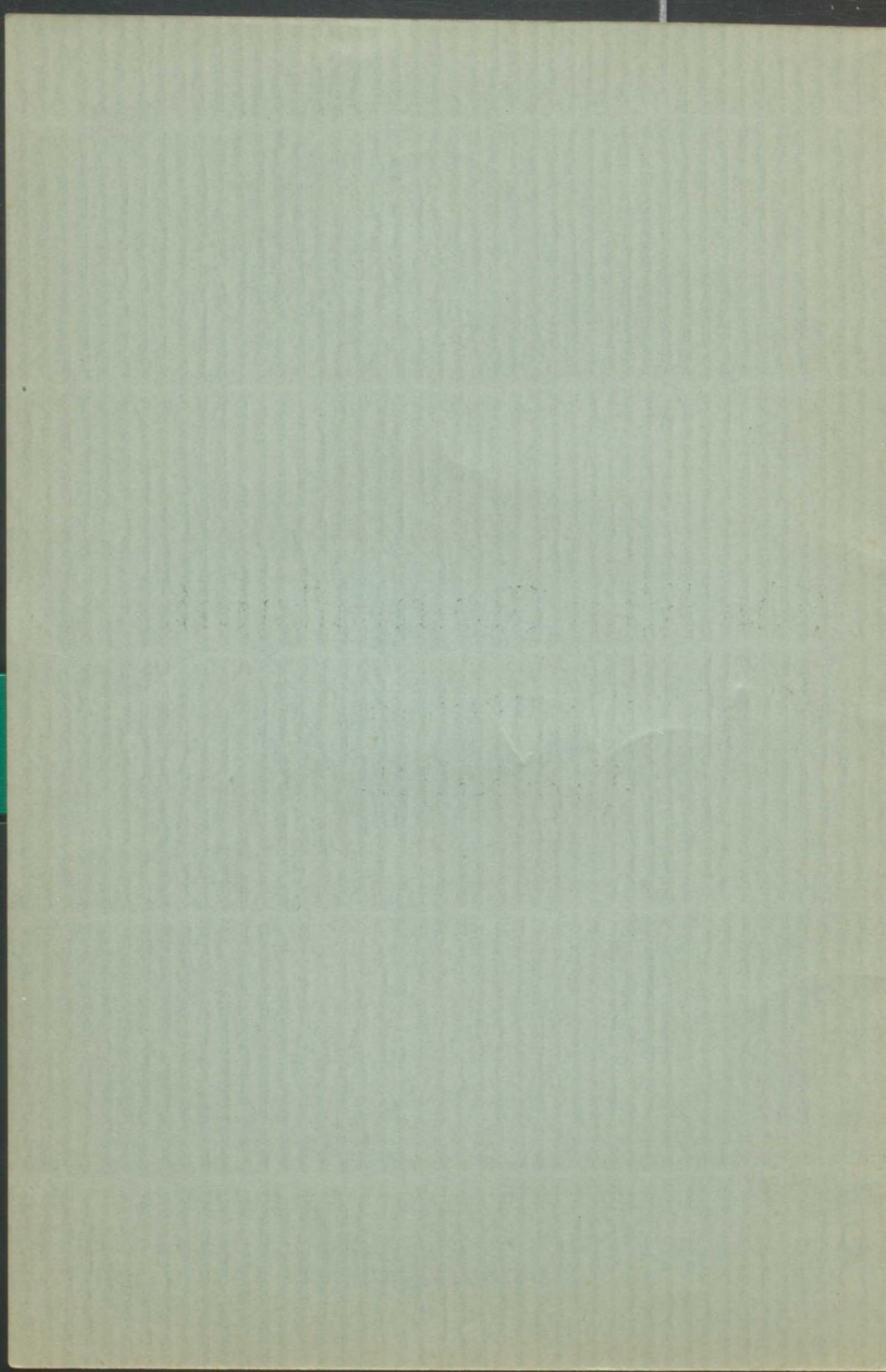


The First Commandment.

✓
Theo. Gesefeld.



THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SERMON.

BY

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THEO. GESTEFELD.



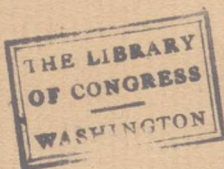
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PREFACE.

Some six months ago some students of Christian Science, including the author, started Sunday afternoon services in the hall, No. 45 East Randolph street, Chicago, for the purpose of developing the truth of life as they understand it. These meetings have grown to considerable importance through the spirit of love and self-government which pervaded them, and are constantly growing in size of attendance. The sermon presented on the following pages was preached August 7, without any intention of publishing it; but so many requests were made for its reproduction on paper that they could not be ignored, and it has been reproduced from the shorthand notes of a friend, as the sermon was not written out before delivery. The sermon is truly the outgrowth of the spirit animating the Independent Christian Science services, and it is for the sole purpose of serving this spirit of truth and love that it is given to the public.

THEO. GESTEFELD.



The First Commandment.

Those who have familiarized themselves with the story of Jesus of Nazareth, as told in the four gospels, will remember that he was continually beset with questions, asked by the leaders of thought of that day, the Scribes and Pharisees, as he called them, which were evidently asked for no other purpose than to confound and to confuse him, or to make him own up to views which would show him to be opposed to the authority of the scriptures, to his church and his political government. But instead of being at all confused or embarrassed by these questions the humble youth of Nazareth, graduate of no recognized school of learning, holding no man's certificate as to the course of study he had pursued, answered them always promptly, and in a manner to confound the questioners and to set the people in whose presence the questions had been asked to make comparisons between the unlettered

son of man—son of the people, or child of his time, would presumably be the most correct rendering of this phrase “son of man”—and his erudite, and highly educated and cultured questioners and tormentors, which must have shaken the confidence in these teachers and their sayings quite as much as the direct attacks Jesus found it necessary to make upon them from time to time. In fact, some of the most important and clearest statements about questions of vital interest were made by the teacher of the new doctrine in these encounters, when his opponents believed to have brought him to bay successfully.

To better understand the great spirit of animosity felt towards Jesus by the rulers of his own people and its spiritual guides, it will be well to consider for a moment upon what foundation the authority they wielded over the mass of the Jewish people was resting. The Jews were always a theocratic people, clinging to the belief that they were the chosen people of the great and only God, and pretended to be guided in all their relations by their reverence for their God. The law of God, as handed down to them from Mount Sinai by Moses, was, however, very brief and seemed to need additional legislation to be made applicable to all the various phases of domestic and public life. Recognizing

the common descent from Father Abraham, the friend of their great Jehovah, as a prime condition for their existence as a nation, which was in fact to be considered as Jehovah's own family, it was quite natural that they firmly established a law of descent and heredity for themselves and readily submitted to the theory that the members of one special tribe, that of Levy, were endowed with a special understanding of the law of Jehovah, and that the construction and amplification of the law as ordained by the members of this priestly family would have to be treated the same as a direct revelation from the great Jehovah himself. Thus was developed a complicated system of religious ritual, civil and hygienic law, of which only a portion was embodied in the sacred writings of the Jewish people, by far the greatest part being handed down from generation to generation by the teachers. Form became very early the principal characteristic of the Jewish law, under these circumstances, and probably no philosophy abounded so much in sophistry, in the mere play with words, as did the wisdom of the Jewish lawgivers. Words and open deeds were all to them, thoughts and motives counted for nothing, and their religion, instead of proving a source of peace and happiness, became a perfect burden by the many absolutely meaningless observances it required from

its followers. Under this form-service there had grown up, of course, very sharp distinctions between men. Not alone was the Jewish nation considered as being in no way connected, as far as the Deity was concerned, with any of the heathenish or gentile people, but almost unsurmountable barriers were erected between the different classes of Jewish society, and political as well as spiritual slavery was recognized by the Jews as one of life's unavoidable conditions. But the worst and greatest trouble was that in this development of a formal law, of a system of law-observance, the important question of clearly defining the nature and the character of the Deity had been entirely neglected, and the very intentions of the God prayed to as the father of his chosen people, with regard to this people, were permitted to remain a matter of doubt and speculation.

Now, Jesus of Nazareth declared against this rule of form and denounced the observance of the law of Jehovah, as taught by the recognized teachers of his people, as a falsification and a misrepresentation of the Father whom he knew so well, having kept his spiritual perception free from all obscuring influences. He saw that the bondage of formalism in which his people was held was harming them far more than their political servitude. He knew that the rule of man over man, that the conditions from

which the misery and suffering of mankind was growing, could not be broken by religious forms and observances, but only by establishing the truth about man's relation to man and to the creation, and that this truth, while contained and revealed in the law, was being obscured by the formalism into which the law had been forced by ignorance and by selfish scheming. Hence the bitterness with which he, otherwise so kind and gentle, attacks the Scribes and Pharisees and their methods. At the same time, the ruling class was forced to see that the Nazarene's revolutionary teaching carried a convincing force, even if they would not recognize its truth, and knowing his strength with the masses, they schemed and planned to ensnare him into admissions of doctrines which would show him to be a hater of the law, as well as of the form of law, they were teaching.

Under these circumstances the questions asked of Jesus, and the answers given by him, show us on the one hand the doubting, skeptical spirit of the age in which he lived, and on the other hand the strong contrast between his spiritual perception and the formalism of the Jewish leaders.

But at no time did he give a more comprehensive and exhaustive answer than when, after a battle with representatives of various schools, he was asked by a lawyer, that is by a recognized expounder of

and authority upon the whole scope of the Jewish law, in its bearing upon all religious, moral and hygienic questions, the simple but momentous question, "Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" And Jesus, fully realizing the scope of this question, knowing the opportunity it afforded to demonstrate the identity of his teaching with the law of God as revealed by Moses, gave unhesitatingly this equally brief but momentous answer:

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.

And then he added, remembering that the greater part of the Jewish law was consisting of legislation to carry out what was given as divine command:

And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matt. xxiii, 36-40.)

And of the effect of this answer upon the hearers the account says:

And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day on ask him any more questions.

Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment, and he himself characterized the statements made in reply as being the foundation, the support, of all the law and the prophets, that is of the entire religion of man, for that is what the law and the prophets were understood to teach.

The first commandment of the law, accepted as divine revelation through their great leader Moses by the Jewish people, in the form handed down from Mount Sinai, reads:

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the land of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

This revelation of a deity as a power which would avenge all violation of his law, which claimed as the cause for the allegiance and exclusive service and worship it demanded the simple fact that this God had led the children of Israel out of captivity, and which invested their deity with the quality of hatred and revenge as well as that of mercy—and the latter by no means boundless—had for about 1,500 years formed the basis of the entire Jewish religion. It had left the nature of the God to be worshiped a matter of doubt and speculation by investing him with contradictory qualities. No wonder that in course of time this God of the Jews became a terrible God, who inspired awe, fear

and trembling, and that the whole worship of this God degenerated into a system of tangible, visible and audible protestations against the exercise of his destructive forces against his children, who in their very fear of him encased themselves into a network of formal law, which, instead of affording protection, only added to their feeling of doubt and unrest. The God taught in this first commandment stood aloof from man, held nothing in common with him, and he differed but very little from the despots and tyrants of antiquity, who claimed power over life and death of their subjects, the latter looking upon the fact that they were permitted to keep their naked existence as a demonstration of mercy upon the part of the ruler.

Now, without entering into the question of whether there was ever any special revelation of deity, it must be admitted, by every fair minded person, that the expression or reading of a revelation should never be considered as being the revelation itself. If God appeared differently to Moses than he did to Jesus, that would not necessarily be caused by any difference in the God who appeared, but would only indicate that Moses and Jesus viewed the revelation with different eyes, and this difference is easily understood when we consider the vast space

of time that elapsed between their readings of the first commandment of one and the same God.

For that Jesus meant to give the commandment of the same God, whose law, according to the traditions and records of the Jewish people, Moses had proclaimed in accordance with direct revelation on Mount Sinai, cannot be doubted for a moment, both from the form of the question and the answer.

But all doubt as to the identity of the Lord in whose name Moses spoke with the Lord as whose son and messenger Jesus appeared among the followers of the Mosaic law 1,500 years later must disappear upon a close analysis of both statements and the connection in which they were made.

Moses commands the exclusive worship of God, giving as a motive gratitude for having delivered the children of Israel from bondage; fear of his jealous vengeance, which is described as terrible; and expectation of mercy as a reward for the love expressed in this exclusive worship. This commandment is followed by elementary legislation for the protection of individual members of society, against the selfishness and cruelty of their fellows, the deity being revealed as intending to punish every violation of these regulations of human intercourse the same as the neglect of his own claims for exclusive attention in the matter of worship. Upon this was built, as

has been stated before, a complicated system of religious observance, moral law and hygiene, making the recognition of the one God the basis of all the different functions and relations of human life. Moses expressed his understanding of God in obedience to the feelings of his time, which recognized as the only incentives for human action fear and the love based upon family relations. Being the leader of a people seeking to establish political freedom and anxious to maintain the purity of its race, it was natural for him to do so, and to proclaim as the God, as the highest power of which human mind can conceive, a being whose friendship for the Jewish people could only be preserved by absolute obedience. With other words, Moses, while undoubtedly moved by the spirit of the only and true source of all existence, could not give expression to his conception beyond the scope of the motive which animated him, namely, love for his own people and the desire to see the Jewish nation become the greatest power on earth.

But 1,500 years of human development had established to the keen perception of an unselfish nature, like that of Jesus of Nazareth is shown by all records of his life to have been, the error of confining the source of all life, the power which guides the human

being through all its relations from the cradle to the grave, to the narrow limits of a national deity.

Jesus saw that the worship of the God who had led the children of Israel out of bondage, based, as it was, upon fear of death, upon selfishness and national pride, had dethroned this very God in the hearts of his people, making them slaves to their senses just as much as were the heathens who were supposed by the Jews, in their proud selfishness, to be forever excluded from the bounties of the Creator, and to be used by the latter, if he ever recognized their existence, only as the instruments of his wrath. He recognized that there was one desire in which all men were united, when left to themselves, namely, the desire for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. He also saw that in reality the Mosaic law, intended nothing else than to protect man in this desire, but that the statement of the motive, and the restriction of this law to national limits had neutralized this intention, and that therefore a new statement had to be made of the same revelation which Moses had endeavored to communicate to the members of his own race. Jesus knew that gratitude, fear and the expectation of mercy made slaves willing victims of sin, misery and death, and also knew that the human race could attain the full development of its potentiality for happiness only

by destroying the influences which kept the human soul from unfolding itself. Like Moses, he knew that man's happiness depended upon the recognition by man of a higher power in all his various functions and relations, but he wanted this recognition based upon the highest possible ground.

And so, when asked to give what he considered to be the highest law or commandment, he expressed the demand of God for recognition as the exclusive power entitled to worship as the origin, cause and substance of all being in this brief way: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and all thy mind." In this sentence we find all there is expressed in the first commandment of the Mosaic law, for how can a being whose heart, soul and mind, that is whose entire potentiality for life, thought and observation, is filled with love for the object of worship, find in itself room for a thought of worship for anything else? In giving this reading of the first commandment the great teacher clearly established the identity of worship and love. Every thought given to the highest power was to be love and love only. There was to be nothing recognized in the source of all being, in the ruler of the world, except an object of love. Jesus saw in the God of Moses nothing to fear; to his pure, unselfish nature there was no destruction,

no power to inflict pain or anguish, no inclination to visit punishment, discoverable in the God who revealed himself to him in his prayers and in the laws of his people.

And so this commandment settles all doubt as to the nature and character of the God whose law Jesus was preaching. It plainly says, "God is love and love only; the fundamental source of all creation, the foundation from whence all life springs, is love, and conscious love at that, for this power demands love in return from its creatures."

It is right here where Jesus differs from all other teachers of religion, philosophy or ethics; it is in this rendering of the first commandment that he establishes and demonstrates his superiority to all other exponents of the mysteries of life. Neither Zoroaster nor Buddha, neither Socrates nor Plato, neither the theology of the Egyptians nor the mysteries of the valleys of the Himalayas, had risen to so high a conception of Deity as to make God identical with absolute, with perfect, love, a love craving and inspiring nothing but love, excluding all thoughts of fear or mercy. Only at the very beginning of Jewish literature, in the first account of creation we meet with a conception of God of similar purity. The voice which said, "Let there be light," and which pronounced all that had arisen from nothing in answer

to that command as good, that voice emanated from love, from absolute perfection. Absolute perfection can only be found in love and eternal life; a source of being not perfect and containing the germs of pain and death as well as those of life, could neither be perfect nor eternal; it would be a house divided against itself. In pronouncing this truth Jesus showed himself the greatest philosopher, the greatest metaphysician of them all.

But well knowing that the Jews considered the loving of God as one of their religious duties, Jesus did not send forth the statement that the recognition of God, the source of all being, as absolute love was the first commandment without adding another statement, in order to show that this love was not to be a mere lip-service. He wanted to impress his hearers with the absolute identity of the God of love he was teaching with the God of righteousness, justice and punishment revealed in the Mosaic law, and was very careful to show how the recognition of this God was to enter into all the relations and functions of man, and so he added, "And the second commandment is like unto it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The Mosaic law admitted the motive of fear into the relation between man and his God, and it employed the same fear to protect man against the

selfishness of his neighbor. Jesus, after denying that there was anything in God man had to fear, also expels the motive of fear from the dealings between man and man, and gives as the object of God's law the regulation of human affairs by substituting the love of the neighbor for the love of self; and what Jesus meant by neighbor his hearers knew well enough. One of his worst faults in the eyes of the Pharisees was that he, the son of Jewish parents, extended the hand of fellowship to the gentiles as readily as to those of his own race, and that he openly proclaimed all men to be the children of God. To him the term neighbor included every human being on the face of the earth, friend or foe, not only those who showed him kindness, but even those who sought to injure and even kill him. He knew that all men were created in the Father's image, that all men had a common inheritance in the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and in this inheritance they were to be protected by making love the motive of all human action.

He practically said to the people, "That God wants your love, you have been taught by all the teachers from Moses down, but you were not plainly told how to show this love. The love demanded from you by the Father must be an active one, and as you are to worship him as the omnipresent, om-

nipotent origin and substance of all existence, you must recognize love to be the law of the universe, the law of life, and if you want to have life, if you want to share the joy of a perfect existence, your only impulse and motive in life, and all its dealings must be love, love to God and love to your fellow-man."

Love, we all know, is a much used and often abused or misunderstood term. We are very apt to look upon love as a passion, as an ardent longing for sole possession, but that is not the love Jesus means, when using that term. Paul, who was taught exclusively by the spirit of Jesus' teachings, gives us a valuable hint of the nature of the love which is to form the sum and substance of all the law and the prophets. According to most translators, Paul calls this love charity and describes it as a motive rather than an active emotion or passion.

There are some of us who know a love which is not a mere passion, but which fills the whole being and makes its possessor with regard to its object absolutely selfless. Mothers feel such love for their children, but the latter seldom return it in the same way; such love may exist between husband and wife, or between friends, but it is a rather significant fact that while the Mosaic law contains no commandment for mothers to love their children, it finds it

necessary to enjoin the duty of loving their parents upon the children. And so we find the wife commanded to leave her parents to follow her husband with whom she is to be one, to be united for life. This would not have been necessary had not the law, by establishing fear as the motive for all action, undermined all foundation for true love and made its protection against selfishness a necessity.

The love which Jesus declares in his first commandment, the love whose praises Paul sings under the name of charity, the love which is identical with life, and which is the real motor of the universe, this love is the very opposite of selfishness, of that which modern philosophers call individualism or personalism. This love is to be without a special object, but it must be the motive for all action, it must inspire and animate every function, every deed, by which we manifest ourselves as living beings. Where this love has assumed full control of man, there, I take it, the comforter whom Christ promised to those who love him and keep His commandments has arrived, the Holy Spirit, bringing the fullest understanding and consciousness of the truth of life, namely, of man's oneness with God, and of the oneness of the entire human family. This love is the absolute trust in the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience, in one word, in the absolute perfec-

tion of God's love, the fullest recognition of God's love, as the life of the universe.

Where it prevails it destroys all selfish impulse and motives, and the man who is pervaded by it will cease to consider himself a separate being, dependent upon individual efforts for his protection and development, recognizing himself an atom in one grand whole, in which he is an integral and self-governing part, working for the good of the whole. If we all work toward a common center, if we all seek to embrace God with our love, we will become stronger, because we come closer together; but working away from the common center of our origin in the endeavor of establishing what we mistake for individuality by ministering to our selfish impulses, we will naturally grow weaker the further we get. For not only have we to pull against the true life-impulse in us which wants to draw us towards oneness with God and his children, but we have also to overcome the friction caused by the contention and striving of others.

The love that is demanded by the first commandment of God, as revealed by Jesus, is the fullest recognition of the equality of mankind. To the man who loves God with all his heart, all his soul, and all his mind, all other men will appear the children of God, all endowed with the same rights and

powers. He will feel responsible to his neighbor for all his deeds, knowing that he cannot think or do anything which he does not do for or against the good of all of God's children. This is the spirit of oneness with God and man which runs through all of Christ's teachings, and the rigorous, unflinching application of which can alone secure the reward of life, freedom and happiness held out by the Master.

But, the question will be asked, what is to become of our human loves under this law of divine love which ignores all differences and discriminations? Jesus did not mean to destroy a single human love, and obedience to his commandments will make our loves only richer, only more active and more productive. Under the law of love we love our parents, our children, our brothers and sisters, our mates, our friends, not for our own, not for their sakes, but for the sake of God, of the all.

Who does not know that the pleasure we derive from our thoughts and experiences depends upon the purity and elevation of the motive? How much greater must then be the pleasure of love, how much more intense must be its enjoyment and realization, when it results from the fullest abandonment of the self to the highest motive conceivable, the love of God!

Jesus never left any doubts about it, that this

love for God, the love for the son—speaking of himself—and the love for the neighbor were one and the same thing. Once, in emphasizing this thought, he spoke of himself as the judge on the last day of judgment, when not the profession of love for God or the Son, but the love actually given or refused to mankind should be considered as cause for giving eternal life or eternal damnation. I am certain he did not mean this judgment in a literal sense, but only expressed himself according to the understanding of his hearers. The judgment he refers to is the continuous unbroken recognition which the thoughts of man and the acts proceeding therefrom receive from the self-conscious love which we worship under the name of God our Father which is in Heaven. Every thought inspired by the motive of love, coming from the consciousness that life and love are one and the same thing, that to live truly means to see God, the object of love, in every being of his creation—every love thought is to be part of the eternal, of the perfect life, where it will form the individuality of the self-consciousness which evolved it in denial of the mortal self. On the other hand, every thought based upon the recognition of the self as the first object of care, every thought not animated by the real love for God, and hence ignorant of the claims of all his creatures upon the Creator's

love—every such thought is to fail of recognition by the eternal Father, is to be denied life, and the consciousness that evolved it will lose from its individuality in the same proportion.

We cannot truly love God and earn his love, that is, life eternal, perfect health, happiness and peace, unless we love our neighbors, unless we substitute the love for all men for the love of self, which the evidence of the senses seems to teach as nature's first law.

Paul, whose whole being seemed to be filled with the spirit of Jesus, rejoices repeatedly, because the spirit of love had made him free from the law of sin and death, and it is this very same joyful thought upon which Christian Science bases its demonstrations of the truth.

To accept the law of love, to bow to the first and greatest commandment as taught by Jesus, means to reject, to deny, all evil and all that is not absolute life. Paul constantly praises Jesus for having wiped out the law of death. The law of fear, the law of form killed. The law of Jesus, the law of God, does not say a word about death; all it commands is love, and love alone, and Jesus, by his willing death, and by his consequent reappearance in a perfect body, proved that he who loves has life eternal, that for him there is no death. He proved that the law of

the universe is love, life and growth, not death and decay and fear, which belief in them as realities inculcates. This thought runs through all of the teachings of Paul, whom nothing would move.

But the statement that the substance of all the law and the prophets is love has a deep meaning also in another direction. The law of the Jews undertook to regulate not only religious and moral matters, it also was the code of hygienic law. Medical science and divinity teachers were closely allied in those days, and Jesus, had he not healed sickness and restored health to thousands upon thousands while preaching the tidings of God's love?

Indeed, the commandment to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, is the foundation of the true law of health. What are we but heart, soul and mind? All our life is comprehended in our heart, in our soul and in our mind. The heart stands for our physical existence, the soul for our thought life ripening into action, the mind for our connection with the rest of the visible world by means of our senses, and for the feeder of our thought life.

Jesus knew and taught freely that our bodies do not have anything to do with our real life, that to have life all belief in that which we think to be our life must be laid aside, and modern science, starting

from material things, is almost agreed upon the same proposition, namely, that our bodies are not the cause, but only the effect of our lives, that is, of our real being. We do not think because we have brains, but we have brains because we think; we do not live because our heart beats, but our heart beats because we live; we do not walk because we have legs, but have legs because we walk. In our heart, in our soul, in our minds, is all there is of us; from them our physical life takes shape, through them all our bodily functions, as well as our actions, are produced and directed.

Now, a heart, a soul and a mind filled with the love of God, feeling their oneness with the boundless, omnipotent cause of all being, cannot harbor fear of anything. That heart will know no other function but to live; it will not be conscious of there being any death which could stop its beating. It will never beat in feverish haste, nor become paralyzed by fear or anguish, because it will be animated by a love which excludes the recognition of all that could produce fear. The soul filled with the love for the Lord will admit no thoughts, no concept, no impression, which even in the slightest regard recognizes that which is not love. It will know no limitations to its expressions, and so all its expression, whether in the form of body, in bodily

function, in word or in action, will be harmonious, healthy and strong. A mind filled with love for the Lord will see God in all and everything, and will never convey or add to the soul any conception which could break the harmony of life, or maintain a belief in anything but life's perpetuity and fullness. Hence obedience to the first commandment means the fulfillment of all the laws of hygiene, for it means the fullest development of all the forces of life which animate the wonderful structure we call the human body. It is the motive of fear based upon the error that man must be a finite, a separate being, which, in pervading our life action, the throbbing of our heart, the expansion and contraction of our lungs, the circulation of our blood, the workings of our various organs, prevents the free and harmonious expression of the divine thought of which we are to be the manifestation. Love for the origin of all life, a feeling of oneness with eternity and infinite life, which is the result of obedience to the command, means absolute consciousness of life and exclusion of all thoughts of sickness or death. There is not a single condition of sickness, not a single defect of body, in form or action, which is not caused by a denial in the individual's soul of the law of love. It is no new thought, that the love of God, the contemplation and the holding

of the highest thoughts the human mind is capable of, will drive out melancholy and despondency, that is, about four-fifths of all chronic diseases, but in the development of mistaken individualism, and of physical sciences, the fact that thought and concept are the cause of all physical condition and action has been lost sight of. Yet it is absolutely true that the first commandment of Jesus, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," contains the fulfillment of all hygienic law.

Jesus went to the very foundation of all things when he declared the motive of love in all of man's relations and actions to be the fulfillment of all law, and thereby showed the full understanding of God's nature which justified him in calling himself the Son and Messenger of God. Jesus did not only teach the superiority of mind over matter; he went further than that; he established the superiority of motive over mind, and in proclaiming this grand truth he proved himself the Savior of mankind. Talk of Buddhism, of Hermetic philosophy, of the beauties of the Orphic and Platonic theology, of the wisdom of ethical teachers of all ages, as much as you please, not one of them reaches the sublime simplicity which characterizes the statements of

Jesus as absolute truth. They all recognize evil, sickness and death as things to be overcome, as integral parts of human existence, and, above all, made a virtue of selfishness and self-will; while Jesus said that there was no real force except love, and that to have the full benefit of this love, to have the fullest possible life, self and self-will had to be merged into the motive of love. Christ is the only one who teaches that the motive is the fulfillment of the law, that harmony of action with the motive of all life, with divine love, is the secret of all happiness, physical as well as moral. He is the only one who fully expressed, in his words and in his entire life, the absolute unity of human life, the singleness of its purpose, and confirmed the belief of the people in its infancy, that man is created in the image of the Creator, and that man's life is the divine breath. Hence I insist upon Christ as the fountain of the whole truth, and decry the tendency to lower him to the level of the selfishness displayed in all other teachings.

Obedience to the first commandment means life, health and happiness; death, disease and misery are the reward the senses inflict when we follow their allurements away from the simple truth that love and love alone is the principle of life. There is but one

answer to the question asked so often, "How shall I get free from the bondage of sin, sickness and death?" and that is this first commandment:

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and all thy mind, by trusting him as the only life, and by loving thy neighbor as thou lovest thyself."

