

Yet he had some real desire to learn the truth, or Jesus would not have given him such a gracious and charming reply. Master — "Teacher" — this was one meaning of "master" in old times, and it survives in our word "school-master." Luke here translates the Hebrew word *Rabbi*, which was probably the title given to him by the lawyer, for the benefit of his Gentile readers. What shall I do — The question is not asked in the same spirit as that of the young ruler (ch. 18: 18), and therefore receives a different answer. Compare also Lesson III. (John 6: 28) and Acts 16: 30. He supposed that heaven was to be merited by pre-eminent service. Christ shews him that it is given to those whose affections are like God's. Eternal life — (John 17: 3). He regarded this as immortal blessedness beyond the grave rather than a moral condition to be in a measure attained on this side of the grave.

26. How readest thou? — He refers him to the Bible for his answer. (Gal. 3: 24.) The reply of Jesus is very courteous; he virtually invites the lawyer to speak first.

27. Thou shalt love — See Deut. 6: 5; 10: 12; Lev. 19: 18. This was the answer Jesus himself gave (Matt. 22: 17-40). By such a reply the lawyer shewed how well he had caught the true spirit of the law, and that he was "not far from the kingdom of God" (Matt. 12: 34). The first passage quoted by him was repeated in the daily morning and evening prayers of the Jews, and was worn in the phylactery, a little square box bound upon the forehead. With the second passage compare Rom. 13: 9; Gal. 5: 13, 14; Jas. 2: 8. Heart . . . soul . . . strength . . . mind —

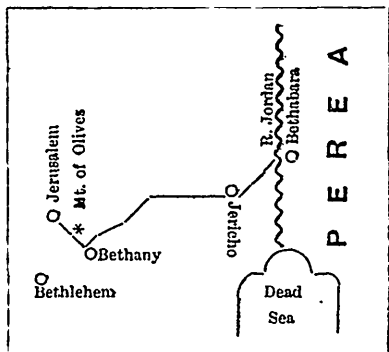
These need not be carefully distinguished from one another. The "heart" is regarded as the seat of the affections and desires; the "soul" is the seat of the profounder emotions and intuitions, which are concerned with things real and eternal; the "strength" embraces all the energies of our nature, moral and physical; the "mind," means, of course, the intellect and reasoning powers. But the cumulation of words is for the sake of emphasis. We use the expression "with all my heart and soul," to mean entire and warm approval. So here the meaning is that love to God should have supreme and entire control of our whole nature. As thyself — "This is, essentially, the "Golden Rule." Rightly understood, it is an absolutely perfect law, and suits the sinless angels as well as fallen men. Its general observance would make heaven upon earth.

28. Thou shalt live — Jesus does not say that anyone *could* keep this law perfectly, so as to obtain eternal life by his obedience. The ground of the sinner's justification is not the subject that is coming up, and he does not enter into it. Compare Lev. 18: 5; Neh. 9: 29; Ezek. 20: 11, 13, 21; Rom. 10: 5; 1 John 4: 16, 21; Gal. 5: 14. Complete surrender of the heart to God involves the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners.

29. Justify himself — for having asked such an apparently simple question, the answer

to which he knew already. He wished to shew that it was not so simple a matter after all; it was really a difficult, practical question. The rabbis understood "neighbors" to mean Jews only, appealing to Lev. 19: 18. Christ rebukes this false view in Matt. 5: 43-44.

II. ANSWERED BY AN EXAMPLE. 30. Answering — lit. "taking it up," implying that he continued the subject of neighborliness beyond a mere answer to the question. A certain man — presumably a Jew. Was going down, R. V. — The road descended 3,500 feet, through a deep ravine, abounding in caves, and infested with bandits. It was called "the bloody way." Even at the present day travellers require an armed escort. The distance is about twenty miles.



31. By chance — lit. "by coincidence." Our scholars don't need to be reminded that there is really no such thing as "chance." God arranges and overrules every event. It here means that the priest did not go that way because this traveller was there, Priest — About 12,000 priests and Levites resided at Jericho, and went up to Jerusalem to serve in the temple as their turn came. If any one would be expected to help a man in distress one would expect a minister of religion to do so. See Exod. 23: 4, 5; Deut. 22: 1-4; Isa. 58: 7. That way — There was another and a safer road. Passed by on the other side — Perhaps he thought there was danger, and he had better hurry on; he would be ceremonially defiled by touching the man if he were dead, or died on his hands; somebody else would help him, perhaps, etc. It is easy to make excuses if we are selfish and cowardly.

32. Levite — The Levites assisted the priests in their duties. He was more heartless than the priest, for he came and looked at the wounded man, and yet passed on without helping him. It is evident that "passed by on the other side" is intended metaphorically, not literally. The roadway was but a "bride path," and the opposite side of the ravine was probably impassable for travellers. The word expresses the moral character of the act. It is literally, "went past over against" him.