

the pressing problems of their day ; such, for example, as those of Sabbath observance, marriage and divorce, the duty of obedience to all the right and reasonable laws of even the most tyrannical government, toleration for the conscientious convictions of others. Had they done no more than this the fact would have been well worth noting in the history of ethics.

But this is about the smallest claim they have to recognition as being the greatest moral teachers of mankind. The moment we open the New Testament and compare it with the Old we feel that we have come into a new moral atmosphere, and ascended to an altitude where the air is purer and the vision clearer. The Sermon on the Mount impresses us not because Christ there teaches so much that is new as because He teaches the Old in a new way and with an altogether new emphasis. He scattered, as with a fresh breeze, the mists of pettifogging casuistry which the Jewish teachers had raised about the law of Moses and brought out into clear light the great ethical principles on which it was based and which alone were of permanent obligation. Their legal methods of interpretation had obscured them until they were almost lost to sight. He uncovered them so that all might see them and recognize their truth. He himself claimed that he was changing nothing. He came not to destroy but to fulfil. And yet the instinctive feeling of the Pharisees that He was changing everything was substantially a true one, as subsequent events plainly showed. In military evolutions the same men may be made to present many different formations. True military genius is often revealed in choosing the best formation for the actual situation or in devising a new one which may prove more effective than any yet known. In the materials of the formation chosen there may be nothing new, but the formation itself may make all the difference between victory and defeat. If there is little that is new in Christ's teaching the elements are present in new relations, and prominence is given to those which are of real and permanent value.

If the question is asked as to what are the emphatic elements in Christ's teaching, various answers may be given