

widespread revolutions that the world of to-day seems hardly to have any relation to the world of the Herods, the Caligulas, and the Borgias. Silent forces, however, in the Church imply the existence of silent workers, of men and women who are intent on doing good as they have opportunity, and ask not to have trumpets blown on public thoroughfares to proclaim their deeds. They belong to that uncommonly noble class who

"Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame."

It is most worthy of note that some of the grandest Christian enterprises of our age took their rise in secluded upper chambers, or in obscure stalls, or in unknown and unsought garrets. The Church of the catacombs undermined Pagan Rome, and it was among the dells of Scotland, and in the ravines of Piedmont, and among the reeds of the meadow lands of Holland that the faith was nourished which created a new era in the Protestant Reformation. Kings and queens have been indeed nursing fathers and mothers of the Church, but they are not entitled to the credit of filling the Church with those unnamed deeds of charity which have opened the wide gates of mercy on mankind. Such deeds have been inspirations from the fountain of life, "propulsions from the eternal throne," throbbings of the heart of Christ. They were not calculated deeds. They sprung not from sordid prudence nor from interested selfishness. They had the spontaneity of love to inform and mould them.

Now wherever the grace of the Lord Jesus abounds, and that charity which hopeth all things and is kind rules in the hearts of believers, there a certain steady force is being exerted, the outcome of which in the end will be nothing short of the anticipated millennium. And if this be so, then it follows that noisy busybodies are not after all quite so useful or important as their inflated self-conceit may induce them to suppose. There must and will be fussy people who like to act only on the public stage to be seen of men. But their memorials prove to be bubbles. They are Summer fireflies, without steady light and void of warmth. They have a certain ornamental place on the garments of the night, but in the clear resplendence of the day their light is all put out.

Look where we may, the silent workers are they who instruct the ignorant, care for the friendless, feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, visit the prisoner, pray with the dying, and thus carry the Christ spirit to the needy and the perishing. What is styled church work is sometimes very deceptive and impoverishing. Fairs and pic-nics, and brilliant conventions, where oratory blazes and reporters fill their horns, may be necessary in a sense to keep up public spirit, but the work of Christ and the salvation of souls has its seeding place in the closet where none but God can hear.

It grows in the obscurity of humble homes, reaches the young, the neglected, the sorrowing, and thus prepares sweet Summer for those who have been in the darkness of bondage or enchained by the rigors of unbelief. It is not for us to speak in censure. Yet it is plain that we have in all denominations far too many who must have flaunting banners, and bands of music, and crowds of admiring spectators to help them on before they will consent to do battle for the Lord or to work in His vineyard. All such forget that they who seek their own honor first cannot be real believers in the only name by which the Church can gather the spoils of victory. Oh, ye who in the strength of humility and in the spirit of self-sacrifice seek to do your Lord's will, do not faint nor grow weary, for ye shall share with the angels in the final reaping!—*N. Y. Christian Intelligencer.*

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 joy 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 till they tingle. Eloquence can produce them. How often under the orator's power men and women weep, groan, and shout in loud acclaim! The mesmeric influence which hovers over a vast audience, as electric

lights hover over marsh-lands during a summer heat, can communicate by subtle and untraceable potency its deceptive and transitory excitement so that the vast multitude shall be charged full of the current whose 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.*

THY WILL BE DONE.

We see not, know not. All the way
Is night. With thee alone is day.
From out the torrent's troubled drift,
Above the storm—one prayer we lift—
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 line,
We trace thy picture's wise design,
And thank thee that our age supplies
Its dark relief of sacrifice—
Thy will be done!

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

Strike, thou, 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.*

CHANGING ONE'S MIND.

It was Emerson, we believe, who declared that a man ought not to be a slave of his yesterdays. By this striking expression he indicated his belief in the duty of independence, and condemned that blind conservatism which holds fast to this or that thing merely because it used to be considered good and worthy of acceptance.

The general sentiment of mankind leans rather towards inertia than toward action. "Whatever is, is right," says the old maxim; and certainly there is less trouble in accepting existing circumstances than in endeavoring to change them. A reformer is pretty sure to be both unpopular and disagreeable, when he begins his work. Furthermore, the real reformer must bear the additional unpopularity earned for him by those foolish false reformers who endeavor to overthrow existing institutions merely because they exist, and not because they are wrong. Our world is one in which change and stability are deftly united, but stability must always retain the upper hand. The presumption of excellence is, and ought to be, on the side of what is. The citizen of a republic ought to think twice before he tries to set up a despotism in its stead; while, on the other hand, the subject of an emperor should carefully consider whether, in attempting to establish a republic, he would not create anarchy instead. The same law holds good in family and personal relations. It is no mark of manliness to refuse to do what your father does, merely for the sake of following the lead of somebody else's father. The child does well to go from his own Sabbath school to the church of which it is a part, without first reviewing the history and doctrines of all the other religious bodies of the world. Inheritance, association in families and communities, and local influence, are not mere accidents in God's plan. It is well to consider a thing settled so long as it is approved by a sincere and earnest conscience.

But the man who never changes his mind is of little

use to society. The progress of events must soon leave him in the lurch. Whether in religion, or politics, or general knowledge, one always has something new to learn; and new facts must bring new opinions in their train. Even Christianity, which can never change, gives room for growth in man's perceptions of its truth and beauty. Not all the wisdom of the nineteen Christian centuries has exhausted the treasures of the books of the Bible. The archæologist's hammer and the metaphysician's lamp constantly bring to light some unexpected scriptural beauty, or some divine law as yet too little heeded. Thus, in the most reverent way, a Christian church or a Christian man may change a religious opinion. A candid and fair-minded person is always ready to change his mind, even though he never see any reason for so doing.

Just here lies the strength of a true system, and the sweetness of a true man. The art of growing old gracefully is simply the art of changing one's mind willingly. The wise old man or the helpful old woman is never content to become a passenger in the world, instead of an actor. No loss of influence comes with a candid acknowledgement of error; but a great gain ensues. If a mistake is promptly corrected, or an old opinion is readily acknowledged to have no value in the light of present facts, the whole remaining fabric of knowledge and belief is greatly strengthened. Who has not seen some fierce onslaught of an opponent made not only useless, but absolutely ridiculous, by the quiet "I admit all that," of the person attacked? After all, strength lies wholly on the side of honesty, and it is only dishonesty that is below conviction. Therefore the candid person clings with a strength that is fairly sublime, to the things that are above change. It is alone he who is able to say: "I do not believe, I know."—*S. S. Times.*

BRILLIANT PREACHING.

Sir 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 lose them all; but de 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 lose them all; but the sermons were very brilliant?"—*Spurgeon.*

REAL glory consists in the conquest of ourselves.

ALMOST sweet is unsavory; almost hot is lukewarm. Almost a Christian is like the Ephraimites who could not pronounce Shibboleth, but Sibboleth. Almost a Christian is like Ananias, who brought a part, but left a part behind. Almost a Christian is like the virgins, who carried lamps without oil; like the willing-unwilling son, who said he would come, and would not.—*Henry Smith.*

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 the bowed form and the trembling step of age, which is a perfect joy to witness. The Gospel inculcates such a spirit everywhere. Parents themselves are largely responsible for the degree of respect which they receive from their children. There needs to be more of the gentleness of love, more endearing confidences, more thorough consecration in every privilege conferred by the religion of Christ.