

REPORT
OF THE
TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE
LAKE MOHONK CONFERENCE
OF
FRIENDS OF THE INDIAN AND OTHER
DEPENDENT PEOPLES
OCTOBER 20th, 21st and 22d, 1909

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lished by the highest tribunal in the British Empire, for I conceive that much good will result from that. Mr. Chairman, when we white people, we people of the two great, powerful Anglo-Saxon nations, come to deal with the Indians, shall we come to them with outstretched hands, saying, "Indian, this is something that we bring to you and give to you of our mercy and of our charity?" Surely not. Should we not rather come to him and say, "Brother, we bring to you that justice and that liberty which we ourselves love so much!" And shall we not by that course do a great deal toward casting down the obstacles which now stand in the way of successfully educating the Indian people, and doing for them in every way the best possible? And then a great obstacle which stands in the way of reaching them effectively by missionary effort with the Gospel of Salvation, will be removed, and a great blessing may be expected to follow. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: The next speaker is Rev. Dr. S. L. MORRIS, of Atlanta, Ga., secretary of the Southern Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. Dr. Morris' subject is "Mission Work for the Indians."

MISSION WORK AMONG THE INDIANS

REMARKS OF REV. DR. S. L. MORRIS

If I were to speak upon the general work of missions among the Indians I certainly would need much preparation. I assume, however, that you wish merely a few words as to the work being done by the Southern Presbyterian Church.

The Presbyterian church has been carrying on work among the Indians for more than fifty years, confining their work to the civilized tribes. I might almost say that is perhaps one explanation of the fact that they are civilized and Christian people — that they have been under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian mission work during these fifty years. Unfortunately, during the War the Presbyterian church was disrupted; and as the Indian territory naturally fell to the Southern Presbyterian Church, all the work done among these civilized tribes at that time was perhaps done by our church. But after the war a large part of this work was transferred to the northern church, so that for some years we have been confining our efforts to the Choctaws and the Chickasaws. At present we have four white missionaries devoting all of their time to the Indians. There are eight "full-blood" Indian preachers who are devoting their time to their own people. We have nineteen "full-blood" Indian churches beside other churches which are mixed and contain some Indians and some whites.

There are no vacant churches among the Indians. The vacant churches have been the cause of the slow growth of the Presbyterian church in some sections; we have been unable to keep all the churches supplied. But we have no difficulty of that kind among the Indians. Whether our missionaries preach on the Sabbath, or can visit all the churches, makes no difference, for there is always an Indian leader on hand ready to take the Bible and expound it in his way, offer prayer, lead the singing, and they seem to get as much spiritual enjoyment out of it as if there were a minister present; so that all of our churches are open ordinarily every Sabbath. We have at present about 700 communicants among them. The number has not grown much in the last few years, owing to the fact that tuberculosis and other diseases are carrying away the Indians — and as the Indian population is not increasing we could not expect there would be much increase in membership among the Indians. I heard the Rev. Silas Bacon, a full-blood Indian preacher, giving an explanation on one occasion why there was no increase, or rather an explanation why the money spent on Indian missions did not produce larger results. In passing, allow me to say that the Rev. Silas Bacon, a full-blooded Choctaw Indian, is one of the most remarkable men this country has ever produced. I would not hesitate to place that man in integrity, honor and in Christian character against any man I ever knew. It was in the meeting of the Indian Presbytery, when some one raised the question why the amount of money spent on Indian missions did not show larger results, he replied in very eloquent language and said, "If you will come with me to yonder cemetery I will show you hundreds of graves filled with the sainted dead. I will show you where the money has gone that has been expended upon Indian missions. Now," said he, "was the money wasted that filled those graves with Christian people rather than heathen?" If the church on earth cannot give a good account of its Indian missions from the standpoint of numbers, surely the church in Heaven can. "The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there!"

Now, we are not only carrying on mission work in this way, having churches and preaching among the Indians, but we have been for many years carrying on mission schools for them, primary schools and even schools of a higher grade. Out of these schools have come some of the finest characters that are among the Indians to-day. Nearly all of our Indian preachers were educated in these schools. I suppose many in this audience know of Frank Wright, the Indian preacher, a remarkable evangelist,

sought all over this country — and Frank Wright, I say, is the product of our Indian schools.

Rev. Silas Bacon, of whom I have spoken, undertook to develop one of our Indian schools — the Goodland School — into an industrial school and orphanage. I assisted him with money to enable him to start. He donated twenty acres of land allotted him by the United States Government, and secured about eighty acres from other Indian friends. There he has erected buildings, which have cost, I suppose, some ten or twelve thousand dollars, and he has quite a flourishing school. So long as he had no attractive accommodations for these children, certain parties have been sending their children elsewhere; but as soon as he erected these fine buildings, the Indians who had property, the more wealthy ones, wanted to send their children to him, but he declined to receive them and said, "You have been sending them elsewhere and I intend to make this a school for the poor Indians who cannot go elsewhere." He being a member of the Choctaw Legislature, persuaded his legislature to ask Congress to give him 640 acres of land, a mile square, for the support of this school. Congress passed the bill and at some expense he located his land; but it seems that the bill passed by Congress was defective and he could not get possession. In the meantime other people filed on his land and he lost it. Then some of his friends went to Congress and a bill was passed which attempted to correct the defect. That was two years ago, but that is dependent upon the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Bacon has located more land, at some expense, but I fear before he can get possession somebody else will "file" on it and he, perhaps, will lose it again. The man is impoverishing himself because he will turn off no Indian child. The representatives of the Government pay him a certain amount for the board of children. There are eighty boarding there now — but if a hundred were to go he would not refuse them or turn them off, but keep them for the money given him for eighty. He hesitates at no sacrifice and recently sold twenty acres of his own land to help the running expenses of the school.

I would like to tell you about other work, but my time is up. (Applause.)

THE CHAIRMAN: I have the pleasure of calling again on the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for an introduction of one of his officials.

Mr. VALENTINE: Two years ago I was at Haskell Institute for one day, and that is all I know about Haskell. But Mr. H. B.

PEAIRS, as many of you know, has rendered efficient service as superintendent there. I have asked him to-night to speak shortly on the subject of results, and then to introduce to you in the flesh a result of Haskell.

RESULTS OF THE WORK OF HASKELL INSTITUTE

REMARKS OF MR. H. B. PEAIRS

The subject assigned — Results — I want to refer to again because of the fact that last summer in June Haskell Institute held its quarter centennial reunion. As was well said this morning, every institution should be judged by the results, by the product, by the young people who go out and the work they do. Therefore, we thought it was worth while to gather together the results of the twenty-five years' work of Haskell Institute, because we felt it would not only be of value to Haskell Institute, but to Indian education in general, because what was true of Haskell Institute was true in a very large degree of every other Indian school. I have time to tell you only a few things to give you some idea of these results.

In a statistical way we found there had been enrolled in that institution approximately 5,400 students. Of that number only the small number of 400 had remained long enough to complete any course and graduate from the institution. We prepared a series of questions, asking the pupils who had gone out from the institution what they were doing, how they were living, a great many questions which are of vital importance, but I cannot stop to give them. We sent out these circulars to more than 2,000 students who had been in that institution, and we received in reply something like 1,600 reports and many more letters. I can tell you little of what was in those reports, or any here this evening. But one thing pleased us very greatly. We held our reunion in June, a busy season of the year, and we had present during the week approximately 250 of the former students of the institution. We had literally hundreds of letters from students who had been in the school, saying, "It is harvest time; it is a busy season, and we are at work and cannot possibly come." That was the tone of letters from all sections of the country. An investigation proved that to be true. What more could we ask? We located every graduate of the institution — approximately 400 of them — and we got definite information that 90 per cent., or a little better, are graded as *good*. Please remember these are graduates from a grammar school because we have no higher work in the Indian schools. Ninety per cent. did excellent work. Many are on their