

- spirit; one's whole life, or the breath of life.
4. "All thy mind" means one's best understanding and reason. God does not ask for blind devotion, but he does ask for complete or perfect trust.
 5. "With all thy strength" involves total dedication and commitment—all our energy devoted to needed action.
 6. To love God means to obey from the heart: to keep his commandments (John 14:15,23; 1 John 5:3).
True love does not exist until one is willing to do His will.
- C. "The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (31a).
1. Self-love is proper, inherent, and divinely regulated.
 2. To love one's neighbor as self is active good will: To consider him and to seek to do him good as you would your own self--to help him all you can, materially and spiritually, while doing him no harm at all.
 3. "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets" (Matt. 22:40).
- D. None greater: "There is none other commandment greater than these" (31b).
1. Because these embrace and are the foundation of all others.
 2. "A part cannot be greater than the whole, for every commandment is included in these"--C. E. W. Dorris.
- V. "TEACHER, THOU HAST WELL SAID..." (12:32-34).
- A. "He is one; and there is none other but he" (32).
 - B. "To love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices" (33).
 - C. "And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God"(34).
 - D. Questions cease: "And no man after than durst ask him any more questions" (34b).

CONCLUSIONS -

- I. "A Christian should be the best citizen in his community" --R. L. Whiteside, A. L. Commentary, 5-22-38, p. 134.
- II. "There is no such thing as disobedient love. A person who really loves God does not speak lightly of any of God's commands. For a person to set aside one of God's commands because it does not suit him is to become a law unto himself, and that is anarchy"--R. L. Whiteside, Annual Lesson Commentary, 5-22-38, p. 134.

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON THIRTY-FIVE

Christian Citizenship

Mark 12:13-17,28-34

INTRODUCTION -

- I. On one of the Lord's most controversial days in the temple, he engaged in a series of three discussions or debates with the Jews.
 - A. With Herodians and Pharisees concerning tribute (12:13-17).
 - B. With Sadducees about the resurrection (12:18-27).
 - C. With scribes and Pharisees about the great command (12:28-34).
- II. Opposition to Jesus began early in his public ministry and did not relent until it reached its climax in the crucifixion.
 - A. The Herodians were a Jewish party, evidently politically inclined toward the Herods, and who evidently favored paying tribute to Rome.
 - B. Most of the Pharisees, self-righteous and loyal to their traditions and nation, resented domination by and paying taxes to them.
- III. True Christianity involves man's relationship to men and governments, and it teaches proper respect for proper authority, including civil and religious.
 - A. This lesson contains one of the cardinal statements of the Christian's relationship to the world: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's..."
 - B. It also teaches the two greatest commandments.
- IV. Parallel passages are Matt. 22:15-22,34-40; & Luke 20:20-26,40.

DISCUSSION -

- I. A COMMITTEE SENT TO ENSNARE JESUS (Mark 12:13,14).
 - A. Certain Pharisees and Herodians: "And they sent unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, that they might catch him in talk" (13).
 1. Smarting from the parable of the wicked husbandmen which Jesus aimed at them, yet fearing the multitude, the Jews sought to trap Jesus.
 2. We know very little about the Herodians except what their name signifies, but they joined the Pharisees in their wicked plot.
 3. Antagonistic parties with little in common will unite their efforts to get rid of a mutual enemy. These evidently sought to entrap Jesus so as to report him to the governor.
 - B. Is tribute to Caesar lawful? "And when they were come, they say unto him, Teacher, we know that thou

art true, and carest not for anyone; for thou regard-
est not the person of men, but of a truth teachest
the way of God: Is it lawful to give tribute unto
Caesar, or not" (14)?

1. Their pretended praise and flattery failed in its design to deceive Jesus.
2. They thought they had framed a question that would force Jesus to answer in one of two ways, either of which would involve him in great difficulty.
3. To say it was "lawful" to give tribute would incur the disfavor of many of his followers who strongly opposed the annual tribute required by Rome.
4. If he said it was not lawful, the result would be a charge of treason by the Herodians to the Roman governor.
5. They evidently felt they had Jesus in a dilemma from which he could not escape. "They had never concocted a shrewder scheme to get Jesus into trouble"--Whiteside, A. L. Commentary, 11-19-44.

II. "UNTO CEASAR....AND UNTO GOD...." (12:15-17).

- A. A denarius: "Shall we give or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why make ye trial of me? bring me a denarius that I may see it" (15).
1. Jesus perceived their base motive, saw through their scheme, and effectively prepared to silence them by exposing their wicked purpose.
 2. A denarius, "the tribute money" (Matt. 22:19), the money used to pay tribute, was a coin worth about seventeen cents, or a laborer's day's pay.
- B. Whose image and superscription? "And they brought it. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Caesar's" (16).
1. Matthew (22:18) reports Jesus as saying, "Why make ye trial of me ye hypocrites?" So they knew their flattery had not deceived him.
 2. By answering the Lord's question, "Caesar's," they admitted the coin they used to pay tribute bore the image of the emperor.
 3. The schemers were then in a trap: Since they were using money which bore the image of Caesar, they had already acknowledged their obligation to Rome, and the blessings of governmental service and protection in return.

- C. Unto Caesar and unto God: "And Jesus said unto them, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (17).
1. Use of Roman money was evidence they were under Roman sovereignty.
 2. The case then, as now, is not "God or Caesar," but "God and Caesar."
 3. Obedience to rightful authority is a fundamental duty of every Christian in every country in which he may live, so long as he is not required to disobey God by such laws (Romans 13:1-7; cf. Acts 5:29).
 4. The true Christian bears both the superscription and the image of Jesus.

III. "WHAT COMMANDMENT IS FIRST" (Mark 12:28)?

- A. A scribe's searching question: "And one of the scribes came and heard them questioning together, and knowing that he had answered them well, asked him, What commandment is the first of all" (28)?
- B. Having dealt superbly with the questions about tribute to Caesar and the resurrection, this man sought light from Jesus about another matter of controversy among the Jews: Which was the greatest commandment of the law?
- C. Not first numerically, but first in importance?
- D. Without any doubt this is a matter of great importance now.

IV. THE LORD'S REPLY TO THE SCRIBE'S QUESTION (12:29-31).

- A. The Lord our God is one: "Jesus answered, The first is, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (29).
1. In his comprehensive reply, Jesus centered it upon a basic rule: Man's primary duty is to God. This is "the foundation of the entire law of God"--McGarvey-Pendleton, The Fourfold Gospel, p. 603.
 2. In this verse he quotes Moses' exhortation to Israel to heed the great command he was about to give (Deut. 6:4-9).
 3. After their return from Babylonian captivity, Israel worshipped one God.
- B. The first: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (30).
1. Heart, soul, mind and strength comprise man's total being.
 2. "All thy heart" involves man's primary & supreme affection; perfect sincerity (1 John 3:18-24; Matt. 18:35; Eph. 6:23,24).
 3. "All thy soul" includes utmost zeal, fervency of