

of God and man. Rather He dropped living germs of new thought into their minds and allowed them silently to do their work. Obviously the only possible way of educating such scholars as He had, was to impress them strongly with that essential conservatism of the venerable and sacred legacy from the past which was in truth so marked an aspect of His doctrine. Nay, more, we may be sure that His own grateful and affectionate piety towards the ancient sages and saints whose writings had been the food of His expanding inner life, would bring into such strong relief in his own mind the continuity and substantial identity of His doctrine with theirs, that the differences must for the most part have sunk into the background almost out of sight. The bearing of the second consideration is no less obvious. The Scribes prided themselves above everything on their exact and punctual legality. In making the well-founded claim to a legality infinitely more minute and rigorous than theirs, in asserting the real Law against its professed zealots, it was natural that Jesus should state in the very strongest terms His own reverence for that Law and His conviction of its imperishable validity, without hampering the force of His statement by qualifications and explanations that would, in fact, have been psychologically impossible in a moment of intense and solemn feeling.

Let us then proceed to extract from the various passages touching upon our inquiry, especially Matthew v, 16-48, the *locus classicus* on this subject, a statement in detail of the position towards the Law taken up by Jesus. In the first place, He claims as against the Scribes to fulfil the Law in His doctrine and practice, to restore it to its pristine integrity. With a view to this end His procedure is twofold, a clearing away of encumbrances, and an explication of hidden meanings. The Scribes had overlaid the Law with endless vain and beggarly additions the product of their perverse ingenuity, their blinking pedantry, and their slavish ascetic externalism. This rubbish is entirely swept away, not only as being an insupportable burden laid on the weak shoulders of the people, all the more odious because those who bound it there have exhausted all their moral energy in that effort and do not stir a finger themselves to bear the weight they have imposed on others; but also as being a fatal distraction from the