

grand piece of music. God listened for the tones of the heart, and they were few and feeble. What did they need? To have their hearts readily and easily responsive to all God's commands, so that the performance of them should come, if I may so speak, naturally and without strain. There is only one thing that can make the heart thus responsive, and that is indicated in our Golden Text. It is love. Love, our Lord told the scribe, is the "first and great commandment," for it is the summing up and fulfilling of all.

Of the second table of the law the Jews were not unmindful either. The outward observance of some of these was made a matter of great importance (see Matt. 5, 21, 27). But one of them was sometimes rendered "of none effect" (Matt. 15, 3-6) and that one which specially concerned the thought of the heart was continually disregarded (see Luke 16, 14), while the spirit of the whole was altogether set on one side (Matt. 23, 4-14, 23). They were like men confining themselves to certain acquired phrases instead of speaking continually the one language of God's law—love. This love in every-day use, one with another, the love of "thy neighbor as thyself," our Lord put forth as the second great commandment. But is it inferior to the other? By no means. Jesus said it is "like unto it." Both hang together. Love toward God comes first, but it must and will produce love toward the neighbor.

But the illustrations I have given are of things that require study and pains; the mastery over a musical instrument and over a foreign language does not come by nature. And here is a contrast, for love cannot thus be learned. It must come like the song of the bird, like the language of our native land, which grows in fullness, in depth, in power and sweetness, but is never learned as a task. To have this love we must have a new nature, that of the "sons of God," only to be had through receiving Christ by faith (John 1, 12).

### Cambridge Notes.

(Mark 12, 28-37; vers. 28-34=Matt. 22, 34-40; vers. 35-37=Matt. 22, 41-46; Luke 20, 41-44.)

It is given to most great causes to humiliate their foes by argument before the crushing argument of force steps in against them. This chapter exhibits the triumph of Jesus, and a more contemptible figure than that presented by his successive opponents it would be hard to imagine. We see them sink away one after the other, publicly disgraced and confounded, and we can easily discern the added determination to secure their revenge. Jesus knew well that he was sealing his own fate, but he went on unmoved, revealing himself in his intellectual and moral grandeur to the wonder of posterity, and arraigning to all time the devils of apostasy, hypocrisy, and worldly materialism. Ven. 38, Matthew tells us that the Pharisees, hearing that Jesus had "muzzled" their rivals, held a consultation near where he was teaching, resulting in the "scribe's" or "lawyer's" question. It was put to "make a trial of him," but the expression seems here to mean only a wish to see whether the wise Teacher can solve the

question that has been troubling him. He makes his venture, and is agreeably surprised to hear Jesus reassert the great formula of Jewish faith. His own enthusiasm is roused by the answer, and he shows that he at least has penetrated the real spirit of the law. *Scribe.* See a full note, April 8, 1888. *Well.* The Pharisees were not slow to take advantage of this answer to the Sadducees, whose strong point in controversy had been the difficulty of proving the resurrection from the law. We find our Lord's argument taken up by later Talmudists, almost certainly borrowed, but of course unacknowledged. *What.* Literally, "of what kind?" His reply seems to show what perplexity lay behind his question. Was his own order right in laying such extraordinary stress on the ceremonies of the law? Were they the essence of it, or was it rather "the eternal laws of truth and right," which a teacher of the laity such as himself ought to emphasize? Ven. 39. *The first.* Deut. 6, 4, 5, called the *Shema* ("Hear"), from its first word. It was the Israelite's passport to paradise, the formula of magical efficacy against the powers of darkness. To this day the rabbis are called in to Jewish death-beds that they may chant the *Shema* as the spirit is just passing away. It is startling to find it given by the Lord's brother as a creed which "the demons believe, and shudder" (James 2, 19). *The Lord.* The personal name, *Jehovah* (see note for July 1, 1888). *One.* He is one in himself, in that there is none of the division of attributes which in Shemitic heathenism produced a growing number of new deities; and he is one as standing alone in the universe, with no equal or second. Ven. 30. *Love.* Here lay the vital point of Judaism, a commandment which, if obeyed, would have reformed the world. Christ's coming was needed to make it possible for the mass of humanity to obey it. What an amazing precept it is! "He is love who speaketh thus, for only love holds love so dear.... Only love seeks love; only love wins love; only love satisfies love" (*M. G. Pearse*). *With.* Literally, "out of;" every part of man's nature is to pour forth its tribute. Our Lord brings this out by using four words for the three of the Hebrew, which was less precise in the distinction of synonyms. The emotions are to throb with answering love; the "life" or "soul" to be prodigally expended in loving service; the intellect to find its highest satisfaction in gaining and disseminating the knowledge of God; all the energies of man to be bent on doing God's work. Ven. 31. *The second.* "Like unto it," adds Matthew, for it is an inevitable corollary if man is the child of God. It comes from Lev. 19, 18, lying in the midst of ritual laws and minute observances as intended to suggest what was the unifying motive of the whole. Of course, the Jews understood "neighbor" as meaning "fellow-Jew." See our Lord's exposition (Luke 10, 25-37). *As thyself.* It would startle most of us to think out the meaning of this. *There is.* Because, as Matthew's report states, all divine law and every divine message is but an application of these precepts. Comp. Rom. 13, 8-10; James 2, 8; 1 John 4, 7, *etq.* Ven. 32. The scribe's reply is entirely in Scriptural phrase. Comp. Deut. 4, 35; 1 Sam. 15, 22. There is a fine ring in his eloquent assertion of a much-forgotten truth. His nation, despite all the prophet's voices from Samuel to Malachi (comp. especially Isa. 50; 51, 16, 17; Micah 6, 8; Hosea 6, 6) were farther than ever from such an estimate of external service. Ven. 33. Note that he returns to the familiar three words, substituting the nearly synonymous "understanding" for the "mind" of verse 30. *Much more.* This is the only addition he makes to the sacred text. Ven. 34.