

—*one jot or one tittle.*] “Jot”=“Yod” the smaller letter of the Hebrew alphabet. Persons will say “not one iota,” in a proverbial way—from the iota’s being the smallest letter of the Greek alphabet—a mere stroke with a slight rest of the pen at the bottom of it.—“Tittle” means the almost imperceptible little peculiarities which make the only but a very great difference between certain letters in the Hebrew alphabet.—In the English written alphabet, a slight stroke will turn a capital T into an F, or an O into a Q—but such differences are much more manifest to the eye than those which the slight marks here meant by “tittle” produce between certain of the Hebrew letters.

—*the Law.*] The preceding revelations from God—especially the Mosaic.

—*till all be fulfilled.*]—“till all the things intended of God relating to the human race have been accomplished”—and this will not be until the close of the Christian dispensation—when the members of the Body founded by our Lord who have stood their probation satisfactorily, will be advanced to a higher state of existence.

Ver. 19. *Whosoever shall do and teach them.*] “Whosoever shall really practice and intelligently teach the ancient revealed commands of God in respect to the conduct of man—in the actual and deep-reaching sense,—the same will be called great—will be considered by our Lord as in a pre-eminent degree accomplishing his will—in the kingdom of heaven—in the Church which he was about to found on earth.”

Ver. 20. *Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.*] “Righteousness” in the Holy Scripture often technically means “the observance of the revealed Law of God”—and this is what the expression means here.—So far from there being an abolition of the ancient revelations of God through the establishment of the Church—those only that obeyed these revelations, or were determined to do so, in a manner far more real than was generally taken to be a true and sufficient obedience—would be even admitted into the Church.—The public Teachers of the Jewish nation had at this time become very

corrupt.—and the most superficial observance of the revealed Laws of God satisfied them. Lax in respect to themselves, they were lax in respect to those whom it was their duty to influence.

Ver. 21. *It was said by them of old time.*] Rather, “It was said to the ancients”—i. e. to the Israelites of the time of Moses.

Ver. 22. *But I say unto you.*] The “I” should be emphasised in reading, to shew the distinction between what our Lord taught, and what the then corrupt Jewish authorities taught relative to the ancient revelations of God.

—*Whosoever is angry with his brother.*] Our Lord teaches that it is not enough simply to be guiltless of the act of murder,—but that anger itself against another must be checked.—It is in consequence of this declaration of our Lord that the Church which he founded teaches us its members “to hurt nobody by word or deed, to be true and just in all our dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in our hearts.” See “Duty towards our neighbour” in the Church-Catechism.

—*the judgment.*] There is a gradation of offence pointed out by our Lord in this verse, and a corresponding gradation of the punishment which will hereafter be inflicted on the members of the Church founded by him. They will suffer loss in proportion to their disobedience of the Laws of God. If that disobedience reaches a certain extreme point, the loss is extreme also,—yea, even irremediable.—“Judgment,” “Council,” “Hell-fire” are believed to refer to three punishments which the inhabitants of Palestine had at various times in their history been exposed to—all indeed capital,—but differing in degree of ignominy or suffering.—(1) “Judgment” is supposed to refer to the Sentence of a Court inferior to the Council,—viz. “the Court of Twenty-three Judges”—who could at one time inflict death. (2) “The Council” is the Sanhedrim, the supreme governing Body in the Jewish nation while it was free,—and which still existed with certain powers after the nation had become subject to the Romans, and previously, when it had been subject to other nations.—This Sanhedrim had its origin in the Coun-