

# Presbyterian Twentieth Century Movement

**T**HE Twentieth century movement in the Presbyterian church in the United States really began three years ago in connection with the Sunday school work. It was then proposed that the churches throughout the United States should set before them the task of adding 1,000,000 new members to their Sunday schools, which would be practically a doubling of these schools, by the year 1901. This movement alone, however, did not meet with a very vigorous and general response. The growth in the membership of the Sunday schools since 1898 has scarcely been more than normal.

At the general assembly held at Minneapolis in May, 1899, a more general movement was inaugurated. A committee, of which Rev. R. F. Sample, D. D., of New York was chairman, was appointed "to report to the next general assembly as to the best method of fittingly celebrating the close of the nineteenth and the advent of the twentieth century." That committee reported a year later to the assembly at St. Louis a plan which was adopted.

This plan contemplates a concerted movement of the entire church to be maintained throughout the whole year 1901. It is to be both devotional and financial in its character, the whole having for its objects on the one hand a fitting expression of thanks to God and on the other an enlargement and strengthening of the Presbyterian church in its efforts for the uplifting of humanity throughout the world.

The specific forms in which it was suggested by the committee that the movement should express itself were religious services and public meetings at the opening of the year, a day of special services in connection with the meeting of the coming general assembly, and the raising of a fund for educational, missionary and beneficent purposes to be known as the "twentieth century fund."

## Public Meetings.

On the first Sunday in January, 1901, every minister was requested to preach a sermon appropriate to the time and every church was requested to make an initiatory offering for the general work of the church, which offering was to be sent forward to the treasurer of the "twentieth century fund," to be by him distributed to the eight missionary and beneficent boards of the church according to a ratio fixed by the general assembly. Most ministers and many churches complied with this request. In addition to this it was suggested that special recognition of this subject be made at the services of the week of prayer, following the first Sunday in January. It was in pursuance of this suggestion that the four mass meetings of the Presbyterian churches of Omaha were held during the first and second weeks in January at the First Presbyterian church, when the moderator of the general assembly, Rev. Charles A. Dickey, D. D., and the field secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, Rev. Thomas L. Marshall, D. D., together with local Presbyterian clergymen, spoke on some of the great lines of the church's activities.

Similar meetings have been held in other large cities of the land, as New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Rochester, Indianapolis, Denver, and others will follow in other places before the meeting of the general assembly in May.

The general assembly, which convenes at the historic center of American Presbyter-

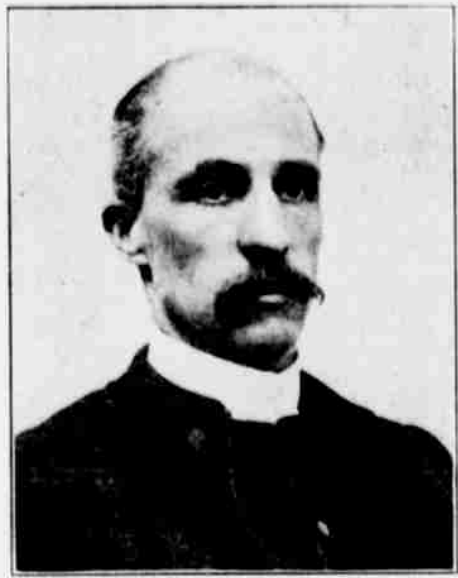
ianism in the city of Philadelphia, Pa., on Thursday, May 16, 1901, will set apart Friday, May 17, as a day of special services to occupy forenoon, afternoon and evening. The program for these services includes some of the most distinguished names in the Presbyterian church, in connection with the following themes: Prof. Willis G. Craig, D. D., L.L. D., of Chicago, "Review of the Nineteenth Century;" Rev. Henry C. McCook, D. D., Philadelphia, "Progress of the Presbyterian Church in the Nineteenth Century;" Prof. Henry C. Minton, D. D., "The Divine Purpose Developed in the Progress of Time;" Rev. George T. Purves, D. D., L.L. D., "The Problems of the Twentieth Century;" Robert E. Spear, "The Speedy Bringing of the World to Christ;" Rev. Henry Van Dyke, D. D., poem, "Revision of the Twentieth Century;" Rev. Samuel J. Nichols, D. D., L.L. D., "Opportunity and Duty of the Presbyterian Church in the Twentieth Century."

The most prominent feature of the twentieth century movement is the effort to raise a "Twentieth Century Fund" for the enlargement and strengthening of the work of the Presbyterian church both at home and abroad. When in the year 1870 the Old and New School branches of the Presbyterian church, after forty-three years of separation, were reunited, the occasion was celebrated by the proposal to raise a memorial fund of \$5,000,000 as a special thank offering to God. The committee appointed to have charge of this work was able finally to report in 1872 the sum of \$7,833,982.85 actually raised. And since that date the growth of the Presbyterian church has been far more rapid than in the same number of years during any previous portion of its history. There was a great forward bound in 1870-72 in all lines of work and the ground then gained has never been lost. It was thought that the opening of the twentieth century afforded another and even more auspicious opportunity for a similar advance.

## One Hundred Years of Growth.

The century just closed had seen great things in the Presbyterian church. From a little body with a membership at the opening of the century of only 20,000 and a ministry of only 183, with only a score of home missionaries and with no foreign missionaries or communicants in foreign lands, and with no Sunday schools, mission boards or societies, and contributing to mission work only \$2,500 per annum, the Presbyterian church has grown until at the beginning of the new century it enrolls a membership of more than 1,900,000, with 7,467 ministers, over 1,000,000 children in the Sunday schools, eight strong boards for missionary and beneficent work, besides women's and young people's societies by the thousands. Instead of a score we have 1,743 home missionaries. Whereas, in heathen lands, we had nothing a century ago, we now have 37,820 communicants, or nearly twice as many members as the church had in the home land at the opening of the century, and, besides these, we have among heathen peoples 730 American and 1,701 native workers, 627 churches and eighty-two hospitals. The contributions of the church to missionary and beneficent causes have risen from \$2,500 per annum 100 years ago to the sum of \$12,825,755 during the year 1899. It is estimated that during the century more than 2,200,000 persons were received into our church on

confession of faith and \$87,000,000 was given to missionary and beneficent causes, besides the cost of supporting local congregations. The Presbyterian church in the United States has grown during the last century from a feeble band to be by far the largest church of this denomination in the world, and that in spite of the fact that twice during the century serious defections occurred from its ranks. In the



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year 1810 the Cumberland Presbyterian church, which now numbers 180,192 communicants, and in 1861 the Presbyterian Church, South, which now numbers 225,800 communicants, separated from the parent body. Such a growth as this seemed to call for special recognition to God. Moreover, at the opening of the new century everything seems to call the church to a forward movement in the world. With prosperity in our land, with vast opportunities of usefulness here at home, and with every nation on earth becoming yearly more accessible to the gospel, it was strongly felt that we should be, as a church, derelict, unfaithful to God and neglectful of our most splendid obligations if we did not make some special effort to take the tide of opportunity at its flood and to go forward.

## Twentieth Century Committee.

Accordingly the general assembly of 1900 appointed a central committee whose duty it should be to have general supervision of the work of raising a twentieth century fund. This committee has taken into itself additional representative ministers and elders from all portions of the United States. Rev. Marcus A. Brownson, D. D., of Philadelphia, Pa., is the chairman and among the members of the large committee are such distinguished ministers as Dr. George T. Purves, pastor of Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church, New York; Dr. Chichester of Chicago, Dr. E. Trumbull Lee of Cincinnati, Dr. R. F. Coyle of Denver, Dr. John Hemphill of San Francisco and such laymen as John Wanamaker, William

E. Dodge, John H. Converse, William B. Gurley, the late Governor Mounin of Indiana, John Willis Baer of the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor and other ministers and elders. The secretary and treasurer of the fund is Rev. W. H. Roberts, D. D., L.L. D., of Philadelphia, Pa., the stated clerk of the general assembly. This committee has been actively engaged in pushing forward the movement, with the result that 175 presbyteries of the church have already appointed special committees on this work.

The objects for the advancement of which Presbyterian churches are urged to raise this twentieth century fund are such as to cover almost every possible line of work in which a church may engage. They are as follows:

1. The increase of contributions to all the boards of the church.
2. The enlargement of the work of the boards as suggested by them.
3. The increased endowment of academic, collegiate and theological institutions.
4. The payment of local church debts.
5. The improvement of the properties of congregations and institutions.
6. Church extension in cities.
7. The establishment or endowment of hospitals and other benevolent institutions connected with the church.
8. Special efforts for strengthening the general interests of the church assumed by individuals, congregations, presbyteries or synods.

No specific sum is suggested for this fund, as was done in the case of the reunion memorial fund. But it is, of course, expected that the total reached in this case will be decidedly larger than in the case of the earlier fund. The word "fund" as here used is not intended to imply that all moneys raised for the general objects specified above shall be accumulated in the hands of the central treasurer of this committee. But any moneys raised by a church over and above its usual annual gifts and expended as a special effort in the advancement of any of the great objects designated, is to be considered a part of the twentieth century fund. Such sums as are spent locally or are forwarded directly to the institutions they are intended to help are to be reported to the treasurer of the fund. It is, however, the expectation that large sums will be given for the general work of the denomination. Such contributions are to be sent to the central treasurer and, if made without any specifications, are by him to be distributed to the eight missionary and beneficent boards of the church, according to ratios which have been fixed by the general assembly.

But in all cases where donations are made for specific objects, whether the money goes to Dr. Roberts or not, the wishes of the contributors are to be strictly carried out. Not only, therefore, is it hoped to increase contributions to the missionary and beneficent work of the church at large by this movement, but also that under its general stimulus churches will pay off their local debts, enlarge their buildings, found hospitals, establish city missions, endow educational institutions, build new churches in growing suburbs and in festering slums; in fact, do anything and everything which means a forward movement in the service of God and humanity and an enlargement and strengthening of Presbyterian churches locally and of the

Presbyterian church throughout the world. Princeton church, Philadelphia, Pa., has given \$5,000 to begin the endowment of the William Henry Green chair in Princeton Theological seminary. Washington college, Pennsylvania; Albany college, Oregon; and Bellevue college, Nebraska, have received considerable sums. The Presbyterians of St. Louis have under consideration the establishment of a Presbyterian hospital.

Many of the presbyteries have instituted special movements for the benefit of their own congregations. For instance, the presbytery of Philadelphia, North, resolved to endeavor to secure the removal of the debt of every one of its congregations, the stronger churches aiding the weaker, and all uniting in this most laudable movement. Other presbyteries are contemplating a similar undertaking.

## What Nebraska is Doing.

The Westminster Presbyterian church, Omaha, has decided to pay off its entire remaining indebtedness of \$6,000 by October 1. Lowe Avenue church, Omaha, is to pay off its debt of \$2,000. The Presbyterian church at Tekamah, Neb., is to build a manse, generous gifts of money and property aggregating during the last year some \$75,000 has been given to the Omaha Theological seminary, both from friends in Omaha and elsewhere, besides smaller contributions reported to the writer from time to time by churches throughout the state to the general work of the boards, such as the church at Wood River, \$135, at Bancroft, Emerson, etc.

Under the stimulus of this movement the \$1,000,000 mortgage remaining on the splendid Presbyterian building at 106 Fifth Avenue, New York City, is being rapidly wiped out. Already as much as \$350,000 is promised and the balance is sure to come. When this is accomplished the Presbyterian church in the United States will have one of the finest pieces of business property in the city of New York, with a new office building on it as a permanent endowment, yielding a steady income for the missionary work and affording central offices for its great boards free of the expense of rentals.

The synod of Nebraska has appointed a special committee on this fund to interest the Presbyterians of this state in the movement. The special object which is proposed to Nebraska Presbyterian churches is the raising of endowment for the Theological seminary in Omaha and for the two young, but vigorous and important, Presbyterian colleges at Bellevue and at Hastings, Neb.

The Omaha Theological seminary was recommended by the assembly of 1900 to the church at large for an endowment of \$100,000 and a strong committee of eastern men is now at work endeavoring to raise this sum as a part of the twentieth century fund.

The general assembly's committee on the twentieth century fund will probably not present its final report until May, 1902, as the entire year 1901 is to be devoted to the prosecution of this work. But the committee is expected to report progress at the coming meeting of the general assembly in Philadelphia in May, 1901. Meanwhile the indications are that the entire church from the Atlantic to the Pacific is awaking and addressing itself with fresh vigor to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the world and that no part will remain unmoved and therefore unbenefited.

Omaha, Neb. T. V. MOORE.

# Robed Choir in Methodist Episcopal Churches

**W**HEN John Wesley founded the society called Methodists he had some very clear ideas as to the best results to be obtained in the matter of living one's life. One of his ideas was that no Christian should be gloomy, down-spirited or morose, and he was wont to say in public and in private: "Sour Godliness is the devil's religion." As for himself, he said: "I dare no more fret than curse and swear."

It is no wonder then that Mr. Wesley's love for music was of the most refined and beautiful character. He had an earnest and devoted attention for the oratorios and for organ playing. He was, in addition to being a great reformer and a wonderful preacher, a real apostle of the beautiful. On one occasion, when seeing with others a beautiful landscape, he said amidst enthusiastic praise of the others, "Shall we give the landscape all the praise, and the Author none?"

These thoughts are merely by way of introduction, to recall to us the scholarly, spiritual and refined nature of the man who founded the great church which is known over the world today by the name Methodist.

When the Methodist church had progressed along various lines of spiritual and religious growth it was but natural that the people took advantage of the development along other lines, such as architecture, ecclesiastical art, music, etc., and applied this development to the temples of the Almighty. This has resulted in mighty edifices, whose appearance denotes that "strength and beauty are in His tabernacles." It has resulted in the mellowing of the sunlight of heaven, which passes through the many-colored windows of stained glass, as it were through a cloud.

Not the least direct result of this broadening of outside avenues of progress is the present choir, or body of singers whose duty it is to lift the hearts and souls of people to the higher plane of spiritual feeling, and to lead the congregation in the singing of

the hymns and songs of praise allotted to them. Formerly the quartet choir (so-called) furnished the music.

With the introduction of the chorus into the Methodist church there naturally arose the question of dress. The Episcopal choirs had an easy task to do, for the vestments of the choir are dictated by the canons of the church. So with the Lutheran. But Methodism has no provision for anything of that sort. The Catholic choirs need no robes, owing to the general position of the Catholic choir, in the rear of the church. The Methodist church, which in most cases has its choir gallery immediately

back of the pulpit, met with the condition that many persons in the choir were unable to dress in a manner corresponding to other members, who were more highly favored in this world's goods. And yet a certain feeling of humanity made necessary the purchase of clothing which really surpassed the means of sundry singers. The result has, of course, been that the vested choir has in many cases been established. It is the only solution of the difficulty. It is simplicity. It is not an "innovation," as some describe it, but a return to John Wesleyan plainness.

Certain churches differ as to the kind of

robe worn, but the general idea is for a college or Geneva gown, which is a close imitation of that worn by John Wesley himself. For the choirs which include children, there is the white surplice of the Episcopal church. The New York Christian Advocate, which is edited by the well known Dr. J. M. Buckley, whose name is as well known in American Methodism as that of John Wesley himself, contains in the issue of January 31 an article on "The Vested Choir," from which the following quotations are taken:

"Our ministers began the disuse of vestments because, in the early years of Ameri-

can Methodism, they were called to preach in barns, in hay lofts, long dwellings, in the open air, and to spend long days and nights in the saddle, fording streams and following difficult forest paths. All these difficulties made the carrying about and the wearing of vestments difficult. But there is no canon against it. And it seems that one with an eye for harmony and a sense of unity would naturally experience a sense of uplifting in the service if the bands of ministering singers were to appear in simple and uniform garments."

Lack of space prevents the printing of the whole article, which proceeds to give a description of a service at Tremont Methodist Episcopal church, New York.

## Robed Choir in Omaha.

The First Methodist Episcopal church of Omaha has taken the initiative in this section of the country, and already two churches have made inquiries of the choir-master of this church as to how to procure robes, or gowns. The choir of this church has a reputation far outside of Omaha and has attracted considerable attention. In this church the choir sings a full choral communion service once every three months, which has been the means of creating a widespread and intense interest in this sacrament of the church. The choir is under the direction of Thomas J. Kelly, who is also the organist. Mr. Kelly is an Irishman, and was trained in the purest school of church music, that is the Anglican. The robes of this choir are flowing Geneva gowns, of black brilliantine, which are brightened by the white linen chemisettes for the women, and silk white puff ties for the gentlemen.

The question of gowning this choir was suggested some years ago in the church paper, called the Guidon, of which Jonathan Mellen was then editor, and the seed was sown by various articles on the subject appearing editorially, followed by a "cut" of the deaconess and children of the Metropolitan choir.



ROBED CHOIR IN FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, OMAHA.