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CENTENNIAL

1902

OF

HOME MISSIONS

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“THE PAST CENTURY”

“TO THE ALLEGHENIES”

THE ATLANTIC STATES: THE MOTHERLAND OF
HOME MISSIONS

BY THE

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THE ATLANTIC STATES: THE MOTHER- LAND OF HOME MISSIONS

BY

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ITALIAN art is the product of two chief factors. One is the Italian himself; the other is the act of nature that set the marble of Carrara within his volcanic hills. So, in the centennial results that your Home Mission Board presents, two chief natural factors were concerned: one was the Home Evangelist; the other the human types whose grain and quality gave the material out of which the missionary in the field and the missioner in Assembly, presbytery, committee, and Board, could carve a character, a Church, and a commonwealth. We are thinking to-day of the home missionary and his heaven-inspired art. We must remember also the Carrara marble; aye, and the volcanic forces that produced it. We are to consider, first.

I

THE HUMAN MATERIAL ON WHICH OUR HOME MISSIONARIES WROUGHT

When the seventeenth century dawned, Europe was still in the throes of the Reformation, that great conflict for soul-liberty and for the sovereignty of God's word.

Out of the hurly-burly there emerged a form which, to one part of Europe, seemed as captivating as the bride of the Canticles ; but to the other, dreadful as the woman of The Revelation—a destroyer and to be destroyed. That form was Presbytery. The Huguenots of France, the Reformed of Switzerland, of the Palatinate, of Hesse, of Brandenburg, of Holland, and of Scotland, had seated her in their cathedrals, and enthroned her in their chairs of state. The English Puritans wooed her lustily, and would have won but for the hostility of Elizabeth, who, toward that fair form, was a veritable virago rather than the “ Good Queen Bess.”

Meanwhile, throughout all the century, North America lay dim and mysterious in the far-away western ocean. Would this virgin world become a field wherein to transplant and propagate presbytery ?

It was not until the second decade of the seventeenth century that English Independents made their memorable settlement at Plymouth. That was like the coming of migratory birds in springtime. Yesterday there was a pair ; to-day there is another. Next week the groves shall be vocal with their songs. In 1607 there was a Jamestown ; in 1614 a New Amsterdam ; in 1620 a Plymouth ; in 1630 a Dorchester ; in 1638 a New Sweden. Thenceforth the gates of the new hemisphere were entered all along the coast, and the century closed (1682) upon William Penn’s “ Holy Experiment.”

So came the eighteenth century, most memorable and fateful in the development of our country and of our Church. The opening of the seventeenth century had

witnessed the planting of Scotch Presbyterians in Ulster upon the forfeited estates of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnel.

The "undertakers" of these new plantations were fortified by refugees from the Stuart persecutions. The intolerance of the English Church and government fastened upon Irish Presbyterians and Roman Catholics alike the yoke of Anglican bishops. These gentlemen are harmless and delightful personages now, with their shovel hats and knee breeches, their high scholarship and higher churchmanship, and highest views—and narrow as high, as imaginary lines must always be—of a sole apostolic succession for their ministry. But they were hard and serious facts in those not very distant days, and down to the period of the American and French Revolutions. Atrocious penal laws harried the native Irish Roman Catholics. Irritating and oppressive restrictions and requirements oppressed the Presbyterians. They were excluded from office; forbidden to be married by their own pastors; denied commissions in the army and other positions, except under odious test oaths; insulted and ill-treated in many ways.

Meanwhile yonder, in the New World, there called to this persecuted folk the sweet voice of freedom to worship God in their own way, the promise of personal independence, and the ownership of fair lands. Our fathers followed the voice! America was their land of promise. British ships groaned with the loads of emigrants who crowded across seas.

Those Ulster Presbyterians became the hardy settlers

of our southern and central frontier, and the brave opposers of Indian encroachment ; for they were an adventurous and warlike folk, though well fashioned for the substantial arts of peace. They rushed *en masse* into the Continental Army, to win once and forever religious and civil freedom from a people and a system that had given them good ground for suspicion and resentment. The century closed upon their full success. The colonies were free, and constituted a nation of freemen. Their beloved presbytery had developed its supreme court, the General Assembly, which neither king nor prelate could henceforth molest. Into and under that General Assembly came the New England Puritans, especially of Connecticut and northern New York, and formed, with the Ulstermen, the chief constituency and the controlling element. Thus dawned the nineteenth century, and that era and act whose centenary we commemorate.

It was a sifted people that God set upon those virgin shores : a people tried in the furnace of affliction and persecution for conscience's sake. By the very fire that tried them and the pressure of their oppression they were given that fine grain that made them fitting material for the artist hand of the Angel of Providence.

This was the raw material, the historic background upon which our picture of American missions must be drawn. But the raw material was at once exposed to violent tests. Novel social forces played upon it and molded it into new forms, finer or grosser, fair or grotesque, noble or depraved. What were some of these

forces? The shock of hereditary opinions and customs, often hard set and stubbornly held, as the confluent streams of life from many diverse nations met and intermingled; the struggle to adjust new conditions to Old World ideas and habits which still clung to them like half-cast shells upon molting spiders; the hunger and struggle for land and for a living; the restless spirit of change that drove families west and still farther westward; the untoward effect of watching against and combat with a lurking savage foe, which developed traits of cunning, fierceness, and cruelty, as well as of courage and adroitness; the pressure and exigencies, both contractile and expansive spirituality, of founding new communities—all these were factors for good or evil that wrought and had wrought upon the American people a century ago.

Conditions created character; character reacted upon conditions; and there lay the whole complex and heterogeneous mass, to be kneaded into homogeneous society, and molded and fixed into the image of Christ and his Church. The new American States of a hundred years ago might be compared to a solution of precious metal in the chemist's retort, ready for the reagent that should separate the gold from the dross. That precipitant was the religion of Jesus Christ, and the work of the home missionary was to cast it into the solution.

II

DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME BY THE HOME MISSIONARY

If we would fairly grasp the degree of honor due the home missionary fathers and founders of the Church,

we must reckon up some of the difficulties which they overcame in achieving success. There was—

1. THE DETERIORATING EFFECT OF THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

The people were scattered far apart along our wide frontier, with vast reaches of virgin forest and prairie lying beyond them. Between the several columns of migration, which were being thrust in wedge-like masses into the wilderness, lay also the forest primeval. The sparse settlements were gathered round small hamlets, most of whose houses were rude log cabins painfully erected by the solitary pioneers, or built by the common toil of the community at cabin-raisings, which were usually occasions for a frolic. At morning the house and its furniture lay latent within the forest trees. At nightfall it was a human habitation, with table, bunk, benches and stools, and rustic brackets for rifles, and pegs for the settler's scant stock of clothes. It is not far from the truth to say that a century ago a moiety of the people of our Union dwelt in such primitive huts as these.

Their modes of living were as primitive as their houses. Clothing was made of home-grown wool and flax, spun and woven and sewed by the women. Money was rarely seen. Traffic was a system of barter. The farmers exchanged their products for the few articles that the trader had to sell in his frontier department store, and he in turn sent his barter, as he had received his goods, by pack-horse trains or wagons to distant

centers of trade ; or, if convenient to rivers, the flat boat and the ark floated his accumulations to the mouth of the Mississippi.

There is a social evolution of retardation and of degradation as well as the reverse. It was a startling change from the life of New England, or the life of Ulster, or Scotland, or Holland, or Germany, or France, into which the emigrants to the borders of America were suddenly thrust. Many of them were so firmly grounded in the principles in which they had been bred that they kept them untarnished amid the most unfriendly environment. The first voice of the missionary found them willing and eager to drop into the old paths of duty and devotion.

With the multitude it was otherwise. The struggle for existence levied upon every faculty and force of mind and body. Alienation from established influences and from the ordinances of religion left the spiritual nature un nourished. It grew flabby, decadent ; it was atrophied at last. Habits, left without the braces and guards of a settled life, swung away sharply tangent to the early use and wont of religious and moral restraint. The deterioration of the frontier settlers was a subject of frequent anxiety to the presbyteries, synods, and assemblies of early days. They mourned the widely spread infidelity ; the indifference to and neglect of religion ; the drunkenness, dueling, gambling, profanity, fighting, and lust that kept in a ferment of moral filthiness and social disorder the long line of frontier reaching from the Carolinas to the Ohio. A type of character

described by its possessors as "half-horse, half-alligator, rip-roaring, fire-eating, whip my weight in wildeats" dominated many sections.

That type has persisted. Our later missionaries knew something of it, and still know, although our generation is seeing the passing of the old-time frontier. But the rapidity with which modern civilization sweeps over modern border settlements gives such aberrant forms of society a far more evanescent life than in those earlier times. True, the day was to come—indeed, the day had already dawned upon that Assembly—when a power mightier than all bands of iniquity should sweep along that border like the "rushing mighty wind" of Pentecost, and revolutionize the character of the people. But ere the great revival of 1800 and until its divine work of reconstruction had been wrought, the absorbing struggle for existence, the greed for land, the unlicensed freedom of the frontier, the unchecked carnival of depravity fostered by demoralized soldiers, and the outcasts and criminals of Europe and the East who had fled for refuge to western solitudes, reared an appalling barrier against the holy toils of the missionary.

2. OPERATING UPON SHIFTING COMMUNITIES

Moreover, it must be remembered that the old-time evangelists were operating not upon settled, but upon shifting, communities. Their gospel armory must be trained to shoot upon the wing. A comparison of the first census in 1790 with that of 1800 will show that a large part of our population was in a state of flux.

When the first General Assembly met in 1789 the whole region from western Pennsylvania to the Mississippi, and from the Kentucky border northward to the Great Lakes, was practically uninhabited by white men. The census of 1790 gave that vast territory, now the heart of the nation, a population of 4280—a twentieth-century village.

Ere the nineteenth century dawned, the westward drift of population had begun. New England overflowed into New York, and again pushing on, with the restless impulse of destiny by which nature accomplishes the occupancy of the earth and the distribution of species, the migratory wave spread itself into northern Pennsylvania and northeastern Ohio. There it paused and overspread the Valley of the Allegheny and the "Western Reserve," until, like a mountain lake under a spring freshet, it poured over its bounds and swept on westward.

Lower down, the stream of emigrants overflowed central Pennsylvania, swelled over the Alleghenies, and was distributed northward and southward along the Ohio, and in the central valleys of the Buckeye State. Ohio was then the frontier, that "greater East" which is now the middle West. There, on that early day, one could feel the pulse-beat of the Eastern States, the heart of the new Republic, sending forth its best blood to vitalize and nourish the nation's extremities.

Farther south the tide moved from the Atlantic States westward and southwestward. The seaboard was monopolized by the great planters, and the landless

settlers were forced inward. The West had already begun to gain at the expense of the East. The population of Kentucky, the fifteenth State (received in 1791), was greater than that of Delaware, or Rhode Island, or Georgia, or Maryland, or New Hampshire, or New Jersey, and yet numbered only 221,000.

The record of a decade's growth in Oklahoma was almost paralleled by that of Kentucky a hundred years ago. The population of Tennessee, the latest born of the States (received 1796), exceeded both Delaware and Rhode Island. In the Ohio territory, which before Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794, was almost a wilderness inhabited only by Indians, there were 45,363 settlers. Indiana Territory had 6000, the Mississippi Territory, 9000, and the cry was, "still they come!"

To follow this flitting multitude into the wilderness, over forest trails and mountain paths and wild lakes and unbridged rivers, to search out and tend the scattered and wandering flock of God, was a task that might have taxed the strongest and best organized forces. It must have seemed most formidable to the few and loosely organized churches of the Atlantic slope a hundred years ago. It added to the difficulty that in many cases ere the molding hand of the missionary had well begun the work of shaping or restoring pious character, the restless subjects, stirred by rumor or dream of some new Eldorado, moved on still farther west. Yet, still onward moved in their trail the undaunted missionary; for the Empire whose westward course he pursued was the Eternal Kingdom of Christ!

3. THE WEAK AND SCATTERED BATTLE LINE

Again, consider the base of supplies from which were drawn the men and the means for evangelizing these ever shifting, yet rapidly swelling, new settlements. You must eliminate from your minds the impression of present conditions, and put your thought, if possible, within the setting of a century ago. In all New York, in the two synods covering that State, there were 66 ministers, of whom 44 were settled as pastors or stated supplies. There were about 90 churches, of which 36 were organizations without pastoral or other charge.

On a map of the United States put 90 dots of blue along New York's southeastern counties, clustered more closely upon Manhattan and Long Islands. Thence let them straggle up the Hudson, thinning out into the central and northern valleys, and diminishing into a point in the then wilderness of the Genesee. You will have here an objective illustration of what a scant showing our Church made even in one of its strongholds in 1802.

On the remainder of your map put 460 blue dots, more than half of which should be but the faintest specks, in token of the nebulous character of the vacant churches they represent. Let them range along the Atlantic Seaboard, from New England to the Carolinas, with four broken lines of color straggling westward and northwestward into the wilderness. You will have an object lesson of the weakness of this great Communion a hundred years ago; nay, of the three great Churches popularly known as the Northern, the Southern, and

the Cumberland Presbyterian, which were then all included within one fold. With the exception of a few points scattered along the Ohio River and within the valleys of Kentucky and Tennessee, and a few penetrating the interior of the Ohio territory, your dots of blue would all be within the thirteen original States. This would indicate the actual aggressive force that lay behind the missionary outposts pushed into the frontier. It was indeed a "far-flung battle line," and thin and broken, almost separate from its base, and set in the face of obstacles that would have daunted men of ordinary courage and faith.

To-day, if you would make an outline map of that Synod of New York whose representatives sat in the Assembly of 1802, you must divide the Empire State into 30 presbyteries, with 902 blue dots for her churches instead of 90; with 184,000 communicant members instead of 4000; 181,000 Sunday-school children, and over half a million worshipping adherents, officered by 6000 elders and deacons, and honorable women not a few (4195 elders and 1472 deacons), and a ministerial force of pastors, evangelists, and licentiates of 1357. The converts last year (1901) were 8330; twice the total membership of the entire State a hundred years ago.

Back of this splendid array of members and leadership you must count a total money contribution of three and three-quarter millions, of which nearly one and one-quarter millions were for the propagation of the gospel and for reported Christian benevolence, besides a vast

unreported sum given by members of our churches to the general charities which they largely support.

Turning from the single State of New York to the United States, and omitting from the count our Southern and Cumberland sisters, your 550 blue dots which represented the churches of a century ago would be multiplied fourteenfold (7779). A ministerial force of 8000 pastors and evangelists (and 917 candidates) leads the worship, and the Christian work of over a million (1,025,388) communicants, and yet more (1,056,110) Sunday-school scholars, representing a host of worshipers and adherents estimated at five millions. If you allow on this latest map a place for all reported religious contributions, the sum-total would be nearly (\$16,834,376) seventeen millions! of which three and a quarter millions (\$3,176,593) were for purely missionary objects. Of this you may set aside \$2,268,854 for various home missionary purposes, of which \$1,252,159 is for home missions as now differentiated from the earlier conceptions, and \$907,739 for foreign missions. Add about one-third to these figures for the Southern and Cumberland Churches. Surely the fathers of 1802 were building wisely; and although we can hardly believe that the most sanguine among them could have pictured the reality as it exists to-day, we cannot doubt that the eye of faith and hope penetrated the future, and saw in vision "the handful of corn," scattered by them along the wilderness paths, waving "like the forest of Lebanon." Will the next century show a proportionate increase—duly and fully and progressively

proportionate to the ministers, Church officers, communicants, wealth, and opportunities of to-day? Will we of this generation and this Assembly as faithfully meet our responsibility and do our duty as did our fathers of 1802?

4. THE DEPRESSING NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In weighing the actions of our Church fathers we should not forget the national danger and disgrace which must have overshadowed their spirits and checked their energies. It was a depressing period in our national history. Recall your knowledge of the first decade of the American Republic. As the eighteenth century closed, the country's condition was pitiable. The people were impoverished by the long, fierce revolutionary struggle, whose heroes, the "ragged Continentals," were, if possible, more ragged in peace than in war. Their hard-earned paper money was valueless, and the proverb, still prevalent, fifty years ago, "not worth a Continental," indicated the condition of the discredited currency. The States, unused to a national harness, were galled and fretted under it; and the old colonial jealousies and bickerings were revived, threatening disruption ere the seams of the Union had been well closed. There was an English faction that clung to aristocratic ideas and affiliation. There was a strong and growing French faction, in sympathy with the radical wing of the French Revolution, organized into mimic Jacobin clubs called "Democratic societies," which subsequently formed a popular basis for the old Republican party. A western frontier, as wide as the

continent, was threatened at every point by Indian savages. The Mississippi River, the southwestern and the sole practicable outlet of the frontier, so far from flowing "unvexed to the sea," was held at its mouth by a then imperious and supercilious Spain. When, subsequently, the Louisiana Territory was yielded to France, Spain's West Indian officials bombarded our southeastern coast with ceaseless insults. From Maine to the Carolinas stretched a vast seacoast whose nakedness was guarded by what, judged by modern standards, was a bare yacht club of sailing vessels called a navy. France, vexed that she could not make "a nose of dough" of her former American ally, bullied and browbeat the Government into an unofficial war. England insulted our flag and impressed our sailors on every sea, until in sheer desperation we were driven at last into the war of 1812, a humiliating chapter in our history, brightened only by the superb valor and skill of our little navy, and the victory of Jackson at New Orleans. Even the Algerine pirates of the Mediterranean levied blackmail upon our commerce with contemptuous indifference.

Without money; without credit; without honor and standing among the nations; derided, insulted, snubbed, threatened, robbed, we had nothing but land—"oceans of land"—and indomitable pluck and exuberant faith in our manifest destiny. It is not strange that under such conditions Alexander Hamilton, possessed by the theory that the Union could not be regarded as stable until it had suppressed some domestic revolution or

united in some successful foreign war, should have seized upon the so-called "Western Insurrection" in the Pennsylvania frontiers as an occasion for a spectacular demonstration to the world of the power of the new government.

All this must be remembered if you would justly compare your own era and acts with the times and deeds of our Church fathers. All this must be considered if you would weigh in a just balance the characters and achievements of the heroes of that evangelistic army of occupation and conquest of the American frontier.

III

THE HIGH QUALITY OF PIONEER MISSION WORKERS

These were some of the difficulties; there were some favoring conditions. The progress of home missions was favored by the quality of the men who led its host both in the office and on the field. We put them in the same category, for in merit and efficiency and in title to honor just history may not separate the one class of workers from the other. They were a product of conditions of which great minds seem to be a fruitage. Vast wars, and high commotions, and extended communal fermentations and national revolutions react strongly upon those mysterious psychical and physiological conditions that control quality in the manhood of a succeeding generation. The American Revolution was followed by an intellectual and spiritual palen-genesis of the nation. The evening twilight of the

eighteenth century saw the birth of Irving, Cooper, Halleck, Prescott, Bryant, and Bancroft. The dawning decades of the nineteenth century welcomed Willis, Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, Hawthorne, and Poe. These leaders in the literary field marked time for the common ranks of American manhood and womanhood. They were types of their times and generation.

As in letters and in other spheres, so was it in the Church. It was an era of high mental quickening. Nerves were tense, tingling with the new vigor of the awakened age and surcharged with life. Men of high and fine qualities were to the fore. Young men were double-winged with vital force and old men renewed their youth. The Church felt this surge of the great sea of humanity and rose and rode upon its crest.

The men who consecrated themselves to the duty of evangelizing America were not inferior in natural gifts to those who shone in letters and politics. Man for man, talent for talent, they were the equals of their fellows; and if their greatness has not been acknowledged it is because of that obliquity of vision which is apt to set secular above spiritual history, and which has left the knowledge of our Church's worthiest men and worthiest actions to be buried underneath the débris of the past, almost beyond the hope of historic resurrection. Against such injustice the voice of your Presbyterian Historical Society has cried for half a century, for to-day marks its Jubilee Year.

The Church and the cause owe an incalculable debt to the fine ability, the splendid optimism, the quenchless

courage, the high consecration, the pure evangelical zeal, and the superior leadership of the early presbyters, ministers and elders alike, of the original thirteen States. Necessarily it fell to them both to plan and to push the campaign for continental evangelization and to supply the men for the service.

Then they had agents for the work of the highest and finest caliber. Call the roll of the home missionary heroes and their no less heroic wives, who broke ground for Christian faith and evangelization on the frontiers of the original Colonies and the middle West. They are all children of the East; nurtured in and sent forth from the Motherland of Home Missions—the States of the Atlantic slope. This work their successors in the ever-expanding West received by good heredity, and in their hands the standard was not allowed to droop or falter; but the initiative, the creative purpose, the formative plans and their execution must be credited to the Atlantic States.

President Roosevelt, in his *Winning of the West*, has given this graphic pen picture of one of these heroic knights of the Evangel: "His name was Samuel Doak. He came from New Jersey, and had been educated at Princeton. Possessed of the vigorous energy that marks the true pioneer spirit, he determined to cast his lot with the frontier folk. He walked through Maryland and Virginia, driving before him an old 'flea-bitten gray' horse, loaded with a sackful of books, crossed the Alleghenies, and came down along blazed trails to the Holston settlements. The hardy people among whom

he took up his abode were able to appreciate his learning and religion as much as they admired his adventurous, indomitable temper; and the stern, hard, God-fearing man became a most powerful influence for good throughout the whole formative period of the Southwest."

He founded the first church in that cradle spot of Tennessee, a log house built near Jonesboro in 1777 and christened "Salem Church." More than that, he built the first log high school, which developed into Washington College, Tennessee, the first educational institution in the Southwest. No wonder our virile President's heart warmed toward such a strenuous character as Missionary Doak. Aye, they were *men*, those early home missionaries, full men, tested by the most exacting mensuration! Mr. Roosevelt's description is typical. It fits hundreds of home missionaries of our pioneer days, and of every decade in the hundred years succeeding. The history of home missions finely illustrates the truth of George Whitefield's epigrammatic argument to John Witherspoon when urging him to accept the call to America: "*Every gownsmen in the Colonies is worth a legion!*" The trained gownsmen, the educated ministers of our "Church in the Wilderness," were a veritable "Tenth Legion" in Christian valor, devotion, and success.

That century-old type is persistent. Professor Brumbaugh, late Commissioner of Education in Porto Rico, in an address given a week ago in your speaker's church in Philadelphia, paid a well-deserved tribute to the character of one of our missionaries in the field

that lies farthest toward the sunrise of all our home missions.

“I cannot quite forgive the Presbyterians,” said Professor Brumbaugh, “for removing from Porto Rico such a man as Dr. Green. I have heard him preach to thousands of peons, who crowded round him and hung with breathless interest upon his words. I have seen a whole neighborhood transformed by his apostolic labors. Their shack houses that reeked with filth, where goats and hogs herded with men, women, and children, were changed as by magic into clean, white-washed human homes, brightened and sweetened by flowers, and sanctified by a new-born piety, and dedicated to a higher and purer family life.” That was a fine testimony from a worthy man to a noble pioneer missionary of our eastern insular frontier.

Those men of 1802 and their faithful wives were old fashioned in their views and utterances of Bible truths. Yet they lived and wrought their duty after a fashion that never grows old, for they maintained and illustrated the eternally new facts of Christian love and zeal for the highest good of the world. They clung to the old confessional words “goodness” and “mercy” and “compassion” in presenting the divine love. But never did men and women more thoroughly than they interpret, in their lives of single-hearted devotion to Christian service, the fundamental law of Christ that requires us to love our neighbor as ourselves. If to spend their days in toil and their nights in watching; to endure hardship and perils in the wilderness, in the forest, in

the cabin, in the face of savage Indians and hostile or unsympathetic countrymen; if to be often in hunger, and always in poverty; to burn with fever, and shiver with ague, and ache with rheumatism; if to separate themselves from the delights of civilization and the haunts of learning; to labor much and to earn little; to give forth their whole energy, skill, care, and culture, to elevate, bless, and save their fellows, and at last to die in penury and leave their widows and orphans a legacy to Providence,—if all that be to know and feel and teach and live the truth that “God is love,” and that man’s highest duty is to love God wholly and to love one’s neighbor as himself, then, Moderator and brethren, those old-fashioned, doctrinal-preaching, Catechism-teaching evangelizers of the American wilderness are not unworthy examples for the men and women of this generation. Still they are teachers of that charity, “the greatest thing in the world,” at whose feet we, even in this age, whose glory is its great charities and whose banner cry is love, may humbly sit, and whose heads we may crown with the blessing of Abu-ben-Adam. Their life-long career was a mission of loving helpfulness in saving, civilizing, and uplifting their fellow-men.

We do not like, perhaps, their ways of putting Bible truth, and their lack of elasticity in certain methods and forms. We are not in sympathy with the old country manners and seventeenth century methods which clung to some of them. But look at their lives of holy and unselfish and loving devotion, often even unto death, to the sublime duty of planting the seeds of Christian faith,

holiness, and love in that wilderness land. It is enough ! Said Chillingworth, "The Bible is the meaning of the Bible." So, of those noble heroes of gospel charity, we declare that their doctrine is the meaning of their doctrine ; their history is the meaning of their history. And do you ask what that meaning is? Behold the order, the law, the prosperity, the virtue, the happiness of those States and communities wherein they toiled. It is the "monument, more enduring than brass," of those home missionary men and women who loved God supremely and loved their neighbors as themselves.

IV

EARLY MISSIONARY SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH

The work of missions was not new in the Presbyterian Church even a century ago. In his sermon yesterday Moderator van Dyke called this year the "one hundredth anniversary of the marriage of the Church to home missions." We will not deny the banns, nor challenge the figure of speech ; but we must claim, at least, that the parties were engaged, and as "good as married," more than a hundred years before the wedding. From the beginning ours was a missionary Church. The fathers and founders had a good grip of the situation, for they all were home evangelists, from Denton and Makemie down. In the original "Presbytery," in the mother "General Synod," in the two synods into which it was divided, and in the reunion "Synod of New York and Philadelphia," the matter of missions, including

Indian evangelization, was the chief concern at every meeting.

The first General Assembly of 1789 enjoined its four synods—Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey, Virginia, and the Carolinas—to provide and recommend each two missionaries, and to take up collections to support them in the field. Young ministers and licentiates, as well as settled pastors, were frequently sent forth on what Dr. Ashbel Green called “their excursions of benevolence,” into the adjoining regions and distant parts. These tours of duty long continued to be the prevailing custom.

The act of 1802 was a step forward in organization, not in spirit. It created a Standing Committee of Missions, with substantially the powers and duties of the present Board of Home Missions. Like the “Board of Missions,” into which it was constituted in 1816, it really embraced the work of evangelizing both the whites and the heathen Indians as well as the negro slaves and freedmen. Not until thirty-five years thereafter was a distinctively Foreign Mission Board organized. But in the early stages of the Assembly’s work missions to the heathen were limited to the Indian tribes of North America. It is to be noted that the title given the new organization was not the Standing Committee of Home Missions, but “the Standing Committee of Missions.”

Within the powers invested in that committee lay in germ all the boards of the Presbyterian Church, as now constituted, which deal with the work of evangelization.

home missions occupied the foremost place. One of the first acts of the Standing Committee was to continue the work of evangelizing the colored people. One of its most successful missionaries was a minister of color, the Rev. John Chavis; and of the white race was Dr. John H. Rice, who, in the spirit of the early apostles, and of recent missionaries to Africa, devoted himself to his colored brethren in the slave States. Therein also was included the work of the Board of Publication; for the newly appointed committee stimulated and directed the distribution of religious literature. It considered also the work of ministerial education. It was, in fact, the one great evangelizing agency of the Church, out of which, by gradual and necessary development, all its separate boards have been evolved. This centenary, commemorative of the formation of that Standing Committee, is therefore an event that concerns the entire Church and all its now distinct evangelizing organs and agents.

The formal origin of that act of 1802 issued from a recommendation made by a body whose existence and functions are rarely thought of and but little known, although it carries the corporate life of our Church. There was laid before the Assembly "a communication from the Trustees of the General Assembly" proposing the formation of "a standing committee for financial purposes," and suggesting several arrangements for securing and managing the missionary funds. This led to a motion that the Assembly commit the general management of missionary business to a standing committee.

The motion was referred to a committee consisting of Dr. Ashbel Green, Rev. Azel Backus, Rev. Nathaniel Irwin, ministers; and ruling elders, the Hon. Ebenezer Hazard and Colonel John Bayard. It is worthy of notice that Mr. Backus, who was one of the two delegates from the General Association of Connecticut, was appointed to such an important place, and thus helped to shape the action which is commemorated to-day. The presence of a Congregational minister on this committee was in accord with that spirit which more than two hundred years ago (1690) united the Presbyterians and the independents of England in evangelistic work, and led to the Saybrook platform of New England in 1708.

V

PERSONNEL OF THE COMMISSIONERS

The General Assembly of 1802 met in the First Church of Philadelphia, the old sanctuary on Market Street, built in 1704, rebuilt in 1793, and occupied for 116 years. It was not as large as many of our modern presbyteries, having only 48 commissioners—33 ministers and 15 elders—not a twelfth part of the Assembly of to-day. These men came from only seven States: Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and South Carolina. A striking contrast this with its successor of 1902, which embraces commissioners from nearly every State and Territory of the Republic, from the District of Columbia, and from many foreign countries representing our world-wide work

of heathen evangelization. But in the character of its members and the influence of some of its acts it was a notable body. Its roll contained the names of nine men who had been elected or were "elected" to be moderators of the General Assembly. These men were John Rodgers (1789), Nathaniel Irwin (1801), Azel Roe (1802), Philip Milledoler (1808), James Richards (1808), Eliphalet Nott (1811), James Inglis (1814), Ashbel Green (1824), and Francis Herron (1827). Among its elder commissioners were such honored men as Colonel John Bayard, Postmaster-general Ebenezer Hazard, Isaac Snowden, and Senator Jonathan Elmer.

1. THE ASSEMBLY'S MISSIONARY LEADER—DR. GREEN

The commissioner entitled to the first honor in the Missionary Centennial is Ashbel Green. If any man deserves the title of father of organized home missions in the Presbyterian Church it is he. He was then (1802) forty years old, in the middle prime of his manhood; and his ability and zeal in the cause marked him as the fitting chairman of the committee to put into shape the proposed action to systematize the Church's missionary work. Dr. Green had a commanding bodily presence, a florid complexion, regular features, prominent aquiline nose. But the great feature of his face was his eye—full, dark, brilliant, imperative, gleaming, underneath shaggy eyebrows. He was a gentleman of the old school, the school in which Washington, his friend, had been cultured. Almost to the end of his life he retained the clerical wig and queue common to

the gentlemen of his period, and as he moved through the streets of Philadelphia his dignified bearing, his antique and stately manners impressed with reverence those whom he met. He filled with distinguished merit every position to which he was called. As a writer and one of the pioneer editors of the Church he wielded a ready and forcible pen, and won a wide influence. In the Church courts he was a faithful presbyter and a wise leader. As president for over ten years of Princeton College he contributed largely to the permanent success of that institution, and earned as an educator the good degree that he attained in other fields. As a patriot, as a scholar, as a preacher, as an educator, as a writer and editor, as an ecclesiastic, and as the father of organized missions, he was preëminent among the men of his period, and takes rank as one of the great men of the Presbyterian Church. He was identified with its work from the beginning, and in every relation proved himself a devoted son and servant during his long career.

Of the Standing Committee of Missions, which the Assembly of 1802 adopted upon his report, he was made the first chairman, and so continued for ten and a half years, until he left Philadelphia for Princeton. As the committee had neither secretary nor executive committee, the laboring oar was in his hands. When in 1822 he returned to Philadelphia from Princeton he found the Board of Missions, which had been created in 1816, greatly reduced in its funds and its activity almost paralyzed. He wrote an overture to the Assem-

bly which stirred the body mightily, and led to the reorganization of the Board in 1826, with the distinct specification of powers to appoint an executive committee and a corresponding secretary, and to prosecute missions, both domestic and foreign, and to pay missionaries with no other restriction than making an annual report to the General Assembly. Of this reorganized Board Dr. Green was elected president and was made chairman of the Executive Committee. For many years the meetings of the committee were held in his study. It was due in a large measure to his zeal, unflinching interest, and wisdom that the Board was nurtured into a new life, and started upon its career of noble Christian philanthropy. When the foreign missionary cause was differentiated from home missions, and entered upon its career of world-wide evangelization, Dr. Green showed almost equal zeal in shaping its work. He wrote the overture to the Assembly of 1803, on the education of pious youth, which was the germ of the Board of Ministerial Education, and which led to the establishment of the first theological seminary of the Church, located at Princeton. The plan of governing the seminary was the product of his pen. He was the first President of its Board of Directors, and retained that position to the end of his life. In the General Assembly of 1825 he moved the resolution which led to the establishment of the Western Theological Seminary at Allegheny. He was a member of all the boards or corporations of the Church during his day, including the Trustees of the General Assembly.

2. OTHER PROMINENT COMMISSIONERS

The members of the Assembly of 1802, both ministers and elders, were worthy followers of their distinguished leader. The retiring Moderator was the Rev. Nathaniel Irwin, of Neshaminy. His text was Luke xiv: 23, "Compel them to come in"; and—shall we say unconsciously, or was it of purpose?—gave the keynote of the profound missionary spirit of the Assembly and a prophecy of its chief act. Mr. Irwin was one of the few untitled moderators, but he was none the less well worthy of the high office. He was an able and eloquent preacher. In the revolutionary struggle he was a firm and aggressive patriot. He was a self-trained physician, having studied medicine that, in the great dearth of professional medical service which marked that era, he might care for the bodily ailments of his flock.¹ He was a man of strong scientific tendencies, and was one of the earliest friends and patrons of John Fitch, the inventor. He was fond of music, and played the violin; and there is a tradition, apparently well founded, that he did not scruple to exercise his gifts at harvest-time, that his workmen might enjoy a moonlight dance upon the manse green. He was buried on the spot where the old pulpit of Neshaminy had stood, and there he sleeps among the fathers of that venerable sanctuary.

The Rev. Dr. Azel Roe was chosen the Moderator of the Assembly of 1802. He was a graduate and subse-

¹ A box containing the scales and weights with which Mr. Irwin weighed out medicines is in the possession of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

quently a trustee of Princeton College. He was one of the revolutionary heroes among the fathers and founders of our Church, having served as a chaplain in the War for Independence. On one occasion, when the ranks of his regiment had been broken before an assault of the enemy, he is said to have rushed into the breach and gallantly led the faltering soldiers back to their duty on the firing line. He was a man of graceful and dignified manners, with a fine head and handsome face.¹

Most eminent among the commissioners was Dr. John Rodgers, of New York. An able preacher, an influential leader, a leading patriot, the gallant chaplain of Heath's Colonial Brigade, the trusted friend and counselor of Washington, he was well worthy to be the first elected Moderator of the General Assembly. He was seventy-five years old in 1802, a venerable and imposing figure, with his buzz wig and well polished silver-buckle shoes and knee breeches, and was an object of universal interest and reverent attention.

James Richards, the Moderator of 1805, was the first President of Auburn Theological Seminary.

Philip Milledoler, the Moderator of 1808, represented in his own person a sort of Catholic Protestantism and Pan-Presbyterianism. He was converted in a Methodist meeting, graduated at an Episcopalian college, ordained a German Reformed minister, called and in-

¹The excellent likeness of Dr. Roe, which is the frontispiece of the paper in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, hereafter referred to, was engraved from a portrait in the possession of his descendants, the Misses Munro, of New York city.

stalled a Presbyterian pastor in Philadelphia and New York, and after being a pastor of the Collegiate Dutch Church, in New York, and President of Rutgers College, died in 1852.

Eliphalet Nott was the Moderator of 1811, a finished orator, and the eminent President of Union College. James Inglis, of Baltimore, was the Moderator of 1814; and Francis Herron, the young Pittsburg pastor, was the Moderator of 1827.

Among the ministers of note were Professor Kollock, William Sloan, and John Ewing Latta, subsequently a permanent clerk; Nathan Grier, of Brandywine Manor; and Chaplain Robert Cooper, of Middle Spring, the pastor of a Scotch-Irish congregation in the Cumberland Valley, whose record for patriotic service in three wars—the French and Indian, the Revolutionary, and the War of 1812—is probably unequaled in any period of our history, by any other congregation.

From the frontiers came John Watson, the first President of Jefferson College, and Matthew Brown, the first President of Washington College, and for twenty-three years the President of Jefferson. From the same section were “the silver-tongued Marquis” and Samuel Tait, the pack-horse boy and farmer of Ligonier, who, like Cincinnatus, was called at the plow to his ministry. There were others almost equally worthy of mention, but these were among the leaders, and they were types of the ministerial members of that remarkable Assembly.¹

¹An extended notice of the members and principal acts of the Assembly of 1802, prepared by Dr. McCook, is printed in the June

3. RULING ELDER COMMISSIONERS

The elder commissioners were of equal honor and ability. The presence of citizens distinguished in the various walks of life is no rarity in the highest court of the Presbyterian Church. The White House, the gubernatorial chair, the Supreme Court of the United States, senators and representatives in Congress, judges, soldiers, lawyers, physicians, philanthropists, merchant princes, and captains of industry, have all and often been represented there. But in that century-ago Assembly, in proportion to the number of elders present, there was an unusually large number of eminent non-ministerial presbyters.

The mother Presbytery of Philadelphia sent three commissioners who would have been men of mark in any assembly. The Hon. Ebenezer Hazard had served as Postmaster-general of the United States, having succeeded Mr. Bache in that position in 1789. He was one of America's pioneer historians, and was one of the seven original members of the new "Standing Committee of Missions." The Hon. Jonathan Elmer was a man of versatile talents. As a physician, a revolutionary soldier and surgeon, a State legislator, a lawyer, a jurist, and as a Representative in Congress, and a Senator of the United States from New Jersey, he proved his greatness and worth. Elder Isaac Snowden was the faithful treasurer of the Trustees of the General

number (1902) of the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia. Those who wish further historical information would do well to consult that paper.

Assembly, and as such his hand probably gave the first impulse to the movement which, on the recommendation of the trustees, resulted in the appointment of the Standing Committee of Missions. Perhaps a Philadelphia presbyter ought to apologize for the prominence given his adopted city in this rapid sketch. But the historian is not responsible therefor, but the facts! However "slow" the modern Philadelphia may be held to be in the squib of the newspaper paragrapher and the threadbare jest of the humorist, the hands that uncover the records wherein are written the deeds of those who wrought at the making of our nation and of our Church, will find first and foremost in every field the sons and citizens of Philadelphia!

The Presbytery of New Brunswick sent Colonel John Bayard, perhaps the most distinguished of the ruling elder commissioners. Born in Maryland, he came in early life to Philadelphia, where the chief incidents in his noble career were achieved. From the beginning of the agitation for national independence he was an ardent patriot. In the Provincial Congress, in the Convention of the Province, in the Council of Safety, as the associate of Franklin, Rittenhouse, Wayne, Robert Morris, Roberdeau, Joseph Read, and John Cadwallader, he was active and useful. As Colonel of the Second Infantry Battalion of the Philadelphia Associators he saw service in the battles of the Brandywine, Germantown, and Princeton, and in the last-named engagement was personally complimented by General Washington for his gallantry. A large part of his

considerable fortune was spent in his country's service, and he well deserved the commendation of the historian Bancroft, as "a patriot of singular purity of character and disinterestedness, personally brave, earnest, and devout."¹ For thirty years he was a trustee of Princeton College. He was one of the most frequent and faithful representatives of his Presbytery in the General Assembly.

From the "far West," then the frontier of Pennsylvania, the Presbytery of Ohio sent a Scotch-Irish Revolutionary veteran, who bore a name which Americans will never cease to honor—William McKinley. This commissioner was apparently a brother of the great-grandfather of President McKinley, the gallant soldier, the pure citizen, the wise statesman, the devout Christian, whose untimely death was mourned by a weeping world. Although this great man was a faithful communicant of the Methodist Episcopal Church, his paternal ancestors were members of our own communion. By a happy coincidence one of his name and blood is an honored commissioner in this Assembly of 1902, as one was a hundred years ago.

These were some of the men who a century ago framed the policy of imperial missionary extension which has spread our great Church, with all its beneficent acts and institutions, from the Atlantic Slope to the Pacific Coast. Having sublime trust in God and in the future,

¹See the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*, June, 1902, and a paper by General James Grant Wilson in the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, 1885.

they threw down the gauntlet to the seemingly impossible, and challenged the religious chaos of a continent, and claimed it for God. One cannot think of the simple faith and fervent zeal for the salvation of men which led our fathers calmly to face immensities of distance and of difficulty, and set their weakness and poverty to the task of occupying this continent for Christ and his Church, without a swelling of heart in lawful pride and gratitude for the gift of such men. Since the time when the Lord's apostles sallied forth, a mere squad, without money or rank or social power, to evangelize a hostile world, there have been few acts of sublimer faith or loftier Christian heroism. To the man who has not learned the lesson which history everywhere teaches—that it is unwise to despise the day of small things—it would seem trivial, perhaps absurd, at least pitiful, the manner in which the Assembly of 1802 pondered the petty details of their few missionaries' service, and the small gifts for the work. But it may well be questioned whether, in that truer judgment which heaven gives, and which takes into view the conditions and relations of men, we of to-day are not the palterers.

Think of their poverty and our abundance; of their sacrifices and sufferings and our self-indulgence and comforts; of the perils faced by them and of our comparative safety in service; of their painful toils in penetrating the wilderness and the ease of modern travel; of the scantiness of their numbers, and of the mighty hosts with their experience, piety, wisdom, wealth, and enthusiasm that stand back of our home missionaries

in this twentieth century. In the comparative view, does not the splendid report that your Board and its secretary bring you this year pale before the simple tale of the labors, the gifts, and the successes of a hundred years ago? It is an electric light of many volts that we hold up in this Home Missionary Centenary, but it shines in the midst of a nation of eighty millions, the wealthiest in the world. It was a tallow-dip candle that the fathers bore aloft, but it shone in the Cerberian darkness of a wilderness land. Let God be the Judge; but let us take a sharp account of our own stock to-day while considering the fathers' work—"lest we forget." Hard as was their lot, inadequate as seems their earthly reward, we do not pity them. No; we praise them, we envy them! Their heaven-assigned duty they did heartily and well. Doubtless they were tempted, as we too have been, to halt in work, to turn therefrom disheartened, to think it too hard a task, a heavy and a thankless burden. Yet God granted them the prayer—as God will grant to us—which he who sits in your Moderator's chair has lately voiced in song:—

“Let me but find it in my heart to say,
 When vagrant wishes beckon me astray,—
 ‘This is my work; my blessing, not my doom!
 Of all who live, I am the one by whom
 This work can best be done in the right way.’”¹

Pardon your speaker if he tunes his rugged harp to

¹ Henry van Dyke, “The Three Best Things.”—*The Outlook*, May 3, 1902.

sing a thought of comment on our Poet-Moderator's verse :—

There sang the Calvinist ; and in his lays
He voiced the mighty purpose of those days
 When men went forth as chosen of the Lord
 To seed a continent with Jesus' word,
And win a chosen people to his ways.

'Twas meant not thus, mayhap ; but, as the rill
Breaks from its spring-head in the granite hill,
 And sings its song of sweetness as it goes,
 And brightens all the course o'er which it flows,
Fulfilling still the Master's sovereign will.

Yet so it is ; the men whose hands shall guide
An erring race back to the Saviour's side,
 Have felt the seizure of the heavenly Hand
 To tread the path that God in them has planned,
And do the task that none may do beside.

The dipper by the wayside well hangs free ;
The mountain holds the spring by God's decree ;
 Kind were the hands that hung the dipper there.
 Thank God for all ! But, stop, and full and fair
Write high their names who, for God's charity,
Have opened up the fount for all—and thee !