

16. 2). **With all thy heart.... and soul.** In biblical language, "heart and soul" comprehensively represent the entire immaterial side of man, intellect, sensibilities, and will. "Love God with heart and soul" means, Have a love for God which is intelligent, affectionate, and active, but which does not consist in outward ceremonies and ritualism (ver. 38). **With all thy mind.** Loving God with the mind—what is that? Is it not studying the ways of God, and so finding newer and deeper reasons for adoring and loving him? David thus loved God with his mind (Psa. 83: 63; 136: 1; Gen. 32: 10; Paul, Rom. 11: 33). **With all thy strength.** What is this? Is it not exerting the full energy of our wills in obedience to his will, because we love him supremely? Did not Jesus show that he loved his Father with all his strength in Gethsemane (14: 36). It is "living unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. 5: 15).

III. The Love of Man (ver. 31).

31. **The second.** The great commandment has a complementary part. The greater includes the less. That one loves God implies that one loves what God loves. He loves man; therefore the love of God includes the love of one's neighbor. He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen (1 John 4: 20). **Thou shalt love thy neighbor.** Quotation from Lev. 19: 18, "How should I love my neighbor as myself?" Matt. 22: 39; James 1: 37; Matt. 7: 12. **As thyself.** What singular devotion each man naturally shows to his own interests and welfare? How jealous he is for his own bodily safety, personal advantage, his honor, his life. But the one God is the one Father of all (Eph. 4: 6), and is as much interested in our neighbor as in us. We should share that interest of his. **Greater.** Including more subordinate principles of religion as conduct.

IV. Near the Kingdom (vers. 32-34).

32. **Of a truth.** The question he had asked was to his mind a more difficult one than that proposed by the Sadducees, and he had not felt sure that he should in his own special field receive so wise an answer. **Teacher.** He seems not to have used this respectful title before. His admiration will not allow him to omit it now. Well said. Mark calls this (ver. 34) a discreet, that is, a discriminating, reply. He was not expressing empty and hypocritical compliment, as did the Pharisees and Herodians (ver. 14); he was without the carping spirit exhibited by nearly every one of his class who had met Jesus; he was expressing intelligent and enthusiastic admiration of Jesus as a religious teacher. He was in intellectual and spiritual sympathy with Jesus. Unlike many of the sincere believers in Jesus, his mind was not preoccupied with a temporal Messiah and a secular Kingdom. Messianic deliverance meant, not deliverance from Rome, but from sin. There is none other but he. The affirmation of the unity in one Godhead of all divine phenomena, carried with it the exclusion of additional divinities.

33. He carefully repeats what Jesus has said, minutely weighing and approving each detail of his statement. The slight variations which he makes in rephrasing the words of Jesus only show that he had entered profoundly into the thoughts represented by the words. His colleagues in ver. 13 scrutinized the words of Jesus as closely as did he, but only that they might "catch him in his talk." **Whole burnt-offerings.** Real love to God is more than the most costly outward display of religious devotion. The scribe had read from David, Hosea, and Micah as carefully as he how listens to Jesus (1 Sam. 15: 22; Psa. 51; Hosea 6: 6; Micah 6: 8-9).

34. **When Jesus saw.** Jesus listened as closely to the scribes' words as the scribe had to his. He was as intent here as in 8: 29 to observe the impression he had made. **Discreetly.** Answered as one who had clear insight in spiritual things. The average reply showed a want of spiritual understanding. Not far from the kingdom. That kingdom is a spiritual kingdom; it does not come with observation, but in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; it has to do, not with the things that are seen, but with immaterial things; hence to one who does not say, as did Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" but, "Master, thou hast well said," who understands its laws and to whom it is real though invisible, that kingdom is not far away and intangible, but near and accessible. **After that.** A backward glance over the four critical questions addressed to Jesus. If the wisest and most learned could not cope with him in discussion, all hope that he might

be entrapped into inconsistent speech was futile. This was the end of insidious queries. The tables are now at once turned, and again, as in 11: 29, he asks (vers. 35-37) a question which they cannot answer.

III. Application.

1. The truths of this lesson have most striking confirmation and illustration in persons well known to you. The kingdom of God is in your midst. Lift up the old Hebrew prayer, "Lord, open thou mine eyes!"

2. Think of your pupils. Is the type of this scribe among them, the naturally thoughtful, meditative one? Study Jesus's way of dealing with such a soul.

3. It is not enough to bring souls near to the kingdom; we must, by God's help, bring them into it. To be near was not enough for Zaccheus (Luke 19: 8).

4. The lesson of January 6 reminded us of the Trinity (Mark 1: 11); this teaches the unity of God. He who built the worlds is our personal Friend. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God."

5. A personal test for all: "Do I love God? Do I love man?"

English Teacher's Notes.

A TEACHER of music once told us that pupils would come to him wishing to learn this piece or the other piece to perform, but the answer he gave was this: "Learn the piano." To study one single piece of music would be a long and difficult matter, and the performance of it would always be that of a task; but to a person who attained the mastery over the instrument all pieces would be within easy reach. To learn the piano was the first and chief thing.

For those who wish to travel in foreign countries there are generally vocabularies and phrase-books provided, that they may know how to express themselves in the most ordinary and the most necessary cases. But even one who has such a book at hand will find himself constantly at fault. In order to mingle with the people of these countries to his own or their pleasure and profit, the first and chief thing is to learn their language. One who knows the language will be ready for all emergencies.

It was a question often debated among the Jews of our Lord's time which was the first and greatest of the commandments; and the scribe who had heard him put both the Pharisees and Sadducees to silence, when they tried to "catch him in his words," seems to have come to him with a sincere desire to know the opinion of the wonderful Teacher on this subject. He would like to learn from him which was the commandment to which the greatest attention should be paid. And our Lord began to answer him by quoting one which was indeed given by Moses, but which is not to be found in the tables of the law.

Since their return from the seventy years' captivity, the Jewish nation had strictly kept themselves free from all semblance of idolatry. Their worship was directed to Jehovah alone, and they refrained from making any outward "likeness" to worship. The holy Name inspired them with such reverence that they would neither pronounce nor write it as it really stood. And from the keeping of the Holy Day there were endless rules and directions. Yet all this was task-work. It was like the toilsome mechanical performance of a

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