

Christian Sociology

LET us begin with a suggestive story of a common question and an uncommon answer. The questioner was a lawyer. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the great commandment in the law?" This was the 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 great and first commandment." So far probably the answer was a common one; but instead of confining himself to these great Deuteronomic words concerning love for God, Christ went on to say: "And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments the whole law hangeth and the prophets."

The significance of this great answer is this: Although only one commandment was asked and expected, to avoid a one-sided presentation of religion Jesus gave a second commandment. He seems to have taken special care to put love of neighbor with love of God as summing up the law and the prophets. Paul goes so far as to write to the Galatians: "the whole law is fulfilled in one word even this: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" Jesus and Paul, therefore, insist that religion concerns itself with the relation between the individual and God. "God and one man could make any other religion" said Dr. Parkhurst "but it requires God and two men to make Christianity." It asks not simply "Adam where art thou" with respect to God, but "Cain, where is thy brother, and what hast thou done with him?" It teaches the brotherhood of man as well as the Fatherhood of God. Let our thoughts cluster about three words:

I. SACRED—A common prejudice against a very important part of Christianity's work in society is due to a false distinction between what is secular and what is sacred. I heard an able president of a theological seminary call this distinction the great heresy of the ages. For instance we would say that it is rank heresy to consider the church as sacred and the home as secular.