

MY RELIGION

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 4 of 5]

Chapter 9 Let all the world practise the doctrine of Jesus, and the reign of God will come upon earth; if I alone practise it, I shall do what I can to better my own condition and the condition of those about me. There is no salvation aside from the fulfilment of the doctrine of Jesus. But who will give me the strength to practise it, to follow it without ceasing, and never to fail? "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." The disciples called upon Jesus to strengthen their faith. "When I would do good," says the apostle Paul, "evil is present with me." It is hard to work out one's salvation. A drowning man calls for aid. A rope is thrown to him, and he says: "Strengthen my belief that this rope will save me. I believe that the rope will save me; but help my unbelief." What is the meaning of this? If a man will not seize upon his only means of safety, it is plain that he does not understand his condition. How can a Christian who professes to believe in the divinity of Jesus and of his doctrine, whatever may be the meaning that he attaches thereto, say that he wishes to believe, and that he cannot believe? God comes upon earth, and says, "Fire, torments, eternal darkness await you; and here is your salvation—fulfil my doctrine." It is not possible that a believing Christian should not believe and profit by the salvation thus offered to him; it is not possible that he should say, "Help my unbelief." If a man says this, he not only does not

believe in his perdition, but he must be certain that he shall not perish. A number of children have fallen from a boat into the water. For an instant their clothes and their feeble struggles keep them on the surface of the stream, and they do not realize their danger. Those in the boat throw out a rope. They warn the children against their peril, and urge them to grasp the rope (the parables of the woman and the piece of silver, the shepherd and the lost sheep, the marriage feast, the prodigal son, all have this meaning), but the children do not believe; they refuse to believe, not in the rope, but that they are in danger of drowning. Children as frivolous as themselves have assured them that they can continue to float gaily along even when the boat is far away. The children do not believe; but when their clothes are saturated, the strength of their little arms exhausted, they will sink and perish. This they do not believe, and so they do not believe in the rope of safety. Just as the children in the water will not grasp the rope that is thrown to them, persuaded that they will not perish, so men who believe in the resurrection of the soul, convinced that there is no danger, do not practise the commandments of Jesus. They do not believe in what is certain, simply because they do believe in what is uncertain. It is for this cause they cry, "Lord, strengthen our faith, lest we perish." But this is impossible. To have the faith that will save them from perishing, they must cease to do what will lead them to perdition, and they must begin to do something for their own safety; they must grasp the rope of safety. Now this is exactly what they do not wish to do; they wish to persuade themselves that they will not perish, although they see their comrades perishing one after another before their very eyes. They wish to persuade themselves of the truth of what does not exist, and so they ask to be strengthened in faith. It is plain that they have not enough faith, and they wish for more. When I understood the doctrine of Jesus, I saw that what these

men call faith is the faith denounced by the apostle James: — “What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man believe he hath faith, but hath not works? can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself. But some one will say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: Shew me thy faith which is without works, and I, by my works, will show thee my faith. Thou believest there is one God; thou doest well: the demons also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect.... Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith is dead without works” (James 2: 14-26.) James says that the indication of faith is the acts that it inspires, and consequently that a faith which does not result in acts is of words merely, with which one cannot feed the hungry, or justify belief, or obtain salvation. A faith without acts is not faith. It is only a disposition to believe in something, a vain affirmation of belief in something in which one does not really believe. Faith, as the apostle James defines it, is the motive power of actions, and actions are a manifestation of faith. The Jews said to Jesus: “What signs shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?” Jesus told them that their desire was vain, and that they could not be made to believe what they did not believe. “If I tell you,” he said, “ye will not believe” (Luke); “I told you, and ye believed not.... But ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep” (John). The Jews asked exactly what is asked by Christians brought up in the Church; they asked for some outward sign which should make them believe in the

doctrine of Jesus. Jesus explained that this was impossible, and he told them why it was impossible. He told them that they could not believe because they were not of his sheep; that is, they did not follow the road he had pointed out. He explained why some believed, and why others did not believe, and he told them what faith really was. He said: "How can ye believe which receive your doctrine one of another, and seek not the doctrine that cometh only from God?" (John). To believe, Jesus says, we must seek for the doctrine that comes from God alone. "He that speaketh of himself seeketh [to extend] his own doctrine, but he that seeketh the doctrine of him that sent him, the same is true, and no untruth is in him" (John 7: 18.) The doctrine of life is the foundation of faith, and actions result spontaneously from faith. But there are two doctrines of life: Jesus denies the one and affirms the other. One of these doctrines, a source of all error, consists of the idea that the personal life is one of the essential and real attributes of man. This doctrine has been followed, and is still followed, by the majority of men; it is the source of divergent beliefs and acts. The other doctrine, taught by Jesus and by all the prophets, affirms that our personal life has no meaning save through fulfilment of the will of God. If a man confess a doctrine that emphasizes his own personal life, he will consider that his personal welfare is the most important thing in the world, and he will consider riches, honors, glory, pleasure, as true sources of happiness; he will have a faith in accordance with his inclination, and his acts will always be in harmony with his faith. If a man confess a different doctrine, if he find the essence of life in fulfilment of the will of God in accordance with the example of Abraham and the teaching and example of Jesus, his faith will accord with his principles, and his acts will be conformable to his faith. And so those who believe that true happiness is to be found in the personal life can never have faith in the doctrine of Jesus. All their efforts to fix their

faith upon it will be always vain. To believe in the doctrine of Jesus, they must look at life in an entirely different way. Their actions will coincide always with their faith and not with their intentions and their words. In men who demand of Jesus that he shall work miracles we may recognize a desire to believe in his doctrine; but this desire never can be realized in life, however arduous the efforts to obtain it. In vain they pray, and observe the sacraments, and give in charity, and build churches, and convert others; they cannot follow the example of Jesus because their acts are inspired by a faith based upon an entirely different doctrine from that which they confess. They could not sacrifice an only son as Abraham was ready to do, although Abraham had no hesitation whatever as to what he should do, just as Jesus and his disciples were moved to give their lives for others, because such action alone constituted for them the true meaning of life. This incapacity to understand the substance of faith explains the strange moral state of men, who, acknowledging that they ought to live in accordance with the doctrine of Jesus, endeavor to live in opposition to this doctrine, conformably to their belief that the personal life is a sovereign good. The basis of faith is the meaning that we derive from life, the meaning that determines whether we look upon life as important and good, or trivial and corrupt. Faith is the appreciation of good and of evil. Men with a faith based upon their own doctrines do not succeed at all in harmonizing this faith with the faith inspired by the doctrine of Jesus; and so it was with the early disciples. This misapprehension is frequently referred to in the Gospels in clear and decisive terms. Several times the disciples asked Jesus to strengthen their faith in his words. After the message, so terrible to every man who believes in the personal life and who seeks his happiness in the riches of this world, after the words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God," and after words still more terrible for men who believe only in

the personal life, "Sell whatsoever thou hast and give to the poor;" after these warning words Peter asked, "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Then James and John and, according to the Gospel of Matthew, their mother, asked him that they might be allowed to sit with him in glory. They asked Jesus to strengthen their faith with a promise of future recompense. To Peter's question Jesus replied with a parable (Matthew 20: 1-16); to James he replied that they did not know what they asked; that they asked what was impossible; that they did not understand the doctrine, which meant a renunciation of the personal life, while they demanded personal glory, a personal recompense; that they should drink the cup he drank of (that is, live as he lived), but to sit upon his right hand and upon his left was not his to give. And Jesus added that the great of this world had their profit and enjoyment of glory and personal power only in the worldly life; but that his disciples ought to know that the true meaning of human life is not in personal happiness, but in ministering to others; "the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." In reply to the unreasonable demands which revealed their slowness to understand his doctrine, Jesus did not command his disciples to have faith in his doctrine, that is, to modify the ideas inspired by their own doctrine (he knew that to be impossible), but he explained to them the meaning of that life which is the basis of true faith, that is, taught them how to discern good from evil, the important from the secondary. To Peter's question, "What shall we receive?" Jesus replies with the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, beginning with the words "For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder," and by this means Jesus explains to Peter that failure to understand the doctrine is the cause of lack of faith; and that remuneration in proportion to the amount of work done is important only from the point of view of the

personal life. This faith is based upon the presumption of certain imaginary rights; but a man has a right to nothing; he is under obligations for the good he has received, and so he can exact nothing. Even if he were to give up his whole life to the service of others, he could not pay the debt he has incurred, and so he cannot complain of injustice. If a man sets a value upon his rights to life, if he keeps a reckoning with the Overruling Power from whom he has received life, he proves simply that he does not understand the meaning of life. Men who have received a benefit act far otherwise. The laborers employed in the vineyard were found by the householder idle and unhappy; they did not possess life in the proper meaning of the term. And then the householder gave them the supreme welfare of life—work. They accepted the benefits offered, and were discontented because their remuneration was not graduated according to their imaginary deserts. They did the work, believing in their false doctrine of life and work as a right, and consequently with an idea of the remuneration to which they were entitled. They did not understand that work is the supreme good, and that they should be thankful for the opportunity to work, instead of exacting payment. And so all men who look upon life as these laborers looked upon it, never can possess true faith. This parable of the laborers, related by Jesus in response to the request by his disciples that he strengthen their faith, shows more clearly than ever the basis of the faith that Jesus taught. When Jesus told his disciples that they must forgive a brother who trespassed against them not only once, but seventy times seven times, the disciples were overwhelmed at the difficulty of observing this injunction, and said, “Increase our faith,” just as a little while before they had asked, “What shall we receive?” Now they uttered the language of would-be Christians: “We wish to believe, but cannot; strengthen our faith that we may be saved; make us believe” (as the Jews said to Jesus when they

demanded miracles); “either by miracles or promises of recompense, make us to have faith in our salvation.” The disciples said what we all say: “How pleasant it would be if we could live our selfish life, and at the same time believe that it is far better to practise the doctrine of God by living for others.” This disposition of mind is common to us all; it is contrary to the meaning of the doctrine of Jesus, and yet we are astonished at our lack of faith. Jesus disposed of this misapprehension by means of a parable illustrating true faith. Faith cannot come of confidence in his words; faith can come only of a consciousness of our condition; faith is based only upon the dictates of reason as to what is best to do in a given situation. He showed that this faith cannot be awakened in others by promises of recompense or threats of punishment, which can only arouse a feeble confidence that will fail at the first trial; but that the faith which removes mountains, the faith that nothing can shatter, is inspired by the consciousness of our inevitable loss if we do not profit by the salvation that is offered. To have faith, we must not count on any promise of recompense; we must understand that the only way of escape from a ruined life is a life conformable to the will of the Master. He who understands this will not ask to be strengthened in his faith, but will work out his salvation without the need of any exhortation. The householder, when he comes from the fields with his workman, does not ask the latter to sit down at once to dinner, but directs him to attend first to other duties and to wait upon him, the master, and then to take his place at the table and dine. This the workman does without any sense of being wronged; he does not boast of his labor nor does he demand recognition or recompense, for he knows that labor is the inevitable condition of his existence and the true welfare of his life. So Jesus says that when we have done all that we are commanded to do, we have only fulfilled our duty. He who understands his relations to his master will understand that he has life only

as he obeys the master's will; he will know in what his welfare consists, and he will have a faith that does not demand the impossible. This is the faith taught by Jesus, which has for its foundation a thorough perception of the true meaning of life. The source of faith is light:— "That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1: 9-12.) "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reprov'd. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God." (John 3: 19-21.) He who understands the doctrine of Jesus will not ask to be strengthened in his faith. The doctrine of Jesus teaches that faith is inspired by the light of truth. Jesus never asked men to have faith in his person; he called upon them to have faith in truth. To the Jews he said:— "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God." (John 8: 40.) "Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" (John 8: 46.) "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18: 37.) To his disciples he said:— "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (John 14: 6.) "The Father ... shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14: 16, 17.) Jesus' doctrine, then, is truth, and he himself is truth. The

doctrine of Jesus is the doctrine of truth. Faith in Jesus is not belief in a system based upon his personality, but a consciousness of truth. No one can be persuaded to believe in the doctrine of Jesus, nor can any one be stimulated by any promised reward to practise it. He who understands the doctrine of Jesus will have faith in him, because this doctrine is true. He who knows the truth indispensable to his happiness must believe in it, just as a man who knows that he is drowning grasps the rope of safety. Thus, the question, What must I do to believe? is an indication that he who asks it does not understand the doctrine of Jesus.

Chapter 10 We say, It is difficult to live according to the doctrine of Jesus! And why should it not be difficult, when by our organization of life we carefully hide from ourselves our true situation; when we endeavor to persuade ourselves that our situation is not at all what it is, but that it is something else? We call this faith, and regarding it as sacred, we endeavor by all possible means, by threats, by flattery, by falsehood, by stimulating the emotions, to attract men to its support. In this mad determination to believe what is contrary to sense and reason, we reach such a degree of aberration that we are ready to take as an indication of truth the very absurdity of the object in whose behalf we solicit the confidence of men. Are there not Christians who are ready to declare with enthusiasm "Credo quia absurdum," supposing that the absurd is the best medium for teaching men the truth? Not long ago a man of intelligence and great learning said to me that the Christian doctrine had no importance as a moral rule of life. Morality, he said, must be sought in the teachings of the Stoics and the Brahmins, and in the Talmud. The essence of the Christian doctrine is not in morality, he said, but in the theosophical doctrine propounded in its dogmas. According to this I ought to prize in the Christian doctrine not what it contains of eternal good to humanity, not its

teachings indispensable to a reasonable life; I ought to regard as the most important element of Christianity that portion of it which it is impossible to understand, and therefore useless—and this in the name of thousands of men who have perished for their faith. We have a false conception of life, a conception based upon wrong doing and inspired by selfish passions, and we consider our faith in this false conception (which we have in some way attached to the doctrine of Jesus), as the most important and necessary thing with which we are concerned. If men had not for centuries maintained faith in what is untrue, this false conception of life, as well as the truth of the doctrine of Jesus, would long ago have been revealed. It is a terrible thing to say, but it seems to me that if the doctrine of Jesus, and that of the Church which has been foisted upon it, had never existed, those who to-day call themselves Christians would be much nearer than they are to the truth of the doctrine of Jesus; that is, to the reasonable doctrine which teaches the true meaning of life. The moral doctrines of all the prophets of the world would not then be closed to them. They would have their little ideas of truth, and would regard them with confidence. Now, all truth is revealed, and this truth has so horrified those whose manner of life it condemned, that they have disguised it in falsehood, and men have lost confidence in the truth. In our European society, the words of Jesus, “To this end I am come into the world, that I shall bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,”—have been for a long time supplanted by Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” This question, quoted as a bitter and profound irony against a Roman, we have taken as of serious purport, and have made of it an article of faith. With us, all men live not only without truth, not only without the least desire to know truth, but with the firm conviction that, among all useless occupations, the most useless is the endeavor to find the truth that governs

human life. The rule of life, the doctrine that all peoples, excepting our European societies, have always considered as the most important thing, the rule of which Jesus spoke as the one thing needful, is an object of universal disdain. An institution called the Church, in which no one, not even if he belong to it, really believes, has for a long time usurped the place of this rule. The only source of light for those who think and suffer is hidden. For a solution of the questions, What am I? what ought I to do? I am not allowed to depend upon the doctrine of him who came to save; I am told to obey the authorities, and believe in the Church. But why is life so full of evil? Why so much wrong-doing? May I not abstain from taking part therein? Is it impossible to lighten this heavy load that weighs me down? The reply is that this is impossible, that the desire to live well and to help others to live well is only a temptation of pride; that one thing is possible—to save one's soul for the future life. He who is not willing to take part in this miserable life may keep aloof from it; this way is open to all; but, says the doctrine of the Church, he who chooses this way can take no part in the life of the world; he ceases to live. Our masters tell us that there are only two ways—to believe in and obey the powers that be, to participate in the organized evil about us, or to forsake the world and take refuge in convent or monastery; to take part in the offices of the Church, doing nothing for men, and declaring the doctrine of Jesus impossible to practise, accepting the iniquity of life sanctioned by the Church, or to renounce life for what is equivalent to slow suicide. However surprising the belief that the doctrine of Jesus is excellent, but impossible of practice, there is a still more surprising tradition that he who wishes to practise this doctrine, not in word, but in deed, must retire from the world. This erroneous belief that it is better for a man to retire from the world than to expose himself to temptations, existed amongst the Hebrews of old, but is entirely foreign, not only to the spirit

of Christianity, but to that of the Jewish religion. The charming and significant story of the prophet Jonah, which Jesus so loved to quote, was written in regard to this very error. The prophet Jonah, wishing to remain upright and virtuous, retires from the perverse companionship of men. But God shows him that as a prophet he ought to communicate to misguided men a knowledge of the truth, and so ought not to fly from men, but ought rather to live in communion with them. Jonah, disgusted with the depravity of the inhabitants of Nineveh, flies from the city; but he cannot escape his vocation. He is brought back, and the will of God is accomplished; the Ninevites receive the words of Jonah and are saved. Instead of rejoicing that he has been made the instrument of God's will, Jonah is angry, and condemns God for the mercy shown the Ninevites, arrogating to himself alone the exercise of reason and goodness. He goes out into the desert and makes him a shelter, whence he addresses his reproaches to God. Then a gourd comes up over Jonah and protects him from the sun, but the next day it withers. Jonah, smitten by the heat, reproaches God anew for allowing the gourd to wither. Then God says to him:— "Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should I not have pity on Nineveh, that great city; wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand?" Jesus knew this story, and often referred to it. In the Gospels we find it related how Jesus, after the interview with John, who had retired into the desert, was himself subjected to the same temptation before beginning his mission. He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, and there tempted by the Devil (error), over which he triumphed and returned to Galilee. Thereafter he mingled with the most depraved men, and passed his life among publicans, Pharisees, and fishermen, teaching them the

truth. Even according to the doctrine of the Church, Jesus, as God in man, has given us the example of his life. All of his life that is known to us was passed in the company of publicans, of the downfallen, and of Pharisees. The principal commandments of Jesus are that his followers shall love others and spread his doctrine. Both exact constant communion with the world. And yet the deduction is made that the doctrine of Jesus permits retirement from the world. That is, to imitate Jesus we may do exactly contrary to what he taught and did himself. As the Church explains it, the doctrine of Jesus offers itself to men of the world and to dwellers in monasteries, not as a rule of life for bettering one's own condition and the condition of others, but as a doctrine which teaches the man of the world how to live an evil life and at the same time gain for himself another life, and the monk how to render existence still more difficult than it naturally is. But Jesus did not teach this. Jesus taught the truth, and if metaphysical truth is the truth, it will remain such in practice. If life in God is the only true life, and is in itself profitable, then it is so here in this world in spite of all that may happen. If in this world a life in accordance with the doctrine of Jesus is not profitable, his doctrine cannot be true. Jesus did not ask us to pass from better to worse, but, on the contrary, from worse to better. He had pity upon men, who to him were like sheep without a shepherd. He said that his disciples would be persecuted for his doctrine, and that they must bear the persecutions of the world with resolution. But he did not say that those who followed his doctrine would suffer more than those who followed the world's doctrine; on the contrary, he said that those who followed the world's doctrine would be wretched, and that those who followed his doctrine would have joy and peace. Jesus did not teach salvation by faith in asceticism or voluntary torture, but he taught us a way of life which, while saving us from the emptiness of the personal life, would give us

less of suffering and more of joy. Jesus told men that in practising his doctrine among unbelievers they would be, not more unhappy, but, on the contrary, much more happy, than those who did not practise it. There was, he said, one infallible rule, and that was to have no care about the worldly life. When Peter said to Jesus, "We have forsaken all, and followed thee; what then shall we have?" Jesus replied:— "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundred fold more in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life." (Mark 10: 28-30.) Jesus declared, it is true, that those who follow his doctrine must expect to be persecuted by those who do not follow it, but he did not say that his disciples will be the worse off for that reason; on the contrary, he said that his disciples would have, here, in this world, more benefits than those who did not follow him. That Jesus said and thought this is beyond a doubt, as the clearness of his words on this subject, the meaning of his entire doctrine, his life and the life of his disciples, plainly show. But was his teaching in this respect true? When we examine the question as to which of the two conditions would be the better, that of the disciples of Jesus or that of the disciples of the world, we are obliged to conclude that the condition of the disciples of Jesus ought to be the most desirable, since the disciples of Jesus, in doing good to every one, would not arouse the hatred of men. The disciples of Jesus, doing evil to no one, would be persecuted only by the wicked. The disciples of the world, on the contrary, are likely to be persecuted by every one, since the law of the disciples of the world is the law of each for himself, the law of struggle; that is, of mutual persecution. Moreover, the disciples of Jesus would be prepared for suffering, while the disciples of the world use all possible means to avoid

suffering; the disciples of Jesus would feel that their sufferings were useful to the world; but the disciples of the world do not know why they suffer. On abstract grounds, then, the condition of the disciples of Jesus would be more advantageous than that of the disciples of the world. But is it so in reality? To answer this, let each one call to mind all the painful moments of his life, all the physical and moral sufferings that he has endured, and let him ask himself if he has suffered these calamities in behalf of the doctrine of the world or in behalf of the doctrine of Jesus. Every sincere man will find in recalling his past life that he has never once suffered for practising the doctrine of Jesus. He will find that the greater part of the misfortunes of his life have resulted from following the doctrines of the world. In my own life (an exceptionally happy one from a worldly point of view) I can reckon up as much suffering caused by following the doctrine of the world as many a martyr has endured for the doctrine of Jesus. All the most painful moments of my life—the orgies and duels in which I took part as a student, the wars in which I have participated, the diseases that I have endured, and the abnormal and insupportable conditions under which I now live—all these are only so much martyrdom exacted by fidelity to the doctrine of the world. But I speak of a life exceptionally happy from a worldly point of view. How many martyrs have suffered for the doctrine of the world torments that I should find difficulty in enumerating! We do not realize the difficulties and dangers entailed by the practice of the doctrine of the world, simply because we are persuaded that we could not do otherwise than follow that doctrine. We are persuaded that all the calamities that we inflict upon ourselves are the result of the inevitable conditions of life, and we cannot understand that the doctrine of Jesus teaches us how we may rid ourselves of these calamities and render our lives happy. To be able to reply to the question, Which of these two conditions is the happier? we

must, at least for the time being, put aside our prejudices and take a careful survey of our surroundings. Go through our great cities and observe the emaciated, sickly, and distorted specimens of humanity to be found therein; recall your own existence and that of all the people with whose lives you are familiar; recall the instances of violent deaths and suicides of which you have heard—and then ask yourself for what cause all this suffering and death, this despair that leads to suicide, has been endured. You will find, perhaps to your surprise, that nine-tenths of all human suffering endured by men is useless, and ought not to exist, that, in fact, the majority of men are martyrs to the doctrine of the world. One rainy autumn day I rode on the tramway by the Sukhareff Tower in Moscow. For the distance of half a verst the vehicle forced its way through a compact crowd which quickly reformed its ranks. From morning till night these thousands of men, the greater portion of them starving and in rags, tramped angrily through the mud, venting their hatred in abusive epithets and acts of violence. The same sight may be seen in all the market-places of Moscow. At sunset these people go to the taverns and gaming-houses; their nights are passed in filth and wretchedness. Think of the lives of these people, of what they abandon through choice for their present condition; think of the heavy burden of labor without reward which weighs upon these men and women, and you will see that they are true martyrs. All these people have forsaken houses, lands, parents, wives, and children; they have renounced all the comforts of life, and they have come to the cities to acquire that which according to the gospel of the world is indispensable to every one. And all these tens of thousands of unhappy people sleep in hovels, and subsist upon strong drink and wretched food. But aside from this class, all, from factory workman, cab-driver, sewing girl, and lorette, to merchant and government official, all endure the most painful and abnormal

conditions without being able to acquire what, according to the doctrine of the world, is indispensable to each. Seek among all these men, from beggar to millionaire, one who is contented with his lot, and you will not find one such in a thousand. Each one spends his strength in pursuit of what is exacted by the doctrine of the world, and of what he is unhappy not to possess, and scarcely has he obtained one object of his desires when he strives for another, and still another, in that infinite labor of Sisyphus which destroys the lives of men. Run over the scale of individual fortunes, ranging from a yearly income of three hundred roubles to fifty thousand roubles, and you will rarely find a person who is not striving to gain four hundred roubles if he have three hundred, five hundred if he have four hundred, and so on to the top of the ladder. Among them all you will scarcely find one who, with five hundred roubles, is willing to adopt the mode of life of him who has only four hundred. When such an instance does occur, it is not inspired by a desire to make life more simple, but to amass money and make it more sure. Each strives continually to make the heavy burden of existence still more heavy, by giving himself up body and soul to the practice of the doctrine of the world. To-day we must buy an overcoat and galoches, to-morrow, a watch and chain; the next day we must install ourselves in an apartment with a sofa and a bronze lamp; then we must have carpets and velvet gowns; then a house, horses and carriages, paintings and decorations, and then —then we fall ill of overwork and die. Another continues the same task, sacrifices his life to this same Moloch, and then dies also, without realizing for what he has lived. But possibly this existence is in itself attractive? Compare it with what men have always called happiness, and you will see that it is hideous. For what, according to the general estimate, are the principal conditions of earthly happiness? One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between man and nature shall not be severed, that is, that

he shall be able to see the sky above him, and that he shall be able to enjoy the sunshine, the pure air, the fields with their verdure, their multitudinous life. Men have always regarded it as a great unhappiness to be deprived of all these things. But what is the condition of those men who live according to the doctrine of the world? The greater their success in practising the doctrine of the world, the more they are deprived of these conditions of happiness. The greater their worldly success, the less they are able to enjoy the light of the sun, the freshness of the fields and woods, and all the delights of country life. Many of them—including nearly all the women—arrive at old age without having seen the sun rise or the beauties of the early morning, without having seen a forest except from a seat in a carriage, without ever having planted a field or a garden, and without having the least idea as to the ways and habits of dumb animals. These people, surrounded by artificial light instead of sunshine, look only upon fabrics of tapestry and stone and wood fashioned by the hand of man; the roar of machinery, the roll of vehicles, the thunder of cannon, the sound of musical instruments, are always in their ears; they breathe an atmosphere heavy with distilled perfumes and tobacco smoke; because of the weakness of their stomachs and their depraved tastes they eat rich and highly spiced food. When they move about from place to place, they travel in closed carriages. When they go into the country, they have the same fabrics beneath their feet; the same draperies shut out the sunshine; and the same array of servants cut off all communication with the men, the earth, the vegetation, and the animals about them. Wherever they go, they are like so many captives shut out from the conditions of happiness. As prisoners sometimes console themselves with a blade of grass that forces its way through the pavement of their prison yard, or make pets of a spider or a mouse, so these people sometimes amuse themselves with sickly plants, a parrot, a poodle, or a

monkey, to whose needs however they do not themselves administer. Another inevitable condition of happiness is work: first, the intellectual labor that one is free to choose and loves; secondly, the exercise of physical power that brings a good appetite and tranquil and profound sleep. Here, again, the greater the imagined prosperity that falls to the lot of men according to the doctrine of the world, the more such men are deprived of this condition of happiness. All the prosperous people of the world, the men of dignity and wealth, are as completely deprived of the advantages of work as if they were shut up in solitary confinement. They struggle unsuccessfully with the diseases caused by the need of physical exercise, and with the ennui which pursues them—unsuccessfully, because labor is a pleasure only when it is necessary, and they have need of nothing; or they undertake work that is odious to them, like the bankers, solicitors, administrators, and government officials, and their wives, who plan receptions and routs and devise toilettes for themselves and their children. (I say odious, because I never yet met any person of this class who was contented with his work or took as much satisfaction in it as the porter feels in shovelling away the snow from before their doorsteps.) All these favorites of fortune are either deprived of work or are obliged to work at what they do not like, after the manner of criminals condemned to hard labor. The third undoubted condition of happiness is the family. But the more men are enslaved by worldly success, the more certainly are they cut off from domestic pleasures. The majority of them are libertines, who deliberately renounce the joys of family life and retain only its cares. If they are not libertines, their children, instead of being a source of pleasure, are a burden, and all possible means are employed to render marriage unfruitful. If they have children, they make no effort to cultivate the pleasures of companionship with them. They leave their children almost continually to the care of strangers,

confiding them first to the instruction of persons who are usually foreigners, and then sending them to public educational institutions, so that of family life they have only the sorrows, and the children from infancy are as unhappy as their parents and wish their parents dead that they may become the heirs. These people are not confined in prisons, but the consequences of their way of living with regard to the family are more melancholy than the deprivation from the domestic relations inflicted upon those who are kept in confinement under sentence of the law. The fourth condition of happiness is sympathetic and unrestricted intercourse with all classes of men. And the higher a man is placed in the social scale, the more certainly is he deprived of this essential condition of happiness. The higher he goes, the narrower becomes his circle of associates; the lower sinks the moral and intellectual level of those to whose companionship he is restrained. The peasant and his wife are free to enter into friendly relations with every one, and if a million men will have nothing to do with them, there remain eighty millions of people with whom they may fraternize, from Archangel to Astrakhan, without waiting for a ceremonious visit or an introduction. A clerk and his wife will find hundreds of people who are their equals; but the clerks of a higher rank will not admit them to a footing of social equality, and they, in their turn, are excluded by others. The wealthy man of the world reckons by dozens the families with whom he is willing to maintain social ties—all the rest of the world are strangers. For the cabinet minister and the millionaire there are only a dozen people as rich and as important as themselves. For kings and emperors, the circle is still more narrow. Is not the whole system like a great prison where each inmate is restricted to association with a few fellow-convicts? Finally, the fifth condition of happiness is bodily health. And once more we find that as we ascend the social scale this condition of happiness is less and less within the reach of the followers

of the doctrine of the world. Compare a family of medium social status with a family of peasants. The latter toil unremittingly and are robust of body; the former is made up of men and women more or less subject to disease. Recall to mind the rich men and women whom you have known; are not most of them invalids? A person of that class whose physical disabilities do not oblige him to take a periodical course of hygienic and medical treatment is as rare as is an invalid among the laboring classes. All these favorites of fortune are the victims and practitioners of sexual vices that have become a second nature, and they are toothless, gray, and bald at an age when a workingman is in the prime of manhood. Nearly all are afflicted with nervous or other diseases arising from excesses in eating, drunkenness, luxury, and perpetual medication. Those who do not die young, pass half of their lives under the influence of morphine or other drugs, as melancholy wrecks of humanity incapable of self-attention, leading a parasitic existence like that of a certain species of ants which are nourished by their slaves. Here is the death list. One has blown out his brains, another has rotted away from the effects of syphilitic poison; this old man succumbed to sexual excesses, this young man to a wild outburst of sensuality; one died of drunkenness, another of gluttony, another from the abuse of morphine, another from an induced abortion. One after another they perished, victims of the doctrine of the world. And a multitude presses on behind them, like an army of martyrs, to undergo the same sufferings, the same perdition. To follow the doctrine of Jesus is difficult! Jesus said that they who would forsake houses, and lands, and brethren, and follow his doctrine should receive a hundred-fold in houses, and lands, and brethren, and besides all this, eternal life. And no one is willing even to make the experiment. The doctrine of the world commands its followers to leave houses, and lands, and brethren; to forsake the country for the filth of the city,

there to toil as a bath-keeper soaping the backs of others; as an apprentice in a little underground shop passing life in counting kopecks; as a prosecuting attorney to serve in bringing unhappy wretches under condemnation of the law; as a cabinet minister, perpetually signing documents of no importance; as the head of an army, killing men.—“Forsake all and live this hideous life ending in a cruel death, and you shall receive nothing in this world or the other,” is the command, and every one listens and obeys. Jesus tells us to take up the cross and follow him, to bear submissively the lot apportioned out to us. No one hears his words or follows his command. But let a man in a uniform decked out with gold lace, a man whose speciality is to kill his fellows, say, “Take, not your cross, but your knapsack and carbine, and march to suffering and certain death,”—and a mighty host is ready to receive his orders. Leaving parents, wives, and children, clad in grotesque costumes, subject to the will of the first comer of a higher rank, famished, benumbed, and exhausted by forced marches, they go, like a herd of cattle to the slaughter-house, not knowing where—and yet these are not cattle, they are men. With despair in their hearts they move on, to die of hunger, or cold, or disease, or, if they survive, to be brought within range of a storm of bullets and commanded to kill. They kill and are killed, none of them knows why or to what end. An ambitious stripling has only to brandish his sword and shout a few magniloquent words to induce them to rush to certain death. And yet no one finds this to be difficult. Neither the victims, nor those whom they have forsaken, find anything difficult in such sacrifices, in which parents encourage their children to take part. It seems to them not only that such things should be, but that they could not be otherwise, and that they are altogether admirable and moral. If the practice of the doctrine of the world were easy, agreeable, and without danger, we might perhaps believe that the practice of the doctrine of Jesus is difficult, frightful, and

cruel. But the doctrine of the world is much more difficult, more dangerous, and more cruel, than is the doctrine of Jesus. Formerly, we are told, there were martyrs for the cause of Jesus; but they were exceptional. We cannot count up more than about three hundred and eighty thousand of them, voluntary and involuntary, in the whole course of eighteen hundred years; but who shall count the martyrs to the doctrine of the world? For each Christian martyr there have been a thousand martyrs to the doctrine of the world, and the sufferings of each one of them have been a hundred times more cruel than those endured by the others. The number of the victims of wars in our century alone amounts to thirty millions of men. These are the martyrs to the doctrine of the world, who would have escaped suffering and death even if they had refused to follow the doctrine of the world, to say nothing of following the doctrine of Jesus. If a man will cease to have faith in the doctrine of the world and not think it indispensable to wear varnished boots and a gold chain, to maintain a useless salon, or to do the various other foolish things the doctrine of the world demands, he will never know the effects of brutalizing occupations, of unlimited suffering, of the anxieties of a perpetual struggle; he will remain in communion with nature; he will be deprived neither of the work he loves, or of his family, or of his health, and he will not perish by a cruel and brutish death. The doctrine of Jesus does not exact martyrdom similar to that of the doctrine of the world; it teaches us rather how to put an end to the sufferings that men endure in the name of the false doctrine of the world. The doctrine of Jesus has a profound metaphysical meaning; it has a meaning as an expression of the aspirations of humanity; but it has also for each individual a very simple, very clear, and very practical meaning with regard to the conduct of his own life. In fact, we might say that Jesus taught men not to do foolish things. The meaning of the doctrine of Jesus is

simple and accessible to all. Jesus said that we were not to be angry, and not to consider ourselves as better than others; if we were angry and offended others, so much the worse for us. Again, he said that we were to avoid libertinism, and to that end choose one woman, to whom we should remain faithful. Once more, he said that we were not to bind ourselves by promises or oaths to the service of those who may constrain us to commit acts of folly and wickedness. Then he said that we were not to return evil for evil, lest the evil rebound upon ourselves with redoubled force. And, finally, he says that we are not to consider men as foreigners because they dwell in another country and speak a language different from our own. And the conclusion is, that if we avoid doing any of these foolish things, we shall be happy. This is all very well (we say), but the world is so organized that, if we place ourselves in opposition to it, our condition will be much more calamitous than if we live in accordance with its doctrine. If a man refuses to perform military service, he will be shut up in a fortress, and possibly will be shot. If a man will not do what is necessary for the support of himself and his family, he and his family will starve. Thus argue the people who feel themselves obliged to defend the existing social organization; but they do not believe in the truth of their own words. They only say this because they cannot deny the truth of the doctrine of Jesus which they profess, and because they must justify themselves in some way for their failure to practise it. They not only do not believe in what they say; they have never given any serious consideration to the subject. They have faith in the doctrine of the world, and they only make use of the plea they have learned from the Church—that much suffering is inevitable for those who would practise the doctrine of Jesus; and so they have never tried to practise the doctrine of Jesus at all. We see enough of the frightful suffering endured by men in following the doctrine of the world, but in these times we

hear nothing of suffering in behalf of the doctrine of Jesus. Thirty millions of men have perished in wars, fought in behalf of the doctrine of the world; thousands of millions of beings have perished, crushed by a social system organized on the principle of the doctrine of the world; but where, in our day, shall we find a million, a thousand, a dozen, or a single one, who has died a cruel death, or has even suffered from hunger and cold, in behalf of the doctrine of Jesus? This fear of suffering is only a puerile excuse that proves how little we really know of Jesus' doctrine. We not only do not follow it; we do not even take it seriously. The Church has explained it in such a way that it seems to be, not the doctrine of a happy life, but a bugbear, a source of terror. Jesus calls men to drink of a well of living water, which is free to all. Men are parched with thirst, they have eaten of filth and drunk blood, but they have been told that they will perish if they drink of this water that is offered them by Jesus, and men believe in the warnings of superstition. They die in torment, with the water that they dare not touch within their reach. If they would only have faith in Jesus' words, and go to this well of living water and quench their thirst, they would realize how cunning has been the imposture practised upon them by the Church, and how needlessly their sufferings have been prolonged. If they would only accept the doctrine of Jesus, frankly and simply, they would see at once the horrible error of which we are each and all the victims. One generation after another strives to find the security of its existence in violence, and by violence to protect its privileges. We believe that the happiness of our life is in power, and domination, and abundance of worldly goods. We are so habituated to this idea that we are alarmed at the sacrifices exacted by the doctrine of Jesus, which teaches that man's happiness does not depend upon fortune and power, and that the rich cannot enter into the kingdom of God. But this is a false idea of the doctrine of Jesus, which teaches us, not to do

what is the worst, but to do what is the best for ourselves here in this present life. Inspired by his love for men, Jesus taught them not to depend upon security based upon violence, and not to seek after riches, just as we teach the common people to abstain, for their own interest, from quarrels and intemperance. He said that if men lived without defending themselves against violence, and without possessing riches, they would be more happy; and he confirms his words by the example of his life. He said that a man who lives according to his doctrine must be ready at any moment to endure violence from others, and, possibly, to die of hunger and cold. But this warning, which seems to exact such great and unbearable sacrifices, is simply a statement of the conditions under which men always have existed, and always will continue to exist. A disciple of Jesus should be prepared for everything, and especially for suffering and death. But is the disciple of the world in a more desirable situation? We are so accustomed to believe in all we do for the so-called security of life (the organization of armies, the building of fortresses, the provisioning of troops), that our wardrobes, our systems of medical treatment, our furniture, and our money, all seem like real and stable pledges of our existence. We forget the fate of him who resolved to build greater storehouses to provide an abundance for many years: he died in a night. Everything that we do to make our existence secure is like the act of the ostrich, when she hides her head in the sand, and does not see that her destruction is near. But we are even more foolish than the ostrich. To establish the doubtful security of an uncertain life in an uncertain future, we sacrifice a life of certainty in a present that we might really possess. The illusion is in the firm conviction that our existence can be made secure by a struggle with others. We are so accustomed to this illusory so-called security of our existence and our property, that we do not realize what we lose by striving after it. We lose everything—we lose life

itself. Our whole life is taken up with anxiety for personal security, with preparations for living, so that we really never live at all. If we take a general survey of our lives, we shall see that all our efforts in behalf of the so-called security of existence are not made at all for the assurance of security, but simply to help us to forget that existence never has been, and never can be, secure. But it is not enough to say that we are the dupes of our own illusions, and that we forfeit the true life for an imaginary life; our efforts for security often result in the destruction of what we most wish to preserve. The French took up arms in 1870 to make their national existence secure, and the attempt resulted in the destruction of hundreds of thousands of Frenchmen. All people who take up arms undergo the same experience. The rich man believes that his existence is secure because he possesses money, and his money attracts a thief who kills him. The invalid thinks to make his life secure by the use of medicines, and the medicines slowly poison him; if they do not bring about his death, they at least deprive him of life, till he is like the impotent man who waited thirty-five years at the pool for an angel to come down and trouble the waters. The doctrine of Jesus, which teaches us that we cannot possibly make life secure, but that we must be ready to die at any moment, is unquestionably preferable to the doctrine of the world, which obliges us to struggle for the security of existence. It is preferable because the impossibility of escaping death, and the impossibility of making life secure, is the same for the disciples of Jesus as it is for the disciples of the world; but, according to the doctrine of Jesus, life itself is not absorbed in the idle attempt to make existence secure. To the follower of Jesus life is free, and can be devoted to the end for which it is worthy—its own welfare and the welfare of others. The disciple of Jesus will be poor, but that is only saying that he will always enjoy the gifts that God has lavished upon men. He will not ruin his own

existence. We make the word poverty a synonym for calamity, but it is in truth a source of happiness, and however much we may regard it as a calamity, it remains a source of happiness still. To be poor means not to live in cities, but in the country, not to be shut up in close rooms, but to labor out of doors, in the woods and fields, to have the delights of sunshine, of the open heavens, of the earth, of observing the habits of dumb animals; not to rack our brains with inventing dishes to stimulate an appetite, and not to endure the pangs of indigestion. To be poor is to be hungry three times a day, to sleep without passing hours tossing upon the pillow a victim of insomnia, to have children, and have them always with us, to do nothing that we do not wish to do (this is essential), and to have no fear for anything that may happen. The poor person will be ill and will suffer; he will die like the rest of the world; but his sufferings and his death will probably be less painful than those of the rich; and he will certainly live more happily. Poverty is one of the conditions of following the doctrine of Jesus, a condition indispensable to those who would enter into the kingdom of God and be happy. The objection to this is, that no one will care for us, and that we shall be left to die of hunger. To this objection we may reply in the words of Jesus, (words that have been interpreted to justify the idleness of the clergy):— “Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food” (Matthew 10: 10). “And into whatsoever house ye shall enter... in that same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10: 5, 7). The laborer is worthy of his food. It is a very short sentence, but he who understands it as Jesus understood it, will no longer have any fear of dying of hunger. To understand the true meaning of these words we must get rid of that traditional idea which we have developed from the doctrine of the redemption that man’s

felicity consists in idleness. We must get back to that point of view natural to all men who are not fallen, that work, and not idleness, is the indispensable condition of happiness for every human being; that man cannot, in fact, refrain from work. We must rid ourselves of the savage prejudice which leads us to think that a man who has an income from a place under the government, from landed property, or from stocks and bonds, is in a natural and happy position because he is relieved from the necessity of work. We must get back into the human brain the idea of work possessed by undegenerate men, the idea that Jesus has, when he says that the laborer is worthy of his food. Jesus did not imagine that men would regard work as a curse, and consequently he did not have in mind a man who would not work, or desired not to work. He supposed that all his disciples would work, and so he said that if a man would work, his work would bring him food. He who makes use of the labor of another will provide food for him who labors, simply because he profits by that labor. And so he who works will always have food; he may not have property, but as to food, there need be no uncertainty whatever. With regard to work there is a difference between the doctrine of Jesus and the doctrine of the world. According to the doctrine of the world, it is very meritorious in a man to be willing to work; he is thereby enabled to enter into competition with others, and to demand wages proportionate to his qualifications. According to the doctrine of Jesus, labor is the inevitable condition of human life, and food is the inevitable consequence of labor. Labor produces food, and food produces labor. However cruel and grasping the employer may be, he will always feed his workman, as he will always feed his horse; he feeds him that he may get all the work possible, and in this way he contributes to the welfare of the workman. "For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a

ransom for many.” According to the doctrine of Jesus, every individual will be the happier the more clearly he understands that his vocation consists, not in exacting service from others, but in ministering to others, in giving his life for the ransom of many. A man who does this will be worthy of his food and will not fail to have it. By the words, “came not to be ministered unto but to minister,” Jesus established a method which would insure the material existence of man; and by the words, “the laborer is worthy of his food,” he answered once for all the objection that a man who should practise the doctrine of Jesus in the midst of those who do not practise it would be in danger of perishing from hunger and cold. Jesus practised his own doctrine amid great opposition, and he did not perish from hunger and cold. He showed that a man does not insure his own subsistence by amassing worldly goods at the expense of others, but by rendering himself useful and indispensable to others. The more necessary he is to others, the more will his existence be made secure. There are in the world as it is now organized millions of men who possess no property and do not practise the doctrine of Jesus by ministering unto others, but they do not die of hunger. How, then, can we object to the doctrine of Jesus, that those who practise it by working for others will perish for want of food? Men cannot die of hunger while the rich have bread. In Russia there are millions of men who possess nothing and subsist entirely by their own toil. The existence of a Christian would be as secure among pagans as it would be among those of his own faith. He would labor for others; he would be necessary to them, and therefore he would be fed. Even a dog, if he be useful, is fed and cared for; and shall not a man be fed and cared for whose service is necessary to the whole world? But those who seek by all possible means to justify the personal life have another objection. They say that if a man be sick, even if he have a wife, parents, and children dependent upon him—if this

man cannot work, he will not be fed. They say so, and they will continue to say so; but their own actions prove that they do not believe what they say. These same people who will not admit that the doctrine of Jesus is practicable, practise it to a certain extent themselves. They do not cease to care for a sick sheep, a sick ox, or a sick dog. They do not kill an old horse, but they give him work in proportion to his strength. They care for all sorts of animals without expecting any benefit in return; and can it be that they will not care for a useful man who has fallen sick, that they will not find work suited to the strength of the old man and the child, that they will not care for the very babes who later on will be able to work for them in return? As a matter of fact they do all this. Nine-tenths of men are cared for by the other tenth, like so many cattle. And however great the darkness in which this one-tenth live, however mistaken their views in regard to the other nine-tenths of humanity, the tenth, even if they had the power, would not deprive the other nine-tenths of food. The rich will not deprive the poor of what is necessary, because they wish them to multiply and work, and so in these days the little minority of rich people provide directly or indirectly for the nourishment of the majority, that the latter may furnish the maximum of work, and multiply, and bring up a new supply of workers. Ants care for the increase and welfare of their slaves. Shall not men care for those whose labor they find necessary? Laborers are necessary. And those who profit by labor will always be careful to provide the means of labor for those who are willing to work. The objection concerning the possibility of practising the doctrine of Jesus, that if men do not acquire something for themselves and have wealth in reserve no one will take care of their families, is true, but it is true only in regard to idle and useless and obnoxious people such as make up the majority of our opulent classes. No one (with the exception of foolish parents) takes the trouble to care for lazy people, because

lazy people are of no use to any one, not even to themselves; as for the workers, the most selfish and cruel of men will contribute to their welfare. People breed and train and care for oxen, and a man, as a beast of burden, is much more useful than an ox, as the tariff of the slave-mart shows. This is why children will never be left without support. Man is not in the world to work for himself; he is in the world to work for others, and the laborer is worthy of his hire. These truths are justified by universal experience; now, always, and everywhere, the man who labors receives the means of bodily subsistence. This subsistence is assured to him who works against his will; for such a workman desires only to relieve himself of the necessity of work, and acquires all that he possibly can in order that he may take the yoke from his own neck and place it upon the neck of another. A workman like this—envious, grasping, toiling against his will—will never lack for food and will be happier than one, who without labor, lives upon the labor of others. How much more happy, then, will that laborer be who labors in obedience to the doctrine of Jesus with the object of accomplishing all the work of which he is capable and wishing for it the least possible return? How much more desirable will his condition be, as, little by little, he sees his example followed by others. For services rendered he will then be the recipient of equal services in return. The doctrine of Jesus with regard to labor and the fruits of labor is expressed in the story of the loaves and fishes, wherein it was shown that man enjoys the greatest sum of the benefits accessible to humanity, not by appropriating all that he can possibly grasp and using what he has for his personal pleasure, but by administering to the needs of others, as Jesus did by the borders of Galilee. There were several thousand men and women to be fed. One of the disciples told Jesus that there was a lad who had five loaves and two fishes. Jesus understood that some of the people coming from a distance had brought provisions with them and that

some had not, for after all were filled, the disciples gathered up twelve basketsful of fragments. (If no one but the boy had brought anything, how could so much have been left after so many were fed?) If Jesus had not set them an example, the people would have acted as people of the world act now. Some of those who had food would have eaten all that they had through gluttony or avidity, and some, after eating what they could eat, would have taken the rest to their homes. Those who had nothing would have been famished, and would have regarded their more fortunate companions with envy and hatred; some of them would perhaps have tried to take food by force from them who had it, and so hunger and anger and quarrels would have been the result. That is, the multitude would have acted just as people act nowadays. But Jesus knew exactly what to do. He asked that all be made to sit down, and then commanded his disciples to give of what they had to those who had nothing, and to request others to do the same. The result was that those who had food followed the example of Jesus and his disciples, and offered what they had to others. Every one ate and was satisfied, and with the broken pieces that remained the disciples filled twelve baskets. Jesus teaches every man to govern his life by the law of reason and conscience, for the law of reason is as applicable to the individual as it is to humanity at large. Work is the inevitable condition of human life, the true source of human welfare. For this reason a refusal to divide the fruits of one's labor with others is a refusal to accept the conditions of true happiness. To give of the fruits of one's labor to others is to contribute to the welfare of all men. The retort is made that if men did not wrest food from others, they would die of hunger. To me it seems more reasonable to say, that if men do wrest their food from one another, some of them will die of hunger, and experience confirms this view. Every man, whether he lives according to the doctrine of Jesus or according to the doctrine of the

world, lives only by the sufferance and care of others. From his birth, man is cared for and nourished by others.

According to the doctrine of the world, man has a right to demand that others should continue to nourish and care for him and for his family, but, according to the doctrine of Jesus, he is only entitled to care and nourishment on the condition that he do all he can for the service of others, and so render himself useful and indispensable to mankind.

Men who live according to the doctrine of the world are usually anxious to rid themselves of any one who is useless and whom they are obliged to feed; at the first possible opportunity they cease to feed such a one, and leave him to die, because of his uselessness; but him who lives for others according to the doctrine of Jesus, all men, however wicked they may be, will always nourish and care for, that he may continue to labor in their behalf. Which, then, is the more reasonable; which offers the more joy and the greater security, a life according to the doctrine of the world, or a life according to the doctrine of Jesus?

