

Pulpit Devices.

BY E. LESLIE GILLÉAINS.



HE watchword of the twentieth century seems to be "originality." This extends not only to the business man, the politician, the day labourer, and the private citizen, but it reaches even to the pulpit. The divine of to-day is radically different from his predecessor of a hundred years ago. He has adapted himself to the times, and in order to secure practical results from his ministry is ready if necessary to defy conventionalities and instigate hitherto unheard-of customs.

Clergymen of other days held a superstitious fear of innovations, and hedged themselves about with a wall of long-approved theories, methods, and doctrines, not daring to venture a step along the path of originality for fear of losing the respect of their followers and lessening their influence for good.

Now all this is changed, and ministers of religion, even in this country, are changing their tactics. One preaches to a congregation attired in faultless evening dress. Another engages a popular actress to deliver a recitation in his church. Whether the end justifies these means is a matter open to much difference of opinion. But it is certain that as yet this country is but a beginner in such things in comparison with America. There the minister of religion is at least as up-to-date as any other public man. He has developed with the times, and, instead of putting forth every effort to tread the narrow path which those who went before him marked out, he courageously steps aside and maps out a course for himself. Results shown by the recent religious census prove that in no period of time since the settling of America have the numerous churches of the United States had such large and ever-increasing congregations.

The original and even startling pulpit devices inaugurated by the ministers to attract and hold congregations are numerous and interesting, and show a comprehensive understanding of human nature.

The minister who announced that he would

deliver his sermons in a "red robe" succeeded in arousing the curiosity of all within his vicinity and in drawing large crowds to his church. Still more daring and original is the man who illustrates his sermons with oil-paintings shown, and even executed, in the pulpit. The clergyman whose church is non-sectarian, and who says that he lays claim to no church or particular congregation, has gained many converts and is doing good work. The Rev. C. H. Tyndall announces that he illustrates Bible truths by electricity, and has proved himself a leader in the ranks on the great march of progress by introducing wireless telegraphy into his church.

The church with a roof-garden is well attended and has an original man at its head, one who realizes that the hot days of summer frequently destroy the good done during the balmy, soul-inspiring days of spring, and who has braved criticism and established codes by building a cool retreat on the roof of his church where open-air services are held.

A California church which has its choral services conducted by a Chinese choir understands that the people of the twentieth century clamour

for novelty, something to capture the attention and hold the interest. In this class might also be mentioned a church in the city settled by William Penn, where lady ushers show strangers to a pew.

The latest pulpit device of this kind, and one more original, perhaps, than any of the rest, is that inaugurated by the Rev. Mr. Karns, of Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania. He is pastor of the Epworth Methodist Episcopal Church, and has by his hard work and originality raised his charge from the mission state to that of a large and ever-increasing congregation. He created quite a sensation recently by publishing a newspaper announcement that he would pay each person who attended his Sunday morning services. The success of his plan was fully demonstrated by the crowded church. Mr. Karns does not pay his congregation without an end to gain, but



THE REV. A. KARNS, WHO PAID HIS CONGREGATION.
From a Photo.

not a particle of light was shed on the pastor's scheme until he read from Matthew the parable of the man who, travelling in a far country, delivered to his servants his goods, giving to one a single talent, to another five, and to a third ten. Following the sermon, which merely suggested the pastor's purpose, Mr. Karns explained under what conditions the money would be given away. His object was to cancel a long-standing debt, and already the success of his original method

of achieving this end is assured. From a member of his congregation he received a sum of money a short time ago with the injunction that it should be given away in a manner best calculated to do the most good. As the sum was small Mr. Karns was in a quandary as to the best way of investing it. While pondering upon the subject the idea of using it to pay the church debt came to him like an inspiration. He secured a number of envelopes, upon which he had printed, "This is your talent. Don't wrap it up in a napkin but use it. Your love for the success of the cause will determine your efforts. Harness up this talent and make it pull in others." Into each of these envelopes was slipped one cent. The ten mills of this copper coin represented ten talents, and after the envelopes were distributed the recipients were instructed to invest the money found therein, adding to it first, if they saw fit, or utilizing just the original one cent in such a

manner that in a given time the amount would have multiplied a hundredfold. The idea was a lucky one. The congregation of Mr. Karns's church is not wealthy, and very likely each member would hesitate long

before donating a useful sum towards wiping out the debt, but each immediately was captivated by the novel scheme for raising money, and all set to work with a will to make the pastor's idea a success.

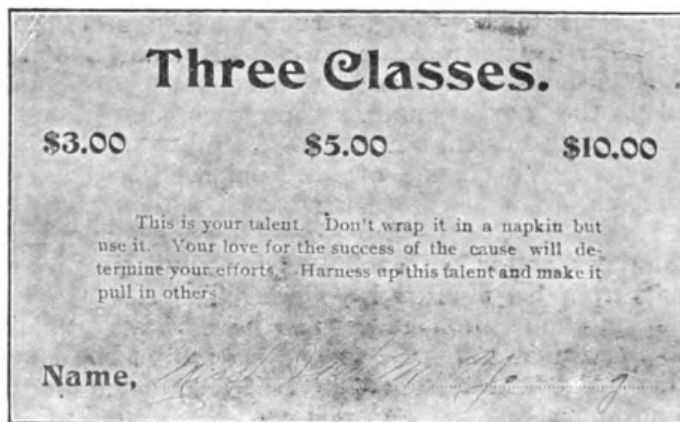
After service the congregation met in the vestry to devise ways

and means of first increasing, then properly investing, their capital. They formed themselves into classes, members of the first section pledging themselves to increase their one talent to a hundred; Class 2 consisted of those who promised to devise a way of returning \$2 in place of the present sum in hand,

one cent; the third class saw their way clear to invest their money so as to make it yield \$3, and members of the \$5 and \$10 divisions pledged themselves each one to return the amount signified by the name of their section at the general meeting, which will be held about the middle of September.

The plans for making money which the congregation conceived were amusing, and almost equalled in originality their pastor's innovation.

Five dollars capital seemed at first a very small amount with which to raise enough money to cancel a church debt of some hundreds of dollars; but if each of the five hundred persons receiving an envelope



ONE OF MR. KARNS'S "TALENT" ENVELOPES.



MR. KARNS'S CHURCH, THE DEBT ON WHICH WAS WIPED OFF BY HIS
From a [Photo.]
INGENIOUS SCHEME.

containing the one cent returns it with its contents doubled two hundredfold, that would make a total of \$1,000, and as many have pledged themselves to earn twice that sum it can be readily seen that the debt will not only be wiped out but that a substantial surplus will also remain in the church treasury. This merely proves what a little originality and courage to set aside conventionalities will accomplish—how it will solve that all-trying problem of money-raising. What matters it whether the methods to secure success, so long as they be honest, are put forth in the market or the pulpit?

“I’ll wager \$1,000 that I can gain fifteen converts within two weeks in any church lent to me,” was the startling proposition made by Mr. Duke M. Farson, the banker-minister, a short time ago. A bet made by a man of the cloth! The idea was alarming at first, but upon giving it careful consideration the pastor of the First Methodist Church of Chicago took up the challenge and turned over his church to Mr. Farson.

This banker-preacher is a revivalist of great renown, and although he has a church of his own he believes that the ministers of to-day need stirring up. He thinks they are too much hampered by conventionalities, and in order to arouse them to enthusiasm and to gather the people he laid this strange wager.

Mr. Farson does not confine the proposition to one church: he is willing to extend the offer indefinitely. He feels pretty safe in venturing this, for his powers as a revivalist have been frequently tested and proved irresistible. If the church which accepts the challenge loses, so to speak, it will be

richer by fifteen members; if Mr. Farson fails to win the converts the church will have \$1,000 added to its treasury.

The banker-revivalist is a very interesting and original character, and although a busy man in the world of money-making, with several big enterprises demanding his constant attention, he still finds time for religious duties and has been a prominent factor in some of the greatest revivals that have ever swept the United States.

About two years ago he built a church, a beautiful structure with a seating capacity of about two hundred persons, and it is the proud boast of the creator that the church is the scene of a permanent revival, and that its prosperous condition is due to the fact that it is run on strictly up-to-date principles. Certain is it that no preacher ever drew larger crowds than has Mr. Farson been collecting since his bet. There is something exciting in a contest of any kind which always draws a crowd, and Mr. Farson realized that when he made

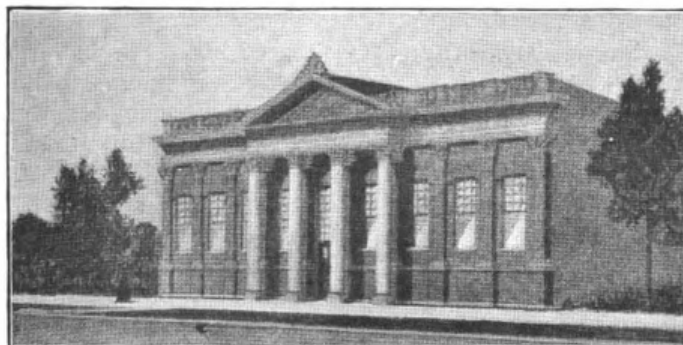
his startling announcement.

At Cincinnati, in the United States, Dr. Robbins, of Lincoln Park Baptist Church in that town, determined to provide a nursery in connection with his church in order that babies might be taken care of whilst the mothers attended the services. He had for this purpose one of the galleries of the church fitted up with cots, in which the babies can sleep peacefully and leave the mothers to take part in the public worship. Should any of

the babies awake, a trained nurse is immediately at hand to soothe and quiet it off to sleep again. There is also a nursery in connection with a church at Brooklyn. It is situated in the basement, and along the walls are cribs



THE REV. D. M. FARSON, WHO MADE THE EXTRA-ORDINARY WAGER. [From a Photo.]



THE CHURCH IN WHICH THE REV. D. M. FARSON WAS TO GAIN FIFTEEN CONVERTS IN TWO WEEKS OR FORFEIT ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS. [From a Photo.]

and baby carriages for the infants, while for older children toys of all sorts are provided, and the little ones are under the care of voluntary nurses. Even the question of food has been provided for.

This, as can be readily seen, will prove a great inducement to the mothers, and many who could not leave their little ones alone long enough to attend church will now be able to enjoy a morning service with a free mind, knowing that the children are being well cared for.

The Rev. M. L. Sornborger, of the Carondelet Christian Church, St. Louis, Missouri, is the only preacher known who gives his congregation pictorial sermons from oil-paintings and drawings which he himself executes. He discovered that his congregation was diminishing in numbers, and conceived this method of bringing back the delinquent ones and of gaining new members. He draws maps or sketches Biblical scenes while delivering a sermon, and brings vividly before the people the life of Christ by showing them huge oil-paintings, his own work, descriptive of the text from which he preaches.

This new departure from the beaten and long-trodden paths of the regulation methods of preaching in a dry, prosaic manner, merely presenting the Scriptures to the people in the language of the present with a few thoughts and theories of the speaker added, caused quite a stir among the ministry and people of the town, and Mr. Sornborger was severely censured for "trying to turn a church service into a week-day entertainment." But having

the courage of his convictions, and feeling sure that he was working in the right direction, he continued to illustrate his sermons and make the Sunday services as attractive as possible.

At first the congregation was small and composed chiefly of those who came from curiosity, but in a short time the curious ones became interested and brought their friends, and in a few months the members had more than doubled in number. The sermons were plain, simple, straightforward talks, illustrated in a most beautiful manner. All the terrifying scenes were omitted in

Mr. Sornborger's sermons, and he told the story of Christ's life on earth in such a manner as to bring forward the purity of the Saviour, the nobility of His character, and the loving-kindness shown by His deeds.

This method of congregation-luring worked like a charm. Attracted first by the novelty of the thing, the people flocked to criticise, but they remained to enjoy. Mr. Sornborger reasons that to hold a congregation a minister must make his discourses interesting and entertaining as well as

instructive. He is very democratic, both in theory and practice, believing that all men are created equal. His sermons are not known by that name, but are styled talks or lectures. This up-to-date disciple of Christ maintains that kindred emotions govern all mankind. He therefore selects passages from the Bible best calculated to appeal to the highest feelings of every member of his congregation. He claims that many of the word-pictures found in the Bible are vague and beyond the power of the mind to grasp on the instant,



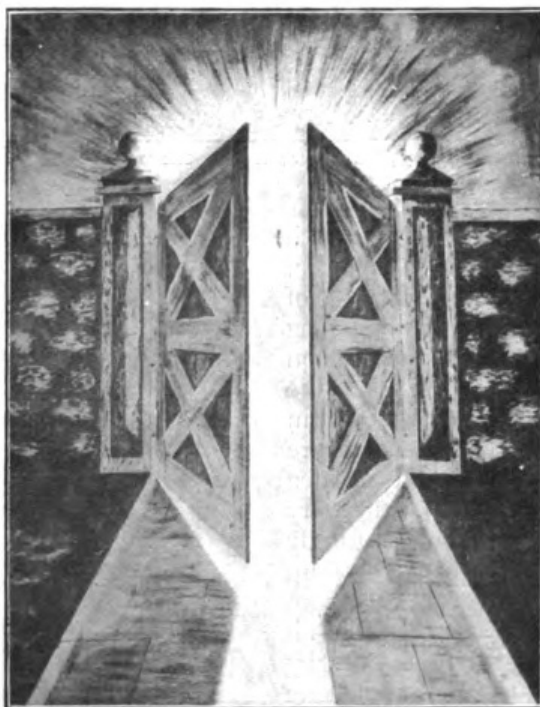
THE REV. M. L. SORNBORGER, WITH ONE OF HIS LARGEST PICTURES,
From a] REPRESENTING THE CRUCIFIXION. [Photo.

unless assisted in some material way. Consequently he gives long and earnest thought to these passages, and then reproduces with pencil or brush upon the canvas the picture therein given before presenting the theme to the congregation. Thus the eye as well as the mind is appealed to, and the two working together form an adequate conception of scenes which mere words alone would fail to convey.

The first painting presented by Mr. Sornborger was a huge canvas 10ft. by 14ft., illustrating "Jesus' Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem." He endeavoured to give the atmosphere of the times and the character of the people. The innovation proved so successful that Mr. Sornborger continued to paint pictures to illustrate his sermons, and he frequently constructs maps and charts during the course of his talks, making clear any point which seems at all obscure. These sermons, illustrated in the pulpit, leave a lasting impression upon the minds of the congregation. Undoubtedly an audience remembers scenes shown in colour and form, as well as by words, long after those depicted by mere verbal eloquence are forgotten. The memory seldom loses a picture once shown to the eye.

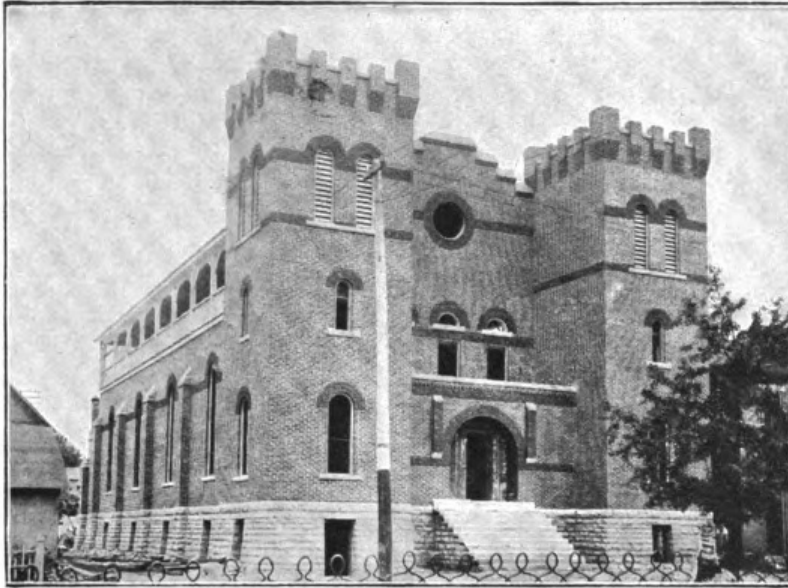
After the sense of sight next in importance is that of hearing. Music is the magic which attracts a crowd when everything else fails, and a church with a good choir is nearly always sure of a large congregation. When novelty is added to quality the result is bound to be gratifying, if the end in view is that of attracting numbers. A church choir composed exclusively of Chinese vocalists and accompanied on the organ by a young Chinese matron is one of the unique practical results of Christian efforts in San Francisco. At the Presbyterian Chinese Church, in Stockton Street, a Chinese congregation composed of men, women, children, and

infants in arms attend worship every Sunday. The musical service is rendered by a double quartette of male and female voices. To accomplish this result has required years of zeal and hope, but the Rev. S. M. Condit and his missionary wife have known no wavering in their efforts. At every service Dr. Condit presides. In 1866, when Dr. Loomis effected a church organization, he found difficulty in bringing the men and women together for worship. There was a religious and social chasm that the men shrank from crossing. Concessions were made, and the women were allowed to worship behind screens and curtains. When, in 1870, Dr. Condit came to work as a Chinese missionary, curtains and screens finally disappeared. Then the converts became more confident. But it was not until a choir was organized that they really took hold of the work with enthusiasm. They now have a flourishing church, which is attended not only by the Chinese converts, but which enrolls upon its membership list many Americans.



"GATES AJAR"—ONE OF MR. SORNBORGER'S PULPIT-PICTURES.
From a Photo.

popularity of open-air services has for many years been growing, and the Rev. E. B. Widger, pastor of the Central Christian Church, conceived the idea of adding to the new church a place where services could be held in the open air. The suggestion gained favour among the congregation, and when the new building was erected it was adorned by a roof-garden where Divine service could be held in the summer, especially on Sunday evenings, and church entertainments given when it is too hot to sit comfortably indoors. The garden is covered by a slate roof for protection in case of a sudden storm. The sides are open except for a screen wiring, which is stretched entirely around the garden as a discouragement to insects and a preventive against possible accidents.



THE CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF INDIANA, WHICH HAS A ROOF-GARDEN FOR SERVICES.
From a [Photo.]

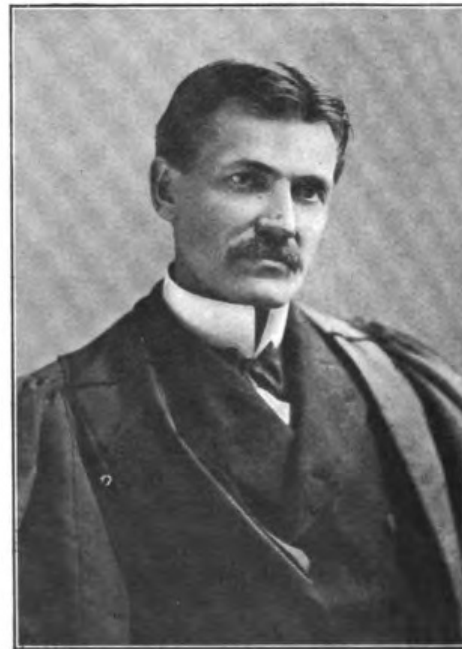
The idea of a roof-garden connected with the church, or rather as a part of the church, was adopted by Mr. Widger as a means of drawing and holding a congregation during the hot summer months. The innovation met with little or no opposition. When the garden was first opened the days were warm and everyone was eager for a place where open-air services could be held, and the idea of the roof-garden has so far met with every expectation. The church proper is beautifully situated, being located in a thinly-built-up portion of the city and on a slight elevation, so that the breezes sweep over it from all four points. The roof-garden is 53ft. by 75ft., and has a seating capacity of about one thousand. The floor resembles a steamer deck and is highly polished. The roof is one-fourth pitched and is of heavy and substantial slate. It is supported by seven posts, 8in. by 8in. and 9½ft. apart. The plate which finishes the top of these posts for the support of the rafters at the wall-edge is 9ft. in depth.

The garden is surrounded by a balustrade 3½ft. high, finished with elaborately carved brackets at all four sides. Inside shutters, which can be removed at will, are provided for use in severe storms or unexpected cold spells. The auditorium contains a movable platform, which extends across the room nearest the highest tower of the church. There are three stairways leading to the garden, one from each turret. The little inclosures which are formed by these towers are used as cloak-rooms. The ladies of the parish have taken quite an interest in the garden, and have made it beautiful

with potted plants and vines.

The Rev. A. W. Hobson, "the Man in Red," is attracting a great deal of comment just now. He preached his first sermon at Lyons, Nebraska, twenty years ago, but four years of his ministerial life were spent in Pueblo, Colorado. He appears in the pulpit clad in a red robe. Not long ago he purchased the church building in which he conducts services. He performs the necessary janitor service, is his own sexton, and makes whatever repairs there may be needed. He also provides light and heat. It is Mr. Hobson's boast that he never takes a collection. His church is supported by free-will offerings.

Until he entered the pulpit clad in a red robe, and announced his intention of wearing the same while conducting Sunday services,



THE REV. C. H. TYNDALL, WHO USES WIRELESS TELEGRAPHY IN HIS CHURCH.
From a [Photo.]

his church was a small one. The originality of Mr. Hobson's departure from the beaten path caught the eye of the people in that vicinity, and through his courageous efforts he has succeeded in making his charge a large and prosperous one.

With breathless interest a large and fashionable congregation watched the practical illustration by wireless messages given by the Rev. Dr. C. H. Tyndall, who preached a powerful and interesting sermon on "Wireless Telegraphy and its Spiritual Similitudes" in the Dutch Reform Church of New York. The demonstrating in the church of this newly-discovered science proved Dr. Tyndall to be a thoroughly progressive man. Surrounded by batteries and other electrical appliances, comprising a complete set of apparatus similar to that used by Marconi, the preacher stood in his pulpit and delivered his unique discourse. Dr. Tyndall sent and received from different parts of the church messages by wireless telegraphy, explaining the system to his congregation and pointing his Bible truths. The experiment was a complete success, and besides proving the value of the science it accomplished the thing which Mr. Tyndall has most at heart, that of interesting his people.

The First Baptist Church of Columbus, Ohio, has a pastor who utilizes the telephone in his Sunday services. As many members of his parish were ill and could not attend the services Mr. Barbour consulted the officers of the Telephone Company of that city and made arrangements that enabled him to reach every absent member of his congregation while preaching to those present in the church. An ordinary transmitter is placed on a small table beside which Mr. Barbour stands while preaching

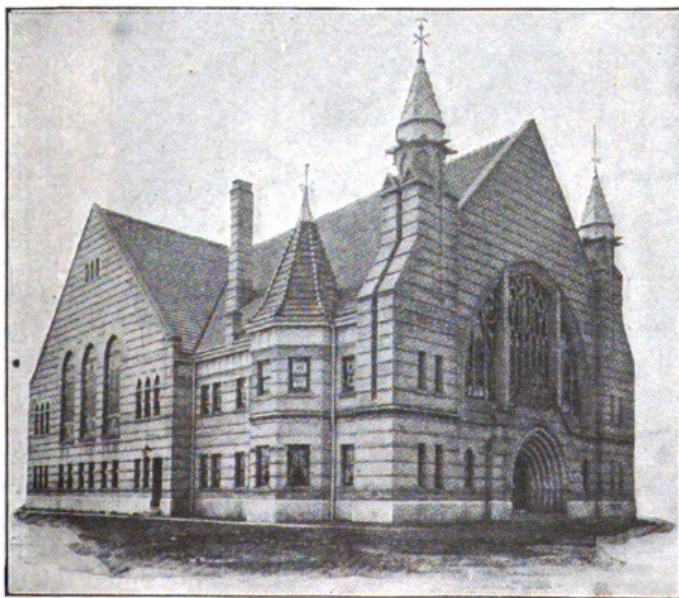
or reading. The organ and choir are behind the pulpit in a direct line with the transmitter, and the music as well as the rest of the service is distinctly heard by all connected with the church by telephone. Hours before the service begins requests to be connected with the church commence to come to the central office, for as yet only a limited number can use the line, although switch-boards have been made which enable one listener to hang up the receiver without cutting off the rest. Besides those who use the telephone because illness prevents them from actually attending a service there are a vast number who are barred from attending the church by business duties, who eagerly listen to the service over the wires. The novelty of the thing has interested many who for years have not listened to a sermon, and who now

regularly set aside half an hour, at least, every Sunday in which to enjoy this remarkable telephone service. It is not a church. It is a movement to supplement church work by an approach on broad moral planes to intelligent men and women who hold aloof from Established Church lines. It is intended to affect public sentiment and to make a religious atmosphere. Not being a church, it has no regular church membership, nor a church organization other than that of an incorporation to insure public confidence.

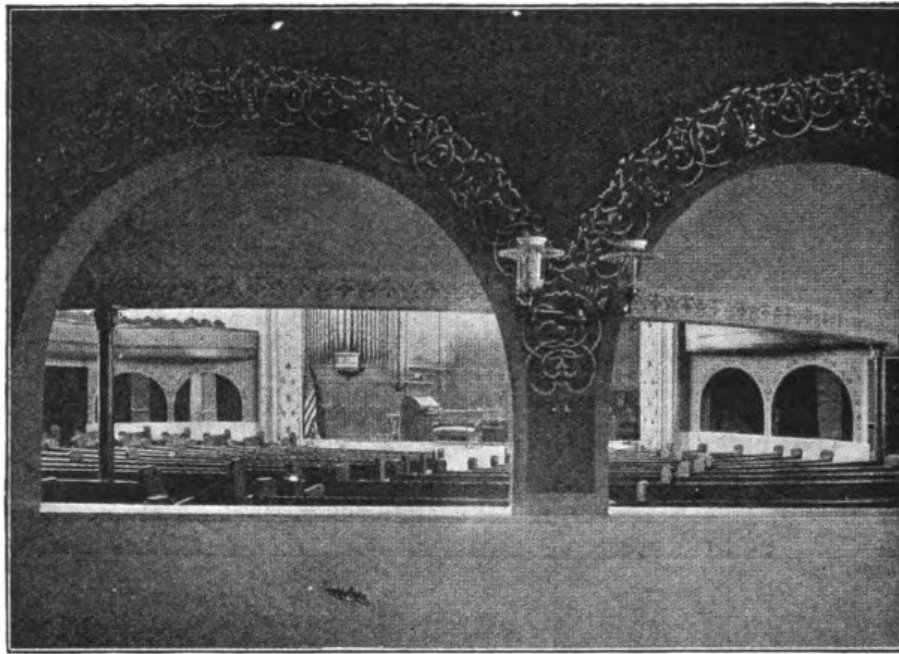
This is the way in which the Rev. Thomas Edward Barr characterizes the work of the "People's Pulpit," which now, after several months in the experimental stage, is estab-



THE REV. MR. BARBOUR, WHO USES A TELEPHONE
[From a] IN HIS CHURCH. [Photo.]



From a] EXTERIOR OF THE TELEPHONE CHURCH. [Photo.]



From a]

INTERIOR OF THE TELEPHONE CHURCH, SHOWING POSITION OF THE INSTRUMENT.

[Photo.

lished on a permanent basis, with many of Milwaukee's leading men lending their names and support to further the movement so successfully begun. Mr. Barr has no especial creed, neither has he one particular congregation to whom he preaches Sunday after Sunday. His services are purely non-sectarian, and are at present held in a large theatre. The attendance at Mr. Barr's services is representative of every form of religious faith and non-faith, and it is peculiar in two respects. In the first place, there has been a preponderance of men—a condition hard to find in any church in the city. In the second place, there has been a surprisingly large number of persons having no regular church who have been regular attendants; though it is equally true that few congregations in the city present a higher average of culture and intelligence. By this daring procedure Mr. Barr has brought more persons in touch with the Word of God than any other one minister in America. He draws those who would, if it were not for the "People's Pulpit," spend Sunday in a round of gaiety, for many

members of his congregation belong to that class of people which the orthodox Church repels rather than attracts.

Reading, Pennsylvania, is noted for its up-to-date ministers who have devised original schemes for holding their congregations.

Chief among the progressive pastors of this city is the Rev. Dr. Richard Harcourt, head of the People's Methodist Church, who has become famous for advancing novel ideas. His last innovation is that of offering an inducement of one gold dollar to mothers to have their children baptized. This dollar will be deposited in one of the local trust companies, at compound interest, in the name of the child christened, and is not to be drawn until the child is twenty-one years of age. • This offer extends beyond Dr. Harcourt's own parish, to any person who may care to present



THE REV. T. E. BARR, WHOSE PRESENT CHURCH IS
A THEATRE.

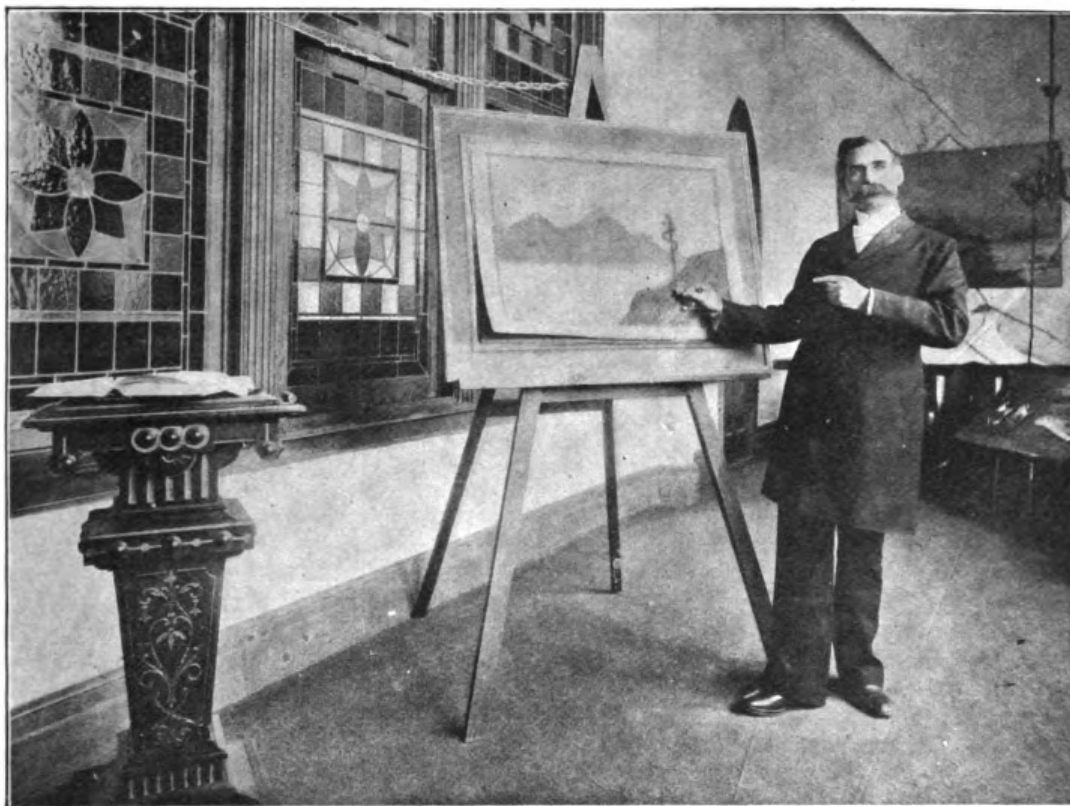
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[Photo.

their child for baptismal privileges. Dr. Harcourt bases this remarkable plan on a passage of Scripture, which states that Wise Men of the East presented the infant Jesus with gold, incense, and myrrh.

The Rev. W. E. Needham, of New York, stands high among the divines who have originated remarkable devices for attracting a congregation. Mr. Needham is known as "the chalk-talk preacher." He is

is a sigh of regret when they are erased to make room for others. It is no unusual thing for Mr. Needham to execute as many as ten of these huge drawings during a morning sermon. He has a true hand and an



From a]

THE REV. W. E. NEEDHAM EXECUTING ONE OF HIS "CHALK-TALKS."

[Photo.

pastor of the fashionable Calvary Baptist Church in Brooklyn and has done good work in this parish, which consists of men and women who are so satiated with both social and religious novelties that it is a most difficult thing for a pastor to interest them. Having a gift for drawing and a fertile imagination, as well as being liberal in his views, Mr. Needham gained favour in the eyes of his congregation by his latest innovation, which is proving very successful. He illustrates his sermons by drawings upon a black-board, which he executes during his discourse. The black-board is a huge one, placed in the pulpit itself, and with coloured chalks the pastor sketches the scenes he describes. Some are so beautiful that there

artist's eye for the blending of colours, so the effects produced are frequently beautiful. In order to vary the programme as much as possible, and thus prevent the novelty from wearing off too soon, Mr. Needham frequently gives his entire evening sermon by means of these drawings, not uttering a word, but allowing the pictures to tell the story. Both morning and evening services are largely attended, and this work proves most successful in the Sunday-school. The young folks and children enjoy the pictured lessons, and it stands to reason that the attention of the Sunday-school classes will be held much more closely by these "chalk-talks" than would be possible by mere word-sermons.