

violence. By them of old—by the old law—the terms of obedience are satisfied when the law is obeyed in its letter, “*but, I say unto you,*” there is a wider and broader meaning that goes beyond the letter and takes cognisance of men’s thoughts and desires. And thus our Saviour goes on to expand the law—giving it a more ample significance than it could have in the eyes of those to whom it was first promulgated. He says nothing about repeal—says nothing of the law being obliterated. On the contrary, it is raised and transfigured and glorified by His divine touch. It is more a law now than ever—a better law, under the commentary which He has made upon it, than Jew or Gentile possessed before Christ came. And so of the other laws of the decalogue. Instead of being pared down and weakened by Christ, they are, on the contrary, charged full with a far more weighty and a more spiritual significance. The law is not loosened to us as Christian men, not one jot or tittle has been diminished of our moral obligations to God by the introduction of Christianity. On the contrary, our Christianity has made these obligations ten-fold greater—has made that law far more stringent by the extension of its principles to delicate shades of good and evil that were not brought forward at all in the original form of the law. So that if anybody thinks, from the discussions that have been lately going on about this subject, that now at last we are going to have a fine, free, liberal sort of Christianity, which will let us all do as we like—having thrown overboard the commandments, and got rid of the troublesome burden of the law—such a man is under a very great mistake as to the nature of these discussions, and the nature of Christianity itself. He has read the Sermon on the Mount to very little purpose, who can find there anything like abolition of God’s eternal laws. I can’t find it. I find there, on the contrary, the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of God’s law, set forth with a piercing, unearthly splendour, that throws even Mount Sinai into shade. “For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” And I cannot understand how any one can look on this picture, and look on that, and then imagine that the law under Christianity has been abridged. Not abridgement, but enlargement, not contraction, but expansion, seems to me the process to which the law has been subjected in its passage through Christianity. The stream of divine revelation has not grown narrower as it rolls down through the ages, has not lost any of its strength and volume, or any of its clearness as it sweeps through the green pastures and rich plains of our goodly heritage, but on the contrary, it flows on in a wider channel, gathering into its bosom a thousand tributaries, gliding on with a deeper serenity and a more heavenly hue as it is fed by those “living waters” that have come down to it, not from Sinai, but from the Mount of Olives, living waters that have changed the narrow brook of the far upland heights into a great and mighty river, the fertiliser and civiliser of cities and nations—“a river whose streams make glad the city of our God.” Let no one suppose,

then, that we have in Christianity a curtailed or mutilated edition of God’s commandments. Let no one imagine that our religion is a soft, easy-going, kind of religion, which allows men a *carte-blanche* to fill up with any parts of the law that may please them, and give the rest the go-by. It is far more strict and stern than Judaism, because it is far more comprehensive and spiritual.

To come now to the Fourth Commandment. To this Commandment I would apply the remarks I have made on the Sixth Commandment. Christ did not abolish the Sixth, no more did he abolish the Fourth. He drove none of the Commandments out of the world; but He took them and absorbed them into a higher and more spiritual system. He took the Commandment,—“Thou shalt not kill,”—He absorbed it, and when from His hands it came forth to the world again it was this—“He that hateth his brother is a murderer.” He took the Fourth Commandment, prohibiting all labour one day of the week, and when it emerges again in the practice of His inspired Apostles, it is not only cessation from labour, which was the chief element in its original form, but it is also a day of spiritual worship—a day commemorative of His resurrection—a day for religious culture. It includes the Sabbath of the Decalogue, as the higher exposition of the Sixth Commandment includes the Sixth Commandment. It is not a Jewish day in any proper sense of the word, it is a day of humanity—needful for humanity, and needful as long as humanity is what it is.

I believe, then, that this command is of perpetual obligation—that, as interpreted by Christianity, it will last as long as the world. In going back, then, to see what this command is, as related to me, a Christian man, I take my Christianity with me as interpreter. I do not go back to the law as a Jew, leaping over Christianity as though I had never heard of it. I cannot go to the foot of Mount Sinai and stand there and listen, without consulting Christ and His Apostles, to learn in what sense, and degree, and manner I am to understand the commands I hear. I must be guided by them in the conclusions I form. I must go through the gate of Christianity in my approach to the law.

In the Lord’s day, then—this first day of the week—I find the Sabbath of the decalogue reproduced, and *something more*. It is not unclothed, but clothed upon with a moral meaning and a pathos which could not belong to the Jewish Sabbath. It is by so much better than the Jewish as Christianity is better than Judaism, and as Christ’s exposition of morality is more spiritual than the Decalogue.

And further, in this Lord’s day I have two things meeting together which prevent me from speaking of the Decalogue as abolished, and prompt me rather to speak of it as absorbed or transfigured into a higher system. And these two things are rest and worship. Rest—I derive that from the Decalogue; worship—I get that from Christianity. If it is asked—why not be satisfied with the one factor, worship, which Christianity gives you, without running away back to the Decalogue in order to import this necessity of rest into your idea of the