

inction between clean and unclean foods. These elements they had developed into a portentous jungle of rules and regulations, where the moral sense went completely astray and was stupified by the malarial atmosphere. For the profound ethical and humane spirit of the Old Testament, the great prophetic insistence on justice and mercy, they had no ears. Their expansions and their contractions had been equally perverse and fatal. They had developed the wrong side of things, had been rigorous and lax in the wrong places. Jesus reversed their procedure. With the prophets He grasped the essence of the Law in "mercy not sacrifice."

But Jesus carried the prophetic principle—the relative inferiority of the ceremonial to the ethical contents of the Law—infinately further and made it cut infinitely deeper than the prophets themselves. He made the clearest distinction between these two elements in the Old Testament. He found there great commands which were to be done, and little commands which indeed were not to be left undone—as was pointed out before His mission was to Israel—but which in His teaching and life sank so far into the back-ground as to become a mere vanishing quantity. In compassion, placability, readiness for reconciliation, purity of heart, He recognizes great commands. In paying the temple tithes of the products of the field, and even in sacrifices, which the Scribes and indeed the whole nation thought the greatest of all, He sees little commands. In His own life, it is true, no instance of downright violation of the Law can be formally established, but we hear nothing of any sacrifice offered by Him, nothing of the removal of ceremonial impurity, or of the dread of such impurity. He was entirely indifferent to the Pharisaic and even to the Levitical regulations on this point. He touched the leper and the woman with the issue of blood without a thought that He was defiling himself thereby. We do not know what His practice was as regards prohibited foods. Doubtless He conformed to the customs of His nation. But in principle He abrogates entirely the distinction between clean and unclean, not only among foods, but among all external things. To Him it was clear, of course, as against the ascetism of the Pharisees and of all times, as against even the ritual symbolism of the Mosaic Law, that there was nothing in God's world not in itself good and