Jackson was appointed to the newly created office of general agent of education in Alaska. This appointment was confirmed by every successive administration during a period of twenty-four years, or until he himself asked to be relieved of its duties a short time before his death.

In a congratulatory note, following the original appointment, the Hon. T. A. Johnson, member of Congress from the state of New York, bears this testimony to its peculiar fitness: "As a member of the Committee on Territories, and of the sub-committee on the bill proposing a civil government for Alaska, I feel like congratulating you on the reward you are now receiving for your long, unwearied and very efficient labors on behalf of that distant portion of our country. I may say without any hesitation that in my humble judgment, to you, more than any other man or agency, is due the success thus attained in the direction of the establishing of a form of government, and the improvement in condition of the inhabitants of Alaska."

For the long period already mentioned Dr. Jackson served the government in this capacity, organizing schools from Fort Wrangell on the eastern coast to the Aleutian Islands on the west. For almost the same period he had the general oversight of the missions of our Home Board in Alaska. In an unofficial sense he also gave his time and counsel freely to

all the other Christian denominations which founded missions or schools within the territory. At his suggestion and under the inspiration of his appeals the Moravian Church established several mission stations among the long neglected tribes of the Eskimos in Arctic Alaska; and to save this people from extinction and also to provide for them a new industry he conceived and successfully carried out the well-known scheme of importing reindeer for breeding purposes from Siberia.

In the carrying out of this project, which was derided by some and opposed by others, he made one journey to the capital of Kamchatka; one midwinter trip, under direction of the War Department, to the northernmost city of the globe in Europe; and twenty-six journeys to northeastern Siberia, eight of which were north of the Arctic Circle.

"A book could be written," says Dr. Stoddard of the "New York Observer," "showing how constant and bitter have been the attempts to prevent missionary schools and civilizing influences among the Indians. Against all these efforts, Jackson set himself like a rock. He was maligned, assaulted, thrown into prison, tried before courts that had no jurisdiction upon charges that were untrue and absurd, but he has been triumphantly vindicated in court and at the bar of public opinion, while the ever-growing value of his work has given the best proofs of his far-reaching vision as a patriot and his saintly consecration as a Christian. The tourists who visit his museum at Sitka wonder at the exhibit which one wanderer in these northern wilds has collected, but the pious traveler who listens to the simple and soulful prayers at the native churches at Sitka and Juneau and Wrangell, and hears from the missionaries at these and other stations what has been wrought among the Indian tribes of Alaska during the last generation, thanks God for another pioneer like the Apostle Paul to 'the regions beyond.'"

When we gather together and sum up the labors and achievements of this remarkable man, ranging through *nine states and three territories during a half century* of unbroken activity, we are surely warranted in saying that such a facing

of imperial opportunities, such a meeting of unusual responsibilities, such a battling for God and righteousness in the face of oppositions and perils and weariness and discouragements and such a rich ingathering of results have not been found in the life of any other leader of the Church militant since the days of the apostles.

The dangers incident to travel in new and sparsely settled countries were every day experiences which Sheldon Jackson faced for years, but to these were added many of an extraordinary and unusual kind. One long summer day he held a rifle on his knee, as the mule teams which drew his coach raced between stockade forts, at intervals on the line, in momentary expectation of an attack from savage Shoshones.

Once he rode through a region in which hostile Apaches were murdering scores of defenseless people, escaping the scalping knife by a few hours only. A little later on the return journey, with a party of Indian children, he and his wife narrowly escaped death from a band of infuriated men whose friends had been murdered by the Apaches. At another time the steamer on which he was traveling was made the target for the rifles of Indians as it drew near the shore on the upper reaches of the Missouri. Once there was only the touch of a finger between him and death as a half dozen revolvers were leveled at him from a stage coach, and five times the mail coach was halted and robbed by highway men, just before or after he passed over the route. On one journey among the high mountains of Colorado the carriage in which he was riding went down over a precipice by a swift plunge, while he escaped, not a moment too soon, by leaping out, as he realized the danger.

At other times he was compelled to flee from prairie fires or from roaring flames which leaped from pine to pine along the slope of the mountains. There were perils also, seen and unseen, in crossing snowy ranges at altitudes varying from ten thousand to thirteen thousand feet; perils in canoe voyages of hundreds of miles along the stormy coasts of Alaska; and perils of frequent occurrence amid the grinding ice floes

and treacherous ice packs of the Arctic Ocean, where whaling vessels were crushed or wrecked every season. Commenting upon the story of his life work, so full of adventure and achievement, Dr. Theodore Cuyler wrote shortly before his death:

"It reads like an added chapter to the 'Acts of the Apostles.' A herald of Jesus Christ who has traversed nearly a million miles by stages, buckboards, by ox carts and reindeer sledges—who has faced hostile Indians and Arctic ice floes—who has delivered nearly four thousand public addresses as hot as an anthracite coal fire—who has done the same pioneer work for the vast region of Alaska that Livingstone did for Africa, and has made his name as visible in the spiritual history of the "New West" as Pike's Peak or Mount McKinley. Such a man, who has wrought such achievements is not surpassed by any living Christian minister on this continent."

Not less valuable and suggestive is the testimony of the late Dr. Teunis Hamlin, of Washington City, from which I quote but one or two sentences:

"Dr. Jackson was pioneer, prospector, administrator, all in one. No man was more quick to see an opportunity, or more efficient to seize it. There is little of our territory, from the Mississippi River to the Aleutian Islands, over which he has not traveled on religious and humanitarian errands, and the whole broad expanse is dotted with monuments of his wisdom and energy."

Among all the kindly tributes which have been paid to Dr. Jackson in the *midst* of his self-denying work the truest, perhaps, to the life were the congratulatory words sent to him on the occasion of his election to the moderator's chair of the General Assembly:

"I never wrote to a moderator to rejoice that he had attained that high position in the great church of the Presbyter, but you are one of my heroes. You have stood for all that our gospel means, not in a luxurious parish or splendid college, but out yonder on the edge of things where God's most friendless children turn toward you the eyes of pathos and hope, and not a woman lives who has a brain to think

who can fail to look upon you as one of the blessed reappearances of the primitive man of Christ in an age that needs such men more than it needs gold or tariff."

For this Christlike ministry "out on the edge of things" Sheldon Jackson will be long and gratefully remembered, and in the days to come his name will be indissolubly linked with all that is good and uplifting in the pioneer history and religious development of the vast domain—greater in extent than the empire of Alexander—which lies between the Mississippi River and the Pacific coast and extends northward from the borders of Mexico to Point Barrow—the utmost bounds of our continental possessions.

All honor to the noble band of men and women who seconded his efforts and aided him in this self-denying work; for on their support he was, under God, dependent for success; but to him will be given, as justly his due, the honor of leadership, *in its beginnings*, over a larger extent of territory than was ever committed to any missionary of the cross since the days of the Apostle Paul. If it be true that the sure index of advancing civilization is the extent to which it is pervaded by the influence of Christianity, the missionary of the frontier—the man with the Book—deserves much more of the nation and the writers of its history than he has ever received. The story of the advance of our missionary vanguard from stage to stage, over frontier lines beset with peril at every step, if as fully written out as the history of the other great actors and movements relating to the "winning of the West," would be one of the most thrilling and romantic stories of modern times. And to no single denomination, perhaps, of all those who had a part in this spiritual conquest of the land has the Great Head of the Church given a nobler, wiser or more courageous band of leaders than to the denomination to which Sheldon Jackson belongs.

"O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train."