

Where the CHURCHES ADVERTISE their goods

How A WIDEAWAKE SAN JOSE MINISTER Used Printer's Ink To Fill His Empty Pews And Why all his FELLOW PASTORS Followed Suit

How the Preachers of San Jose Came to Use Printer's Ink to Fill Their Pews, and the Story of the "Ad" That Was Echoed Round the World

By Franklin Hichborn

WHILE certain churches of San Jose reeled—not with the most encouraging success, certainly without sensation—upon sermon and song service, with an occasional church social thrown in for luck and good measure, to draw worshippers, the Second Presbyterian Church of that city pinned—or rather, not to mix metaphors, stuck—its faith to printers' ink, filled its pews and astonished—not to say paralyzed—the community.

Many a run-down business house has hitched the establishment—not to a star, as Emerson advised—but to the all-powerful display "ad," and has been dragged out of the rut and threatened bankruptcy at the same time. But it remained for the Second Presbyterian Church to escape the ordinary church rut and empty pews through the straight, direct and not at all narrow path that leads through the advertising columns of the daily newspaper to the realms of success, be the advertiser the seller of shoes or the preacher of the gospel.

The Second Presbyterian Church advertised; the advertising columns of the San Jose papers testify to that. The Second Presbyterian Church of San Jose found that it pays to advertise; the church packed to the doors each Sunday night where formerly there were empty pews establishes that. If further proof were necessary the fact that all the other Protestant churches of San Jose have gone to advertising in self-defense, lest the Second Presbyterian draw their congregations away from them, drives in the proof that printers' ink is most efficacious even in church work. And if all this fails to satisfy the doubter we have the statement of the pastor of the original advertising church, the Rev. Thornton A. Mills, who testifies enthusiastically that church money invested in printers' ink is money well invested.

"We have the best thing in the world," said the minister of the church that advertises when approached on the subject, meaning salvation, of course. "Why not get it before the public in the most practical way; buy space in the newspapers and advertise what we have to offer? Our church has tried it for four years. It pays. With the help of printers' ink we have made our church a success."

Preached to Empty Pews.

Up to four years ago the San Jose Second Presbyterian Church was noted more for the social standing and solid citizenship of its members than for the size of its congregation. Situated rather out of the beaten path of Sunday night travel, the Sunday evening attendance was discouragingly small. The pastor saw other churches more conveniently located filled to the doors every Sunday night, while he preached to empty pews. The people of his congregation were devoted, earnest workers, were on hand at morning service and were never slow on the contribution question, but they wouldn't or couldn't show up at evening service, and didn't; and that to most ministers would have been an end on't. But not to the Rev. Thornton A. Mills. His church was comfortable, his people cordial, the music good, the sermons—modestly prevented him passing on the sermons. But leaving the sermons entirely out of the question, the combination was one well calculated to draw hearers. The problem was to draw them. The idea occurred to him to employ cleverly written church notices. But before he could do very much drawing along this line he ran slam-bang up against the newspaper business manager.

I have two versions of what happened when Rev. Mr. Mills and the then business manager of the morning paper at San Jose, L. E. Bontz, met on the question of advertising—that of Mr. Mills and that of Mr. Bontz. Bontz, each agrees, had evolved a scheme to save space in the Saturday paper by running all church notices in the Sunday magazine of his publication. Mr. Mills had gone to see him about it. "I told Mr. Bontz," said Mr. Mills, "that I did not want to have my church notice printed on Sunday; that I didn't want my church made an excuse for anybody to buy a Sunday paper. He

told me that he didn't see what he could do about it, and I suggested that we pay him for a notice to go in on Saturday. The price of reading notices proved too high. Then he suggested that a border around the notice would make it a display advertisement, and that I could have it at display advertising rates. I accepted this and entered into a contract with him for the upper right hand corner of page 7 of his paper, where our advertisement was to appear every day in the week except Sunday."

What the Manager Said.

"The churches of San Jose," said Mr. Bontz in giving his version of the incident, "like the churches of most cities, are quite eager for free notices in newspapers, given as news, which, of course, is not news of such general interest as to justify its publication. After I had been tackled two or three times by Mr. Mills for notices of this kind I sprang on him the idea of making a regular contract for a year for display advertising, in which they were at liberty to use whatever copy they chose to print. The idea struck Mr. Mills favorably, and after another conference or two with the trustees of the church he came in and signed up a year's contract for advertising."

Community Scandalized.

Their churches were certainly as worthy of consideration, said they, as the Second Presbyterian. But they found difficulty in getting so much as a short notice in the columns of Mr. Bontz's paper, and that only on Sunday, in an obscure corner, where people had to hunt to find it. But here was the Second Presbyterian Church with a displayed notice occupying many inches of space on the most prominent page of the paper, in the most conspicuous place on a weekday, and not one weekday only but every weekday.

Bontz in self-defense told the indignant gentlemen that the Presbyterian church notice was paid advertising, and that any or all of them were welcome to an equal amount of space at the same rates. The majority of the ministers took no more kindly to the explanation than to the apparent favoritism. They had entered Mr. Bontz's office indignant; they left it scandalized. For a church to advertise—and pay for the advertising—was a thing unheard of; therefore it was wrong. Yet there were some who rather favored Mr. Mills' method. The town took sides. The press of Santa Clara County and even of San Francisco took the matter up editorially.

Two or three ministers came out bravely to Mr. Mills' defense. Said Dr. C. W. Evans, then pastor of the First Methodist Church in San Jose: "If I had a fund at my disposal for that purpose I would keep a standing display advertisement in the local papers."

Would Advertise on Satan.

But it was Rev. H. M. Tenney of the First Congregational Church of the First who came most emphatically to Mr. Mills' standard. "If I knew that Satan were going around town," said Mr. Tenney, "and I could get at him, I would paste a placard on his back advertising his services."

Judicious advertising of the work of the church increases the attendance.

"Ad" That Startled the World.

As a usual thing Mr. Mills writes his own advertisements, but during his absence one day this duty was left to an enthusiastic lady member of his congregation, whose faith in the value of printer's ink is unbounded. She wrote an advertisement that was echoed around the world. It read:

FOUND ASLEEP.
So you slept in church yesterday, did you? Well, it was rather a drowsy day, but if you had been at the Second Presbyterian Church you wouldn't have dozed. The pastor preached two earnest, enthusiastic sermons, and the music was alive and inspiring. Mrs. Hillman-Smith sang that old favorite, "The Holy City," to the enjoyment of all, and rendered two anthems. An old-timer there looked around and remarked to a bystander: "Well, I declare, I thought that I knew every one who comes to this church, but the last few weeks I didn't seem to know more than half of them."

San Jose had settled down to take church advertising as a matter of course, but that advertisement paralyzed the town. It was copied from one end of the world to the other. A paper published in Scotland had offered a prize of five pounds for the most extraordinary advertisement of the year. The "Found Asleep Ad" was cut from some London paper that had copied it, sent to Scotland and took the prize. Incidentally, it reopened the whole church advertising controversy in San Jose; but the churches had grown to look upon such advertising as a pretty good thing; anyhow, it had become too firmly rooted to be undone by a single sensation-creating incident, and church advertising at San Jose continued.

Churches Show Effects.

"Does church advertising pay?" said Mr. Mills, when the question was put to him at his study in San Jose last week. "Of course it pays. Our church shows that. As you know, we are a little out of the way of things, and while our morning congregations were all that could be asked, attendance at the evening services before we began



REV. THORNTON A. MILLS



REV. E. J. TENNEY WHO ADVOCATES RELIGIOUS PUBLICITY

to advertise was decidedly small. By the aid of advertising we have succeeded in filling the church Sunday nights. And as further evidence that it pays all the other Protestant churches of San Jose have taken it up, and pay for space in the papers precisely the same as our church is doing. Even the Episcopal church is advertising now. But, by the way, we do not call it advertising; we refer to our published notices as 'announcements.'

"What is the church advertising that pays best?" was asked.

The Best Advertisement.

"The advertising that pays best," answered Mr. Mills, "is honest advertising; that is, advertising that does not over-announce. The advertising that takes here in San Jose is that which is dignified but at the same time has enough of the extraordinary about it to attract attention. While it must steer clear of the theater advertising style, it must be interesting. There must be something in it that will interest people outside the churches. There should not be the suggestion of the church notice about it; church notices are for the church notice column. But the great essential is not to over-advertise. Avoid the clothing store method of exaggeration. You must be prepared to deliver the goods that you advertise. Whenever you advertise a musicale, a sermon or a speaker and do not come up to what you promise more harm than good is done. You may draw an audience that time, but you will not the next."

"The substance of church advertising is about this: It is an attempt to attract the attention and secure the attendance of those who are not ordinarily interested in religion by announcements of a readable, sane and

dignified character. It is difficult to write such an advertisement, but it can be done, and we are doing it. "As a sample of an ideal church advertisement," continued Mr. Mills, "I consider that which we printed when Ellen Stone, the missionary, spoke in our church as good as any I could show you."

The announcement to which Mr. Mills referred reads as follows:

THE ONLY ONE.

The name of no living woman is so familiar through all the world as that of Ellen Stone, the devoted missionary who was held captive in the Balkan Mountains many months. She will tell her experiences with the brigands a week from tonight at the Second Presbyterian Church.

"We had something worth while to say," went on Mr. Mills, "and we said it directly and simply. It filled the church to the doors."

Church Display "Ads."

As samples of display "ads" the following are taken from Mr. Mills' scrap book:

THE CHURCH OF THE CORDIAL WELCOME

Otherwise Known as the SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. GOD'S WORK AND OURS

IN THE CELESTIAL EMPIRE. Stereopticon Illustrations. Services in care of the MEN'S CLUB.

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH Tomorrow Evening.

Here is another one:

HOW TO BE HAPPY! A Plain Answer to An Important Question.

Sabbath Evening. SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

"On what days of the week do you find it most profitable to use space?" was asked.

"We generally begin to make our announcements for Sunday on Friday."

Mr. Mills replied, "Sometimes on Thursday. If we have anything special we begin as early as Monday. The longer we advertise, the better the results. With the help of the papers here in San Jose we fill the churches full. It would be absolutely impossible to do so without the aid of the papers."

Such is the experience with printer's ink of the minister who advertised, believes in advertising and has results to show that such advertising pays. The visitor to San Jose who will open the San Jose morning paper at page seven, say on Friday or Saturday, will see there a column of church advertisements the like of which cannot be found perhaps anywhere else in the world. And even the most biased of us must admit that seldom is printer's ink put to better use.

America's Monument to Composer Verdi

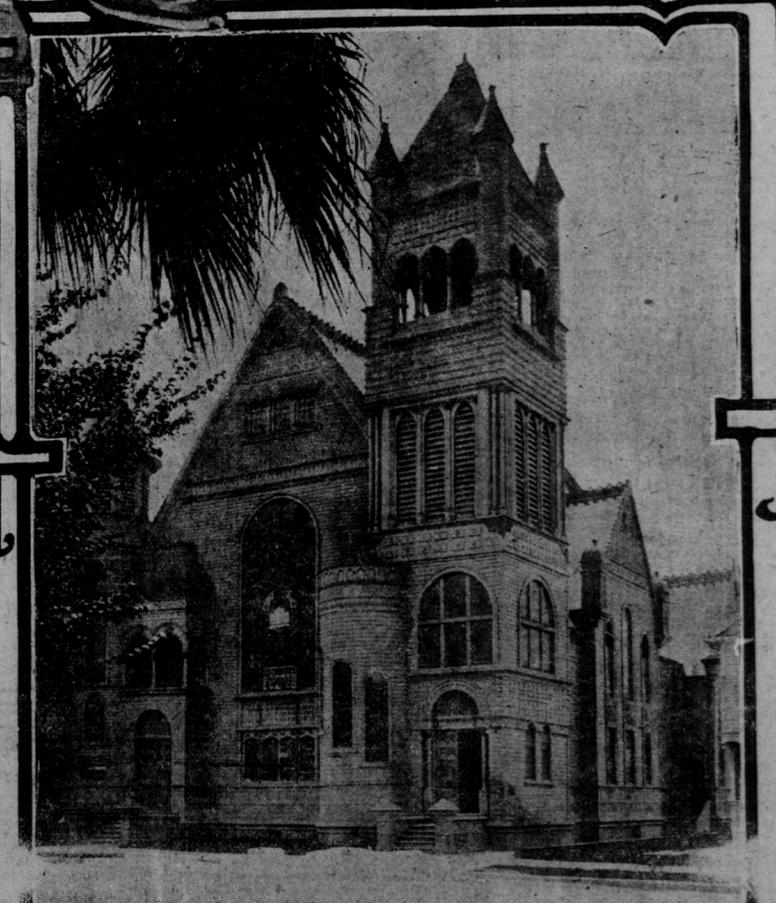
AS evidence of the high esteem in which the works of that famous composer of operas, Giuseppe Verdi, are held by Americans and as a tribute to the memory of their dead countryman, the Italian colony in the United States has had a beautiful monument carved and sent to New York to be unveiled on October 12.

Chevalier Pasquale Civiletti, a well known sculptor of Palermo, Italy, was chosen by the committee to execute this important commission. It has met with the approval of the Italians in charge of the monument fund and the Commissioner of Parks for the Borough of Manhattan, which will hold the Verdi memorial.

The monument is about twenty-five feet in height and is composed entirely of fine Carrara marble and dark tinted granite. On top of a round granite shaft which is capped by a laurel wreath, stands the imposing figure of Verdi as he looked in the heyday of his career.

The granite shaft on which the figure of the composer stands rests on a square base of the same dark stone, and surrounding the central column are four smaller figures, in Carrara marble, representing operatic creations of Verdi. They are "Otello," "Aida," "Falstaff" and "La Forza del Destino."

Soon after the death of Verdi, on January 25, 1901, Signor Charles Barsotti, the editor of an Italian newspaper, conceived the idea of collecting a subscription to perpetuate in marble the memory of Italy's favorite composer and the man whose operas were loved by the whole world. Contributions poured in from all parts of the United States from Italians who recently emigrated to this country and from those who have become American citizens. In the end \$20,000 was subscribed to the monument fund and the order for the sculpture and the design was given out. The monument has been finished now for some time and has been on view in Italy, where it was wrought. The commission appointed to decide upon its acceptance comprised American and Italian representatives of the two governments and sculptors.



SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SAN JOSE, WHICH IS ADVERTISED EVERY DAY