

"in Christ" (Rom. 8 : 1), he cannot do otherwise than keep the law. Even this scribe admits that a life of love is better than a life of forms, v. 33. He came very near to entering the dominion in which Jesus rules by love, v. 34. But it is one thing to recognize a principle, and another thing to put it into practice, James 1 : 22. The Lesson concludes with concrete instances :

2. *Ignoring the Law*, vs. 38-40. Whilst professing to keep it, the scribes really violated its twofold principle of love to God and man, by cultivating : (a) Self-love, v. 38. Is this "long clothing" a suggestion of extravagant expenditure on self ? (See James 2 : 2-4.) (b) Self-esteem (v. 38), in the craving for "salutations," Esth. 5 : 9 ; Rom. 12 : 16. (c) Self-advancement, v. 39 ; Matt. 20 : 26-28. (d) Self-deception (v. 40), in the callous treatment of the helpless (Isa. 10 : 1, 2), and outward display of pretentious piety, Matt. 6 : 5. The scribes as a class habitually ignored the law of love. In contrast we have an illustration of—

3. *Fulfilling the Law*, vs. 41-44. Real love is ready to bestow all it has, be it little or much. This widow had little. She is judged according to what she has, not according to what she has not, 2 Cor. 8 : 12 ; Lev. 14 : 30. It is open to her to give only half ; out of love, she gives all. Her very poverty, in the eyes of most people, would justify her in withholding altogether. But love led her to give all, 2 Cor. 8 : 1-3. The widow's mite showed more discernment and practice of the twofold law of love than the habitual oppression of the pious scribes, Rom. 13 : 10.

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

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One of the hardest tests to which a person can be subjected is to be badgered by those who seek to put him in the wrong. It tries patience, as well as ability and skill. He is a very rare man who can be gentle and generous under it. Remind the scholars (see Lesson for Sept. 16, vs. 13-27) of how Jesus was being assailed—foe after foe trying to catch Him in His speech ; and of how patient He was through it all. Peter was thinking of this day, as well as of the day of Jesus' trial and condemnation, when he wrote 1 Pet. 2 : 23.

The tide turns a little now. There is a new questioner, seemingly a more sincere man. Who is he ? Have the scholars tell what a "scribe" is—a "writer," one learned in the scriptures : a theological professor, as we would say. Show why this scribe was pleased with Jesus' answer to the Sadducees (vs. 24-27) : he was a Pharisee, and this was exactly his belief, Acts 23 : 8. Besides, he seems to have really wished to find the truth, v. 34.

The scribe's question, v. 28. For an explanation of the importance of his question, see Exposition. If eternal life was by keeping the law of Moses, and if the greater the commandments that were kept, the greater would be the glory of that life eternal, no wonder it was worth while seeking an answer to the question.

How does Jesus answer ? From the scribe's own scriptures—see Deut. 6 : 4, 5. Have the scholars dissect the answer as given in the Lesson : here are some of the points,—(1) It exalts God ; there is none other (compare Ex. 20 : 2, 3, and Psalm 115 : 2-9). (2) It makes love the sum total of the worship and service of God : a good way of showing that this is so, is to take the first four Commandments of the decalogue (Ex. 20 : 3-11) and show, in the case of each of them, that true love to God, and that alone, will ensure our keeping of it. (3) Jesus' answer demands an absolute love of God—love with every part of our nature, unreserved consecration (compare Matt. 10 : 37). (4) Love to others is placed side by side with love to God, v. 31. An interesting five minutes can be spent with such passages as John 13 : 34, 35 ; 1 John 2 : 9-11 ; 3 : 14-17.

The scribe's reply, vs. 32, 33 ; he also quoted the scriptures (see margin of Bible) ; explain what the latter part of v. 33 means—outward form in religion counts for nothing : it is the heart that counts. "Not far from the kingdom, v. 34—show what glad words, and yet what sad words ; for though near, he was not within. What kept him out ? He knew the truth, but did not do as he knew. Impress the lesson.

The Lesson closes with some proud men to beware of, vs. 35-40 ; and one humble woman to be admired and imitated, vs. 41-44. Who