

prove against Him as an excuse for His death. There was a sense in which the charge was false, but there must have been some sense in which it was true, or they would not have seized upon it so confidently. In fact, we are all conscious of a difference in passing from the one Testament to the other. Whatever we may make of it, the difference exists and cannot be ignored or denied.

It has been usual to explain this difference by supposing that Christ's attack was not really against Moses, but against the current interpretation of his law by the Scribes and Pharisees, or against the traditions of the elders which made void the law. As for the law itself, He asserts its permanence in the strongest possible terms. "Verily I say unto you. Till heaven and earth pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whosoever shall do and teach them, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For any erroneous interpretation of the law, of course, Moses was in no way responsible, nor was Christ bound to accept it.

Now there is no doubt that a good deal of the current interpretation put upon the law by the Scribes, was exceedingly puerile, and in some cases it practically nullified the intention of the lawgiver. Nor is there any doubt that in some of His discourses, Jesus does denounce these evasions, and characterizes them as they deserve: such, for instance, as the device whereby they excused themselves from providing for their aged parents by declaring all their property corban, or devoted to the Lord. And, as will appear a little later on, I believe there is a sense in which it is true of the teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, that they are directed

against a misapprehension or misuse of Moses, rather than against Moses himself. But this is hardly sufficient to explain the whole case. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ makes no direct charge of misinterpretation, nor does He even give such prominence to their interpretations as to suggest that He is directing His attack solely against them. In several instances, the very words of Moses are quoted by themselves, and His own precept set over against them, as if He were determined to make the contrast between Himself and Moses as distinct and unequivocal as possible. Where the current interpretations are referred to, they are treated as if they were the natural and legitimate interpretations of what Moses meant. He seems therefore, to occupy the somewhat anomalous position of earnestly upholding the law of Moses and yet of being profoundly dissatisfied with it, of being strongly in favor of it and yet of being vigorously opposed to it. Such a manifest self-contradiction is of course inconceivable as a reality, and leads us to suspect that the law of Moses must somehow have a twofold meaning, according to the way it is taken, one of which He adopts as the law of the new kingdom but not the other.

Let us look at it and see.

The decalogue, which is represented as having been given directly by God from Mount Sinai to the people of Israel, and afterwards written on two tables of stone, is very generally taken as a summary of the moral law, or a statement of man's duty to God and to his fellowmen. As such, it is embodied in all our Church Catechisms, and finds a place more or less prominent in our Church services.

Now, I believe that use of it is perfectly legitimate, and certainly it has served a wholesome end. We may truly say that in all literature there is no detailed summary of human duty that can for a moment compare with it in com-