

and His disciples may break the law with impunity, but that they are keeping the law in its true intention.

His claim is rather an assertion of His right so to interpret the law of the Sabbath as to put the legal institution upon an ethical basis for the future and to indicate the principle that ought to rule the observance of it as an ethical institution. In this respect His attitude to the Sabbath law is precisely the same as His attitude to the other laws of the old dispensation as indicated in the Sermon on the Mount. That sermon may be taken as His Messianic manifesto *par excellence*. In it He takes up one law after another, and, without perverting them at all from their original intention, gives such a spiritual interpretation to them as lifted them up for evermore from the position of external statutes for the regulation of outward conduct to the grander position of ethical principles for the guidance of the conscience. In doing so He ever speaks with the tone of authority. "Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time—but I say unto you," is the regular antithesis. But that authority is not the authority of superior position so much as it is the authority of superior insight into the true nature of moral distinctions and into the true meaning of the Old Testament laws. He does not legislate; He simply reveals. His words in every case appeal straight to the conscience and find their justification there. As the Christ He is lord not only of the Sabbath but of the whole moral realm through His unerring perception of the truth. That is a sphere which He made His own, a sphere in which, as the very chief of moral experts, He is entitled to speak with an authority that can belong to no other.

This co-ordination of Christ's teaching on the Sabbath with His teaching on many other moral subjects explains, as no other view does, the force of the word "also" in this saying. That the word is significant is evident from the fact that it is found in two out of the three synoptists. On any other view it seems *a propos* of nothing. But when we take the statement as asserting His ability to give the true principle of Sabbath observance as well as of a multitude of other laws which He had already expounded on different occasions in the hearing of these very Pharisees, it falls into its proper place and helps us to appreciate the extent as well as the limits of His claim.

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