

Plutocracy's Preachers Imitate Bigelow.

If imitation is indeed the sincerest form of compliment, then has Herbert S. Bigelow been paid a compliment unstinted in its measure of fullness. His Peoples' Church meeting in the Cincinnati Grand Opera House is being copied by the Young Men's Christian Association. Some years ago the old Vine Street Congregational Church sold its building in Cincinnati and, pending the finding of an acceptable location has been holding meetings under its new name of the Peoples' Church in the Grand Opera House Sunday afternoons. For this he was assailed in the press and the pulpit. It was said to be the limit of unGodliness that even a Bigelow was not expected to go. It was socialistic, anarchistic, blasphemous, sacrilegious. It was doomed to failure. It would feel the rod. Nothing so sinful could survive. That was certain. A church in a theater!

But it did survive. It did more, it increased and multiplied its audience. Confusion! Bigelow preached as he had preached a new type of sermon. For instance, he made a twentieth century application of the parable of the Good Samaritan. The three thieves were various brands of Privilege. Dismay! It must be counteracted. But how? The Y. M. C. A. has a fine auditorium in its building, known as Sinton Hall. It was adequate to hold audiences as large as the Grand Opera House. But did they use it? They did not. Why not? It was not on a main thoroughfare, it was too far away from Bigelow. So this conservative, this endowed, this Christian institution, the Y. M. C. A., rented a theater, the Lyric Theater, exactly opposite the Grand Opera House, and two weeks ago began holding meetings on Sunday afternoon, on the Lord's day. Yes, they are in an unGodly theater on the Sabbath, the Christian Sabbath. Who did they get to speak? Debs? Some modern Bob Ingersoll? Bless you, no! They got a Christian minister, the Rev. Charles Frederick Goss. Surely he is at least a Unitarian? Wrong again. Dr. Goss is a member of the most rigid denomination of Protestants, the Presbyterian. Did he open with a sermon on the intermediate state of the dead? Not he. He spoke on "Joseph Heberle." Heberle was a workingman who advocated free text books and better shop conditions, a union man.

Why did he select that subject or rather why was it selected for him? To catch the workingmen who have been crowding the Grand Opera

House to hear that terrible Bigelow. Laudable enterprise. Anything sacrilegious about it? Not now. Is it cutting into Bigelow? It is not. It is advertising Bigelow. The American people have that saving grace, a sense of humor. They are laughing at the millionaires who are backing the Lyric theater meetings. Is Dr. Goss in on the deal? It is hard to believe he is, consciously. He is a highly respectable, learned, amiable gentleman who has devoted much time to approved reforms. This is the greatest thing he has done, proven that a Christian institution can hold a service in a theater on a Sunday afternoon. He has vindicated Bigelow.

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NATURAL LAW IN THE ECONOMIC WORLD.

Part Two.

The chief economic forces we are to consider briefly in this article are Competition and its opposites, Co-operation and Combination. In the popular mind the latter word carries with it an almost malevolent signification. This is unfortunate for the purposes of clear thinking since Co-operation and Combination mean much the same. The second indeed is but a more intense form of the first—is Co-operation perfected. With the introduction of modern machinery, steam and electricity, have come the mammoth industrial trust and business corporation. To some degree these are linked in popular apprehension as cause and effect. In this public opinion is essentially in error.

Doubtless the time has gone by when individual and isolated industry may be successfully carried on. To this later phase of industrial development machinery, steam and electricity have contributed, but that is a very different thing from saying that the baneful powers wielded by these industrial combinations are due to these inventions. If this is what Mr. Samuel Gompers meant when he said, "The trust is, economically speaking, the logical and inevitable development of our industrial system," he was talking as the Socialists talk, with as little faith in economic laws.

But, as we have intimated, Mr. Gompers' opinion is the popular one, and it is a view that has perverted most of the discussion on the vexed problem of industrial combinations. We shall see if we carefully examine the phenomena of trust formation how fallacious is the view so commonly held.

Combinations, both as to number and character,