

## Way of Life

by George Abbott, lay preacher and deceased uncle of David Mawdsley

“I suggest that a way of living is far more significant than a way of believing—that a man is judged not by what he says, but what he does—and that religion is a way of life.

Show me someone who has a profound respect for integrity, and I will consider him a religious man regardless of his creed. Show me someone who is consistently charitable, and I will consider him a religious man regardless of his faith. Show me someone who is truly kind, and I will consider him a religious man regardless of his theology. Show me someone who is loyal, and I will consider him a religious man regardless of his rituals. Show me someone who demonstrates love, and I will consider him a religious man regardless of his worship disciplines.

Be he Christian, Moslem, Hindu, Confucianist, Buddhist or Jew—if he has a sensitivity to the feelings of his fellowmen—I will worship with him at his altar. Be he Roman Catholic, Orthodox Catholic or Protestant—if he shares his last loaf of bread with someone who is hungry—I will invite him to join me in my religious service. Be he atheist, agnostic or theist—if he attempts to do anything to reduce the despair, heartbreak or sorrow in the world—I will extend my hand in fellowship as an associate, colleague and friend.

In short, religion and life cannot be separated. They cannot or should not become separate entities. The good life is a religious life. Churches, temples, synagogues or mosques are only the external symbols of what men have found to be true. Robes, candles and harps are merely sensory aids for religious observances. And when a man prays, he verbalizes his conviction that this is a rational and moral universe.

Two of the world's greatest teachers said in simple terms what I mean—Socrates said: “Be intelligent.” Jesus said: “Be kind.” With this combination, we have a fairly comprehensive condensation of religion.

Edward Markham, the poet, put it this way:

*‘He drew a circle that shut me out.  
Heretic—rebel—a thing to flout.  
But Love and I had the wit to win,  
We drew a circle that took him in.’ “*