

*Discreetly*. Or "intelligently," showing that he understood the law, the first steps toward fulfilling it. *Not far*. How this would disgust the Pharisees! It was bad enough to allow that any law-observing Israelite could be outside Messiah's kingdom—but a scribe! We may hope that the seathing exposure of his order completed this scribe's enlightenment, though it must have been a severe test of his belief in Jesus. *And, no man*. In Matthew this observation is made after Jesus has confounded them yet further by asking them a question on which, from their official position, they were bound to be able to pronounce a judgment. The picture is profoundly telling as an exhibition of that "awfulness of goodness" which abashed the temple traffickers in their unholiness, reduced the acute and angry Pharisee to helpless silence, drove back the armed band to fall to rest before one simple word. One further point must be remembered: Jesus pronounced "not far from the kingdom" one who had only repeated with earnestness and conviction the central creed of Israel. Clearly then Messianism, understood, is the antechamber of Christianity. Those who take up the parrot-cry against Judaism should find in all human thought a precept more ennobling than the *Shema*. VER. 35. Matthew's account is fuller here, as the incident touches the keynote of his gospel, the fulfillment of Messianic hopes. Our Lord's question is of course much more than a mere puzzle for the professed teachers of the people. It was designed mainly to prove to the unprejudiced that the prevalent conception of a merely human Messiah was really excluded by the very Scriptures from which they had mistakenly derived it. The passage is one of great importance for showing our Lord's indorsement of the Old Testament inspiration. The Holy Spirit spoke through the ancient writers, "in many portions and in many ways," a message only perfect for its own generation and always to be interpreted by the circumstances of its time. Yet it is the Spirit's voice; and it is at most but some human theories of inspiration, not the doctrine itself, that must fall before the advance of knowledge. VER. 36. *David*. References to "David's" utterances in the New Testament often only cite the Book of Psalms as called by his name. Here, however, is an unequivocal statement of authorship which, even apart from our Lord's authority, has every thing in its favor. The original of the 110th Psalm begins, "Jehovah said unto my Lord;" the confusion of the two words both in the Greek and the English versions presents an unfortunate ambiguity. *Sit*. Frequently cited in the New Testament to describe the glorified life of Jesus after the ascension. As God he is omnipresent, with his people "all the days;" as the Godman he mediates at the Father's right hand. Comp. Heb. 1, 13; Acts 7, 56 (note the "standing"). *Till*. That is, till those whose hostility is final have been crushed. Comp. Josh. 10, 24. As the phrase (see margin, which gives the better reading here) is identical with that of Psa. 8, 6, it may possibly include also the submission of those whose hostility has ceased. VER. 37. Reverence paid by an ancestor to a descendant, however glorious, was very unseemly, according to Jewish notions. *Heard*. Doubtless the masses were pleased to see their spiritual tyrants thus reduced to helplessness. But there was a stronger motive to keep their attention. Since the prophets vanished no teacher had thought the mob worthy of addressing. Comp. John 7, 40. "To the poor the glad tidings are preached" was the brightest wonder of Christ's advent.

## The Lesson Council.

### Question 5. What is it to love God?

It comprehends all of the Christian graces and a glad service. In it are comprised gratitude and joy. It lays undisputed tribute upon all of our powers and possessions. Those whom we love live in our thoughts and we live for them.—*Rev. J. E. Day, D.D.*

To love God is to feel that delight in him which results from the twofold revelation of his grace, whereby we behold in him alone absolute perfection and amazing condescension. Coming to us in sacrificing love, he evokes from the thoughtful eager affection (see 1 John 4, 10). This pure emotion becomes powerful. It fills the whole being of its possessor and compels every faculty to express supreme satisfaction and self-surrender.—*Rev. C. W. Millard.*

To love God is to have our desires and purposes made with God's desires and purposes. Love is an intermingling of soul with soul, so that they are no more twain, but one. The test of character in loving God, and the benefit from loving God, will depend on one's conception of him. Jesus's conception of God, or John's, will make us poor Christians. Our conception of God is the tap-root of character.—*Rev. Joseph Pullman, D.D.*

### 6. What is it to love one's neighbor?

As to love God truly is to think and feel toward him as Jesus did, so to love one's neighbor is to think of him and feel toward him as did Jesus.—*Rev. Joseph Pullman, D.D.*

The Hebrew, the Greek, and the English combine to express in the word "neighbor" the idea of nearness. In the parable of the good Samaritan, Christ tells us that the man is near us whose need is known. Soon we see that the circle of need is the circle of the race. To the Christian consciousness, neighborhood is humanity. To move through that neighborhood impelled by the conviction that the need of our fellow-men imposes obligations co-equal with the demands of highest self-love is to conform to the second commandment.—*Rev. C. W. Millard.*

It is formalized in the golden rule and illustrated in the Saviour's picture of the Samaritan helping the man in the Jericho road among thieves.—*Rev. J. E. Day, D.D.*

## Lesson Word-Picture.

Away out on the edge of the crowd about the Saviour, who is it that watches the debate between Jesus and those Sadducees trying to trip him with their questions? It is Joseph, the scribe; and a very honorable man he is. He loves debate. He loves to set a question-trap for any body who will try to answer, but he is candid in statement, fair in his concessions. As the debate goes on, he edges nearer and nearer, working his way patiently through the crowd till he stands close to the Saviour and that ring of teasing, worrying Sadducees.

And these are discomfited.

Joseph is not sorry.

"He has answered well these Sadducees," conceded Joseph.

Are the Sadducees going?

All but Obadiah. He has discovered Joseph. He knows Joseph's inquisitive turn of mind.

"Perhaps Joseph will ask a question and trip that Galilean," reflects Obadiah. "Ah, there is Joab!"

Joab is another Sadducee. He sees Joseph, and curiously lingers to learn if there be a new questioner.

Yes, Joseph questions.

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