

GOSPEL PEARLS

Image and likeness

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Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?" But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose

inscription?" "Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." (Matthew 22: 15-21)

Without specifically mentioning it, Jesus recalls the Genesis story according to which every human being is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, if it is right to give back to Caesar the money that bears his image, all the more so is it right to give our entire lives back to God, since we created in His very image. This is why Christianity cannot be reduced to a private set of beliefs to be kept hidden away from others: just as the candle is placed on the candlestick for all to see, likewise Christians shouldn't be ashamed to show others they are God's children. They can do so, without flaunting and feeling embarrassed about it.