

A. D. 30.]

LESSON III. THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

[April 21.]

Authorized Version.

Revised Version.

Mark 12. 28-34. [Commit to memory verses 30, 31.]



28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he:

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

28 And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one:

29 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. And the scribe said unto him, Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one: and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself is much more than all

30 whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him any question.

INDUCTIVE NOTES.

I. Study of General Features.

Sec. 1. Baffled by the bold and wonderful reply of Jesus, the Pharisees went away (12. 12) to meditate some other plan which would justify the arrest of Jesus. They hit upon the shrewd device detailed in 12. 13-17, the blind question about tribute, but find themselves baffled again by the marvelous wisdom of Jesus. The Sadducees, proposing a current but skillfully contrived objection to the doctrine of the resurrection, meet no better success (12. 18-27). The conclusive answer given the Sadducees prompts a learned scribe to test Jesus with a technical question of rabbinical exegesis. With that question and its answer our present lesson is concerned.

Sec. 2. Note in each verse what the two, the scribe and Jesus, say. Put the contents of each verse into a short sentence, thus: 28. Scribe asks, Which commandment is greatest? 29-31. Jesus answers, The one that says, God is one, and commands supreme love to him; and the one that bids a man love his neighbor as himself. 32-33. The scribe approves the answer. 34. Jesus tells him he is near the kingdom. Unite and condense these sentences thus:

To a scribe asking him to name the most comprehensive of divine commandments, Jesus specifies those that enjoin supreme love to God and unfeigned love to man.

Subdivide into topics. The following are suggested: I. The Question; II. Love to God; III. Love to Man; IV. Near the Kingdom.

II. Study of Details.

[Parallel passage, Matt. 22. 34-40.]

I. The Question (vers. 28).

28. One of the scribes. He was an exception among his class, which Mark has hitherto (2. 6, 16; 8. 31; 9. 14; 11. 18) represented as bigoted and hostile. This scribe was fair-minded (vers. 32, 34). He was not like Saul of Tarsus, who belonged to the same class, was interested in the more profound questions suggested by it. While Matthew (22. 35) says he "tempted" Jesus, we are not bound to consider the text any thing more than the sign of honest interest. Them. The Sadducees and Jesus (18-27). Knowing. As an expert in such discussions. Well. He may

have felt peculiar satisfaction in the discomfiture of an opposing sect. Asked him. So the woman at the well, as soon as she knew Jesus was a prophet, instantly thought of a great theological question much debated among her countrymen (John 4. 30), and proposed it for solution. What reader has not such puzzling questions which he would like to have authoritatively answered? What commandment, in Greek, and spiritual sight into the nature of the precepts of the law. It calls for the results of protracted and profound meditation. First. In comprehensiveness. This was a well-known and much-discussed topic among the rabbins, some deciding upon circumcision, others on the Sabbath, the keeping one's self from idols, etc.

II. Love to God (vers. 29, 30).

29. Answered. He did not hesitate; he did not ask time for reflection. He was at home with such a theme, difficult as it was. Hear, O Israel. As in the case of the rich young ruler (10. 19) he refers to that which was familiar to every Jewish child, the *shema*, from Deut. 6. 4, repeated every morning and evening by every pious Israelite. The Lord is one. The heathen localized and divided godhead. There were gods in the hills, others in the plains, still others in the clouds and in the sea. These might be hostile to one another, so that man teaching led to very painful perplexity in religious duty, and, in the case of the thoughtful, to atheism. Religion chiefly inspired fear. To such a miscellany of venal, lustful, and fickle personalities, who made themselves known to the individual, for the most part, in infliction of punishment for offense against unknown preferences, love was out of the question. The unity of God is the only possible basis for love to God. We can indeed love him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, the God of our fathers, the God and Father of our Christ, the God of our children, the God who has been with us in all places and all our days, who promises, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," the same to-day as when he gave his only begotten Son that each of us might not perish, but have eternal life.

30. And thou. "Therefore thou" would be the form in Greek, not literally translated from Hebrew. Love the Lord. Of the two Greek words for "love," the one used here denotes a love that has reflection, the word which Peter, owing probably to his shame at having denied his Lord, would not allow himself to apply to his attachment to his Master in John 21. 15-17. Thy God. He is not only "Lord of heaven and earth," but his goodness and mercy have followed thee as an individual all the days of thy life. "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord" (Psa.