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## THE BEST RULE FOR LIFE

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“THE sum of all morality, and the brief statement of all perfectness, is to be like Christ, to do as He did, or in the exercise of your best and most conscientious judgment, as you think He would have done if He had been in your circumstances. Why! John Stuart Mill was obliged to say that there was no better rule for life than to do as Christ would have done. He is our Lord, and our perfecting is to be as our Lord. Is it not strange that the fragmentary records of a brief life so utterly unlike our modern lives in garb and circumstances, and which had no experience of many of our most important earthly relationships, should yet be recognized by men as being capable of giving the pattern and the model for us all?

“Kings and slaves, philosophers and fools, all professions, both sexes, all ages, all conditions of men, may find in that lowly life, partially recorded, of the carpenter's son of Nazareth, the perfect realized ideal of human conduct; and the one duty for men is that they should follow—though it be afar off and with unequal steps—on His path; and plant their feet in the prints of His.

“There is the blessed characteristic of Christian morality—instead of giving us a hard, abstract, impersonal law of duty, it gives us the living example of the Beloved. The Statue, fair and white, stainless and symmetrical, which conscience hews out, which law and morals had chiselled, becomes flesh and blood, and the glow of warmth comes into the face, and a heart beats there. It is not difficult, when love is the motive, to follow the pattern that the Beloved has set, and the imitation of a dear one is always sweet. That is one of the main reasons why Christ's yoke is easy and His burden light.

“Our Lord used this teaching as a guide of our conduct, during that infinitely sublime and tender scene in

the upper chamber, where Christ's very consciousness of His superhuman dignity and Divine abode from of old with God is assigned by the evangelist as the reason for His lowest humiliation. ‘Knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God, He laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself, and washed the disciples' feet.’ The highest, because He knew Himself to be the highest, stooped below the lowest. And when He had taken His garments

He said, ‘The disciple is not above his master. Ye ought also to wash one another's feet.’ So, as Christian people, we are bound to exercise stooping love to all around us, as the Master loved. His love was not a mere sentiment, but in measure infinite. Putting off the garments of His divine majesty, and girding Himself with the towel of humanity, and bearing in His hand the basin of water and of blood that cleansed and atoned, He came to cleanse our foulness and to make us white and pure like Himself. *That is our pattern.*

“Alas! Alas! for the poor copies that the best of us make of it, like children whose blotted page of scrawling pithooks and hangers comes below the symmetry of the head-line which they are trying to copy. Let us remember that there is

no discipleship without the attempt at imitation. What sort of a follower of incarnate love is that man whose life is one long incarnation of selfishness? What is the worth of a discipleship which day by day contradicts Christ's life, and flouts in negligence and disobedience all His precepts?

“Let us, who say that we are His, take heed lest one day we should hear the solemn voice asking the unanswerable question, ‘Why call ye me Lord! and do not the things that I say and that I did?’”

### Active Member's Pledge

“Trusting in the help of the Holy Spirit, I promise that I will follow the example of my Saviour and Lord, and make an honest effort daily, in all things, to do the will of God my Heavenly Father.”