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## THE TRUE TEST OF PIETY

What is the true test of piety? Plain, matter of fact, unecstatic obedience as of a child to a father, that is the test. The only true piety is born of such obedience. Ecstasies that come from any other source do not belong to the legitimate family circle of heavenly joys. They are the result of that which it does not take heaven to explain. They can be produced at any time and on any occasion by a combination of earthly forces. Singing can produce them. A sympathetic voice can charge the mystic thrill along the nerves of the tongue. Eloquence can produce them. How often under the orator's power men and women weep, groan, and shout in loud acclaim! The magnetic influence which hovers over a vast audience, the electric lights hover over marsh lands during a summer heat, can communicate by subtle and untraceable piety its deceptive and transitory excitement so that the vast multitude shall be charged full of the current. Most expression might deceive the very elect. Many suppose that this kind of feeling is legitimate, spiritual, and represents the real power of God. Yea, many gauge their piety by the presence or absence of these feelings; which are feelings that reach no farther than the muscles, and have their home in nothing more divine than the nervous tissues.

The piety of Jesus consisted in obedience. His great aim was to do the will of God. He loved God perfectly, and he loved man perfectly, and so perfectly fulfilled the law; and so had perfect happiness. Obedience to God lies in natural duties as truly as what are known as technically spiritual. The perfect life stands parent to the perfect joy. *The Golden Rule.*

## QUESTIONS FOR CHURCH MEMBERS.

1. Why am I a member of this Church? Is it because I wish to serve Christ here below, or is it for the sake of company, respectability and fashion?
2. Am I a true Christian? Do I hate sin, love Christ, his people, and cause? Have I chosen God for my portion? Do I desire to be made holy?
3. As a member, what am I doing in the church? Do I feel that I have a duty to perform for which Christ will call me to an account?
4. Is there that reverence, that deference, that consistency, which right views of the sanctuary should inspire?
5. What is my conduct towards my brethren? Do I love them, feel interested in them, and help them? If in my power, do I visit them when sick and comfort them? When wandering, do I endeavor to reclaim them?
6. Do I love my pastor as I ought? Do I help him or am I a burden to him? Do I wound, afflict, and grieve where I might comfort?
7. Do I pray for my minister as I ought?
8. Do I bear my share towards the cost of God's house cheerfully, punctually, conscientiously?
9. Am I a laborer in God's vineyard or a loiterer? Is my talent laid up in a napkin, or laid out to the best advantage for Christ?
10. Am I growing in grace? My privileges are great. Is my faith stronger, hope brighter, humility deeper, charity broader, and principles more fixed? Do my hatred of sin and love of holiness increase?
11. Do I live under the impression that I am responsible to God for time, talent, property, and the improvement of opportunities of usefulness?
12. Am I prepared to die? Are my accounts straight? Is my work done? Would I receive the applauding welcome, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?"—*Christian Era.*

## BRILLIANT PREACHING.

So Astley Cooper, on visiting Paris, was asked by the surgeon-in-chief of the empire how many times he had performed a certain wonderful feat of surgery. He replied that he had performed the operation thirteen times. "Ah, but, monsieur, I have done him one hundred and sixty times." How many times did you save his life? continued the curious Frenchman, after he had looked into the blank amazement of Sir Astley's face. "I," said the Englishman, "saved eleven out of the thirteen." How many did you save out of one hundred and sixty? "Ah, monsieur, I lost them all, but the operation was very brilliant. Of how many popular ministries might the same verdict be given? Souls are not saved, but the preaching is very brilliant. Thousands are attracted and operated on by the rhetorician's art, but what if he should have to say of his admirers, 'I lost them all, but the sermons were very brilliant.'—*Spirit.com.*

## THY WILL BE DONE.

We seek not to win it. All the way  
Is night. With thee alone is day  
From out the torrent's troubled drift,  
Above the storm, one prayer we utter—  
Thy will be done!

The flesh may fail, the heart may faint,  
But who are we to make complaint,  
Or dare to plead in times like these,  
The weakness of our love of ease?  
Thy will be done!

We take with solemn thankfulness  
Our burden up, nor ask it less,  
And count it joy that even we  
May suffer, serve, or wait for thee,  
Thy will be done!

Though dim, as yet, in tint and hue,  
We trace thy picture-wise design,  
And thank thee for the orange supplies  
Its dark relief of sacrifice—  
Thy will be done!

And if, in our unworthiness,  
Thy sacrificial wife we press;  
If from thy altar's heated bars  
Our feet are scathed with heated scars,  
Thy will be done!

Stole, then, the Master, we thy keys,  
The anthem of the destinies!  
The minor of the loftier strain,  
Our hearts shall breathe the old refrain:  
Thy will be done!

—John G. Whittier.

## UNCONSCIOUS SERVICE.

The best and noblest service in life is prompted by love, and love works without consciousness of self. When in the house of Simon at Bethany, that woman came with the alabaster box and poured the costly and fragrant ointment upon the head of Jesus, it was, on her part, an unconscious act, expressive of the supreme affection of a heart that would give all to Him. Even the disciples were blind to its meaning, until the Master hushed their complaint with the revelation that this service of womanly devotion should evermore be remembered as a memorial of her. The fragrance of this simple act could never cease to exhale, because of what it was to her Lord. She knew it not, but her offering of affection had anointed His body for its burial. A deed of devotion which angels would have begged to render.

Duty is a task-master and galls the neck with its yoke, where love bears its heavier burdens and sings with joy unconscious of its service. Whatever is done, impelled by the supreme affection of the heart towards Christ, is sure to be the right thing. That which for a moment appears to be a blunder, and which a cold,

calculating spirit would avoid, proves to be just the right thing. Love has an intuitive perception, and going easily and straight to the accomplishment of its purpose, thinks that its work is so simple as scarcely to merit recognition. The fact that self is not thought of is the reason often why so much real good is accomplished. The word spoken in love by one who is neither great nor renowned is received and thought of for its own worth and need, while the same message spoken in eloquence of personal utterance is forgotten in the remembrance of the way and manner of its expression. The unconscious service of love is an irresistible argument that it is done for its own sake, and such words and acts are conquering forces. Men are brave to stand against influences back of which they see obtruding personal pride or planning, but let them be convinced that what is said or done is simply from a supreme desire for their welfare and good and they are broken down. When the Master welcomed His faithful servant the exclamation of glad surprise leaps from his lips, "Lord, when did we these things?" He knew it not until then that those deeds of unconscious service that prompted him to help the lowliest of his fellow men was remembered as if done for the King of kings. It is the unconscious ministry of loving hearts that is held in eternal remembrance.—*The Working Church.*

## A CHRISTIANIZED PRESS.

ANOTHER rectifying influence is to come, will come, from a Christianized printing-press. There are but few people who read books in our day. Take a hundred business men; ninety-nine do not read one book. ~~Take a hundred newspapers that are not doing the~~ people, either in the right or in the wrong direction. A bad newspaper is an angel of darkness. A good newspaper is an angel of light. No man is any better than the newspaper he continually reads. When you see the printer's boy, with inky fingers setting up the type, you do not put him down as one of the forces in our civilization; yet he is. That newspaper lad, running along the street with a roll of papers under his arm—although he may be barefooted and bareheaded—is irresistible in his power, and at every step the city is elevated or depressed. Oh! for a Christianized printing-press. The whole responsibility comes down upon the heads of editors, and authors, and publishers, and writers, and compositors in our day. If in any city the newspaper is polluted, the city is polluted. We would do well, in all our prayers before God, to solicit the Christianization of all the printing presses in our country. By that power the world is to be redeemed.—*Talmage.*

MEN sometimes object to the doctrine of the depravity of mankind. But the strongest teachings of the Bible and of the pulpit are more than confirmed by their own actions—by the conduct of the world itself. Every bolt and bar, and lock and key, every receipt and check and note of hand, every law-book and court of justice, every chain and dungeon and gallows, proclaim that the world is a fallen world, and that our race is a depraved and sinful race.

THE young people of our country do not usually show the respect for age which is both a duty and a grace. In some countries beyond the sea, there are communities where veneration for old persons is a universal habit. Wherever met by the young, known or unknown, there is a beautiful obeisance toward bowed form and the trembling step of age, which perfect joy to witness. The Gospel inculcates respect for spirit everywhere. Parents themselves are responsible for the degree of respect which they receive from their children.