

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

A MAGNIFICENT OFFER.

How did the Rev. Irving A. Searles, of Lexington, McLean county, Illinois, know that I was a hard-worked pastor? How did he know that my old sermons that were worth anything were pretty much used up, and that only by severe toil and constant study could I get up any new ones even tolerably to satisfy myself? I don't know many people in Illinois, and I don't think that any of the few I do know would post the Rev. Mr. Searles as to these items in my personal history.

Nevertheless, there came to my study one day last week a circular entitled "Pulpit Helps." Underneath this heading are two mottoes, one of which is "Without a parable spake He not unto them." It is then explained that the "Pulpit Helps" are sermons of the Rev. Mr. Searles, a specimen of which accompanies the circular. The statement is then made that "they are not designed to encourage plagiarism, but as a fund of pulpit material that a hard-worked pastor may use without being subject to such a charge." The author of the circular has notified us that we may expect him to speak in parables; but I submit that "parable" is too mild a word to describe the sentence just quoted. The illustrations used in these sermons are "vivid, fresh, and striking, and, as a rule, are not found in books of illustrations." Don't you see? Without any danger of being accused of plagiarism, I can get a lot of sermons, full of illustrations, that are not in any books. They are especially attractive to young people, whom most pastors find so difficult to interest in sermons. That is so. Why, an elaborately prepared sermon on the Symbolism of the Bells and the Pomegranates of the Tabernacle fails to interest them; and even a sermon on the Felicitous Luminosity of the Athanasian Creed as an Explanation of the Doctrine of the Trinity will not keep them awake. Now, just in the nick of time, comes a lot of sermons that will keep the young folks all on the tip-toe of interest and lively expectation; and they will only cost you ten cents apiece! I have preached some awfully poor sermons in my time; and my congregations illustrated both the perseverance and the long suffering of the saints in listening to them; but even the poorest of them cost me a good deal more than ten cents. Why further rack one's brains? Why waste money on commentaries and cyclopædias? Here you are! For ten cents—only ten cents! Rich, bright, entertaining sermons that are full of illustrations not to be found in books!

"Why will ye doubting stand?
Why still delay?"

Come, on, ye hard-worked pastors, bring up your dimes, and carry away your sermons! Don't any of you be stupid, now, and say, "But they are not mine!" What have you a better right to than that which you pay for? And if Mr. Searles will sell you a sermon fairly bristling all over with illustrations for ten cents, why not invest? There is a whole year's supply, you see, for ten dollars and forty cents. And you needn't exchange pulpits with anybody for the entire year.

Perhaps you may feel a little hesitation, fearing that these sermons may be printed, and somebody might happen to be sitting in your congregation some day with a printed copy in hand, looking over your sermon as you deliver it. Don't be alarmed! "None of these sermons appear in print; but copies are made by the Hextograph process." The specimen before me is written with violet ink, in a good, large, coarse hand, that you can read on your pulpit at night, with even "a dim, religious light," and without spectacles. The letters are almost the size of those in John Hancock's signature to the Declaration of Independence.

Some doubting Thomas who reads this is still hesitating and saying: "But some neighbouring pastor may get one of these written copies, and some troublesome itinerant Christian may hear the same sermon from two pulpits, and make a fuss about it!" Now, my doubting brother, let me fling to the winds your last flimsy objection by stating in your private ear a very confidential sentence of this circular: "They are not sent to any one else in your vicinity, nor will they be, if you order them." Don't you see? You are to have a pre-emption right of your whole vicinity? You are to be amply protected. If you doubt

how large a territory your vicinity includes, that could readily be arranged by correspondence. If you buy ten sermons, probably a circuit of one hundred miles around your church could be reserved to you; and you might bargain with some hard-worked brother up in Shincomadunk Valley, ninety-eight and a half miles from you, to take the sermons after you have preached them, at five cents apiece; and thus you would have the price of half a new lot on hand. If you will buy a hundred at once, no doubt you can have all the eastern half of New York secured to you.

There is a whole series of sermons on Queen Esther. The first is entitled "The Queen Divorced." If you simply announce that, some people may think it refers to the Queen of Spain, or the Queen of Madagascar; and you will draw in a crowd just from curiosity to find out what queen it is, and what she was divorced for.

Then there is a series of three on the death of John the Baptist, entitled respectively, "A Bad Woman," "A Bad Dance," and "A Bad Ghost." Certainly these titles ought to draw a crammed house, and deplete all the neighbouring churches. Only thirty cents for the lot! All sorts of subjects, from "Sinai" and "Gethsemane" to "Ears" and "Fretting" are here treated, with profuse illustrations, and only ten cents apiece!

But I must let you know something of the specimens sent to me; only, don't you come around the Sunday I preach it. I shall have the sexton look out for suspicious strangers that day. But this sermon didn't cost me a cent. It was presented to me out of the disinterested generosity of the author. And may I not give as freely as I have received?

Subject—The Sunday School. Text—"Train up a child in the way he should go," etc. Divisions—1. Truth or error is more easily instilled into the mind of a child than into the mind of the adult. (Illustrations from the Jesuits, Victor Hugo, wealthy people who have French nurses for their children, Bishop Jane (sic) of the M. E. Church, and a Mohammedan "minister." *Minarets* spelled "minerets.") 2. Either truth or error instilled into the mind of a child has in that mind a permanence unknown to impressions received in later life. A blood-curdling illustration of a white child carried off by Indians, rescued, converted, graduated from a theological seminary, preaching near a battle field in the time of the Revolution, who goes out to the field and comes home with a string of scalps taken from the heads of the British! Couldn't help it, you see! Learned it when he was an infant among the Indians! Further illustrations from Bishop Purcell and Rembrandt.) 3. Children have an influence that the Church cannot afford to lose. I give one illustration entire, to show its classic origin and its admirable adaptation to its purpose:

"You may have read the book entitled 'Sam Slick.' He was a Yankee who travelled in several States selling wooden nutmegs. He understood human nature. When he stopped at a farmhouse to sell his wares, if a child, no matter how ragged its garments, came running down to the gate, he would take the child up and cover its face with kisses. The presumption was that the mother was observing the scene from the window, and she could not remain indifferent to such attention paid her child. If she had any use for wooden nutmegs, she would surely buy them of him! The road to a mother's heart is through her child! Can the church afford to lose this influence of childhood?"

4. In the Sunday School work, *God is with us.* (Illustration from Mrs. Vinton, about a tree that was rooted in the skies.) 5. A great reward awaits the faithful Sunday school teacher. (Illustration from Jewish Talmud.)

Waik up, ye hard-worked pastors, and purchase. Only ten cents! In fact, if you buy fifty-five sermons, they come at nine and one-eleventh cents apiece. This advertisement ought to be worth at least fifty dollars to the author. He may, therefore, send 550 sermons to *The Independent*, and as it believes in illumination, I have no doubt that when they get to the sanctuary, the editors will speedily make light of them.—*Rev. S. L. Baldwin, in Independent.*

THE death of Dr. Martensen, the eminent Danish theologian, is reported. He was a distinguished representative of the Lutheran Church. As a preacher he was thoughtful, able and eloquent. Many valuable contributions to theological science have been made by Dr. Martensen. Several of his works will have a permanent place in Christian literature.

THE CONVERSION OF ONCKEN OF HAMBURG.

Though we have read somewhere that the late Mr. Oncken's early spiritual history was also associated with Scotland, a correspondent, "W.B.C.," kindly draws our attention to a narrative by Rev. Dr. Belcher, published in 1853, which gives Greenwich as the place in which that eminent servant of God was converted. According to this story Oncken, as a young mechanic, boarded with a pious Englishman, also a mechanic, who was a deacon in a Congregational church. Both this man and his wife were eminent for simple piety, fervent devotion, and quiet, untiring zeal. They had very small talents, but much religion. Oncken knew nothing of religion, but was amiable and obliging and greatly devoted to pleasure as the source of his happiness. For some time after he began to live with them when the Bible morning and evening was laid upon the table indicative of family worship, it was a signal for his leaving the room, but after a short time, influenced by the amiable spirit and manners of the worthy John Cottman and his wife, he occasionally stayed to observe this solemnity. One evening he came home to dress that he might visit a place of amusement, when the good deacon said: "I think you had better go with me and enjoy pleasures greater than that which you are going to." "Where are you going?" was the enquiry of the young man. "To the prayer-meeting at our church," replied the good deacon. "A prayer-meeting! What is that?" "Why, we meet to sing hymns, read the Scripture, and ask God to bless us." The young man hesitated. "You had much better go," said the good lady in her usual kind tone. "So I will," was the reply. He went, and in that meeting of some dozen persons held in the vestry of the Congregational church, Maize Hill, Greenwich, did God open and soften his heart and excited feelings which led him to the Saviour of sinners for pardon.

—*The Christian Leader.*

INTEREST IN THE WELFARE OF OTHERS.

We who call ourselves Christians ought to feel a hundredfold deeper interest in the spiritual welfare of those who belong to the same family of Jesus.

"How do you do," is the stereotyped inquiry about bodily health; if a friend is sick, we send messages of enquiry to the door. But how seldom do Christians ask each other honestly and lovingly: "How is it with your soul? Are you getting stronger in grace? Is the Saviour nearer to you? What good things have you lately discovered in your Bible? Where do you find most sunshine? What good work are you engaged in?" Now if we ask such questions as these, instead of the usual interrogations about business, or money-making, or social affairs, or family matters, it would show where our hearts are, and that we regard the spiritual life to be the chief thing after all. Is it not strange, yea is it not a reproach to our religious profession, that we are so ready to talk about trifles, and yet are so shamefully reticent about "the one thing needful?" We might aid each other most effectively in this life of preparation and conflict, if we would "speak often one to another" about our heart feelings, our joys, our trials and our Christian experiences.

"Christian's" rich conversations with "Faithful" and "Hopeful" in the Pilgrim's Progress, are beautiful, models of the style of intercourse that becomes those of us who are journeying to the same heaven.—*Dr. Cuyler, in Christian at Work.*

WHAT MAKES A HOME.

It is an excellent thing to have a well-kept house and finely appointed table; but, after all, the best cheer of every home must come from the heart and manner of the home mother. If that be cold and this ungracious, all the wealth of India cannot make the home pleasant and inviting. Intelligence too must lend its charm if we would have home an Eden. The severe style of house-order neatness seldom leaves much margin for intellectual culture; a simpler style of living and house-furnishing would set many a bonded slave at liberty, and adds vastly to the comforts of all the household. There are cabin homes that have been and are remembered with pleasure, because of the beautiful, loving presence there; and stately homes without it, are but dull and cheerless habitations.