

we do not take the course that God has marked out. And so it was that, although Moses had taught the knowledge of the true God to the children of Israel, they were continually turning their backs upon Jehovah, forgetting the invisible Deity and worshipping Baal and Ashtoreth—things that they could see. You remember how prone they were to idolatry, even in the days of Moses—tainted with it no doubt from their long sojourn in Egypt; so that while Moses was up in the Mount, receiving the knowledge of the true God, conversing with him face to face, in order that he might testify that he had both seen and heard the God that Israel was to worship, the people persuaded Aaron to make them a golden calf—one of the Egyptian gods.

It is the tendency of the natural man to demand signs and outward manifestations; the Israelites wanted a god that they could see; and hence they erected the golden calf, and bowed down before it. They were seduced again and again, because they neglected to do the things that God required of them, and their minds were darkened in consequence. The knowledge that Moses had kindled in their hearts became dim, and gradually died away. They forgot that their God was in heaven, and they worshipped the sun and the moon, like the heathen nations around them. Hence it was necessary for the Lord to send prophets again and again, to rekindle the old fire, to revive in the hearts of His chosen people the original knowledge that they received from Moses, reminding them that they must not walk by sight, but must have faith in the invisible God and believe the testimonies of those who had been worthy to see and converse with him. The masses of the people were not worthy to see God. Moses tried to make His people worthy, but they would not submit themselves to the necessary discipline; so the Melchisedec Priesthood and the fullness of the Gospel were taken into the heavens when Moses departed, and Israel was left with the law of Moses, with the law of carnal commandments, with the Aaronic Priesthood to rule over them, until the dawning of a brighter day.

When Jesus Christ came, He taught them new doctrines—that is, they were new to that generation, who were astonished at them, and because He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. He told them He was the Son of God, and that He was in the image of His Father. He taught them that up above this world, in a heaven of happiness, peace and glory, dwelt their Father, from whom He had come—come in fulfillment of Moses and the Prophets, who had testified of Him. He came to restore the knowledge that was lost. He came to fulfill the requirements of the Law, which had pre-figured by its sacrifices and offerings the offering up of this great sacrifice, the Lamb of God, in the meridian of time. "Think not," said He, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." But He came to teach a new principle. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." This was to His disciples. He also said, as He sat upon the Mount of Olives delivering that great discourse called the Sermon on the Mount:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He

maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

They were astonished at His doctrine. Why? Was it a new doctrine? No; it was as old as eternity. It was a part of that everlasting Gospel that had been formulated in the heavens before the world was, and had been upon the earth in different dispensations. This same principle had doubtless been taught by Enoch, who with his city reached such a state of perfection that they were taken into the heavens by translation. Can you conceive that Enoch did not teach his people that they should love each other, that they should return good for evil? I cannot. I believe that wherever the fullness of the Gospel has been preached, whether by an Adam, an Enoch, a Noah, an Abraham, or a Moses, men have been taught to love each other as the children of God, and to return good for evil. But it was a new doctrine to the generation to whom Christ was sent. For fifteen hundred years the Jews had been schooled under the law of Moses. It was a law of strict justice, with little or no mercy. It was the law of retaliation. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." This was as high a principle perhaps as they could comprehend, and was good as far as it went; for justice cannot be abolished. Men will receive the measure that they mete unto others. Christ taught this principle along with the principle of mercy and forgiveness and the return of good for evil. "Judge not," says He, "that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." He did not do away with the principle of justice, but re-enunciated it. But He did seek to take out of the hands of individuals, the infliction of vengeance upon those who had wronged them. Leave these things to God, was what He meant. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Do good to each other, forgive all men, serve God, and He will avenge your injuries. Perhaps no other principle is so closely associated with the name of Jesus Christ, except it be the atonement and the resurrection, which he came to teach and exemplify, as the principle of the Golden Rule, the return of good for evil.

Now, it seems a hard thing to do; but there is always some difficulty in obeying God. There is always something to be conquered in ourselves when we make up our minds to live near to the Lord. But that is what we are here for. Self-conquest is the object of the revelation of God's will to man. It is to make man Godlike; to lift him up, to make him more like His Father in heaven; for he is destined to be like Him. But how long would we have to wait, if men continued to hate each other, to avenge their wrongs and inflict injury in return for injury—how long would we have to wait before mankind would be Godlike and the world worthy to be rolled back into the presence of its Creator?

The Prophet Joseph Smith—that much-misunderstood man—gave at one time a striking illustration of this principle. It was when Zion's camp was going down to Missouri, in the year 1834. A member of the camp awoke one morning and found a rattlesnake in bed with him, coiled and asleep near his pillow. Horrortrucken he arose, and his first thought was to get a stick or a stone and kill the snake. The Prophet

told him not to do it. Said he: "The snake has not harmed you; it has trusted in you; do not kill it; for how is that great era of peace and goodwill to be ushered in, which the prophets have predicted, when the lion shall eat straw like the ox, when the sucking child shall play with the serpent, and they shall not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of the Lord—how long must we wait for that great era, the Millennium, if men continue to treat cruelly the animals and crush their lives out of them without any provocation?" Joseph Smith taught men to be kind, to be merciful, to be forgiving, and to return good for evil.

I bear in mind another incident in his history, when he and some of his brethren were lying in a dungeon, Liberty Jail, Missouri, during the winter of 1838-9, after the Saints, fifteen thousand men, women and children, had been driven from the state of Missouri. These brethren were treated with great cruelty in prison. It is said that the depravity of their jailors descended so low that they even cooked human flesh, taken from the body of a negro who had been killed, and offered it to these prisoners to eat; and the Prophet, warned by the Lord, told his brethren not to partake of it. It was in the midst of these circumstances that one of the brethren was asked to pray; and he prayed that God would damn the men who were treating them thus cruelly. When he got through, the others were laughing at him. He asked, "What is the matter?" They said, "We are laughing at your prayer." "Well," he replied, "If you want any better praying than that, you can do it yourselves." The Prophet then told him, "You yourself will yet see the day when you will pity these very men who are inflicting these injuries upon you. God has shown to me in vision the sufferings of the ungodly, and I had to pray to Him to close the vision when I saw the terrible judgments that would come upon the wicked." The Prophet taught the principle of patient submission to wrong. And it is this that lifts men up above other men. When men injure us they put themselves in our debt, and that debt remains until we cancel it by an act of retaliation.

But men will say, as I have heard them say, "Why, if I should return good for evil to this or that person, he would not appreciate my motive; he would think I was soft, foolish, that I was truckling, and that I meant it as an acknowledgement that he was right and I was wrong and had deserved all that he had done." What if he should think so? What if some men's souls are so limited that they cannot appreciate a magnanimous act? It is not for the effect upon them alone that you are taught to practice the golden rule; it is for the effect upon yourself. You cannot grow if you hate mankind. You cannot increase and expand, at least as rapidly as you might, if you cherish feelings of anger, jealousy and strife. It is because God wants you to grow, to become like Him, that He asks you to keep your hearts free from these things. Therefore what matters it whether your motives are understood or not? You are not the first to have your motives misunderstood. The effect upon you and upon me cannot be otherwise than good, if we forgive those who have injured us, and strive to love our enemies; for I believe that even this is possible, if we stand upon a plane high enough. If we remember who and what we are; that we were sent into this world to teach and exemplify the truth; that we came to be saviors of men, bearing the Holy Priesthood, having the Gospel of peace and goodwill to administer; if we remember that we have been chosen to