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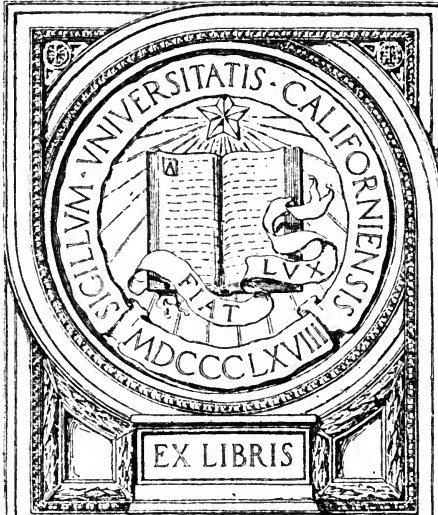


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With the affectionate regard

of the Author
Supplement to THE NEW EARTH, April, 1898

*Status conditions of the under-privileged
class only for Europeans - Why? Resources
are developing everywhere*

[Note in the harmonious scope - etc.]

CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

NUMBER TWO



[Note in the harmonious scope - etc.]

The Two Great Commandments in Economics

JAMES E. MILLS

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The Two Great Commandments in Economics



I

THE broadest and most comprehensive statement of principles of philosophy and wisdom of human life is:

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

And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

To feel as much as we may of the infinite force and scope of these grandest of uttered thoughts, and to draw what we may of guidance for the conduct of life from them, it is needful to recall the spirit in which they are spoken; for “The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.” It is holy spirit, hallowed by infinite and unalloyed love and desire to bless. Commandments given in such a spirit are guidance in the way of well-being and happiness. They are the directions of the Father to his children, teaching them how “they may have life, and may have it abundantly;” how they may receive in the greatest fulness and intensity the good of life within and life without which he wills to impart to them. Com-

ing down to our states of selfishness and worldliness, they often sound imperative and exacting, like the words of one demanding his due. This quality is not in the voice that is speaking, but in the ears that are hearing. There is nothing imperative or exacting in the two great commandments, other than their certainty and universality. They are law of being for men, and are inevitable law to all men. As no matter can escape the law of gravitation, so no human life can escape the law of love. Where its sway is least obstructed, there character is most elevated and complete; and it follows those who fall through perverted free agency down to the depths of perversion and misery.

“Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;
 If I make my bed in sheol, behold, thou art there.
 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 And the light about me shall be night,
 Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
 But the night shineth as the day.”

No man is so low that he cannot take the first step upward by heeding the law of love, and no angel so high that it is not law of life to him.

The two great commandments are law of conditions as well as of conduct. Conditions that conflict with the first great law of living are evil conditions. We miss the scope and limit the application of a divine law of life if we hear in it only commandment to be obeyed in conduct and motive. God, in his providence, surrounds men with conditions that tend, as strongly as is consistent with their freedom, to lead them to accept the law of love; and men co-operate with that providence when they seek to establish and extend such conditions for their fellows and themselves.

The law of love is also the law for conditions of groups of men as well as of individuals; of the married pair, of the home, of communities, of nations, and of the race. Law or custom of a people which conflicts with the law of love is as truly an evil as sinful deed or habit of an individual. Wherever there is human motive or conduct to be directed, or condition of human life to be shaped, or human character to be formed or influenced, there the law of love applies; and there, if the law be not applied, follow arrest of development, meagerness of life, and misery.

The law of love, both love to God and love to man, finds its chief ultimate expression, and the basis on which it rests, and the means by which it comes into real existence, in service of man to man. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these, my brethren, these least, ye did it unto me," said the Master to his disciples in the conclusion and summing up of his great symbolic account of the judgment which truth passes on qualities of human character. And his teachings from first to last, and his own life, all go to show that service to God is through and by service to men. In his system of teaching and living, sacrifice is incident, worship is incident, service is supreme. In the deeper meaning that flashes out through the letter here and there, so that he who runs may read, and which underlies all we know of what he said and what he is, salvation or health of soul is love of serving. Service in some form may be, and in the case of most men is, a necessity of the situation in which they find themselves; but love of serving is from above, and is the goal of Christian life.

It is true that love to the Lord has other expression, in prayer to him, in thought of him, and in trust and dependence upon him. And service cannot become a work of love without some thought of God, though the thought may be in almost hidden depths of consciousness. But worship becomes true and loving worship when the worshiper comes to it heart-free of guile from serving fellow men. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,

shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." The heart that is warmed by doing for fellow men throbs with new life when it comes for a time from serving to direct thought of God, and returns to serving with new vigor.

Still more than in worship, love to the Lord is expressed in shunning evils as sins against God; for without shunning sins as against God, neither worship nor service from the heart are possible. There is no room in the heart that is occupied with sin for pure worship of God or pure love of serving.

But shunning evils as sins against God is preparatory means or way of coming into fuller love, and worship is an incident of love. The chief expression of love is service, and the law of love as it comes down to the plane of outward conduct and conditions, is the law of service.

In the form of law of service, the two great commandments reach down to the lowest plane of life; for human society is impossible without some form of service, and society is, first of all, a system of mutual service. Shun it as men may, they cannot escape it; they must either enjoy the benefits of conforming to it, or suffer the penalties of breaking it; and shunning merely brings about meeting it on a lower level of living. By law of physical existence, mutual service must be a habit of life with most men. Individuals may escape it in part by force or fraud or privilege sustained by laws or customs, but such escape entails loss of character, and its own peculiar degradation in every case; and in society where law and custom are shaped to Christian principles, the most selfish man will find what the economist Bastiat calls "the great law of service for service" inevitable law of being.

But, though the laws and customs and conditions of society may tend, and in a truly Christian order would all tend, to lead the individual to a life of serving his fellow men, and would render living without service impracticable to an adult in normal condition of body and mind, they cannot compel love of serving. Love of serving is love

of the neighbor. It is the goal of life. No man is born into it at the first birth, and coming into it is birth from above. It flows to the heart by the inner way from God when service to fellow men has become a matter between the worker and God, and evils are shunned as sins against God, and service rendered because God wills it. And to open the way for this love to the hearts of men, the two great commandments were given.

As the giving of the ten commandments on mount Sinai introduced no new law of morality, and, indeed, no new law of outward conduct which had not clearly been established and obeyed to a greater or less extent wherever society existed, so the two great commandments contained no absolutely new law of outward conduct. What the promulgation of the law on Sinai did do was to make worship, morality and justice to individuals and peoples, a matter between them and God. So the two great commandments make the law of service to every individual and every people a matter between him or them and their Heavenly Father.

When obeyed from necessities of outward life, obedience to the law of service becomes a habit of adjustment to conditions of self-gratification and outward well-being, and leaves the essential character unchanged. It makes physical and mental habits more or less orderly, and so develops and completes the outside of character. But at heart the character remains self-centered and self-absorbed, and closed upward to the inflow of love of serving and the abounding life of that love. Obeyed in outward conduct, the law of service must be; there can be no love of serving without serving; but the love comes to the heart from God. No human effort can make or grasp love. The human part is to do service, and, in doing, to put away evil from motive, and look to the Lord for the new life; the rest is in God's hand. He gives the new life, and gives abundantly; gives with infinite desire and power to give, and infinite delight in giving.

The law of love in the soul is in perfect harmony with

the law of service in conduct and conditions of outward life, and also with the law of function of the body in which the soul dwells, and through which it reaches the outer world and manifests itself there. Love of serving, or, what is the same, love to the neighbor, reorganizes the character and directs its forces into channels through which they flow out into deeds of service naturally. They then act in perfect harmony with the law of service. By the first birth everyone finds himself impelled by forces of self-love which clash with the law of service in conduct. By the second birth he is endowed with love that prompts and impels to serving fellow-men. This harmony of inner motive with the order of outer life, Swedenborg describes as conjunction of the internal and external man, or conjunction of good and truth with men, resulting from regeneration. And what Swedenborg writes of this union, which otherwise frequently seems a tiresome reiteration of an abstract formula, becomes full of meaning and interest and life, and close to daily needs, when we realize that the law of service is the law of love on the plane of our conscious effort and our conduct. The harmony of love of serving with the law of outer and inner life is the peace of God. It is harmony with the law of existence, with the order of the universe, and with the character and purpose of the Creator of the universe. For he creates from love of serving, and creation is service.

The law of service on its organizing career outward and downward from its source in the character of God, does not stop with the character of the individual, or with the wonderful order of the body in which he dwells; but keeps on still onward and outward, and becomes the organizing law of society. The industrial system, by far the grandest of all organizations of groups of men, embracing all peoples, except perhaps some of the most degraded savages, in an inconceivably vast and complete system of service and exchange of service, absorbing the greater part of the mental and physical activity of the race, is organized by the law of service. Whatever motive of worldli-

ness or selfishness may impel the actors in this world-wide drama, its movements, from the very necessities of existence, fall into the rhythm of the law of service. Discord there may be and is, self-love rebels, pride and craft of individuals and classes pervert the system and introduce misery and want, where, if the law were unobstructed, there would be abundance for healthy living in healthy homes for all workers; but in spite of the perversions, on the whole, the law of service for service is inevitable law to the mass of men.

From principles of order inherent in the law, the world's service falls into classes corresponding to definite needs of men and varying capacities to meet the needs. Some serve in meeting physical needs, others in meeting mental, others in meeting moral and spiritual needs of their fellow-men. And, as a rule, each finds himself in some group of workers, some office, profession, trade, or calling in which he performs the greater part of his life's work.

One of the first grand divisions of the world's work is into that which falls to men and that which falls to women. As a rule, the work of women is nearer to the heart of life, a more direct expression of love for husband or children or parents or brothers or sisters, or other persons who are immediate objects of personal affection; and is in home, or in educating children, or in some form of direct service to persons. Man's work, on the other hand, is, as a rule, farther from such immediate personal relation, farther from home, out in the world. Home, therefore, comprises a large part of the industrial system, for there one-half of mankind do their share of the world's work. Moreover, home is the object for which most men labor, and home affections are the principal motive power that impels the machinery of the world's industries, and in a broad, general sense, the world's work is for the world's homes. The great industrial system centers upon home, and, still within home, upon marriage. The union of impelling motive and law of conduct which faithful,

God-fearing service brings about, is imaged forth in the union of husband and wife within the home, which it is the first aim of the industrial system to support.

The Church is an essential constituent part of the industrial system. He whose Church it is, lived a life of service, taught a life of service, sent his disciples out to serve, and died in serving. His dying has been magnified to an infinite sacrifice, and a whole system of theology founded upon the imagined sacrifice—vicarious atonement, tripersonality of God, obscurity and confusion after obscurity and confusion—to hide the simple truth that the life of Jesus Christ, the divine man, was a life of simple service, and that to follow him is to serve fellow-men. As the clouds are breaking, men see that to minister in the Church is to serve as he served, and the Church falls into its place among the groups of service of man to man. But, not only is the Church a part of the industrial system, because in it its ministers do their share of the world's work; it is, or should be, an inspiration to the whole system. To the Church the workers should be able to come from all their varied occupations, to realize, and help one another realize, that each one's work, whether in home or school or field, on shipboard or in factory or mine, is between him and God; that his service to men is service to God, and that God is with him in it.

That the State is a part of the industrial system, is the principal lesson of the history of progress in government, for the progress is always toward making the officers of the State servants of the people, and where the progress is most advanced, offices exist for service and service only, and are shorn of all power or dignity or reward other than such as is necessary and fitting to the service.

The law of service is the law of home life, and civil and social and religious life, of manners and conduct and motive. But its most complete outward development and expression and manifestation is in the industrial system. In it most men must, from physical necessities, and all

men should of right, spend the greater part of their active life. It absorbs the greater part of human physical energy and motive power and thought. The more society advances, the more complex and highly organized and delicately interdependent the system becomes, the more specialized its parts, the more complete the harmony of its whole.

Another tendency of the system that shows the guiding hand above it, is that, as it develops, the worker is prompted less and less directly by his own personal wants, and his thought is more and more directly engaged in serving the neighbor. The savage hunts and fishes and gathers berries and nuts, impelled by his own hunger or the hunger of his family, and the result of his hunt goes at once to satisfy his want. But in organized industry of a civilized community under normal conditions, the personal want is far in the background, and for the time, quiescent, in the worker's mind. In the case of the savage, the mind or body or both are occupied in satisfying the worker's own needs; but the mind and energies of the civilized worker are engaged in doing a special part of a whole system of mutual service, and the conditions of success are such that his attention is fixed upon meeting the needs of others. Moreover, while the savage's wants are satisfied by the product of his own labor, the wants of the civilized laborer are supplied by the labor of large numbers of workers widely distributed over the world. The industrial system is an organized system of service and exchange of service, in which, as in all normal organisms, each acts for all and all for each, and each becomes a center toward which converge unnumbered lines of supply, and from which go out benefits of his own labor to unknown and unnumbered recipients.

In an entirely healthy condition of the industrial system, the returns would come to each individual worker from the whole body of workers, without need for care or concern on his part, in proportion to the service he rendered.

The interior motive may be alike self-centered with the civilized and the savage worker; but the tendency of organized industry, when justly organized, is to encourage and develop a habit of doing work without direct thought of the return to self.

So far as the vast system of service is true to the intrinsic law of its being, it is a training for love to the neighbor. It would make the school of life on earth the school of love. Its welcome to the youth would be the welcome of God to share with him the love of serving which is the motive power of creation, and the welcome of the world's best manhood to happy comradeship in doing the world's work. From the enthusiasm of boyhood through love of sweetheart and wife and children, and desire for fellowship and good standing with men, it would lead him to delight in doing his share of the world's work, and this is birth from above. Alone it could not indeed accomplish such changes. Environment alone cannot reach so far into the depths of character; but it would act in entire harmony with revealed truth, for it is meant to be itself the law of love in ultimate effect. It is the outer world where the new-born love of service first draws breath, and where it waxes strong and grows to the stature of spiritual manhood.

To one who has learned from observation and reflection something of the greatness and power for good of the industrial system, and in the light of revealed truth has caught glimpses of its spiritual meaning and intent, nothing can be more astounding than its failure of its purpose; nothing, except perhaps the failure of organized religious bodies and their teachers to see its divine intent, and apply to it the divine law of service.

It is not necessary here to go into the details of the failure; the world is resounding with the story of the wrongs and the miseries which the failure entails upon the workers, of human minds dwarfed and distorted, and human hearts hardened, of manhood robbed of honesty

and womanhood of purity, of a mad scramble for wealth to escape the perils of poverty which no honest industry can confront with reasonable confidence of success. A system which engages the energies of the great body of God's children, which has its origin in the law of love, and which is or should be that law in effect upon the conduct and conditions of human life, and which is based upon the earth which God has provided for the birthplace and temporary dwelling place of his children, should be all beneficent, and should furnish the environment best fitted to develop the highest manhood, physical, moral, mental, affectional and spiritual. Any result short of this is failure. Such failure must be due, not to any inherent and unavoidable defect of the law of the system, which is the divine law of life, or to any lack in the earth to respond to human needs, for it, too, is provided by infinite wisdom for the best development of manhood; but to some human interference with the order of the system, and some human perversion of its activities.

It is well known and easily established as a matter of fact that there is no failure of the earth to yield, and no failure in human powers to produce what is needed to satisfy all healthy human wants. Wants increase, indeed, with the intellectual progress of the race; so, too, does human control of the forces of nature increase with the intellectual activity that accompanies the progress.

The failure is in the distribution of the products of labor, or the distribution of service among men.

The law of distribution of service, or of the products of labor, is a part of the law of service, an inevitable deduction from the two great commandments. It is that *service, and service only, entitles a man in normal condition to share the service of other men.*

This statement, so simple, so in accord with ordinary perception of right, seems at first sight a mere truism, as if one should say, "It is best to be good." Nevertheless, the breach of this law is the cause of the fail-

ure of the industrial system, or rather, it is itself the failure.

Very few among intelligent Christians would have the hardihood to deny the existence and validity of this law; but in religious literature it is rarely stated and still more rarely carried to its logical conclusion; and the failure to see and declare this law tends to reduce the two great commandments in Christian literature from laws of life and of conditions of life, to sentiment. Libraries are written to extol the law of love, with never a word about its application to the distribution of service. The law has been made to teach sacrifice rather than service; service without return is often extolled as the Christian service; blind obedience of slave or serf or peasant is treated as ideal service; the soldier's service is exalted above that of other workers, because it involves risks of life; the priest's service, because it involves the giving up of marriage and meagerness of pay, is considered conducive to spirituality among religious workers; anything but the clear, frank recognition and statement of the law of distribution of service in its simplicity, grandeur and power; anything but service for service.

Recognized crime against laws of property is abundantly condemned and inveighed against. But the principal diversions of the products of the world's work from the world's workers is not by recognized crime, but by legalized wrong. The wrong is, *privilege, or the ability conferred by law or custom upon some men or classes of men to secure the service of other men without rendering adequate service in return.*

This antithesis of the good of service and its opposite evil of privilege seems also like a truism. Nevertheless, it is privilege that infects the industrial system with moral disorder, injustice and wrong, and perverts its vast influences to the degradation of the manhood it is meant, first of all, to develop to its best and highest. It is the negation of the law of love; but it takes on such specious

forms, and is so buttressed by tradition, so adorned by culture and refinement, and its true nature is so obscured by tortuous reasonings that have been evoked in the ages of effort to reconcile it with Christianity, that to question it is hardly tolerated, even in the pulpit, whose very reason for existence is that the law of love may come home to the hearts of men.

It is not the glamor of wealth and power alone, or principally, that conceals the evil nature of privilege from thoughtful Christians, but rather the glamor of achievement. When the great masses of material of the pyramids were being gathered and piled up by the labor of slaves, in the minds of most thoughtful Egyptians, no doubt the slavery was justified by the greatness and dignity of the achievement; indeed, I have heard the justification attempted at the table of a Christian home. So, too, materialistic and intellectual achievement in our day imposes upon our minds, and conceals the evils with which it is associated. We dwell with admiration upon the industrial achievement of our age, and rest in it. Achievement is for man, not man for achievement; and whenever or wherever it dwarfs or limits manhood, it is a curse. No thousands of miles of railroads or telegraphs, and no advance in knowledge or control of the forces of nature in a country, can atone for the loss of a single manly trait among its people. And yet undoubtedly the great achievements of the industrial system do cause some thoughtful and devoted teachers of Christianity to pause and refrain from attacking the privilege which seems so interwoven with the very existence of the system, though it limits the application of the central law of life that Christ taught, and excludes from its light and warmth a large area of the field of human activities and interests.

But revealed truth has spread far wide of religious institutions, and become a constituent part of human thought and human character. And to the common stock of revealed truth which has become character among men is

the final and efficient appeal from traditional and established wrong. And so long as the two great commandments are the central law of life to the thought of the multitudes, and the holy spirit of truth is hovering over the world of truth and thought, ever ready to stir it into activity, there can be no rest until privilege is abolished and the law of service holds sway in the organism of human society as complete as in the organism of the human body.

II

THE two great commandments are one law, and in application of either it becomes necessary to appeal to the other also. Love to the Lord exists by and in love and service to the neighbor, and without service to the neighbor, the thought of God descends to a purely intellectual idea and passes into formulas of words or of worship, and becomes an unreal and shadowy thing, devoid of affection, trust, or fidelity. The attempt to love and worship God without serving men has resulted at all times in religious formalisms and pretence, pharasaism, dogmas of salvation by faith alone, and spiritual paralysis.

The attempt to act from love to the neighbor without some fidelity to God is equally a failure, because it leaves the innate self-love, which is the starting-point of every human career, untouched. Without obedience to God the conduct can be shaped to the law of service under the influence of external necessities; but the essential self-centered motive at the bottom of unregenerate character, remains unchanged. The thought of God may be vague, may go no farther than to the recognition of the infinite goodness and power of right; but without some perception of divine qualities to which fealty is due, love to the neighbor has no means of replacing the self-love which is the ruling force of unregenerate character; and if a mental habit of useful effort exists, it is a part of a kind of superimposed second nature of adjustment to external con-

ditions of success, which is of this world, and of the surface of life here. And the clearer the recognition of God, the more direct and conscious the dependence upon him and trust in him and obedience to him, the more favorable are the conditions for the inflow from him of the new forces of character, which of their own nature, act in accord with the laws of love.

Therefore, in an effort like this we are making to apply the great central law of love to a department of conduct and conditions of life, it is necessary to appeal to the first as well as to the second of the two great commandments.

We have tried to apply the test of the law of love to the neighbor to existing conditions and conduct of society; we have seen that on this plane and in this field of application, the law of love to the neighbor is the law of service and of the distribution of service; and that the opposing sin and evils are naturally grouped and classified under the head of privilege and the effects of privilege; but now as we approach the more useful and important stage of our effort, and seek the cure for the evils, it becomes necessary to look at the subject in the light of the whole of the great central law, the law of love to the Lord as well as love to the neighbor.

Again it will be helpful to recall the nature of a divine commandment. The traditional and probably most common thought of such a commandment is that it is an expression of divine will, or willfulness even, and that obedience to it is exacted by God as a condition of well-being. It is really law of the relation of God to man, founded on the nature of both God and man, and is spoken by God to guide men to the right relation to him, and to the fullest enjoyment of the blessings he wills to bestow upon them.

The law of love to the Lord, when read beneath the letter, is information from infinite wisdom to man that his right and intended condition in the universe is a condition of union in mutual love with the Creator of the uni-

verse; that being the object of the Creator's love and the end for which all things are created and sustained, it is necessary to his well-being and happiness that the love be mutual, and that he be conjoined with his Creator in bonds of mutual love. How alone humanity would be without the possibility of such union! How fearsome would be the prospect of an eternity of existence without it! Such existence would not be eternal life. In its highest meaning, eternal life is unending union with life itself, and life itself is God.

The rights of the individual man are founded upon his relation to God. He stands among his fellow-men the equal of any or all of them in being the object of God's love. He receives, indeed, a part of the blessings of life through them; but far more, directly from the Giver by the inner door to his soul. He is in some measure responsible to them, but his first and highest responsibility, and, in his deeper life of motive and purpose, his entire responsibility, is to God. In the animal kingdom, the individual seems to be an incident, and the preservation of the species the main object of its existence. Individuals are born and perish that the species may endure. But among men the individual is as enduring as the species; he is himself an object and end of divine love; and, being such, he can never perish. This is the foundation of the dignity and right to freedom, and to the highest development of his own character, inherent in every individual man. Without a sense of direct relation to God and responsibility to him, manhood is in a state of arrested development, unconscious of its own greatness and worth, unconscious of its place in the universe. In default of this sense, men assume an arbitrary self-respect, or rest upon the respect of other men or upon pride or privilege of caste, and a thousand props and makeshifts; but no man knows the repose and dignity of manhood until he is conscious of its relation to divinity. With this consciousness, he need never quail before other men, or be dismayed by any conditions; he can go forward with en-

tire trust in the divine love and care, following the light as God gives him to see the light, serving his fellow-men and working out his destiny.

The law of all these relations of God to man is generalized in the first great commandment. It is a law of giving and receiving, and, in application to human life, is the method of receiving life and blessings of life in the largest possible measure.

All that comes to man from without is gift from God, either direct or through other men. And all of life within—that which goes to make up the man himself—is gift from God. And the giving, both by the inner and outer way, is continuous, moment by moment, year by year, and forever.

Our sense of the relation to the Giver, is dulled by a habit of thinking of the gift of life as bestowed at birth and continuing by a self-sustaining power of its own, and of thinking of the world around as having been created at some time in the past and left with a self-sustaining existence. World and life continue, aye, are called into present existence, moment by moment, by the creating and sustaining power of Divine will, from which all life and forces flow, and shaped by the divine thought, from which go out all law and method and form of existence. And life and world are free gifts bestowed continually upon his children, and the child's love to God and to fellow-men is response to the giving.

The gift of life—*inflowing, indwelling life*—is hardly recognized in youth and early manhood. As the years of faithful service go on, the servant may feel the cords of inflowing love and life drawing his affections inward and upward to their source; but in earlier years his activities are in the outer world, and his thought is largely engaged, and rightly engaged, on things of environment, at best, on his work amid things of environment; and his first sense of relation to God is gratitude for the environment of earth. Just as doing in the outer world is the means of coming into love to fellow-men, so enjoyment

of the outer world and sense of receiving it as gift from God are means of coming into gratitude and love for God.

The relations of God to man, of which the first great commandment is the generalized law, are relations of giver and receiver of life within and world without. The sense-world is the first of God's gifts recognized by the developing man, and the response of the sense-world to the needs of both body and soul is the foundation of love to God. And although the superstructure rise far above sense, until finally sense and all that responds to sense become incidental, still, on sense are life and love and wisdom based; and when the individual loses his sense-life of earth through death of the material body, his love still rests on the sense-world, now the sense-world of heaven, through the senses of the spiritual body. For without a basis in sense, or, in other words, without environment, there can be no life. The environment of earth is the means of union in love with God during the years when senses are keenest and sensuous delights are most engaging, and power for physical effort most efficient. In these early years of a healthy life, the prayer for daily bread is, of necessity, prayer for the blessings of outer life.

If the economic conditions were shaped—as shaped they must be before God's kingdom can come on earth as it is in heaven—to the two great commandments, the youth on leaving the home of his childhood would be welcomed to his larger home in the world with the smile of God. He would feel his birthright to an equal share of God's love and God's loving gifts of earth. "Here my Father has placed me. I am equal heir with all my fellows to this fair earth about me, and to all its opportunities; heir to my place where I may stand upright and free, and may live out to its fullest and best the life he gives me, and may do my share of the world's work as he gives me to do. Here on this inheritance from our Father in heaven, the wife he gives me and the children he gives us shall live and grow with me to the full

stature of the manhood and womanhood he made us to obtain, and here we will thank Him and love Him."

This, or such as this, is the attitude of youth and early manhood to God, to fellow-men, and to the earth, which the two great commandments contemplate.

But the youth who should stand in this attitude today would be called a dreamer of dreams; and if he tried to enforce his claim to his inheritance of God's earth, he would come into conflict with human laws, traditions, and customs and habits of thought. He would find his place on earth held by other men, his claim of equal rights of access to the earth annulled, and he himself dependent upon other men for what his Father gave him outright; his sense of the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man referred to the realms of sentiment, and the whole system of relation between him and his fellows and their common Father which follows inevitably from the spirit and letter of Christ's teachings, treated as impracticable idealism.*

The mutual relations of the Divine Giver and the human recipient are confused and obscured by the intrusion of perverse human institutions between the individual and his Maker. The struggle of the ages has been to remove such intrusions. The still, small voice of the conscience of the people—persuasive voice uttering spiritual perceptions—amid the clamor of selfish interests is saying, "Stand aside from between me and God; let me come before him

* Ralph Waldo Emerson has clearly and beautifully expressed in his essay on "The Conservative," the ideal attitude of the youth to the earth, and the conflict with man-made law into which such attitude would bring him. But he evidently saw no practicable way to establish the right relation of man to the earth, or, in other words, to reconcile the right of equal access to the earth with the security of occupancy necessary to the best use of the earth. He expressed the longing for justice in the relations of men to the land, which was then (1841) deep and intense in the minds of many of those who were looking for higher life. Nearly forty years later, some of them welcomed with thankful hearts the grand discovery—one of the grandest, it seems to me, of modern science—of the simple means or method, which the evolution of the industrial system has rendered practicable, of accomplishing the end.

as he made me to come, in the full stature of manhood." And privilege is always talking back with grandiloquent assertions of its own importance and greatness. The conscience of the people, which is, in fact, the common stock of revealed truth woven into the fiber of human character, arranged and arrayed against evils under the influence and with the power of the Holy Spirit of truth, has set aside claims of priesthood to authority, and of divine right of kings and classes to rule over minds and bodies of men, and a thousand forms of intrusion of swelling self-love between God and men,—forms of special privilege of individuals or classes. And steadily, through all this setting aside of human arrogance and usurpation of divine authority, the view of God has been growing clearer and truer, and responsibility to Him more direct; and steadily the individual man has risen to a higher appreciation of his dignity as a child of God; and widespread and widening recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is emerging from amid the debris of customs and traditions and laws founded upon privilege, or, what is the same, widespread and widening recognition of the voice of God in the law of love.

But there still remains among the most advanced peoples forms of privilege sanctioned, as far as evil can be sanctioned, by law.

And here on the border line of truth from above and truth from round about, or of revealed truth and truth from outward experience, it is necessary to take into consideration economic facts and generalization of facts. In every application of revealed truth to actual life, there must be consideration of outward conduct and conditions, and so, in an effort to see economic facts in the light of the two great commandments, we must marshal the facts.

The principle privilege which so perverts the industrial system of the world, and robs it of its power to confer its highest blessings, and sickens it with injustice and misery, must lie near to the heart of the system. It must be some breach, not only of the law of service, or

the second great commandment, but also of the law of relations of God to man, or the first great commandment. It is one that disturbs the relations of man to God and to the earth on which God has placed him and to his fellow-man. This privilege is the private and exclusive ownership of land, the monopoly by some men of the earth, which is the gift of God to all men.

That the earth is created and sustained for all men alike, follows so directly and inevitably from the doctrine of creation by a God of infinite love, is, in fact, so essential a part of the doctrine, that it cannot be debatable among men who accept the doctrine with any sense of its scope and bearing. It is axiomatic to the mind that accepts the doctrine, and the law of love. It is a part of the relations of God and man taught in the first great commandment. The private and exclusive ownership of land, therefore, thwarts the first great commandment of the central law of Christian life. It thwarts equally the second great commandment, for the rent-value of land is due to the presence and labor of the community at large, and exclusive ownership of the land by individuals enables them to take for themselves what is the product of the labor of the whole community, and this is to obtain the service of other men without rendering adequate service in return, in other words, it is privilege.

But, while from revealed truth we know that the earth belongs alike to all men, from observation of and experience amid actual conditions of life, we know that the land must be occupied and securely held by some men to the exclusion of others.

At first sight the law from above and the outward condition seem irreconcilable. But law and condition are from the same infinite wisdom. He who made the law of living, made also the conditions of living; and there can be no conditions in the environment of the race or of an individual, amid which the law of conduct does not apply.

The methods of applying the law of equal right of

access to the earth must vary with the degree and kind of development of society. They should improve as civilization advances. But the law itself, striking, as it does, at the root of privilege, is obstructed and obscured both by the brute force and the perverted intellectual powers that are exerted to maintain privilege, and so it comes to pass that in our time it is necessary both to establish the law itself in the minds of men, and to point out the method of applying it. We have found that the law flows from the central law of life. We shall find the method of applying it in the nature of things, that is to say, in the nature of the relation of humanity to the earth, and find it emerging as the order of society emerges from the debris of arbitrary human laws.

But first it will be well to glance at some of the methods of the past, for there have been such methods all along the line of experience of society. The instinct or sense of equal right to the soil has asserted itself and been kept alive through the ages of suppression through abuse of physical and intellectual power.

In the Israelitish code the right of access to the good land given by Jehovah was to be maintained by re-distribution of the land among the families at stated times. In Russia certain portions of the land which the classes have not monopolized are controlled by the people, and this common property is distributed from time to time by the *mir* or village community to the families of the community, according to the number of persons in each and their ability to use the land. It is but a few generations since the Scotch and Irish chief held the land of his clan in trust for the families of the clan. By feudal institutions, when carried to their logical results, land was held in trust from the sovereign or other lord, on condition that the holder should render certain defined service, or pay a certain fixed tribute to the sovereign or lord, who, in the system, represented the community; and so, in a crude and imperfect way, the value of the land was theoretically shared by the community. In England, from

the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries the tribute paid by the actual users of the land was very light, not graded to the value of the land, and remaining unaltered on agricultural land at from six pence to eight pence an acre, and paid nominally for necessary protection and government.*

And now in English law there is no absolute ownership of lands vested in individuals, but land is held by individuals in trust from the community, because, as is explained, the community has deemed it best that its lands should be so entrusted, and the community can legally resume possession of its land whenever it wills to do so.**

In our own country from its settlement until the last thirty years land has been of comparatively ready access to the mass of the people, although to avail themselves of it they have had to migrate to the frontier and give up much of the good of society life. To this approach to free access to land is due the great movement of population westward within the country, and to the country from Europe. And much more is due to it. Whatever of dignity and freedom and strength of individual manhood characterizes Americans as a people, is plainly traceable principally to the comparative freedom of access to the land which has existed to within the last thirty years.***

* This has been clearly brought out by the late Thorold Rogers, Professor of Political Economy in Oxford University, in his two great works, "Six Centuries of Work and Wages," and "Economic Interpretation of History." He has also shown that in those centuries in England, "Of poverty which perishes unheeded, of willingness to do honest work and a lack of opportunity, there was none."

** The late Lord Chief Justice Coleridge has set this forth clearly in an address delivered before the Glasgow Juridical Society, published in Macmillan's Magazine, April, 1888.

*** There is still public land unoccupied, but it is all, or nearly all, below the "margin of cultivation," that is, too poor from barrenness, inaccessibility, or other cause, to be profitably used under present conditions.

But this partial freedom of access to the land has ceased with the passing of the public land to private and corporate ownership.

Plainly, none of the methods already cited of securing to the masses some share of the land is adequate to maintain the equal right of access to the earth, and none can have more than a very restricted application in a settled country of high industrial activity and development. Some far more efficient and complete method is necessary to secure to every man born on the earth the share of the earth which is his by inheritance from God.

Economic forces flow from the Creator's will as truly as do the forces of the material world, and economic laws proceed from the Creator's thought as truly as do the laws of the material world. And it is among laws of divine origin existing in the nature of things and of men, that we must seek the method of securing to all men equal right of access to the earth.

When economic forces have free play, there is a quality or condition inseparable from the occupancy and use of land by men living in well-developed social relations, which constitutes, indeed, an essential part of the relations of the community to the earth. It is ground-rent.*

Ground-rent is inevitable under conditions of economic freedom. As already shown, when economic forces were hampered by military control, rent proper was replaced by a more or less arbitrary tribute. What may be called

* The whole subject of the nature of ground-rent, and the effects of having it taken by individuals or by the community at large, is best treated from the economic side by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty," "Social Problems," "Condition of Labor," and other works. Other philosophers had seen the abstract right to the soil, but none had seen the remedy and brought it prominently to public view, until Henry George did. Others had seen the evils of private ownership of land, but George not only saw the disease, but the remedy. I must refer to his works for details of the subject. Here I can only bring forward enough of them to illustrate the application of the two great commandments to economics.

natural ground-rent, and what Rogers calls "competitive rent" in contradistinction to the feudal tribute, began to develop in England freely when Henry VIII. sold the confiscated lands of the Church and of the laborers' guilds to the rich burghers, principally traders and manufacturers, who naturally treated land as private property on commercial principles. As military control and arbitrary legislation have become more and more restricted, and economic forces less trammled, true ground-rent has become a more and more fixed and definite factor in social relations. Under conditions of free economic development, "rent of land is determined by the excess of its produce over that which the same application can secure from the least productive land in use."

This definition of ground-rent is treated in the literature of political economy generally as a statement of a law, called, from the author who first brought it prominently into notice, "The Law of Ricardo," and probably it is the one generalization of the science of political economy which has become most widely accepted. It can hardly be regarded as other than a truism; but, nevertheless, it has proved a useful truism, for it has helped to establish the truth that rent is in no wise arbitrary, but exists in the nature of things, and attaches itself to the use of land as a definite and unavoidable condition.

Ground-rent is plainly dependent upon the existence of society. In an uninhabited wilderness land has no rental value. Within the memory of pioneers now living in well populated districts in the Mississippi Valley on very valuable lands, these same lands had no rental value whatever. Rent grows with the growth of society, and is largest at centers of population.

Ground-rent is a product of the labor of the community at large. No individual owner or occupant of a piece of land can add more than a trifle to the value of it. He may put improvements upon it, may enrich the soil, may fence and till it, may build costly structures on it, and it

is common to confound the value of such improvements with the value of the land, but ground-rent in the sense of the word as used by political economists and in the sense here intended, is the rental value of the bare land exclusive of all improvements of any kind upon it. The value of a city lot is due to the labor of the people who dwell in the city, and in the country that centers upon the city. Increase of working population, additional industrial establishments, development of schools, advancement in intelligence and morality of the inhabitants, all add to the rental value of the land of the city, and so does every railroad that reaches the city, every improvement to its harbor, and every means of access to the city or locomotion within it.

Ground-rent not only exists in the nature of things where economic forces are free to act, but it is a very definite quantity, not to be arbitrarily raised or lowered to any considerable extent. If, for example, the land owners of a city should conspire to raise the ground-rent there beyond what the advantages of position and the industrial development of the city establish, the business of that city would drift away to other cities, till rent should find again its normal level. How sensitive business and population are to any increase of ground-rent beyond its normal value, is well illustrated by the fact that seaport cities, however much in need of funds, dare not raise port charges (a form of ground-rent) beyond what is normal, for well-grounded fear of driving their commerce away to other ports. What is true of city lots in this respect, is true of all land.

Ground-rent, the product of the labor of the community at large, bears also a very definite relation to the wants of the community as a body, and is itself sufficient for those wants, just as in healthy economic conditions, the product of the labor of the individual is sufficient for the needs of himself and his family. It is a matter of ascertained fact, for example, that the rental value of land

in the United States is somewhat more than all the present revenues, national, state, county, and municipal.*

Now, ground-rent, the product of the labor of the whole community, is diverted from its producer to individual land owners, while the community, thus deprived of its own proper income, supports itself by taking from the individual, in the form of taxes, a part of the product of his labor.

By simply righting this wrong and taking for its own use as a body the product of its own labor, namely, the rental value of land, and leaving to every individual the product of his own labor, undiminished by taxation of any kind, the community would secure to each and every individual member an equal share of the benefit of the land, and at the same time secure to the users of the land the safe and exclusive occupancy necessary to the best use of land.

Here, then, we have in the application of a primary, axiomatic principle of justice—leaving to each his own, and taking for the whole its own—the method of establishing equal right of access to the earth among men.

To illustrate the method more fully, let us look into the effects of its application.

It would impose no additional burden upon the user of land. He would pay for the land he occupies, as he now does, its rental value; but he would pay it to the community, while now he pays it to some individual land owner, either as rent proper or interest on purchase money. No one would hold land out of use for rise of value, or hold land at all that he did not use, for there would be no motive for doing so, and to do so would be expensive, when the rental value all goes to the public treasury. All land would then be available for use, and would naturally fall into occupancy by those who needed it and could use

* The necessary data for conclusions in this matter are presented in readily available form in "Natural Taxation," by Thomas G. Shearman, published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895.

it to the best purpose. No laborer would accept as wages for his work less than the value of the product that a like amount and quality of work would produce from the land. The city workman might not, indeed, be able to go to the land, but the country boy who now comes to the city to compete with him, in blind hope of winning what he knows is denied him in the conditions he leaves behind—the means of maintaining a healthy home—would then stay on the land, and support there the wife and babies his heart yearns for, and soon the congestion of cities would be a thing of the past. The relation of employer and employed would become an entirely mutual relation, with no more dependence of the one than of the other. Both labor and capital would be freed of taxation. Capital could no longer be employed in maintaining monopoly, and must be devoted to co-operating with labor in useful productions. Then the capitalist could always feel that his gain was gain also to the community at large. Competition, under conditions of free access to land and natural opportunities, would be healthy rivalry for excellence in service.

There is no need to go into details here of the benefits that would follow the adoption of this method of reconciling the equal right of access to the earth of all men with the necessary exclusive occupancy of land by some men, farther than to illustrate that it is an entirely practicable method, and at the present stage of economic development, *the* method of establishing the equal right of all men to the earth.

To establish this right is to overthrow privilege in its last stronghold. There are, indeed, other minor forms of privilege, created by unwise or perverse legislation, such as monopoly of transportation (which, however, depends upon a kind of monopoly of land), and monopoly of the means of exchange. But the one great privilege still remaining after all the struggles of the ages, is private ownership of land, or monopoly of natural opportunities. It is this that hardens the heart and darkens the spirit of the

great industrial system, that gives the lie to the law of service, and answers back to Christianity with a sneer; it is the anti-Christ of economics.

Remove this last great privilege, and the law of the order of the industrial system will be the law of service, and the "kingdom of uses" on earth will be the school for the "kingdom of uses" which is heaven. There will still be growth in warmth and intensity of love and life, and readjustments in outer form to the fuller inflow of spirit. But there will be no great discord in the harmony of the social system. There will still and forever remain to each individual to choose between self-love and love of the world on one hand, and love to the Lord and the neighbor on the other. But the daily influence and pervading spirit of the work of life will all tend to encourage and develop and call out the love of serving. The teaching and implication of the daily experiences of life will be illustration and confirmation of the law of life learned from revealed truth. Divine Providence and care will be felt as actual experience in a great, protecting, loving system of mutual service. Manhood will take on new freedom and dignity from new sense of direct responsibility to the Heavenly Father, and sense of trust in daily duties. Economics will be firm foundation for Christianity, for the whole order of the economic system will center upon and radiate from the Two Great Commandments.

JAMES E. MILLS.

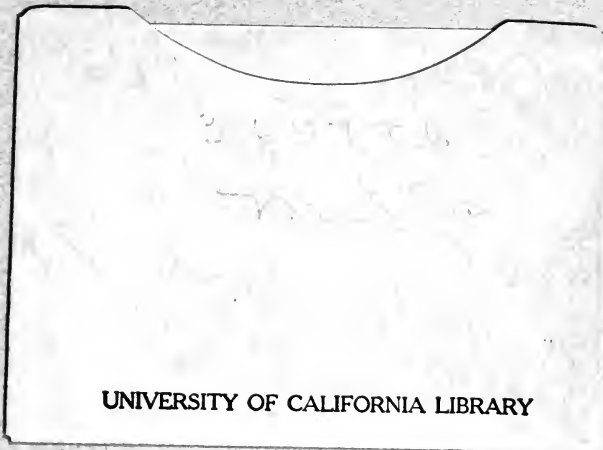


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