

MY RELIGION

by Leo Tolstoy

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Chapter 11 The doctrine of Jesus is to bring the kingdom of God upon earth. The practice of this doctrine is not difficult; and not only so, its practice is a natural expression of the belief of all who recognize its truth. The doctrine of Jesus offers the only possible chance of salvation for those who would escape the perdition that threatens the personal life. The fulfilment of this doctrine not only will deliver men from the privations and sufferings of this life, but will put an end to nine-tenths of the suffering endured in behalf of the doctrine of the world. When I understood this I asked myself why I had never practised a doctrine which would give me so much happiness and peace and joy; why, on the other hand, I always had practised an entirely different doctrine, and thereby made myself wretched? Why? The reply was a simple one. Because I never had known the truth. The truth had been concealed from me. When the doctrine of Jesus was first revealed to me, I did not believe that the discovery would lead me to reject the doctrine of the Church. I dreaded this separation, and in the course of my studies I did not attempt to search out the errors in the doctrine of the Church. I sought, rather, to close my eyes to propositions that seemed to be obscure and strange, provided they were not in evident contradiction with what I regarded as the substance of the Christian doctrine. But the further I advanced in the study of the Gospels, and the

more clearly the doctrine of Jesus was revealed to me, the more inevitable the choice became. I must either accept the doctrine of Jesus, a reasonable and simple doctrine in accordance with my conscience and my hope of salvation; or I must accept an entirely different doctrine, a doctrine in opposition to reason and conscience and that offered me nothing except the certainty of my own perdition and that of others. I was therefore forced to reject, one after another, the dogmas of the Church. This I did against my will, struggling with the desire to mitigate as much as possible my disagreement with the Church, that I might not be obliged to separate from the Church, and thereby deprive myself of communion with fellow-believers, the greatest happiness that religion can bestow. But when I had completed my task, I saw that in spite of all my efforts to maintain a connecting-link with the Church, the separation was complete. I knew before that the bond of union, if it existed at all, must be a very slight one, but I was soon convinced that it did not exist at all. My son came to me one day, after I had completed my examination of the Gospels, and told me of a discussion that was going on between two domestics (uneducated persons who scarcely knew how to read) concerning a passage in some religious book which maintained that it was not a sin to put criminals to death, or to kill enemies in war. I could not believe that an assertion of this sort could be printed in any book, and I asked to see it. The volume bore the title of "A Book of Selected Prayers; third edition; eighth ten thousand; Moscow: 1879." On page 163 of this book I read:— "What is the sixth commandment of God? "Thou shalt not kill. "What does God forbid by this commandment? "He forbids us to kill, to take the life of any man. "Is it a sin to punish a criminal with death according to the law, or to kill an enemy in war? "No; that is not a sin. We take the life of the criminal to put an end to the wrong that he commits; we slay an enemy in war, because in war we fight for our

sovereign and our native land." And in this manner was enjoined the abrogation of the law of God! I could scarcely believe that I had read aright. My opinion was asked with regard to the subject at issue. To the one who maintained that the instruction given by the book was true, I said that the explanation was not correct. "Why, then, do they print untrue explanations contrary to the law?" was his question, to which I could say nothing in reply. I kept the volume and looked over its contents. The book contained thirty-one prayers with instructions concerning genuflexions and the joining of the fingers; an explanation of the Credo; a citation from the fifth chapter of Matthew without any explanation whatever, but headed, "Commands for those who would possess the Beatitudes"; the ten commandments accompanied by comments that rendered most of them void; and hymns for every saint's day. As I have said, I not only had sought to avoid censure of the religion of the Church; I had done my best to see only its most favorable side; and knowing its academic literature from beginning to end, I had paid no attention whatever to its popular literature. This book of devotion, spread broadcast in an enormous number of copies, awakening doubts in the minds of the most unlearned people, set me to thinking. The contents of the book seemed to me so entirely pagan, so wholly out of accord with Christianity, that I could not believe it to be the deliberate purpose of the Church to propagate such a doctrine. To verify my belief, I bought and read all the books published by the synod with its "benediction" (blagoslovnia), containing brief expositions of the religion of the Church for the use of children and the common people. Their contents were to me almost entirely new, for at the time when I received my early religious instruction, they had not yet appeared. As far as I could remember there were no commandments with regard to the beatitudes, and there was no doctrine which taught that it was not a sin to kill. No such teachings appeared in

the old catechisms; they were not to be found in the catechism of Peter Mogilas, or in that of Beliokof, or the abridged Catholic catechisms. The innovation was introduced by the metropolitan Philaret, who prepared a catechism with proper regard for the susceptibilities of the military class, and from this catechism the Book of Selected Prayers was compiled. Philaret's work is entitled, *The Christian Catechism of the Orthodox Church, for the Use of all Orthodox Christians*, and is published, "by order of his Imperial Majesty." The book is divided into three parts, "Concerning Faith," "Concerning Hope," and "Concerning Love." The first part contains the analysis of the symbol of faith as given by the Council of Nice. The second part is made up of an exposition of the Pater Noster, and the first eight verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, which serve as an introduction to the Sermon on the Mount, and are called (I know not why) "Commands for those who would possess the Beatitudes." These first two parts treat of the dogmas of the Church, prayers, and the sacraments, but they contain no rules with regard to the conduct of life. The third part, "Concerning Love," contains an exposition of Christian duties, based not on the commandments of Jesus, but upon the ten commandments of Moses. This exposition of the commandments of Moses seems to have been made for the especial purpose of teaching men not to obey them. Each commandment is followed by a reservation which completely destroys its force. With regard to the first commandment, which enjoins the worship of God alone, the catechism inculcates the worship of saints and angels, to say nothing of the Mother of God and the three persons of the Trinity ("Special Catechism"). With regard to the second commandment, against the worship of idols, the catechism enjoins the worship of images. With regard to the third commandment, the catechism enjoins the taking of oaths as the principal token of legitimate authority. With regard to the fourth commandment, concerning the

observance of the Sabbath, the catechism inculcates the observance of Sunday, of the thirteen principal feasts, of a number of feasts of less importance, the observance of Lent, and of fasts on Wednesdays and Fridays. With regard to the fifth commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," the catechism prescribes honor to the sovereign, the country, spiritual fathers, all persons in authority, and of these last gives an enumeration in three pages, including college authorities, civil, judicial, and military authorities, and owners of serfs, with instructions as to the manner of honoring each of these classes. My citations are taken from the sixty-fourth edition of the catechism, dated 1880.

Twenty years have passed since the abolition of serfdom, and no one has taken the trouble to strike out the phrase which, in connection with the commandment of God to honor parents, was introduced into the catechism to sustain and justify slavery. With regard to the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," the instructions of the catechism are from the first in favor of murder. "Question.—What does the sixth commandment forbid? "Answer.—It forbids manslaughter, to take the life of one's neighbor in any manner whatever. "Question.—Is all manslaughter a transgression of the law? "Answer.—Manslaughter is not a transgression of the law when life is taken in pursuance of its mandate. For example: "1st. When a criminal condemned in justice is punished by death. "2d. When we kill in war for the sovereign and our country." The italics are in the original. Further on we read:—"Question.—With regard to manslaughter, when is the law transgressed? "Answer.—When any one conceals a murderer or sets him at liberty" (sic). All this is printed in hundreds of thousands of copies, and under the name of Christian doctrine is taught by compulsion to every Russian, who is obliged to receive it under penalty of castigation. This is taught to all the Russian people. It is taught to the innocent children—to the children whom Jesus commanded to be brought to him

as belonging to the kingdom of God; to the children whom we must resemble, in ignorance of false doctrines, to enter into the kingdom of God; to the children whom Jesus tried to protect in proclaiming woe on him who should cause one of the little ones to stumble! And the little children are obliged to learn all this, and are told that it is the only and sacred law of God. These are not proclamations sent out clandestinely, whose authors are punished with penal servitude; they are proclamations which inflict the punishment of penal servitude upon all those who do not agree with the doctrines they inculcate. As I write these lines, I experience a feeling of insecurity, simply because I have allowed myself to say that men cannot render void the fundamental law of God inscribed in all the codes and in all hearts, by such words as these:— “Manslaughter is not a transgression of the law when life is taken in pursuance of its mandate... when we kill in war for our sovereign and our country.” I tremble because I have allowed myself to say that such things should not be taught to children. It was against such teachings as these that Jesus warned men when he said:— “Look, therefore, whether the light that is in thee be not darkness.” (Luke 11: 35.) The light that is in us has become darkness; and the darkness of our lives is full of terror. “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, even while for a pretense ye make long prayers: therefore ye shall receive greater condemnation. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides.... “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say,

If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers.... I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel.... "Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven." Of a truth we might say that all this was written but yesterday, not against men who no longer compass sea and land to blaspheme against the Spirit, or to convert men to a religion that renders its proselytes worse than they were before, but against men who deliberately force people to embrace their religion, and persecute and bring to death all the prophets and the righteous who seek to reveal their falsehoods to mankind. I became convinced that the doctrine of the Church, although bearing the name of "Christian," is one with the darkness against which Jesus struggled, and against which he commanded his disciples to strive. The doctrine of Jesus, like all religious doctrines, is regarded in two ways—first, as a moral and ethical system which teaches men how they should live as individuals, and in relation to each other; second, as a metaphysical theory which explains why men should live in a given manner and not otherwise. One necessitates the other. Man should live in this manner because such is his destiny; or, man's destiny is this way, and consequently he should follow it. These two methods of doctrinal expression are common to all the religions of the world, to the religion of the Brahmins, to that of Confucius, to that of Buddha, to that of Moses, and to that of the Christ. But, with regard to the doctrine of Jesus, as with regard to all other doctrines, men wander from its precepts, and they always find some

one to justify their deviations. Those who, as Jesus said, sit in Moses' seat, explain the metaphysical theory in such a way that the ethical prescriptions of the doctrine cease to be regarded as obligatory, and are replaced by external forms of worship, by ceremonial. This is a condition common to all religions, but, to me, it seems that it never has been manifested with so much pomp as in connection with Christianity—and for two reasons: first, because the doctrine of Jesus is the most elevated of all doctrines (the most elevated because the metaphysical and ethical portions are so closely united that one cannot be separated from the other without destroying the vitality of the whole); second, because the doctrine of Jesus is in itself a protest against all forms, a negation not only of Jewish ceremonial, but of all exterior rites of worship. Therefore, the arbitrary separation of the metaphysical and ethical aspects of Christianity entirely disfigures the doctrine, and deprives it of every sort of meaning. The separation began with the preaching of Paul, who knew but imperfectly the ethical doctrine set forth in the Gospel of Matthew, and who preached a metaphysico-cabalistic theory entirely foreign to the doctrine of Jesus; and this theory was perfected under Constantine, when the existing pagan social organization was proclaimed Christian simply by covering it with the mantle of Christianity. After Constantine, that arch-pagan, whom the Church in spite of all his crimes and vices admits to the category of the saints, after Constantine began the domination of the councils, and the centre of gravity of Christianity was permanently displaced till only the metaphysical portion was left in view. And this metaphysical theory with its accompanying ceremonial deviated more and more from its true and primitive meaning, until it has reached its present stage of development, as a doctrine which explains the mysteries of a celestial life beyond the comprehension of human reason, and, with all its complicated formulas, gives no religious

guidance whatever with regard to the regulation of this earthly life. All religions, with the exception of the religion of the Christian Church, demand from their adherents aside from forms and ceremonies, the practice of certain actions called good, and abstinence from certain actions that are called bad. The Jewish religion prescribed circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, the giving of alms, the feast of the Passover. Mohammedanism prescribes circumcision, prayer five times a day, the giving of tithes to the poor, pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet, and many other things. It is the same with all other religions. Whether these prescriptions are good or bad, they are prescriptions which exact the performance of certain actions. Pseudo-Christianity alone prescribes nothing. There is nothing that a Christian is obliged to observe except fasts and prayers, which the Church itself does not recognize as obligatory. All that is necessary to the pseudo-Christian is the sacrament. But the sacrament is not fulfilled by the believer; it is administered to him by others. The pseudo-Christian is obliged to do nothing or to abstain from nothing for his own salvation, since the Church administers to him everything of which he has need. The Church baptizes him, anoints him, gives him the eucharist, confesses him, even after he has lost consciousness, administers extreme unction to him, and prays for him—and he is saved. From the time of Constantine the Christian Church has prescribed no religious duties to its adherents. It has never required that they should abstain from anything. The Christian Church has recognized and sanctioned divorce, slavery, tribunals, all earthly powers, the death penalty, and war; it has exacted nothing except a renunciation of a purpose to do evil on the occasion of baptism, and this only in its early days: later on, when infant baptism was introduced, even this requirement was no longer observed. The Church confesses the doctrine of Jesus in theory, but denies it in practice. Instead of guiding

the life of the world, the Church, through affection for the world, expounds the metaphysical doctrine of Jesus in such a way as not to derive from it any obligation as to the conduct of life, any necessity for men to live differently from the way in which they have been living. The Church has surrendered to the world, and simply follows in the train of its victor. The world does as it pleases, and leaves to the Church the task of justifying its actions with explanations as to the meaning of life. The world organizes an existence in absolute opposition to the doctrine of Jesus, and the Church endeavors to demonstrate that men who live contrary to the doctrine of Jesus really live in accordance with that doctrine. The final result is that the world lives a worse than pagan existence, and the Church not only approves, but maintains that this existence is in exact conformity to the doctrine of Jesus. But a time comes when the light of the true doctrine of Jesus shines forth from the Gospels, notwithstanding the guilty efforts of the Church to conceal it from men's eyes, as, for instance, in prohibiting the translation of the Bible; there comes a time when the light reaches the people, even through the medium of sectarians and free-thinkers, and the falsity of the doctrine of the Church is shown so clearly that men begin to transform the method of living that the Church has justified. Thus men of their own accord, and in opposition to the sanction of the Church, have abolished slavery, abolished the divine right of emperors and popes, and are now proceeding to abolish property and the State. And the Church cannot forbid such action because the abolition of these iniquities is in conformity to the Christian doctrine, that the Church preaches after having falsified. And in this way the conduct of human life is freed from the control of the Church, and subjected to an entirely different authority. The Church retains its dogmas, but what are its dogmas worth? A metaphysical explanation can be of use only when there is a doctrine of life which it serves to make manifest.

But the Church possesses only the explanation of an organization which it once sanctioned, and which no longer exists. The Church has nothing left but temples and shrines and canonicals and vestments and words. For eighteen centuries the Church has hidden the light of Christianity behind its forms and ceremonials, and by this same light it is put to shame. The world, with an organization sanctioned by the Church, has rejected the Church in the name of the very principles of Christianity that the Church has professed. The separation between the two is complete and cannot be concealed. Everything that truly lives in the world of Europe to-day (everything not cold and dumb in hateful isolation)—everything that is living, is detached from the Church, from all churches, and has an existence independent of the Church. Let it not be said that this is true only of the decayed civilizations of Western Europe. Russia, with its millions of civilized and uncivilized Christian rationalists, who have rejected the doctrine of the Church, proves incontestably that as regards emancipation from the yoke of the Church, she is, thanks be to God, in a worse condition of decay than the rest of Europe. All that lives is independent of the Church. The power of the State is based upon tradition, upon science, upon popular suffrage, upon brute force, upon everything except upon the Church. Wars, the relation of State with State, are governed by principles of nationality, of the balance of power, but not by the Church. The institutions established by the State frankly ignore the Church. The idea that the Church can, in these times, serve as a basis for justice or the conservation of property, is simply absurd. Science not only does not sustain the doctrine of the Church, but is, in its development, entirely hostile to the Church. Art, formerly entirely devoted to the service of the Church, has wholly forsaken the Church. It is little to say that human life is now entirely emancipated from the Church; it has now, with regard to the Church, only contempt when the

Church does not interfere with human affairs, and hatred when the Church seeks to re-assert its ancient privileges. The Church is still permitted a formal existence simply because men dread to shatter the chalice that once contained the water of life. In this way only can we account, in our age, for the existence of Catholicism, of Orthodoxy, and of the different Protestant churches. All these churches—Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant—are like so many sentinels still keeping careful watch before the prison doors, although the prisoners have long been at liberty before their eyes, and even threaten their existence. All that actually constitutes life, that is, the activity of humanity towards progress and its own welfare, socialism, communism, the new politico-economical theories, utilitarianism, the liberty and equality of all social classes, and of men and women, all the moral principles of humanity, the sanctity of work, reason, science, art—all these that lend an impulse to the world's progress in hostility to the Church are only fragments of the doctrine which the Church has professed, and so carefully endeavored to conceal. In these times, the life of the world is entirely independent of the doctrine of the Church. The Church is left so far behind, that men no longer hear the voices of those who preach its doctrines. This is easily to be understood because the Church still clings to an organization of the world's life, which has been forsaken, and is rapidly falling to destruction. Imagine a number of men rowing a boat, a pilot steering. The men rely upon the pilot, and the pilot steers well; but after a time the good pilot is replaced by another, who does not steer at all. The boat moves along rapidly and easily. At first the men do not notice the negligence of the new pilot; they are only pleased to find that the boat goes along so easily. Then they discover that the new pilot is utterly useless, and they mock at him, and drive him from his place. The matter would not be so serious if the men, in thrusting aside the unskilful

pilot, did not forget that without a pilot they are likely to take a wrong course. But so it is with our Christian society. The Church has lost its control; we move smoothly onward, and we are a long way from our point of departure. Science, that especial pride of this nineteenth century, is sometimes alarmed; but that is because of the absence of a pilot. We are moving onward, but to what goal? We organize our life without in the least knowing why, or to what end. But we can no longer be contented to live without knowing why, any more than we can navigate a boat without knowing the course that we are following. If men could do nothing of themselves, if they were not responsible for their condition, they might very reasonably reply to the question, "Why are you in this situation?"—"We do not know; but here we are, and submit." But men are the builders of their own destiny, and more especially of the destiny of their children; and so when we ask, "Why do you bring together millions of troops, and why do you make soldiers of yourselves, and mangle and murder one another? Why have you expended, and why do you still expend, an enormous sum of human energy in the construction of useless and unhealthful cities? Why do you organize ridiculous tribunals, and send people whom you consider as criminals from France to Cayenne, from Russia to Siberia, from England to Australia, when you know the hopeless folly of it? Why do you abandon agriculture, which you love, for work in factories and mills, which you despise? Why do you bring up your children in a way that will force them to lead an existence which you find worthless? Why do you do this?" To all these questions men feel obliged to make some reply. If this existence were an agreeable one, and men took pleasure in it, even then men would try to explain why they continued to live under such conditions. But all these things are terribly difficult; they are endured with murmuring and painful struggles, and men cannot refrain from reflecting upon the motive which

impels them to such a course. They must cease to maintain the accepted organization of existence, or they must explain why they give it their support. And so men never have allowed this question to pass unanswered. We find in all ages some attempt at a response. The Jew lived as he lived, that is, made war, put criminals to death, built the Temple, organized his entire existence in one way and not another, because, as he was convinced, he thereby followed the laws which God himself had promulgated. We may say the same of the Hindu, the Chinaman, the Roman, and the Mohammedan. A similar response was given by the Christian a century ago, and is given by the great mass of Christians now. A century ago, and among the ignorant now, the nominal Christian makes this reply: "Compulsory military service, wars, tribunals, and the death penalty, all exist in obedience to the law of God transmitted to us by the Church. This is a fallen world. All the evil that exists, exists by God's will, as a punishment for the sins of men. For this reason we can do nothing to palliate evil. We can only save our own souls by faith, by the sacraments, by prayers, and by submission to the will of God as transmitted by the Church. The Church teaches us that all Christians should unhesitatingly obey their rulers, who are the Lord's anointed, and obey also persons placed in authority by rulers; that they ought to defend their property and that of others by force, wage war, inflict the death penalty, and in all things submit to the authorities, who command by the will of God." Whatever we may think of the reasonableness of these explanations, they once sufficed for a believing Christian, as similar explanations satisfied a Jew or a Mohammedan, and men were not obliged to renounce all reason for living according to a law which they recognized as divine. But in this time only the most ignorant people have faith in any such explanations, and the number of these diminishes every day and every hour. It is impossible to check this tendency. Men

irresistibly follow those who lead the way, and sooner or later must pass over the same ground as the advance guard. The advance guard is now in a critical position; those who compose it organize life to suit themselves, prepare the same conditions for those who are to follow, and absolutely have not the slightest idea of why they do so. No civilized man in the vanguard of progress is able to give any reply now to the direct questions, "Why do you lead the life that you do lead? Why do you establish the conditions that you do establish?" I have propounded these questions to hundreds of people, and never have got from them a direct reply. Instead of a direct reply to the direct question, I have received in return a response to a question that I had not asked. When we ask a Catholic, or Protestant, or Orthodox believer why he leads an existence contrary to the doctrine of Jesus, instead of making a direct response he begins to speak of the melancholy state of scepticism characteristic of this generation, of evil-minded persons who spread doubt broadcast among the masses, of the importance of the future of the existing Church. But he will not tell you why he does not act in conformity to the commands of the religion that he professes. Instead of speaking of his own condition, he will talk to you about the condition of humanity in general, and of that of the Church, as if his own life were not of the slightest significance, and his sole preoccupations were the salvation of humanity, and of what he calls the Church. A philosopher of whatever school he may be, whether an idealist or a spiritualist, a pessimist or a positivist, if we ask of him why he lives as he lives, that is to say, in disaccord with his philosophical doctrine, will begin at once to talk about the progress of humanity and about the historical law of this progress which he has discovered, and in virtue of which humanity gravitates toward righteousness. But he never will make any direct reply to the question why he himself, on his own account, does not live in harmony with what he recognizes

as the dictates of reason. It would seem as if the philosopher were as preoccupied as the believer, not with his personal life, but with observing the effect of general laws upon the development of humanity. The “average” man (that is, one of the immense majority of civilized people who are half sceptics and half believers, and who all, without exception, deplore existence, condemn its organization, and predict universal destruction)—the average man, when we ask him why he continues to lead a life that he condemns, without making any effort towards its amelioration, makes no direct reply, but begins at once to talk about things in general, about justice, about the State, about commerce, about civilization. If he be a member of the police or a prosecuting attorney, he asks, “And what would become of the State, if I, to ameliorate my existence, were to cease to serve it?” “What would become of commerce?” is his demand if he be a merchant; “What of civilization, if I cease to work for it, and seek only to better my own condition?” will be the objection of another. His response always will be in this form, as if the duty of his life were not to seek the good conformable to his nature, but to serve the State, or commerce, or civilization. The average man replies in just the same manner as does the believer or the philosopher. Instead of making the question a personal one, he glides at once to generalities. This subterfuge is employed simply because the believer and the philosopher, and the average man have no positive doctrine concerning existence, and cannot, therefore, reply to the personal question, “What of your own life?” They are disgusted and humiliated at not possessing the slightest trace of a doctrine with regard to life, for no one can live in peace without some understanding of what life really means. But nowadays only Christians cling to a fantastic and worn-out creed as an explanation of why life is as it is, and is not otherwise. Only Christians give the name of religion to a system which is not of the least use to any one. Only among

Christians is life separated from any or all doctrine, and left without any definition whatever. Moreover, science, like tradition, has formulated from the fortuitous and abnormal condition of humanity a general law. Learned men, such as Tiele and Spencer, treat religion as a serious matter, understanding by religion the metaphysical doctrine of the universal principle, without suspecting that they have lost sight of religion as a whole by confining their attention entirely to one of its phases. From all this we get very extraordinary results. We see learned and intelligent men artlessly believing that they are emancipated from all religion simply because they reject the metaphysical explanation of the universal principle which satisfied a former generation. It does not occur to them that men cannot live without some theory of existence; that every human being lives according to some principle, and that this principle by which he governs his life is his religion. The people of whom we have been speaking are persuaded that they have reasonable convictions, but that they have no religion. Nevertheless, however serious their asseverations, they have a religion from the moment that they undertake to govern their actions by reason, for a reasonable act is determined by some sort of faith. Now their faith is in what they are told to do. The faith of those who deny religion is in a religion of obedience to the will of the ruling majority; in a word, submission to established authority. We may live a purely animal life according to the doctrine of the world, without recognizing any controlling motive more binding than the rules of established authority. But he who lives this way cannot affirm that he lives a reasonable life. Before affirming that we live a reasonable life, we must determine what is the doctrine of the life which we regard as reasonable. Alas! wretched men that we are, we possess not the semblance of any such doctrine, and more than that, we have lost all perception of the necessity for a reasonable doctrine of life. Ask the

believers or sceptics of this age, what doctrine of life they follow. They will be obliged to confess that they follow but one doctrine, the doctrine based upon laws formulated by the judiciary or by legislative assemblies, and enforced by the police—the favorite doctrine of most Europeans. They know that this doctrine does not come from on high, or from prophets, or from sages; they are continually finding fault with the laws drawn up by the judiciary or formulated by legislative assemblies, but nevertheless they submit to the police charged with their enforcement. They submit without murmuring to the most terrible exactions. The clerks employed by the judiciary or the legislative assemblies decree by statute that every young man must be ready to take up arms, to kill others, and to die himself, and that all parents who have adult sons must favor obedience to this law which was drawn up yesterday by a mercenary official, and may be revoked to-morrow. We have lost sight of the idea that a law may be in itself reasonable, and binding upon every one in spirit as well as in letter. The Hebrews possessed a law which regulated life, not by forced obedience to its requirements, but by appealing to the conscience of each individual; and the existence of this law is considered as an exceptional attribute of the Hebrew people. That the Hebrews should have been willing to obey only what they recognized by spiritual perception as the incontestable truth direct from God is considered a remarkable national trait. But it appears that the natural and normal state of civilized men is to obey what to their own knowledge is decreed by despicable officials and enforced by the co-operation of armed police. The distinctive trait of civilized man is to obey what the majority of men regard as iniquitous, contrary to conscience. I seek in vain in civilized society as it exists to-day for any clearly formulated moral bases of life. There are none. No perception of their necessity exists. On the contrary, we find the extraordinary conviction that they are superfluous;

that religion is nothing more than a few words about God and a future life, and a few ceremonies very useful for the salvation of the soul according to some, and good for nothing according to others; but that life happens of itself and has no need of any fundamental rule, and that we have only to do what we are told to do. The two substantial sources of faith, the doctrine that governs life, and the explanation of the meaning of life, are regarded as of very unequal value. The first is considered as of very little importance, and as having no relation to faith whatever; the second, as the explanation of a bygone state of existence, or as made up of speculations concerning the historical development of life, is considered as of great significance. As to all that constitutes the life of man expressed in action, the members of our modern society depend willingly for guidance upon people who, like themselves, know not why they direct their fellows to live in one way and not in another. This disposition holds good whether the question at issue is to decide whether to kill or not to kill, to judge or not to judge, to bring up children in this way or in that. And men look upon an existence like this as reasonable, and have no feeling of shame! The explanations of the Church which pass for faith, and the true faith of our generation, which is in obedience to social laws and the laws of the State, have reached a stage of sharp antagonism. The majority of civilized people have nothing to regulate life but faith in the police. This condition would be unbearable if it were universal. Fortunately there is a remnant, made up of the noblest minds of the age, who are not contented with this religion, but have an entirely different faith with regard to what the life of man ought to be. These men are looked upon as the most malevolent, the most dangerous, and generally as the most unbelieving of all human beings, and yet they are the only men of our time believing in the Gospel doctrine, if not as a whole, at least in part. These people, as a general

thing, know little of the doctrine of Jesus; they do not understand it, and, like their adversaries, they refuse to accept the leading principle of the religion of Jesus, which is to resist not evil; often they have nothing but a hatred for the name of Jesus; but their whole faith with regard to what life ought to be is unconsciously based upon the humane and eternal truths comprised in the Christian doctrine. This remnant, in spite of calumny and persecution, are the only ones who do not tamely submit to the orders of the first comer. Consequently they are the only ones in these days who live a reasonable and not an animal life, the only ones who have faith. The connecting link between the world and the Church, although carefully cherished by the Church, becomes more and more attenuated. To-day it is little more than a hindrance. The union between the Church and the world has no longer any justification. The mysterious process of maturation is going on before our eyes. The connecting bond will soon be severed, and the vital social organism will begin to exercise its functions as a wholly independent existence. The doctrine of the Church, with its dogmas, its councils, and its hierarchy, is manifestly united to the doctrine of Jesus. The connecting link is as perceptible as the cord which binds the newly-born child to its mother; but as the umbilical cord and the placenta become after parturition useless pieces of flesh, which are carefully buried out of regard for what they once nourished, so the Church has become a useless organism, to be preserved, if at all, in some museum of curiosities out of regard for what it has once been. As soon as respiration and circulation are established, the former source of nutrition becomes a hindrance to life. Vain and foolish would it be to attempt to retain the bond, and to force the child that has come into the light of day to receive its nourishment by a pre-natal process. But the deliverance of the child from the maternal tie does not ensure life. The life of the newly born depends upon another bond of union

which is established between it and its mother that its nourishment may be maintained. And so it must be with our Christian world of to-day. The doctrine of Jesus has brought the world into the light. The Church, one of the organs of the doctrine of Jesus, has fulfilled its mission and is now useless. The world cannot be bound to the Church; but the deliverance of the world from the Church will not ensure life. Life will begin when the world perceives its own weakness and the necessity for a different source of strength. The Christian world feels this necessity: it proclaims its helplessness, it feels the impossibility of depending upon its former means of nourishment, the inadequacy of any other form of nourishment except that of the doctrine by which it was brought forth. This modern European world of ours, apparently so sure of itself, so bold, so decided, and within so preyed upon by terror and despair, is exactly in the situation of a newly born animal: it writhes, it cries aloud, it is perplexed, it knows not what to do; it feels that its former source of nourishment is withdrawn, but it knows not where to seek for another. A newly born lamb shakes its head, opens its eyes and looks about, and leaps, and bounds, and would make us think by its apparently intelligent movements that it already has mastered the secret of living; but of this the poor little creature knows nothing. The impetuosity and energy it displays were drawn from its mother through a medium of transmission that has just been broken, nevermore to be renewed. The situation of the new comer is one of delight, and at the same time is full of peril. It is animated by youth and strength, but it is lost if it cannot avail itself of the nourishment only to be had from its mother. And so it is with our European world. What complex activities, what energy, what intelligence, does it apparently possess! It would seem as if all its deeds were governed by reason. With what enthusiasm, what vigor, what youthfulness do the denizens of this modern world manifest their abounding

vitality! The arts and sciences, the various industries, political and administrative details, all are full of life. But this life is due to inspiration received through the connecting link that binds it to its source. The Church, by transmitting the truth of the doctrine of Jesus, has communicated life to the world. Upon this nourishment the world has grown and developed. But the Church has had its day and is now superfluous. The world is possessed of a living organism; the means by which it formerly received its nourishment has withered away, and it has not yet found another; and it seeks everywhere, everywhere but at the true source of life. It still possesses the animation derived from nourishment already received, and it does not yet understand that its future nourishment is only to be had from one source, and by its own efforts. The world must now understand that the period of gestation is ended, and that a new process of conscious nutrition must henceforth maintain its life. The truth of the doctrine of Jesus, once unconsciously absorbed by humanity through the organism of the Church, must now be consciously recognized; for in the truth of this doctrine humanity has always obtained its vital force. Men must lift up the torch of truth, which has so long remained concealed, and carry it before them, guiding their actions by its light. The doctrine of Jesus, as a religion that governs the actions of men and explains to them the meaning of life, is now before the world just as it was eighteen hundred years ago. Formerly the world had the explanations of the Church which, in concealing the doctrine, seemed in itself to offer a satisfactory interpretation of life; but now the time is come when the Church has lost its usefulness, and the world, having no other means for sustaining its true existence, can only feel its helplessness and go for aid directly to the doctrine of Jesus. Now, Jesus first taught men to believe in the light, and that the light is within themselves. Jesus taught men to lift on high the light of reason. He taught them to live,

guiding their actions by this light, and to do nothing contrary to reason. It is unreasonable, it is foolish, to go out to kill Turks or Germans; it is unreasonable to make use of the labor of others that you and yours may be clothed in the height of fashion and maintain that mortal source of ennui, a salon; it is unreasonable to take people already corrupted by idleness and depravity and shut them up within prison walls, and thereby devote them to an existence of absolute idleness and deprivation; it is unreasonable to live in the pestilential air of cities when a purer atmosphere is within your reach; it is unreasonable to base the education of your children on the grammatical laws of dead languages;—all this is unreasonable, and yet it is to-day the life of the European world, which lives a life of no meaning; which acts, but acts without a purpose, having no confidence in reason, and existing in opposition to its decrees. The doctrine of Jesus is the light. The light shines forth, and the darkness cannot conceal it. Men cannot deny it, men cannot refuse to accept its guidance. They must depend on the doctrine of Jesus, which penetrates among all the errors with which the life of men is surrounded. Like the insensible ether filling universal space, enveloping all created things, so the doctrine of Jesus is inevitable for every man in whatever situation he may be found. Men cannot refuse to recognize the doctrine of Jesus; they may deny the metaphysical explanation of life which it gives (we may deny everything), but the doctrine of Jesus alone offers rules for the conduct of life without which humanity has never lived, and never will be able to live; without which no human being has lived or can live, if he would live as man should live—a reasonable life. The power of the doctrine of Jesus is not in its explanation of the meaning of life, but in the rules that it gives for the conduct of life. The metaphysical doctrine of Jesus is not new; it is that eternal doctrine of humanity inscribed in all the hearts of men, and preached by all the prophets of all the ages. The power of

the doctrine of Jesus is in the application of this metaphysical doctrine to life. The metaphysical basis of the ancient doctrine of the Hebrews, which enjoined love to God and men, is identical with the metaphysical basis of the doctrine of Jesus. But the application of this doctrine to life, as expounded by Moses, was very different from the teachings of Jesus. The Hebrews, in applying the Mosaic law to life, were obliged to fulfil six hundred and thirteen commandments, many of which were absurd and cruel, and yet all were based upon the authority of the Scriptures. The doctrine of life, as given by Jesus upon the same metaphysical basis, is expressed in five reasonable and beneficent commandments, having an obvious and justifiable meaning, and embracing within their restrictions the whole of human life. A Jew, a disciple of Confucius, a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan, who sincerely doubts the truth of his own religion, cannot refuse to accept the doctrine of Jesus; much less, then, can this doctrine be rejected by the Christian world of to-day, which is now living without any moral law. The doctrine of Jesus cannot interfere in any way with the manner in which men of to-day regard the world; it is, to begin with, in harmony with their metaphysics, but it gives them what they have not now, what is indispensable to their existence, and what they all seek—it offers them a way of life; not an unknown way, but a way already explored and familiar to all. Let us suppose that you are a sincere Christian, it matters not of what confession. You believe in the creation of the world, in the Trinity, in the fall and redemption of man, in the sacraments, in prayer, in the Church. The doctrine of Jesus is not opposed to your dogmatic belief, and is absolutely in harmony with your theory of the origin of the universe; and it offers you something that you do not possess. While you retain your present religion you feel that your own life and the life of the world is full of evil that you know not how to remedy. The doctrine of Jesus (which should be binding

upon you since it is the doctrine of your own God) offers you simple and practical rules which will surely deliver you, you and your fellows, from the evils with which you are tormented. Believe, if you will, in paradise, in hell, in the pope, in the Church, in the sacraments, in the redemption; pray according to the dictates of your faith, attend upon your devotions, sing your hymns—but all this will not prevent you from practising the five commandments given by Jesus for your welfare: Be not angry; Do not commit adultery; Take no oaths; Resist not evil; Do not make war. It may happen that you will break one of these rules; you will perhaps yield to temptation, and violate one of them, just as you violate the rules of your present religion, or the articles of the civil code, or the laws of custom. In the same way you may, perhaps, in moments of temptation, fail of observing all the commandments of Jesus. But, in that case, do not calmly sit down as you do now, and so organize your existence as to render it a task of extreme difficulty not to be angry, not to commit adultery, not to take oaths, not to resist evil, not to make war; organize rather an existence which shall render the doing of all these things as difficult as the non-performance of them is now laborious. You cannot refuse to recognize the validity of these rules, for they are the commandments of the God whom you pretend to worship. Let us suppose that you are an unbeliever, a philosopher, it matters not of what special school. You affirm that the progress of the world is in accordance with a law that you have discovered. The doctrine of Jesus does not oppose your views; it is in harmony with the law that you have discovered. But, aside from this law, in pursuance of which the world will in the course of a thousand years reach a state of felicity, there is still your own personal life to be considered. This life you can use by living in conformity to reason, or you can waste it by living in opposition to reason, and you have now for its guidance no rule whatever, except the decrees drawn up by men whom

you do not esteem, and enforced by the police. The doctrine of Jesus offers you rules which are assuredly in accord with your law of "altruism," which is nothing but a feeble paraphrase of this same doctrine of Jesus. Let us suppose that you are an average man, half sceptic, half believer, one who has no time to analyze the meaning of human life, and one therefore who has no determinate theory of existence. You live as lives the rest of the world about you. The doctrine of Jesus is not at all contrary to your condition. You are incapable of reason, of verifying the truths of the doctrines that are taught you; it is easier for you to do as others do. But however modest may be your estimate of your powers of reason, you know that you have within you a judge that sometimes approves your acts and sometimes condemns them. However modest your social position, there are occasions when you are bound to reflect and ask yourself, "Shall I follow the example of the rest of the world, or shall I act in accordance with my own judgment?" It is precisely on these occasions when you are called upon to solve some problem with regard to the conduct of life, that the commandments of Jesus appeal to you in all their efficiency. The commandments of Jesus will surely respond to your inquiry, because they apply to your whole existence. The response will be in accord with your reason and your conscience. If you are nearer to faith than to unbelief, you will, in following these commandments, act in harmony with the will of God. If you are nearer to scepticism than to belief, you will, in following the doctrine of Jesus, govern your actions by the laws of reason, for the commandments of Jesus make manifest their own meaning, and their own justification. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12: 31.) "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (John 16: 33.) The world, that is, the evil in the world, is overcome. If evil

still exists in the world, it exists only through the influence of inertia; it no longer contains the principle of vitality. For those who have faith in the commandments of Jesus, it does not exist at all. It is vanquished by an awakened conscience, by the elevation of the son of man. A train that has been put in motion continues to move in the direction in which it was started; but the time comes when the intelligent effort of a controlling hand is made manifest, and the movement is reversed. "Ye are of God, and have overcome them because greater is he that is within you than he that is in the world." (1 John 5: 4.) The faith that triumphs over the doctrines of the world is faith in the doctrine of Jesus.

Chapter 12 I believe in the doctrine of Jesus, and this is my religion:— I believe that nothing but the fulfilment of the doctrine of Jesus can give true happiness to men. I believe that the fulfilment of this doctrine is possible, easy, and pleasant. I believe that although none other follows this doctrine, and I alone am left to practise it, I cannot refuse to obey it, if I would save my life from the certainty of eternal loss; just as a man in a burning house if he find a door of safety, must go out, so I must avail myself of the way to salvation. I believe that my life according to the doctrine of the world has been a torment, and that a life according to the doctrine of Jesus can alone give me in this world the happiness for which I was destined by the Father of Life. I believe that this doctrine is essential to the welfare of humanity, will save me from the certainty of eternal loss, and will give me in this world the greatest possible sum of happiness. Believing thus, I am obliged to practise its commandments. "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1: 17.) The doctrine of Jesus is a doctrine of grace and truth. Once I knew not grace and knew not truth. Mistaking evil for good, I fell into evil, and I doubted the righteousness of my

tendency toward good. I understand and believe now that the good toward which I was attracted is the will of the Father, the essence of life. Jesus has told us to live in pursuit of the good, and to beware of snares and temptations which, by enticing us with the semblance of good, draw us away from true goodness, and lead us into evil. He has taught us that our welfare is to be sought in fellowship with all men; that evil is a violation of fellowship with the son of man, and that we must not deprive ourselves of the welfare to be had by obedience to his doctrine. Jesus has demonstrated that fellowship with the son of man, the love of men for one another, is not merely an ideal after which men are to strive; he has shown us that this love and this fellowship are natural attributes of men in their normal condition, the condition into which children are born, the condition in which all men would live if they were not drawn aside by error, illusions, and temptations. In his commandments, Jesus has enumerated clearly and unmistakably the temptations that interfere with this natural condition of love and fellowship and render it a prey to evil. The commandments of Jesus offer the remedies by which I must save myself from the temptations that have deprived me of happiness; and so I am forced to believe that these commandments are true. Happiness was within my grasp and I destroyed it. In his commandments Jesus has shown me the temptations that lead to the destruction of happiness. I can no longer work for the destruction of my happiness, and in this determination, and in this alone, is the substance of my religion. Jesus has shown me that the first temptation destructive of happiness is enmity toward men, anger against them. I cannot refuse to believe this, and so I cannot willingly remain at enmity with others. I cannot, as I could once, foster anger, be proud of it, fan into a flame, justify it, regarding myself as an intelligent and superior man and others as useless and foolish people. Now, when I give up to anger, I can only realize that I alone

am guilty, and seek to make peace with those who have aught against me. But this is not all. While I now see that anger is an abnormal, pernicious, and morbid state, I also perceive the temptation that led me into it. The temptation was in separating myself from my fellows, recognizing only a few of them as my equals, and regarding all the others as persons of no account (rekim) or as uncultivated animals (fools). I see now that this wilful separation from other men, this judgment of raca or fool passed upon others, was the principal source of my disagreements. In looking over my past life I saw that I had rarely permitted my anger to rise against those whom I considered as my equals, whom I seldom abused. But the least disagreeable action on the part of one whom I considered an inferior inflamed my anger and led me to abusive words or actions, and the more superior I felt myself to be, the less careful I was of my temper; sometimes the mere supposition that a man was of a lower social position than myself was enough to provoke me to an outrageous manner. I understand now that he alone is above others who is humble with others and makes himself the servant of all. I understand now why those that are great in the sight of men are an abomination to God, who has declared woe upon the rich and mighty and invoked blessedness upon the poor and humble. Now I understand this truth, I have faith in it, and this faith has transformed my perception of what is right and important, and what is wrong and despicable. Everything that once seemed to me right and important, such as honors, glory, civilization, wealth, the complications and refinements of existence, luxury, rich food, fine clothing, etiquette, have become for me wrong and despicable. Everything that formerly seemed to me wrong and despicable, such as rusticity, obscurity, poverty, austerity, simplicity of surroundings, of food, of clothing, of manners, all have now become right and important to me. And so although I may at times give myself up to anger and abuse another, I

cannot deliberately yield to wrath and so deprive myself of the true source of happiness—fellowship and love; for it is possible that a man should lay a snare for his own feet and so be lost. Now, I can no longer give my support to anything that lifts me above or separates me from others. I cannot, as I once did, recognize in myself or others titles or ranks or qualities aside from the title and quality of manhood. I can no longer seek for fame and glory; I can no longer cultivate a system of instruction which separates me from men. I cannot in my surroundings, my food, my clothing, my manners, strive for what not only separates me from others but renders me a reproach to the majority of mankind. Jesus showed me another temptation destructive of happiness, that is, debauchery, the desire to possess another woman than her to whom I am united. I can no longer, as I did once, consider my sensuality as a sublime trait of human nature. I can no longer justify it by my love for the beautiful, or my amorousness, or the faults of my companion. At the first inclination toward debauchery I cannot fail to recognize that I am in a morbid and abnormal state, and to seek to rid myself of the besetting sin. Knowing that debauchery is an evil, I also know its cause, and can thus evade it. I know now that the principal cause of this temptation is not the necessity for the sexual relation, but the abandonment of wives by their husbands, and of husbands by their wives. I know now that a man who forsakes a woman, or a woman who forsakes a man, when the two have once been united, is guilty of the divorce which Jesus forbade, because men and women abandoned by their first companions are the original cause of all the debauchery in the world. In seeking to discover the influences that led to debauchery, I found one to be a barbarous physical and intellectual education that developed the erotic passion which the world endeavors to justify by the most subtle arguments. But the principal influence I found to be the abandonment of the woman to

whom I had first been united, and the situation of the abandoned women around me. The principal source of temptation was not in carnal desires, but in the fact that those desires were not satisfied in the men and women by whom I was surrounded. I now understand the words of Jesus when he says:— “He which made them from the beginning, made them male and female.... So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19: 4-6.) I understand now that monogamy is the natural law of humanity, which cannot with impunity be violated. I now understand perfectly the words declaring that the man or woman who separates from a companion to seek another, forces the forsaken one to resort to debauchery, and thus introduces into the world an evil that returns upon those who cause it. This I believe; and the faith I now have has transformed my opinions with regard to the right and important, and the wrong and despicable, things of life. What once seemed to me the most delightful existence in the world, an existence made up of dainty, aesthetic pleasures and passions, is now revolting to me. And a life of simplicity and indigence, which moderates the sexual desires, now seems to me good. The human institution of marriage, which gives a nominal sanction to the union of man and woman, I regard as of less grave importance than that the union, when accomplished, should be regarded as the will of God, and never be broken. Now, when in moments of weakness I yield to the promptings of desire, I know the snare that would deliver me into evil, and so I cannot deliberately plan my method of existence as formerly I was accustomed to do. I no longer habitually cherish physical sloth and luxury, which excite to excessive sensuality. I can no longer pursue amusements which are oil to the fire of amorous sensuality—the reading of romances and the most of poetry, listening to music, attendance at theatres and balls—amusements that once

seemed to me elevated and refining, but which I now see to be injurious. I can no longer abandon the woman with whom I have been united, for I know that by forsaking her, I set a snare for myself, for her, and for others. I can no longer encourage the gross and idle existence of others. I can no longer encourage or take part in licentious pastimes, romantic literature, plays, operas, balls, which are so many snares for myself and for others. I cannot favor the celibacy of persons fitted for the marriage relation. I cannot encourage the separation of wives from their husbands. I cannot make any distinction between unions that are called by the name of marriage, and those that are denied this name. I am obliged to consider as sacred and absolute the sole and unique union by which man is once for all indissolubly bound to the first woman with whom he has been united. Jesus has shown me that the third temptation destructive to true happiness is the oath. I am obliged to believe his words; consequently, I cannot, as I once did, bind myself by oath to serve any one for any purpose, and I can no longer, as I did formerly, justify myself for having taken an oath because "it would harm no one," because everybody did the same, because it is necessary for the State, because the consequences might be bad for me or for some one else if I refuse to submit to this exaction. I know now that it is an evil for myself and for others, and I cannot conform to it. Nor is this all. I now know the snare that led me into evil, and I can no longer act as an accomplice. I know that the snare is in the use of God's name to sanction an imposture, and that the imposture consists in promising in advance to obey the commands of one man, or of many men, while I ought to obey the commands of God alone. I know now that evils the most terrible of all in their result—war, imprisonments, capital punishment—exist only because of the oath, in virtue of which men make themselves instruments of evil, and believe that they free themselves from all

responsibility. As I think now of the many evils that have impelled me to hostility and hatred, I see that they all originated with the the oath, the engagement to submit to the will of others. I understand now the meaning of the words:— “But let your speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of evil.” (Matthew 5: 37.) Understanding this, I am convinced that the oath is destructive of my true welfare and of that of others, and this belief changes my estimate of right and wrong, of the important and despicable. What once seemed to me right and important—the promise of fidelity to the government supported by the oath, the exacting of oaths from others, and all acts contrary to conscience, done because of the oath, now seem to me wrong and despicable. Therefore I can no longer evade the commandment of Jesus forbidding the oath, I can no longer bind myself by oath to any one, I cannot exact an oath from another, I cannot encourage men to take an oath, or to cause others to take an oath; nor can I regard the oath as necessary, important, or even inoffensive. Jesus has shown me that the fourth temptation destructive to my happiness is the resort to violence for the resistance of evil. I am obliged to believe that this is an evil for myself and for others; consequently, I cannot, as I did once, deliberately resort to violence, and seek to justify my action with the pretext that it is indispensable for the defence of my person and property, or of the persons and property of others. I can no longer yield to the first impulse to resort to violence; I am obliged to renounce it, and to abstain from it altogether. But this is not all. I understand now the snare that caused me to fall into this evil. I know now that the snare consisted in the erroneous belief that my life could be made secure by violence, by the defence of my person and property against the encroachments of others. I know now that a great portion of the evils that afflict mankind are due to this—that men, instead of giving their work for others, deprive themselves completely of the

privilege of work, and forcibly appropriate the labor of their fellows. Every one regards a resort to violence as the best possible security for life and for property, and I now see that a great portion of the evil that I did myself, and saw others do, resulted from this practice. I understood now the meaning of the words:— “Not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” “The laborer is worthy of his food.” I believe now that my true welfare, and that of others, is possible only when I labor not for myself, but for another, and that I must not refuse to labor for another, but to give with joy that of which he has need. This faith has changed my estimate of what is right and important, and wrong and despicable. What once seemed to me right and important—riches, proprietary rights, the point of honor, the maintenance of personal dignity and personal privileges—have now become to me wrong and despicable. Labor for others, poverty, humility, the renunciation of property and of personal privileges, have become in my eyes right and important. When, now, in a moment of forgetfulness, I yield to the impulse to resort to violence, for the defence of my person or property, or of the persons or property of others, I can no longer deliberately make use of this snare for my own destruction and the destruction of others. I can no longer acquire property. I can no longer resort to force in any form for my own defence or the defence of another. I can no longer co-operate with any power whose object is the defence of men and their property by violence. I can no longer act in a judicial capacity, or clothe myself with any authority, or take part in the exercise of any jurisdiction whatever. I can no longer encourage others in the support of tribunals, or in the exercise of authoritative administration. Jesus has shown me that the fifth temptation that deprives me of well-being, is the distinction that we make between compatriots and foreigners. I must believe this; consequently, if, in a moment of forgetfulness, I have a feeling of hostility toward a man of another

nationality, I am obliged, in moments of reflection, to regard this feeling as wrong. I can no longer, as I did formerly, justify my hostility by the superiority of my own people over others, or by the ignorance, the cruelty, or the barbarism of another race. I can no longer refrain from striving to be even more friendly with a foreigner than with one of my own countrymen. I know now that the distinction I once made between my own people and those of other countries is destructive of my welfare; but, more than this, I now know the snare that led me into this evil, and I can no longer, as I did once, walk deliberately and calmly into this snare. I know now that this snare consists in the erroneous belief that my welfare is dependent only upon the welfare of my countrymen, and not upon the welfare of all mankind. I know now that my fellowship with others cannot be shut off by a frontier, or by a government decree which decides that I belong to some particular political organization. I know now that all men are everywhere brothers and equals. When I think now of all the evil that I have done, that I have endured, and that I have seen about me, arising from national enmities, I see clearly that it is all due to that gross imposture called patriotism—love for one's native land. When I think now of my education, I see how these hateful feelings were grafted into my mind. I understand now the meaning of the words:— "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father that is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." I understand now that true welfare is possible for me only on condition that I recognize my fellowship with the whole world. I believe this, and the belief has changed my estimate of what is right and wrong, important and despicable. What once seemed to me right and important—love of country, love for those of my own race, for the organization called the State, services rendered at the expense of the welfare of other men, military exploits—

now seem to me detestable and pitiable. What once seemed to me shameful and wrong—renunciation of nationality, and the cultivation of cosmopolitanism—now seem to me right and important. When, now, in a moment of forgetfulness, I sustain a Russian in preference to a foreigner, and desire the success of Russia or of the Russian people, I can no longer in lucid moments allow myself to be controlled by illusions so destructive to my welfare and the welfare of others. I can no longer recognize states or peoples; I can no longer take part in any difference between peoples or states, or any discussion between them either verbal or written, much less in any service in behalf of any particular state. I can no longer co-operate with measures maintained by divisions between states—the collection of custom duties, taxes, the manufacture of arms and projectiles, or any act favoring armaments, military service, and, for a stronger reason, wars—neither can I encourage others to take any part in them. I understand in what my true welfare consists, I have faith in that, and consequently I cannot do what would inevitably be destructive of that welfare. I not only have faith that I ought to live thus, but I have faith that if I live thus, and only thus, my life will attain its only possible meaning, and be reasonable, pleasant, and indestructible by death. I believe that my reasonable life, the light I bear with me, was given to me only that it might shine before men, not in words only, but in good deeds, that men may thereby glorify the Father. I believe that my life and my consciousness of truth is the talent confided to me for a good purpose, and that this talent fulfils its mission only when it is of use to others. I believe that I am a Ninevite with regard to other Jonahs from whom I have learned and shall learn of the truth; but that I am a Jonah in regard to other Ninevites to whom I am bound to transmit the truth. I believe that the only meaning of my life is to be attained by living in accordance with the light that is within me, and that I must allow this light to shine forth to be seen

of all men. This faith gives me renewed strength to fulfil the doctrine of Jesus, and to overcome the obstacles which still arise in my pathway. All that once caused me to doubt the possibility of practising the doctrine of Jesus, everything that once turned me aside, the possibility of privations, and of suffering, and death, inflicted by those who know not the doctrine of Jesus, now confirm its truth and draw me into its service. Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the son of man, then shall you know that I am he,"—then shall you be drawn into my service—and I feel that I am irresistibly drawn to him by the influence of his doctrine. "The truth," he says again, "The truth shall make you free," and I know that I am in perfect liberty. I once thought that if a foreign invasion occurred, or even if evil-minded persons attacked me, and I did not defend myself, I should be robbed and beaten and tortured and killed with those whom I felt bound to protect, and this possibility troubled me. But this that once troubled me now seems desirable and in conformity with the truth. I know now that the foreign enemy and the malefactors or brigands are all men like myself; that, like myself, they love good and hate evil; that they live as I live, on the borders of death; and that, with me, they seek for salvation, and will find it in the doctrine of Jesus. The evil that they do to me will be evil to them, and so can be nothing but good for me. But if truth is unknown to them, and they do evil thinking that they do good, I, who know the truth, am bound to reveal it to them, and this I can do only by refusing to participate in evil, and thereby confessing the truth by my example. "But hither come the enemy—Germans, Turks, savages; if you do not make war on them, they will exterminate you!" They will do nothing of the sort. If there were a society of Christian men that did evil to none and gave of their labor for the good of others, such a society would have no enemies to kill or to torture them. The foreigners would take only what the members of this society voluntarily gave, making no

distinction between Russians, or Turks, or Germans. But when Christians live in the midst of a non-Christian society which defends itself by force of arm, and calls upon the Christians to join in waging war, then the Christians have an opportunity for revealing the truth to them who know it not. A Christian knowing the truth bears witness of the truth before others, and this testimony can be made manifest only by example. He must renounce war and do good to all men, whether they are foreigners or compatriots. "But there are wicked men among compatriots; they will attack a Christian, and if the latter do not defend himself, will pillage and massacre him and his family." No; they will not do so. If all the members of this family are Christians, and consequently hold their lives only for the service of others, no man will be found insane enough to deprive such people of the necessaries of life or to kill them. The famous Maclay lived among the most bloodthirsty of savages; they did not kill him, they revered him and followed his teachings, simply because he did not fear them, exacted nothing from them, and treated them always with kindness. "But what if a Christian lives in a non-Christian family, accustomed to defend itself and its property by a resort to violence, and is called upon to take part in measures of defence?" This solicitation is simply an appeal to the Christian to fulfil the decrees of truth. A Christian knows the truth only that he may show it to others, more especially to his neighbors and to those who are bound to him by ties of blood and friendship, and a Christian can show the truth only by refusing to join in the errors of others, by taking part neither with aggressors or defenders, but by abandoning all that he has to those who will take it from him, thus showing by his acts that he has need of nothing save the fulfilment of the will of God, and that he fears nothing except disobedience to that will. "But how, if the government will not permit a member of the society over which it has sway, to refuse to recognize the

fundamental principles of governmental order or to decline to fulfil the duties of a citizen? The government exacts from a Christian the oath, jury service, military service, and his refusal to conform to these demands may be punished by exile, imprisonment, and even by death." Then, once more, the exactions of those in authority are only an appeal to the Christian to manifest the truth that is in him. The exactions of those in authority are to a Christian the exactions of those who do not know the truth. Consequently, a Christian who knows the truth must bear witness of the truth to those who know it not. Exile and imprisonment and death afford to the Christian the possibility of bearing witness of the truth, not in words, but in acts. Violence, war, brigandage, executions, are not accomplished through the forces of unconscious nature; they are accomplished by men who are blinded, and do not know the truth. Consequently, the more evil these men do to Christians, the further they are from the truth, the more unhappy they are, and the more necessary it is that they should have knowledge of the truth. Now a Christian cannot make known his knowledge of truth except by abstaining from the errors that lead men into evil; he must render good for evil. This is the life-work of a Christian, and if it is accomplished, death cannot harm him, for the meaning of his life can never be destroyed. Men are united by error into a compact mass. The prevailing power of evil is the cohesive force that binds them together. The reasonable activity of humanity is to destroy the cohesive power of evil. Revolutions are attempts to shatter the power of evil by violence. Men think that by hammering upon the mass they will be able to break it in fragments, but they only make it more dense and impermeable than it was before. External violence is of no avail. The disruptive movement must come from within when molecule releases its hold upon molecule and the whole mass falls into disintegration. Error is the force that binds men together; truth alone can set them

free. Now truth is truth only when it is in action, and then only can it be transmitted from man to man. Only truth in action, by introducing light into the conscience of each individual, can dissolve the homogeneity of error, and detach men one by one from its bonds. This work has been going on for eighteen hundred years. It began when the commandments of Jesus were first given to humanity, and it will not cease till, as Jesus said, "all things be accomplished" (Matthew 5: 18). The Church that sought to detach men from error and to weld them together again by the solemn affirmation that it alone was the truth, has long since fallen to decay. But the Church composed of men united, not by promises or sacraments, but by deeds of truth and love, has always lived and will live forever. Now, as eighteen hundred years ago, this Church is made up not of those who say "Lord, Lord," and bring forth iniquity, but of those who hear the words of truth and reveal them in their lives. The members of this Church know that life is to them a blessing as long as they maintain fraternity with others and dwell in the fellowship of the son of man; and that the blessing will be lost only to those who do not obey the commandments of Jesus. And so the members of this Church practise the commandments of Jesus and thereby teach them to others. Whether this Church be in numbers little or great, it is, nevertheless, the Church that shall never perish, the Church that shall finally unite within its bonds the hearts of all mankind. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good purpose to give you the kingdom."

Editorial Supplement:

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? John 11: 25-26

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. Mark 16: 6

He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Luke 24: 6-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1: 3

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Matthew 28: 5-6

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again. Matthew 20: 18-19

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13: 20-21

Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. John 20: 8-9

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 3: 21

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. Revelation 20: 12-13

Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. Revelation 20: 6

Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. Acts 26: 22-23

