

# The Great Commandment<sup>1</sup>



Our relationship with God is vertical,<sup>2</sup>  
With neighbor, horizontal.<sup>3</sup>  
The two combine in perfect unity.

The Spirit of the Whole cannot set one part  
In antagonism with the other,  
Both are duly proportioned.

Taken together they image the sign of a cross,  
More than an ornament from heaven  
It conveys wisdom from long ago.

The tension between the two directions  
Must be centered else it causes separation,  
One direction acting alone can be fatal.

Create God in our own image,  
According to our personal needs,  
And the vertical fades away.

Mix selfish interests  
Into our relationships with neighbor  
And the horizontal dissipates.

Harmony is lost when antagonism  
Conflicts the fundamental principle  
Of the two acting as one.

This principle is the basis for the Law and prophets  
And its fulfillment brings  
The greatest of blessings.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 12:18-24    Matt 22:34-40

<sup>2</sup> Dt 6:4

<sup>3</sup> Lev 19:18, Rom 13:9, Gal 5:14, James 2:8