

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING

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FROM A LETTER TO THE RUSSIAN EDITOR

Of course, I consider this writing incomplete, and far from satisfying those demands which I myself would have made on it twenty years ago. But now I know that I shall not have the time to finish it, to bring it to a desired degree of lucidity ; at the same time I think that even in this form there will be found something which will be of use to men, and so print and edit it as it is. God willing, and if I shall be free from other work and shall have the strength for it, I shall return to this writing and shall try to make it simpler, clearer, and briefer.

Lev Tolstoy

September 2, 1897.

INTRODUCTION

I lived to my fiftieth year, thinking that the life of man which passes from birth to death is all his life, and that, therefore, man's aim is happiness in this mortal life, and I tried to receive this happiness ; but the longer I lived, the more obvious did it become to me that there is no such happiness, and that there can be none. The happiness which I was looking for did not come to me, and the one which I attained immediately stopped being happiness. At the same time my misfortunes grew more and more, and the inevitableness of death became more and more obvious, and I understood that after this senseless and unhappy life nothing was awaiting me but suffering, diseases, old age, and annihilation; I asked myself what this was for, and I received no answer. And I arrived at despair.

What some people told me and what I at times tried to convince myself of, that it was necessary to wish happiness not to oneself alone, but also to others, to friends, and to all men, did not satisfy me, in the first place, because I could not as sincerely desire happiness for other men as for myself, and, in the second

place, and chiefly, because other men were like myself doomed to unhappiness and death. And so all my sufferings about their good were in vain.

I began to despair. But I thought that my despair might be due to the fact that I was a peculiar man, and that other men knew why they lived and so did not arrive at despair.

And I began to observe other people, but the other people knew as little as I why they were living. Some tried to drown this ignorance in the bustle of life ; others persuaded themselves and others that they believed in different religions, which were impressed upon them in childhood ; but it was impossible for me to believe in what they believed, it was so stupid ; and many of them, it seemed to me, only pretended that they believed, whereas in the depth of their hearts they did not believe.

I was no longer able to continue bustling about : no amount of bustling concealed the question which constantly stood before me, and I could not begin anew to believe in the faith which I had been taught in my childhood and which, when I grew strong in mind, fell off me by itself. But the more I studied, the more did I convince myself that there could be no truth in it, that there was here nothing but hypocrisy and the selfish views of deceivers, and the weak-mindedness, stubbornness, and terror of the deceived.

To say nothing of the inner contradictions of this teaching, of its baseness and cruelty in recognizing God as punishing men with eternal torments, the chief thing which did not permit me to believe in this teaching was this, that I knew that side by side with this Orthodox Christian teaching, which asserted that it alone had the truth, there was another, a Catholic Christian, a third, a Lutheran, a fourth, a Reformed teaching, – and all other kinds of Christian teachings, – each of which asserted in regard to itself that it alone possessed the truth ; I knew also this, that side by side with these Christian teachings there existed also non-Christian religious teachings, – Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Confucianism, and others, – which similarly considered themselves alone in the truth and all other teachings in error.

' All these contradictions, insipidities, and cruelties I expounded in detail in a book, Critique of Dogmatic Theology, in which all the church dogmas of Orthodox Theology are analyzed, proposition after proposition. – Author's Note.

And so I could not return to the faith in which I had been instructed from my childhood, nor believe in any one of those which other nations professed, because in all of them were the same contradictions, insipidities, miracles, which denied all other faiths, and, above all else, the same deception of demanding blind faith in their teaching.

Thus I became convinced that in the existing faiths I should not find a solution to my question and an alleviation of my sufferings.

My despair was such that I was near to committing suicide.

But here I found salvation. This salvation was due to this, that I had from childhood retained the idea that in the Gospel there was an answer to my question. In this teaching, in the Gospel, in spite of all the distortions to which it has been subjected in the doctrine of the Christian church, I felt there was the truth. And I made a last effort : rejecting all the interpretations of the Gospel teaching, I began to read and study the gospels, and to penetrate their meaning ; and the more I penetrated the meaning of this book, the more something new became clear to me, something which did not at all resemble that which the Christian churches teach, but which answered the question of my life. And finally the answer became quite clear.

And this answer was not only clear, but also indubitable, in the first place, in that it completely coincided with the demands of my reason and of my heart ; in the second, in that when I understood it, I saw that this answer was not my exclusive interpretation of the Gospel, as might seem, and not even the exclusive revelation of Christ, but that this same answer to the question of life had more or less clearly been expressed by all the best men of humanity before and after the Gospel, beginning with Moses, Isaiah, Confucius, the ancient Greeks, Buddha, Socrates, and ending with Pascal, Spinoza, Fichte, Feuerbach, and all those often unnoticed and inglorious men who have thought and talked of the meaning of life in a sincere manner, without taking any teachings upon faith. Thus, in the knowledge which I drew from the truth of the gospels, I was not only not alone, but in agreement with all the best men of the past and the present. And I became firm in this truth, and was calmed after that, and have joyfully lived twenty years of my life, and joyfully approach death.

And this answer to the meaning of my life, which gave me complete peace and joy of life, I wish to communicate to men.

By my age and the condition of my health I stand with one foot in the grave, and so human considerations have no meaning for me, and if they had, I know that the exposition of my faith not only will not contribute to my well-being, nor to people's good opinion of me, but, on the contrary, can only agitate and embitter, not only the nonbelievers, who demand of me literary writings, and not discussions of faith, but also the believers who are provoked by all my religious writings and scold me for them. Besides, in all probability this writing will become known to people only after my death. And so I am not incited by personal advantage to do what I am doing, nor by fame, nor by worldly considerations, but only by the fear lest I may not fulfil what is wanted of me by Him who sent me into this world and to whom I expect to return any moment.

And so I beg all those who will read this, to read and understand my writing, by rejecting as I do all worldly considerations and having in view nothing but the eternal principle of truth and the good, by the will of which we came into this world and very soon will

disappear as bodily beings, and without haste or irritation to understand and discuss what I am giving utterance to, and in case of disagreement to correct me, not with contempt and hatred, but with sympathy and love ; and in case of a disagreement with me to remember that if I speak the truth, this truth is not mine, but God's, and that only fortuitously a part of it is passing through me, just as it passes through every one of us, when we find out the truth and communicate it to others.

THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING

PART THE FIRST

THE ANCIENT RELIGIONS AND THE NEW CONCEPT OF LIFE

I. THE ANCIENT RELIGIONS

1. At all times, since most remote antiquity, people have felt the wretchedness, insecurity, and meaninglessness of their existence and have tried to find a salvation from this wretchedness in the belief in God or gods who might free them from the various evils of this life and might in the future life give them that good which they wished for, and could not receive in this life.

2. And so, since most remote antiquity and among all the nations, there have existed all kinds of preachers who taught men about what God or the gods were who could save men, and about what ought to be done in order to please this God or these gods in order to receive a reward in this or in the future life.

3. Some religious teachings taught that this God is the sun and is personified in various animals; others taught that the gods are the heaven and the earth ; others – that God created the world and chose one favourite people from among all the nations ; others – that there are many gods, and that they take part in the

affairs of men; others – that God, having assumed a human form, came down upon earth.

And all these teachers, mixing truth with the lie, demanded from men, not only the desistance from acts which were considered bad and the performance of such as were considered good, but also sacraments, and sacrifices, and prayers, which more than anything else were to guarantee to people their good in this world and in the world to come.

II. THE INSUFFICIENCY OF THE ANCIENT RELIGIONS

4. But the longer people lived, the less and less did these religions satisfy the souls of men.

5. Men saw that, in the first place, happiness, after which they were striving, was not attained in this world, in spite of satisfying the demands of God or of the gods.

6. In the second place, in consequence of the dissemination of enlightenment, the confidence in what the religious teachers preached about God, about the future life, and about the rewards in it, grew weaker and weaker, since it did not coincide with the more enlightened conceptions of the world.

7. If formerly men could be unhampered in their belief that God created the world six thousand years ago, that the earth is the centre of the universe, that under the earth there is hell, that God came down upon earth and then flew back to heaven, and so forth, they can no longer believe in it, because they know for sure that the world has existed, not six thousand, but hundreds of thousands of years, that the earth is not the centre of the universe, but only a very small planet in comparison with other celestial bodies, and they know that there can be nothing under the earth, since the earth is a globe; they know that it is impossible to fly to heaven, because there is no heaven, but only a seeming vault of heaven.

8. In the third place, and chiefly, the confidence in these various teachings was undermined by this, that men, entering into closer interrelations, learned that in every country the religious teachers preach their particular doctrine, recognizing their own as true, and rejecting all the others.

And men, knowing this, naturally drew the conclusion from it that not one of these doctrines is more true than any other, and that, therefore, none of them can be accepted as an undoubted and infallible truth.

III. THE NEED FOR A NEW RELIGION, TO CORRESPOND WITH THE DEGREE OF HUMANITY'S ENLIGHTENMENT

9. The unattainableness of happiness in this world, the progressing enlightenment of humanity, and the intercourse of people among themselves, in consequence of which they learned of the religions of other nations, had this effect, that the confidence of people in the religions transmitted to them grew weaker and weaker.

10. At the same time, the need of explaining the meaning of life and of solving the contradiction between the striving after happiness and life on the one hand, and the ever growing consciousness of the inevitableness of misery and death on the other, became more and more insistent.

11. Man wishes the good for himself, sees in this the meaning of his life, and, the longer he lives, the more he sees that the good is impossible for him ; man wishes for life, for its continuation, and sees that he and everything existing around him are doomed to inevitable destruction and disappearance ; man possesses reason and seeks for a rational explanation of the phenomena of life, and does not find any rational explanation for his own life or for that of another being.

12. If in antiquity the consciousness of this contradiction between human life, demanding the good and its own continuation, and the inevitableness of death and suffering was accessible to the best minds only, such as Solomon, Buddha, Socrates, Lao-tse, and others,

this has of late become a truth which is accessible to all men ; and so the solution of this contradiction has become more necessary than ever.

13. And exactly at a time when the solution of the contradiction between the striving after the good and life and the consciousness of their impossibility became exceedingly vexing and necessary for humanity, it was given to men through the Christian teaching in its true significance.

IV. WHAT THE SOLUTION OF THE CONTRADICTION OF LIFE AND THE EXPLANATION OF ITS MEANING, AS GIVEN BY THE CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE IN ITS TRUE SIGNIFICANCE, CONSISTS IN

14. The ancient religions endeavoured, with their assurances about the existence of God the creator, the provider, and the redeemer, to conceal the contradiction of the human life ; but the Christian teaching, on the contrary, shows men this contradiction in all its force ; it shows them what it ought to be, and from the recognition of the contradiction draws the solution of it. The contradiction consists in the following :

15. Indeed, on the one hand man is an animal, so long as he lives in the body, and on the other he is a spiritual being, denying all the animal demands of man.

16. Man lives during the first part of his life without knowing that he lives, so that it is not he who lives, but through him that life force which lives in everything we know.

17. Man begins to live only when he knows that he is living ; and he knows that he is living, when he knows that he wishes the good for himself, and that the other beings wish the same. This knowledge is given to him by his awakened reason.

18. When he learns that he lives and wishes the good for himself,

and that the other beings wish the same, he inevitably learns also this, that the good which he wishes for his separate being is inaccessible to him, and that instead of the good which he wishes there await him inevitable suffering and death. The same await all the other beings. There appears the contradiction, for which man seeks a solution with which his life, such as it is, may have a rational meaning. He wants life to continue to be what it was previous to the awakening of his reason, that is, completely animal, or that it may be entirely spiritual.

19. Man wants to be an animal or an angel, but can be neither the one nor the other.

20. And here appears the solution of the contradiction, which is given by the Christian teaching. It tells man that he is neither an animal, nor an angel, but an angel born of an animal, – a spiritual being born of the animal, – and that our sojourn in this world is nothing but this birth.

V. WHAT DOES THE BIRTH OF THE SPIRITUAL BEING CONSIST IN ?

21. The moment man awakens to rational consciousness, this consciousness tells him that he wishes the good ; and since his rational consciousness has awakened in his separate being, it seems to him that his desire for the good has reference to his separate existence.

22. But the same rational consciousness, which shows him to himself as a separate being wishing his good, shows him also that this separate being does not correspond to that desire for the good and for life which he ascribes to it ; he sees that this separate being can have neither the good nor life.

23. "What, then, has the true life?" he asks himself, and he sees that neither he nor the beings that surround him have the true life, but only that he wishes for the good.

24. Having learned this, man ceases to recognize his bodily and mortal existence as separate from the rest, but recognizes that spiritual and so non-mortal existence, inseparable from the rest, which is revealed to him by his rational consciousness.

In this consists the birth of the new spiritual being in man.

VI. WHAT IS THAT BEING WHICH IS BORN IN MAN?

25. The being which is revealed to man by his rational consciousness is the desire for the good, the same desire for the good which even before formed the aim of his life, but with this difference, that the desire for the good of the former being had reference to the separate bodily being alone, and was not conscious of itself, but the present desire for the good is conscious of itself and so does not refer to anything separate, but to everything in existence.

26. During the first period of the awakening of reason it appeared to man that the desire for the good which he recognizes in himself has reference only to the body in which it is enclosed.

27. But the clearer and firmer reason became, the clearer it grew that the true being, man's true ego, the moment it becomes conscious of itself, is not his body, which has no true life, but the desire for the good in itself, in other words, the desire for the good for everything in existence.

28. But the desire for the good for everything in existence is what gives life to everything in existence, that which we call God.

29. Thus the being which is revealed to man by his consciousness, the being which is being born, is what gives life to everything in existence, – is God.

VII. GOD, ACCORDING TO THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING COGNIZED BY MAN IN HIMSELF

30. According to the former doctrines about the cognition of God, man had to believe what other people told him about God, about how God created the world and men, and then made himself manifest to men ; but according to the Christian teaching, man by means of his con-sciousness cognizes God immediately in himself.

31. In himself consciousness shows to man that the essence of his life is the desire for the good for everything in existence, something inexplicable and inexpressible, and at the same time something most near and comprehensible to man.

32. The beginning of the desire for the good appeared in man in the beginning, as the life of his separate animal existence : then as the life of those beings whom he loved ; then, from the time that the rational consciousness awoke in him, it appeared as the desire for the good for everything in existence. But the desire for the good for everything in existence is the beginning of all life, is love, is God, as it says in the Gospel that God is love.

VIII. GOD, ACCORDING TO THE CIIRISTIAN TEACHING COGNIZED BY MAN OUTSIDE HIMSELF

33. But outside of God as recognized, according to the Christian teaching, in oneself, as a desire for the good for everything in existence, as love, man, according to the Christian teaching, recognizes God also outside of himself in everything in existence.

34. While recognizing in his separate body God's spiritual and indivisible existence, and seeing the presence of the same God in everything living, man cannot help but ask himself why God, a spiritual, one, and indivisible God, has enclosed himself in the separate bodies of the beings and in the body of the separate man.

35. Why has the spiritual and one being, as it were, divided itself up in itself ? Why has the divine essence been imprisoned in conditions of separation and corporeality ? Why is the immortal contained in the mortal ? bound up with it ?

36. There can be but one answer: there is a higher will, whose aims are inaccessible to man. And it is this will which placed man and everything in existence under the conditions in which all is. It is this cause which for some aims, that are incomprehensible to man, enclosed itself,— the desire for the good for everything in existence, — love, — in beings distinct from the rest of the world, that is, that very God whom man recognizes in himself, who is recognized by man without himself.

Thus God, according to the Christian religion, is that essence of life which man recognizes in himself and in everything in the world, as the desire for the good ; and, at the same time, that cause through which this essence is enclosed in conditions of separate and corporeal life.

God, according to the Christian teaching, is that father, as is said in the Gospel, who has sent into the world his son who is like him, in order to fulfil in it his will,— the good of everything in existence.

IX. THE CONFIRMATION OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF LIFE BY THE EXTERNAL CONFIRMATION OF GOD.

37. God is manifested in rational man as the desire for the good for everything in existence, and in the world, in separate beings, each of which is striving after its good.

38. Though it is not known, and cannot be known, to man why it was necessary for the one spiritual being, God, to manifest himself in rational man as the desire for the good for everything in existence and in the separate beings as the desire for the good for each one in particular, man cannot help but see that both reduce themselves to one nearest, definite, accessible, and joyous aim for man.

39. This aim is revealed to man through observation, and tradition, and reflection. Observation shows that all motion in the lives of men – in so far as it is known to them – consists only in this, that formerly divided and mutually hostile beings and men are more and more being united and bound with one another in concord and interaction. Tradition shows man that all the sages of the world have taught humanity must from division pass to union, that, as the prophet says, all men are to be taught by God, and that the spears and swords are to be forged into pruning-hooks and ploughshares, and that, as Christ said, all shall be united, as I am one with my Father. Reflection shows man that the greatest good of men, toward which all men strive, can be attained only with the greatest union and concord of men.

40. And so, although the final end of the life of the world is concealed from man, he none the less knows wherein consists the nearest work of the life of the world, in which he is called to take a part : this work is the substitution of union and concord for division and discord.

41. Observation, tradition, reason show man that in this consists God's work, in which he is called to take part, and the inner striving of the spiritual being which is being born in him draws him toward the same. .

42. The inner striving of the spiritual being which is being born in man is only this : the increase of love in himself. And it is this increase of love which alone cooperates with the work that is being done in the world, – the substitution of union and concord for disunion and struggle, – what in the Christian teaching is called the establishment of the kingdom of God.

43. So, if there could even be any doubt as to the truth of the Christian definition of the meaning of life, the coincidence of man's inner striving, according to the Christian teaching, with the course of the whole world's life, would confirm this truth.

X. IN WHAT DOES THE LIFE IN THIS WORLD, AS REVEALED TO MAN BY THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING, CONSIST?

44. Being born into the new life, man is conscious that in his existence, which is separate from all other beings, there is contained the desire for the good, not for himself alone, but also for everything in existence, – love.

45. If this desire for the good for everything in existence, this love, were not found in the separate being, it would not know of itself, and would remain always equal to itself : but being contained within the limits of the separate being, man, it recognizes itself and its limits, and strives to tear asunder what binds it.

46. From its property, love, the desire for the good, strives to embrace everything in existence. Naturally, it expands its limits through love, – at first to the family, to wife and children, then to friends and countrymen ; but love is not satisfied with this, and strives to embrace everything in existence.

47. In this unceasing expansion of the limits of the sphere of love which forms the essence of the birth of the spiritual being, is contained the essence of man's true life in this world. Man's whole sojourn in this world, from birth until death, is nothing but the birth in him of the spiritual being. This unceasing birth is what in the Christian teaching is called the true life.

48. We may imagine that what forms our body, which now presents itself as a separate being, which we love preferably above all other beings, in its former, lower life was only a collection of beloved objects, which love united into one in such a way that in this life we feel it as our own self ; and that similarly our present love for what is accessible to us will in the future life form one indivisible whole, which will be as near to us as now our body is (in your Father's house are many mansions).

XI. IN WHAT WAY DOES THE TRUE LIFE, AS REVEALED BY THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING, DIFFER FROM THE PREVIOUS LIFE ?

49. The difference between the personal life and the true life consists in this, that the aim of the personal life consists in the increase of the enjoyments of the external life and its continuation, and this aim, in spite of all efforts, will never be attained, because man has no power over external conditions, which interfere with enjoyment, or over all kinds of miseries, which may beset one at any time ; but the aim of the true life, which consists in the expansion of the sphere of love and its increase, cannot be interfered with in any way, since all external causes, such as violence, diseases, sufferings, which interfere with the attainment of the aims of the personal life, contribute to the attainment of the aim of the spiritual life.

50. The difference is the same as between the labourers who, having been sent to the master's vineyard, as it says in the Gospel parable, decided that the vineyard belonged to them, and those who recognize themselves as labourers, and do what the master has commanded them.

PART THE SECOND

OF SINS

XII. WHAT HINDERS MAN FROM LIVING THE TRUE LIFE ?

51. In order to fulfil his mission man must increase love in himself and manifest it in the world, – and this increase of love and its manifestation in the world is what is needed for the accomplishment of God's work. But what can man do for the manifestation of love ?

52. The basis of man's life is the desire for the good for everything in existence. Love in man is contained within the limits of the separate being, and so naturally tends to expand its limits ; consequently man has nothing to do in order to manifest love in

himself : it strives itself after its manifestation, and man needs but remove the obstacles to its progress. In what, then, do these obstacles consist ?

53. The obstacles which hinder man from manifesting love are contained in man's body, in his separation from other beings; in this, that, beginning his life with babyhood, during which time he lives only the animal life of his separate existence, he even later on, when reason is awakened in him, can never fully renounce the striving after the good for his separate existence, and so commits acts which are contrary to love.

XIII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OBSTACLES TO THE MANIFESTATION OF LOVE

54. The desire for the good for everything in existence, – love, – striving after its manifestation, encounters ob-

stacles to this manifestation in this, that man's reason, which sets love free, does not awaken in man at his appearance in the world, but after a certain time, when he has already acquired certain habits of the animal life. Why so ?

55. Man cannot help asking himself this : Why is the spiritual being, love, enclosed in man's separate being ? And to this question various teachings have replied variously. Some, the pessimistic, answer by saying that the shutting up of the spiritual being in man's body is a mistake which has to be corrected by the destruction of the body, by the destruction of the animal life. Other teachings answer by saying that the assumption of the existence of a spiritual being is a mistake which has to be corrected by recognizing only the body and its laws as actually existing. Neither teaching solves the contradiction ; they only fail to recognize, one – the legality of the body, the other – the legality of the spirit. It is only the Christian teaching that solves it.

56. In reply to the advice given by the tempter to Christ to destroy his life, if it is not possible for him according to his will to satisfy all the demands of his animal nature, Christ says that it is not right for us to oppose the will of God, who sent us into the

world in the form of separate beings, but that in this life of the separate being we must serve one God only.

57. According to the Christian teaching, it is necessary for the solution of the contradiction of life not to destroy the life of the separate being itself, which would be contrary to the will of God who sent it, and not to submit to the demands of the animal life of each separate being, which would be contrary to the spiritual principle forming man's true ego, but it is necessary for me to serve the one God in the body in which this true human ego is enclosed.

58. Man's true ego is the infinite love which forms the basis of his life, and which lives in him and constantly strives to be increased. This love is contained within the limits of the animal life of the separate being, and always strives to be liberated from it.

59. In this liberation of the spiritual being from the animal personality, in this birth of the spiritual being lies the true life of each separate man and of all humanity.

60. Love in each separate man and in humanity is like steam which is compressed in a boiler: the steam, striving to expand, pushes the pistons and produces work.

Just as there have to be the obstacles of the walls, in order that the steam may do its work, so love, to produce its work, must have the obstacle of the limits of the separate being in which it is contained.

XIV. WHAT MUST MAN NOT DO, IN ORDER THAT HE MAY LIVE THE TRUE LIFE?

61. During his infancy, childhood, and sometimes even later, man lives as an animal, doing God's will, which is cognized by him as

the desire for the good for his separate being, and knows no other life.

62. Awakening to the rational consciousness, man, though knowing that his life is in the spiritual existence, continues to feel himself in the separate body, and, from his acquired habit of the animal life, commits acts which have for their aim the good of the separate personality and which are contrary to love.

63. Acting in this way, man deprives himself of the good of the true life and does not attain that aim of the good of the separate existence toward which he is striving, and so, acting thus, he commits sins. In these sins are contained the inherent obstacles to the manifestation of love in man.

64. These obstacles are increased by this, that men who lived before and committed sins transmit the habits and manners of their sins to future generations.

65. Thus every man, both because in his childhood he acquired the habit of the personal life of the separate being, and because these habits of the personal life are transmitted to him by tradition from his ancestors, is always subject to sins which interfere with the manifestation of love.

XV. THREE KINDS OF SIN

66. There are three kinds of sins which impede love : (a) sins which arise from the ineradicable tendency of man, while he is living in the body, toward the good of his personality, – inborn, natural sins; (b) sins which arise from the tradition of human institutions and customs, which are directed to the increase of the good of separate persons, – inherited, social sins ; and (c) sins which arise from the tendency of the separate man toward a greater and greater increase of the good of his separate being, – personal, invented sins.

67. Inborn sins consist in this, that men assume the good to lie in the preservation and increase of the animal good of one's own personality, but every activity which is directed to the increase of the animal good of one's own personality is such an inborn sin.

68. Inherited sins are sins which are committed by people when making use of the existing methods for the increase of the good of the separate personality, as established by men who lived before them. Every use of institutions and customs established for the good of one's personality is such an inherited sin.

69. Personal invented sins are such as people commit, inventing, besides the inherited methods, new means for the increase of the good of their separate personality. Every newly invented means for the increase of the good of one's separate being is a personal sin.

XVI. THE DIVISION OF THE SINS

70. There are six sins which impede the manifestation of love in men.

71. The sin of lust, which consists in preparing for oneself pleasures from the gratification of necessities.

72. The sin of idleness, which consists in freeing oneself from labour necessary for the gratification of necessities.

73. The sin of greed, which consists in preparing for oneself the possibility of the gratification of one's necessities in the future.

74. The sin of the love of power, which consists in subjecting one's like to oneself.

75. The sin of fornication, which consists in preparing for oneself enjoyments from the gratification of the sexual passion.

76. The sin of intoxication, which consists in producing an artificial excitation of one's bodily and mental forces.

XVII. THE SIN OF LUST

77. Man has to satisfy his bodily needs, and in the unconscious state he, like any animal, fully satisfies them without restraining or intensifying them, and in this gratification of his need he finds his good.

78. But having awakened to a rational consciousness, it appears to man at first that the good of his separate being is contained in the gratification of his needs, and he invents means for the increase of enjoyment from the gratification of his needs, and tries to maintain the means, invented by men who lived before, for an agreeable gratification of needs, and himself invents new, still more agreeable means for their gratification. In this consists the sin of lust.

79. When a man eats, without being hungry, when he dresses himself, not in order to defend himself against the cold, or builds a house, not in order to seek shelter in it from bad weather, but in order to increase the pleasure from the gratification of needs, he commits the inborn sin of lust.

80. But when a man is born and brought up in habits of superabundance in drink, food, raiment, habitation, and continues to use his superabundance, maintaining his habits, he commits the inherited sin of lust.

81. And when a man, living in luxury, invents still more new and

agreeable means for the gratification of needs, such as are not employed by men around him, and in the place of his former simple food and drink introduces new, more refined ones, and in the place of his former raiment which covered his body provides himself with new, more beautiful garments, and instead of the former small, simple house builds himself a new one, with now adornments, and so forth, – he commits the personal sin of lust.

82. The sin of lust, whether inborn or inherited or personal, consists in this, that, striving after the good of his separate being, by means of the gratification of his needs, man, by intensifying these needs, impedes his birth to the new spiritual life.

83. Besides, the man who acts thus does not attain the aim toward which he is striving, liecause every intensification of his needs makes less probable the possibility of the gratification of lust and weakens the enjoyment from the gratification itself. The more frequently a man quenches his thirst, the more refined the food used by him is, the less enjoyment will he get from his eating. The same is true in relation to the gratification of all other animal needs.

XVIII. THE SIN OF IDLENESS

84. A man, like an animal, must exercise his strength. This strength is naturally directed to the preparation of objects necessary for the gratification of his needs. After the labour directed upon this, man, like any animal, needs rest.

85. In his unconscious state man, like an animal, while preparing for himself objects that are necessary for life, alternates labour with rest, and in this natural rest finds his good.

86. But having awakened to a rational consciousness, man separates the labour from the rest and, finding his rest more agreeable, tries to diminish his labour and to prolong his rest, compelling, through force or cunning, other people to serve his needs. In this consists the sin of idleness.

87. When a man, employing the labours of others, rests when he is still able to work, he commits the inborn sin of idleness.

88. But when a man is born and lives in such a state that he makes use of the labours of other men, without being put to the necessity of working himself, and maintains such an order of things, without working, making use of the labours of others, he commits the inherited sin of idleness.

89. But when a man, having been born and living among men who are accustomed without labour to exploit the work of other men, himself invents means for freeing himself from labours which he formerly performed himself, and imposes this work upon others; when a man, who used to clean his own clothes, makes another person do it, or who used to write letters himself, or kept his own accounts or himself attended to his affairs, makes others do all this, and himself uses his free time for rest or amusement, he commits the personal sin of idleness.

90. The fact that each man cannot do everything for himself, and that the division of labour frequently perfects and lightens labour, cannot serve as a justification of the liberation of oneself from labour in general or from hard labour, by substituting what is easy for it. Every production of labour which man employs demands from him a corresponding labour, and not a lightening of his labour or a complete liberation from it.

91. The sin of idleness, whether inborn, or inherited, or personal, consists in this, that, by stopping his labour and exploiting the labour of others, man does what is contrary to what he is destined to do, since the true good is acquired only through the activity of service.

92. Besides, a man who acts like this does not even attain what he is striving after, since the enjoyment from rest is obtained only after work. And the less work there is, the less there are enjoyments of rest.

XIX. THE SIN OF GREED

93. The position of a man in the world is such that his bodily existence is made secure by general laws, to which man is subject together with all animals. Surrendering himself to his instinct, man must work, and the natural aim of his work is the gratification of needs, and this work always secures his existence with a surplus. Man is a social being, and the fruits of his work accumulate so much in society that, if there were not the sin of greed, every man who cannot work could always have what he needs for the gratification of his needs. And so the Gospel utterance about not taking any thought of the morrow, but living as the fowls of the air, is not a metaphor, but the assertion of an existing law of every animal social life. Even so it says in the Koran that there is not one animal in the world to whom God does not give sustenance.

94. But man, even after his awakening to rational consciousness, continues to imagine that his life consists in the good of his separate being, and since this being lives in time, man cares for the special security of the gratification of his needs in this future for himself and for his family.

95. But the special security in the future of the gratification of needs for himself and for his family is possible only by withholding from other people the objects of the needs, what is called property. And it is to the acquisition, retention, and increase of property that man directs his forces. In this consists the sin of greed.

96. When a man regards the food prepared or received by him for the morrow, or the raiment, or the cow for the winter for himself or for his family as exclusively his own, he commits the inborn crime of greed.

97. But when man with awakened consciousness finds himself under such conditions that he considers certain objects as exclusively his own, although these objects are not needed for the security of his life, and withholds these objects from others, he commits the inherited sin of greed.

98. And when man, who already has the objects which he wants for the

security of his needs in his future and in the future of his family, and owns objects which are superfluous for the support of his life, keeps acquiring new objects, and withholds them from others, he commits the personal sin of greed.

99. The sin of greed, whether inborn, or inherited, or personal, consists in this, that, trying to secure in the future the good of his separate being, and so acquiring objects and withholding them from others, man does what is contrary to what he is destined for; instead of serving men, he takes from them what is needed.

100. Besides, a man who acts thus never attains the aim toward which he is striving, since the future is not in man's power, and man may die at any moment. But by wasting on the unknown and the possibly unrealizable future, he obviously commits an error.

XX. THE SIN OF LOVE OF POWER

101. Man, like the animal, is placed under such conditions that every gratification of his needs causes him to enter into a struggle with other beings.

102. Man's animal life is sustained only at the cost of other beings. Struggle is the natural property and law of the animal life. And man, living an animal life previous to the awakening of consciousness in him, finds the good in this struggle.

103. But when in man there awakens the rational consciousness, it appears to him during the first of this awakening that his good is increased if he vanquishes and conquers as many beings as possible, and he uses his strength for the subjugation of men and beings. In this consists the sin of the love of power.

104. When man, in order to defend his personal good, considers it necessary to struggle, and struggles against those people and beings who want to subjugate him, he commits the inborn sin of the love of

power.

105. But when man is born and brought up under certain conditions of power, whether he be born a son of a king, a nobleman, a merchant, or a rich peasant, and, remaining in this position, does not put a stop to this struggle, which is at times imperceptible, but always necessary for the maintenance of one's position, he commits the inherited sin of the love of power.

106. And when man, finding himself in certain constant conditions of struggle, and wishing to increase his good, does enter also into new conflicts with men and other beings, wishing to increase his power ; when he attacks his neighbour, in order to take possession of his property, his lands, or tries, by obtaining rights, a diploma, a rank, to occupy a higher position than he is occupying, or, wishing to increase his estate, enters into a struggle with his rivals and labourers, or enters into a struggle with other nations, he commits the personal sin of the love of power.

107. The sin of love of power, whether inborn, or inherited, or personal, consists in this, that, using his strength for the attainment of the good of his separate being by means of struggle, man does what is directly opposed to what is proper to the true life. Instead of increasing love in himself, that is, of destroying the barriers which separate him from other beings, he increases them.

108. Besides, by entering into a struggle with men and beings, man obtains the very opposite to what he is striving after. By entering into the struggle, he increases the probability that other beings will attack him, and that, instead of subjugating other beings, he will be vanquished by them. The more a man is successful in the struggle, the more tension is demanded of him in this struggle.

XXI. THE SIN OF FORNICATION

109. In man is implanted the need for preserving the species, – the sexual need, and man in his animal state, in surrendering himself to

it, and cohabiting, thus fulfils his destiny, and in this fulfilment of his destiny finds his good.

110. But with the awakening of consciousness, man imagines that the gratification of this need may increase the good of his separate being, and he enters into sexual intercourse, not for the purpose of continuing the race, but of increasing his personal good. In this consists the sin of fornication.

111. The sin of fornication differs from all other sins in this, that while with all other sins a full continence from inborn sin is impossible, and only a diminution of the inborn sin is possible, in the sin of fornication a full continence from sin is possible. This is due to the fact that complete abstinence from the gratification of the needs of personality, from food, raiment, shelter, destroys the personality itself, just as the personality is destroyed by the absence of all rest, of all property, and of all struggle, but the continence from the sexual need – chastity, of one or of several – does not destroy the human race, what the sexual need is to support, since the continence of one, of several, and of many men from sexual intercourse does not destroy the human race. Thus the gratification of the sexual need is not obligatory for all men : to each individual man is given the possibility of continence from this need.

112. Man is, as it were, presented with the choice of two ways of serving God : either, remaining free from the marital life and its consequences, with his life to perform in this world everything man is destined by God to fulfil, or, having recognized his weakness, to transmit part of the fulfilment, or, at least, the possibility of the fulfilment of what is unfulfilled, to his begotten, nurtured, and reared posterity.

113. From this peculiarity of the sexual need, which is distinct from all the rest, there result two different degrees of the sin of fornication, according to which of the two destinations man chooses for himself.

114. With the first destination, when man wants, remaining chaste, to devote all his strength to the service of God, every sexual intercourse will be a sin of fornication, even though it have for its aim the begetting and bringing up of children ; the purest and chastest marriage will be such an inborn sin for the man who has chosen the destination of virginity.

115. An inherited sin for such a man will be every continuation of such sexual relations, even though in marriage, which have for their aim the begetting and bringing up of children ; a liberation from the inherited sin will for such a man be the cessation of sexual intercourse.

116. A personal, invented sin for such a man will be the entrance into sexual relation with another person than the one to whom he is married.

117. In choosing as his destination the service of God through the continuation of the race, man's inborn sin will consist in every sexual intercourse which has not the continuation of the race for its aim, as is the case in prostitution, accidental unions, and in marriages contracted from calculation, connections, and love.

118. An inherited sin for a man who has chosen as his destination the continuation of the race will be a sexual intercourse from which no children can be born, or in cases where the parents cannot or do not wish to bring up the children who are born from their union.

119. But when a person, having chosen the second destination of serving the continuation of the race, be it a man or a woman, who is already in sexual intercourse with one person, enters into such an intercourse with other persons, not for the production of a family, but for the increase of enjoyment from sexual intercourse, or tries to prevent childbirth/or abandons himself to unnatural vices, he commits the personal sin of fornication.

120. Sin, that is, the error of fornication, for a man who has chosen the destination of virginity, consists in this, that man, who might have chosen a higher destination and used all his forces in the service of God, and consequently for the continuation of love and the attainment of the highest good, descends to a lower stage of life and is deprived of this good.

121. And for a man who has chosen the destination of the continuation of the race, the sin, the error, of fornication consists in this, that, depriving themselves of the begetting of

children, or, at least, of domestic communion, people deprive themselves of the highest good of the sexual life.

122. Besides, people who try to increase the good from the sexual intercourse, as in all the gratifications of needs, diminish the natural enjoyment in proportion as they abandon themselves to this lust.

XXII. THE SIN OF INTOXICATION

123. In his natural state it is proper for man, as for any animal, to arrive through external causes at a condition of excitation, and this temporary excitation gives the good to a man who is in this animal condition.

124. But having awakened to consciousness, man notices the causes that lead him to this condition of excitation, and tries to reproduce and intensify these causes, for the purpose of evoking this condition in himself ; and for this purpose he prepares for himself and takes into his stomach or inhales substances which produce this excitation, or creates for himself the surroundings, or makes those peculiar intensified motions, which bring him into that state. In this does the sin of intoxication consist.

125. The peculiarity of this sin consists in this, that while all those sins only distract the man born to the new life from the activity which is proper to him, by increasing in him his tendency to prolong his animal life, and do not weaken or impair the activity of reason, the sin of intoxication not only weakens the activity of the mind, but for a time, and often for all times, destroys it ? so that a man who gets himself into an excited state through smoking, wine, certain solemn surroundings, or intensified motions, as the dervishes and other religious fanatics do, under these conditions frequently not only performs acts which are proper to animals, but even such as, by their madness and cruelty, are not proper to animals.

126. The natural inborn sin of intoxication consists in this, that,

having received pleasure from a certain condition of excitation, whether it be produced by food or drink, surroundings which affect vision or hearing, or by certain motions, a man does not abstain from that which produces this intoxication. When a man, without noticing it himself, excites himself without intention, eats sweetmeats, drinks tea, kvas, or mash, adorns himself or his habitation, or dances, or plays, he commits the inborn, natural sin of intoxication.

127. But when a man is born and brought up in certain habits of intoxication, in the habits of the use of tobacco, wine, opium, in habits of solemn spectacles, – public, domestic, ecclesiastic, – or in the habits of certain kinds of motions, gymnastics, dancing, obeisances, leaps, and so forth, and keeps up these habits, he commits the inherited sin of intoxication.

128. And when a man is brought up in certain habits of periodic intoxication, and is used to them, and, by imitation of others or through his own invention, introduces new methods of intoxication, – after tobacco begins to smoke opium, after wine drinks whiskey, introduces new festive celebrations with a new intensified effect of pictures, dances, light, music, or introduces new methods of exciting bodily motions, of gymnastics, of bicycle riding, and so forth, he commits the personal sin of intoxication.

129. The sin of intoxication, whether inborn, or inherited, or personal, consists in this, that a man, instead of using all the power of his attention in removing everything which may bedim his consciousness, that reveals to him the meaning of his true life, tries, on the contrary, to weaken and to shroud this consciousness with external means of excitation.

130. Besides, a man who acts in this manner attains the opposite to what he has been striving after. The excitation which is produced by external means weakens with every new method of excitation and, in spite of the intensification of the methods of excitation, which

destroys health, the ability of the excitation grows weaker and weaker.

XXIII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SINS

131. Sins serve as an impediment to the manifestation of love.

132. But not only do sins serve as an impediment in the manifestation of love ; they also produce in men the greatest calamities. The calamities produced by sins are of two kinds : one class of calamities are those from which men suffer who are subject to sin ; the others are those from which others suffer. The calamities which befall those who commit sins are: effeminacy, satiety, tedium, despondency, apathy, care, terror, suspicion, malice, envy, fury, jealousy, impotence, and all kinds of agonizing diseases. The calamities from which others suffer are: thieving, robbery, torture, riots, murder.

133. If there were no sins, there would be no poverty, nor satiety, nor dissipation, nor thieving, nor robbery, nor murder, nor executions, nor wars.

134. If there were no sin of hoarding, there would be no want on the part of the dispossessed, no tedium and no fear on the part of those who live luxuriously, no useless loss of force for the safeguarding of the pleasures of those who live luxuriously, no debasement of the spiritual forces of the needy, no constant, concealed struggle between both, which begets envy and hatred in the one class, and contempt and terror in the other; and this enmity would not from time to time break forth in violence, murders, and revolutions.

135. If there were no sin of idleness, there would not be, on the one side, any men who are exhausted from work, and on the other, men who are distorted through inaction and constant amusements; there would be no division of men into two inimical camps, of men filled to satiety and of the hungry, of the idle and of those who are worn out by work.

136. If there were no sin of ownership, there would not be all those acts of violence which are committed by one class of men on the other for the purpose of acquiring and retaining objects; there would be no thieving, robbery, incarceration, exile, hard labour, and executions.

137. If there were no sin of power, there would be none of those enormous, useless wastes of human force in vanquishing one another and for the support of power ; there would be no pride and no dulling of the victors, and no flattery, deceit, and hatred of the conquered ; there would be no divisions of family, classes, nations, and the disputes, quarrels, murders, and wars, which result from them.

138. If there were no sin of fornication, there would be no slavery of woman, no torture of woman, and, at the same time, no spoiling and no corruption of her; there would be no disputes, quarrels, murders from jealousy, no reduction of woman to the level of an instrument of the gratification of the flesh, no prostitution ; there would be no unnatural vices ; there would be no weakening of bodily and spiritual forces, none of those terrible diseases, from which men suffer now; there would be no waifs and no infanticide.

139. If there were no intoxication by means of tobacco, wine, opium, exciting intensified motions, and festivities, there would be no dissipation of men in sins. There would not be one hundredth part of the disputes, quarrels, robberies, acts of lust, murders, which take place now, especially under the influence of the weakening of men's spiritual forces ; there would not be that useless waste of energy, not only on unnecessary, but on directly harmful acts: there would not be any dulling and disfigurement of men, often the best, who pass through life without being of any use for others, and a burden to themselves.

PART THE THIRD

OF OFFENCES

XXIV. THE OFFENCES

140. The pernicious consequences of sins for the separate

individuals who commit them, as also for the society of men, among whom the sins are committed, are so obvious that from remotest antiquity men have seen the calamities which arise from them, and have issued laws against the sins and have punished them : there was a prohibition against stealing, killing, committing debauch, slandering, getting drunk, but in spite of the prohibition and the punishments, men have continued to sin, ruining their own lives and those of their nearest friends.

141. This is due to the fact that for the justification of the sins there exist false reflections, from which it follows that there are certain exclusive circumstances according to which sins are not only venial, but also necessary. These false justifications are what is called the offences.

142. Offence is in Greek *a/cdvSaXov*, which means noose, trap. Indeed, an offence is a trap into which a man is enticed by the similitude of the good, and, having fallen into it, he perishes in it. For this reason it says in the Gospel that the offences must enter into the world, but woe to the world from the offences, and woe to him through whom they enter.

143. It is because of these offences of the false justifi-

cations of the sins that men do not mend from their sins, but continue to sink in them and, what is worse than anything, educate their young generations in them.

XXV. THE ORIGIN OF THE OFFENCES

144. The birth of man to the new life does not take place at once, but gradually, just like carnal birth : the efforts of birth alternate with arrests and returns to the former condition, and the manifestations of the spiritual life – with the manifestations of the animal life; man now abandons himself to the service of God and

in this service sees the good, and now returns to the personal life and seeks the good of his separate being and commits sins.

145. Having committed these sins, man recognizes the non-correspondence of the act with the demands of his conscience. So long as man only wishes to commit a sin, this non-correspondence is not completely clear ; but as soon as the sin is committed, the non-correspondence is made obvious, and man wishes to destroy it.

146. The non-correspondence of the act and the position into which man enters in consequence of sin may be destroyed only by using reason for the justification of the act committed and the position.

147. The contradiction of the sin with the demands of the spiritual life can be justified only by explaining the sin by the demands of the spiritual life. This is precisely what men do, and this mental activity .is that which is called an offence.

148. Ever since there has appeared in men the consciousness of the contradiction between their animal and their spiritual life, ever since men began to commit sins, they began to invent their justification, that is, offences, and so there have established themselves among men traditions of ever the same justifications of sins, that is, of offences, so that a man does not need to invent his own justifications for his sins, – they were invented before him, and he needs only accept ready, established offences.

XXVI. THE DIVISION OF THE OFFENCES

149. There are five offences which ruin men: the personal offence, or the offence of preparation ; the family offence, or the offence of the continuation of the race ; the offence of work, affairs, or of profit ; the offence of companionship, or of loyalty ; the offence of state, or of the common good.

150. The personal offence, or the offence of preparation, consists

in this, that a man, committing a sin, justifies himself by saying that he is preparing himself for an activity which in the future is to be useful to men.

151. The family offence, or the offence of the continuation of the race, consists in this, that man, committing sins, justifies them as being for the good of his children.

152. The offence of work, affairs, or of profit, consists in this, that a man justifies his sins by the necessity of conducting and finishing an affair which he has begun and which is useful for men.

153. The offence of companionship, or of loyalty, consists in this, that man justifies his sins as being for the good of those men with whom he has entered into exclusive relations.

154. The offence of state, or of the common good, consists in this, that men justify the sins committed by them as being for the good of many men, of the nation, of humanity. This is the offence which is expressed by Caiaphas, who demanded the killing of Christ in the name of the good of many.

XXVII. THE PERSONAL OFFENCE, OR THE OFFENCE OF PREPARATION

155. " I know that the meaning of my life is in serving not myself, but God or men ; but, in order that my serving of men may be successful," says the man who has fallen into this offence, " I can admit some departures from the demands of my conscience, if they are necessary for my perfection, which is preparing me for my future activity that is useful to men ; I must first study, must first serve the term of my office, must first improve my health, must first get married, must first secure the means of my life in the future, and before I attain this, I cannot fully follow the demands of my conscience, and when I have finished it, I shall begin to live exactly as my conscience demands."

156. Having recognized the necessity of caring for his personal life

for the more real service of men and the consequent manifestation of love, man serves his personality, committing sins of lust, and of idleness, and of property, and of power, and of debauchery even, and of intoxication, without considering those sins important because he permits them to himself but for a time, for that time when all his forces are directed upon the preparation of himself for the active service of men.

157. Having begun to serve his personality, preserving, intensifying, and perfecting it, man naturally forgets the aim for which he is doing it, and gives his best years, and frequently his whole life, to such a preparation for service, which never arrives.

158. In the meantime the sins which he permits himself for the sake of the beneficent aim, become more and more habitual, and, instead of the proposed useful activity for men, man passes all his life in sins, which ruin his own life and offend others and do them harm. In this lies the offence of preparation.

XXVIII. THE OFFENCE OF FAMILY, OR OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE RACE

159. On entering into a family union, people, especially women, are prone to think that their love to their family, to their children, is precisely that which their rational consciousness asks of them, and that therefore, if in their family life they have to commit sins for the gratification of the needs of their family, these sins are venial.

160. Having come to recognize this, such people consider it possible in the name of the love of their family not only to free themselves from the demands of justice toward other men, but also, with the assurance that they are doing right, to commit the greatest cruelties against others for the good of their children.

161. "If I had no wife, no husband, or no child," say people who have fallen into this offence, "I should be living quite differently and should not be committing these sins ; but now, in order to bring up my children, I cannot live otherwise. If we did not live thus, if we did not commit any sins, the human race could not be continued."

162. And, having made such a reflection, the man calmly takes away men's labour, compels them to labour to the disadvantage of their lives, takes away the land from people, and – the most striking example – takes away the milk from the child, in order that the child's mother may nurse his babe, and does not see the evil which he is doing. In this consists the offence of family, or of the continuation of the race.

XXIX. THE OFFENCE OF AFFAIRS

163. From the property of his nature, man must exercise his mental and bodily powers, and for their exercise he chooses some work.

164. But every work demands certain acts at a certain time, so that if these acts are not performed at the given time, the work which is useful to men is destroyed, without being of any use to any one.

165. " I have to finish ploughing the field with the seed sowed in it. If I do not do it, the seed and the work will be lost, without being of any use to any one. I must finish a certain work by a given time ; if I do not finish it, the work which might have been useful will be lost for nothing. My factory is running ; it is producing articles which are indispensable to men, and it gives the chance to work to tens of thousands of people ; if I interrupt the work, the articles will not be manufactured, and the people will be deprived of work," say the men who have fallen into this offence.

166. And having made this reflection, a man not only does not abandon the unfinished ploughing, in order to pull his neighbour's horse out of the bog, not only does not give up his work which is set for a certain time, in order to sit a day at the bed of a patient, not only does not stop his factory, in which work ruins the health of men, but is ready to take advantage of his neighbour's misfortune, in order to finish ploughing his field, is ready to take a man away from attending on a patient, in order to be sure to finish his work by a given time, is ready to ruin the health of several generations, in order that he may produce well-manufactured articles.

In this does the offence of affairs, or of profit, consist.

XXX. THE OFFENCE OF ASSOCIATION

167. Placing themselves accidentally or artificially under certain identical conditions, men are prone to segregate themselves with the men who are under the same conditions, from all other men, and to consider themselves obliged, for the purpose of safeguarding the advantages of these men who are placed under the exclusive conditions, to depart from the demands of their reason, and not only to prefer these advantages of their own to those of others, but also to do evil to men, merely so as not to impair their loyalty to their own people.

168. " Men do obviously a bad deed, but they are our associates, and so we must conceal and justify their bad deed. What is proposed for me to do is bad and senseless, but all my associates have decided to do so, and I cannot fall behind them. For strangers this may be suffering, a misfortune, but it will be agreeable for us and for our association, and so we must act thus."

169. There are all kinds of such associations. Such is the association of two murderers or thieves, who are going out to do their work and consider their loyalty to their associates more obligatory for the performance of the deed which they have undertaken than the loyalty to their conscience, which condemns their undertaking ; such is the association of pupils of educational institutions, workmen's societies, regiments, scholars, clergymen, kings, nationalities.

170. All these men consider the loyalty to the institution of their association more obligatory than the loyalty to the demands of their conscience in relation to all other men. In this does the offence of association, or loyalty, consist.

171. The peculiarity of this offence consists in this, that in its name are committed the most savage and insensible of acts, such as the masquerading in special, strange garments and ascribing to these garments a special significance, and acts of poisoning oneself by means of wine or beer, and very frequently terribly cruel acts, such as fights, duels, murders, and so forth, in the name of this very offence which provokes the enmity of one class of associations against another.

XXXI. THE OFFENCE OF STATE

172. Men live in a certain social order, and this order, like everything else in the world, changes continually in proportion as the consciousness grows in men.

173. But men, especially those for whom the existing order is more advantageous than for others (and the existing order is always more advantageous to some than to others), think that the existing order is good for all men, and so, in order to maintain this good for all men, not only consider it possible to violate love in respect to some men, but also think it just and good to commit the greatest malefactions in order to maintain this existing order.

174. Men established the right of property, and some own land and the instruments of labour, while others have neither. This unjust possession of the land and the instruments of labour by certain idle people is regarded as that order which must be protected, and for the sake of which it is considered right and good to lock up and punish people who violate this order. Similarly, in view of the danger that a neighbouring people or potentate may attack our nation and conquer and destroy and change the established order, it is considered right and good, not only to cooperate with the establishment of the army, but also to be ready oneself to murder people of another nation and to proceed against them, in order to kill them.

1 75. The peculiarity of this offence is this, that, while in the

name of those four first offences men depart from the demands of their conscience and commit separate bad acts, in the name of this offence of state there are committed the most terrible mass malefactions, such as executions and wars, and there are supported the most cruel crimes against the majority, like slavery in former times, and the present dispossession of the workingman's land.

Men would not be able to commit these evil deeds, if there were not invented methods by means of which the responsibility for the commission of these crimes is so distributed among men that no one feels its burden.

176. The method of the distribution of this responsibility in such a way that no one may feel the burden consists in this, that men recognize the necessity of power which for the good of subject men must prescribe these malefactions ; but the subjects are obliged to fulfil the prescriptions of the power for the good of all.

177. " I am very sorry to be obliged to prescribe the seizure of the products of labour, incarceration, exile, hard labour, execution, war, that is, mass murder, but I am obliged to do so, because this is demanded of me by the men who have vested me with power," say the men who are in power. " If I take away men's property, detach them from their families, lock them up, send them into exile, have them executed, if I kill men of another nation, ruin them, shoot into cities upon women and children, I do not do so upon my own responsibility, but because I am doing the will of the higher power whom I have promised to obey for the common good."

In this does the offence of state, or of the common good, consist.

XXXII. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE OFFENCES

178. Sins are consequences of habits (inertia, animal life). Animal life running at full speed cannot stop, even when reason has wakened in man, and he understands the senselessness of the animal life. Man knows that the animal life is senseless and cannot do him any good, but from old habit he seeks a meaning and the good in the joys of the animal life, – the gratification of complex artificial needs, in constant rest, in the increase of property, in dominion, in dissipation, in intoxication, and uses his reason for the purpose of attaining these ends.

179. But the sins punish themselves: very soon a man feels that the good which he is trying to find on this path is not accessible to him, and the sin loses its attractiveness. Thus, if there did not exist any justifications of sins, – offences, – men would not abide in sins, and would not carry them to the limit to which they have been carried.

180. If there were no offences of preparation, no offences of family, no offence of affairs, no offence of state, not a man, not even the most cruel one, would be able among needy men dying in want to make use of that superabundance which now the rich enjoy ; the rich would not be able to arrive at that condition of complete physical idleness, in which, experiencing ennui, they now pass their life, compelling frequently the old, the very young, the sick to perform the labour which they need. If there were no offences which justify property, men could not senselessly and aimlessly waste all the forces of their lives for a greater and ever greater acquisition of property, which cannot be made use of, and people who suffer from struggle would not be able to provoke it in others. If there were no offence of association, there would not be even one-hundredth part of that corruption which now exists : people would not be able so obviously and senselessly to ruin their bodily and their mental forces by means of intoxicating substances, which neither increase nor diminish their energy.

181. From the human sins come the poverty of some and their crushed condition through labour, and the satiety and the idleness of others; from the sins come the inequality of possessions, struggle, quarrels, lawsuits, punishments, wars ; from the sins come the calamities of men's debauch and brutalization ; but from the offences comes the establishment, the sanctification of all this, – the legalization of poverty and of the crushed condition of some, and of the satiety and the idleness of others, the legalization of violence, of murders, wars, debauch, intoxication, and their expansion to those terrible dimensions which they now have reached.

PART THE FOURTH

THE DECEPTIONS OF FAITH AND THE LIBERATION FROM IT

XXXIII. THE DECEPTIONS OF FAITH

182. If there were no offences, people could not continue to live in sins, since every sin punishes itself : the men of the former generations would show to posterity the perniciousness of sin, and the subsequent generations would be educated without falling into the habit of sin.

183. But man has used the intellect which is given him not for the purpose of finding out sin and freeing himself from it, but of justifying it, and so there appeared the offence, and sin became legitimized and took root.

184. But how could man with awakened reason recognize the lie as truth ? In order that a man may be able not to see the lie and take it for truth, his reason must be distorted, because the uncorrupted reason faultlessly distinguishes the lie from the truth, wherein, indeed, its destination consists.

185. Indeed, men's reason, as educated in human society, is never free from corruption. Every man who is educated in human society is inevitably subject to corruption, which consists in the deception of faith.

186. The deception of faith consists in this, that the men of former generations by means of all kinds of artificial methods impress upon the subsequent generations the comprehension of the meaning of life, which is not based on reason, but on blind faith.

187. The essence of the deception of faith consists in this, that men intentionally confound the concepts of faith and trust, and substitute one for the other: they assert that men cannot live and think without faith, which is quite correct, and in the place of faith, that is, the recognition of the existence of what is cognized, but cannot be defined by reason, such as God, soul, goodness, they put the concept of trust in the existence of God, namely, such and such a one in three persons, who at such and such a time created the world and revealed this or that to men, in such a place and at such a time and through such and such prophets.

XXXIV. THE ORIGIN OF THE DECEPTIONS OF FAITH

188. Humanity moves slowly, but without cessation, onward, that is, toward a greater and ever greater clearness of the consciousness of the truth concerning the meaning and significance of its life, and toward the establishment of life in conformity with this clearer consciousness. And thus men's comprehension of life and men's life itself constantly change. Men who are more sensitive for truth understand life in conformity with that higher light that has appeared in them, and arrange their life in conformity with this light ; men who are less sensitive stick to the former comprehension of life and the former structure of life, and try to defend it.

189. Thus there are always in the world, by the side of men who point out the advanced and last expression of the truth and try to live in accordance with this expression of truth, other men who defend the older, obsolete, and now useless comprehension of it and the former orders of life.

XXXV. IN WHAT WAY THE DECEPTIONS OF FAITH ARE COMMITTED

190. Truth does not need any external confirmation and is freely accepted by all those to whom it is communicated, but deception demands special methods, by means of which it may be communicated to men and adopted by them ; and so to practise the deception of faith, one and the same methods are employed among all nations by those who practise them.

191. There are five such methods: (1) the misinterpretation of the truth, (2) the belief in the miraculous, (3) the establishment of a mediation between man and God, (4) the affecting of man's external sensations, and (5) the impression of a false faith upon children.

192. The essence of the first method of the deception of faith consists not only in recognizing in words the correctness of the truth as revealed to men by the last preachers, but also in

recognizing the preacher himself as a holy, supernatural person and in deifying him, by ascribing to him the performance of various miracles, and in concealing the essence itself of the revealed truth in such a way that it may not only not violate the former comprehension of life and the order of life as established according to it, but may also, on the contrary, confirm it.

Such a misinterpretation of truth and deification of the preachers has taken place with all nations, at every appearance of a new religious teaching. Thus was the teaching of Moses and of the Jewish prophets misinterpreted. And it was for this very misinterpretation that Christ rebuked the Pharisees, telling them that they were sitting in the seat of Moses and themselves did not enter the kingdom of God and did not let others in. Similarly were the teachings of Buddha, Lao-tse, and Zarathustra misinterpreted. A similar misinterpretation was introduced into the Christian teaching in the first period of its acceptation by Constantine, when the pagan temples and divinities were changed into Christian ones and there arose Mohammedanism, as a protest against the apparent Christian polytheism. To a similar misinterpretation has Mohammedanism also been subjected.

193. The second method of the deception of faith consists in impressing people with the idea that, in the cognition of the truth, to follow our God-given reason is a sin of pride ; that there exists another, more reliable instrument of cognition, the revelation of the truth, which is communicated by God to men with certain signs and miracles, that is, supernatural events which confirm the correctness of the transmission. Men are impressed with the idea that it is necessary to believe, not in reason, but in miracles, that is, in what is contrary to reason.

194. The third method of the deception of faith consists in assuring men that they cannot have that immediate relation with God which is felt by every man, and which was especially elucidated by Christ when He recognized man as the son of God, and that for man's communion with God there is needed a mediator or mediators. As such mediators they proclaim prophets, saints, the church, the Scriptures, hermits, dervishes, lamas, Buddhas, anchorites, every clergy. However different all these mediators may be, the essence of the mediation is this, that between man and God no direct connection is admitted, but it is, on the contrary, assumed that the truth is not directly accessible to man, and can be received only through faith in the mediators between him and God.

195. The fourth method of the deception of faith consists in this,

that under the pretext of accomplishing certain works presumably demanded by God, – prayers, sacraments, sacrifices, – they collect a large number of men and, subjecting them to various stupefying influences, impress lies upon them, pretending that they are the truth. Men are impressed by the beauty and grandeur of the temples, the magnificence of the adornments, by the utensils, the garments, the brilliancy of the illumination, the sounds of singing, the organs, the incense, the exclamations, the performances, and while men are under this spell, the deception, given out as the truth, is forced upon their souls.

196. The fifth method is the most cruel, since it consists in telling to a child, when he asks his elders who lived before him and had a chance to find out the wisdom of the men who had lived before, as to what this world and its life is and what the relations between the two are, not what these elders think and know, but what the men who lived thousands of years before knew and what none of his elders now believe in, nor are able to believe in. Instead of the spiritual food, which is indispensable to him, and for which he asks, the child is given a poison which ruins his spiritual health, and from which he can be cured only by the greatest efforts and sufferings.

197. Awakening to the conscious life with a clear, unpolluted reason, ready to receive and in the depth of his soul, though only dimly, conscious of the truth of life, that is, of his position and his mission in life (the human soul is by its nature a Christian, says Tertullian, a father of the church), the child asks his older parent what life is, what his relation to the world and his beginning is, – and his father, or teacher, does not tell him that little which he knows unquestionably of the meaning of life, but with assurance tells him what in the depth of his soul he does not regard as true : he tells him, if he is a Jew, that God created the world in six days and revealed all the truth to Moses, writing with his finger on a stone that it is necessary to keep oaths, remember the Sabbath, be circumcized, and so forth ; if he is a Greek-Catholic, a Roman-Catholic, a Protestant Christian, – that Christ, the second person, created the world and came down upon earth, in order to redeem Adam's sin with his blood, and so forth; if he is a Buddhist, – that Buddha Hew to heaven and taught men to destroy life in themselves ; if he is a Mohammedan, that Mohammed Hew to the seventh heaven and there learned the law according to which the belief in the fivefold prayer and the pilgrimage to Mecca give men paradise in the future life.

198. Knowing that other men impress something else upon their children, parents and teachers communicate each his own special superstition to them, though he knows in the depth of his soul that it is only a superstition, – he communicates it to innocent,

trustful children at an age when the impressions are so strong that they are never again eradicated.

XXXVI. THE EVIL DUE TO THE DECEPTION OF FAITH

199. The sins, by causing man at times to commit acts which are contrary to his spiritual nature, contrary to love, retard his birth to the new, true life.

200. The offences lead man into a sinful life, by justifying the sins, so that a man does not commit separate sinful acts, but lives an animal life, without seeing the contradiction of this life with the true life.

201. Such a position on the part of a man is possible only with the distortion of truth, which is achieved by the deception of faith. Only a man with his reason distorted by the deception of faith can fail to see the lie of the offences.

202. And so the deception of faith is the foundation of all the sins and calamities of man.

203. The deceptions of faith are that which in the Gospel is called blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and of which it says that this action cannot be forgiven, that is, that it cannot help but be disastrous in any life.

XXXVII. WHAT MUST A MAN DO, TO LIVE ACCORDING TO CHRIST'S TEACHING ?

204. To live according to Christ's teaching, a man must destroy the obstacles which interfere with the true life, that is, with the manifestation of love.

205. The sins form obstacles to them. But the sins cannot be destroyed, so long as a man does not free himself from the offences. And only a man who is free from the deceptions of faith can free himself from the offences.

206. And so, in order to live according to Christ's teaching, a man must first of all free himself from the deceptions of faith.

207. Only after a man has freed himself from the deceptions of faith, can he free himself from the lie of the offences ; and only after he has found out the lie of the offences, can he free himself from sins.

XXXVIII. THE LIBERATION FROM THE DECEPTIONS OF FAITH\

208. To free himself from the deceptions of faith in general, a man must understand and remember that the only instrument of cognition which he possesses is his reason, and that therefore every sermon which asserts something contrary to reason is a deception, an attempt at removing the only instrument of cognition given him by God.

209. To be free from the deceptions of faith, a man must understand and remember that he has no other instrument of cognition than reason, – that, whether he wants it or not, every man believes only in reason, and that therefore the men who say that they do not believe in reason, but in Moses, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, the church, the Koran, the Bible, are deceiving themselves, because, no matter what they may believe in, they do not believe in him who transmitted to them those truths in which they believe, – in Moses, Buddha, Christ, the Bible, – but in reason, which tells them that they should believe in Moses, in Christ, in the Bible, and must not believe in Buddha, Mohammed, the Koran, and vice versa.

210. Truth cannot enter man in spite of reason, and so a man who

thinks that he cognizes truths through faith, and not through reason, only deceives himself and employs his reason irregularly for what it is not destined for, – for the solution of questions as to who of those who transmit the teachings which are given out as truth is to be believed, and who not. But reason is not destined for the purpose of deciding who is to be believed, and who not, – that it cannot decide, – but for the purpose of verifying the correctness of what is proposed to it. That it always can do, and for that it is destined.

211. The false interpreters of truth generally say that reason cannot be believed, because the reason of different people affirms different things, and because for this reason it is better for the union of men to believe in a revelation which is confirmed by miracles. But such an assertion is directly opposed to truth. Reason never asserts different things ; it always and in all men asserts and denies the same.

212. It is only the faiths which assert, – one, that God revealed himself on Sinai, and that He is the God of the Jews; another, that God is Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; a third, that God is the Trinity, – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; a fourth, that God is heaven and earth ; a fifth, that truth was all revealed by Buddha ; a sixth, that it was all revealed by Mohammed;—only these faiths divide men, but reason, whether it be the reason of a Jew, a Japanese, a Chinaman, an Arab, an Englishman, a Russian, always and in all men tells one and the same thing.

213. When people say that reason may deceive, and in confirmation adduce discordant assertions of various men as to there being a God, and how he ought to be served, those who say this make an intentional or an unintentional mistake, in that they confuse reason with considerations and inventions. Considerations and inventions can actually be and generally are diversified and different, but the decrees of reason are always the same for all men and at all times. Reflections and inventions as to how the world or sin originated, or what will happen after death, may be infinitely varied, but the decrees of reason as to whether it is true that three gods make one, whether a man died and then rose again, whether a man walked on the water or flew bodily into heaven, whether in swallowing bread and wine I am eating a body and blood,— the decrees of reason in regard to these questions are always one and the same for all men and in the whole world, and are always indubitable and true. Whether men say that God walked in a pillar of fire, or whether Buddha rose on the sunbeams, or whether Mohammed flew into heaven, or whether Christ walked on the water, and so forth, the reason of all men always and everywhere replies one and the same thing: " It is not true." But to the questions as to whether it is right to treat

others as you wish to be treated, whether it is good to love men and forgive them their offences and be merciful, the reason of all men at all times has said : " Yes, it is right, it is good."

214. And so, not to fall into the deceptions of faith, a man must understand and remember that truth is revealed to him only in his reason, given him by God for the purpose of learning the will of God, and that the discouragement of confidence in reason has for its basis the desire of deceiving, and is the greatest blasphemy.

215. Such is the general means for freeing oneself from the deceptions of faith. But to be free from the deceptions of faith, it is necessary to know all the forms of these deceptions and to beware of them, – to counteract them.

XXXIX. THE LIBERATION FROM THE DECEPTION OF FAITH, INSPIRED FROM CHILDHOOD

216. In order that a man may live according to Christ's teaching, he must first of all free himself from the deception of the faith in which he was brought up, – no matter whether this is a deception of the Jewish, Buddhistic, Japanese, Confucian, or Christian faith.

217. But in order to be freed from the deceptions of faith, in which a man is brought up from childhood, he must understand and remember that reason is given to him directly from God, and that God alone can unite all men, while human traditions do not unite, but divide men, and so he must not only not be afraid of doubts and questions, which are evoked by reason in the verification of beliefs impressed upon him from childhood, but, on the contrary, must carefully subject to analysis and comparison with other beliefs all those beliefs which were handed down to him from childhood, accepting as correct only what does not contradict reason, no matter how solemnly circumstanced and anciently transmitted the tradition may be.

218. Having subjected the beliefs impressed upon him from childhood to the tribunal of reason, a man who wishes to free himself from the deceptions of faith, impressed upon him from childhood, must boldly and without finding any excuses reject everything which is contrary

to reason and cannot be true.

219. Having freed himself from the deception of faith, impressed upon him from childhood, a man who wants to live according to Christ's teaching must not only by word, example, and reticence keep from aiding in the deception of the children, but also with all his means dispel this deception, according to the words of Christ, who pitied the children on account of the deceptions to which they are subjected.

XL. THE LIBERATION FROM THE DECEPTION OF FAITH, PRODUCED THROUGH THE APPEAL TO THE EXTERNAL SENSES

220. Having freed himself from the deception of faith, impressed upon him from childhood, a man must beware of the deception produced by the deceivers of all nations by means of the appeal to the external senses.

221. In order not to fall into this deception, a man must understand and remember that truth for its dissemination and adoption by men does not need any appliances and adornments ; that it is only the lie and the deception that need special conditions for their transmission, in order to be accepted by men, and that therefore all solemn services, processions, adornments, incense, singing, and so forth, not only do not serve as signs of the fact that the truth is being communicated under these conditions, but, on the contrary, serve as a sure sign that where these means are used, it is not the truth, but a lie, that is being communicated.

222. In order not to fall into the deception of the appeal to the external senses, a man must remember the words of Christ, that God is not to be served in some particular place, but in the spirit and in truth, and that he who wants to pray must not go into a temple, but shut himself up in the privacy of his room, knowing that every magnificence in divine service has for its aim deception, which is the more cruel, the more magnificent the service is, and so he must not only refrain from partaking himself in the stupefying divine services, but also wherever possible must disclose their deception.

XLI. THE LIBERATION FROM THE DECEPTION OF MEDIATION

223. Having freed himself also from the second deception of the appeal to the external senses, a man must also beware of the deception of mediation between man and God, which, if he admits it at all, is sure to conceal the truth from him.

224. In order not to fall into this deception, a man must understand and remember that God is only directly revealed to man's heart, and that every mediation, be it one person, a collection of persons, a book, or a tradition, not only conceals God from man, but also commits the greatest evil which can befall a man, namely, causes him to regard as God what is not God.

225. The moment a man admits the faith in any mediation, he deprives himself of the one possibility of the certainty of knowledge and opens up the possibility of the reception of any lie instead of the truth.

226. Only thanks to the mediation of men could there be practised, and are there practised, those deceptions in consequence of which sensible and good men pray to God, Christ, the Virgin, Buddha, Mohammed, the saints, the relics, the images.

227. In order not to fall into this deception, a man must understand and remember that truth was revealed to him first of all and more correctly, not in a book, not in tradition, not in any assembly of men, but in his own heart and in reason, even as Moses said, when he informed the people that the law of God was not to be sought beyond the sea, nor in heaven, but in their hearts, and as Christ said to the Jews : " You do not know the truth, because you believe in the traditions of men, and not in Him whom He sent." But what God has sent into us is reason, – the one infallible instrument of cognition, which is given us.

228. Not to fall into the deception of mediation, a man must understand and remember that truth can never be revealed altogether, and that it is gradually revealed to men, and only to those who seek

it, and not to those who, believing in what the infallible mediators communicate to them, think that they possess it, and so, to keep from subjecting himself to the danger of falling into the most terrible errors, a man must not acknowledge any one as an infallible teacher, but must seek the truth anywhere, in all the human traditions, verifying them with his reason.

XLII. THE LIBERATION FROM THE BELIEF IN MIRACLES

229. But even having freed himself from the deception impressed upon him from childhood, and not surrendering himself to the deception of impressing the lie by means of solemnity, and not recognizing any mediation between himself and God, a man will still not be free from the deception of faith and will be unable to know Christ's teaching, if he shall not free himself of the belief in the supernatural, the miraculous.

230. They say that miracles, that is, the supernatural, take place for the purpose of uniting men, whereas there is nothing which so disunites men as miracles, because each faith asserts its own miracles and rejects those of all the others. Nor can it be otherwise : miracles, that is, the supernatural, are infinitely varied ; only the natural is always and everywhere the same.

231. And so, to be free from the deceptions of belief in the miraculous, a man must recognize as true only what is natural, that is, in accord with his reason, and must recognize as a lie everything which is unnatural, that is, which contradicts reason, knowing that everything which gives itself out as such is human deception, such as are the deceptions of all modern miracles, cures, resurrections, miracle-working images, relics, transubstantiation of bread and wine, and so forth, as also of the miracles which are mentioned in the Bible, in the gospels, in Buddhist, Mohammedan, Taoist, and other books.

XLIII. LIBERATION FROM THE DECEPTIONS OF THE FAITH IN FALSE INTERPRETATIONS

232. Having freed himself from the deception of mediation, a man must free himself from the deception of the false interpretation of truth.

233. No matter in what faith a man may have been educated, whether in the Mohammedan, Christian, Buddhistic, Jewish, or Confucian, he will in every doctrine of faith find an assertion of indubitable truth, which is recognized by his reason, and side by side with it assertions

. contrary to reason, which are given out as equally deserving faith.

234. In order to free himself from this deception of faith, a man must not be discouraged because the truths which are recognized by his reason and those which are not recognized by it are given out as equally deserving faith on account of their common origin, and as though inseparably connected, but must understand and remember that every revelation of the truth to men (that is, every comprehension of the truth by one of the advanced men) has always so startled people that it has been clothed in a supernatural form, that to every manifestation of truth there have inevitably been added superstitions, and that, therefore, for the knowledge of truth it is not necessary to accept everything, but that, on the contrary, we are obliged in what is transmitted to us to separate the lie and the invention from the truth and reality.

235. Having separated the truth from the superstitions which are admixed, let each man understand and remember that the superstitions which are admixed with truth not only are not as sacred as truth itself, as is preached by the men who find their advantage in these superstitious, but, on the contrary, form a most pernicious and harmful phenomenon, which conceals the truth, and for the destruction of which a man must employ all his forces.

PART THE FIFTH

LIBERATION FROM THE OFFENCES

XLIV. HOW CAN WE AVOID THE OFFENCES ?

236. Having freed himself from the deceptions of faith, a man would be capable of receiving Christ's teaching, if there were no offences. But even when he is free from the deceptions of faith and understands the meaning of Christ's teaching, a man always finds himself in danger of falling into the offences.

237. The essence of all the offences consists in this, that a man who has wakened to consciousness, feeling the doubling and suffering from a crime committed, wants to destroy the doubling and the suffering arising from it, not through a struggle with sin, but through its justification.

238. But the justification of a sin can be nothing but a lie.

239. And so, in order not to fall into an offence, a man must first of all not be afraid to recognize the truth, knowing that such an acknowledgment cannot remove him from the good, whereas the opposite, the lie, is the chief source of sin and of a departure from the good.

240. Thus, in order to avoid the offences, a man must, above all else, not lie, and, above all, not lie to himself, and not so much take care lest he lie to others, as lest he lie to himself, concealing from himself the aims of his acts.

241. Not to fall into the offences and the habit of sin-

ning and destroying, which result from these offences, a man must not be afraid to repent of his sins, knowing that repentance is the

only means for the liberation from sins and the resulting calamities.

242. Such is the one common means for keeping from falling into the offences in general. To be able to avoid every offence in particular, it is necessary to understand clearly in what their lie and their harm consist.

XLV. THE LIE OF THE OFFENCE OF PREPARATION (THE PERSONAL OFFENCE)

243. The first and most common offence which takes possession of a man is the personal offence, the offence of the preparation for life, instead of life itself. If a man does not invent this justification of his sins, he always finds this justification to have been invented by men who lived before him.

244. " Now I can for a time depart from what is proper and what my spiritual nature demands of me, because I am not ready," a man says to himself. " As soon as I am prepared, there will come a time when I shall begin to live entirely in conformity with my conscience."

245. The lie of this offence consists in this, that a man departs from the life in the present, from the one actual life, and transfers it into the future, whereas the future does not belong to man.

246. The lie of this offence has this feature, that, if a man foresees the morrow, he must also be able to foresee the day after to-morrow, and what comes later, and later. And if he foresees all this, he also foresees his inevitable death. If he foresees his inevitable death, he cannot prepare himself for the future in this finite life, because death destroys the meaning of all that for which a man prepares himself in this life. Having given full sway to his reason, a man cannot help but see that the life of Ins separate existence has no meaning, and so it is impossible to prepare anything for this existence.

247. On the other hand, the lie of this offence may be seen in this,

that a man cannot prepare himself for a future manifestation of love and service of God : a man is not an instrument which another employs. It is possible to grind an axe and not get any time to cut with it, and for another man to make use of it ; but no one can use a man, except he himself, because he himself is an instrument which is always at work and which perfects itself at* work.

248. The harm of this offence is this, that a man who has fallen into it not only fails to live the true life, but even does not live a temporal life in the present, and transfers his life into the future, which never comes. Thinking of perfecting himself for the future, a man omits the one, ever present perfection in love, which can be only in the present.

249. Not to fall into this offence, a man must understand and remember that there is no time for preparation ; that he must live in the best manner possible this very moment, just such as he is ; that the perfection which he needs is no other than the perfection in love, and this perfection is accomplished only in the present.

250. And so he must without delay live each minute with all his strength in the present, for God, that is, for all those who make demands on his life, knowing that he may any moment be deprived of the possibility of this ministration, and that he came into the world for precisely this hourly ministration.

XLVI. THE LIE AND THE HARM OF THE OFFENCE OF AFFAIRS

251. Every man who busies himself with some affair is involuntarily carried away by it, and it appears to him that for the sake of his business he is unable to do what his conscience, that is, God, demands of him.

252. The lie of this offence consists in this, that every human affair may prove useless, be interrupted, and remain unfinished ; but God's business as accomplished by man, the fulfilment of God's will, can never be useless and cannot be interrupted by anything.

253. The harm of this offence consists in this, that, by admitting that a certain business – be it the harrowing in of sown seeds or the emancipation of a whole people from slavery – is more important than God's business, which to human judgment is frequently the most insignificant, that is, more important than immediate aid and ministrations to one's neighbour, there will always be found some matters which must be looked after before complying with the demand of God's business, and a man will always free himself from serving God, that is, from doing the works of life, by substituting the ministrations to what is dead for the ministrations to the living.

254. The harm consists in this, that, by admitting this offence, men will always put off serving God until they are free from all worldly affairs. But men are never free from worldly affairs. Not to fall into this offence, a man must understand and remember that no human affair, which has an end, can be the aim of his true, infinite life, and that such an aim can only be the participation in God's infinite affairs, which consists in the greatest possible manifestation of love.

255. And so, in order not to fall into this offence, a man must never attend to such affairs of his as impair God's affairs, that is, the love of men; he must be at all times prepared to throw up any business, as soon as the execution of God's work calls him, – to be like a labourer who is working for his master and can attend to his own affairs only when his master's work does not demand his strength and his attention.

XLVII. THE LIE AND THE HARM OF THE OFFENCE OF FAMILY

256. This offence more than any other justifies men's sins. If a man is free from the offence of preparation for life, of the offence of affairs, hardly a man, especially a woman, is free from the offence of family.

257. This offence consists in this, that men, in the name of their exclusive love for the members of their families, consider

themselves free from their obligations toward other men, and calmly commit the sins of greed, of struggle, of idleness, of lust, without considering them to be sins.

258. The lie of this offence consists in this, that the animal feeling which incites a man to continue the race and which is legitimate only in that measure in which it does not impair the love of men, is taken to be a virtue which justifies sin.

259. The harm of this offence consists in this, that it, more than any other offence, intensifies the sin of property, embitters the struggle between men, by raising the animal feeling of love for one's family to a desert and virtue, and leads people away from the possibility of knowing the true meaning of life.

260. Not to fall into this offence, a man must not only refrain from educating in himself love for the members of his family, from considering this love a virtue, and abandoning himself to it, but, on the contrary, knowing the offence, he must always be on guard against it, in order that he may not sacrifice the love of God for the love of family.

261. One may without reserve love one's enemies, unattractive people, strangers, and fully abandon oneself to this love ; but it is not right to love thus one's family, because such a love leads to blindness and to the justification of sins.

262. Not to fall into this offence, a man must understand and remember that love is only then true love, giving life and the good, when it does not seek, does not wait, does not hope for rewards, just like any manifestation of life which expects no reward for existing ; but that love for the members of one's family is an animal feeling which is good only so long as it remains within the limits of instinct and a man does not sacrifice his spiritual demands for it.

263. And so, not to fall into this offence, a man must try and do the same for any stranger that he wishes to do for his family, and for the members of his family he must do nothing which he is not prepared and able to do for any stranger.

XLVIII. THE LIE AND THE HARM OF THE OFFENCE OF ASSOCIATION

264. It seems to people that if they, segregating themselves from other men, and uniting among themselves under exclusive conditions, observe these conditions, they are doing such a good deed that they are freed from the common demands of their conscience.

265. The lie of this offence consists in this, that, by entering into associations with a small number of men, the people segregate themselves from the natural association with all men and so impair the most important natural obligations in the name of the artificial ones.

266. The harm of this offence consists in this, that men who have placed themselves under conditions of association, being guided in life, not by common laws of reason, but by their exclusive rules, more and more depart from the rational principles of life, which are common to all men, become more intolerant and more cruel to all those who do not belong to their association, and thus deprive themselves and others of the true good.

267. Not to fall into this offence a man must understand and remember that the rules of association as established by men may be infinitely varied, infinitely changeable, and contrary to one another ; that every rule which is artificially established by men must not bind him, if it can be contrary to the law of love ; that every exclusive combination with men limits the circle of communion, and thus deprives him of the chief condition of his good, – the possibility of a communion of love with all the men of the world.

268. And so we must not only refrain from joining such societies, associations, compacts, but, on the contrary, must avoid everything which with the others may exclude all the rest of men.

XLIX. THE LIE AND THE HARM OF THE OFFENCE OF STATE

269. This most cruel offence is conveyed to men just like a false faith, – by means of two methods of deception, of impressing the lie upon children and of appealing to men's senses by external pomp. Nearly all men who live in states find themselves, as soon as they awaken to consciousness, entangled in the offences of state, and live in the conviction that their nation, their country, their fatherland, is the best, the chosen nation, country, father-land, for the good and the well-being of which people must blindly obey the existing government, and by the command of this government torture, wound, and kill their neighbours.

270. The lie of this offence consists in this, that a man thinks that in the name of the good of his nation he may renounce the demands of his conscience and of his moral freedom.

271. The harm of this offence consists in this, that as soon as a man admits the possibility of understanding and knowing in what the good of many men consists, there are no limits to the assumption concerning that good of many men, which may result from any act, and so any act may be justified ; and as soon as he admits that for the good of many in the future one may sacrifice the good and the life of one man, there are no limits to the evil which may be committed in the name of such an assumption. On the basis of the first assumption, which is, that men can know the future good of many men, they in former times maintained tortures, inquisitions, slavery, and now maintain courts, prisons, the ownership of land. On the basis of the second assumption Caiaphas in former times had Christ killed, and now millions perish in war and as the result of punishments.

272. Not to fall into this offence, a man must understand and remember that, before belonging to any country or nation, he belongs to God, as a member of the universal kingdom, and that he cannot shift his responsibility for his acts on anybody else, and himself is always responsible for them.

273. And so a man must never, under any conditions, prefer the people of his own nation or country to the people of another nation or country ; he must never commit any evil to his neighbours in view of any considerations about the future good of many ; he must never consider himself obliged to obey any one in preference to his conscience.

PART THE SIXTH

THE STRUGGLE WITH SINS

L. THE STRUGGLE WITH SINS

274. But, having freed himself from the deception of faith and having kept away from the offences, a man none the less falls into sins. A man with an awakened consciousness knows that the meaning of his life is only in the service of God, and yet he from habit commits sins, which interfere with the manifestation of his love and the attainment of his true good.

275. How is a man to struggle with the habit of sinning ?

276. There are two means for the struggle with the habit of sinning : the first is clearly to understand the consequences of the sins, – that the sins do not attain the aim for which they are committed, and do not increase, but rather diminish the animal good for the individual man ; in the second place, to know with what sins one ought to begin to struggle, with what first and with what later.

277. And so it is necessary first of all clearly to understand and remember that a man's position in the world is such that ever}7 search by him for the personal good, after the rational consciousness has awakened in him, deprives him of the good itself, and that, on the contrary, he receives his good only when he does not think of his personal good, but gives all his strength to the service of God.

278. In the second place, that for success in his struggle with the habits of sinning it is necessary to know to what sin he is first of all to direct his attention ; not to begin the struggle with a sin which has its root in another unconquered sin ; to know the connection and the consecutiveness of the sins.

LI. THE CONSECUTIVENESS OF THE STRUGGLE WITH SINS

279. There is a connection and a consecutiveness of the sins, so that one sin brings forth another or interferes with the liberation from it.

280. It is impossible for a man to free himself from any of the sins, if he surrenders himself to the sin of intoxication ; and it is impossible for him to free himself from the sin of struggle, if he surrenders himself to the sin of property ; and he cannot free himself from the sin of property, if he surrenders himself to the sin of idleness, and he cannot free himself from the sin of struggle and of property, if he surrenders himself to the sin of lust.

281. This does not mean that a man need not struggle with every sin at some time, but that, for a successful struggle with sin, it is necessary to know with which to begin, or, rather, with which not to begin, in order that the struggle may be successful.

282. Only from the lack of consecutiveness in this struggle with sins results the failure of the struggle, which frequently leads the struggling man to despair.

283. Intoxication, no matter of what kind, is the sin, abandonment to which makes struggle with any other sin impossible ; this intoxication may be from intoxicating matters, or from solemnity, or from rapid, intensified motions; the intoxicated person will not struggle with idleness, nor with lust, nor with fornication, nor with the love of power. And so, in order to struggle with the other sins, a man must first of all free himself from the sin of intoxication.

284. The next sin from which a man must free himself in order that he may be able to struggle with lust, profit, love of power, fornication, is the sin of idleness. The freer a man is from the sin of idleness, the easier can he abstain from the sin of lust, profit, fornication, and love of power : a working person is in no need of the complication of means for the gratification of his needs, is in

no need of property, is less subject to the temptations of fornication and has no cause and no time for struggle.

285. The next sin is the sin of lust. The more a man is abstinent in food, attire, and dwelling, the easier it is for him to free himself from the sin of profit, love of power, fornication : a man who is satisfied with little needs no property, abstinence helps in the struggle with fornication, and, as he does not need much, he has no causes for struggling.

286. The next sin after this is the sin of profit. The freer a man will be from this sin, the easier it will be for him to abstain from the sin of fornication and the sin of struggling. Nothing encourages the sin of fornication so much as a superabundance of property, and nothing provokes so much struggle among men.

287. The next sin to it and the last sin is the sin of struggling, or of the love of power, which is included in all the other sins and is called forth by all the other sins, and the greatest liberation from which is possible only with the liberation from all the preceding sins.

LIL HOW TO STRUGGLE WITH THE SINS

288. It is possible to struggle with the sins in general only by knowing the consecutiveness of the sins, so that one can first begin the struggle with those, without the liberation from which it is impossible to struggle with the rest.

289. Hut even in the struggle with each separate sin one ought to begin with those manifestations of the sins, the abstinence from which is in the power of a man, of which he has not yet made a habit.

290. Such sins in all the varieties of sins, – in intoxication, idleness, lust, prolit, power, and fornication, – are the personal sins, those which a man commits for the first time, when he has not yet formed any habit of them. And so it is from these that a man

must free himself first of all.

291. Only after having freed himself from these sins, that is, after having stopped inventing new means for the increase of his personal good, must a man begin the struggle with the habits, the tradition, established among the sins.

292. And only after having vanquished these sins can a man begin the struggle with the inborn sins.

LIIT. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF INTOXICATION

293. Man's destination consists in the manifestation and increase of love. This increase takes place only in consequence of man's recognition of his true divine ego. The more a man becomes conscious of his true ego, the greater is his good. And so everything which counteracts this consciousness (and each excitation does counteract it), the intensified false consciousness of the individual life and the weakened consciousness of the true ego (as is the case in every intoxication), impedes man's true good.

294. But not only does every intoxication impede the true good of the man who has awakened to consciousness : it also deceives a man, and not only fails to increase the man's own individual good, which he seeks, when he abandons himself to some stimulus, but always deprives him also of that animal good which he had.

295. A man who is still in the stage of the animal life, or a babe with unawakened consciousness, in abandoning himself to some stimulus, to smoking, drinking, solemnity, dance, receives a full gratification from the stimulus produced and is in no need of a repetition of this stimulus. But a man with an awakened consciousness notices that every stimulus drowns in him the activity of his reason and destroys the morbidity of the contradiction between the demand of his animal and that of his spiritual nature, and so demands a repetition and intensification of the intoxication, and keeps demanding it more and more, until the awakened reason will be completely drowned in him, which can be done only by completely

or at least partially destroying the bodily life. Thus a rational life, having begun to abandon himself to this sin, not only does not receive the expected good, but also falls into the most varied and most cruel of calamities.

296. A man who is free from intoxication makes use for his worldly life of all those forces of the mind which are given to him, and can rationally choose the best for the good of his animal existence ; but a man who abandons himself to intoxication deprives himself even of those mental forces which are characteristic of the animal for the avoidance of harm and the attainment of pleasure.

297. Such are the consequences of the sin of intoxication for the sinner ; but for those who surround him they are particularly harmful, in the first place, because an enormous waste of forces is necessary for the production of the act of intoxication, so that the major part of humanity's labour is wasted on the production of intoxicating substances and the preparation and building up of intoxicating solemn acts, processions, ministrations, monuments, temples, and all kinds of celebrations ; in the second place, because smoking, wine, intensified motions, and especially solemnities, cause unthinking people, while they are under the influence of these actions, to commit the most insipid, coarse, pernicious, and cruel acts. It is this that a man must always have in view when he surrenders himself to the temptation of some intoxication.

298. No man, so long as he lives in the body, is able to destroy in himself completely the ability to receive a temporary stimulus of intoxication from the consumption of food or drink, or from external conditions, or from intensified motions, and an intensification of his animal consciousness in consequence of it and a weakening of the consciousness of his spiritual ego. But although a man is not able completely to destroy in himself this inclination toward being stimulated, he is capable of reducing it to the smallest degree. And in this consists the struggle with the sin of intoxication, which is imminent to every man.

299. To free himself from the sin of intoxication, a man must understand and remember that a certain degree of stimulation at certain times and under certain conditions is proper to man, as an animal, but that, with the awakened consciousness in him, he must not only avoid seeking these stimuli, but must also get out of their way and seek a quieter state, in which the activity of his mind may be manifested in its full force, that activity which, when followed up, makes it possible for him to attain the greatest good, both his

own and that of men and beings that are connected with him.

300. In order to attain this state, a man must begin by not increasing for himself that sin of intoxication to which he has become accustomed and which is the habit of his life. If certain habits of intoxication, which repeat themselves at certain times and are considered necessary by those who surround him, have entered into the routine of his life, let him continue these habits, but let him not introduce new ones, imitating others or inventing them himself : if he is accustomed to smoke cigarettes, let him not train himself to smoke cigars or opium ; if he is used to beer or wine, let him not train himself to something more intoxicating ; if he is accustomed to obeisances at prayers, at home or in church, or to jumping and leaping at services, let him not learn new observances ; if he is accustomed to celebrate certain holidays, let him not celebrate new ones. Let him not increase those means for stimulation to which he is accustomed, and he will do very much for the liberation of himself and of others from the sin of intoxication. If people would not introduce new methods of sinning, sin would be destroyed, because sin begins when there is not yet^{any} habit formed of it, and it is possible to vanquish it, and there have always been and always will be men who liberate themselves from sin.

301. If a man has firmly recognized the madness of the sin of intoxication, and has firmly resolved not to increase those habits of intoxication which have become customary to him, let him stop smoking and drinking, if he already has these habits ; let him stop taking part in solemnities and celebrations, in which he used to take part before ; let him stop making stimulating motions, if he was in the habit of making them.

302. But if a man has freed himself from those artificial habits of intoxication in which he is living already, let him free himself from those conditions of excitation which are produced in him by certain food, drink, motions, and surroundings, to which every man is subject.

303. Although a man, so long as he is in the body, will never fully be freed from excitation and intoxication, produced by food, drink, motions, surroundings,— the degree of these conditions may be diminished to a minimum. The more a man who has awakened to consciousness will free himself from the condition of intoxication, the clearer will his mind be, the easier will it be for him to struggle with all the other sins, the more true good will he receive, the more will there be added to him of worldly good, and the more will he contribute to the good of other men.

LIV. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF IDLENESS

304. A man with an awakened consciousness is not a self-existing, self-satisfied being that can have its own independent good, but a messenger of God, to whom the good is possible only in the measure in which he does God's will. And so it is as irrational for a man to serve his own separate personality as it is irrational for a labourer to serve his instrument of labour, take care of his spade or scythe, and not waste it on his predetermined work ; as it says in the Gospel, he who keeps his carnal life, loses the true life ; and only by losing the carnal life is it possible to receive the true life.

305. To make other persons work for the gratification of one's needs is as irrational as it would be for a labourer to destroy or spoil his companion's instruments of labour, in order to save or improve the instrument with which he, wasting it, must produce the work for which he and his companions are delegated.

306. But besides that true good, of which a man deprives himself when he frees himself from labour and imposes it upon others, such a man at the same time deprives himself also of that worldly animal good which is set aside for man with his natural bodily labour demanded of him for the gratification of his needs.

307. A man will receive the greatest good of his separate being from the exercise of his forces and from rest, when he shall live instinctively like an animal, labouring and resting precisely as much as his animal life demands. But the moment a man artificially transfers his labours to others, arranging an artificial rest for himself, he will not derive any enjoyment from his rest.

308. A working man derives true enjoyment from rest ; but an idle man, in place of the rest which he is trying to arrange for himself, experiences constant unrest, and, besides, by means of this artificial idleness destroys the very source of enjoyment, – his health, – so that by weakening his body, he deprives himself of the possibility of work, and so also of the consequences of work, of

true rest, and begets in himself grave diseases.

309. Such are the consequences of idleness for the sinner ; for those about him the consequences of this sin are pernicious, in the first place, because, as a Chinese proverb runs, if there is one idle man there is also one who is starving ; in the second place, because unthinking men, who do not know that dissatisfaction which is experienced by idle men, try to imitate them, and instead of good sensations experience bad sentiments toward this dissatisfaction.

310. To free himself from the sin of idleness, a man must clearly understand and remember that every liberation of himself from the work which he has been performing does not increase, but diminishes the good of his separate personality and produces an unnecessary evil to other men.

311. It is impossible in the separate animal existence of man to diminish the striving after rest and the dislike of work (according to the Bible idleness was bliss and work a punishment), but the diminution of this sin and its reduction to the lowest degree is that toward which a man must strive in order to free himself from this sin.

312. To free himself from the habit of sinning, a man must begin by not freeing himself from any work that he may have been doing before ; if he brushed his own clothes and washed his linen, he must not cause another to do that ; if he got along without the productions of other people's labour, he should not buy them ; if he used to walk, he should not mount a horse ; if he carried his own satchel, he should not give it to a porter, and so forth. All this seems so insignificant, but if men would do so they would be freeing themselves from a great number of their sins and the sufferings arising therefrom.

313. Only when a man is already able to abstain from freeing himself from the labour which he used to perform before, and from transferring it to others, can he successfully begin his struggle with the inherited sin of idleness. If he is a peasant, let him not make his weak wife do what he has the leisure to do himself, nor hire a labourer whom he used to hire before, nor purchase an article of the production of labour which he used to buy formerly, but without which others are getting along ; if he is rich, let him send away his valet and put away his own things, and stop buying, as formerly, expensive garments, if he is used to doing so.

314. But if a man has been able to vanquish that idleness to which he has been accustomed from childhood, and has descended to that level of work on which the men who surround him live, he is able successfully to begin the struggle with the inborn sin of idleness, that is, to labour for the good of other men and when others rest themselves.

315. The fact that human life has become so complicated in consequence of the division of labour that a man is unable himself to satisfy his own needs and those of his family, and that it is impossible in our world to get along without using the labours of others, cannot keep a man from striving after a state in which he would give to people more than he receives from them.

316. To be convinced of this, a man must in the first place do for himself and his family what he can find the time to do, and, in the second, in his serving other men must not choose such matters as please him, and for which there are many volunteers, as is the case with all matters of the government of men, of their instruction, of their amusement, but such as are pressing and indispensable, which are not attractive, and which all men reject, as is the case with coarse and dirty work.

LV. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF LUST

317. It is man's destination to serve God by the increase of love in himself. The fewer the needs are which a man may have, the easier will it be for him to serve God and men, and so the greater will the true good be which he will receive through the increase of love in himself.

318. But besides that good of the true life, of which the more a Man receives the freer he will be from the sin of lust, a man's position in the world is such that if he abandons himself to his needs only to the extent to which they demand their gratification, and does not direct his mind upon the increase of enjoyment from their gratification, this gratification gives him the greatest accessible good in this respect. With every increase of his needs, no matter

whether they are gratified or not, the good of the worldly life is inevitably diminished.

319. The greatest good from the gratification of his needs of eating, drinking, sleeping, raiment, and house, a man receives only when he gratifies them like an animal, instinctively and not in order to receive enjoyment, but in order to destroy incipient suffering; the greatest enjoyment from food a man will receive, not when he has refined food, but when he is hungry ; and from raiment, not when it is beautiful, but when he is frozen ; and from the house, not when it is luxurious, but when he takes refuge in it from ill weather.

320. A man who enjoys a rich dinner, garments, a house, without any necessity, derives less pleasure than a man who uses the poorest kind of food, raiment, and house after he has been starving, freezing, and feeling wet, so that the complication of the means for gratifying the needs and their abundance do not increase the good of the personal life, but diminish it.

321. A superabundance in the gratification of the needs deprives a man of the very source of enjoyment in connection with the gratification of needs; it destroys the health of the organism, —no food affords pleasure to the sick, weakened stomach, and no garment and no houses warm the anæmic bodies.

322. Such are the consequences of the sin of lust for the sinner ; but for the men who surround him its consequences are these, that, in the first place, needy persons are deprived of those objects which are used by those who live in luxury; in the second place, all those mean-spirited men who see the abundance of him who lives in luxury, but do not see his sufferings, are tempted by his condition and are drawn into the same sin, and, instead of the natural, universal, joyous fraternal feelings, experience painful envy and ill-will toward those who live in luxury. This a man must know in order to be able successfully to struggle with the sin of lust.

323. It is impossible in the separate being of a man to destroy the striving after the increase of enjoyment from the gratification of needs, so long as a man lives in the body, but he may reduce this striving in himself to a minimum, and in this does the struggle with this sin consist.

324. For the greatest liberation of oneself from this sin of lust, a

man must first of all understand clearly and remember that every complication of the gratification of one's needs does not increase, but diminishes his good, and produces unnecessary evil in other men.

325. To free himself from the habit of sinning, a man must begin by not increasing his needs, by not changing what he is used to, by not accepting ui ...-----

thing new ; he must not begin to drink tea, if he lived and was well without it; he must not build a new castle, if he lived in an old one. It seems such a little thing not to do this, but if men did not do this, nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of human sins and sufferings would be destroyed.

326. Only by abstaining firmly from introducing new luxury into his life can a man begin the struggle with the sins of heredity, can a man, who is accustomed to drinking tea and eating meat, or who is used to champagne and trotters, give up the habit of what is superfluous, and pass from more luxurious habits to such as are more modest.

327. Only by giving up the habits of luxurious people and descending to the level of the poorest can a man begin to struggle with the natural sins of lust, that is, diminish his needs in comparison with the poorest and most abstinent of men.

LVI. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF PROFIT

328. Man's true good consists in the manifestation of love, and with this a man is placed in such a situation that he never knows when he is going to die, and every hour of his life may be the last, so that a rational man can by no means violate the love in the present for the sake of his care to secure the one in the future. But it is this that a man does when he tries to acquire property and to hold it against other people for the safeguarding of his own future and that of his family.

329. Not only do men, by acting thus, deprive themselves of the true good ; they do not even attain that good of the separate personality which is always safeguarded for each man.

330. It is proper for man to gratify his needs by means of his labour, and even to prepare the objects of his needs, as some animals do, and, acting in this manner, a man attains the highest accessible good of his separate existence.

331. But the moment a man begins to claim exclusive rights to these prepared and otherwise acquired objects, the good of his separate existence is not only diminished, but even changes to suffering for his existence.

332. A man who, in the safeguarding of his future, relies upon his work, upon men's mutual aid, and, above all, upon such an order of the world in which men are as well provided for in life as the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, can calmly surrender himself to all the joys of life; but a man who has himself begun to make his future possessions secure cannot have a minute's rest.

333. In the first place, he never knows to what extent he must make himself secure, whether for a month, a year, ten years, or the next generation. In the second place, property cares draw a man more and more away from the simple joys of life; in the third place, he is always afraid of seizures by other people, always struggles for the preservation and increase of what he has acquired, and, giving up his life to the care of the future, he now loses the present life.

334. Such are the consequences of the sin of property for the sinner; but for those who surround him the consequences are privations as the result of the seizures.

335. It is almost impossible to destroy in oneself the striving after keeping exclusively for oneself raiment, instruments, a piece of bread for the morrow, but it is possible to reduce this striving to a minimum, and in this reduction of the sin of property to a minimum does the struggle with this sin consist.

336. And so, to free himself from the sin of property, a man must clearly understand and remember that every provision for the future by means of acquiring and retaining property will not increase the good of the separate existence, but will diminish it and will produce a large and unnecessary evil for those men among whom property is acquired and retained.

337. To struggle with the habit of the sin, it is necessary to begin by not increasing that property which one has and which provides for the future,— whether that be millions or dozens of sacks of rye for food for the whole year. If men only understood that their good and their life, even their animal life, are not made secure by property, and if only they did not increase at the expense of another what each considers to be his own, there would disappear the greatest part of the calamities from which people suffer.

338. Only when a man can refrain from increasing his property, can he successfully begin the liberation of himself from what he has, and only by having freed himself from everything hereditary, can he begin to struggle with the inborn sins, that is, to give to others what is considered necessary for the support of life itself.

LVII. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF LOVE OF POWER

339. " Kings rule over the nations and are honoured, but let it not be thus among you, — he who wants to be first, let him be a servant to all," says the Christian teaching. According to the Christian teaching a man is sent into the world in order to serve God ; now the service of God is achieved through the manifestation of love. Love can be manifested only through serving men, and so every struggle of a man who has awakened to rational consciousness with other beings, that is, violence and the desire to cause another man to commit an act which is contrary to his will, is contrary to man's destination and interferes with his true good.

340. But a man who has awakened to the rational consciousness and who enters into a struggle with other beings in this way not only deprives himself of the good of the true life, but even does not attain that good of the separate being, after which he is striving.

341. A man who is still living the animal life alone, like a child or an animal, struggles with other beings only so long as his animal instincts demand this struggle : he takes a piece away from another, so long as he is hungry, and drives another man away from his place, only so long as he himself has no place ; he employs nothing but physical force for this struggle, and, having conquered or being

vanquished in the struggle, he makes an end of it. And, in acting thus, he receives the greatest good which is accessible to him as a separate being.

342. But not the same happens with a man with an awakened reason, who enters into the struggle : a man with an awakened reason, on entering into the struggle, uses for this his whole reason and sets his aim in the struggle, and so never knows when to stop it ; and, having conquered, he is carried away by the desire for further victories, evoking in the conquered hatred, which poisons his life, if he is a victor, – and if he is worsted, he suffers himself from humiliation and hatred. Thus a rational man who enters into a struggle with beings not only does not increase the good of his separate being, but even diminishes it and puts in its place sufferings which he himself has produced.

343. A man who avoids struggling, who is meek, is, in the first place, free and can give his forces to what attracts him ; in the second place, as he loves others and humbles himself before them, he evokes love in them, and so can make use of those goods of the worldly life which fall to his share, while a rational man who enters into the struggle inevitably gives up all his life to the efforts of the struggle and, in the second place, by provoking resistance and hatred in other people through the struggle, cannot calmly make use of those goods which he has obtained through the struggle, because he must without cessation defend them.

344. Such are the consequences of the sin of the struggle for the sinner; but for those around him the consequences of the sin are in all kinds of suffering and privations, which the conquered suffer, but chiefly in those sentiments of hatred which they provoke in people in place of the natural or amicable brotherly feeling.

345. Although a man, so long as he is in this life, will never free himself from the conditions of the struggle, yet, the more he will free himself from them in accordance with his strength, the more will he attain the true good, the more of the worldly good will be added to him, and the more will he contribute to the good of the world.

346. And so, to free himself from the sin of the struggle, a man must clearly understand and remember that both his true spiritual and his temporal animal good will be greater the smaller his struggle will be with men and all other beings, and the greater his

humility and meekness will be, and the more he will learn to submit his other cheek to him who will strike him, and to give his cloak to him who takes away his coat.

347. In order not to fall into the habit of the sin, a man must begin by not increasing in himself that sin of the struggle in which he is : if a man is already in the struggle with animals or men, so that his whole carnal life is sustained by this struggle, let him continue this struggle, without intensifying it, and let him not enter into a struggle with other beings, – and he will do much for his liberation from the sin of the struggle. If only men did not increase the struggle, the struggle would be abolished more and more, since there are always men who more and more renounce the struggle.

348. But if a man has reached the point where he lives without increasing the struggle with the surrounding beings, let him labour to diminish and weaken that state of the hereditary struggle in which every man is, when he enters into life.

349. But if a man succeeds in freeing himself from this struggle in which he is brought up, let him try to free himself from those natural conditions of the struggle in which every man finds himself.

LVIII. THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SIN OF FORNICATION

350. Man's destiny is to serve God, which consists in the manifestation of love toward all beings and men ; but the man who abandons himself to the lust of love weakens his forces and takes them away from the service of God, and so, by abandoning himself to sexual lust, deprives himself of the good of the true life.

351. But a man who abandons himself to sexual lust, in whatever form it be, not only deprives himself of the true good, but also does not attain the good which he is seeking.

352. If a man lives in regular wedlock, entering into sexual

intercourse only when there can be children, and educates his children, there inevitably follow sufferings and cares for the mother, for the father cares about the mother and the child, mutual alienations and frequent quarrels between the married pair and between the parents and the children.

353. But if a man enters into sexual intercourse without the purpose of begetting and bringing up children, tries not to have them, and, having them, pays no attention to them, and changes the objects of his love, the good of the separate being becomes even less possible, and he invariably subjects himself to sufferings, which are the more violent the more he abandons himself to the sexual passion : there appear a weakening of the physical and spiritual forces, quarrels, diseases, and there is not that consolation which those who live in regular wedlock have,— the family and all its assistance and joys.

354. Such are the consequences of the sin of fornication for the sinner; but for other people they consist in this, that, in the first place, the person with whom the sin is committed bears all the consequences of the sin : the privation of the true and the temporal good, and the same sufferings and diseases ; and for those who surround him : the destruction of the children in the fœtus, infanticide, the abandoning of children without proper care and without any education, and the horrible evil, which ruins the human souls, prostitution.

355. Not one living being is able to destroy this tendency in its own body, nor can man, if we do not consider the exceptions. Nor can it be otherwise, since this lust secures the existence of the human race, and so, as long as the higher will needs the existence of the human race, there will be fornication in it.

356. But this fornication maybe reduced to a minimum, and by some people may be carried to complete chastity. And in this diminution and reduction of the sin to a minimum and even to chastity in the case of some, as it says in the Gospel, does the struggle with the sin of fornication consist.

357. And so, to free himself from the sin of fornication, a man must understand and remember that fornication is a necessary condition of every animal and every man, as an animal, but that the awakened rational consciousness in man demands of him the opposite, that is, complete chastity, and that the more he will surrender himself to fornication, the less will he receive, not only of the true good,

but even of the temporal animal good, and the more suffering will he cause to himself and to other men.

358. To counteract the habit of this sin, a man must begin by not increasing in himself that sin of fornication, in which he finds himself. If a man is chaste, let him not impair his chastity ; if he is married, let him remain true to his mate ; if he has intercourse with many, let him continue to live so, without inventing unnatural methods of debauchery. Let him not change his position and increase his sin of fornication. If men only did so, all their great sufferings would be destroyed.

359. And if a man has come to a point where he does not commit any new sin, let him labour on diminishing that sin of fornication in which he is : let the one who is chaste in fact struggle with the mental sin of fornication ; let the married man try to diminish and regulate his sexual intercourse. Let him who knows many women, and her who knows many men, become true to the chosen mate.

360. And if a man shall be able to free himself from those habits of fornication, in which he happens to be, let him strive to free himself from those inborn conditions of fornication, in which every man is born.

361. Although but few men can be completely chaste, let every man understand and remember that he can always be chaster than he was before, and can return to the violated chastity, and that the more a man, in accordance with his strength, approaches complete chastity, the more he attains the true good, the more of the worldly good will be added to him, and the more will he contribute to the good of men.

PART THE SEVENTH

OF PRAYER

LIX. SPECIAL MEANS FOR THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SINS

362. Not to fall into deception, it is necessary not to trust any one or anything but one's own reason ; not to fall into an offence, it is necessary not to justify acts which are contrary to the truth, to life ; not to fall into sin, one must clearly understand that sin is evil and deprives one not only of the true good, but also of the personal good, and produces evil in men, and, besides, one must know that sequence of the sins in which it is necessary to struggle with them.

363. But men know this and none the less fall into sin. This is due to the fact that men either do not know quite clearly who they are, what their ego is, or forget this.

364. In order more and more fully and more and more clearly to know oneself and to remember what man is, there is one powerful means. This means is prayer.

LX. OF PRAYER

365. It has been recognized since antiquity that man has need of prayer.

366. For the men of antiquity prayer was, and it even now remains for the majority of men, an address under certain conditions, in certain places, under certain acts and words, to God, or to the gods, for the purpose of propitiating them.

367. The Christian teaching does not know such prayers, but teaches that prayer is indispensable, not as a means for a liberation from worldly calamities and for the acquisition of worldly goods, but as a means for strengthening man in the struggle with the sins.

368. For the struggle with the sins a man must understand and remember his position in the world, and in the performance of every act he must estimate the value of it, in order that he may not fall

into sin. For either, prayer is necessary.

369. And so Christian prayer is of two kinds : one, which elucidates to man his position in the world, – temporary prayer, and the other, which accompanies every act of his, presenting it to God's judgment and verifying it, – hourly prayer.

LXI. TEMPORARY PRAYER

370. Temporary prayer is a prayer by means of which a man in the best moments of his life, abstracting himself from everything worldly, evokes in himself the clearest possible consciousness of God and his relation to him.

371. It is that prayer of which Christ speaks in the sixth chapter of Matthew, when he opposes it to the wordy and public prayers of the Pharisees, and for which he makes solitude a necessary condition. These words show men how they should pray.

372. And the Lord's prayer, as well as the prayer uttered by Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, shows us how to pray and in what the true temporary prayer should consist, which, elucidating man's consciousness about the truth of his life, about his relation to God, and about his destination in the world, strengthens his spiritual powers.

373. As such a prayer may serve a man's expression in his own words of his relation to God ; but such a prayer has always consisted for all men in the repetition of the expressions and ideas of men who lived before us and who expressed their relation to God, and a union of souls with these men and with God. Thus Christ prayed, repeating the words of a psalm, and we pray truly, when we repeat Christ's words, and not only Christ's, but also those of Socrates, Buddha, Lao-tse, Pascal, and others, if we live over that spiritual condition which these men passed through and expressed in those expressions which have come down to us.

374. And so the true temporary prayer will not be the one which will be performed at definite hours and days, but only the one which is performed in moments of the highest spiritual moods, moments which come over every man, which often are evoked by sufferings or by the proximity of death, and at times come without any external cause, and which a man should value as his highest treasure and use for the greater and ever greater elucidation of his consciousness, because only at these moments does our forward motion and approximation to God take place.

375. Such a prayer cannot be performed in assemblies, nor with external actions, but by all means in complete solitude and in freedom from every external, distracting influence.

376. This prayer is the one which moves a man from the lower stage of life to the higher, from the animal to man, and from man to God.

377. Only thanks to this prayer does a man recognize himself, his divine nature, and feel those barriers which confine his divine nature, and, feeling them, try to break them, and in this tendency widen them.

378. It is that prayer which, elucidating consciousness, makes impossible for man the sins into which he fell before and presents to him as sin what before had not appeared as sinful to him.

LXII. HOURLY PRAYER

379. In his motion from the animal to the true and spiritual life, in his birth to a new life, in his struggle with sin, every man always finds himself in three different relations to sin : one set of sins is vanquished by man, – they sit like captured animals, bound to their chain, and only now and then by their bellowing remind him that they are alive. These sins are behind. Other sins are such as a man has just come to see, acts which he has committed all his life, without considering them sins, and the sinfulness of which he has just come to see in consequence of the clearing up of his consciousness in temporary prayer. A man sees the sinfulness of his acts, but he is so accustomed to committing them, that he has but lately and indistinctly recognized the sinfulness of these deeds and has not yet attempted to struggle against them. And there is a third kind of acts, the sinfulness of which a man sees clearly, with which he struggles, and which he at times commits, surrendering himself to sin, and at times does not commit, vanquishing sin.

380. For the struggle with these sins hourly prayer is needed. Hourly prayer consists in this, that it reminds a man at all minutes of his life, during all his acts, of what his life and good consist in, and so cooperates with him in those acts of life in which he is still able to vanquish the animal nature by means of his spiritual consciousness.

381. Hourly prayer is a constant recognition of the presence of God, a constant recognition by the ambassador during the time of his embassy of the presence of him who sent him.

382. The birth to new life, the liberation of self from the shackles of the animal nature, the liberation of self from sin, takes place only by slow efforts. Temporary prayer, in enlightening man's consciousness, reveals to him his sin. The sin at first appears to him unimportant, bearable, but the longer a man lives, the more pressing does the necessity become of freeing himself from sin. And if a man does not fall into an offence which conceals his sin, he inevitably enters into a struggle with sin.

383. But with his first attempts to overcome sin, a man feels his impotence: the sin attracts him by the sweetness of the habit of the sin ; and a man is unable to oppose anything to the sin but the consciousness of the fact that the sin is not good, and, knowing that what he is doing is bad, he continues to do what is bad.

384. There is but one way out of this situation. Some religious teachers see it in this, that there exists a separate force, called grace, which supports man in his struggle with sin, which is obtained through certain actions called sacraments. Other teachers see a way out of this situation in the redemption, which was accomplished by Christ the God in his death for men. Others again see this way out in prayer addressed to God about strengthening man's power in his struggle with sin.

385. But none of these means makes it easier for a man to struggle with sin ; in spite of the grace of the sacrament, of the faith in the redemption, of suppliant prayer, every man who has sincerely begun to struggle with sin cannot help but feel his whole weakness before the mightiness of sin and the hopelessness of the struggle with it.

386. The hopelessness of the struggle presents itself very forcibly, because, having come to understand the lie of the sin, a man wants to free himself from it at once, in which he is supported by all kinds of false teachings concerning redemption, the sacraments, and so forth, and, feeling the impotence of the liberation, he at once neglects those insignificant efforts which he can make for freeing himself from sin.

387. However, as all the great transformations in the material world do not take place at once, but by slow and gradual falling off and accretion, so also in the spiritual world the liberation from sin and the approach to perfection take place only through the counteraction to sin, – through the successive destruction of its minutest particles.

388. It is not in man's power to free himself from a sin which has become a habit in the course of many years ; but it is entirely within his power not to commit acts which draw into sin, to diminish the attractiveness of sin, to put himself where it is impossible to commit a sin, to cut off his hand and put out his eye which offend him. And this he should do every day and every minute, and in order to be able to do this, he needs hourly prayer.

PART THE EIGHTH

CONCLUSION

LX III. WHAT MAY A MAN EXPECT WHO LIVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE PRESENT?

389. There are religious teachings which promise men who follow them a full and complete good in life, not only in the one to come, but also in this. There is even such a comprehension of the Christian teaching. The men who understand the Christian teaching in this manner say that a man needs but follow Christ's teaching, to renounce himself, to love men, and his life will be one continuous joy. There are other religious teachings which see in human life nothing but unending, necessary suffering, which a man must bear,

expecting rewards in the future life. There exists such a comprehension also of the Christian teaching : some see in life constant joy, others – constant suffering.

390. Neither comprehension is correct. Life is not joy, nor suffering. It may present itself as joy or as suffering only to that man who considers his separate existence to be his ego ; only for this ego can there be joy or suffering. Life according to the Christian teaching, in its true sense, is neither joy, nor suffering, but the birth and growth of man's true spiritual ego, with which there can be no joy and no suffering.

391. According to the Christian teaching, man's life is a constant growth of his consciousness of love. And since the growth of the human soul, the increase of love, is taking place without cessation, and there is also taking place in the world without cessation that work of God which is accomplished by this growth, a man who understands his life as the Christian teaching teaches him to understand it, namely, as an increase of love for the establishment of the kingdom of God, can never be unhappy or dissatisfied.

392. On the path of his life there may occur joys and sufferings for his animal personality, which he cannot help but feel, which he cannot help but enjoy or bear, but he can never experience complete happiness (and so he cannot wish for it) and can never be unhappy (and so cannot fear sufferings and wish to avoid them, if they are in his way).

393. A man who lives a Christian life does not ascribe any great meaning to his joys, does not look upon them as the realization of his wishes, but looks upon them only as accidental phenomena which one meets on the path of life, as something which is naturally added to him who seeks the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and he does not look upon his sufferings as something that ought not to be, but looks upon them as an indispensable phenomenon of life like friction in work, knowing likewise, that as friction is a sign of work performed, so sufferings are a sign of the performance of the work of God.

394. A man who lives a Christian life is always free, because the same that forms the meaning of his life, – the removal of obstacles which impede love and, in consequence of this removal, the increase of love and the establishment of the kingdom of God, is precisely what he always wants and what is irresistibly accomplished in his

life; he is always calm, because nothing can happen to him which he does not wish.

395. We must not think that a man who lives a Christian life always experiences this freedom and peace. always receives joys, without being carried away by them, as something accidental, without wishing to retain them, and sufferings as an indispensable condition of the motion of life. A Christian may temporarily be carried away by joys, trying to produce and retain them, and temporarily be tormented by sufferings, taking them as something unnecessary, which might even not have been ; but at the loss of joys, at the fear and pain of sufferings, a Christian immediately recalls his Christian dignity, his embassy, and his joys and sufferings take up their appropriate place, and he again becomes free and calm.

396. Thus even in a worldly relation the position of a Christian is not worse, but better than the position of a non-Christian. " Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the rest shall be added unto you," means that all the worldly joys of life are not kept away from a Christian, but are fully accessible to him, with this one difference, that while the joys of a non-Christian may be artificial and may pass over into satiety, into sufferings, and so appear to him as unnecessary and hopeless, – for a Christian the joys are more simple and more natural, and so more powerful, never producing satiety or suffering : they can never cause so much pain and seem so senseless as they do to a non-Christian.

Such is the position of a Christian in the life of the present ; but what can a Christian expect in the future ?

LXIV. WHAT MAY A MAN EXPECT IN THE FUTURE?

397. Living in this world in his bodily integument, a man cannot represent life to himself otherwise than in space and time, and so he naturally asks himself, where. he will be after death.

398. But this question is faulty : The divine essence of our soul is spiritual, extratemporal and extraspatial ; being in this life

enclosed in the body, the soul, on leaving it, ceases to be in conditions of space and time, and so we cannot say of this essence that it will be. It is. Even so Christ said, " Before Abraham was, I am." Thus we all are. If we are, we have always been and shall always be. We are.

399. Even so it is with the question where we shall be. When we speak of where, we speak of the place in which we shall be. But the idea of place resulted only from that division from everything else, in which we are placed. At death this division is destroyed, and so we shall be everywhere and nowhere, for the people who live in this world. We shall be such that place will not exist for us.

400. There exist many different guesses as to where we shall be after death ; but all these guesses, from the grossest to the most delicate, cannot satisfy a rational man. Bliss, Mohammed's voluptuousness, is too gross and palpably incompatible with the true concept of man and God. Even so the church representation of paradise and hell is not compatible with the concept of a God of love. The transmigration of the souls is less gross, but it similarly preserves the concept of the individuality of the being : the concept of the Nirvana destroys the whole coarseness of the idea, but violates the demands of reason, – the rationality of existence.

401. Thus no representation of what will be after death gives any answer which could satisfy a rational man.

402. Nor can it be otherwise. The question is falsely put. The human mind, which can reason only in conditions of time and space, wants to give an answer to what will be outside these conditions.– Reason knows but this much, that there is a divine essence, that it grew in this world, and that having reached a certain degree of its growth, it left these conditions.

403. Will this essence continue to act in severalty ? Will this increase of love be the cause of another new division ? All these are guesses, and there may be very many such guesses, but not one of them can give any ascertainable truth.

404. One thing is certain and indubitable, and that is, that Christ has said, " Into thy hands I commend my spirit," that is, dying I

return whence I came. And if I believe in this, that that from which I have come is rational love (I know these two properties), I joyfully return to him, knowing that I shall fare well. I not only do not grieve, but even rejoice at the transition which awaits me.