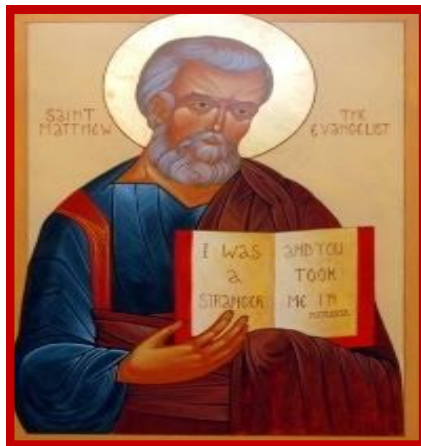


5. God is of a great and lofty mind, which transcends all things, and which ever abides and is established in His own blessed and tranquil eternity, and so converts and draws all things to Himself. Hear, again, S. Bernard (*ad Fratres de Monte Dei*): “Thou shalt, amid the adverse and prosperous changes and chances of the world, hold fast as it were an image of eternity; I mean an inviolable and unshaken constancy of mind, blessing God at all times, and vindicating for thyself, even in the uncertain events of this changeful world, and in its certain troubles, to some extent at least, a condition of abiding unchangeableness, so shalt thou begin to be changed and formed anew into the image and likeness of the eternal God, with whom is no changeableness, neither shadow of turning; for as He is, so also shalt thou be in this world, neither fearful in adversity nor dissolute in prosperity.”

Lastly, all perfection in this life is begun only, and is imperfect. For concupiscence, like a Jebusite, dwelleth in our members, and can be kept under, but not entirely extirpated; but in heaven, perfection shall be full and complete, where this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on a blessed immortality, where death and concupiscence shall be swallowed up of glory, and God shall be all in all. There shall be no covetousness, where love shall fill all things. Whence the Apostle says of himself (Philip. iii. 12):—“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”



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For the Catholic Church, God's Revelation is found in Sacred Tradition, understood as God's Revealed Word handed down by the Living Teaching Authority established by Christ in the Church. That includes both Written Tradition (Scripture) and Unwritten Tradition received from Christ and handed down Orally by the Apostles and their Successors. The Church founded by Christ on Peter, and only that Church, has been Empowered by Christ to 'Interpret' His Teaching Authoritatively in His Name.

Scripture is *Inspired*; *Inspiration* really means that God Himself is the Chief Author of the Scriptures. He uses a Human Agent, in so marvelous a way that the Human writes what the Holy Spirit wants him to write, does so without Error, yet the Human Writer is Free, and keeps his own Style of Language. It is only because God is *Transcendent* that He can do this - insure Freedom from Error, while leaving the Human Free. To say He is Transcendent means that He is above and beyond all our Human Classifications and Categories.

Matthew writes his gospel account to give us the view of Jesus as the King. He records Jesus' authority in calling the disciples: "Follow me" (Matthew 4:19), and he also records more than any of the others about Jesus' teaching concerning God's kingdom and heavenly rule.

Considered one of the most important Catholic theologians and Bible commentators, Cornelius à Lapide's, S.J. writings on the Bible, created a Scripture Commentary so complete and scholarly that it was practically the universal commentary in use by Catholics for over 400 years. Fr. Lapide's most excellent commentaries have been widely known for successfully combining piety and practicality. Written during the time of the Counter Reformation, it includes plenty of apologetics. His vast knowledge is only equaled by his piety and holiness.

### Continuation of Matthew 5: 35-48

**Verse 37.**—*But let your communication be, &c.—i.e.,* a simple affirmation, or negation. *For what is more than these,* Gr. περισσόν. The Syriac has, *what is added beyond these.* In the Hebrew Gospel ascribed to S. Matthew, we have ין יןאין, *ain, ain,* כן כןken, *ken*—that is *no, no, so, so.* In this passage a simple affirmation or negation is opposed to an oath; so in S. James (v. 12); and it means that whatever is added to these in the way of swearing, is of evil. So S. Chrysostom and S. Jerome, or rather Paulinus, *Epist. ad Celantium.*

*Of evil.* *Evil* here may be taken either in the masculine or the neuter gender. If the masculine the devil is meant, who, as a ringleader of all iniquity, incites thee to swear without necessity, and so draws thee on by degrees to swear falsely, which is the sin of perjury. So Theophylact, Maldonatus, and others. If you take the neuter, it means *cometh of vice, either your own or another's*—that is to say, the custom of swearing arises either from your own vice of levity or irreverence, or else from

says. Therefore we are made to be really sons of God, and as it were gods upon earth. And so S. Peter proposes the words in Lev. xi. 44 as a kind of mirror for Christians saying, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." (1 Pet. i. 16.) And S. Paul says, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) Beautifully says S. Cyprian, "If it be a pleasure and glory to men to have children like themselves, how much more is there gladness with God our Father, when any one is so born spiritually, that the Divine nobility is manifest in his actions?"

1. The perfection of God consists in the most ample love of all men, bad as well as good. And it is to this Christ has special reference in this passage.

2. It consists in the highest forbearance, kindness, and tranquillity, and the impossibility of being affected by injury, wrath, or revenge, so that He is imperturbable and without passions. So in like manner must we, if we would be perfect, be meek and tranquil, and to that end must mortify anger and all other mental passions. Whence S. Ambrose says (*lib. de Jacob et vita beata*), "It is the part of a perfect man to sustain like a brave soldier the onset of the most terrible misfortunes, and like a wise pilot to manage his ship in a storm, and as he runs through the surging billows, to avoid shipwreck rather by facing the waves than by shrinking from them." Hence we shall find it a singularly efficacious means of attaining perfection for every one to search carefully into the state of his own soul, and find out his chief vice, from which, like branches from a root, all his other faults spring, and to strive against this with all his might until he root it out. For example, the radical and dominating vice in Peter is pride, in Paul gluttony, in James luxury, in John acerbity, in Philip anger, in Andrew sadness, in Matthew pusillanimity. Let every man know his own vice, and when it is known, let him fight against it with suitable weapons and mortify it.

3. God looks down from on high upon all earthly things as mean and poor, and gloriously presides over heaven and heavenly things. So in like manner, ought the man who is aiming at perfection to despise earthly honours and pleasures as worthless matters, pertaining to flies and gnats and fleas, and ought to look up to and covet the heavenly things, which are God's.

4. The mind and will of God are most just, holy, and perfect. With this mind, then, ought we to be clothed, that we may be like God—yea, one with God. Hear what S. Bernard says about this: "The unity of a man's spirit with God is his having his heart lifted up towards God, and entirely directed to Him; when he only wills what God wills; when there is not only affection, but perfect affection for God, so that he cannot will anything save and except what God wills. For to will what God wills is to be already like God. But not to be able to will except what God wills, this is to be what God is, to whom to will and to be are the same thing.

Moreover, S. James (chap. i.), addressing not religious, but all believers, says: “That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” For if soldiers in battle wish to be most brave, disciples in a school most learned, workmen, each in their own craft, most exact, servants in obeying their own masters most diligent, why should not Christians, who are called by Christ to holiness and perfection, wish to be most holy and most perfect?

Blessed Theresa was wont to say that God has an especial love for those who are perfect, and makes them, as it were, captains and generals of others, that they should convert, save, and perfect many. Wherefore she herself made a vow that in every work she would do that which should be more perfect, and for the greater glory of God. See S. Chrysostom (lib. 3. *de Vitupererat. vitæ Monast.*), where he teaches that the precepts of Christ bind seculars as well as religious, and that therefore both ought to aim at perfection, each in his own state and rank, according to that which God said to Israel, “Thou shalt be perfect and without spot before the Lord thy God.” (Deut. xviii. 13.)

2. This perfection is of counsel so far as it extends itself to the observance, not only of commands, but of evangelical counsels, such as voluntary poverty, chastity, and religious obedience; such, I mean, as when Christ said, “If thou wilt be perfect, sell that thou hast and give to the poor.” (Matt. xix. 21.)

Moreover, this perfection mainly consists in charity and love, especially of our enemies. For this is the perfection of *life*, since the perfection of the *country* consists in the vision and fruition of God. Christ here tacitly intimates that the way of attaining perfection and eminent sanctity is for any one to exercise himself in love of his enemies, both because this is the highest and most difficult act of charity, as because it is the greatest victory over ourselves. For he who does this generously vanquishes anger, revenge, and the other passions of the soul; and God, requites his charity with far more abundant gifts of grace. So that holy virgin mentioned by D. Tauler, when asked how she had attained to so great sanctity, replied, “I have ever loved with a special love any who have been troublesome to me; and to any one who has injured me, I have always endeavoured to show some special mark of kindness.”

*As your Father which is in heaven, &c.*, For He with a perfect love loves all men. Upon all He sheds the beams of His beneficence, as it were a perennial sun of kindness, Who expects not to derive any advantage from any one, but out of pure love desires to communicate His benefits to others, that thus He may contend with the wickedness and ingratitude of man; for few indeed are they who love Him, their Benefactor, in return as they should do. The word *as* signifies likeness, not equality; for we cannot come up to the perfection of God, for that infinitely transcends all our perfection; but we ought to imitate it as far as we are able.

The perfection then which Christ here requires of a Christian is not merely human but Divine perfection, and similar to God’s perfection. For he is our Father not only by nature, but by grace, for by it “we are partakers of the Divine nature,” as S. Peter

another man’s incredulity and distrust. Because a man does not believe my simple assertion, I confirm my words by an oath, which, however, is a fault become necessary since the fall of man. So S. Augustine.

**Verses 38 and 39.**—*You have heard, &c.* This was the law of retaliation. *But I say unto you, Resist not evil.* That is, an evil or unjust thing, or an injury done to thee by a wicked man. That is, do not requite evil by evil, injury by injury. Or better, *resist not evil*, taking *evil* in the masculine—*i.e.*, the evil man who injures you. The Greek *τῷ πονηρῷ*, though both meanings amount to much the same thing.

Note—1. That the ancient *lex talionis* was just, but in practice it was often unjust, and sprang from a desire of revenge, by which one who had had an eye or tooth plucked out brought before the magistrate the person who had injured him, and demanded, by way of retaliation, that his eye or tooth should be plucked out. But Christ supplies the deficiency of this law and perfects it, by opposing to the *lex talionis* the law and counsel of patience, and to a disposition thirsting for revenge the law of meekness.

Note—2. That this law of Christ has not regard to magistrates, as Anabaptists say, that all war not only offensive, but even defensive, is forbidden to Christians by Christ, but has regard to private persons; for it is the office of the magistrate to scourge the guilty and to put murderers to death.

Note—3. This law of Christ does not take away from private individuals the *lex talionis* which is of the law of nations and of nature, both for the reparation of offended justice and for the correction of the guilty person who has offended; much less does it take away the right of defending ourselves when we are attacked by an enemy, but only forbids the desire of vengeance.

Note—4. That Christ here wishes to imprint upon us a disposition to meekness and patience, that however much thou mayest be injured, yet still that thou shouldst not depart so much as a hair’s breadth from inward peace and charity; and that if love of your neighbour and the glory of God, in any conjuncture of circumstances, should absolutely require that you resist not evil, but patiently accept it, that you should in such a case do as the first Christians did—suffer joyfully the spoiling of your goods, or even the deprivation of life itself. I say then, with regard to these three cases spoken of by Christ, *If any one smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; If any one will take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also; Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain*, that they are, speaking generally, matters of counsel, not of direct precept; but if the salvation of our neighbour and the glory of God require them to be done, then they are of precept. For instance, if the Indians or the Japanese knew that Christ has commanded Christians to turn the other cheek to him who smote them upon one cheek, and unless they did so those heathens would be scandalized and turned away from embracing the faith of Christ, then I say that it would be the bounden duty of any Christian, but especially

of a preacher, to turn the other cheek to him who smote him upon one. There is a literal example of this in the life of S. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of India and Japan. When the Japanese were laughing at him as a foreigner, and at his new doctrine concerning Christ crucified, it happened that a certain Japanese, hearing John Fernandez, a companion of Xavier, preaching in the street, out of petulance spat in his face. Fernandez, in no way disturbed, quietly wiped away the spittle, and proceeded with his discourse. The Japanese were so filled with admiration at his patience and struck with the wisdom of the new preachers, that they gave themselves to them as disciples, and in great numbers embraced the faith of Christ.

Lastly, it is a distinguishing characteristic of a martyr not to resist, not to defend himself, but to suffer himself to be slain for Christ. For, “a soldier fights, not a martyr.” A martyr is a sharer in the Passion of Christ, as the martyrs write to S. Cyprian, (lib. 5, *Epist.* 12.) For the passion of Christ is the pattern of all martyrdom.

Wherefore that Theban Legion of very many and very brave soldiers, being condemned to death by the Emperor Maximian, because they would not sacrifice to idols, when soldiers were sent amongst them to slay them, would not defend themselves, even though they might have sold their lives dear and made an immense slaughter of their enemies. But at the instigation and exhortation of S. Mauritius, they piled their arms and suffered themselves to be immolated like a flock of lambs, for the sake of Christ. It was Christ who taught this new philosophy, a paradox to the world, unknown to the philosophers, unheard of among men, but heavenly and divine, and confirmed the same by His own example, when He willingly gave Himself up to the Jews to be bound, scourged, and crucified. Whence He says Himself, “I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” (Is. 1. 6.)

**Verse 39 (Continued)-** *Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, &c.* This is, as I have said, a matter sometimes of precept, sometimes of counsel. Compliance with it flows from a generous mind, prompt to suffer, and earnestly desirous of imitating the Life and Passion of Christ. Hence S. Ambrose by *the right cheek* mystically understands *patience*, which conquers all things. “For as,” saith he, “Samson by the jaw-bone of an ass slew a thousand Philistines, so Christ by His patience overthrew the demons and all His enemies.”

Thus that glorious Spiridion, Bishop of Trimituns, in Cyprus, being invited by the Emperor Constantine to visit him on account of the fame of his sanctity, when he was entering the imperial palace in a mean and foreign garb, was derided by one of the servants and slapped on the cheek. On receiving it he immediately turned the other cheek, on which the servant was so struck with his virtue, that he became ashamed, and falling down on the ground at his feet begged him to forgive him. (See Spiridion’s Life in Surius, *Decemb.* 12.)

Similarly, a monk who was slapped on one cheek by an energumen, offered her the other; and by this drove out the devil. Hear the account (*Auctor. Doctrinæ Pat. Tract. de humilitate n. 5*) : “When the monk entered into the house, there came the girl who was vexed by the devil, and gave the monk a slap in the face, but he, according to the

Lycurgus, King of the Lacedæmonians, being deprived of an eye by a certain young man, the youth was presented to him by the people that he should punish him in any way he pleased. Lycurgus took the youth, and gave him excellent instruction; and when he had quite reformed his character, he brought him into the theatre, and presented him to the people, saying, “Lo! him whom I received from you violent and injurious I restore to you profitable and acceptable.” See Plutarch in Life of Lycurgus. If the Gentiles, led by nature and reason, did such things as these, for the sake of temporal glory, what ought not Christians to do, led by faith and grace for the reward of a blissful eternity?

**Verse 47-** *And if ye salute your brethren only, &c. Brethren, i.e., relations, kinsfolk, friends. Salute. Gr. ἀσπάσθητε, salute with a kiss and embrace*, which was the customary method of salutation among the Greeks and Romans, and indeed amongst the first Christians, according to those words of S. Paul, “Salute one another with an holy kiss.” (2 Cor. xiii. 12.)

**Verse 48-** *Be ye therefore perfect, &c.* The emphasis here is upon the word *ye*. Because ye are separated from the heathen, and chosen of God that ye should be His faithful ones, His friends, His sons and heirs, therefore imitate the holiness and perfection of your Heavenly Father.

The word *therefore* refers partly to what immediately precedes concerning love of our enemies. “Do ye therefore, O faithful, who are the friends of God, and who ought therefore to be better than the heathen, do you love all men, enemies as well as friends, even as your Father wholly extends His love to all.” But the *therefore* also partly refers to all that has gone before. For this maxim is the end and completion of all the sayings of this chapter, as though Christ said, “Thus far I have unfolded the commandments of God, which are the sanction of the perfection of all virtue. Be ye therefore perfect in meekness, in purity of heart, in patience, in chastity, in charity, and in every virtue which the Law of God enjoins.”

You will ask whether this perfection be of counsel or of precept? I reply, partly of counsel, partly of precept. First, it is of precept that every believer in Christianity should endeavour to be perfect, in such wise that he should perfectly love his enemies as well as his friends, and keep perfectly all the other commandments of God. For Christ is here speaking to all the faithful, as is plain from what precedes. Hence we learn from this passage that all Christians are under obligation to be advancing towards perfection according to their state and condition. For this is required that they should be the children of their Heavenly Father, as Christ says. Whosoever therefore desires to be the child and heir of this Father ought to imitate Him in perfection because, as S. Cyprian says (*Serm. de bono Patient.*), “The children of such and so great a Parent ought not to be degenerate.”

and even them, not out of hatred: just as a judge might order a guilty person to be put to death, not because he hated him, but even one whom he loved.

I Maintain, therefore, that this saying was not in the Law, but was said by the Scribes who interpreted the Law. For they, because they found in Lev. xix. 18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," or "thy friend," as the Vulgate translates, inferred from thence that they should hate their enemies. Wherefore Christ here corrects this interpretation of theirs, and explains the Law, that by neighbour or friend every man is meant, even a foreigner, a Gentile, and an enemy. For all men are neighbours, through their first forefather, Adam, and brethren one of another. We are also brethren through our second Father, Christ, through whom we have been born again, and, as it were, created anew in the likeness of God, and called to the common inheritance of God, our Father in heaven. So S. Jerome, Augustine, Theophylact, and others.

**Verse 44-** *But I say unto you,* &c. Christ here bids us love our enemies in heart, in word, and in deed. In heart, when He says, "Love your enemies;" in word, "Bless them that curse you;" in deed, by adding, "Do good to them that hate you."

**Verse 45-** *That ye may be the children of your Father,* &c. Christ bids that in loving our enemies we should imitate God, who does good to his impious enemies, giving them rain and sunshine, corn and fruits. For the mind of God is so lofty, that He regards no injury nor blasphemy of any one, however impious, as done against Himself. He perceives no diminution of His honour and glory. He is so impassible and so holy that no anger or revenge can affect Him, and so good and element that He showers His gifts upon His enemies, preventing them with His grace, and alluring and drawing them to reconciliation. Yea, He gave up His only Son to be crucified, that He might reconcile them and save them. Let us imitate these things as far as we can.

**Verse 46-** *For if ye love them,* &c. The publicans were so called because they farmed and collected the public taxes. And they extorted from the poor with the utmost rigour more than they had a right to pay. For this reason they were accounted by the Jews iniquitous and infamous.

*What reward have ye?* None: for if ye love your friends only, not your enemies, ye only do as the publicans do, and God will give you no reward in heaven. For such love is of nature, not of grace and charity, which latter love extends itself even to enemies. And ye do receive a reward from your friends, namely, reciprocal love. But if ye love your enemies as well as your friends, ye will deserve and obtain great grace and glory from God, since both kinds of love are the fruit of charity. Charity therefore bids us love both friends and enemies, corrupt nature our friends only.

Publius Sulla was wont to boast that he surpassed his friends in benefits, his enemies in injuries. Other heathen did the same. There were indeed a few among them who did love even their enemies. Such was Phocion, who being condemned to death, and at point of execution, being asked what message he would send to his son, made answer, "I wish him to forget this injury which the Athenians have done to me."

Divine precept, offered her his other cheek to slap. The devil, being constrained, began to cry out, 'O! The power of the precepts of Jesus Christ drives me hence.' And immediately the girl was cleansed. When the monk came to some old men, he told them what had been done, and they glorified God, saying, 'It is the habit of diabolical pride to fall before the lowliness of the commands of Jesus.'"

Cassian celebrates the patience of a certain religious man, who in order to try his virtue, received a very sharp slap on his cheek from his Abbot Paul in a large assemblage, and so severe was the blow that it was heard by a number of persons who were sitting a considerable distance off. Yet not only did not the monk murmur, but his face was not even suffused with a blush, as is usual.

Lastly, S. Eulogius, presbyter and martyr of Cordova, being sentenced to death by a Saracen prince because he had spoken evil of Mahomet, whilst he was being led to martyrdom, was struck by a Saracen on his cheek. He offered him the other, when he received another slap upon that. Soon afterwards he was beheaded, when a dove came and sat upon his body, a sign and a vindication of his dove-like meekness, innocence, and patience. This happened A.D. 859, On the 11th day of March.

**Verse 40-** *And if any man will sue thee at the law,* &c. The cloak is an outer garment, and often of considerable value; the coat in this passage is an inner garment, whence the saying, "Your coat is nearer than your cloak." Wherefore the coat cannot be plucked away until the cloak has been taken off. So S. Luke rightly inverts the order of the two, and says, *And him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take away thy coat also.* But the meaning is the same in both. If any one shall take one garment away from thee, do not go to law with him to recover it, but rather let him take possession of another, if he will. S. Francis did this literally. On account of his profuse almsdeeds he was taken by his father before the Bishop of Assisi, that he might be made to give up his property. Not only did he yield up his other goods, but he resigned even his clothes to his father, saying, "Now shall I say more boldly, 'Our Father, which art in heaven.'" S. Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary, afforded in this matter a rare example of patience and poverty. After the death of her husband, the Landgrave of Hesse, she was expelled with the utmost indignity by his vassals and relations from her home, she was despoiled of all she had, and reduced to the most extreme poverty. With joy and alacrity she went to a Franciscan convent; and there she asked the brethren to sing *Te Deum laudamus* in thanksgiving to God. Afterwards she wandered from house to house, like a beggar, with her children, and at last entered a hut, where she was tormented with the smoke, heat, wind, and rain, yet always did she give God thanks. The insults, reproaches, and scoffs of her relations she joyfully endured, being glad that she was counted worthy to suffer such things for God. At length, her father, King Andrew, begged her to go back

to Hungary to share in the royal splendour. She would not, but in great poverty, gaining her own living by spinning wool, she spent the rest of her life, performing the most menial offices for poor, ulcerated, and leprous people. And so, a little before her death, she heard the singing of the angels, and the sweet voice of Christ calling her to His heavenly kingdom—"Come, My chosen one, and enjoy the bed in heaven which I have destined for thee from all eternity."

**Verse 41-** *And whoso shall compel thee to go a mile, Gr. ἀγγιαριζέῖν, Angiare* is a Persian word. The Persian royal messengers and postmen were called angari. They had the right of seizing horses, men or ships, and enforcing their service, so that *angiare* has the same meaning as to *impound, compel*. Hence the words *Angarice* and *Panangarice* in law books. In Hebrew *iggheret* means a *letter*, that which is carried by *angari* or *runners*.

The meaning is—If any one shall force thee to go one mile with him, go to the second mile-post rather than contend; so will you keep peace, exercise patience, and conquer by your charity him who compels you, and make him your friend.

And let not believers think that this is too difficult for them to do. S. Basil (in his *Homiy on reading heathen books*) shows that philosophers taught and did as much. For instance, Pericles, who, upon a certain occasion, had suffered abuse from a person during a whole day, took him home in the evening with a light. Of Julius Cæsar, Cicero says that he forgot nothing except injuries. But those things were but shadows of Christian virtues, which existed in a far greater and more solid degree in S. Paul, S. Laurence, S. Vincent, who gave thanks to their tormentors for weaving for them their martyrs' crowns. S. Cyprian ordered twenty pieces of gold to be given to the executioner who was to behead him. Brother Juniper, the companion of S. Francis, received taunts as Christ's jewels. Once to him who reproached him, he cried, "Cast your jewels into my lap; would that I might be stoned with precious stones like these all the way to Rome!" In the *Lives of the Fathers* we read of a certain religious man, who the more any one vexed him, or laughed at him, the more he rejoiced, saying, "These are the men who afford us an opportunity of becoming perfect; but they who commend us disturb our minds, for it is written, 'They who speak well of you are those who deceive you.'"

Climacus (*Gradu 4 de Obedientiâ*) says that a certain religious, named Abbakirus, suffered divers trials and tribulations at the hands of his brethren for fifteen years. He was even driven from table by the servants. But he bore all patiently, and took none of the indignities offered to him seriously, but as proving him. And when he lay a-dying he said, "I give thanks to Jesus Christ the Lord, and to you, that ye have tried me unto salvation, for, lo! for these seventeen years I have remained un-tempted of the devil." The same Climacus relates that an old man, named Macedonius, who by his own desire had been sent among the novices, said, "Never have I felt freedom from all strife and the sweetness of divine light within my soul as I do now."

**Verse 42-** *Give to him that asketh, &c.* At first sight the precept might not seem to be in harmony with what has gone before concerning the *lex talionis*, but it is indeed in

perfect harmony. The meaning is this—I, Christ, instead of the law of retaliation, appoint a law of love and kindness. Wherefore, whosoever asketh anything of thee, be he friend or be he enemy who has injured thee, or smitten thee on the cheek, or taken away thy cloak, give him what he asks; and if he should desire to borrow from thee, turn not thy face away from him, as people are wont to do, but treat him kindly as a neighbour, and lend him that he requires, as though he had never injured thee. In fine, the sermon and sanction of Christ here does not decrease but increases, for although it may be easier *per se* to give to every one that asketh thee, than when thou art smitten upon one cheek to offer the other to the smiter, yet it is more difficult *in the connection*, which implies both the patience which suffers such things and such men, and the beneficence by which we give or lend to those who ask us. For it is more difficult to do a kindness to one who has injured us, than simply to bear an injury patiently. So S. Augustine, *lib. de Sermonibus Domini*, c. 40.

The liberality of S. John, Patriarch of Alexandria, is well known. Encouraged by these words of Christ, he gave large alms to all who asked him, whence he derived his name of the Almoner. And the more he gave the more he received, so that it seemed as though there were a strife between God and him who should be the more liberal. For John overcame God, but much more did God overcome John. John would not examine those who asked him, whether they were rich or poor, worthy or unworthy, few or many. "I am persuaded," he said, "that if the whole world should come to Alexandria, needing alms, they would be very far from exhausting the treasury of God." S. Francis, upon one occasion, shortly after his conversion, refused, contrary to his custom, to give an alms to a poor man. But he very soon afterwards repented of his refusal, and gave the man a large alms; and he made a vow that in future he would never refuse to give when he was asked. By this his liberality, he drew down upon him that abundant grace of God by which he attained to such eminent sanctity.

That is a rare thing which we read in the Chronicles of the Franciscans concerning Alexander Aleusis, who was called a fountain of life, and who was the teacher of S. Bonaventura. His affection for the Mother of God was so great that he would never deny anything to any one who asked him in her name. A certain Franciscan got to know of this, and, seeing that he was by far the most celebrated Doctor of the University of Paris, came to him and said, "By S. Mary, I beg of you to become one of us." He believed the man was sent by God, and immediately followed him, and became a Franciscan Brother.

**Verse 43.**—*Ye have heard, &c.* It has been asked, where is it said, "Thou shalt hate thine enemy?" Maldonatus replies, in Deut. xxv. 19, "Thou shalt blot out his name from under heaven." God had commanded Joshua and the Hebrews utterly to destroy the impious Canaanites, and to seize their land. But the Law bade only the Canaanites to be slain, not other nations,