

execrable as anything can which is under the ban of law. It is almost without variation, mean, shabby and filthy. About the only thing in its favor is that it deprives the temperance orators of the joy of launching anathemas on the "Gilded dens of vice." Gilded! As much gilt as is usually found around the average farmer's pig-sty! Cobwebs on the walls, red calico curtains, bleached and faded, at the windows, unpainted pine boards, a thick coating of tobacco juice on the rough floor, and an odor that no man may define, this is a regulation Kansas "joint." The frequenters of these dens gather around what is called by courtesy the bar. They talk in the low tones of voice which guilt employs. They exchange mysterious glances and keep one eye upon the door. The act of drinking is without any token of sociability. With all the lethargy of the people, the liquor traffic is today in Kansas a despised, outlawed skulking, after-dark business, in which negroes and immoral whites are the chief proprietors. In saying this I speak of the State as a whole. I am far from denying that there are some places in Kansas where intoxicants are plentifully distributed, as there also are plenty of places where larceny and immorality defy the law. But we claim that the success or failure of no measure is determined by the failure of the citizens to carry, or not to carry, out the absolute spirit and intention of such a law. Go through the statutes in any land. Upon which one can we place our finger and say "this law has never been infringed in the smallest degree. Not one of the millions of citizens has ever crossed with its spirit or letter." Verily, if such a law can be found, we had better at once merge our congress and parliament into an autocracy and crown the framer of that law as supreme maker, interpreter and enforcer of all civil discipline!

What more reason has a man to pronounce the prohibition law a failure, if here and there, in dark alleys, in underground "burrows," a man is found who sells whiskey? Or if a whole county, or city should be wide open, is he justified in making the assertion? One has only to stand in Kansas city, Kansas, which is under prohibition, and look across the line, into Kansas city, Missouri, which is under a "high license," to thank God for prohibition and shut up talking. "Local Option," "Revenue from Saloons," etc. For nearly two years I have lived in a city of 12,000 inhabitants, and during that period I have seen but three men the worse for liquor. It has been sold, and yet so meagerly and darkly in comparison with other States that the "Phantom of Drink," has lost some of its terror. And all that I have said thus far concerning prohibition has been of its working while the temperance people were comparatively lax in their efforts. Not properly supported it has proved itself an effective measure.

To-day with an awakened public conscience and conviction standing back of it, it is proving itself, as near to a perfect law as any measure can well be. For the Kansan is not an easily satisfied being. Not until his State is ideal in law-abiding citizenship, as it is in climate and in products will he relax his efforts. And so it came to pass, that not many weeks past, there came forth an apostle of temperance preaching a "new gospel which is not a new gospel," that the "joint" must go. Mrs. Carrie Nation did not wait for the applause of church, W. C. T. U. or business man, but sang her song of temperance, and played her own accompaniment with delightful energy, upon the bottle and mirror of the jointist. And the result? Why to-day nearly all enlightened Kansas cries—"Amen!" and while dropping the accompaniment they are vigorously chanting the song. The success she has attained in starting a movement has grown only as an agitation can grow on Kansas soil. In 60 days a humble housewife has accomplished more with her hatchet than all the efforts made in the past by the friends of the law. An awakened and aroused conscience among the people now demands that the joint shall be no more.

The result of this is that to-day, we in Kansas are living under prohibition, sustained by a vigorous public sentiment. In nearly every town and city in the State, great mass meetings have been called, and the liquor men have been given from 24 to 48 hours to "move out," and they have invariably done so. The druggists have given in their "permits," and in towns where such action has been taken, not a public saloon or joint is to be found. A man who gets a drink to-day in most of our Kansas towns, has to risk his reputation, by fraternizing with out-lawed "hoot leggers." So "dry" is Kansas to-day, that the liquor men realize they are having a life and death struggle and in the municipal elections now being held the breweries have poured money in by the thousands to buoy up their cause.

If it can be shown that prohibition has been a force making for greater sobriety than could be had under a license system, then prohibition must come forth triumphant. Kansas has tested prohibition for 20 years, and no one can deny that in that time, she has made wonderful advancement in the practice of sobriety. Drunkenness has greatly diminished as statistics show. To be sure there are those who declare that prohibition is the product, not the cause, of this temperance reformation, but they are answered by the fact of a more

rapid lessening of intemperance since the adoption of the measure. And in this sense, and in the power of control possessed by the people, even in communities where joints have run openly, the argument for prohibition is convincing.

Old drinkers are dying off, and no new ones are coming to fill their places. Is not the future bright with hope under such conditions? May the day speedily come when the manhood of Canada shall demand at the hands of the government, the rigorous suppression by prohibition of the manufacture and importation, of all intoxicants! Kansas is the living exemplification of the success of prohibition.

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### Does Our Service of Song Need Improvement?

A paper read before the P. R. Island Baptist Conference and published by request of that body.

Every one will admit the importance of the service of song in our worship. It has held a prominent place in the service of God's house as far back as we can trace worship in the New or Old Testaments. Since it holds so important a place much depends upon the character of the song and the singing to make our services a success.

One way of ascertaining whether our song service is in need of improvement or not is to judge our songs and music according to some fixed standard.

1. Let us inquire then what is the ideal in sacred song.

I take the question in the more general sense including all song employed in our church services. Not the prayer-meeting or special evangelistic meeting or Young People's meetings but all the services of God's house. There must be one ideal for all, one standard of song for all. What then is our standard of judging the character of song to be used in our services?

It is not mere opinion. Opinions differ and hence the innumerable books of song used by the churches all over the land, each one represented by the author as superior to all others.

It is not according to our likes or dislikes. Anything with a good jingle to it is sufficient to satisfy the superficial; and the hymn selector may be inclined to cater to the wishes of the multitude.

For a Baptist the only standard of judgment is the Word of God. What does the Word say "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me" Ps. 50:23. Here, then, the ideal of all song is found to be the glorification of God. If we examine the songs of the Bible we will be deeply impressed with the truth that the first thought and purpose of the song is to exalt God as the mighty Saviour and all-powerful helper.

In Exodus 15th is recorded the first song of the Bible. When the children of Israel were delivered out of the land of the Egyptians "Moses and the children of Israel sang a song unto the Lord." I select a few verses out of the many to show how the Lord is extolled and glorified.

(v. 2). The Lord is my strength and song and he is become my salvation.

(v. 6). Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

(v. 11). Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like thee glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

(v. 21). Sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously. The whole song is a gem of beauty, a power of glory flowing spontaneously from a heart made glad by the favor of Almighty God.

It needs but a hasty glance at the Psalms of David to see that God is the burden of his song. In the fulness of his soul the Psalmist breaks forth in singing "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Time and space forbid me to pick out even the brightest jewels of praise which glow with the true poetic spirit when they exalt the Lord in the beauty of his holiness.

One more example from the New Testament will show us that where praise is the purest and free from all the imperfections which sin has brought to us, then also the Lord and his works are the only subject worthy of song. I refer to the song of the angels at the birth of our Saviour: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men," Luke 2:14.

I might multiply examples from the Word of God to show that the one controlling purpose of the singer is to exalt the Lord and glorify his holy name.

This is the poetry which has stood the test of ages. It may serve as our test of all true poetry. The great poets of the past have excelled because they have been true to nature; but their sublimest passages breathe in the fragrance of heaven, and catch a glimpse of the beauties beyond. In "Paradise Lost" Milton excelled while his mind dwelt upon events and scenery of the supermaterial

world; but when, in "Paradise Regained," his mind became engrossed with earth and earthly scenery, the quality of his poem was also lowered. We may safely say that the poet of the future will be one who must achieve his greatness by being true to nature's God, and true to portray the deeper aspirations of the soul for spiritual realities. All true beauty is inseparably connected with God, and happy is the poet who can see "the beauty of the Lord" either in nature, God's handiwork, or better yet, in the character of nature's Creator. If this is true we can reasonably expect that a hymn, sung to the praise of God, should ring with the true poetic spirit and there is no reason why it should not be of the highest poetic value. A true hymn is not the sentimental effusion of every spring-time rhymester, but the product of a soul who feels impelled to express the deep aspirations of his heart after God.

It may be that our books of praise need improvement. Perhaps the pruning knife is necessary before they bear the fruit for which the Master is looking. A hymn accomplishes its object only when it is sung unto the Lord. Hear what God says, "My glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images," Isa. 42:8. Therefore, "let us sing unto the Lord a new song and his praise from the end of the earth," 42:10.

The inference which we draw from this thought is that we do not sing about men or to men.

(1). We do not sing about men. If man is to enter at all into our song it is only as the instrument or means of bringing praise to God. The song which the redeemed sing on the other shore is described as "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb," (Rev. 15:3). Notice that it is the song of Moses the servant of the Lord. When the song exalts human qualities or human prowess it departs from the true ideal of sacred song; but if the song exalts man's greatness and power as the direct result of God's workings in him and for him, then it is worthy of being sung.

(2). We do not sing to men. Let us come into the domain of the choir and search for the cause of all the jealousy and quarrels for which it is proverbial. May it not be due to the fact that the singers have in mind the pleasing of men or the pleasing of themselves by their song rather than to glorify God. If we were all inspired with the purpose of giving praise to God alone, it would hallow our song, sanctify our singing, unify our purpose, and bind all our hearts in love's perfect bond.

Do our songs of praise come up to this ideal? If they do then our song service needs no improvement. If they do not, then there is need of improvement, need of judicious care, need of earnest prayer for guidance, and help from above.

II. The results which must come from following this ideal are many. The pastor will be the first to feel its influence. As a general rule, the pastor is the one who chooses the hymns.

If the praise and glory of God is the glad purpose of his soul it will manifest itself in a prayerful and judicious search for hymns of sterling character. Is it not true that the pastor is often tempted to choose those hymns which are familiar irrespective of their character? This is singing for the sake of singing. This means gratifying self instead of praising God. This is form without the real substance of song. If the people do not know the best hymns, the pastor's duty is to preach upon the subject in such a way that the people will want to sing only the best hymns.

Another result will be manifest in the spiritual life of the church.

The joy of the Christian finds expression in hymns of praise. The joy must be of the right kind,—joy in the Holy Ghost. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. The fountain of joy must be pure. Like a living spring it must send forth pure waters. But the channel also or the means by which the joy is expressed must also be pure. If refuse or impurities choke up the channel of the stream the effect will soon be felt on the fountain itself. If the joy is the fruit of the Spirit, the hymn also or the means by which the joy is expressed must be dictated by the Spirit. It must be a weapon that the Spirit can use. It must be a channel through which the Spirit can flow unimpeded. Joy is like a spring in this respect that it is at its best or most helpful to the Christian when it is best expressed. The hymns that we sing ought to be full of spiritual power, full of spiritual blessing and uplift.

"Let those refuse to sing who never knew our Lord."

But children of the heavenly King can sound His praise abroad."

A third result will be manifest in the conversion of souls.

Ought we not to expect conversions to follow from the proper singing of God's praises. Is there not a sad need of improvement along this line? Listless, half-hearted, thoughtless singing is always barren of results. It is no benefit to those who sing or those who hear. But there is a power in song. We have all realized it at one time or another. The singing of such men as Mr. Sankey, proves that there is a spiritual power in song which is able to reach the unregenerate heart. Such a power can be obtained only as we get down on our knees and ask God to use our voices to His own glory and the upbuilding of His Kingdom on earth.

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