

each day of the year—and 228 commandments,—one for each part of the body—and they had many disputes as to which was chief amongst these.

V. 29. *Jesus answered* ; in the same words with which he began his reply to the lawyer or scribe to whom he spoke the parable of the Good Samaritan. *Hear* ; in Hebrew, "Shema," the opening word of Deut. 6 : 4-9, the first of three passages called, for this reason, the Shema (the other two being Deut. 11 : 13-21 and Num. 15 : 37-41), which were repeated twice daily by every Hebrew grown-up man as a confession of his faith. *The Lord* ; and therefore worship, including love and obedience, cannot be divided amongst several deities, but must be given to one only.

Vs. 30, 31. *Love* ; as Father and friend. This commandment is first, because, if we obey this, we shall willingly obey all others. *All thy heart . . . soul . . . mind . . . strength* ; that is, with the whole of every power that is within one. *Thy neighbour as thyself*. Jesus quotes this law from Lev. 19 : 18. But, while the Jews understood by "neighbor" in this passage a brother Jew, Jesus meant every fellow man.

II. A Discreet Scribe, 32-34.

Vs. 32-34. *Of a truth* (Rev. Ver.). The scribe agreed with what Jesus had said. *Master* ; literally, "teacher." The questioner repeats the teaching of Jesus, but in his own words, proving his sincerity and intelligence. *More than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices* ; because these were but the outward expression of love, and were worthless when love was lacking. (Compare 1 Sam. 15 : 22 ; Hos. 6 : 6 ; Mic. 6 : 6-8). *Answered discreetly* ; with knowledge and understanding. *Not far from the kingdom of God* ; the kingdom in which love rules. The scribe had learned that all service without love is of no value, but he did not know that the way to become loving is to receive the love of God in Christ.

Vs. 35-40 contain Jesus' counter question : "What think ye of Christ?" and his condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees.

III. A Generous Widow, 41-44.

V. 41. *Jesus sat* ; a close and keen observer of all that went on. *The treasury* ; the thirteen trumpet-shaped boxes of brass which

stood in the colonnades of the Women's Court of the temple to receive the offerings and dues of worshipers. Each box bore an inscription indicating what it was for. Nine were for temple tribute and money given instead of sacrifices, and four were for free will offerings. *Money* ; literally, "brass," but the Greek word was used for any kind of money. *Many . . . rich cast in much* ; but their giving cost them little.

V. 42. *A certain poor widow* ; literally, "one poor widow," singled out by Jesus from the "many" who were coming. *Two mites* ; the smallest of Jewish coins, made of bronze, each worth one-eighth of a cent—a tiny gift, but she gave two when she might have kept one. *Farthing* ; either the Roman copper quadraus or the Jewish bronze coin of the same value—one fourth of a cent.

V. 43. *Called . . . his disciples* ; that he might tell them something very important. *This poor widow* ; poverty-stricken, as was manifest from her dress and wasted looks. *Cast in more than all* (Rev. Ver.) ; not that the other gifts were worthless, but they did not require any denial of self. It is always the state of the heart that counts for most with Jesus. He sets the highest value on gifts that cost real self-denial.

V. 44. *They . . . of their superfluity* (Rev. Ver.) ; what they had over and above all that they could spend on themselves. *She of her want . . . all her living* ; the largest gift possible for any one. Our gifts are truly measured by what we have left after giving. God reckons our offerings, not by their amount, but by our means and by the spirit in which we give. "Those who give most, often give the least."

Light from the East

THE SHEMA—For two thousand years a prominent feature of a synagogue service has been the recitation of the Shema. In some ways it corresponds to our creed : "I believe in God," etc. ; it lays stress on what is thought central in Jewish belief and duty. The Shema consists of three short paragraphs from the Pentateuch, Deut. 6 : 4-9 ; Deut. 11 : 13-21 ; and Num. 15 : 37-41. This is called Shema because the first word of Deut. 6 : 4 ("Hear")