

correcting the ancient traditions as only antiquated errors, and telling of heavenly things hitherto unrevealed.

This again marks the contrast between Christ and the scribes, or all other professed teachers of the law. Jewish doctors and Pharisees often descended to that which was puerile and frivolous. Assuming that the Spirit who had breathed through the prophets was withdrawn, they sought to supply this lack by an elaborate system of petty rules and regulations. They tithed all manner of herbs, while they passed over judgment and the love of God; they washed pots and made clean the outside of cup and platter, while they left their own hearts full of ravening and wickedness. In the place of a high morality based upon the love of the right, they devised the most frivolous casuistry ever known, overburdening men's memories with countless rules, often not only trivial but trifling, and not surpassed in absurdity by the paltry regulations of the Koran. For example, the school of Hillel held that an egg, laid on a festival day, must not be eaten: the school of Shammai dared to say it might be. Think of rival schools dividing upon such a question as this, whether water poured from a clean into an unclean vessel was *in the transit clean or unclean!* These are but specimens of the solemn frivolities with which the Jewish teachers burdened and perplexed men. Christ charged them with even making the Word of God of none effect by their tradition, inculcating precepts decidedly immoral and irreligious, as when they absolved a man from the duty of maintaining aged, infirm, or helpless parents, if He claimed that His property was *corban*, as if God would not scorn a gift, placed upon His altars, which by the claims of natural affection and filial gratitude and household piety already belonged to the offerer's father and mother!

Contrast now the sublime altitude of Christ's teachings! What lofty themes! How broad and deep their range and reach! While others were emphasizing *forms*, he laid stress upon the *spirit*; they talked of *ceremonies*, He of spiritual *affections*; they of trifling *details*, He of great *duties*; they of petty regulations, He of regulating principles. They tried to frame a code so minutely complete that the most insignificant matter should have its definitions; He sought to put within men a profound enthusiasm for the right, such love of God as would make duty a delight, such love of man as would work no ill to one's neighbor but impel generous exertion to promote his well-being.

3. Let us mark next the *spirituality* of Christ's teaching. Here both its authority and sublimity reach their summit. He stands alone and unique in emphasizing what is *within*—not the *act*, but the *motive*. We have seen that His teaching was sublime in its ascent to the loftiest heights of theme and thought: it was equally profound in the depths which it sounded. It penetrated to the lowest, inmost, and most intricate recesses of the soul. Christ pointed men to that in which the sin of adultery finds both its origin and index, the look of lust.