

The essential characteristic of preaching is found in its being a testimony, and this applies also to that spiritual song in which the congregation testifies to its faith in thanksgiving, praise and prayer. Together with the faithful proclamation and reception of the word, hymns and songs form a main element of edification. Silent congregations are not a good sign. The chief requirement of a good hymn is not only to be poetical, but that the poetic element should be entirely subordinate to the purpose of edification, should contribute to and be lost sight of therein, that it should be unpretending, free from all self-chosen conceits, from that independence which belongs to secular poetry. All this applies equally to hymn tunes. If it is objectionable for a sermon to be brilliant at the expense of edification, it is equally so for hymns to sparkle with ingenious trickery or fantastic turns, to the injury of that poetic purity which is in this department an indispensable qualification, and to forfeit the characteristic of lowliness and piety. This is to betray a self-consciousness, a self-pleasing which comes of evil.

It belongs also to a good hymn that it can be sung by all, and it must, therefore, be congregational and orthodox. Nothing is less compatible with a hymn than the merely individual, or more out of place than the general Christian element to acquire, through the poetic mannerism of the style, a flavour of the poet's peculiarity, which is thus forced upon a congregation. From this point of view it may—*cum grano salis*—be said, that a good hymn should be so colorless as rather to resemble the lilies of the field than the pomp and glory of Solomon, though the latter may be far more attractive in the eyes of the multitude. The motley is in this case the objectionable; and if it has been said that "the motley is better than the pale," we may answer that neither is to be recommended, but that in certain cases the pale is the better of the two.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

3RD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY. JUNE 17TH, 1888.

"Death of Eli."

Passage to be read.—1 Samuel iv. 1-18.

In last lesson we saw how the inconsistent life of Eli's sons led to a terrible sentence upon them. (Compare Prov. xxix.1.) We saw, too, the warning conveyed,—to beware of the first deviations from the right path. To-day we pass on to notice the partial fulfilment of that terrible message, delivered by the man of God. It is one of the saddest of lessons. God's presence and protection withdrawn from Israel.

Disastrous Defeat.—The old enemies of Israel were again at war with them. A pitched battle is to be fought (v. 1.) No commander now to lead Israel to victory, so "Israel was smitten before the Philistines," with great slaughter (v. 2.) Their chief men met to talk over their defeat; they know how they had lost the battle, but why they did not care to discover. See what Joshua had done in a similar case. (Joshua v. 6.) But how differently the elders of Israel acted now (v. 3.) Could the Ark, a box made of wood and gold, save them? No, only God's presence could do that. They sent to Shiloh for the Ark. The people, encouraged, shout for joy, (v. 5.) Philistines afraid of the news (v. 7.) The battle rages for a short time, then Israel wavers, breaks, and flies. A great slaughter among the people, (v. 10); the day lost (v. 11.)

Dismal Tidings.—Where was Eli all this day? He had sad forebodings (v. 13.) No telegraph or telephone in those days, but the bad news reached Shiloh the same evening. It was known before the messenger had spoken a word (v. 12.) Eli heard the bitter wail that rose when the defeat was announced. He could not see the messenger, but he hardly needed to ask the cause of the cry. The dismal tidings are told him (v. 17.) "Israel is fled"—that is bad enough. "There has been a great slaughter"—this is not all. "Thy two sons are dead,"—worse and worse. "The Ark of God is taken," captured by the Philistines—his forebodings verified. This last blow more than he could bear, Eli falls back from his high seat, "his neck brake and he died," (v. 18.) Is not that a sad history? But notice,—Eli's sons did not become all bad at once. Often warned; but refused to listen, so God withdrew His presence. We should fear to lose God's presence. Let us see that our worship is real, true spiritual. Let us value our Church privileges; and let our earnest prayer be, "Lord abide with me."

"DEATH HAS SO MANY DOORS TO LET OUT LIFE."

sang an old time poet. In those days they had not discovered remedies that shut these doors. How different is Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, from the old time doses. Consumption or lung-scurf, is one wide door that it shuts, if taken in time. Don't waste a moment then, lest life slip through that open door.

DESERVED OFFICIAL RECOGNITION.

THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINATION OF BAKING POWDERS
—ROYAL OFFICIALLY REPORTED PURE.

The reports of the Government analysts, as made public from time to time in the official reports of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, form useful subjects for study. A great deal of attention is devoted to the examination of baking powders, and very properly so, for they are articles of general use, and many of them being so grossly adulterated all possible information should be given to enable consumers to distinguish between the good and the bad.

A large number of these articles have been analyzed, the samples being collected from dealers in all sections of the Dominion. The impurities found were principally alum and lime, both unwholesome. The alum is used in place of cream of tartar because of its low cost. The lime, both tartrate and sulphate being found, was present from the use of improperly refined cream of tartar.

The analysts found and reported the Royal Baking powder to be pure, free from lime, alum and phosphoric acid, and of high leavening strength. A complete analysis would undoubtedly have shown no baking powder except the Royal entirely free from some one of these objectionable ingredients. This, we presume, accounts for the lack of leavening power in the other powders, as sometimes complained of by the cook, and for the bitter taste found in the biscuits so frequently complained of by ourselves.

But aside from the inferiority of the work done by these powders, the physicians assure us that lime and alum taken into the system are injurious. Their physiological effects are indigestion, dyspepsia or worse evils.

The question naturally arises, why do these cheap baking powder makers use these things? Alum is three cents a pound, lime still cheaper, while cream of tartar costs thirty-five or forty. The reasons for the chemical purity of the Royal Baking Powder were recently given in the *New York Times*, in an interesting description of a new method for refining argols, or crude cream of tartar. It seems that it is only under this process that cream of tartar can be freed from the lime natural to it and rendered chemically pure; that the patents and plant for this cost the Royal Baking Powder Company about half a million dollars, and that they maintain exclusive control of the rights.

This official recognition of the purity and value of the Royal Baking Powder by the Government will add to the already wide popularity of that article, and deservedly so. This baking powder is now used, to the exclusion of all others, by the United States Government, its advertisements for supplies calling for it by name, as the continued tests of the official chemists show it to be much higher in strength and purer in quality than any other brand.

THE GREAT DISMAL SWAMP.

of Virginia, is one enormous quagmire of decayed vegetation, a region of gloom and desolation; but not more so than the human system when blocked up by decayed animal matter, which poisons the blood and brings gloom to an otherwise happy household. Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Purgative Pellets remove all waste matter, and give Nature a chance to build up.

"WHAT SHE COULD."

A poor crippled woman, living in a tiny room on the ground floor of a dingy house, could only move on her hands and knees, and had not stood upright for fifteen years. A lady, visiting the sufferer, was pitying her for her utter inability to do anything in the world. While she spoke two merry little children clattered into the room and seated themselves by the scrap of fire. "Do these little children belong to you?" asked the lady.

"No ma'am," was the reply, "they are my neighbor's children; she's just a poor washer-woman, and I look after her little ones to set her free to get a job of work. I can just do that you see; thank the Lord!"

"I ONLY WANT YOU."

NEARLY FOUR YEARS AGO I was going to spend the day in a large city. Before starting I said to my dear invalid sister, who is now in glory, satisfied with the fulness of her Father's house: "Can I buy anything for you, dear? I do want so much to bring you something from town." She interrupted my question, saying with such a sweet yearning look: "Nothing dear. Don't bring anything; I only want you. Come home as soon as you can." Her tender words rang in my ears all day—"I only want you;" and O, how often, since her bright entrance within the pearly gates, have her touching words and loving look returned to memory!

Well, dear friend, is not this, too, what a dear Saviour says to you? Do you not want sometimes to offer prayers, tears, almsgiving, deeds of kindness, sacrifices, earnest service and patient endeavor? But He, too, turns from all, and says, "I only want you." "My son, My daughter, give me thine heart."

No amount of service can satisfy the love which claims only the heart; "Lovest thou Me?" was his thrice repeated question to His erring disciple. Devotion of life, earnestness of service, fervent prayers, are only acceptable to Him as fruits of love. They are valueless without the heart. He says to each of us as my sainted sister said to me, "I only want you."

SINCERE BUT WRONG.

"If he is sincere in his belief, he has as good a chance of going to heaven as you have," said a church member to us the other day, who held and taught all kinds of strange doctrines contrary to God's Word.

This idea, that provided a man is sincere in his belief, no matter what it may be, God will safely admit him to the eternal city, is one of Satan's delusions eminently prevalent at the present day. Men seem to forget that Saul was sincere in his belief when he shut up the saints in prison; yea not only sincere, but "exceeding zealous" also. So were those who killed the Prince of Life, and although through ignorance they did it, God holds them responsible for their lack of knowledge, and that notwithstanding they were perfectly sincere in their convictions.

Had a bitten Israelite sincerely believed that he knew a better way than a simple glance at the brazen serpent, he would have died where he lay, and in like manner will the sinner go down to endless death if trusting in a self-appointed way, rather than in the one so plainly revealed in God's written Word.

Man says: Though I believe not, I shall be saved, provided I am sincere in my belief. God says: "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life but the wrath of God abideth on him." From all this we learn that it is of the utmost importance what we believe, or rather in Whom we believe. And as the One who offers us eternal life is no other than God's dear Son, how can we escape if we neglect His great salvation?—*Ex.*

EXCUSE ME.

"Excuse me," said Mr. Smith, pushing back his plate at the table of Mrs. Jones; "I can not eat with you any more." "Pray what is the trouble?" said Mrs. Jones; "is there nothing on my table that you can eat?" "O yes," said Mr. Smith, "but there is a dish I see over there that I never could relish." "Why not let that alone and take what you like, Mr. Smith, as that dish is just suited to some of my boarders." "It is against my principles," said Smith, "to eat at any table on which there is anything I dislike." "And it is against my principles," said Mrs. Jones, testily, "to run my boarding-house to suit the tastes of any one man, regardless of the tastes of others." This parable is commended to the subscriber who stops his paper, because he disagrees with one article he has found in it.