

My Sin is Not Your Hope

by Kevan O'Banion

"If that is the way Christians act then I don't want to be a Christian." You have likely heard this many times and may have given tacit consent to the thought — having strong distaste for hypocrisy in religion.

There is no denying that followers of Christ should so live as to attract rather than repel; and we make no excuse for those lights who have gone out, or salt that has lost its savor. But one who uses the "if that is the way..." excuse, is also "copping out" on responsibility.

Christianity, in its true sense, is not determined by what *any* person, high and noble or low and vile, does or says about it. "The church," even in its purest stage, is the product of Christianity, not the mother of it. God has not abdicated His throne, nor Christ His divinely appointed roles. God distributes the "rule" (inspired truth) which reaches to all alike (2 Cor. 10:12-14, 4-5).

If I mislead someone by my conduct or teaching, I must answer for this in judgment (1 Cor. 3:12-15). But my sin is not his righteousness. He is not released from his obligation to God because I failed to meet my obligations. Or, to put it another way, offences must come --- sin and injustices will continue so long as this age lasts --- but this does not excuse him "by whom the offence cometh" (Mat. 18:7). The inevitability of sin in the world does not excuse the sinner. Are we to assume that the one who is disgusted by hypocrites has no need of forgiveness? If he knows what Christianity is NOT, does he know what it IS, and refuses to conform? Or, has he confused a "good moral life" with Christianity? True followers of Christ are morally upright, but they know they can not trust in themselves for justification. Freely acknowledging their need for forgiveness, they trust in Jesus Christ for mercy and redemption. One has not learned the real meaning of Christianity until he so learns Christ.

And we do not learn Christ by studying the faults of others. We must turn our attention from the disciples and center it upon the Master.