

While they condemned murder, He made murder to consist in the hate that prompts it; they denounced divorce without the legal forms, but He denounced divorce without the cause by which alone it is justified—namely, infidelity to the marriage vow. While they forbade swearing falsely and in certain forms, He forbade all taking of God's name in vain—all profanation of sacred things: in a word, all irreverence. While they forbade evil, except in retaliation for injury, such retaliation is just what He forbade—the vindictive feeling which returns evil for evil He held to be irreconcilable with the law of love.

4. Another characteristic of Christ's teaching was its *originality*, or *novelty*. Much of what He said was the repetition of truths, already revealed by Nature or the Scripture, or a modification or resurrection of truths perverted or forgotten; but much more was entirely new and original. For example, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another," defining the kind of love by adding, "as I have loved you." Love was not new, but *such* love was. It had been said by them of old time thou shalt love thy neighbor, but the same law inverted would imply "thou shalt *hate* thine enemy!" But Christ's love was neither selfish nor exclusive: not confined by conventionalism, limited by relationship, nor dependent upon reciprocity; neither inspired by passion nor dictated by interest. It was that universal charity, of which almsgiving is only one manifestation, and which is the parent of the benevolence or philanthropy so often confounded with it. Such love is not merely a state of *feeling* but a *law and habit of life*, called in the Epistle of James "the royal law."

Such love was a new thing in history. It has since sent missionaries to the uttermost parts of earth, not to gather gold or jewels, to satisfy greed of gain; not to gather facts for history or science, to gratify ambition; not to find new dainties and delicacies to indulge appetite—but to raise men out of ignorance and idolatry, sensuality and sin, to a better life and a nobler destiny. Such love taught man to yearn after every other man as a brother; it broke down that "middle wall of partition" between Jew and gentile which had been a barrier to mutual confidence and intercourse more insurmountable than the loftiest mountains or the broadest seas; and so barbarian, Scythian, bond and free, became one in Christ Jesus. Thales, chief of the seven sages, used to thank the gods that he was born a man and not a brute, a Greek and not a barbarian, implying that not to be a Greek was to be a barbarian and a brute. Such a man knew no love more universal than that which is limited by national lines—falsely called "patriotism." Christ made it a fundamental precept in the code of Christian ethics, "*Love your enemies*," and gave so wide a signification to the current precept "thou shalt love thy neighbor" that even an enemy becomes a neighbor; for the point of the parable of the Good Samaritan lies deeper than the duty of *befriending the helpless*, which is only an incidental lesson. Christ was asked,