

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

AN AMERICAN PASTOR AND EVANGELIST.

Knowing that the Rev. George F. Pentecost, of Brooklyn, is in England, and that he is expected to aid Messrs. Moody and Sankey during much of their sojourn among you, it has occurred to me that a brief account of his career might be of interest to your readers. He is of Huguenot extraction, and has Jewish blood in his veins. His family name had a peculiar origin. One of his ancestors in France, a venerable but ardent preacher, used to traverse the country as an itinerant evangelist; and such was the spiritual power accompanying his efforts, and so remarkable were the results wherever he went, that the people got to calling him "Old Pentecost." The previous name, whatever it was, fell into disuse, and the new one was adopted.

The subject of this sketch, I believe, was born in Kentucky, and his early years were spent in that State and in Indiana. As a boy he was bright and impulsive, but not vicious. His conversion occurred during a revival in Kentucky, in the course of which not only himself, but his mother, two sisters, and a brother, now in the ministry, entered into the new life. George soon determined that he was called of God to become a preacher of the Gospel; and abandoning all previous plans, he proceeded with characteristic energy to follow the divine bidding. The first exercise of his ministry was in small places in the West. It was not long, however, before his qualities as a preacher became generally known, and he was quite young when he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Hanson-place Baptist Church, Brooklyn, the principal church of that denomination in the city. After several years of success in this position, he became pastor of a prominent Baptist church in Boston. While thus engaged, he was in constant demand among the leading Churches in the Eastern cities, and ministered to God's children wherever and whenever Providence permitted.

Although abounding in Christian work to an extent unusual among settled pastors, Mr. Pentecost was not satisfied that he was making the best use of his time and talents. Probably the wonderful results of the labours of Messrs. Moody and Sankey convinced him that he was more needed as an evangelist than as the shepherd of a single congregation. At all events, he threw himself heartily into the special work at the time of Mr. Moody's visit to Boston; and immediately thereafter, at Mr. Moody's earnest entreaty, relinquished his pastoral charge for the wider field of the whole country. As an evangelist he was signally successful. With the advantage of scholarly attainments, a philosophical turn of mind, and a cultivated manner, he challenged the attention even of the hypercritical Unitarians of New England; while his faithful presentation of the doctrine of justification only through the blood of Christ was rewarded by the conversion of large numbers of hitherto stiff-necked unbelievers.

His singing companion was Mr. George C. Stebbins, whose strains thrilled and affected the most fastidious audiences. Mr. Stebbins is a man of exquisite taste in music, and his rare gifts are entirely consecrated. He is known to you already as the composer of many popular tunes in *Sacred Songs and Solos*; he will now become known to you as a most useful Gospel singer. Latterly his excellent wife has been singing with him, and the pieces in which both voices are engaged are a treat indeed. With Mr. Stebbins, Mr. Pentecost visited several cities in various parts of the country, and in each case a revival of great power ensued. In New Haven and in Detroit, especially, the effects of their work were very marked.

Observing, however, that in each community visited the best thing accomplished was the quickening of the Christians therein to a higher plan of living and to greater activity, and reflecting that for such work, as well as for direct dealing with the unconverted, a city like Brooklyn, with its population of 600,000, and the adjacent metropolis of New York, afforded a field practically unbounded, Mr. Pentecost, after five years of evangelistic service, determined to accept again the pastorate of a church in Brooklyn, with liberty to labour elsewhere as he might be able. Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins continued with him.

That it is possible for a clergyman to be at the same time a successful pastor of one congregation and an effective evangelist and Christian teacher in a wider field, is proved by Mr. Pentecost's recent experience. Within a year and a half from his taking charge of the Tompkins Avenue Congregational Church, Brooklyn, the people have purchased their place of worship, which they previously rented, paying the entire sum at once in cash, and more than 450 new members have been added to the church. Street preaching has been carried on in a spiritually destitute part of the city called "Dutchtown," because of its population being almost entirely German. Mr. Pentecost has himself spoken regularly to the open-air crowds and has been assisted by missionaries supported by his congregation. As a result of these efforts among a class regarded as very hard to impress with religious truth, more than 300 persons have within a few months been converted, and money has been raised to build and equip a chapel for the newly-gathered flock. Every Sunday morning and evening Mr. Pentecost has preached to crowded audiences in his church; each Wednesday evening lectured; each Friday evening held the general prayer-meeting; on other evenings preached elsewhere than in his own church; besides engaging in a variety of pastoral work.

The Academy of Music is a building capable of seating 3,500 persons, used mainly for concerts and theatrical entertainments. It contains the largest secular auditorium in the city, is situated in a very densely populated part of the city called the "Heights," and is several miles distant from the Tompkins Avenue Church. Here, far enough away to be free from the appearance of seeking to augment his own congregation, and under the auspices of a committee of eminent Christian laymen representing all parts of the city, and called together by himself, Mr. Pentecost carried on special evangelistic services each Sunday afternoon during the six months last season from October to April. The place was usually crowded to its utmost capacity, chiefly by persons of the non-church going class, and frequently half as many more were turned away as gained admission. Mr. and Mrs. Stebbins sang. The congregational singing was led by a choir of several hundred voices. Mr. Pentecost preached Christ crucified in the plainest language and with the power of the Spirit. After-meetings were held, in which the anxious were aided. More than 300 conversions are known to have occurred besides those not observed. Not the least beneficial result of the work was the stirring up of the Christian community to a sense of its duty toward the heathen in our midst.

In this country a very large proportion of our zealous Christian workers are engaged in Sunday school teaching. In addition to all his other labours, Mr. Pentecost has aided many of this class to a proper understanding of the lessons from week to week. Every Thursday afternoon he has lectured in New York and every Saturday afternoon in Brooklyn, about 1,000 teachers in this way coming under his instruction.

May the Lord raise up many like him! May it speedily become the rule, rather than the exception, for all nominal Christians, whether pastors or laymen, thus to be diligent in "every good word and work!"—*Correspondent of the Christian.*

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND LIFE.

There are one or two very important facts that even Christian parents overlook when considering the relation of religion to the well-being of their children. They admit, of course, in theory that it is incomparably the supreme interest; of infinitely greater importance than all worldly success in professional life or business; but who, of Christian parents, is disposed to look upon it as one of the most effective of all educational elements, and one of the highest sources of inspiration to the widest success in all worthy lines of human ambition?

There is nothing that so immediately wakens all the intellectual powers as the birth of divine life in the heart of youth. It brings the developing soul in contact with the highest and most active thought in the universe. It awakens both a sense of responsibility and a quick apprehension of the claim of duty. It sets the heretofore somewhat torpid mind on fire with the strangest and holiest desires, and arouses it to its utmost capacity with the sublimest thoughts. We

have known too many instances to be enumerated of young lads and girls, up to this hour, quite purposeless in their lives, never having given a thought to any serious plan of preparation for coming years, looking upon school studies as a most wearisome burden, to be thrown off at any time with delight, and to be closed with a shout of emancipation; making no progress, gaining nothing from text-books, forgetting what was passed as soon as new studies were entered upon, really knowing nothing intelligently, although the intellectual powers had been somewhat developed by contact with teachers rather than books—we have known such persons, when touched by the Holy Spirit and melted to penitence, to rise in the warmth and light of a new spiritual life, new creatures intellectually as well as morally.

We have in our mind now a quite young man, who had an inveterate dislike of school, and upon whose mental powers school studies had but made the slightest impression—a subject of peculiar anxiety and almost shame to his family—who, when awakened to sincere prayer and an apprehension of eternal verities, was seized with an irresistible desire for study. His lips had been opened by the depth of the newly-awakened love for his Master. He began to speak of Him in religious and other circles. This greatly quickened his thoughts and developed slumbering powers of which none, heretofore, had believed him to be possessed. Now he wishes to leave the store into which he had passionately pleaded to be permitted to enter, and to return to school, that he may prepare himself for greater usefulness in his coming manhood.

No lad will accomplish much in school until the man within him is fairly roused. The reason why many young pupils of schools, who have been through all the classes, seem at the close of their course to know so little even about the subjects of their text-books, is because their minds have really never been aroused. No spark has kindled the soul into a living flame. It is only when the real value of an education begins to dawn upon the mind of the child—when there is a desire from within for acquisition, and not simply compulsory force from without, that a marked mental development will be seen. There is nothing like the divine spark to accomplish this object, and it brings with it a high and solemn sense of duty. It is not simply the wish and pride of the parent that is now to be met, but the will of God and the voice of the Master.

But parents connect this divine life almost solely with the ministry. If in one of our Christian schools a child is converted, the pulpit or zenana work is at once thought of. Here, indeed, our pulpits and our missions find their exhaustless supplies. Hundreds receive their call to a heavenly mission while enjoying not so much the intellectual training, as the spiritual opportunities, of our excellent Christian academies. But this grace has no more necessary relation to the pulpit and to heathen fields than it has to professional and business life at home.

The trouble with most of our young people is that they do not know what to do with themselves. They have not felt the presence of the hand of duty, or heard the call of God. They do not know where they wish to study longer, to go to college, to learn a profession, or to go at once into business. After making a choice they regret it, for it was founded upon no principle, and think of something different as preferable. Now, the birth to newness of life at once aids in settling the question. The ordering of life becomes a matter of prayer, of consideration under an invisible but searching and loving Eye. Providential indications are sought. There is a consecration to duty wherever God directs, and thus calmed, settled and inspired, the young student is not long left in painful doubt as to the course he should take.

All this shows us the inestimable blessing to the parentage of the Church and to its children of our precious religious schools. How many thoughtless lads have been quickened into intellectual life during seasons of religious interest in these institutions! Every department of Church work, and all lines of business, show the results of this. Hundreds of our lawyers, physicians, teachers and conspicuous mothers of families, received in them the first clear impression of the significance of life and the true idea of living. Herein these schools have a great advantage over all purely secular institutions—an advantage not moral alone, but intellectual and economical.—*27th Herald.*