

human race. If, however, you choose a different rule, very likely you will disagree with my conclusions. What I am now concerned to show is, that my rule, (above stated,) the Christian rule, requires that the law of love should regulate our overcoming of evil as well as every other department of our action, and this equally, whether the evil in question is directed against ourselves or others. I trust that thus far the case is plain.

Here then are the laws which are to regulate our action against evil-doers, whether the thing assailed be our individual welfare, or the individual welfare of a 'neighbour,' or the general welfare of the community.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF !

LOVE EVEN YOUR ENEMIES !

OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD !

Let us make the application of these rules to a particular case.

Stealing is an evil and a crime unhappily too common in all communities. It is an injury to individuals, and an offence against society. Theft is one of the recognized evils which it is the duty and interest of us all to overcome. But it is to be overcome *with good*, not with evil.

A man who has lost property by theft sometimes knows the thief, and knows where *he* possesses property of equal value. Shall he steal that, and thus restore the disturbed equilibrium of property? This might compensate for the loss, but would it remove the evil? Is it a right method of proceeding?

Nobody will say so. Instead of removing the evil, it has doubled it. If one theft is an offence against good morals and the welfare of society, two thefts must be yet more so. This is not the proper mode of proceeding. Nobody uses it, nobody would justify it. On the contrary, it is the interest of the person robbed, and of the whole community, to pay a sacred regard to the laws of property, and to show, by their whole conduct, that they respect and scrupulously observe those rights which the thief has violated. Only thus can they justify themselves in complaining of him, and applying remedial measures to him, as a thief. If they show themselves dishonest in the very case in question, with what face can they accuse *him* of dishonesty?

What I wish to have noted here is the fact, that, in proceeding against the thief—(unhappily and unjustifiably the custom of the community is to proceed *against* him, instead of applying to him the law of love !)—we ourselves set the example of a faithful adherence to the laws of property, and do not