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Majority of the Jewish nation had, for some time prior to the advent of our Saviour, fallen into many gross and carnal errors both respecting the Law and the Prophets. In regard to the former, they, and particularly the sect of the Pharisees, seem to have lost all sense of the end and purpose of the types and ceremonies enjoined by Moses, and to have substituted the minute discharge of his ritual as something excellent and meritorious in itself, capable of being received as an atonement for the neglecting those general points of virtue and morality upon which that dispensation as well as all that emanates from the Divine Author, was originally founded, and with which it ought for ever to have been animated. But when the observance of the minute ceremonial was substituted instead of love to God and duty to our neighbours, the system resembled some ancient tree, which continues to show green boughs and a stately form to those who regard it only on the outside, but when carefully examined proves rotten and false at heart, and valueless excepting as a matter of outward show ;

" All green and wildly fresh without, but worn and gray within."

In pointing out to his hearers, therefore, the true fulfilment of the law, our blessed Redeemer showed that it consisted not in a strict and literal interpretation of the express precepts of the law, but in the adoption of an ample and liberal interpretation, carrying the spirit of each precept into all the corresponding relations of life. Thus, he taught that not alone by actual slaughter was the perpetrator in danger of judgment, but that all causeless enmity, all injurious language, the source and provocation of deeds of violence, was forbidden. Not only, added the same pure and heavenly teacher, is the foul act of adultery prohibited in the law, but all unclean thoughts which lead to such a crime, are forbidden by the same precept. The same law, pursues the divine interpreter, which prohibits a breach of oath, forbids, by its essence, all idle and unnecessary appeals to that solemnity ; and the same precept when *verbally* goes no farther than to enjoin an equitable retribution of injuries according to the *lex talionis*, includes in it a recommendation to humility, to patience under and forgiveness of injuries, to universal benevolence, to the return of good for evil, and to the practice of every virtue, not in the restricted and limited sense of compliance with the letter of the Law, but with an extended and comprehensive latitude, becoming the children of our heavenly father, whose universal benevolence causes us not to rise on the evil and the good, and his rain to descend on the just and the unjust.

In this sense, therefore as a commentator on the law, and addressing himself to those who were born under its dispensations, did Jesus come *not* to destroy, but to fulfil it ; not to take away the positive prohibition of gross evil, but to extend that prohibition against the entertainment of angry and evil thoughts, which are the parents of such actions ;—not to diminish the interdiction against violence and malevolence, but to enlarge it into a positive precept enjoining to benevolence in action, and resignation in suffering. At the same time, our Saviour taught the inferior value of that compliance with the forms of the ritual so much insisted on by the Pharisees, when placed in competition with the practice of the virtues enjoined by the law ;—and that reconciliation with an offended brother, was a duty preferable even to the offering up a gift, although the devout ceremonial was already commenced by its being laid upon the altar. In a word, our Saviour taught his disciples such a fulfilment of the Law as might in spirit and effect far exceed the dry, formal, literal compliances of which hypocrites showed themselves capable, for the carnal purpose of raising themselves in the opinion of others ; and he sealed his interpretation with the awful denunciation, *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter the kingdom of heaven.*

Thus far, therefore, have we proceeded upon the first head of our discourse, being an attempt to show how far the doctrines of Christ, as preached before his disciples, were consonant to and a fulfilment of the law of Moses ; and it would be no difficult task to prove, from a comparison of texts, that the germs of the Christian doctrine, so beautifully and broadly developed and displayed in the Gospel, are to be found in the ancient dispensation, although they have been unhappily lost sight of by such pretenders to sanctity, among the Jews, as found the observance of the Mosaic cere-