

November. Although no public announcement had been made of the intention to appear vested, it had evidently become pretty generally known, for there was a large congregation—the church being filled to the doors. The Bishop was present and, after the conclusion of an admirable Advent sermon, gave the following address :—

“I must take this opportunity of making a remark upon the change which you inaugurate to-day in the conduct of the services of the church. I allude, of course, to the vesting of the choir in surplices. You have fitly chosen the first Sunday in the Church year to commence this new departure. I am no advocate of innovations in the modes or forms of public worship—far otherwise—but this I cannot regard as an innovation upon the Church’s practice, only as a change in your own practice as a congregation; and I congratulate you upon having made it, as one calculated, in my judgment, to promote reverential decorum, hearty earnestness, and the beauty of holiness in the worship of God. On the ground of common seemliness and the fitness of things, I think few would venture to deny that in cases where a choir of men and boys occupy seats in the chancel, to cover over the diversities of dress in shape, style and colour, which mark the individualities of their every day life, by a uniform garment which denotes the oneness and the sacredness of their sanctuary service, is simply to fulfil the apostolic precept ‘Let all things be done decently and in order.’

“It may help to allay some groundless anxieties which, I am aware, are often excited by this apparent advance-step in the direction of innovation, if I state my belief that the surpliced choir is distinctive of the Church of England, and does not commonly, so far as my knowledge extends, enter into the worship of the Church of Rome.

“I trust, too, that this change will not be without its beneficial effect upon you, too, my brethren, who are most affected by it—the members of the choir. Let the putting on of the surplice remind you, so often as you wear it, that you are entering upon an act of public worship, and that ‘Holiness becometh God’s house for ever.’ Let this habit (which distinguishes those who minister in the sanctuary) be ever in your eyes, a badge of the character which becomes all who offer the service of prayer and praise—holiness, sincerity, and purity.

“Especially my dear younger brethren, the boys of the Choir, pray that you may not sully the white robe of your sanctuary service by any thoughtless trilling, levity of conduct, or any wandering worldly or unholy thoughts. Let your distinctive dress be as a check upon such acts or thoughts, remembering that when you come within the gates of the courts of the Lord’s house, it becomes you to be clothed not only with the garments but with the spirit of holiness, and may you never omit as you put on your apparel for the earthly service of song, to pray that you may be accounted worthy one day to join that white-robed throng who sing a nobler song and be admitted into the ranks of the heavenly choir, who will chant unceasingly day and night, through all eternity, the praises of Him who loved them and washed them with His blood and gave them to be clothed in the white linen which is the righteousness of the saints.”

The following are the men and boys of the choir who were present :—Messrs. E. W. Schuch, Douglas Armour, H. M. Arnold, J. Fraser, John T. Edwards, W. Spratt, W. H. Adamson, and H. LeJeune; Vaux Chadwick, Arthur Murray, E. Chadwick, Frank Parsons, Samuel Huff, Harry Gillespie, Donald Lightbourne, Richard Cowan, Thomas Lough, Harold Parsons, Robert Spratt, Herbert Cowan, and George VanKoughnet.

The Surplices were made by the Churchwoman’s Mission Aid Society, and are the generous gift of Mrs. D’Alton McCarthy to St. George’s Church.