

would be less readily understood and appreciated by gentle Christians. Expressed in its most general form, the basal principle of the new regime is to be love to one's fellow-men. How surprising a sequel must this have seemed to all who cherished Messianic expectations, whether friends or foes! The rabbi with authority, the miracle-worker who claims the divine prerogative of forgiving men's sins, aims, after all, not to break Rome's detestable political yoke, but to induce men to love one another.

Verse 27. I say. I give my personal commandment. **You which hear.** His disciples and all who accept him as Master. **Love your enemies.** The antithesis, "hate your enemies," is in mind, as Matt. 5. 43, shows. The enemy is the one who manifests hatred, as the subsequent clauses indicate. This is not a command to take delight in the injustice others do us, but, in place of returning evil for evil, as sinners naturally do, to return good for evil. Observe how well Paul had already set forth this truth. Rom. 12. 17-21. At this early stage of his teaching, before his atoning death had taken place, he could not explain how citizenship in the kingdom was to be obtained, and how the Holy Spirit, poured out in men's hearts, would make such a virtue as loving one's enemies a common possession. See Gal. 2. 20, 21; 4. 4-7. **Do good.** The current method for establishing a kingdom, notably the Herodian, was to kill all opposers and enemies of the person and dynasty.

28. Bless. Speak well of. The natural rejoinder to vituperation is fiercer vituperation. **Pray for them.** So Stephen, who was full of the Holy Ghost, did (Acts 7. 60), in place of asking God to repay a vengeance he was powerless to execute. Luke reflects that Jesus is moving his hearers to imitate his own example. 23, 34. Two of the disciples notably needed such teaching. Luke 9. 54.

29. Check. Literally, jaw-bone; implying a heavy blow and the greater provocation. **Offer also the other.** Jesus knew how to compel popular attention to abstract principles by the use of striking illustrations and metaphors. He chooses examples of conduct which can alone proceed from real love. It is love only that can turn the other cheek. There is nothing but love that can restrain the average man from returning blow for blow. The citizen of God's kingdom, the member of Christ's Church, is to let all his dealing with his harshest and rudest fellow-men be controlled by love. That this saying was not meant as a direction for specific conduct is plain from the fact that Jesus himself, when struck by an officer, did not turn his other cheek, but reproved the offender. John 18. 22. **Withhold not thy coat.** Deny not the proof of your love to the greedy and selfish. Be kind to the man who defrauds you of your rights.

30. To every one that asketh. Our Lord was not giving rabbinical precepts, but embodying great principles in striking forms which would arouse thought and help the memory. The adoption of this saying by every Christian as a precept would encourage pauperism and swell the army of tramps the world over. The adoption of it as principle has already dotted the map of Christendom with asylums and hospitals. Let love rule the use you make of your means. **Ask them not again.** Withhold not your loving offices even from the heartless and grasping. Let the sharper find in your conduct the antithesis of his own. Treat him who has robbed you by legal process like a brother. A crucial example of love.

31. As ye would. The paradoxes that have preceded have prepared the way for a statement of the general principle. What the Christian desires for him-

self is to be the infallible rule of his conduct toward his fellow-men. Others, before Christ's time, had stated the negative side of this precept; it remained for him to see and boldly declare the vital importance of its positive side.

32. What thank. What recognition on God's part that you are members of his kingdom and like him! Peter uses the same word to describe God's appreciation of unjust suffering borne for his sake. 1 Pet. 2. 19. **Sinners.** Who obey their own carnal impulses rather than the will of God. The word was commonly applied by Jewish writers to Gentiles as not belonging to the commonwealth of Israel. Gal. 2. 15.

35. Love your enemies. By this reiteration Jesus makes his leading theme the more impressive. **Do them good.** Let no injustice or wickedness on the part of the world change you into its likeness. Though in the world, be not of the world. Paul said, Owe no man any thing but love. He recognized his debt to the Philippian jailer, and returned his cruelty with blessing. A Christian prisoner, crying "Do thyself no harm," thus revealed Jesus to a hardened heathen. **Lend.** Christian love cannot always be shown in sympathetic words; very often its only language is dollars and cents. See Jas. 2. 15, 16; 1 John 3. 18. **Never despairing.** Every Christian has generous impulses. It is not easy to love to the end as the Lord does (John 13. 1), and make love the law of one's life. Only as we wait on the Lord, and by the Spirit renew our strength, can we be saved from despairing of the success of such a policy. **Reward.** Immediately, in repose and peace of soul; ultimately, in the benign effects of such a life. Matt. 23. 34, *sq.* **Shall be sons.** Not, shall be called, but shall be. See 1 John 3. 1, in Rev. Ver., "such we are." Your life of love will be one directly derived from the Ruler of all, and you will become "partakers of his nature." 2 Pet. 1. 4. **For he is kind.** Proof of our filial relationship to God from similarity of conduct. **Toward the unthankful.** Nothing discourages kindness like ingratitude. It is only love that can persevere in kindness to the ungrateful. In Matthew's sketch Jesus likens God's loving impartiality to his indiscriminate gift of rain to all classes of men. **Evil.** Who can continue to help the wretch who impugns one's motives and finds fault with one's gifts? Who does not find charity arduous enough among wholesome and agreeable pensioners? Moral deformity is more loathsome to a holy God than physical degradation can be to us. Yet he is kind to those who curse and hate him.

36. Merciful. Show kindness to men independently of their conduct toward you.

37. Judge not. In the case of personal wrongs and injury, as in the preceding verses. Men are never so prone to judge the actions of others as when their rights are infringed by others; as they also are never in so great danger of transgressing the law of love to their neighbors. When injured, do not assume the functions of judge. Read Peter's teaching on this point. 1 Pet. 2. 23.

Condemn not. As men are so quick to do to their own rights are trampled upon. How confident we are in such cases that we are right; how little chance justice and mercy have at such times. In fact, the injured man is in danger of sinning as much as his injurer. **Shall not be condemned.** For extreme and uncharitable judgments of one's enemies. **Release.** Acquit; discharge. The judicial figure is still retained. Let the man that has wronged you go. You are in no state to judge him righteously; besides, it is not your prerogative.

38. Give. The world, the flesh, and the devil say, Withhold! Hoard! Resources material, mental, and

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