

which were regarded by Him as worth most.

V. 29. *Jesus answered*; with perfect knowledge and wisdom, Col. 2:3. *Hear, O Israel.* Jesus replies from Deut. 6:4, 5—words which were repeated by every pious Jew at morning and evening prayer, and were written on the parchment roll enclosed in the phylactery (that is, the case made of calf-skin, with thongs for binding it on the forehead or left arm) which he wore when at prayer. It was not more knowledge that the Jews needed, but a new heart to obey God's law. *The Lord our God is one Lord.* These words, directing attention to the oneness of Jehovah, were used as a call to worship, at the morning and evening prayer in the temple. The conclusion to which they point is, that worship is not to be divided up amongst many gods, but offered only to the one true God.

Vs. 30, 31. *Love the Lord thy God.* Jesus emphasizes what was taught in Deuteronomy, that the true attitude of man to God is love. This truth He illustrated in His own life of Sonship. *Heart. soul. strength.* The three words teach that all the powers of our nature, —intellect, feeling, and will, must be absolutely devoted to the service of God in love. Our religion takes its character from our idea of God. There can be no nobler idea of God than that which regards Him as a Being who loves His creatures and seeks their love. *The first commandment*; including obedience to the laws written on the First Table (see Ex. 32:15, 16; 34:1), which teach us our duty to God. *The second. love thy neighbour as thyself.* See Lev. 19:18. Without this, the first commandment is incomplete. To obey it is to keep the six Commandments of the Second Table, which make known our duty to others. It is really the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12), which itself is powerless unless we also serve the loving Father. And our service of a loving Father is merely nominal, unless it is manifested in the Golden Rule.

Vs. 32-34. *Well, Master.* The words of Jesus approved themselves to the heart and conscience of His hearer. *Love. more than . . . burnt offerings and sacrifices.* Israel came to lay such stress upon sacrifice, that religion degenerated into ritual, and the prophets had often to preach that sacrifice in itself was worthless. (See Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:8)

Jesus Himself says the same thing in Matt. 12:7 (see also Ps. 51:16, 17). *Answered discreetly*; with intelligence. *Not far, etc.*; because all Christ's teaching as to the kingdom is based on these two great commandments. With it, in principle, this scribe agreed. Yet he was still outside the kingdom, not having received from Jesus the new heart, without which there cannot be true love to God or our neighbor.

II. Love Withheld, 38-40.

V. 38. *He (Jesus) said* (to the "common people," v. 37). *in his doctrine* (teaching)? *Beware of the scribes*; the religious teachers of the day. Jesus Himself is the great Teacher. *Walk in long robes* (Rev. Ver.); for the sake of dignity and ostentation. *Love salutations*; that is, seek honor from men (see Matt. 23:7-12). This pride is one of their sins which Jesus denounces most strongly, John 5:41-44. *Marketplaces*; public squares, where people gather.

Vs. 39, 40. *Chief seats in the synagogues*; "the bench in the synagogues in front of the ark and facing the congregation, which was reserved for officials and persons of distinction." (Swete.) *Chief places at feasts* (Rev. Ver.); the place of honor near the host. *Devour widows' houses.* While not breaking the letter of the law, these scribes would get hold of all the property belonging to defenceless women and other helpless ones, who came under their power. *For a pretence*; to cover up their greed under a mask of piety. Hypocrites and robbers, they will get the punishment of both.

III. Love Shown, 41-44.

Vs. 41, 42. *The treasury.* See Light from the East. *Multitude cast money* (Rev. Ver.); threw it into the thirteen trumpet-like receptacles. *Rich cast in much.* The Jews were liberal in the support of their religion. *Two mites*; the smallest of Jewish copper coins, each perhaps worth an eighth of a cent, the "farthing" here being worth one fourth of a cent.

Vs. 43, 44. *Verily*; introducing, as always in the Gospels, an important statement. *This. widow. more in, than all.* She had nothing left, while they had abundance. That gift alone which is only made at great cost