

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Matthew 24:35

The Pharisees (Religious leaders), got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested Jesus with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: "***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.***"

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Jesus said unto him ... - Mark says that he introduced this by referring to the doctrine of the unity of God "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is thy God the Lord is one" - taken from Deuteronomy 6:4. This was said, probably, because all true obedience depends on the correct knowledge of God. None can keep his commandments who are not acquainted with his nature, his perfections, and his right to command,

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart - The meaning of this is, thou shalt love him with all thy faculties or powers. Thou shalt love him supremely, more than all other beings and things, and with all the ardor possible. To love him with all the heart is to fix the affections supremely on him, more strongly than on anything else, and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command,

With all your soul - Or, with all thy "life." This means, to be willing to give up the life to him, and to devote it all to his service; to live to him, and to be willing to die at his command,

With all thy mind - To submit the "intellect" to his will. To love his law and gospel more than we do the decisions of our own minds. To be willing to submit all our faculties to his teaching and guidance, and to devote to him all our intellectual attainments and all the results of our intellectual efforts.

"With all thy strength" (Mark). With all the faculties of soul and body. To labor and toil for his glory, and to make that the great object of all our efforts.

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.'"

Thou shalt love thy neighbor - The love of our neighbor springs from the love of God as its source; is found in the love of God as its principle, pattern, and end; and the love of God is found in the love of our neighbor, as its effect, representation, and infallible mark. This love of our neighbor is a love of equity, charity, succor, and benevolence. We owe to our neighbor what we have a right to expect from him - "Do unto all men as ye would they should do unto you," is a

positive command of our blessed Savior. By this rule, therefore, we should speak, think, and write, concerning every soul of man: - put the best construction upon all the words and actions of our neighbor that they can possibly bear. By this rule we are taught to bear with, love, and forgive him; to rejoice in his success, mourn in his adversity, desire and delight in his prosperity, and promote it to the utmost of our power: instruct his ignorance, help him in his weakness, and risk even our life for his sake, and for the public good. In a word, we must do everything in our power, through all the possible varieties of circumstances, for our fellow man, which we would wish them to do for us, were our situations reversed.

This is the religion of Jesus! How happy would society be, were these two plain, rational precepts properly observed! Love *Me*, and love thy Fellowman! Be unutterably happy in me, and be in perfect peace, unanimity, and love, among yourselves. Great fountain and dispenser of love! Fill thy creation with this sacred principle, for His sake who died for the salvation of mankind!

"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

On these two - hang all the law and the prophets - They are like the first and last links of a chain, all the intermediate ones depend on them. True religion begins and ends in love to God and man. These are the two grand links that unite God to man, man to his fellow man, and men and women again to God.

Love is the fulfilling of the law, says St. Paul, Romans 13:10; "*for he who has the love of God in him delights to obey the Divine precepts, and to do all manner of kindness to all men for God's sake.*"

***"I am the Alpha and the Omega--the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—
The Almighty One."*** Revelation 1:8