

# A Bishop In the Church of God

*The Story of Eastern Oregon*

*By*

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## A BISHOP IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

I HAD heard for years that something was wrong in Eastern Oregon. When the malady was hinted at I became curious, for the things which were noted as signs of disorder seemed to me to be symptomatic of a missionary advance.

No phrase in the office set for the consecration of a bishop is so radiant with the splendor of the apostolic tradition as that awful phrase, *a bishop in the Church of God*. One's sectarianism shrivels and is ashamed when those seven words light up vistas of the Church's history, past and future. The servant who is consecrated to the office which those words describe has entered upon a spacious task. When I heard, from time to time, criticism, sometimes petty, sometimes sincere but anxious, of what was being done in the name of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America's most rural missionary district, it occurred to

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me that Bishop Paddock was, in very fact, trying to serve his Master like a bishop in the Church of God. I sought out the story of his work. Some of it I got from him as he lay on his back in a New York hotel; for twenty-five years of missionary hardship and, of late, wounds, which no missionary of Christ ought to be called upon to bear at the hands of his brothers, have broken him. He will never go back to Oregon.

Some of that story I shall try to tell to CHURCHMAN readers. I cannot tell it as I heard it and as it became patched together from various sources, for it is the one of the two or three great missionary romances in American church history. In unheralded and patient heroism it has not been surpassed. Yet I venture to say that not half a dozen American churches have ever heard a missionary address about the work in Eastern Oregon, and only a few score of churchmen in the East know that for fifteen years on that bleak frontier something like apostolic Christianity was being tried by a bishop who has been too busy to tell his own story and too humble to want praise.

We have read in the *Spirit of Missions* and we have heard in our Auxiliaries the thrilling stories of what our other missionary bishops are doing. The names of some of them are household words. Their faces are almost as familiar as that of our own bishop. They come to us frequently and their presence is a blessing. But Bishop Paddock, when he was consecrated in the city of New York a decade and a half ago, had a conviction. When

one has seen Bishop Paddock's jaw and looked into his eyes he will know that conviction with him carries no light ballast of determination. The conviction which this youthful bishop brought to his missionary work was, I dare say, in the minds of some members of the Board of Missions quixotic and of some of his fellow missionary bishops almost a disloyalty to the fundamental principles of the Church's missionary methods.

Bishop Paddock, at a luncheon given in Brooklyn in his honor on the day of his consecration, said: "I am not going to take any money for the work in Eastern Oregon except my salary and I am not going to leave my diocese to talk about my work." Some of the clergy present laughed. There was cynicism in the laughter. There was also some of the worldly wisdom gleaned from a practical knowledge of the Church's missionary work. They said: "We shall see."

So Bishop Paddock disappeared from the city where he was born and had served his entire ministry. For fifteen years he has not left his diocese, except to attend General Convention, to attend the provincial synod and meetings in neighboring dioceses, to go to France as a worker during the war, and at last, one is ashamed to say it, he came last spring to New York to plead his cause and save his ministry before the Presiding Bishop and Council. He has traveled much in those fifteen years, but he has traveled as a missionary in the hard, rough country where the Church sent him to convert men to Christ. A good deal of the time he

has gone in khaki, his blankets on his back. I have heard him criticized because he did not always carry bishop's robes on his journeys. And for fifteen years he has steadily refused a dollar from the Board of Missions except his salary. He has also refused gifts from his many friends in New York, for Bishop Paddock was not a stranger in the city of his birth when he was consecrated a bishop. About a thousand dollars a year has come to him from a little fellowship, from men and women whom he had helped. That sum was largely made up of widows' mites. He couldn't refuse it. He asked for their prayers. They insisted upon adding money. He said that day in Brooklyn at luncheon: "I will stay on the job and Eastern Oregon will pay for its own religion." He has kept the promise.

## THE BACKGROUND

A WORD about Bishop Paddock's background. When on December 18, 1907, at the age of thirty-seven, young Paddock was consecrated bishop, he was not a stranger to the manners, spirit and genius of our Communion. His grandfather was a clergyman. His father was a bishop. His uncle had been Bishop of Massachusetts and his cousin was Bishop Bedell, of Ohio. He, therefore, knew something of the traditions and the mind of the Church. He moved at ease within its borders and he was not self-conscious about the proprieties or the prescriptions of loyalty. The Church in which he was con-

secrated bishop had been his Church by birth and preference, and his loyalty was instinctive. It must have amused him, though I have not heard him say so, that during his great experiment in Eastern Oregon presbyters, laymen and bishops who have scarcely become acclimated in the Episcopal Church questioned his loyalty. It was because Bishop Paddock was so much of a churchman that he became so thoroughly at his consecration a bishop in the Church of God.

Paddock was not an unknown man when he was sent by the Church to Eastern Oregon. At the pro-cathedral on the East Side, the old Stanton Street mission, he had done for the Church, for the city of New York, and for the nation, a heroic piece of Christian service. Bishop Potter's letter to Mayor Van Wyck, revealing the criminal neglect of the administration, is a proud possession of the Diocese of New York. But that letter was merely the dramatic and rhetorical climax of the three years' labors of young Paddock, who, in the worst sink of iniquity that America has known, fought as a priest to protect his boys and girls from the slime with which the entrenched power of Tammany had bedaubed the streets of the poor. When Bishop Potter wrote that letter the battle had been fought and won. Paddock had done the work. It is a glorious chapter in the history of our American Church. The man who was sent as a bishop to the frontier diocese was not a fledgling. He had shown patience, courage and wisdom in trying seasons.

From the pro-cathedral Paddock went to the run-down church in Old Chelsea, the Church of the Holy Apostles. Here he spent the next six years of his ministry. He found 100 communicants when he became rector. When he left the parish to go to Eastern Oregon there were 1,000. And here there begins to be revealed a characteristic trait in Paddock's pastoral work. He has served the Church in three fields. Two of these lay in the metropolis. The third in the most rural and, when he went there, perhaps the most primitive frontier of America. But whether Paddock was working in the slums of Stanton Street, or in Chelsea, or in Eastern Oregon, he identified himself completely with the place in which he was called to work. When he was at the pro-cathedral he lived in slums and for the slums. It was the sins, the needs, the opportunities, the limitations of that particular field that determined his methods. He hitched his star to the humble little wagon that needed to be drawn. Everybody, every parish worker, aims, of course, to do that. There is no originality or heroism in that. Isn't there? All the opposition with which Paddock has met, and it has been bitter at times, he might have avoided, if he had been willing to act in the Stanton Street mission like a Fifth Avenue curate and in Eastern Oregon like a bishop in some snug, well-groomed Eastern diocese. But Paddock was enough of a Christian to think more about bringing Christ to his neighbors than of being 100 per cent a conventional curate, priest or bishop. The most dominant trait of his pastoral method has been inspired by a sound missionary principle. He has adapted his method to the immediate problem. He had one method

in Stanton Street, another in Holy Apostles', New York; and another in Eastern Oregon. But the principle was the same. He has always conceived himself to be Christ's missionary to men and women.

Bishop Paddock has been accused of not building churches, of under-emphasizing organization, of not talking enough about the Church. The amazing thing is that this missionary, who has been accused of neglecting the fabric, has not always worn bishops' robes and not talked much about the Protestant Episcopal Church, has sent East Side gang leaders into the ministry of his Church, increased the communicant list of his first parish ten-fold in six years, and has had the highest percentage of confirmations of any missionary bishop in the Church during the time of his episcopate. He has demanded freedom as a bishop in the Church of God. No! That would be a misleading statement. Paddock is too unconscious about his methods to demand anything. He has always done the natural thing. He has followed his Christian instinct in bringing Christ to the sinner. The method was merely his natural way of approaching men. Sometimes that method seemed strange, uncouth, and unchurchly to men sitting in a New York office, pronouncing upon missionary principles. Paddock felt himself to be a bishop in the Church of God. The needs and the limitations of the people whom he was trying to convert determined his method. His unconventionality has shocked some churchmen. There was a great Missionary 1900 years ago who shocked some churchmen.

## FROM THE METROPOLIS TO THE FRONTIER

WHY should the Church have sent a man who was born in New York City, had spent all his life among city people, who had never worked among the primitive conditions of the Far West, to the most rural diocese in the Church? Paddock was not the first missionary who had been chosen from a city environment to go into the mission field. The plan has generally worked admirably. But it has only worked because the missionary was a converted man. It is the Christ in man that converts other men. Christ is the only missionary power in the world. There have been bishops of Eastern dioceses who have not had enough of the missionary spirit even to reach the villages of their own dioceses. They were city men. They became and remained city bishops. Some of the finest, most successful missionary bishops we have in the West today were city men. But when the Church sent them to the frontier the Christ within them taught them the way. It is a great tribute to the power of the Spirit. It is a fine tribute to the unworldliness of our missionaries.

This New York rector whom the Church sent to Eastern Oregon had no knowledge, when he was consecrated, of any of the problems, the people, the conditions of the region to which he was going. But he had, by the time he was consecrated, a working method. It was inspired by a sound missionary principle. Paddock has believed throughout his ministry that if a man identifies himself with

the people whom he is trying to help, Christ will show him the way to help them,—the natural and the right thing to do. It was the dream of his life to go to China as a missionary. He wanted to lose himself in China, become a Chinaman, dress as the Chinese dress, live as the Chinese live. He felt that the only way that an Occidental can become an effective missionary to the Orient is for the Occidental to become an Oriental. Paddock's interest in China has never abated. When he has refused lavish gifts for his work in Eastern Oregon he always said: "Send the money to China. They have never heard of Christ. Eastern Oregon can pay for its own religion." But this is a digression. It illustrates a point, however. When Paddock went to the pro-cathedral on Stanton Street he identified himself with the slums. He forgot the rest of New York. When he went to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Chelsea he buried himself in the problems of Chelsea. When he was consecrated bishop, before leaving New York, he said, much to the amusement of some of the clergy present: "I am going to become an Eastern Oregonian. I am going to think their thought, speak their language, live their life. I am not coming back to New York to talk about my work. I am not going to take any money from New York, except my salary. I shall travel, but I shall travel as a missionary in my diocese." This is what he has been doing for fifteen years and because he has done it the Church has forgotten about him. Because he has done it, because he has refused money, worked out his own methods, lived his own missionary life, he has suffered something far harder to bear than isolation from the world in which he was born,

had lived and worked in the East. He has suffered ecclesiastical isolation in the Church which consecrated him and sent him to do its missionary work.

Perhaps we are emphasizing as something unique in Paddock's ministry a principle and a method which all faithful pastors and missionaries practice. Every Christian worker tries to identify himself with the interests, the environments and the problems of the people whom he is trying to serve. But I venture to say that the cause of every failure or inadequate return for missionary labor in the Church has been due either to worldliness, which is unwilling to repeat in a humble way the miracle of the Incarnation,—the humbling, the emptying of oneself that one may take up the life of the men and women to whom one is sent in the Name of Christ, or it is due to a rigid uniformity, a standardization of method, bureaucracy, if you will.

A missionary is the last servant of Christ who ought to be standardized. But we standardize our missionaries. We teach them to think in the terms of New York, Philadelphia or Chicago. We unconsciously demand that they shall speak our language, use our methods, think our thoughts. Because a missionary builds a church or ten churches we infer that he is spreading the Kingdom of God. He may be blocking its progress. We demand the same kind of year book statistics to mark and measure the spread of Christ's Kingdom in Eastern Oregon as we require in Ohio or New York. Our missionary bishops acquire our prejudices and sometimes, it may be feared, try to satisfy

our foolish demands. Where in God's world should there be greater freedom for self-determination, greater, wider scope for adapting methods to needs than in our missionary fields? I venture to say that if our missionaries had cut themselves off from the East, identified themselves wholly with the people to whom they were sent, if they had refused to keep on telling their story of needs and successes to the people of the Eastern dioceses, the results in the mission field would be fivefold what they are today. But that again is a digression. And now we have come to the real story of Paddock's missionary career.

#### HIS CONVICTION AND HIS FAITH

WHEN Bishop Paddock went to Eastern Oregon he proposed to try an experiment in missionary method. The theory upon which that experiment was based proceeded not so much from his mind as from his heart. But his whole previous experience in the ministry confirmed his faith in that theory. One may as well be frank at the outset and say that Paddock's theory ran counter to the practice of every other missionary bishop and to the accepted principles of the Church Missions House. New York thought him perverse and eccentric. His fellow-missionary bishops could not help but see that if Paddock was right, perhaps they were wrong. For fifteen years, therefore, the Bishop of Eastern Oregon has been "going it alone." But he has not been "left alone." There has been a steady fire of criti-

cism and opposition, both from some of his missionary brothers and the central office.

If Paddock's experiment had required money he could not have weathered the storm. But the storm has been gathering in fury in spite of the fact that he has merely asked that Eastern Oregon should not be pauperized by money from the Board of Missions, and that he be granted reasonable freedom in missionary methods. His theory is a romantic one. He believes that men can be made to pay for their own religion. That you can convert a wilderness without first building churches; that a bishop in the Church of God can, with Christ at his side, go into a region of warring and competing sects and flaunting vice, and show forth the Church without entering the sectarian competition of church-building and organization. His theory is based upon a tremendous churchly assumption. He refuses to acknowledge that in a town of five hundred people with five churches in existence, one hundred of those souls belong to the Methodists, one hundred to the Baptists, one hundred to the Presbyterians, one hundred to the Holy Rollers, and one hundred to the Adventists. He refused to enter a competition in which he might win a few score from the other Churches for the Episcopal Church. He claimed the whole five hundred for the Church of Christ. He proposed to be the bishop of the whole town. Not by any arrogant assertion of ecclesiastical authority—that might have won him ten souls, and the contempt of all the rest—but by his becoming the servant, the brother, and the helper of the whole town. Whatever forces in the town were making for the

spread of the Kingdom of God, to those forces he lent a hand. Whatever churches were on the spot trying to do the work of the Master for the spread of His Kingdom, with those churches Paddock cooperated. He preached in those churches. He became pastor and friend. He baptized those who gathered around him in those churches; he celebrated the Holy Communion at their Communion tables and to that Communion he permitted to come every man and woman in the town who claimed to be a disciple of our Lord. And this is the miracle! By claiming nothing, he got everything. That was Paddock's faith. He believes that if we let Him, Christ will leap over every sectarian barrier and win men to Himself.

No Easterner, without having had contacts with the West, can imagine the bitterness, the narrowness, the bigotry of the sectarianism of a frontier like Eastern Oregon. Yet in Eastern Oregon the Baptists and the Presbyterians call Paddock their bishop. He said when he went there: "I will not enter this competition. I will not add one more church to your five. Let me serve all of you." He played fair with them. They came to trust him. We shall quote statistics later to show the almost miraculous results of Paddock's unique way of presenting the Church in Eastern Oregon. Refusing to make another sect out of the Episcopal Church, he made it the Church of God on that frontier. Men and women gathered around this bishop, who refused to build a church, who taught the simplest rudiments of the Church's Gospel, who offered himself as servant of all, and said: "We want to be baptized into your Church." When they grew in numbers they organized themselves into

little fellowships, working, praying, living within the existing churches, but maintaining the spiritual tie with the Church of God of which the bishop was the symbol and their pastor and friend. In some of the Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian churches of Eastern Oregon the choirs are composed almost exclusively of men and women who have been confirmed by Bishop Paddock, and communicants of our Church are teaching in their Sunday Schools. The very restraint which Paddock has put upon their ecclesiastical zeal, not indulging their desire to have a church building and a local clergyman, has heightened their loyalty. The churchmen of Eastern Oregon are ardent lovers of the Church. They have made a great sacrifice for it. They have sacrificed their secretarianism for it. The laymen are the glory of Eastern Oregon.

The churchmen of Eastern Oregon have been put to a severe test. They knew that their bishop was refusing to take money from outside the missionary district to support his work. They knew that across the borders, in neighboring missionary districts, outside money was at hand to build churches, rectories, parish houses, and to pay the salaries of the clergy. They saw the fabric growing in the other missionary jurisdiction, while their bishop refused to accept help. Not always have Paddock's clergy been keyed up to his idealism and faith. The temptation to get something for nothing is human. Some of them grew restive, criticized and succumbed. A worker for the Nation-Wide Campaign from the East came into a town of Eastern Oregon where there is a thriving Episcopal church and said: "You ought:

to have a parish house. We will give you one. You can have \$10,000 if you want it, out of the Nation-Wide Campaign funds, for the building and \$2,500 a year to maintain it." Paddock said: "No, you can't have it. Send the money somewhere else. Send it to China, but not here. We will not have a parish house till we care enough for it to build it ourselves." The rector has found it hard not to succumb to the lure of unearned gold for the work of the Kingdom of God.

Of course, Paddock does more than minister to the four parishes, the twenty-one unorganized and twenty-five organized missions of Eastern Oregon and to preach and conduct services in Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. He is a missionary. He has gone into saloons and talked to bartenders and to men gathered about their gambling tables. He goes into mining camps and holds services. He tramps through the open country, sometimes his blankets on his back, and holds services in lumber camps. In one town which he entered, in the corner of Eastern Oregon near Seven Devils, he visited every saloon in the town, asking that they close up during the hour at which he planned to hold a service in the open air. For one hour, the first time in the history of the town, every saloon closed its doors and every saloonkeeper and twenty prostitutes from a house of ill fame came to hear the bishop speak to them about the Kingdom of God. At that service the bishop, who had organized a chorus of young men in the town for this meeting, heard an exceptional voice among the people sitting on kegs and on the ground. The hymn was "Nearer,

my God, to Thee." Paddock went down and led the singer to the platform. The man was drunk. But the hymn sobered him. Paddock in all his life had never heard a hymn sung as that man sang the familiar words of the Church's hymn. The drunken singer was a famous opera soloist who had gone down, down into the depths. At that service the owner of the biggest saloon in the town was converted. He is now a well-known evangelist in the West. He had once been a minister. He, too, had gone down, but a bishop in the Church of God had pulled him up again. Every missionary does that sort of thing, perhaps. But we in the East are likely to think that the best things which a missionary bishop can do with his time is to build churches. Paddock believes, first of all, in building converts to Christ.

Paddock has been criticized for not building churches, for not always wearing bishop's robes at services and not talking enough about the Episcopal Church; and, of course, he has been criticized for treating Baptists, Presbyterians and Methodists as if they, too, were co-workers in the Kingdom of God. Now let us see how Paddock has succeeded in making churchmen without any expense to the general Church, except for his meagre salary.

Here is a table showing grants of money to the various continental missionary districts for 1922, the growth of communicants in ten years, and the confirmations in 1922

| Missionary<br>Districts—             | Population |           | Communi-<br>cants |       | Con-<br>firma-<br>tions | Appro-<br>pria-<br>tions |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                      | 1912       | 1922      | 1912              | 1922  | 1922                    | 1922                     |
| Arizona ...                          | 204,354    | 334,162   | 1,252             | 2,815 | 218                     | \$52,600                 |
| Asheville ..                         | 428,000    | 560,500   | 2,767             | 3,379 | 178                     | 61,654                   |
| E. Oregon..                          | 143,930    | 150,000   | 1,000             | 2,000 | 162                     | 4,200                    |
| Idaho .....                          | 325,594    | 431,866   | 1,983             | 2,601 | 173                     | 57,450                   |
| Nevada .....                         | .....      | 77,407    | 989               | 1,187 | 96                      | 18,580                   |
| N. Mexico..                          | 327,301    | 470,000   | 1,993             | 3,033 | 249                     | 21,600                   |
| N. Dakota..                          | 577,056    | 646,872   | 2,146             | 2,357 | 181                     | 30,700                   |
| N. Texas...                          | 398,246    | .....     | 748               | 903   | 42                      | 16,200                   |
| Okla. (plus<br>E. Okla.)             | 2,457,155  | 2,028,283 | 3,107             | 4,081 | 307                     | 67,540                   |
| Salina .....                         | .....      | .....     | 1,026             | 986   | 24                      | 30,240                   |
| San Joaquin                          | .....      | .....     | 1,687             | 2,355 | 105                     | 20,600                   |
| S. Dakota..                          | 583,888    | 636,547   | 6,986             | 8,099 | 493                     | 93,500                   |
| S. Florida..                         | .....      | .....     | 4,154             | 5,445 | 358                     | 27,700                   |
| Spokane ...                          | .....      | 409,904   | 2,750             | 2,926 | 268                     | 53,400                   |
| Utah .....                           | 373,351    | 449,396   | 1,289             | 1,205 | 177                     | 68,975                   |
| W. Nebraska<br>(formerly<br>Kearney) | .....      | .....     | 2,041             | 2,683 | 230                     | 27,832                   |
| Wyoming .                            | 145,965    | 194,402   | 1,981             | 3,282 | 319                     | 105,075                  |

### SUMMARY

Note 1—The average appropriation for each district is about \$50,000 (1922), almost as much as the total which Eastern Oregon has received in fifteen years.

Note 2—Eastern Oregon has increased its communicants between four and fivefold in fifteen years. It has doubled in the last ten years. Considering conditions, there is nothing comparable with this in our missionary history.

Paddock's conviction that the pouring of money into Eastern Oregon would pauperize the people and hinder the spread of the Kingdom may be quixotic. His faith that Christ will work the miracle for His Church, if we let Him, may be romantic. But at least in Eastern Oregon results have justified his faith. For fifteen years this New York boy who was sent to the wilderness as a bishop in the Church of God has hid himself from the East. He has been a mendicant apostle. Never in his entire ministry has he spent more than \$1,000 a year upon himself. The rest of his salary he has given away. He has taken, year by year, the vow of poverty, chastity and obedience. He has denied himself wife and children and home. But the vow of obedience has been taken with a difference. He has not been obedient always to the central office of the Church in New York and he has sometimes been indifferent to the conventionalities of his Church. When I asked him how he dared to go it alone, he said, in utmost humility and without affectation: "I have never been alone. I have always been conscious in my missionary journeys that Jesus of the Gospels was journeying with me. I have been supported by the peace that passes understanding."

I have told at length for CHURCHMAN readers this story of a bishop in the Church of God, because it seemed to me that the Church ought to have the inspiration of this heroic adventure for Christ. And I have told it, too, for another reason. Bishop Paddock has lost his health. He could have withstood and survived, I think, the strain of the journeyings often, the perils by the heathen, perils in the

city, perils in the wilderness,—the weariness, the painfulness, the watchings often, but, like another apostle of Christ, he has not been spared the perils of false brethren. I have not heard him utter one word of criticism of those who have been delegated to administer the missionary work of the Church, or one word of criticism of his fellow-bishops. But a larger measure of Christian grace and perhaps a more inspired knowledge of apostolic Christianity among his brothers might have spared this bishop in the Church of God some of the travail of his soul.