

CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOR.

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"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." Romans 12:9.

Some one said the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians is the beatitudes set to music. The second part of Romans is the beatitudes set to the pattern of practical human life. Paul here gives the pattern of life to fit the sublime ethics laid down in the beatitudes. We can repeat, over and over, the sublime thoughts of Socrates and Christ, without ever thinking seriously of putting them into practice. Paul calls for human lives that come up to the standard.

A little girl prayed, "O Lord, make me good. Not too good, but good enough that I will not have to be punished." Many people would like a religion that would keep them out of trouble, but one that would not keep them from enjoying the things they like. Paul is not calling for a pattern of life that will put a halo on the brow of men and women; but one that will make them better neighbors, better fathers and mothers, better brothers and sisters, and better citizens. When he says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice," he is calling for something more than pious professions and sanctimonious motions. A living sacrifice is a sacrifice that is alive.

My daughter lived with a woman in Georgia who had pious mottoes, the Lord's Prayer, "Jesus Lives Here" all over the walls of her home. She rented rooms to the soldier boys and their wives near a camp during the Second World War. She cheated and robbed these young people who were giving

their lives to save her country. They could have had her 66
jailed or fined, but they wanted to be together so much,
they just took her dirty filthy rooms and paid her extortionate
prices for them. What do you suppose the boys and girls thought
of her piety?

The old sacrifices offered to the deity might be
perfect and without blemish, but they were dead. The sacrifice
the Christian offers to God is much more than this. It is
alive. It is the daily offering to God of all that we hold
dear, not once or twice, but daily.

A Tennessee farmer had a sign over his gate, which read:

"PARTNERSHIP FARM

Christ Owner.

Charles A Keys, Tenant.

That was a beautiful motto, but it was more. Charles A Keys
was a tenant for Christ.

When Paul says, "Let love be without dissimulation,"
he means, "Let it be genuine!" Do not say you love a person,
then prove by your actions you do not.

Socrates said, over four hundred years before Christ,
never
"It is never right to harm a person." Socrates had never heard
of Paul or Christ. But he was pretty close to the love that
Paul is talking about. In the complex lives we live it is
sometimes hard to help one person without harming another.
A boy lived near a hunting preserve with a fine stream running
through it. Only a few people had a permit to fish in the
stream, but the boy finally got one. One day when he was
fishing in the stream with another boy the game keeper came
upon them. The boy threw down his pole and ran like he was
terribly frightened. The keeper followed him for almost

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half a mile. When he finally caught the boy by the arm he panted, "Have you a permit to fish in that stream?" The boy said he did and the keeper asked to see it. When the boy drew out the permit, he sputtered, "Why did you run when you had this permit?" The boy said, "I ran to let the other boy get away. He didn't have one."

Socrates said when you harm a man, even for wrong he has done, you only make him worse and that increases the wrong. It seems that, after more than two thousand years, we are about to learn that Socrates was right. In a recent article in the Reader's Digest by Irving Ben Cooper, the great jurist says he has sentenced 15,000 young people for their first serious offense against the law. "Three out of five of these, after serving the prison terms I was compelled to impose, went on from crime to more vicious crime. Some ended in the electric chair." The great jurist now believes that 80 percent of these young people could have been saved with the proper Christian effort. "From years of practical experience*** we judges have learned that the indiscriminate jailing of first offenders has contributed mightily to the fearful rise in crime in this country." In New York City they have created a Probation Department of trained men and women, who look into the record of first offenders to see what causes the bent to crime. If the judge finds there is hope of reclaiming the young person, he puts him under a suspended sentence, and places him in the hands of a trained and skilled probation officer. They have tried this plan only on first offenders and for minor crimes. I quote Judge Cooper on the results:

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"We have been using probation for a good many years now. We know it works. But inadequate facilities have drastically limited the success of the program. In most states probation officers are few and poorly paid; in many states these positions are political sinecures held by totally unqualified individuals. Less than ten percent of the courts dealing with first offenders have anything resembling adequate probation facilities."

Judge Cooper tells us that the average cost to the tax payers of a man committed to prison is \$2000 a year. For a life of fifty years that would be a hundred thousand dollars. The cost of saving a first offender averages about \$150. Even this is money saved for the tax payer. It would cost that much to keep him in prison one month. It is his belief that about fifteen percent of criminals are incorrigibles. He has no hope of saving these until something else is learned about crime.

Genuine love means loyalty. In Virginia an orphan boy named Tom Jackson used to catch fish and sell them to aid his mother in making a living. One day he caught a very large bass. A neighbor came by and offered him a dollar for the fish. When he refused he raised his offer to a dollar and a half. "No", said Tom. "A man has been taking all I catch at fifty cents apiece. It would not be right to sell this one and then take him the small ones." Tom Jackson was the man who stood like a stonewall at the battle of Bull Run and saved the Confederate army. They did not call him Tom Jackson after that. He was called Stonewall Jackson.

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Making a living sacrifice of our lives can mean more than giving up the most cherished possessions. It can mean embracing things we fear or do not like. A mother who had a horror of looking down from any height was often laughed at by her son because she was afraid to look into the Grand Canyon or to fly in a plane. When he was drafted and sent to an army post far away he wrote his mother about his own fears. He said he was afraid now, that he had seen some actual practice for fighting, that he would be a coward. He was almost in despair because he feared he would never be a brave man. His mother took a plane and went straight to him. He said, "Mother, I thought you were ^{afraid} to fly." She said, "I was. But I am not now. Any fear can be conquered if the cause is great enough."

Making a living sacrifice means walking humbly with God. A preacher who was going a long way to preach got a reservation for a parlor chair on the train, so he could work on his sermon on the way. But when he got on the train he found another man in his seat. He showed the man his reservation. The man took one from his pocket, showing he had a reservation for the same seat. The man said, "Railroads frequently make mistakes. I am giving you the seat." The preacher protested that both had reservations and that the man who got there first had the prior claim. But the man pushed him into the seat. He said, "I am the President of the railroad. I believe in the old adage the customer is always right."

An Italian teacher said, "We have learned to swim like a fish under the sea; we have learned to fly like the birds

of the air. But we have not learned to walk the earth in peace with our fellow men." The religion of the Lord would teach us to walk the earth in peace with our fellow men. 70

One article in Abraham Lincoln's creed was:

"I recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scripture and proven in all history, that those nations only are blest whose God is the Lord." It is His religion that has made men truly blest.

During the Civil War Lincoln appointed a man chaplain of a hospital. Some church people went to him to protest the appointment. They said the man was not orthodox in his belief, and had said that some of the rebels could be saved. Lincoln said, "Gentlemen, if there is any way under heaven to save the rebels, let the man be appointed." The religion of Jesus Christ is the only one that could bridge a gulf like that.

Years ago at a Baptist Convention there were some Christian Indians present. They had reserved seats and heard the evangelist preach who had been a soldier in Custer's Last Stand. He told the Indians that he had once been their enemy and had fought them to the death. But he said the Lord had taught him to love them, which he did now with all his heart. One Indian raised his hand. He said he was in the same battle and had once hated the white man, but now had learned to love him. They asked him to come up on the stage and shake hands with the man he once fought. When the two men met they did not shake hands. They fell into each other's arms.

A life of love cut short can leave a fragrance behind that is not easily forgotten. A preacher was called on to hold a funeral for a man who had been killed. The woman who called

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him would not tell him who the deceased was, but only told him the time and place of the funeral. When he got to the cemetery he found the man who had been killed was a gangster who had been shot by a rival gang. The father of the boy was there. He was a ne'er-do-well who had let the boy go astray, although his mother had been a Christian. When the service was over the gangsters wanted to take the father back home with them. But he fought them and would not go. He said he was not going to leave the grave till he had said a prayer. The preacher kneeled with him at the boy's grave. He said, " My son, your mother deserved something better of you than this. Amen. "