

Sept. 3,
1882.

LOVE TO GOD AND MEN.

{Mark 12:
28-44.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."—Deut. 6 : 5.

TIME.—Same day as last Lesson—Tuesday of Passion week.

PLACE.—Same place—Temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLEL.—With vers. 28-37; Matt. 22 : 34-46, with vers. 31-44; Luke 20 : 41-47; 21 : 1-4.

Notes and Comments.—Ver. 28. "One of the scribes:" the lawyers of the nation. Matthew says, "a lawyer." "Asked Him:" although Matthew speaks of this as "tempting Him," and of the scribes as being put forward by the Pharisees, it is evident, however, that he was of a better class of men than many of them—probably an earnest, devout man. "Which—first commandment of all:" a question that greatly troubled Jewish theologians; they divided the commandments into greater and lesser; some contended for circumcision, some for sacrifice, some for phylacteries.

Vers. 29, 30. Jesus gives the introduction to the ten commands as the first commandment. Modern Jews reckon it the first, "And thou shalt love:" Deut. 6 : 4-6. A demand for supreme affection, because there can be no true obedience to God without love. Love to God will ensure obedience to all His commands; without it the form is worthless—1 John 2 : 3-6. "Heart:" reason and intellect. "Soul:" sentiment and passion. "Mind:" thought and will. "Strength:" moral energy.

Ver. 31. "The second is like:" Lev. 19 : 18. "None greater than these:" Christ here elevates our duty to man to the plane of our duty to God, and links them together as one. This sums up all our duty to man, as the other to God—Gal. 5 : 14. He who takes love for his guiding star will never miss the goal. Matthew adds, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Ver. 32, 33. Special to Mark; very interesting as showing the character of the scribe; now, at any rate, he saw the spirituality of these commands. "More:" Rev. "much more." "Burnt offerings:" love better than all ceremonies and observances. In like spirit had spoken some of the prophets—1 Sam. 15 : 22; Hos. 6 : 6; Mic. 6 : 6-8; and yet a bold utterance before that company.

Ver. 34. "Jesus—said:" loving words as to the rich young man. "Not far:" one thing thou lackest: he stood, as it were, at the door of the kingdom of God, but he was not within. Did he enter? We know not; Christ would have had him make the great surrender and enter the kingdom.

Vers. 35-37. "Answered:" by a question in reply to their attacks. Matthew has for the first sentence, "What think ye of Christ; whose son is He?" they answered, "The son of David." Then comes the question here, "How say:" "the son of David:" this was the point on which the scribes insisted. Jesus would show that there is another aspect of His official position, and quotes Psa. 110, which the Rabbis regarded as distinctly Messianic. "David—by the Holy Ghost:" another testimony by our Saviour to the inspiration of Old Testament writers. "Right hand:" place of honour and power. "Enemies—footstool:" putting the feet on the neck of enemies a common eastern symbol of complete triumph. "Common people:" marg. in Rev. "the great multitude." "Gladly:" lit. "sweetly:" with relish, pleasure, but hearing was not accepting—for many.

Vers. 38-40. "In his doctrine:" Rev. "teaching:" a short extract from the fuller form of the discourse as in Matt. 23. "Scribes:" Matthew, "Pharisees," "Long clothing:" Rev. "robes:" as a sign of their official position; some modern ecclesiastics, not alone in the Romish Church,

have the same love. "Salutations:" humble recognition of their rank in the chief places of resort. "Chief seats:" near the ark containing the law, reserved for persons of distinction. "Uppermost rooms:" Rev. "chief places:" the most honourable—those on the middle couch at the upper table were so esteemed. "Widows' houses:" taking advantage of the unprotected state of widows, and making a pretence of exalted piety, these hypocrites gained an ascendancy and consumed their victims' property. "Long prayers:" formalism and ostentation; against this aggravated guilt, a "greater damnation"—condemnation—is denounced.

Ver. 41. Wearing with the previous talk, Jesus sits down in the Court of the Women, opposite the treasury, the name given to thirteen brazen chests called "trumpets," from the shape of the mouth. "Cast in much:" right for the rich to do that if done in a proper spirit; may have been Pharisaism about it.

Ver. 42. "A poor widow:" the original is strong, and signifies very poor, destitute. "Two mites:" the smallest Jewish coin, making together about half a cent; she gave the two. *Bengel* says, "One of which she might have retained."

Ver. 43. "He called:" to point out the lesson of this act. "More:" not in quantity, but in quality; for with the two mites she had cast in her heart.

Ver. 44. "Of their abundance:" those gifts were but the overflowings of a full cup; hers, the last drop in the cup. What the rich gave was nothing to them; what she gave was all "she had." "Her living:" really, it was the sacrifice of herself to the service of God. There are poor offerings of the rich which bulk largely in contribution lists, and rich offerings of the poor which are lumped together as "small sums." God reads them aright.

HINTS TO TEACHERS.—WHAT AND HOW TO TEACH.

Prefatory.—Again you have a lesson, the whole of which it will be impossible to teach, save in mere outline. If you determine to teach only a part, we would suggest the first and last of the four topics as the most practical, but choose and carry out:

Topical Analysis.—(1) The question of the scribe (vers. 28-34). (2) An unanswered problem (vers. 35-37). (3) A warning and denunciation (vers. 38-40). (4) The widow's two mites (vers. 40-44).

On the first topic, show that we have the great foundation teaching of the Gospel, love, in its two indissoluble aspects, God-ward and man-ward. Love to God is demanded by His love to us, by His character, by His commands. It must be a *supreme* love, first in the heart, above all created things; a *complete* love, with all the faculties we have, with all the powers of body and soul; and a *constant* love—this naturally follows—all the powers are to be engaged in it, so it must be a state, a condition, and not a spasmodic effort. Teach, press this, that love to God will produce *obedience* to His commands; there can be no love without obedience, and the form of obedience without love is worthless. Then comes the other side of love, "thy neighbour as thyself." This is opposed to all *selfishness*, *injustice*, *oppression*, *hurtfulness*: it is doing unto others as we would they should do unto us; it is practical good-will, making us as careful of the rights and welfare of others as of our own; and this is made one command with our love to God. You may refer to the parable of the Good Samaritan as a reply to the question, "Who is my neighbour?"

On the second topic, we have to show not only how all the prophecies of Scripture centre and find their fulfilment in Jesus, but how they also point to His dignity. He who, while He was David's son, was David's Lord, could not be a man simply, though He was man truly. As *Chrysostom* says, "His meaning is not to prove that He is not David's son, but to confute their error who, by saying that He was