

opportunity of returning it." We see here the false motive that may sometimes induce a man to be merciful or kind,—the desire of getting as much, or even more, in return for what the effort has cost him. But, as has been already remarked, the Christian should act upon higher principles; and his deeds of mercy should be the outcome of a pure love for others.

Our Lord teaches us this same lesson in the Sermon on the Mount, as it is recorded in the sixth chapter of Luke. "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." Here our Lord exposes the false motive that may actuate men, and of which we have just been speaking. But he does not stop here, he goes on to show the true ground on which mercy should be shown, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." In other words, Christ as much as says, "it is an easy matter to show kindness when we are sure of receiving a reward, or a favor in return. But mercy should be extended without any thought of a remuneration. And if we show it in this way, we may be sure we shall not go unrewarded." In the beginning of this Sermon, Christ stamps mercy with divine approval, and shows that it should be a virtue characterizing the members of his kingdom; for He places it among the beatitudes. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

Let our acts of mercy, therefore, be the outcome of a pure and holy love. They will then be Christ like. For when we were his enemies, lost, and without hope, He performed the greatest deed of mercy the world has ever seen,—by giving Himself for us. And this seems to be the thought in His mind when he says, "be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

But all this even does not constitute a perfect character. Justice and mercy are excellent virtues, but they are not all that go to make up a christian character. They may make an excellent foundation, but there is something else needed to complete the structure, viz., *humility*. We need not be surprised that the prophet insists upon this, for humility was one of the most striking features in the life of Christ. His whole mission was decidedly an expression of humility. He did not come merely as a teacher or a lawgiver. This even, would have been great condescension on his part. But he came and dwelt among men, and alleviated their sorrows by becoming an actual participator in them. He knew what it was