

On Life

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Contents

Introduction	4
I. The Fundamental Contradiction of Human Life	10
II. The Contradiction of Life Has Been Recognized by Men Since Remote Antiquity. The Enlighteners of Humanity Have Revealed to Men the Definitions of Life, Which Solve This Internal Contradiction, but the Pharisees and the Scribes Conceal Them From Men	12
III. The Delusions of the Scribes	14
IV. The Doctrine of the Scribes Substitutes the Visible Phenomena of His Animal Existence for the Concept of the Whole Life of Man, and From These Makes His Deductions as to the Aim of His Life	15
V. The False Teachings of the Pharisees and of the Scribes Do Not Give Any Explanations of the Meanings of Actual Life, Nor Any Guidance in It; as the Only Guide of Life There Appears the Inertia of Life, Which Has No Rational Explanation	17
VI. The Doubling of the Consciousness in the Men of Our World	20
VII. The Doubling of the Consciousness Is Due to Confusing the Animal Life with the Human Life	21
VIII. There Is No Doubling and No Contradiction: They Appear Only with the False Teaching	23
IX. The Birth of the True Life in Man	24
X. Reason Is That Law Cognized by Man, by Which His Life Is to Be Accomplished	25
XI. The False Direction of Knowledge	26
XII. The Cause of the False Knowledge Is the False Perspective In which Objects Present Themselves	28
XIII. The Knowableness of Objects Does Not Increase in Consequence of Their Manifestation in Space and Time, but in Consequence of the Unity of the Law to Which We and All the Objects Which We Study Are Subject	30
XIV. Man's true life is not what takes place in space and time	33
XV. The Renunciation of the Good of Animal Personality Is the Law of Human Life	35
XVI. The Animal Personality Is an Instrument of Life	36
XVII. Birth by the Spirit	38
XVIII. The Demands of the Rational Consciousness	38
XIX. The Confirmation of the Demands of the Rational Consciousness	40
XX. The Demand of Personality Seems Incompatible with the Demand of the Rational Consciousness	42
XXI. What Is Demanded Is Not a Renunciation of Personality, but Its Subjection to the Rational Consciousness	43
XXII. The Sentiment of Love Is the Manifestation of the Activity of Personality Subjected to the Rational Consciousness	46

XXIII. The Manifestation of the Feeling of Love . Is Impossible for Men Who Do Not Understand the Meaning of Their Life	48
XXIV. True Love Is the Consequence of the Renunciation of the Good of Personality .	51
XXV. Love Is the Only Full Activity of the True Life	53
XXVI. The Endeavours of Men, Directed upon the Impossible Improvement of Their Existence, Deprive Them of the Possibility of Their Only, True Life	55
XXVI. The Endeavours of Men, Directed upon the Impossible Improvement of Their Existence, Deprive Them of the Possibility of Their Only, True Life	56
XXVIII. The Carnal Death Destroys the Spatial Body and the Temporal Consciousness, but Cannot Destroy What Forms the Foundation of Life, the Special Relation Which Each Being Bears to the World	59
XXIX. The Terror of Death Is Due to This, That Men Regard as Their Life One Small Part of It, Which Is Limited by Their Own False Conception of It	62
XXX. Life Is a Relation to the World. The Motion of Life Is the Establishment of a New, Higher Relation, and so Death Is the Entrance into a New Relation	63
XXXI. The Life of Dead People Does Not Cease in This World	65
XXXII. The Superstition of Death Is Due to This, That Man Confuses His Different Relations to the World	67
XXXIII. The Visible Life Is a Part of the Infinite Motion of Life	70
XXXIV. The Inexplicability of the Sufferings of the Earthly Existence Proves More Convincingly Than Anything Else to Man That His Life Is Not a Life of the Personality, Which Began with Birth and Ends with Death	72
XXXV. Physical Sufferings Form the Necessary Condition of the Life and Good of Man	77
Conclusion	79
Appendix I.	80
Appendix II.	81
Appendix III.	82

L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, le plus faible de la nature, mais c'est un roseau pensant. Il ne faut pas que l'univers entier s'arme pour l'écraser. Une vapeur, une goutte d'eau suffit pour le tuer. Mais quaud l'univers l'écraserait, l'honime serait encore plus noble que ce qui le tue, parce qu'il sait qu'il meurt: et l'avantage que l'univers asur lui, l'univers n'en sait rien. Ainsi, toute notre dignité consiste dans la pensée. C'est de là qu'il faut nous relever, non de l'espace et de la durée. Travaillions done a bien penser: voilà le principe de la morale. — *Pasca I.*

Zwei Dinge erfüllen mil das Gemüth mit immer neuer und zunehmender Bewunderung und Ehrfurcht, je offer und anhaltender sich das Nachdenken damit beschäftigt I der bes- tirnte Himmel fiber mir, und das moralische Gesetz in mir. . . . Das erste fängt von dem Platze an, den ich in der aussern Sinnenwelt einnehme, und erweitert die Verknüpfung, darin ich stehe, ins unabsehlich Grosse mit Welten fiber Welten und Systemen von Systemen, tiberdem noch in grenzenlose Zeiten ihrer periodischen Bewegung, deren Anfang und Fortdauer. Das zweite fängt von meinem unsichtbaren Selbst, meiner Persönlichkeit, an, und stellt mich in einer Welt dar, die wahre Unendlichkeit hat, aber nur dem Verstande spürbar ist, und mit welcher ich mich, nicht wie dort in bloss zufälliger, sondern allgemeiner und nothwendiger Verknüpfung erkenne. — *Kant (Krit. der pract. Vern. Beschluss).*

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another. — *John xiii. 34.*

Introduction

Let us imagine a man, whose only means of support is a mill. He is the son and the grandson of a miller, and knows well by tradition how to manage the mill in all its details, so that it may grind properly. Not knowing any mechanics, this man fixed, the best way he could, the various parts of the mill, so as to have it grind well, and he lived and earned his sustenance.

But this man happened to reflect on the construction of the mill, having heard some indistinct talks about mechanics, and began to observe what made the different parts move.

From the rynd to the millstone, from the millstone to the axletree, from the axletree to the wheel, from the wheel to the sluice, the dam, and the water, he reached a point when he saw clearly that the whole matter was in the dam and the river. And he rejoiced so much at this discovery that, instead of testing the quality of the milling, as he had done before, and accordingly raising or lowering the millstones and clamping them, and tightening and releasing the belt, he began to study the river. And so the mill began to run down. He was told that he was not doing right, but he disputed with such men, and continued to reflect on the river. And he busied himself so long and so assiduously with this, and so warmly and continually disputed with those who showed him the irregularity of his method of reasoning, that at last he convinced himself that the river was the mill.

To all the proofs of the incorrectness of his reflections such a miller will reply: "No mill grinds without water; consequently, in order that we may know the mill, we must know how to regulate the water, and what the force of its motion is, and whence it comes, — consequently, in order that we may know the mill, we must be acquainted with the river."

Logically the miller's reflection is unanswerable. The only means of bringing him out of his error is to show him that in all reasoning it is not so much the reasoning that is of importance, as the place occupied by the reasoning, that is, that for fruitful reasoning it is first of all necessary to know what to reason about at first, and what later; to show him that a rational activity differs from an irrational one only in this, that the rational activity classifies its reflections in the order of their importance, as to which is to be the first, the second, the third, the tenth, and so forth, while an irrational activity consists in reasoning without this order. It is necessary to show him this also that the determination of this order is not accidental, but depends on the end for which this process of reasoning is taking place.

The end of the reasoning determines the order in which the separate reflections are to be grouped in order that they may be sensible; and a reflection which is not connected with the general aim of all the reflections is irrational, no matter how logical it may be.

The end of the miller is to have good milling, and this end, if he does not lose sight of it, will determine for him the unquestionable order and the consecutiveness of his reflections about the millstones, the wheel, the dam, and the river.

But without this relation to the end of the reflections, the reflections of the miller, no matter how logical and beautiful they may be, will in themselves be irregular and, above all, void: they will be similar to the reflections of Kífa Mokiévich, who tried to reason out what the shell of an elephant's egg would be, if elephants were hatched out of eggs, like birds.

Precisely such, in my opinion, are the reflections of our contemporary science about life.

Life is the mill which a man wants to investigate. The mill is needed that it may grind well, and life is needed only that it may be good. This end of the investigation a man cannot for a minute abandon with impunity. If he abandons it, his reflections will inevitably lose their place and become like Kífa Mokiévich's reflections as to what kind of powder is needed in order to crack the shell of an elephant egg.

A man investigates life only to make it better, and thus has life been investigated by those who have advanced humanity on the path of science. But, by the side of these true teachers and benefactors of humanity, there have always been reasoners who abandon the end of the reflections, and instead trouble themselves with the question as to what causes life, what makes the mill go. Some say it is the water; others, that it is the construction. The dispute waxes hot, and the subject under discussion is removed farther and farther, and gives way entirely to foreign matters.

There is an ancient jest about the dispute of a Jew and a Christian. The story tells how the Christian, replying to the intricate cunning of the Jew, struck the Jew's bald spot with the palm of his hand, so as to produce a smacking sound, and then put the question: "What made it smack? The hand or the bald spot?" And so the dispute about faith gave way to a new, insoluble question.

Something similar has since the most ancient times taken place in relation to the question about life, by the side of the real knowledge of men.

Since the most ancient times there have been known the reflections as to whence life comes, whether from an immaterial principle or from various combinations of matter. These reflections have been continued up to the present time, so that no end of them can be foreseen, because the end of all these reflections has been abandoned, and they discuss life independently of its end, and by the word life no longer understand life, but only that from which it comes, or that which accompanies it.

Speaking now of life, not only in scientific books, but also in private conversations, they do not speak of the life which we all know, of which I am conscious through those sufferings which I fear and hate, and through those joys and pleasures which I wish, but of something which may have originated from the play of accident according to some physical laws, or, perhaps, because it has some mysterious cause.

Now they ascribe the word *life* to something disputable, which has not in itself the chief symptoms of life, the consciousness of suffering and enjoyment, the striving after the good.

“La vie est l’ensemble des fonctions, qui résistent à la mort. La vie est l’ensemble des phénomènes, qui se succèdent pendant un temps limité dans un être organisé.”

“Life is a double process of decomposition and composition, general and at the same time uninterrupted. Life is a certain combination of heterogeneous modifications taking place consecutively. Life is an organism in action. Life is an especial activity of an organic substance. Life is an adaptation of internal to external relations.”

Not to speak of the inaccuracies and tautologies in which all these definitions teem, their essence is always the same, namely, what is defined is not what all men alike indisputably understand by the word *life*, but certain processes, which accompany life and other phenomena.

The majority of these definitions are applicable to the forming crystal; some of these definitions are applicable to the activity of fermentation and decomposition, and all of them apply equally to the life of each separate cell of my body, for which there exists nothing, — neither good nor bad. A few processes, which take place in the crystals, in the protoplasm, in the nucleus of the protoplasm, in the cells of my body and of other bodies, are called by the name which in me is inseparably connected with the consciousness of striving after my good.

The discussion of certain conditions of life as of life is like the discussion of the river as of the mill. These discussions may be very necessary for some purposes, but they do not touch the subject which they are to discuss. Thus, all the conclusions about life which are deduced from these discussions, cannot help but be false.

The word *life* is very short and very clear, and everybody knows what it means; but even because all know what it means, we are obliged always to use it in this universally intelligible significance. This word is intelligible to all, not because it is very accurately defined by other words and concepts, but, on the contrary, because this word signifies a fundamental concept, from which many other, if not all, concepts are deduced, and so, to make our deductions from this concept, we are obliged above all else to accept it in its central, indubitable meaning. But this, it seems to me, has been overlooked by the disputants in relation to the concept of life. What has happened is, that the fundamental concept of life, which in the beginning was not taken in its central meaning, on account of the disputes departed more and more from the accepted central meaning, finally lost its fundamental meaning, and received another, improper meaning. What has happened is that the centre, from which the figure was described, has been abandoned and transferred to a new point.

They dispute whether there is life in a cell or a protoplasm, or even lower down, in inorganic matter. But, before disputing, we ought to ask ourselves whether we have the right to ascribe the concept of life to the cell.

We say, for example, that there is life in the cell, that the cell is a living being, whereas the fundamental concept of human life and that of the life which is found in the cell are two concepts which are not only quite distinct, but which cannot in any way be connected. One concept excludes the other. I discover that my body, without a residue, is all composed of cells. These cells,

I am told, have also the property of life like myself, and are just such a living being as I am; but I recognize myself as living only because I am conscious of myself with all my cells, of which I am composed, as of one inseparable living being. Now I am told that all of me, without any residue, is composed of cells. To what do I ascribe the property of life, to the cells, or to myself? If I admit that the cells have life, I must from the concept of life abstract the chief symptom of my life, — the consciousness of self as one living being; but if I admit that I have life as a separate being, it is obvious that I can in no way ascribe the same properties to the cells, of which my whole body is composed, and of the consciousness of which I know nothing.

Either I live, and there are in me non-living particles, called cells, or there is in me a conglomeration of living cells, and my consciousness of life is not life, but an illusion.

We do not say that in the cell there is something which is called *trife*, but say that it is life. We say life, because by this word we do not mean some X, but a well-defined quantity, which we all call by the same name and know only from within ourselves, as a consciousness of ourselves with our one, inseparable body, — and so such a concept is not applicable to those cells of which my body is composed.

No matter with what investigations and observations a man may busy himself, — he is obliged, for the expression of his observations, to understand by each word what is indisputably understood in the same way by all men, and not employ a concept, which he needs, but which in no way coincides with the fundamental, universally intelligible concept. If it is possible so to employ the word life that it expresses indiscriminately the quality of the whole subject and entirely different qualities of all its component parts, as is the case with the cell and the animal consisting of cells, then it is possible so to employ other words as well: for example, it is possible to say that, since all thoughts consist of words, and words of letters, and letters of strokes, the drawing of strokes is the same as an exposition of ideas, and so strokes may be called ideas.

It is, for example, a most common phenomenon in the scientific world to hear and read reflections about the origin of life from the play of physical, mechanical forces.

Almost the majority of scientific men hold to this — I find it hard to express myself — opinion, no, not opinion, paradox, to this joke or riddle, I might say.

They affirm that life is due to the play of physical and mechanical forces, — those physical forces, which we called physical and mechanical only in contradistinction to the concept of life.

It is obvious that the word *life*, incorrectly applied to concepts foreign to it, by departing more and more from its fundamental meaning has in this significance been removed from its centre to such an extent that life is assumed to be where, according to our conceptions, life cannot be. It is as though they asserted that there is a circle or sphere whose centre is outside its periphery.

Indeed, life, which I cannot present to myself otherwise than as a striving from bad to good, takes place in a territory where I can see neither bad nor good. Obviously the centre of the concept of life has been entirely transposed. Moreover, following the investigations of this something, called life, I see that these investigations touch on concepts which are scarcely known to me. I see a whole series of new concepts and words, which have their conventional significance in scientific language, but which have nothing in common with existing concepts.

The concept of life, as I understand it, is not understood in the same way in which all understand it, and the concepts deduced from it also fail to agree with the customary concepts; there appear instead new, conventional concepts, which receive corresponding invented appellations.

Human language is more and more pushed out from scientific investigations, and instead of the word, as a means of expressing existing objects, they enthrone a scientific Volapfik, which

differs from the real Volapük in that the latter has general words for existing objects and concepts, whereas the first, the scientific Volapiik, applies non-existing words to non-existing concepts.

The only means for the mental intercourse of men is the word, and, to make this intercourse possible, words have to be used in such a way as to evoke in all men corresponding and exact concepts. But if it is possible to use words at random, and to understand by them anything we may think of, it is better not to speak at all, but to indicate everything by signs.

I will admit that to define the laws of the world from mere deductions of the mind, without experience and observation, is a false and unscientific way, that is, one that cannot give any true knowledge; but if we were to study the phenomena of the world by experiment and observation, and yet were guided in these experiments and observations by concepts which are neither fundamental nor common to all, but by conventional ones, and were to describe the results of these experiments with words to which different meanings may be attached, would not that be still worse? The best apothecary shop would be productive of the greatest harm, if the labels were pasted on the bottles, not according to their contents, but as the apothecary might choose.

But I shall be told: "Science does not propose to investigate the whole totality of life (including in it will, the desire of good, and the spiritual world); it abstracts from the concept of life such phenomena only as are subject to its experimental investigations."

This would be beautiful and legitimate. But we know that this is not at all the case in the conception of the men of science of our time. If they first recognized the concept of life in its central meaning, in the way all understand it, and if then it were clearly shown that science, having abstracted from this concept all sides but one, which is subject to external observation, views the phenomena from this one side alone, for which it has methods of investigation peculiar to it, then it would be beautiful, and an entirely different matter: in that case the place which science would occupy and the results at which we should arrive on the basis of science would be quite different. They ought to say what is, and not conceal what we all know. Do we not know that the majority of the experimental scientific investigators of life are fully convinced that they are not studying one side of life alone, but all life?

Astronomy, mechanics, physics, chemistry, and all the other sciences taken together, and each separately, work out the particular side of life subject to them, without arriving at any results about life in general. Only in the times of their crudity, that is, of their obscurity and indefiniteness, some of these sciences endeavoured from their point of view to embrace all the phenomena of life, and went astray in their attempts at inventing new concepts and words. Thus it was with astronomy, when it was astrology, and thus it was with chemistry, when it was alchemy. The same is now taking place with that experimental evolutionary science which, analyzing one side or several sides of life, makes pretensions that it is studying the whole of life.

Men with such a false view of their science will not recognize that only a few sides of life are subject to their investigations; they affirm that the whole of life with all its manifestations will be investigated by them by means of external experiment.

"If," they say, "psychics" (they are fond of this indefinite word of their Volapiik) "is still unknown to us, it will be known some day. By investigating one or several sides of vital phenomena we learn all sides, that is, in other words, if we shall for a very long time and very assiduously look at an object from one side, we shall see the object from all sides, and even from the middle."

However surprising this strange doctrine is, which can be explained only by the fanaticism of superstition, it exists and, like any fanatical doctrine, produces its disastrous effect in that it directs the activity of the human mind upon a false and useless path. It is the ruin of conscientious

workers, who devote their life to the study of what is almost unnecessary; it is the ruin of the material forces of men, in that they are turned into the wrong direction; it is the ruin of the young generations, which are directed upon the most useless activity of a Kffa Mo- kiévich, advanced to the degree of the highest service of humanity.

They usually say that science studies life from all its sides; but the trouble is that every object has as many sides as there are radii in a sphere, that is, an endless number, and that it is not possible to study it from all sides, but we must know from which side it is more important and necessary, and from which it is less important and less necessary. Just as it is impossible to approach an object from all sides at once, so it is impossible to study all the phenomena of life from all sides at once. The consecutiveness establishes itself in a natural manner, and in this lies the whole matter. This consecutiveness presents itself only through the comprehension of life.

Nothing but a correct comprehension of life gives the proper meaning and direction to science in general and each science in particular, distributing them according to the importance of their significance in respect to life. But if the comprehension of life is not such as is inherent in us, the science itself will be false.

Not what we shall call science will define life, but our conception of life will determine what must be regarded as science; and so, in order that science may be science, we must first solve the question as to what is science, and what not; but, to do this, the concept of life must be made clear.

I will frankly express my idea: we all know the fundamental dogma of faith of this false experimental science. There exists matter and its energy. Energy moves; the mechanical motion passes into molecular motion, and is expressed by heat, electricity, and nerve and brain activity. All phenomena of life without any exception are explained as relations of energies. Everything is so beautiful, simple, clear, and, above all, convenient. And so, if what you desire so much and what so simplifies your whole life does not exist, it has all to be invented in some way.

And so here is my whole bold idea: the chief portion of energy, of the impassioned activity of experimental science, is based on the desire to invent all that is needed for the confirmation of so convenient a conception.

In the whole activity of this science one sees not so much the desire to investigate the phenomena of life, as the one, ever present anxiety to prove the correctness of one's fundamental dogma. What energy has been wasted on the attempts to prove the origin of the organic from the inorganic and of the psychical activity from the progresses of the organism !

The inorganic does not pass into the organic: let us search at the bottom of the sea, — we shall find there a thing which we shall call a nucleus, a moneron. It is not there either: let us believe that it will be found, the more so since we have at our service a whole infinitude of ages, whither we can cram down everything which ought to exist according to our belief, but does not exist in reality.

The same is true of the transition from the organic activity into the psychic. We haven't it? We believe that it will be, and all the efforts of the mind are directed toward proving at least the possibility of it.

The discussions of what has no reference to life, namely whence life comes, — whether it is animism, or vitalism, or the concept of some special force, — have concealed from men the chief question of life, that question without which the concept of life loses its meaning, and have slowly brought the men of science, — those who ought to lead others, — to the condition of a man who is walking, and is even in a hurry, but has forgotten whither he is going.

But, maybe, I intentionally try not to see those enormous results which science gives in its present direction. However, no results whatever can change its false direction. Let us assume the impossible: that that which modern science wishes to find out about life, of which it asserts (though it does not believe so) that it will all be revealed, — let us assume that it is all revealed and as clear as day. It is clear how through adaptation the organic is born out of inorganic matter, and how physical energies pass into feelings, will, thought, and all this is known not only to gymnasiasts, but also to village schoolboys.

I know that certain thoughts and feelings are due to such and such motions. What of it? Can I guide these motions, or not, in order that I may evoke in myself a given series of thoughts? But the question as to what thoughts and feelings I must evoke in myself and in others remains not only unsolved, but even untouched.

I know that the men of science find no difficulty in answering this question. The solution of this question seems very simple to them, as simple as the solution of a difficult question appears to a man who does not understand it. The solution of the question as to how life is to be arranged, when it is in our power, seems very simple to the men of science. They say: “Arrange it in such a way that men may be able to gratify their needs; science works out the means, in the first place, for regularly distributing the gratification of needs, and in the second, for producing so much and so easily that all needs may be easily gratified, and then all men will be happy.”

But if you ask what is meant by need, and what the limits of needs are, they reply to this simply: “That is what science is for, — to classify the needs into physical, mental, sesthetic, even moral needs, and clearly to define what needs are legitimate, and to what extent, and what are illegitimate, and to what extent. Some day it will determine all that.”

But if you ask what one is to be guided by in the determination of the legitimacy or illegitimacy of these needs, they answer boldly: “By the study of the needs.”

But the word *need* has only two meanings, — either that of a condition of existence, and of conditions of existence of any object there is an endless number, and so all conditions cannot be studied; or that of the living being’s demand of the good, which is cognized and determined by consciousness alone, and so can still less be studied by experimental science.

There is an institution, a corporation, or an assemblage of men or minds, which is infallible and is called science. This science will determine all that at some future time.

Is it not evident that all this solution of the question is only a paraphrased kingdom of the Messiah, in which science plays the rôle of the Messiah, and that, in order that such an explanation may explain anything, it is necessary to believe in the dogmas of science as unconditionally as the Jews believe in the Messiah, which the orthodox men of science actually do, — but with this difference: an orthodox Jew, who sees in the Messiah a messenger of God, can believe that he will arrange everything excellently by dint of his power, while an orthodox man of science by the nature of the thing cannot believe that it is possible by means of an external study of the needs to solve the chief and only question of life.

I. The Fundamental Contradiction of Human Life

Every man lives only that he may feel well, — for his own good. If he does not feel the desire of good for himself, he does not feel himself living. Man cannot present to himself life without

the desire of good for himself. To live is for every man the same as to wish and obtain the good; to wish and obtain the good is the same as to live.

Man feels life only in himself, in his personality, and so man imagines at first that the good which he wishes is only the good of his personality. At first it seems to him that only he lives, lives truly. The life of other beings does not at all present itself to him like his own, — it presents itself to him only as a semblance of life; the life of other beings man knows only from observation, and only through observation does he know that they live. Of the life of other beings man knows when he wants to think of them; but of himself he knows at all times, and so each man sees his own life only as the real life. The life of other beings, which surround him, presents itself to him only as one of the conditions of his existence. If he does not wish others any evil, he refrains from doing so because the sight of the sufferings of others impairs his welfare. If he wishes others well, he does not do so in the same way as to himself, — not that he whom he wishes well may fare well, but that the good of the other beings may increase the good of his own life. What is important and necessary for man is the good in that life which he feels his own, that is, his good.

Now, while striving to attain his good, man observes that this good depends on other beings, and, observing these other beings, he sees that all of them — both men and animals — have precisely the same conception of life which he has. Each of these beings, like him, feels only its own life and its own good, and regards only its own life as important and real, and the life of all the other beings only as a means for its own good. Man sees that each of the living beings must be prepared, like himself, for the sake of its little good, to deprive of a greater good and even of life all the other beings, and among them him, as a reasoning man. Having comprehended this, man involuntarily reflects that if this is so, — and he knows that it is indubitably so, — not one being, and not a dozen beings, but all the endless creatures of the world are prepared, each for the attainment of its own good, at any moment to destroy him, for whom alone life exists. Having comprehended this, man sees that his personal good, in which alone he understands his life, is not only not easy of acquisition, but will certainly be taken from him.

The longer a man lives, the more this reflection is confirmed by experience, and he sees that the life of the world, in which he takes part, and which is composed of interrelated individuals that wish to destroy and devour one another, not only cannot be a good for him, but certainly is a great evil.

More than this: even if a man is placed in such favourable conditions that he can successfully struggle against other individuals, without fearing for himself, reason and experience will show him very soon that even those semblances of good which he snatches away from life, in the form of enjoyments of personality, are not any good, but, as it were, only samples of good, given to him solely that he may the more sensibly feel the sufferings which are always connected with the enjoyments. The longer a man lives, the more clearly does he see that the enjoyments grow less and less, and the ennui, satiety, labours, and sufferings more and more.

More than this: as he begins to experience a weakening of his forces and diseases, and contemplates the sickness, old age, and death of other men, he cannot fail to observe that his own existence, in which alone he feels real, full life, is with every hour, with every motion approaching debility, old age, and death; that his life, in addition to being subject to thousands of casualties of destruction by other beings that are struggling with him, and to ever increasing sufferings, by its very essence is only an unceasing approach to death, to that condition in which, together with the life of the individual, there will certainly be destroyed every possibility of any good of personality whatsoever. Man sees that he, his personality, — that in which alone he feels life,

— does nothing but struggle against what it is impossible to struggle against, against the whole world; that he is seeking enjoyments which give only a semblance of good and always end in suffering, and wishes to retain life, which it is impossible to retain. He sees that he himself, his personality, — that for which alone he wishes the good and life, — can have neither good nor life. And that which he wishes to have, the good and life, is possessed only by those beings, foreign to him, whom he does not feel and cannot feel, and of whose existence he neither can nor wishes to know.

What is most important to him and what alone he needs, what, as he thinks, lives the only real life, his personality, will perish and be bones and worms, — not he; and what he does not need and is of no importance to him, what he does not feel as living, all that world of struggling and alternating beings, is the real life, and will remain and live for ever. Thus the only life of which man is conscious, for which all his activity takes place, turns out to be delusive and impossible, while the life outside him, which he does not love or feel, and which is unknown to him, is the one true life.

Only what he does not feel has those properties which he would like to have. And this is not something which so presents itself to man in the bad moments of his gloomy mood, it is not a conception without which one can get along, but, on the contrary, such an obvious, indubitable truth that, as soon as this thought strikes a man, or is explained to him by others, he never gets rid of it, and will never eradicate it from his consciousness.

II. The Contradiction of Life Has Been Recognized by Men Since Remote Antiquity. The Enlighteners of Humanity Have Revealed to Men the Definitions of Life, Which Solve This Internal Contradiction, but the Pharisees and the Scribes Conceal Them From Men

The sole aim of life, as it first presents itself to man, is the good of his personality, but there can be no good for the personality; even if there were anything in life that resembled the good, life, in which alone the good would be possible, the life of the personality, by every motion, every breath, is irresistibly drawn to sufferings, to evil, to death, to annihilation.

This is so obvious and so clear that every thinking man, whether he be young or old, cultured or uneducated, sees it. This reflection is so simple and so natural that it presents itself to every rational man, and has been known to humanity since remote antiquity.

“The life of man, as an individual striving only after its good, amidst an endless number of similar individuals, which destroy one another and themselves, is evil and senseless, and the true life cannot be such.” Thus has man said to himself since antiquity, and this internal contradiction of man’s life has with extraordinary force and clearness been expressed by Hindoo, Chinese, Egyptian, Greek, and Hebrew sages; and since antiquity man’s mind has been directed to the cognition of such a good as would not be destroyed by the struggle of the beings among themselves, by sufferings, and by death. The whole progress of humanity, ever since we know its life, consists in the ever growing elucidation of this good of man, which is not impaired by struggle, suffering, and death.

Since most remote times and among the different nations, the great teachers of humanity have revealed to men ever clearer definitions of life, which solve its internal contradiction, and have pointed out to them the true good and the true life that are proper for man. Since the position of men in the world is the same for all men, and, therefore, the contradiction between his striving after his personal good and the consciousness of its impossibility is the same also, all the definitions of the true good and, therefore, of the true life, as revealed to men by the greatest minds of humanity, are by their essence the same. ’

“Life is the dissemination of that light which came down from heaven for the good of men,” Confucius said, six hundred years before Christ.

“Life is a wandering and perfecting of the souls attaining a greater and ever greater good,” said the Brahmins of about the same time.

“Life is self-renunciation for the sake of attaining blissful Nirvana,” said Buddha, a contemporary of Confucius.

“Life is the path of humility and abasement for the sake of attaining the good,” said Lao-tse, another contemporary of Confucius.

“Life is that which God blew into the nostrils of man, in order that he, fulfilling the law, might attain the good,” says the Jewish wisdom.

“Life is subjection to reason, which gives men the good,” said the Stoics.

“Life is love of God and of our neighbour, which gives man the good,” said Christ, including all the former definitions into his own.

Such are the definitions of life, which, pointing out to men the true, indestructible good in the place of the false and impossible good of personality, have thousands of years before us solved the contradiction of human life, and given a rational meaning to it. We may fail to agree with these definitions of life; we may assume that these definitions can be expressed more exactly and more clearly, but we cannot help seeing that these definitions are such that the recognition of them, destroying the contradiction of life and putting in place of the striving after the unattainable good of personality another striving,— after the good which is not destroyed by suffering and death, — gives a rational meaning to life. We cannot help seeing that these definitions, being theoretically correct, are also confirmed by the experience of life, and that millions and millions of people, who have recognized such definitions of life, have in fact shown the possibility of substituting for the striving after the good of the personality the other striving after the good which is not impaired by suffering and by death.

But besides these men, who have comprehended the definitions of life, as revealed to men by the great enlighteners of humanity, and who have lived by it, there has always existed a large majority of men, who at a given period of life, and at times during their whole life, have lived nothing but an animal life, not only failing to understand those definitions which serve as a solution of the contradiction of human life, but not even seeing that contradiction which they solve. There have always been men among them who, on account of their external, exclusive position, have considered themselves called to guide humanity, and, themselves failing to comprehend the meaning of human life, have taught other men the life which they do not understand, namely, that human life is nothing but personal existence.

Such false teachers have existed at all times and exist even at present. They profess in words the teachings of those enlighteners of humanity, in whose traditions they have been educated, but, failing to comprehend their rational meaning, they turn these doctrines into supernatural revelations of the past and the future life of men and demand only the execution of rites. This is

the teaching of the Pharisees in the broadest sense, that is, of men who teach that the life which is in itself irrational may be mended by faith in another life, which is obtained by the execution of external rites.

Others, who do not recognize the possibility of any other than the visible life, deny all miracles and everything supernatural, and boldly assert that man's life is nothing but his animal existence from his birth to his death. It is the teaching of the scribes, of men who teach that in the life of man, as of an animal, there is nothing irrational.

The two classes of false teachers have always waged war among themselves, though the doctrines of either class are based on the same gross understanding of the fundamental contradiction of human life. Both doctrines hold sway in our world and, making war on one another, fill the world with their disputes, thus concealing from men those definitions of life which reveal the path to the true good of men, which were given humanity thousands of years ago.

The Pharisees, by not understanding the definition of life which is given to men by those teachers in the traditions in which they are brought up, substitute for it their false interpretations of the future life, and at the same time try to conceal from men the definitions of life of the other enlighteners of humanity, by presenting them to their disciples in their grossest and most cruel distortion, hoping in this way to support the exclusive authority of the teaching on which they base their interpretations.¹

But the scribes, who do not even suspect in the Pharisaical teachings those rational foundations from which they arose, deny outright all the doctrines of the future life, and boldly affirm that all these doctrines have no foundation whatever, and are only survivals of coarse customs of ignorance, and that the progress of humanity consists in putting no questions of life which exceed the limits of the animal existence of man.

III. The Delusions of the Scribes

How wonderful! The fact that all the teachings of the great minds of humanity so awed men by their greatness that rude people generally ascribed to them a supernatural character and recognized their founders as demigods, — which serves as the chief token of the importance of these teachings, — serves for the scribes, so they think, as the best proof of the irregularity and obsolescence of these teachings. The fact that the unimportant teachings of Aristotle, Bacon, Comte, and others have always remained the possession of a small number of their readers and admirers, and on account of their falseness never could have influenced the masses, and so were not subjected to superstitious distortions and increments, is taken as a proof of their truth. But the teachings of the Brahmins, of Buddha, Zoroaster, Lao-tse, Confucius, Isaiah, Christ, are regarded as superstitions and delusions, only because these teachings have transformed the lives of millions.

They are not in the least troubled by the fact that billions of people have lived according to these superstitions, because even in their distorted form they give men answers to the questions as to the true good of life, and that these teachings are divided up, but even thus serve as the

¹ The unity of the rational meaning of the definition of life by the other enlighteners of humanity does not present itself to them the best proof of the truth of their teaching, since it shatters the trust in those irrational false interpretations which they substitute for the essence of the teaching. — *Author's Note.*

basis of reasoning of the best men of all ages, while the theories which are acknowledged by the scribes are divided by them alone, are always subjects of dispute, and often do not survive a decade, and are forgotten as quickly as they rise.

In nothing is the false direction of the science which modern society follows expressed with such clearness as in the place which in society is given to the teachings of those great teachers of life, by which humanity has lived and formed itself, and continues to live and form itself. In the almanacs it says, in the department of statistical data, that there are a thousand different creeds, which are now professed by the inhabitants of the globe. In these creeds are included Brahminism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Christianity. There are a thousand creeds, and men of our time believe this statement quite sincerely. There are a thousand creeds, and they are all nonsense, so what need is there of studying them? And the men of our time consider it a shame if they do not know the last utterances of wisdom of Spencer, Helmholtz, and others, but of the Brahmins, of Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse, Epictetus, Isaiah, they sometimes know the names, and sometimes they do not know even that. It does not even occur to them that there are not at all one thousand creeds in our day, but only three,— the Chinese, the Hindoo, and the Judaeo-Christian (with its outgrowth, Mohammedanism), and that the books of these religions may be bought for five roubles and read in two weeks, and that in these books, by which all humanity, with the exception of seven per cent, of almost unknown people, has lived, is contained all the wisdom of man, all that which has made humanity such as it is.

But it is not merely the masses that do not know these teachings: the learned do not know them, if they do not happen to be their specialty; philosophers by profession do not consider it necessary to look inside these books. What sense is there in studying those men who have solved that which to a rational man is a contradiction of his life, and who have determined the true good and life of men? The scribes, who do not understand the contradiction which forms the principle of a rational life, affirm boldly that, since they do not see it, there is no contradiction, and that the life of man is only his animal existence.

Men who see understand and define what they see before themselves: a blind man pokes his cane in front of him, and affirms that there is nothing but what the feel of his cane tells him.

IV. The Doctrine of the Scribes Substitutes the Visible Phenomena of His Animal Existence for the Concept of the Whole Life of Man, and From These Makes His Deductions as to the Aim of His Life

“Life is what is going on in the living being from its birth to its death. A man, a dog, a horse, is born; each of them has his individual body; this individual body lives, and then dies; the body will be decomposed, will enter into other beings, and the former being will be no more. There was life, and life has come to an end; the heart beats, the lungs breathe, the body does not fall apart, — consequently the man, the dog, the horse, lives; the heart stops beating, the breath ceases, the body begins to decompose, — death has come, and there is no life. Life, then, is that which takes place in the body of man, just as in that of an animal, in the interval between birth and death. What can be clearer?”

Thus the grossest, most ignorant people, who have just issued from the animal state, have always looked upon life. In our day the teaching of the scribes, which calls itself science, recognizes this same gross, primitive concept of life as the only true one. Making use of all those weapons of external knowledge, which humanity has acquired, this false teaching wants systematically to lead men back into that darkness of ignorance, from which it has for a thousand years tried with so much effort and labour to escape.

“We cannot define life in our consciousness,” says this doctrine. “We lose ourselves, if we analyze it in ourselves. That concept of good, the striving after which in our consciousness forms our life, is an illusive phantom, and life cannot be understood in this consciousness. To understand life, we must observe its manifestations, as the motion of matter. Only from these observations and from the laws deduced from them shall we find the law of life itself and the law of the life of man.”²

And so the false teaching, by substituting for the concept of the whole life of man, as known to him in his consciousness, its visible part, — animal existence,— begins to study these visible phenomena, at first in animal man, then in the animals in general, then in the plants, then in matter, asserting all the time that it is not certain manifestations of life that are studied, but life itself. The observations are so complex, so diversified, so mixed, and so much time and effort is wasted on them, that men by degrees forget their original mistake of assuming part of the subject as being the whole subject, and are fully convinced that the study of the visible properties of matter, of plants, and of animals is the study of life itself, which is cognized by man only in his consciousness.

What takes place is very much like what a man does who points to a shadow, wishing to sustain the delusion in which his spectators are.

“Look nowhere,” says the demonstrator, “except where the reflections appear, and, above all, do not look at the object itself: there is no object, — there is only its reflection.”

The same is done by the science of the scribes of our time, which pampers the vulgar crowd, when it views life without its chief definition, the striving after the good, which is revealed only in the consciousness of man.³ Starting directly from the definition of life independently of the striving after the good, the false science observes the ends of the living beings, and, finding in them ends which are foreign to man, ascribe them to him.

As the end of the living beings there presents itself, with such an external observation, the preservation of one’s personality, the preservation of species, the reproduction of one’s like, and the struggle for existence, and this imaginary end of life is foisted upon man.

² The true science, which knows its place and, therefore, its subject, is modest and, therefore, powerful, and has never spoken in this way.

The science of physics speaks of the law’s and relations of forces, without troubling itself with the question as to what force is, or trying to explain the essence of force. The science of chemistry speaks of the relations of matter, without troubling itself with the question what matter is, or trying to define its essence. The science of biology speaks of the forms of life, without troubling itself with the question as to what life is, or trying to define its essence. Force and matter and life are accepted by the true sciences not as objects of investigation, but as axiomatic points of support, which are taken from other fields of knowledge, and on which the structure of each separate science is reared. Thus true science looks upon the subject, and this science cannot have a deleterious influence upon the masses, turning them toward ignorance. But not thus does the falsely reasoning science look upon its subject. “We study matter and force and life; and since we study them, we can know them,” they say, failing to consider that they are not studying matter, or force, or life, but only their relations and forms. — *Author’s Note.*

³ See first appendix.

The false science, taking for its starting-point the obsolete conception of life, with which one cannot see that contradiction of human life, which forms its chief property, — this so-called science in its last deductions arrives at what the vulgar majority of humanity demands, — at the recognition of the possibility of good for the individual life alone, at the recognition of the animal existence alone as man's good.

The false science goes even beyond the demands of the vulgar crowd, for which it wants to find an explanation, — it arrives at the affirmation of what the rational consciousness of man rejects with its first gleam of intelligence, — it arrives at the conclusion that the life of man, as of any animal, consists in the struggle for the existence of personality, of the race, and of the species.⁴

V. The False Teachings of the Pharisees and of the Scribes Do Not Give Any Explanations of the Meanings of Actual Life, Nor Any Guidance in It; as the Only Guide of Life There Appears the Inertia of Life, Which Has No Rational Explanation

“There is no need of defining life: everybody knows it. That is all, and so let us live !” say men in their delusion, being supported by the false teachings. And, as they do not know what life and its good is, they think that they live, as a man who is borne by the waves without any special direction may think that he is swimming whither he has to and wishes to swim.

A child is born in need or in luxury, and receives an education either of the Pharisees or of the scribes. For the child, for the youth, there does not yet exist the contradiction of life and the question about it, and so he needs neither the explanation of the Pharisees, nor that of the scribes, and they cannot guide his life. He learns only by the example of men who live about him, and this example, both of the Pharisees and of the scribes, is the same: both live only for the good of the personal life, and teach him the same.

If his parents are in need, he learns from them that the aim of life is the acquisition of more bread and money, and as little work as possible, so that the animal personality may fare as well as possible. If he was born in luxury, he learns that the aim of life is wealth and honours, so that one may pass the time with as much pleasure and jollity as possible.

All the knowledge which the poor man acquires is necessary for him, so that he may be able to improve the welfare of his personality. All the knowledge of science and of the arts which the rich man acquires is necessary for him only that he may be able to vanquish ennui and pass the time pleasantly. The longer each of them lives, the more strongly does the reigning view of the men of the world enter his flesh. They marry and raise a family, and the eagerness for acquiring the benefits of an animal existence is intensified by the justification of the family: the struggle with others becomes more acute, and there is established the habit (inertia) of life only for the good of the personality.

Even if a doubt as to the rationality of such a life should assail either the poor or the rich man; if either shall be confronted with the question, For what purpose is this aimless struggle for existence, which my children will continue, or for what purpose is this illusive chase after

⁴ See second appendix.

enjoyments, which end in suffering both for me and my children? there is hardly any possibility that he will find out those definitions of life which have long ago been given to humanity by its great teachers, who thousands of years ago were in the same condition as he. The teaching of the Pharisees and of the scribes screen them so firmly that only very few succeed in seeing them.

Some, the Pharisees, in reply to the question, "What is this miserable life for?" say, "Life is miserable and has always been so, and must always be so; the good of life is not in its present, but in its past, before life, and in its future, after life." The Brahmin, and the Buddhist, and the Taoist, and the Jewish, and the Christian Pharisees always say the same. "The present life is an evil, and the explanation of this evil is in the past, — in the appearance of the world and of man; but the correction of the existing evil is in the future, beyond the grave. Everything which man can do for the acquisition of the good is not in this life, but in the future: believe in the teaching which we impart to you, — fulfil the rites which we prescribe."

And the doubter, seeing in the lives of all men who live for their personal good, and in the lives of the Pharisees who live in the same way, the untruth of this explanation, and not grasping the meaning of their answer, simply does not believe them, and turns to the scribes.

"All the teachings about another life than the one which we see in the animal life is the fruit of ignorance," say the scribes. "All thy doubts in the rationality of thy life are idle dreams. The life of the worlds, the earth, the man, the animal, the plant has its laws, and we study them and investigate the origin of the worlds and of man, of the animals and plants, and of all matter; we also investigate what is in store for the worlds, when the sun cools off, and so forth, and what has been and will be with man and with every animal and plant. We can show and prove that everything has been and will be, as we say; our investigations, besides this, cooperate with the improvement of man's welfare. But of thy life, with thy striving after the good, we cannot tell thee anything, except what thou knowest without us: since thou livest, live in the best manner possible."

And the doubter, having received no answer whatsoever to his question, neither from the one nor from the other, remains, as he has been, without any guidance in life except the impulses of his personality.

Some of the doubters, saying to themselves, according to Pascal's reflection, "What if there is truth in that with which the Pharisees threaten us for the non-performance of their injunctions?" carry out, in their leisure time, all the injunctions of the Pharisees ("There will be no loss, and the gain may be great"), while others, agreeing with the scribes, deny outright any other life and all religious rites, and say to themselves, "Not I alone, but all men have lived in this manner, — what will be, will be." And this discrimination gives no advantage to either of them: they all remain without an explanation as to the meaning of the present life.

But one has to live.

Human life is a series of acts from rising to going to bed; every day a man has to choose out of hundreds of possible acts those which he will perform. Neither the teaching of the Pharisees, which explains the mysteries of the heavenly life, nor the teaching of the scribes, which investigates the origin of the worlds and of man, and which draws its conclusions as to their future fate, furnishes such a guide for his acts. And yet man cannot live without a guide in the choice of his acts, and so he involuntarily submits, not to reason, but to that external guide of life, which has always existed in every society of men.

This guide has no reasonable explanation, but yet it moves an enormous majority of the acts of all men. This guide is the habit of life of societies of men, which governs men the more powerfully

the less men have the comprehension of the meaning of life. This guide cannot be expressed definitely, because it is composed of the greatest variety of acts and works, widely different in time and place. It is candles on the little boards of the parents for the Chinese; it is pilgrimages to certain places for a Mohammedan; it is a certain number of words in a prayer for a Hindoo; it is loyalty to his flag and the honour of the uniform for a soldier, the duel for a man of the world, the vendetta for the mountaineer; it is certain food for certain days, a certain education of one's children; it is visits, a certain furnishing of the apartments, a certain celebration of funerals, births, and weddings; it is an endless number of deeds and acts, which fill the whole life.

It is what is called decency, custom, but most frequently duty, and even sacred duty.

And it is to this guidance that the majority of men submit, in spite of the explanations of the Pharisees and the scribes. All about him and ever since childhood a man sees people who perform these acts with full assurance and external solemnity, and, as he has no rational explanation of his Efe, he not only begins to perform such acts, but tries to ascribe a rational meaning to these acts. He wants to believe that the men who perform these acts have an explanation as to why and for what purpose they do what they do. And so he begins to convince himself that these acts have a rational meaning and that the explanation of their meaning, though not known to him, is known to others. But the majority of other men, who themselves lack an explanation of life, are in precisely the same state in which he is. The only reason they perform the acts is that they think that others, having an explanation of these acts, demand them from them. Thus, involuntarily deceiving one another, men get more and more accustomed to performing acts which have no rational explanation, and even to ascribing to these acts a certain mysterious, incomprehensible meaning. The less they comprehend the meaning of the acts to be performed by them and the more doubtful these acts are in themselves, the more importance do they ascribe to them, and the more solemnly do they perform them.

The rich man and the poor perform what they see others around them do, and these acts they call their duty, their sacred duty, quieting themselves with the thought that that which has been done for so long a time, by so great a number of men, and is so highly esteemed by them, cannot help but be the real work of life. And up to a good old age, up to death, men live, trying to assure themselves that, if they themselves do not know what they live for, others do know it, — those others who know it just as little as those who depend on them.

New men come into existence, are born, grow up, and, looking at this hubbub of existence, called life, in which gray-haired, respected, revered old men take part, assure themselves that this senseless bustle is life, and that there is no other, and go away, having crowded a bit at its gate. Even so a man who has never seen an assembly, upon noticing a crowding, noisy, animated throng at the entrance, and deciding that this is that assembly, allows himself to be jostled at the door and returns home with crushed sides, and with the full assurance that he was in the assembly.

We cut through mountains, fly around the world; electricity, microscopes, telephones, wars, parliament, philanthropy, the struggle of parties, universities, learned societies, museums, — is not all that life?

All the complex seething activity of men, with their commerce, wars, roads of communication, science, arts, is for the greater part only a crush of a senseless crowd at the gate of life.

VI. The Doubling of the Consciousness in the Men of Our World

“But verily, verily, I say unto you, The time is coming and is already at hand when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and hearing shall come to life.” And this time is coming. No matter how much a man may assure himself, and no matter how much others may assure him, that life can be good and rational only beyond the grave, or that nothing but the personal life can be good and rational, — man cannot believe this. Man has in the depth of his soul an ineffaceable demand that his life should be a good and should have a rational meaning, and life, which has before itself no other aim than the life after the grave or the impossible good of the personality, is an evil and an absurdity.

“To live for the future life?” man says to himself. “But if that life, that only sample of life which I know, my present life, is to be meaningless, this not only fails to confirm me in the belief that another, rational life is possible, but, on the contrary, convinces me that life is in its essence meaningless, and that there can be no other life but the meaningless.

“To live for myself? But my personal life is an evil and an absurdity. To live for my family? For the common weal, for my country, for humanity even? But if the life of my personality is wretched and meaningless, the life of every other human personality is also meaningless, and so an endless number of collected absurd and irrational personalities will not form one single blessed and rational life. To live for myself, not knowing why, and doing what others are doing? But I know that others, like myself, do not know themselves why they do what they do.”

The time comes when the rational consciousness outgrows the false teachings, and man stops amidst life and demands an explanation.⁵

Only such rare person as has no relations with men of other manners of life, or a man who is constantly occupied in a tense battle with Nature for the purpose of supporting his bodily existence, can believe in this, that the execution of those senseless deeds, which he calls his duty, can be a duty of life peculiar to him.

The time is at hand and already here, when the deception which proclaims as life the verbal negation of this life for the purpose of preparing for oneself a future life and the acknowledgment of the personal animal existence, and which calls the so-called duty the work of life, — when this deception shall become clear for the majority of men, and it is only people who are crushed by want or dulled by a life of lust that can exist, without feeling the senselessness and wretchedness of their existence.

Men awake ever more frequently to the rational consciousness, come to life in their graves, and the fundamental contradiction of the human life, in spite of all the efforts of men to conceal this from themselves, stands out before the majority of men with terrible force and clearness.

“My whole life is a desire for good for myself,” says the awakened man, “but my reason tells me that this good cannot exist for me, and that, no matter what I may do and what I may attain, everything will end in one and the same, in sufferings and death, — in destruction. I want the good, I want life, I want a rational meaning, but in me and in everything which surrounds me there is evil, death, absurdity. What shall I do? How can I live?” And there is no answer.

A man looks about him and seeks an answer for his question, and does not find it. He will find about him teachings that will answer questions which he has not put to himself, but in the world that surrounds him there is no answer to the question which he has put to himself. There is but

⁵ See third appendix.

the bustle of men, who, without knowing why, are performing acts which others are performing, themselves not knowing why.

All live as though they were not conscious of the wretchedness of their situation and the absurdity of their activity. "Either *they* are senseless, or *I* am," the awakened man says to himself. "But all men cannot be senseless, consequently it is I who am senseless. But no, — that rational ego which tells me this cannot be senseless. Let it be one against the whole world, I cannot help but believe it."

And man recognizes himself alone in the whole world with those terrible questions which tear his soul asunder. And one has to live.

One ego, his personality, commands him to live.

The other ego, his reason, says: "You cannot live."

Man feels that he has doubled. And this doubling lacerates his heart in an agonizing manner. And it seems to him that his reason is the cause of this doubling and suffering.

Reason, that highest quality of man, which is necessary for his life, which, amidst the forces of Nature that destroy him, gives him, the naked and helpless man, the means both for existence and for enjoyment, — that same quality poisons his life.

In all the surrounding world, amidst living creatures, the qualities that are peculiar to these beings are necessary for them, are common to them all, and cooperate with their good. Plants, insects, animals, submitting to their law, live a blessed, joyful, calm life. And suddenly this highest quality of man's nature produces in him such a painful state that frequently — more and more frequently of late — man cuts the Gordian knot of his life, and kills himself, only to free himself from the painful internal contradiction which is produced by a rational consciousness, and which in our time has been carried to the highest degree of tension.

VII. The Doubling of the Consciousness Is Due to Confusing the Animal Life with the Human Life

It seems to man that the rational consciousness awakened in him breaks and arrests his life only because he recognizes that to be his life which has not been, and cannot be, his life.

Having been educated and brought up in the false teachings of our world, which confirm him in his conviction that his life is nothing but his personal existence, which began with his birth, it seems to man that he lived when he was a babe, a child; then it seems to him that he lived without a break, as a youth and a full-grown man. He lived, as it seems to him, a very long time ago, and has lived all the time without a break, and suddenly reached the time when it became indubitably clear to him that it was impossible to live as he had lived before, and that his life has been arrested and is breaking up.

The false teaching has confirmed him in the idea that his life is the period of time from his birth to his death, and, looking at the visible life of the animals, he confused the idea of the visible life with his consciousness, and came to the absolute conviction that this visible life is his life.

The awakened rational consciousness, in making demands on him which cannot be satisfied for the animal life, shows him the faultiness of his concept of life; but the false teaching which has penetrated him keeps him 265

from recognizing his mistake: he cannot renounce his concept of life as an animal existence, and it seems to him that his life has come to a stop through the awakening of his rational consciousness. But that which he calls his life, which to him seems to be arrested, has never existed. What he calls his life, his existence from birth, never was his life; his idea that he has lived all the time from his birth to the present moment is a deception of consciousness, similar to the deception of consciousness in a dream: up to the waking there were no dreams, — they arose all at the moment of waking. Up to the waking of the rational consciousness there was no life: the concept of the past life formed itself at the waking of the rational consciousness.

Man lived like an animal during his childhood, and knew nothing of life. If a man lived ten months, he would not know anything of his own, nor of any other life: he would know as little as if he died in his mother's womb. And not only a babe, but also a demented grown man and a complete idiot cannot know that they live and that other beings live. And so they have no human life.

Human life begins only with the manifestation of rational consciousness, which at the same time reveals to a man his life, in the present and in the past, and the lives of other entities, and everything which inevitably results from the relations of these entities, — sufferings and death, — precisely what produces in him the negation of the good of the personal life and the contradiction which, as he thinks, arrests his life.

Man wants to define his life in time, as he defines all visible existence outside of him, and suddenly there awakens in him life, which does not coincide with the time of his carnal birth, and he does not want to believe that that which is not defined in time can be life. But no matter how much man may seek in time that point from which he may count the beginning of his rational life, he will never find it.⁶

In his recollections he will never find this point, this beginning of his rational consciousness. It seems to him that the rational consciousness has always existed in him. If he does find something resembling a beginning of consciousness, he does not find it in his carnal birth, but in a sphere which has nothing in common with his carnal birth. He cognizes his rational consciousness quite differently from what his carnal birth appears to him to be. Asking himself about the origin of his rational consciousness, man never imagines that, as a rational being, he is the son of his father and mother, the grandson of his grandparents, who were born in such and such a year; he is conscious, not exactly of being a son, but of being united in one with the consciousness of rational beings most foreign to him in time and space, who may have lived thousands of years before and at the other end of the world. In his rational consciousness man does not even see any origin of himself, but is conscious of his extra-temporal and extra-spatial union with other rational beings, so that they enter into him and he into them. This rational consciousness, which

⁶ Nothing is more common than to hear discussions about the inception and evolution of human life and of life in general in time. People who discuss in this manner imagine that they are standing on the firmest ground of reality, and yet there is nothing more fantastic than the discussions about the evolution of life in time. These discussions are like what a man would do, who, wishing to measure a line, would not lay off the measure from the one known point on which he is standing, but would select imaginary points at various indefinite distances from himself, and would begin to measure from them toward himself. Do not people do the same, when they discuss the inception and evolution of life in man? Indeed, where on that endless line, which represents the evolution of human life in the past, are we to take that arbitrary point from which we may begin the fantastic history of the evolution of this life? Is it in the birth or inception of the child, or of his parents, or still farther back, in the primeval animal and protoplasm, in the first bit broken loose from the sun? All these discussions will be most arbitrary fancies, — mensuration without a measure. — *Author's Note.*

is awakened in man, arrests, as it were, that semblance of life which erring men regard as life: to the erring men it seems that their life is arrested at the very moment when it awakens.

VIII. There Is No Doubling and No Contradiction: They Appear Only with the False Teaching

It is only the false teaching about the human life being the animal existence from birth to death, in which men are brought up and maintained, that produces the agonizing condition of doubling, into which men enter at the manifestation of their rational consciousness in them.

To a man who is under this delusion it appears that life is doubled in him.

Man knows that his life is one, and yet he feels it as two. Rolling a small ball with the two fingers crossed over one another, one feels it to be two. Something similar takes place with a man who has acquired a wrong concept of life.

Man's reason is falsely directed: he has been taught to recognize as life nothing but his carnal personal existence, which cannot be life.

With such a false concept of an imaginary life he has looked upon life, and has come to see two lives: the one, as he has imagined it to be, and the other which really is.

To such a man it seems that the negation by the rational consciousness of the good of the personal existence and the demand of another good is something morbid and unnatural.

But to a man, as a rational being, the negation of the possibility of the personal good and of life is the inevitable consequence of the conditions of the personal life and of the quality of the rational consciousness, which ifr 269

connected with it. The negation of the good and of the life of personality is for the rational being just as natural a quality of his life as it is natural for a bird to fly with its wings, and not to run with its feet. But if a feathered fledgeling runs with its feet, it does not prove that flying is not peculiar to it. If we see outside of ourselves men with a dormant consciousness, who assume that their life lies in the good of personality, this does not prove that it is improper for a man to live a rational life. The awakening of man to his true life, peculiar to him, takes place in our world with such painful tension, only because the false teaching of the world tries to convince men that the phantom of life is life itself, and that the manifestation of the true life is a violation of it.

What happens with men in our world who enter into the true life is very much like what would happen with a girl, from whom the properties of a woman should be concealed. Feeling the symptoms of sexual maturity, such a girl would consider the condition which calls her to the future family life, with the obligations and joys of a mother, a morbid and unnatural condition, which would bring her to despair.

Similar despair is experienced by the men of our world at the first signs of the awakening to the true human life.

A man in whom the rational consciousness is awakened, but who at the same time understands his life only as being personal, is in the same agonizing condition in which an animal would be, which, recognizing the motion of matter as its life, would not recognize the law of personality, but would only see its life in the subjection of self to the laws of matter, which take place without its effort. Such an animal would experience an agonizing internal contradiction

and doubling. In submitting only to the laws of matter, it would see its life in nothing but lying and breathing, but its personality would demand something different of it, — nutrition of self, continuation

of species, — and then the animal would imagine that it experienced a doubling and contradiction. “Life,” it would think, “lies in submitting to the laws of gravity, that is, in not moving, and lying still, and in submitting to the chemical processes which take place in the body; I am doing all this, and yet I have, in addition, to move, and feed, and seek a male or female.”

The animal would be suffering, and would see an agonizing contradiction and doubling in this condition. The same takes place with a man who is taught to regard the baser law of his life, the animal personality, as the law of his life. The higher law of life, the law of his rational consciousness, demands something different of him; but all the surrounding life and the false teachings keep him in a deceptive consciousness, and he feels a contradiction and doubling.

But, as the animal, to stop suffering, must recognize as its law not the baser law of matter, but the law of its personality, and, fulfilling it, makes use of the laws of matter for the gratification of the purposes of its personality, — even so a man has to recognize his life not in the baser law of personality, but in the higher law, which includes the first law, — in the law revealed to him in his rational consciousness, — and the contradiction will be destroyed, and the personality will be freely submitted to the rational consciousness and will serve it.

IX. The Birth of the True Life in Man

As we analyze in time and observe the manifestation of life in the human being, we see that the true life is always preserved in man, as it is in the seed, and the time comes when this life is made manifest. The manifestation of the true life consists in this, that the animal personality draws him toward its own good, while the rational consciousness shows him the impossibility of the personal good and points out a certain other good. Man strains his vision toward this good, which is pointed out to him in the distance, and he is not able to see it; at first he does not believe in this good and returns to the personal good; but the rational consciousness, which points so indefinitely at its good, shows so indubitably and so convincingly the impossibility of the personal good that man again renounces his personal good and again scans this new good, which is pointed out to him. The rational good is not visible, but the personal good is so thoroughly destroyed that it is impossible to continue the personal existence; and in man there is being established a new relation of his animal to his rational consciousness. He is being born to the new human life.

What takes place is similar to what happens in the material world at every birth. The fruit is not born because it wants to be born, because it is better for it to be born, and because it knows that it is good to be born, but because it is mature, and it cannot continue its former existence; it is compelled to surrender to the new life, not so much because the new life calls it, as because the possibility of the former existence is destroyed.

The rational consciousness, growing imperceptibly up in his personality, reaches a point when the life in the personality becomes impossible.

What takes place is precisely what happens at the inception of everything: the same destruction of the seed, of the previous form of life, and the appearance of a new growth; the same seeming struggle of the older form of the decomposing seed and the increase of the new growth,

and the same nutrition of the new growth at the expense of the decomposing seed. The difference between the birth of the rational consciousness and the visible carnal inception consists for us in this, that while in the carnal birth we see in time and in space out of what, and how, and when a being is born of the germ, know that the seed is the fruit, that from the seed under certain conditions the plant will come, that it will have a flower and then a fruit, like the seed (the circle of life takes place under our very eyes), — we do not see the growth of the rational consciousness in time, we do not see the completion of its circle. We do not see this growth of the rational consciousness and the completion of its circle, because we ourselves complete it: our life is nothing but the birth of that invisible essence which is born in us, and so we can never see it.

We cannot see the birth of this new essence, the new relation of the rational consciousness to the animal, just as the seed cannot see the growth of its stalk. When the rational consciousness comes out of its concealed position and is made manifest for us, it seems to us that we are experiencing a contradiction. But there is no contradiction, just as there is none in the sprouting seed. In the sprouting seed, we see only that *Efe*, which before was in the integument of the seed, is now in its sprout. Even so there is no contradiction in man with his awakened rational consciousness, but only the birth of a new being, of a new relation of the rational consciousness to the animal.

If a man exists, without knowing that other entities exist and that enjoyments will not satisfy him, — that he will die,— he does not even know that he lives, and there is no contradiction in him.

But if a man has come to see that other entities are just such as he himself is, that sufferings await him, that his existence is a slow death; if his rational consciousness has begun to decompose the existence of his personality, he no longer can put his life in this decomposing personality, but inevitably must place it in that new life which is revealed to him. And so there is again no contradiction, as there is no contradiction in the seed which has sent forth a sprout and, therefore, is decomposing.

X. Reason Is That Law Cognized by Man, by Which His Life Is to Be Accomplished

Man's true life, which is manifested in the relation of his rational consciousness to his animal personality, begins only when there begins the negation of his animal personality; but the negation of the good of the animal personality begins when the rational consciousness is awakened.

But what is the rational consciousness? The Gospel of John begins with this, that the word *X070Ç* (reason, wisdom, word) is the beginning, and that in it is everything, and everything from it; and that, therefore, reason, that which defines everything else, cannot be defined by anything.

Reason cannot be defined, and there is no reason for defining it, because we all not merely know it, but know nothing else. In communing with one another, we are convinced in advance — more than in anything else — of the equal obligatoriness of this reason which is common to us all. Reason we know more correctly and earlier than anything else, so that everything which we know in the world we know only because what is cognized by us agrees with the laws of this reason, which is incontestably known to us. We know reason, and cannot help knowing it.

We cannot help it, because reason is that law according to which the rational beings — men — must inevitably live. Reason is for man that law according to which his life is accomplished, just such a law as the one for which the animal, according to which it feeds and multiplies, — as that law for the plant, according to which it grows, and the grass, the tree blooms, as the law for the heavenly body, according to which the earth and the luminaries move.

The law which we know in ourselves as the law of our life is the same law according to which all the external phenomena of the world are accomplished, but with this difference, that in us we know this law as that which we ourselves must accomplish, while in the external phenomena we know it as that which takes place according to this law without our participation. Everything which we know of the world is only the visible submission to reason, which is taking place outside us, in the heavenly bodies, in the animals, the plants, the whole world. In the external world we see this submission to the law of reason but in ourselves we know this law as that which we must ourselves accomplish.

The habitual delusion about life consists in this, that the subjection of our animal body to its law, which is not accomplished by us, but is only seen by us, is taken for the human life, while this law of our animal body, with which our rational consciousness is connected, is in our animal body accomplished as unconsciously as it is accomplished in the tree, the crystal, the heavenly body. But the law of our life — the subjection of our animal body to reason — is that law which we see nowhere, and cannot see, because it has not yet been accomplished, and is being accomplished by us in our life. In the accomplishment of this law, in the subjection of the animal personality to the law of reason, for the purpose of obtaining the good, does our life consist. By failing to understand this, that our good and our life consist in the subjection of our animal personality to the law of reason, by accepting the good and the existence of our animal personality as our whole life and renouncing the task of life, which is set for us, we deprive ourselves of our true good and of our true life, and in its place put that visible existence of our animal activity, which is accomplished independently of us, and so cannot be our life.

XI. The False Direction of Knowledge

The delusion that the visible law, which operates on our animal personality, is the law of our life is an old delusion, into which men have fallen at all times. This delusion, by concealing from men the chief object of their cognition, the subjection of the animal personality to reason for the purpose of obtaining the good of life, puts in its place the study of the existence of men, which is independent of the good of life.

Instead of studying the law, to which, for the purpose of obtaining its good, man's animal personality must be subjected, and instead of studying all the other phenomena of the world on the basis of the cognition of this law, the false knowledge directs its efforts only to the study of the good and of the existence of man's animal personality, without the least reference to the chief subject of knowledge,— the subjection of this animal personality of man to the law of reason, for the purpose of obtaining the good of the true life.

The false cognition, by not having in view this chief object of knowledge, directs its forces to the study of the animal existence of men past and present and to the study of the conditions of man's existence in general, as an animal. It appears to him that from these studies may be found the guidance for the good of the human life.

The false knowledge judges as follows: Men have existed heretofore, — so let us see how they existed, through what changes they passed in their existence both in time and space, and whither these changes tend. From these historical changes of their existence we shall find the law of their life.

By not having in view the chief aim of knowledge,— the study of that rational law to which man's personality ought to be subjected for the sake of his good, — the so-called learned men of this category, by the very aim which they set for their investigation, pass sentence on the vanity of all study. Indeed, if the existence of men changes only in consequence of the general laws of their animal existence, the study of those laws to which it is subject anyway is quite useless and void. Whether men know about the law of the change of their existence, or not, this law is accomplished just as the change in the life of moles and beavers is accomplished in consequence of those conditions under which they live. But if the knowledge of that rational law to which man's life must be subjected is possible for him, it is evident that he can not find the knowledge of this law of reason anywhere except where it has been revealed to him, — in his rational consciousness. And so, no matter how much men may study how men have existed as animals, they will never find out anything about the existence of men, which does not take place in them even without this knowledge; and never, no matter how much they may study man's animal existence, will they find out that law to which, for the good of his life, this animal existence of man must be subjected.

This is one category of barren human reflections on life, which are called historical and political sciences.

Another category of reflections, which are especially common in our time, and with which the only object of knowledge is entirely lost sight of, is this: In viewing man as an object of observation, we see, say the learned, that he feeds, grows, multiplies, ages, and dies, like any other animal; but certain psychic phenomena (so they call them) interfere with the exactness of the observations and offer **toe** great a complexity, and so, in order that we may better understand man, we shall view his life first in simpler manifestations, such as resemble those which we see in the animals and plants, which are deprived of this psychic activity. But, when we view the animals and plants, we see that in all of them there are manifested still simpler laws of matter, which are common to them all. And since the laws of the animals are simpler than the laws of man, and the laws of plants are still simpler, and the laws of matter still simpler, we must base the investigations on the very simplest, — on the laws of matter. We see that what takes place in the plants and animals takes place in the same way in man, they say, and so we conclude that everything which takes place in man will be explained to us from what takes place in the simplest visible inanimate matter which is subject to our experiments, — the more so since all the peculiarities of man's activity are in a constant dependence on the forces which are active in matter. Every modification in the matter which forms man's body changes and impairs his activity. And so, they conclude, the laws of matter are the causes of man's activity. They are not troubled by the reflection that in man there is something which we do not see in the animals, nor in the plants, nor in the dead matter, and that this something is the only object of knowledge, without which every other is useless.

It does not occur to them that, if the modification of matter in man's body impairs his activity, this proves only that the modification of matter is one of the causes which impair man's activity, and not that the motion of matter is the cause of man's activity. Just so the damage done to a plant by the removal of the earth beneath its roots proves only that the earth may be everywhere,

or not, but not that the plant is the product of earth. And so they study in man what takes place in the dead matter, and in the plant, and in the animal, assuming that the elucidation of the laws of the phenomena which correspond to man's life make clear to them man's very life.

In order that we may understand man's life, that is, that law to which, for the sake of man's good, his animal personality is to be subjected, men view either man's historical existence, and not his life, or the uncognizable and merely visible subjection of the animal, the plant, and the dead matter to various laws, that is, they do the same which men do who study the condition of unknown objects, in order that they might find that unknown aim which they ought to follow.

It is quite true that the knowledge of the visible manifestation of men's existence in history may be instructive for us, and that the study of the laws of the animal personality of man and of other animals, and the study of the laws to which matter itself is subject, may be just as instructive to us. The study of all that is important for man, showing him, as in a reflection, what necessarily takes place in his life; but it is evident that the knowledge of what has already taken place and is visible to us, no matter how full it may be, cannot give us the chief knowledge which we need, — the knowledge of the law to which our animal personality must be subjected for the sake of our good. The knowledge of the laws which are operating is instructive for us, but only when we recognize that law of reason to which our animal personality must be subordinated, and not when this law is not at all recognized.

No matter how well a tree may study (if it could study) all the chemical and physical phenomena which takes place in it, it could not from these observations and this knowledge in any way arrive at the necessity of collecting sap and distributing it for the growth of its trunk to the leaf, the flower, and the fruit.

Even so is man: no matter how well he may know the law governing his animal personality, and the laws governing matter, these laws do not give him the least indications as to how he is to act with that piece of bread which he has in his hands, — whether to give it to his wife, a stranger, his dog, or eat it himself; whether to defend this piece, or give it to him who asks him for it. But the life of man consists only in the solution of these and similar questions.

The study of the laws governing the existence of animals, plants, and matter is not only useful, but even necessary for the elucidation of the law of man's life, but only when this study has for its aim the chief object of human knowledge, — the elucidation of the law of reason.

But with the supposition that man's life is only his animal existence, and that the good, as pointed out by the rational consciousness, is impossible, and that the law of reason is only a phantom, such a study becomes not only void, but also pernicious, in that it conceals from man his only object of cognition and supports him in that error that by studying the reflection of an object he may know the object itself. Such a study is like what a man would do if he carefully studied all the changes and movements of the shadow of a living being, thinking that the cause of the motion of the living being is to be sought in the changes and movements of his shadow.

XII. The Cause of the False Knowledge Is the False Perspective In which Objects Present Themselves

True knowledge consists in knowing that we know what we know, and do not know what we do not know," said Confucius; "but false knowledge consists in thinking that we know what

we do not know, and do not know what we know.” It is impossible to give a more exact definition of that false knowledge which reigns among us. The false knowledge of our time assumes that we know what we cannot know, and that we cannot know what alone we know. To a man with false knowledge it appears that he knows everything which appears to him in space and time, and that he does not know what is known to him in his rational consciousness.

To such a man it appears that the good in general and his good in particular are for him a subject of which he can know least. Just as unknowable appears to him his reason, his rational consciousness; he himself, as an animal, appears to himself as a little more knowable object; still more knowable objects are for him the animals and plants, and most knowable appears to him the dead, infinitely distributed matter.

Something similar takes place with man’s vision. A man always unconsciously directs his vision preferably to most distant objects, which, consequently, appear to him most simple in colour and contour, — to the sky, the horizon, the distant fields, the woods. These objects present themselves the more clearly defined and simple, the farther they are removed, and, on the other hand, the nearer an object is, the more complicated are its outlines and colour.

If a man were not able to define the distance of objects, if he did not in looking arrange the objects in perspective, but recognized the greater simplicity and definiteness of the outlines and the colour of the objects as a greater degree of visibility, the simplest and most visible would to him appear the endless heaven, then less visible the more complex outlines of the horizon, then still less visible the houses and trees, which are more complex in colour and outline, and still less visible the hand which is moving in front of his eyes, and least visible of all, the light.

Is not the same true of the false knowledge of man? What is indubitably known to him, his rational consciousness, seems to him unknowable, because it is not simple, while what is incomprehensible for him, the infinite and eternal matter, seems to him most knowable, because on account of its distance from him it appears to him simple.

But the reverse is true. First of all and with the greatest certainty every man may know and does know that good toward which he is striving; then he knows with the same certainty that reason which shows him this good; then only he knows his animal personality, which is subjected to this reason, and then only he sees, but does not know, all the other phenomena, which present themselves to him in space and time.

It is only to a man with the false concept of life that it appears that he knows the objects better the more they are determined in space and time; but in reality we know fully only that which is not determined in space, or time, — the good and the law of reason; but the external objects we know less, in proportion as our consciousness takes less part in the cognition, in consequence of which an object is defined only by its place in space and time. And so, the more exclusively an object is defined by space and time, the less it is knowable for man.

Man’s true knowledge ends with the cognition of his personality, of his animal. This animal of his, which strives after the good and is subject to the law of reason, man knows quite distinctly from the knowledge of everything which is not his personality. He really knows himself in this animal, and knows himself not because he is something spatial and temporal (on the contrary,— he can never know himself as a temporal and spatial manifestation), but because he is something which for the sake of its good must be subjected to the law of reason. He knows himself in this animal as something independent of time and space. When he asks himself about his place in time and space, it appears to him first of all that he is standing in the midst of time which is infinite on either side, and that he is the centre of a globe, whose periphery is everywhere and

nowhere. And it is this extra-temporal and extra-spatial self that man knows in reality, and with this ego of his ends his real knowledge. Everything which is outside this ego man does not know, and can only observe and define in an external, conditional manner.

By renouncing for a time the knowledge of himself as a rational centre which is striving after the good, that is, as an extra-temporal and extra-spatial being, man may for a time admit conditionally that he is a part of the visible universe, which manifests itself in space and time. By viewing himself thus, in space and time, in connection with other beings, man unites his true inner knowledge of himself with an external observation of himself, and receives the notion of himself as of a man in general, resembling all other men; from this conditional knowledge of himself man gets a certain external notion of other men as well, but he does not know them.

The impossibility for man of getting a true knowledge of men is due even to this, that he sees not merely one such man, but hundreds and thousands of them, and knows that there are, have been, and will be such men, whom he has never seen and never will see.

Beyond men, at a still greater distance from himself, man sees in space and time animals which differ from men and from one another. These beings would be entirely incomprehensible to him, if he did not have any knowledge of man in general; but, since he has this knowledge and abstracts from the concept of man his rational consciousness, he gets a certain notion also about the animals; but this notion still less resembles knowledge for him than his notion of men in general. Of animals he sees the greatest variety and in enormous numbers, and the greater their numbers, the less possible can his knowledge of them obviously be.

Still farther away from himself, he sees the plants, and the distribution of these phenomena is still greater in the world, and so the knowledge of them is still more impossible.

Still farther away from himself, beyond the animals and plants, in space and time, man sees the dead bodies and the feebly, or not at all, differentiated forms of matter. Matter he understands least of all. The knowledge of the forms of matter is for him quite indifferent, and he not only fails to know it, but merely imagines it, — the more so since matter presents itself to him as infinite in space and time.

XIII. The Knowableness of Objects Does Not Increase in Consequence of Their Manifestation in Space and Time, but in Consequence of the Unity of the Law to Which We and All the Objects Which We Study Are Subject

What can be more intelligible than the words: the dog has a pain; the calf is gentle, — it loves me *, the bird is glad, the horse is afraid, a good man, a bad animal? Now all these most important and intelligible words are not defined in space and time; on the contrary: the less intelligible the law is to which the phenomenon is subject, the more exactly is the phenomenon defined in time and space. Who can say that he understands that law of gravitation according to which the motion of the earth and the sun takes place? And yet the eclipse of the sun is most exactly defined in space and time.

We know completely only our life, our striving after the good, and reason, which points this good out to us. Next in certainty is the knowledge of our animal personality, which strives toward the good and is subject to the law of reason. In the knowledge of our animal personality there

appear already spatial and temporal conditions, visible, sensible, observable, but inaccessible to our understanding. Next in certainty is the knowledge of just such animal personalities as we are, in whom we recognize a common striving toward the good and a common rational consciousness. We know them to the extent to which the life of these personalities approximates the laws of our life, of the striving after the good, and of the subjection to the law of reason; we do not know them to the extent to which their life is manifested in spatial and temporal conditions. Thus we know men most. Next in certitude is our knowledge of animals, in which we see a personality striving, like our own, after the good; but we here barely recognize a semblance of our rational consciousness, and with them we can no longer commune by means of this our rational consciousness. Next after the animals we see the plants, in which we with difficulty recognize a personality, like our own, striving after the good. These beings present themselves to us mainly as temporal and spatial phenomena, and so are still less accessible to our knowledge.

We know them, only because in them we see a personality, resembling our animal personality, which, like our own, strives after the good and subjects matter to the law of reason manifested in it, in the conditions of space and time.

Still less accessible to our knowledge are impersonal, material objects; in these we no longer find a similitude of our personality, no longer see a striving after the good, but only temporal and spatial manifestations of the laws of reason, to which they are subject.

The correctness of our knowledge does not depend on the observableness of objects in space and time; on the contrary, the more observable a manifestation of an object is in space and time, the less comprehensible it is for us.

Our knowledge of the world results from the consciousness of our striving after the good, and from the necessity, for the sake of obtaining this good, of subjecting our animal to reason. If we know the life of an animal, we know it only because we see in the animal also a striving after the good and a necessity of submitting to the law of reason, which in the animal presents itself as the law of the organism.

If we know matter, we know it only because, though its good is not comprehensible to us, we none the less see in it the same phenomenon as in ourselves,— the necessity of submitting to the law of reason which governs it.

The knowledge of anything is for us the transference to other objects of our knowledge of the fact that life is a striving after the good, which is obtained by submitting to the law of reason.

Everything which a man knows of the external world he knows only because he knows himself and in himself finds three different relations to the world: one — the relation of his rational consciousness, the second — the relation of his animal, and the third — the relation of matter which enters the body of his animal. He knows in himself these three different relations, and so everything which he sees in the world is always distributed before him in the perspective of three distinct plans: (1) rational beings; (2) animals and plants, and (3) inanimate matter.

Man always sees these three categories of objects in the world, because he embraces in himself these three objects of cognition. He knows himself: (1) as rational consciousness, subordinating the animal; (2) as an animal, subject to rational consciousness, and (3) as matter, subject to the animal.

It is not from the cognition of the laws of matter, as is generally believed, that we can know the laws of the organisms, and not from the cognition of the laws of the organisms that we can know ourselves as rational beings, but vice versa. First of all, we can and must know ourselves, that is, that law of reason to which, for the sake of our good, our personality has to be subordinated, and

then only can we and must we know the law of our animal personality and of entities similar to it, and, at a still more remote distance from ourselves, the laws of matter.

We must know and do know only ourselves. The world of animals is for us only a reflection of what we know in ourselves. The material world is, as it were, a reflection of a reflection.

The laws of matter seem especially clear to us, only because they are uniform for us; and they are uniform for us, only because they are particularly remote from the cognizable law of our life.

The laws of the organisms seem to us simpler than the law of our life, again on account of their remoteness from us. But in them we merely observe the laws: we do not know them, as we know the law of our rational consciousness, which has to be fulfilled by us.

We know neither the one existence, nor the other: we only see and observe it outside ourselves. What we know beyond any doubt is the law of our rational consciousness, because it is needed for our good, because we live by this consciousness; and we do not see it, because we are not in possession of that higher point from which we may observe it.

But, if there existed higher beings which would subordinate our rational consciousness in the same way in which we subordinate our animal personality, and in which the animal personality (the organism) subordinates matter, these higher beings could see our rational life, just as we see our animal existence and the existence of matter.

Man's life presents itself as insolubly connected with two forms of existence, which it embraces: the existence of animals and plants (organisms) and the existence of matter.

Man produces his own true life, — he lives through it; but in those two forms of existence which are connected with his life man cannot be a participant. The body and matter, which form him, exist in themselves.

These forms of existence present themselves to man as lives passed through at some former time and embraced by his life, — as recollections of former lives*

In man's true life these two forms of existence represent to him the instrument and material of his labour, but not the labour itself.

It is useful for man to study both the material and instrument of his labour. The better he knows them, the better he will be able to work. The study of these forms of existence which are included in his life — of his animal and of the matter forming the animal — shows to man, as though in a reflection, the general law of everything in existence, — the submission to the law of reason, and so confirms him in the necessity of the submission of his animal to this law; but man cannot and must not mistake the material and the instrument of his labour for the labour itself.

No matter how much man may study life which is visible, sensible, observable in himself and in others, — life which is accomplished without his efforts, this life always remains a mystery to him; from these observations he will never comprehend this unknowable life, and by means of observations on this mysterious life, which is always concealed from him in the infinitude of space and time, he will never illuminate his true life, which is revealed to him in his consciousness, and which consists in the subjection of his unique and most familiar animal personality to the unique and most familiar law of reason, for the purpose of obtaining his unique and most familiar good for himself.

XIV. Man's true life is not what takes place in space and time

Man knows his life in him as a striving after the good, which is obtainable by the submission of his animal personality to the law of reason.

Another human life he does not know and cannot know. Indeed, man only then acknowledges an animal to be alive, when its composing matter is subject not only to its own laws, but also to the higher law of the organism.

If in a certain combination of matter there is a subjection to the higher law of the organism, we recognize life in this combination of matter; if this subjection does not exist, — if it has not yet begun, or has come to an end, — and if that no longer exists which separates this matter from all the other matter, in which nothing but mechanical, chemical, physical laws act, we do not recognize in it any animal life.

Even so we only then recognize ourselves and similar beings as living, when our animal personality, in addition to the subjection of the organism to its law, is also subjected to the higher law of rational consciousness.

As long as this subjection of the personality to the law of reason does not exist, as long as in man acts only the law of personality, subduing the matter which composes it, we do not know and do not see the human life either in others or in ourselves, as we do not see the animal Life in the matter which submits only to its own laws.

No matter how strong or quick the movements of man may be in delirium, in insanity, or in agony, in intoxication, and even in an outburst of passion, we do not recognize man as living, do not treat him as a living man, and recognize in him only the possibility of life. But no matter how feeble or immovable a man may be, — if we see that his animal personality is subject to reason, we recognize him as living and treat him accordingly.

Human life we cannot understand otherwise than as subjection of the animal personality to the law of reason.

This life is manifested in time and space, but is not determined by temporal or spatial conditions, but only by the degree of the subjection of the animal personality to reason. To determine life by temporal and spatial conditions is the same as defining the height of an object by its length and breadth.

The upward motion of an object, which at the same time moves on a plane, will be an exact similitude of the relation of man's true life to the life of the animal personality, or of the true life to the temporal and spatial life. The upward motion of the object does not depend on the motion on the plane, and cannot be increased or diminished by it. The same is true of the determination of man's life. The true life is always made manifest in the personality, but does not depend on this or that existence of the personality, and cannot be increased or diminished by it.

The temporal and spatial conditions, in which man's animal personality happens to be, cannot influence the true life, which consists in the subjection of the animal personality to the rational consciousness.

It is beyond the power of man, who wants to live, to destroy or arrest the spatial and temporal motion of his existence; but his true life is the attainment of the good by means of subjection to reason, independently of these visible spatial and temporal motions. In this greater and ever greater attainment of the good by means of the subjection to reason lies that which forms the human life. If this increase in the subjection be wanting, the human life goes in the two visible directions of space and of time, and is nothing but existence. If this upward motion exists, — this

greater and ever greater submission to reason, a relation is established between the two forces and the one, and a greater or lesser motion along the resultant takes place and raises existence into the sphere of life.

The spatial and temporal forces are definite, final forces, which are incompatible with the concept of life; but the force of striving after the good through submission to reason is a force which raises upward, — it is the force of life itself, for which there are no temporal, no spatial limitations.

Man imagines that his life is arrested or doubled, but these arrests and perturbations are only an illusion of consciousness (like the illusion of the external sensations). There are no arrests and perturbations of the true life, and there can be none: they only seem so to us with our false view of life.

A man begins to live a true life, that is, rises to a certain height above the animal life, and from this height sees the phantasmal condition of his animal existence, which inevitably ends in death, and that his existence on the plane is on all sides limited by abysses, and, as he does not acknowledge that this upward tendency is life, he is terrified at what is revealed to him from his height, and purposely descends and lies down as low as possible, in order that he may not see the precipices that are open to him. But the force of his rational consciousness lifts him up again, and again he sees, again he is terrified, and again he descends to earth, in order that he may not see. This lasts until he finally recognizes that, in order to save himself from the terror before the precipitous motion of perishable life, he must understand that his motion in the plane — his spatial and temporal existence — is not his life, that his life is only in the upward motion, and that only in the subjection of his personality to the law of reason does the possibility of the good and of life consist. He must understand that he has wings which raise him above the precipice, that, if he did not possess these wings, he would never have risen to the height and have seen the precipice. He must have faith in his wings and fly whither they carry him.

Only from this want of assurance arise those perturbations of the true life, its arrests and the doubling of consciousness, which at first appear so strange.

Only to a man who understands his life in the animal existence as defined by space and by time does it appear that the rational consciousness has been manifested at times in the animal existence. Looking thus upon the manifestation in himself of the rational consciousness, man asks himself when and under what conditions his rational consciousness appeared in him. But no matter how much a man may investigate his past, he will never discover these times of the manifestation of his rational consciousness: it always seems to him that either it has never existed, or has existed at all times. If it appears to him that there have been intervals of his rational consciousness, this is due to the fact that he does not recognize the life of the rational consciousness as life. By understanding his life only as animal existence, as defined by spatial and temporal conditions, man wants to measure the awakening and the activity of the rational consciousness with the same measure: he asks himself, "When, how long, under what conditions have I been in possession of the rational consciousness?" but the intervals between the awakenings of the rational life exist only for a man who understands his life as the life of the animal personality. For a man who understands his life to be in what it is, — in the activity of the rational consciousness, - - these intervals do not exist.

The rational life exists. It alone exists. Intervals of time, whether of one minute or of fifty thousand years, are immaterial for it, because time does not exist for it. Man's true life — from which he forms for himself a concept of any other life — is a striving after the good, obtainable by

the subjection of his personality to the law of reason. Neither reason, nor the degree of subjection to reason, are defined by space or by time. Man's true life takes place outside space and time.

XV. The Renunciation of the Good of Animal Personality Is the Law of Human Life

Life is the striving after the good. The striving after the good is life. Thus all men have always understood life, and thus they will always understand it. Consequently man's life is a striving after the human good, and the striving after the human good is human life. The crowd, the unthinking people, understand man's good to lie in the good of his animal personality.

The false science, by excluding the concept of the good from the definition of life, understands life to be in the animal existence, and so it sees the good of life only in the animal good and coincides with the errors of the crowd.

In either case the error is due to the confusion of the personality, of the individuality, as science calls it, with the rational consciousness. Rational consciousness includes personality; but personality does not include rational consciousness. Personality is a property of an animal, and of man as an animal. Rational consciousness is the property of man alone.

An animal can live for its body only, — nothing prevents it from living so; it gratifies its personality, and unconsciously serves its species, and does not know that it is a personality; but rational man cannot live for his body alone. He cannot live so, because he knows that he is a personality, and so he knows that other beings are just such personalities as he, and he knows what must happen from the relations of these personalities.

If man strove only after the good of his personality and loved only himself, his personality, he would not know that other beings love themselves, just as animals do not know it; but if man knows that he is a personality striving after the same that all the beings surrounding him strive after, he can no longer strive after the good which is visible to his rational consciousness as evil, and his life can no longer consist in the striving after the good of personality. It only seems at times to man that his striving after the good has for its object the gratification of the demands of his animal personality. This deception is due to this, that man takes what he sees to be going on in his animal as the aim of the activity of his rational consciousness. What takes place is like what a man would do if he were guided in his wakeful state by what he sees in his dream.

And then, if this deception is maintained by the false teachings, there takes place in man the confusion of the personality with the rational consciousness.

But the rational consciousness always shows man that the gratification of the demands of his animal personality cannot be his good, and, therefore, his life, and irrepressibly draws him toward that good and, therefore, toward that life, which is peculiar to him and is not contained in his animal personality.

People generally think and say that the renunciation of the good of personality is a heroic deed, a praiseworthy quality in man. The renunciation of the good of personality is not a praiseworthy quality, a heroic deed, but an inevitable condition of man's life. At the same time that man recognizes himself as a personality distinct from the whole world he recognizes also other personalities as distinct from the whole world, and their mutual connection, and the phantasm

of the good of his personality, and the actuality of only such a good as can satisfy his rational consciousness.

For an animal an activity which has not for its aim the good of personality, but is directly opposed to this good, is a negation of life: but for man it is the very opposite. Man's activity which is directed only to the acquisition of the good of personality is a full negation of human life.

For an animal, which has no rational consciousness that shows to it the wretchedness and finality of its existence, the good of personality and the resulting continuation of the species of the personality are the highest aim of life. But for man personality is only that stage of his existence from which the true good of his life, which does not coincide with the good of his personality, is revealed to him.

The consciousness of the personality is for man not life, but that limit at which his life begins, that life which consists in a greater and ever greater attainment of the good which is peculiar to him, and which is independent of the good of the animal personality.

According to the current conception of life, man's life is a piece of time from the birth to the death of his animal. But this is not man's life; it is only man's existence as an animal personality. Man's life is something which is manifested only in animal existence, just as organic life is something which is manifested only in the existence of matter. .

The visible aims of man's personality at first appear to him as the aims of his life. These aims are visible and so seem intelligible.

But the aims which are indicated to him by his rational consciousness seem unintelligible, because they are invisible. At first it is hard for a man to renounce the visible and abandon himself to the invisible.

To a man who is corrupted by the false teachings of the world, the demands of the animal, which are accomplished of themselves and are visible, both in himself and in others, seem simple and clear, while the new, invisible demands of the rational consciousness appear as contradictory; their gratification, which is not accomplished of itself, but is the action of the person, appears complex and obscure. One feels terribly and ill at ease in renouncing the visible conception of life and abandoning oneself to its invisible consciousness, just as a child would feel terribly and ill at ease when it is born, if it could feel its birth; — but what is to be done, since it is obvious that the visible conception leads to death, and the invisible consciousness alone gives life?

XVI. The Animal Personality Is an Instrument of Life

No reflections can conceal from man that obvious, undoubted truth that his personal existence is something constantly perishing, tending toward death, and that, therefore, there can be no life in his animal personality.

Man cannot help but see that the existence of his personality from birth and childhood to old age and death is nothing but a constant waste and diminution of this animal personality, which ends in inevitable death; and so the consciousness of his life in the personality, which includes the desire for the increase and indestructibility of the personality, cannot help but be a constant contradiction, and the suffering cannot help but be an evil, whereas the only meaning of his life is a striving after the good.

No matter what the true good of man may consist in, his renunciation of the good of his animal personality is inevitable for him.

The renunciation of the good of the animal personality is a law of human life. If it is not accomplished freely, finding its expression in the subjection to the rational consciousness, it is accomplished in each man violently at the carnal death of his animal, when under the burden of his suffering he wishes this much: to be freed from the agonizing consciousness of the perishing personality, and to pass over to another kind of existence.

Man's entrance into life and life itself are like what takes place with a horse which the master takes out of the stable and hitches to a wagon. The horse, upon coming out of the stable and seeing the light and feeling its freedom, imagines that life lies in this freedom, but it is hitched to the wagon and the reins are pulled. It feels a load at its back, and if it thinks that its life consists in running at large, it struggles, and falls, and at times is killed. If it is not killed, it has but two ways out: either it will pull the load, and will find out that the load is not so heavy and the pulling not a torture, but a pleasure, or it will become unmanageable, and then the master will take it to the treadmill, will tie it with a rope to the wall, and the wheel will begin to turn under it, and it will walk in the darkness in one spot and suffer, but its strength will not be lost in vain: it will do its unwilling labour, and the law will be accomplished upon it. The only difference will be, that the first will work cheerfully, and the second unwillingly and painfully.

"But what is this personality for, whose good I, the man, must renounce, in order that I may obtain life?" say people who recognize their animal existence as life. "Why is this consciousness of personality given to man, if it is opposed to the manifestation of the true life?"

This question may be answered by a similar question, which an animal striving after its aims of preserving its life and species might put.

For what purpose, it would ask, are this matter and its laws, mechanical, physical, chemical, and other laws, with which it has to struggle, in order that it may attain its ends? "If it is my vocation," the animal would say, "to materialize the life of the animal, why are there so many barriers which I must overcome?"

It is clear to us that all matter and its laws, with which the animal struggles, and which it subjects to itself for the existence of its animal personality, are not barriers, but means for the attainment of its ends. The animal lives by nothing but the transformation of matter and by

its laws. Even so it is in the life of man. The animal personality, in which man finds himself and which he is called to submit to his rational consciousness, is not a barrier, but a means for attaining the aims of his good: the animal personality is for man that tool with which he works. The animal personality is for man that spade which is given to the rational being that it may dig with it and, digging, dull it and sharpen it again, and waste it away, but not to clean it and put it away. It is the talent given him for increase, and not to be hid in the ground.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." In these words it says that it is impossible to keep what must perish and perishes without cessation, and that only by renouncing what perishes and must perish, — our animal personality, do we get our true life, which does not perish and cannot perish. It says that our true life begins only when we cease regarding as life what has not been and could not be life for us, — our animal existence. It says that he who will keep the spade, which he has for the purpose of obtaining by it food for the sustenance of his life, will, by saving the spade, lose both his food and his life.

XVII. Birth by the Spirit

“You must be born again,” says Christ. Not that man is ordered by any one to be born anew, but that man is inevitably brought to it. To have life, he must be born again in this existence through his rational consciousness.

The rational consciousness is given to man in order that he may place his life in that good which is revealed to him through his rational consciousness. He who places his life in this good, has life; but he who does not place his life in it, but in the good of the animal personality, by this very fact deprives himself of life. In this consists the definition of life as given by Christ.

Men who recognize as life their striving after the good of personality, hear these words and, not that they do not acknowledge them, — they do not understand them, and cannot understand them. These words appear to them either meaningless, or meaning very little, — designating a certain turgidly sentimental and mystical mood, as they like to call it. They cannot understand the meaning of these words, which express an explanation of a condition which is incomprehensible to them, just as a dry, intact seed could not comprehend the condition of a moist and germinating seed. For the dry kernels the sun, which with its beams shines on the seed springing into life, is only a meaningless incident, — a little more heat and light; but for the germinating seed it is the cause of birth to life. Even so for men, who have not reached the inner contradiction of the animal personality and the rational consciousness, the light of the sun of reason is only a meaningless incident and sentimental, mystical words. The sun brings only those to life in whom life has already begun to germinate.

No one has ever found out how it germinates, why, when, where, not only in man, but also in the animal and the plant. Of its germination in man Christ has said that no one knows this, nor ever can know.

Indeed, what can man know of how life is germinating in him? Life is the light of men, life is life, — the beginning of everything; how, then, can man know how it germinates? What germinates and perishes for man is that which does not live, which is manifested in time and space; but the true life *is*, and so, as far as man is concerned, it can neither germinate nor perish.

XVIII. The Demands of the Rational Consciousness

Yes, the rational consciousness tells man indubitably and incontrovertibly that with that structure of the world which he knows out of his personality, there can be no good for him, for his personality. /’ His life is a desire for the good for himself, yes, for himself, and he sees that this good is impossible. But, strange to say, though he sees unquestionably that this good is impossible for him, he none the less lives with the one desire for this impossible good, — the good for himself alone.

A man with an awakened (only an awakened) rational consciousness, which has not yet subdued the animal personality, if he does not kill himself, lives only in order that he may realize this impossible good: he lives and acts that only he himself may obtain the good, that all men and even all beings may live and work so as to furnish him with comfort and pleasure, and that he shall experience no suffering and no death.

Strange to say, though experience, and the observation of the lives of all who surround him, and reason show incontestably to each man that it is unattainable and that it is impossible to

compel other living beings to stop loving themselves, and to love only him,— in spite of this, the life of each man consists only in this, that by wealth, power, honour, glory, flattery, deceit, in one way or another, he may compel other beings to live, not for themselves, but for him alone,— to compel all beings to love not themselves, but him alone.

Men have done all they can with this aim in view, and at the same time they see that they do the impossible. “Aly life is a striving after the good,” man says to himself. “The good is possible for me only when all will love me more than themselves; but all beings love themselves only, — consequently, all I do in order to compel them to love me is useless. It is useless, but I can do nothing else.”

Ages pass: men find out the distance from the luminaries, determine their weight, find out the composition of the sun and the stars, but the question as to how the demands of the personal good are to be harmonized with the life of the world, which excludes the possibility of this good, remains for the majority of men just as insoluble a question as it was for men five thousand years ago.

The rational consciousness says to each man:—“Yes, you can have the good, but only whoa all will love you more than themselves.” And the same rational consciousness shows man that it cannot be, because they all love themselves alone. And so the only good, which is revealed to man by his rational consciousness, is again concealed by it.

Ages pass, and the riddle about the good of man’s life remains the same insoluble riddle for the majority of men. Meanwhile the riddle has been solved long ago, and all those who learn the answer to the riddle always marvel how it is they did not themselves solve it: it seems to them that they knew it long ago, but only forgot it, — so simple and so obtrusive is the solution of the riddle, which has seemed so difficult amidst the false teachings of our world.

Do you want all to live for you, and all to love you more than themselves? There is but one condition under which your wish may be fulfilled. It is that condition when all beings shall live for the good of others and shall love others more than themselves. Only then you and all beings would be loved by all, and you would among their number receive the good which you desire. But if the good is possible for you only when all beings love you more than themselves, you also, as a living being, must love other beings more than yourself.

Only with such conditions are the good and the **life of** man possible, and only with this condition is that destroyed which poisoned man’s life, — the struggle of the beings, the agony of sufferings, and the terror of death.

Indeed, what is it that formed the impossibility of the personal existence? In the first place, the struggle among themselves of the beings seeking their personal good. In the second place, the deception of pleasures, which leads to waste of life, to satiety, and to sufferings, and, in the third place, death. But we need only admit mentally that man may exchange the striving after the good of his personality for the striving after the good **of** other beings, in order that the impossibility of the good be destroyed, and that the good appear to man as accessible. ^Looking at the world from his notion of life as a striving after the personal good, man saw in the world an irrational struggle of beings destroying one another. But he needs only acknowledge his life to consist in the striving after the good of others, in order that he may see something quite different in the world: by the side of the incidental phenomena of the struggle of the beings — a constant mutual service of these beings, a service without which the existence of the world is unthinkable.

We need only admit this, and all our former senseless activity which is directed upon the unattainable good of personality gives way to another activity, which is in harmony with the

law of the world and is directed upon the attainment of the greatest possible good for oneself and for the world.

Another cause of the wretchedness of the personal life and of the impossibility of man's good was this, — the illusoriness of the pleasures of personality, which wasted life and led to satiety and suffering. Man need only recognize his life as consisting in the striving after the good of others, and the illusory thirst of enjoyments is destroyed; but the idle and agonizing activity, which is directed to the filling of the bottomless barrel of the animal activity, gives way to an activity, in accord with the laws of reason, directed toward sustaining the life of other beings, an activity necessary for his good; and the agony of the personal suffering, which destroys the activity of man, gives way to the feeling of compassion for others, which calls to life an unquestionably fruitful and most joyful activity.

The third cause of the wretchedness of the personal life was the dread of death. Man needs only recognize his life as not consisting in the good of his animal personality, but in the good of other beings, and the scarecrow of death for ever disappears from his eyes.

The dread of death is due only to the fear of losing the good of life at its carnal death. But if man could place his good in the good of other beings, that is, if he loved them more than himself, death would not present itself to him as that cessation of the good and of life, as which it presents itself to a man who lives only for himself. To a man living for others death could not present itself as a cessation of the good and of life, because the good and life of other beings is not only not destroyed by the life of a man who serves them, but very frequently is increased and strengthened by the sacrifice of his life.

XIX. The Confirmation of the Demands of the Rational Consciousness

"But this is not life/" replies the provoked erring human consciousness. "This is a renunciation of life, suicide." "I know nothing of the kind," replies the rational consciousness: "I know that such is man's life, and that there is no other and can be no other. I know more than this: I know that such a life is both life and the good for man and for the whole world. I know that with the former view of the world, my life and the life of everything existing was evil and absurd; but with this view it appears as a realization of that law of reason which is implanted in man. I know that the greatest, infinitely increasable good of the life of each being may be obtained only by this law of each man serving all, and all men each."

"But if this may be a thinkable law, it is not a law of reality," replies the provoked erring consciousness of man. "Others do not love me more than themselves, and so I cannot love them more than myself and for their sake deprive myself of pleasures and submit to sufferings. I have no business with the law of reason; I want enjoyments for myself and liberation from sufferings for myself. Now there exists a struggle of the beings among themselves, and if I alone will not struggle, others will crush me. It makes no difference to me by what road the greatest welfare of all is mentally attained, — I now need the actual good for myself," says the false consciousness.

"I know nothing about this," replies the rational consciousness. "All I know is that that which you call your enjoyments will be a good for you only when you will not take them yourself, but others will give them to you; and your enjoyments will be superfluous and a source of suffering, as they now are, when you shall seize them yourself. You will be freed from actual sufferings

only when others shall free you from them, and not you yourself, as you now do, when for fear of imaginary sufferings you deprive yourself of life itself.

“I know that the life of personality, a life which demands that all should love me alone, and that I should love myself only, and which would offer me the greatest number of enjoyments and would liberate me from sufferings and death, is the greatest unceasing suffering. The more I shall love myself and struggle with others, the more they will hate me and the more fiercely will they struggle with me: the more I shall defend myself against suffering, the more painful will they be; the more I shall defend myself against death, the more terrible will it be.

“I know that, no matter what a man may do, he will not receive any good unless he will live in conformity with the law of his life. But the law of his life is not struggle, but, on the contrary, a mutual service of the beings.”

“But I know life only in my personality. It is impossible for me to assume my life in the good of other beings.”

“I know nothing of the kind,” says the rational consciousness: “I know only this much, that my life and the life of the world, which heretofore presented themselves to me as an evil absurdity, now present themselves to me as one rational whole, living and striving after one and the same good, through subjection to one and the same law of reason, which I know in myself.”

“But this is impossible for me!” says the erring consciousness. And yet there is no man who has not done this very impossible thing, who has not looked for the best good of his life in this very impossible thing.

“It is impossible to seek one’s good in the good of other beings,” — and yet there is no man who does not know a state in which the good of the beings outside of him becomes his good. “It is impossible to seek the good in labours and sufferings for another person,” — but let a man abandon himself to this feeling of compassion, and the enjoyments of personality lose all meaning for him, and the force of his life passes into labours and sufferings for the good of others; and the sufferings and labours become a good for him. “It is impossible to sacrifice one’s life for the good of others,” but a man need only experience this feeling, and death is not only not visible and terrible to him, but appears to him as the highest accessible good.

A rational man cannot help but see that, if he admits mentally the possibility of an exchange of his striving after his own good for the striving after the good of other beings, his life, instead of its former senselessness and wretchedness, becomes rational and good. Nor can he help seeing that, by admitting the same comprehension of life in other men and beings as well, the life of the whole world, instead of what before appeared as madness and cruelty, now becomes the highest rational good which man can at all wish for: instead of the former meaninglessness and aimlessness, it now acquires for him a rational meaning. To such a man the aim of the world’s life appears in an endless enlightenment and union of the beings of the world, toward which life proceeds, and in which at first men, and then all beings, submitting more and more to the law of reason, will understand (what now is given to man alone to understand) that the good of life is attained not by the striving of each being after its personal good, but by the striving, in conformity with the law of reason, of each being after the good of all others.

More than this: if man only admits the possibility of an exchange of the striving after one’s own good for the striving after the good of other beings, he cannot help but see this also, that this same gradual, increasing renunciation of his personality and the transference of the aim of his activity from himself into other beings is the forward movement of humanity and of those living beings which are nearest to man. Man cannot help but see in history that the movement of

the general life does not consist in the intensification and increase of the struggle of the beings among themselves, but, on the contrary, in the diminution of the discord and the weakening of the struggle: that the movement of life consists in this alone, that the world, from hostility and discord, through subjection to reason, passes more and more to concord and union. Admitting this, man cannot help but see that those who devoured one another no longer devour one another; that those who killed captives and their own children no longer kill them; that the military who used to pride themselves on murder no longer boast of it; that those who established slavery now abolish it; that men who used to kill animals are beginning to tame them and kill them less; that instead of feeding on the flesh of animals men now begin to feed on their eggs and milk; and that the destruction in the world of plants is growing less. Man sees that the best men of humanity condemn the search after enjoyments and admonish people to be temperate, while the best men, who are extolled by posterity, show examples of sacrifices of their existence for the good of others. Man sees that what he has admitted only on account of the demands of reason is taking place in reality in the world and is confirmed by the past life of humanity.

More than this: more powerfully and more convincingly than by reason and history, this same thing, as though from another source, is pointed out to man by the striving of his heart, which, as to an immediate good, is drawing him on to the same activity which reason points out to him, and which in his heart is expressed by love.

XX. The Demand of Personality Seems Incompatible with the Demand of the Rational Consciousness

Reason, and reflection, and history, and the inner feeling, — everything, it seems, convinces man of the correctness of such a comprehension of life: but to a man who is brought up in the teaching of the world it none the less appears that the gratification of the demands of his rational consciousness and of his feeling cannot be the law of his life.

“Not to struggle with others for one’s own good, not to seek enjoyments, not to ward off suffering, and not to fear death ! But this is impossible: it is the renunciation of all life! And how can I renounce life, since I feel the demands of my personality and with my reason recognize the legality of these demands,” the cultured people say with full assurance.

Now here is a remarkable phenomenon. Simple working people, who have exercised their reasoning capacity but a little, hardly ever defend the demands of personality and always feel in themselves the demands which are contrary to the demands of personality; but the full negation of the demands of the rational consciousness and, above all, the rejection of the legality of these demands and the defence of the rights of personality are to be found only among rich and refined men, who are trained in reasoning.

An intellectual, pampered, idle person will always prove that personality has its inalienable rights; but a hungry man will not prove that a man must eat, — he knows that all men know that, and that it is impossible to prove or disprove it: he will simply eat.

This is due to the fact that a simple, a so-called uncultured, man, who has worked with his body all his life, has not distorted his reason and has retained it in its purity and force.

But a man who has all his life thought not merely of insignificant, trifling matters, but also of such as are improper for a man to think of, has distorted his reason: it is not free in him. His

reason is occupied with improper matters, with the consideration of the needs of his personality, — with their development and increase, and with the invention of means for their gratification.

“But I feel the demands of my personality, and so these demands are legitimate,” say the so-called cultured people, who are educated by the worldly teaching.

Nor can they help feeling the demands of their personality. The whole life of these people is directed upon the supposed increase of the good of personality, and the good of personality appears to them to be in the gratification of needs. By the needs of personality they mean those conditions of the existence of personality toward which they have directed their reason. Now these cognized needs, — such as their reason is directed upon, — in consequence of this cognition grow infinitely, and the gratification of these increasing needs shields from them the demands of their true life.

The so-called social science puts at the basis of its investigations the study of the needs of man, forgetting the circumstance, so inconvenient for this teaching, that either a man has no needs whatsoever, as in the case of a man who commits suicide or starves himself, or there is literally an infinite number of them.

There are as many needs of the existence of the animal man as there are sides of this existence; and there are as many sides as there are radii in the globe: there are the needs of food, drink, breathing, and the exercise of all the muscles and nerves; the needs of labour, rest, pleasure, and domestic life; the needs of science, art, religion, and their diversity; the needs in all these relations of the child, the youth, the adult, the old man, the girl, the mature woman, the old woman; the needs of the Chinaman, the Parisian, the Russian, the Laplander; the needs which correspond to the habits of races, to the diseases. . . .

We may count them up to the end of time, without mentioning all those in which the needs of man’s personal existence consists. All the conditions of existence may be needs, and of conditions of existence there is an infinite number.

However, by needs we mean only those conditions which are cognized; but the cognized conditions, the moment they are cognized, lose their actual meaning and receive that exaggerated significance given to them by the reason which is directed upon them, and conceal the true life.

What is called needs, that is, the conditions of man’s animal conditions, may be compared with an endless number of expansible globules, of which we may imagine a body to consist. All the globules are equal and occupy their own places, without exerting any pressure on one another as long as the globules are not expanded: even so all needs are equal and have their place, and they are not felt morbidly as long as they are not cognized. But it is enough to expand one globule until it occupies more place than the rest taken together, and it will press against them and be pressed against. The same is true of the needs: the rational consciousness need but be directed upon one of them, and this cognized need occupies all life and causes man’s whole being to suffer.

XXI. What Is Demanded Is Not a Renunciation of Personality, but Its Subjection to the Rational Consciousness

Yes, the affirmation that man does not feel the demands of his rational consciousness, but only the needs of personality, is nothing but an assertion that our animal appetites, to the intensification of which we have directed our whole reason, have taken possession of us and conceal

from us our true human life. The weeds of the rankly growing vices have choked the sprouts of the true life.

How can it be otherwise in our world, since it has been asserted outright by those who regard themselves as the teachers of others that the highest perfection of the individual is an all-sided development of the refined needs of his personality; that the good of the masses consists in this, that they should have as many needs as possible and should be able to gratify them; that the good of men consists in the gratification of their needs.

How can people who are brought up in such a teaching help affirming that they do not feel the demands of the rational consciousness, but only the needs of personality? How can they feel the demands of reason, when all their reason has gone without a residue on the intensification of their appetites? And how can they renounce the demands of their appetites, when these appetites have swallowed their whole life?

“The renunciation of personality is impossible,” these men generally say, intentionally trying to distort the question and substituting the idea of renunciation for the idea of the subjection of personality to the law of reason.

“It is unnatural,” they say, “and so impossible.”

But no one is saying anything about the renunciation of personality. Personality is for a rational man the same that breathing and the circulation of the blood are for the animal personality. How can the animal personality renounce the circulation of the blood? It is impossible even to speak of this. Even so it is impossible for a rational man to speak of the renunciation of personality. Personality is for a rational man just as important a condition of his life as the circulation of the blood is a condition of the existence of his animal personality.

Personality, as an animal personality, cannot even put forth any demands, and it never does. These demands are put forth by the falsely directed reason, which is directed, not upon guiding life, not upon illuminating it, but on fanning the appetites of personality.

The demands of the animal personality can always be gratified. A man cannot say: “What shall I eat? or what shall I put on?” All these needs are secured to man as much as they are to a bird or a flower, if he lives a rational life. Indeed, what thinking man can believe that he can diminish the wretchedness of his existence by provisions for his personality?

The wretchedness of man’s existence is not due to the fact that he is a personality, but to the fact that he recognizes the existence of his personality as life and a good. Only in this case do there appear a contradiction, a doubling, and suffering for man.

Mau’s sufferings begin only when he uses the force of his reason for the intensification and enlargement of the endlessly expanding demands of personality, in order that he may conceal from himself the demands of reason.

It is impossible and unnecessary to renounce personality, or any of the conditions in which man exists; but what one can and must do is not to recognize these conditions as life itself. One can and must make use of the given conditions of life, but one cannot and must not look upon these conditions as upon an aim of life. Not to renounce personality, but to renounce the good of personality and to cease recognizing personality as life, this is what a man must do in order that he may return to the oneness, and in order that the good, the striving after which forms his life, may be accessible to him.

Ever since remote antiquity the teaching that the recognition of the life in the personality is a destruction of life, and that the renunciation of the good of personality is the only way for obtaining life, has been preached by the great teachers of humanity.

“Yes, but what is this? It is Buddhism,” men of our time generally reply to this. “It is Nirvana, it is standing on a pillar.”

And, having said this, it appears to the men of our time that they have in the most successful manner possible rebutted what all know very well, and what cannot be concealed from any one,—that the personal life is wretched and has no meaning whatever.

“This is Buddhism, Nirvana,” they say, and it seems to them that with these words they have rebutted everything that has been accepted by billions of people, and that each of us knows full well in the depth of his heart, — namely, that the life for the purposes of personality is destructive and meaningless, and that, if there is any way out of this destructiveness and meaninglessness, it unquestionably leads through the renunciation of the good of personality.

They are not in the least troubled by the facts that the greater half of humanity has always understood life in this manner, that the greatest minds have comprehended life in the same way, and that it cannot be comprehended otherwise. They are so convinced that if all the questions of life are not solved in the most satisfactory manner, they are removed by telephones, operettas, bacteriology, electric light, roburite, etc., that the idea of the renunciation of the good of the personal life presents itself to them only as an echo of ancient ignorance.

In the meantime the unfortunate people do not suspect that the grossest Hindoo, who for years stands on one leg in the name of renouncing the good of personality for the sake of Nirvana, is incomparably more of a live man than they, the bestialized men of our contemporary European society, who fly over the whole world on railroads and in the electric light show their bestial condition to the whole world. This Hindoo has come to understand that there is a contradiction between the life of personality and the rational life, and he solves it the best he knows how; but the men of our cultured class not only fail to understand this contradiction, but even do not believe that it exists.

The proposition that human life is not the existence of man’s personality, acquired by the millennial spiritual labour of all humanity, has become for man (not the animal) in the moral world an even more undoubted and indestructible truth than the motion of the earth and the laws of gravitation. Every thinking person, whether he be a learned man, an ignoramus, an old man, a child, understands and knows this: it is concealed only from the most savage people in Africa and Australia, and from the brutalized men of leisure in the European cities and capitals. This truth has become the possession of humanity and if humanity does not retrograde in its auxiliary knowledge of mechanics, algebra, astronomy, it will still less retrograde in its fundamental and chief knowledge of the determination of its life. It is impossible to forget and wipe out from the consciousness of humanity what it has carried away from its life of many millenniums,— the conviction of the vanity, meaninglessness, and wretchedness of the personal life. The attempt at reestablishing the antediluvian savage conception of life as personal existence, with which the so-called science of our European world is occupied, shows only more obviously the growth of the rational consciousness of humanity, and makes it palpably clear that humanity has outgrown its baby clothes. Both the philosophical theories of selfdestruction and the practice of suicides, increasing in a terrible proportion, show how impossible it is for humanity to return to the defunct stage of consciousness.

Life as personal existence has been outlived by humanity, and it is impossible to return to it and to forget that man’s personal existence has no meaning. No matter what we may write, or say, or discover, no matter how our personal life may be perfected, the negation of the possibility of the good of personality remains an imperturbable truth for every rational man of our time.

”And yet it moves !” It is not a question of rejecting the propositions of a Galileo and a Copernicus, and inventing some Ptolemaic circles, — they can no longer be invented, — but of going on and making further deductions from the proposition which has already entered into the consciousness of humanity. The same is true of the proposition about the impossibility of the good of personality, as expressed by the Brahmins, and Buddha, and Lao-tse, and Solomon, and the Stoics, and all the true thinkers of humanity. This proposition must not be concealed from ourselves, nor must it be obviated in every manner possible, but we should clearly and boldly recognize it and make the further deductions from it.

XXII. The Sentiment of Love Is the Manifestation of the Activity of Personality Subjected to the Rational Consciousness

A rational being cannot live for the purposes of personality. This is impossible, because all ways are barred for it: all the aims toward which man’s animal personality is striving are obviously inaccessible. Rational consciousness points out other aims, and these aims are not only accessible, but also give full satisfaction to man’s rational consciousness; at first, however, under the influence of the false teaching of the world, it appears to man that these aims are contrary to his personality.

No matter how much a man, educated in our modern world, with developed, exaggerated appetites of personality, may try to regard himself as being in his rational ego, he does not feel in this ego any striving after life, such as he feels in his animal personality. The rational ego, as it were, contemplates life, but does not live itself and has no impulse to live. The rational ego does not experience any striving after life, but the animal ego must suffer, and so there is but one thing left to do, — to be liberated from life.

Thus the question is unscrupulously solved by those negative philosophers of our time (Schopenhauer, Hartmann), who negate life and yet remain in it, instead of utilizing the opportunity to leave it. And thus this question is conscientiously solved by the suicides, when they step out of life, which presents to them nothing but 323

evil. Suicide appears to them as the only way out from the misapprehension of the human life of our time.

The reasoning of pessimistic philosophy and of the commonest suicides is as follows: “There is an animal ego, in which there is a striving after life; this ego with my striving cannot be gratified; there is another, a rational ego, in which there is no striving at all after life, and which critically contemplates the whole false love of life and the passion of the animal ego, and negates it altogether.

“If I abandon myself to the first, I see that I live senselessly and walk toward wretchedness, sinking deeper and deeper into it. If I abandon myself to the second, the rational ego, there is left in me no striving after life. I see that it is absurd and impossible to live for what alone I want to live for, that is, for the happiness of personality; for the rational consciousness it is, indeed, possible to live, but I see no cause why I should, and I do not want to. To serve that principle from which I originate, God? What for? God, if there is one, will find enough servants without me. And of what good is it to me? One can look at all this play of life as long as one does not get tired of it; and when one gets tired of it one can go away, and kill oneself,— and so I will do.”

Such is the < «mtiadic lory notion of life, which humanity had arrived at before Solomon and before Buddha, and to which its false teachers of our time want to return.

The demands of personality have been carried to the extreme limits of madness. The awakening reason rejects them: but the demands of personalities have branched out to such an extent, have so clogged man's consciousness, that it seems to him that reason negates the whole life. It seems to him that nothing will be left, if he rejects from the consciousness of life everything which his reason negates. He no longer sees what is left. The residue — that residue in which there is life — seems to him as nothing.

But the light shines in darkness, and the darkness cannot comprehend it!

The teaching of truth knows this dilemma, — either senseless existence, or the negation of it, — and solves it.

The teaching, which has always been called the teaching of the good, the teaching of the truth, has shown to people that instead of their deceptive good, which they seek for their animal personality, they not only can at some time, somewhere receive, but always, immediately, here, have an inalienable, real good, which is always accessible to them.

This good is not merely something deduced by reasoning, something which has to be sought somewhere, a good promised somewhere and at some time, but that familiar good after which every uncorrupted human soul strives directly.

All men know from their first years of childhood that, in addition to the good of the animal personality, there is another, better good of life, which is not only independent of the gratification of the appetites of the animal personality, but, on the contrary, is the greater, the greater the renunciation of the good of the animal personality.

This feeling, which solves all the contradictions of the human life and gives the greatest good to man, is known to all men. This feeling is *love*.

Life is the activity of the animal personality, subjected to the law of reason. Reason is that law to which, for its own good, man's animal personality must be submitted. Love is the only rational activity of man.

The animal personality tends toward the good; reason points out to man that deceptiveness of the personal good and leaves one path. The activity on this path is love.

Man's animal personality demands the good; the rational consciousness shows man the wretchedness of **all** the warring beings: it shows him that there can be no good for his animal personality, and that the one good, which is possible for him, is one with which there is no struggle with other beings, nor a cessation of the good, nor satiety, nor the vision and terror of death.

And as though it were a key specially made for this lock, man finds in his soul a feeling which gives him that very good, which, as the only possible one, reason points out to him. This feeling not only solves the former contradiction of life, but also, as it were, in this very contradiction finds the possibility of its manifestation.

The animal personalities want to make use of man's personality for their own purposes; but the feeling of love draws him on to give his existence for the benefit of other beings.

The animal personality suffers, and these sufferings and their alleviation form the chief subject of the activity of love. The animal personality, striving after the good, with its every breath tends toward evil, — toward death, — the vision of which has impaired every good of personality. But the feeling of love not only destroys this terror, but draws man toward the last sacrifice of his carnal existence for the good of others,

XXIII. The Manifestation of the Feeling of Love . Is Impossible for Men Who Do Not Understand the Meaning of Their Life

Every man knows that in the feeling of love there is something especial, which is capable of solving all the contradictions of life and of giving to man that full measure of the good in the striving after which his life consists.

“But this feeling, which comes but rarely, does not last long, and its consequence is worse sufferings,” say people who do not understand life.

To these men love presents itself, not as that one legitimate manifestation of life, as which it appears to rational consciousness, but only as one of a thousand different casualties of life, — it presents itself as one of those thousand divers moods in which a man happens to be during his existence: it happens that a man plays the dandy, or that he is infatuated with science or with art, or that he is infatuated with his service, with ambition, with acquisition, or that he loves some one. The mood of love presents itself to men who do not comprehend life, not as the essence of human life, but as an accidental mood, — which is as independent of his will as all the others to which man is subject during his life. Frequently we have occasion to read or hear reflections as to love being a certain irregular, agonizing mood which impairs the regular current of life, — something like what must appear to an owl when the sun comes out.

These people, it is true, feel that in the mood of love there is something special, something more important than in all the other moods. But, as they do not understand life, they also fail to understand love, and the condition of love appears to them as wretched and deceptive as all other conditions.

“To love? But whom?”

It is not worth while for a time, And you cannot love one for ever ... °

These words correctly express the dim consciousness of men that in love there is salvation from the calamities of life, and that something which alone resembles the true good, and at the same time a confession that for men who do not understand life love cannot be an anchor of salvation. There is no one to love, and every love is unenduring. And so love could be a good only if there were any one to love, and if there were one who could be loved for ever. But as such a one does not exist, there is no salvation in love, and love is just such deception and such suffering as everything else.

So, and not otherwise, love can be understood by those who teach and themselves are taught to believe that life is nothing but animal existence.

For such people love does not even correspond to the conception which we all involuntarily connect with the word love. It is not a good activity, which gives the good to the lover and to him who is loved. Love is frequently, in the conception of men who recognize life to be in the animal personality, the same feeling, in consequence of which one mother, for the sake of the good of her babe, takes the milk away from the mother of another hungry infant and suffers from anxiety for the success of the nursing; that feeling, according to which a father, tormenting himself, takes the last piece of bread away from starving people, in order to provide for his own children; that feeling, according to which he who loves a woman suffers from this love and causes her to suffer, when he seduces her, or out of jealousy ruins himself and her; that feeling, which sometimes leads a man to rape a woman; that feeling, by dint of which men, in order to defend the rights of their society, cause harm to others; that feeling, which causes a man to torment himself over some

favourite occupation, and by this very occupation to inflict sorrow' and suffering on those who surround him; that feeling, by dint of which men will not bear any insult offered to their beloved country, and strew the fields with killed and wounded, both of their own and of strangers.

More than this: the activity of love presents such difficulties for men who recognize life to consist in the good of the animal personality, that its manifestations become not only agonizing, but frequently even impossible. "We must not reflect on love," people who do not understand life generally say, "but abandon ourselves to the immediate feeling of predilection and bias toward people, which we experience, and this is true love."

They are right that we must not reflect on love, that every reflection on love destroys love. But the point is, that only those people can keep from reflecting on love who have already used their reason for the comprehension of life and have renounced the good of the personal life; but those people who do not comprehend life, and exist for the good of the animal personality, cannot help but reflect on it. They must reflect, in order that they may abandon themselves to the feeling which they call love. Every manifestation of this feeling is impossible for them without reflection, without the solution of insoluble questions.

Indeed, men prefer their babes, their friends, their wives, their children, their country, to all other children, wives, friends, countries, and call this sentiment love.

To love means in general to wish to do good. Even so we all understand love, and cannot help but understand it thus. And so I love my child, my wife, my country, that is, I wish my child, my wife, my country, more good than other children, wives, and countries. It never happens, and it cannot happen, that a man loves his child only, or his wife, or his country only. Every man loves at the same time his babe, his wife, his children, his country, and men in general. Meanwhile the conditions of the good, which in his love he wishes various beloved beings, are so connected among themselves that every love activity of a man for one of his beloved beings not only interferes with his activity for others, but even injures others.

And there arise the questions as to how one is to act and in the name of what love. In the name of what love are we to sacrifice another love? Whom shall we love more, to whom do more good, — to the wife or to the children, to the wife and to the children or to the friends? How are we to serve our beloved country, without impairing the love for wife, children, and friends? How, finally, am I to decide the question how much I may sacrifice of my personality which is needed in the service of others? How much must I care for myself, in order that, loving others, I may be able to serve them? All these questions seem very simple for men who do not attempt to give themselves an account of the feeling which they call love; but, far from being simple, they are completely insoluble.

There was good reason why the lawyer put this question to Christ: "Who is my neighbour?" Answers to these questions appear very easy to such people only as forget the true conditions of human life.

Only if men were gods, such as we imagine them to be, would they be able to love certain chosen people, and then only could the preference of some to others be true love. But men are not gods: they exist under those conditions of existence under which all living beings always live on one another, devouring one another, both in the direct and the transferred sense; and man, as a rational being, must know and see it. He must know that every carnal good is obtained by one being only at the expense of another.

No matter how much religious and scientific superstitions may assure people of a future golden age, in which there will be plenty of everything for all men, a rational man sees and

knows that the law of his temporal and spatial existence is a struggle of all against each, of each against each and against all.

In this pressure and struggle of animal interests, which form the life of the world, man cannot love chosen ones, as people imagine who do not understand life. Even if a man loves chosen ones, he never loves just one. Every man loves his mother, his wife, his babe, his friends, his country, and even all men. And love is not a mere word (all agree to this), but an activity which is directed upon the good of others. Now this activity does not take place in any definite order, so that at first man becomes aware of the demands of his strongest love, then of his less strong love, and so forth. The demands of love are constantly made manifest and all at once, without any order. A hungry old man, whom I love a little, has just come and asks me to give him the food which I am keeping for a supper for my beloved children; how am I to weigh the demands of my present, less strong love with the future demands of a stronger love?

The same questions were put by the lawyer to Christ: "Who is my neighbour?" Indeed, how shall it be decided whom I must serve, and to what extent? — whether men or my country, whether my country or my friends? whether my friends or my wife? whether my wife or my father? whether my father or my children? whether my children or myself (so that I may be able to serve others, when any need for it shall arise)?

All these certainly are demands of love, and they are all intertwined, so that the gratification of the demands of some deprives man of the possibility of satisfying the others. If I admit that a frozen child may not be clothed, because the garment which they ask of me may some day be of use for my children, I can also refuse to abandon myself to other demands of love in the name of my future children.

The same is true in relation to love of country, of favourite occupations, and of all men. If a man is capable of renouncing the demands of the smallest love of the present, in the name of the demand of the greater love of the future, it is clear that such a man, even though he wished it with all his might, will never be able to weigh in how far he can renounce the demands of the present in the name of the future; and so, being unable to decide the question, he will always choose that manifestation of love which will be agreeable to him, that is, he will not act in the name of love, but in the name of his personality. If a man decides that it is better for him to refrain from the demands of the present, smaller love in the name of another, a future manifestation of a greater love, he is deceiving either himself or others, and loves no one but himself.

There is no love in the future: love is only an activity in the present. A man who does not manifest love in the present has no love.

What takes place is the same as in the conception of life held by men who have no life. If men were animals and had no reason, they would exist like animals, without reflecting on life, and their animal existence would be legitimate and happy. The same is true of love: if men were animals without reason, they would love those whom they love, — their whelps and their flock, — and would not know that they love their whelps and their flock, nor that other wolves love their whelps, and other flocks the members of their flocks, and their love would be that love and that life which would be possible on that stage of consciousness which they occupy.

But men are rational beings and cannot help seeing that other beings have the same love for their own, and that, therefore, these sentiments of love must come into conflict and cause something which is not good and the very opposite to the concept of love.

But if men use their reason for the purpose of justifying and strengthening that animal, unpropitious sentiment, which they call love, by ascribing monstrous proportions to this feeling, it

not only fails to be good, but also makes of man — this is an old truth — a very evil and terrible animal. What takes place is like what is said in the Gospel: “If the light which be in thee is darkness, how great is the darkness?” If there were nothing in man but love for himself and for his children, there would not be even one hundredth part of that evil which now exists among men. Ninety-nine hundredths of the evil among men is due to that false feeling which they, extolling it, call love, and which resembles love as much as the life of an animal resembles that of a man.

What people, who do not know life, call love, is only certain preferences of one set of conditions of the good of personality over another. When a man, who does not understand life, says that he loves his wife, or babe, or friend, he merely says that the presence of his wife, his child, his friend, in his life increases the good of his personal life.

These preferences have the same relation to love that existence has to life. And as people who do not understand life call existence life, so these people mean by love the preference of certain conditions of their personal existence over others.

These sentiments, the preferences for certain beings, for example, for one’s children or even for certain occupations, for example, for science, or art, we call love; but such sentiments of preference, infinitely diversified, form the whole complexity of the visible and palpable animal life of men and cannot be called love, because they lack the chief sign of love, — an activity which has the good both for its aim and consequence.

The passionateness of the manifestation of these preferences only shows the energy of the animal personality. The passionateness of the preference of one set of men to others, which is incorrectly called love, is only a wild tree on which true love may be grafted and may bring forth its fruits. But as the wild tree is not an apple-tree and brings forth no fruit, or only bitter fruit instead of sweet, so bias is not love and does no good to men, or produces a still greater evil. Consequently the greatest evil is caused the world by the much lauded love of woman, of children, of friends, not to speak of the love of science, of art, of country, which is nothing but a temporary preference of certain conditions of animal life over others.

XXIV. True Love Is the Consequence of the Renunciation of the Good of Personality

True love becomes possible only with the renunciation of the good of the animal personality.

The possibility of true love begins only when man has come to understand that there does not exist for him the good of his animal personality. Only then all the sap of his life passes into the one ennobled graft of true love, which is growing with the full vigour of the wild trunk of the animal personality. Christ’s teaching is a grafting of this love, as he himself said. He said that he, his love, is the one vine which can bear fruit, and that every branch which does not bear fruit will be cut off.

Only he who has not merely understood, but comprehends with his whole life that “he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall save it,” only he who has come to understand that he who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will save it for the eternal life, only he will know true love.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. If you love those who love you, it is not love; love your enemies, love those who hate you.”

Not in consequence of their love of father, son, wife, friends, good and dear people, as is generally believed, do people renounce their personality, but only in consequence 336

of the consciousness of the vanity of the existence of personality, of the consciousness of the impossibility of its good, and so man, in consequence of the renunciation of the life of personality, learns to know true love, and can truly love his father, son, wife, children, and friends.

Love is the preference of other beings over oneself, over one's animal personality.

The oblivion of the nearest interests of personality for the purpose of attaining the more distant aims of the same personality, as happens in the case of so-called love, which has not grown out of self-renunciation, is only the preference of some beings over others for the purpose of one's personal good. True love, before becoming an active feeling, must be a certain condition. The beginning of love, its root, is not an outburst of feeling which dims reason, as it is generally imagined to be, but a very rational, bright, and so calm and joyful state, which is peculiar to children and rational people.

This state is one of good-will toward all men, which is inherent in children, but which in adults comes only with renunciation and is strengthened proportionately with the renunciation of the good of personality. How often we may hear the words, "It is all the same to me, I need nothing," and with these words to see a loveless relation to men ! But let any man even once, in a moment of ill-will toward men, say sincerely, from his soul, "It is all the same to me, I need nothing," and really not wish anything, even though for a short time, and he will find out through this simple internal experience how, in proportion with the sincerity of his renunciation, all ill-will disappears at once, and how good-will toward all men, which heretofore was locked up in his heart, will burst forth in a torrent.

Indeed love is a preference of other beings over oneself, — this is the way we all understand love, and cannot understand otherwise. The magnitude of love is the magnitude of a fraction, the numerator of which, my bias, my sympathy for others is not in my power; but the denominator, my love of myself, may be indefinitely increased or diminished by me, in accordance with the meaning which I shall ascribe to my animal personality; but the reflections of our world on love and its degrees are reflections on the magnitude of fractions judged by their numerators alone, without any reference to their denominators.

True love has always for its basis the renunciation of the good of personality and the consequent good-will toward all men. Only on this universal good-will can true love for certain persons grow, — the love for friends and for strangers, and only such love gives the true good of life and solves the seeming contradiction between the animal and the rational consciousness.

Love which has not for its basis the renunciation of personality and the consequent good-will toward all men, is only an animal life and is subject to the same and even greater calamities and even greater misunderstanding than the life without this apparent love. The sentiment of bias, called love, not only fails to remove the struggle of existence, to free the personality from the chase after enjoyments, and to save from death, but also obscures life, embitters the struggle, intensifies the eagerness for enjoyments for oneself and for others, and increases the terror of death for oneself and for others.

A man who assumes all his life to lie in the existence of the animal personality cannot love, because love must present itself to him as an activity which is directly opposed to his life. The life of such a man lies only in the good of the animal existence, whereas love first of all demands a sacrifice of this good. Even if a man who does not understand life wanted sincerely to abandon

himself to the activity of love, he would not be able to do so until he understood life and changed all his relation to it. A man who has put all his life into the good of the animal personality, all his life increases the means of his animal good, acquiring wealth and preserving it, makes others serve his animal good, and distributes this good among those persons who are most needed for the good of his personality. How can he give up his life, since his life is not supported by himself, but by other men? Still harder it is for him to choose to whom of the persons he prefers he is to transmit the accumulated good and whom to serve.

To be able to give up his life, he must first give up that surplus which he takes from others for the good of his life, and then do the impossible: he must solve the question which men he is to serve with his life. Before he will be able to love, that is, to do good by sacrificing himself, he must stop hating, that is, doing evil, and stop preferring some people to others for the good of his personality.

The activity of man's love, which always satisfies him and others, is possible only for him who does not recognize any good in the personal life and so does not trouble himself about this false good, and in this way has freed in himself the good-will for all men, which is peculiar to man. The good of life for such a man is in love, as the good of a plant is in the light, and so, as a plant that is not covered by anything cannot and does not ask in what direction it shall grow, whether the light is good, and whether it had not better wait for another, more favourable light, but takes that one light which there is in the world and tends toward it, — so a man who has renounced the good of personality does not discuss what he must give back of what he has taken from other people and to what beloved beings, and whether there is not some better love than the one which prefers demands, — but gives himself and his existence to that love which is accessible to him and is before him. Only such a love gives full satisfaction to man's rational nature

XXV. Love Is the Only Full Activity of the True Life

There is no other love than the one which makes us lay down our life for our friends. Love is then only love when it is a self-sacrifice. Only when a man gives to another his time, his forces, when he sacrifices his body for a beloved object, gives his life to it, — only that we all recognize as love, and only in such love do we all find the good, the reward of love. And the world exists by nothing else than that there is such love in men. A mother who nurses her babe gives herself, her body, outright as food for her children, who without it would not be living. And this is love. Even so every labourer gives himself, his body, as food for another, when he wears away his body in work for the good of others and approaches death. Such love is possible for such a man only for whom between the possibility of self-sacrifice and those beings whom he loves there is no obstacle for the sacrifice. A mother who turns her child away to a wet-nurse cannot love it; a man who acquires and keeps his money cannot love.

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. . . . Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. . . . Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day

of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth, is not made perfect in love.”

Only such love gives the true life to men.

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment.”

“And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” the lawyer said to Christ. And to this Christ replied: “Thou hast said the truth, do like that, that is, love God and thy neighbour, and thou shalt live.”

True love is life itself.

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren,” says Christ’s disciple. “He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.”

Only he who loves lives.

Love is according to Christ’s teaching life itself, not irrational, suffering, perishable, but blessed and infinite life. And we all know it. Love is not a deduction of reason, not the consequence of a certain activity; it is the most joyous activity of life, which surrounds us on all sides, and which we all know in ourselves from the very first recollections of childhood until the false teachings of the world have muddled it in our soul and have deprived us of the possibility of experiencing it.

Love is not a bias for what increases the temporal good of man’s personality, as the love for chosen persons or objects, but that striving after the good of what is outside of man, which remains in man after the renunciation of the good of the animal personality.

Who of living men does not know that blessed feeling, which is experienced at least once, most frequently only in earliest childhood, when the soul is not yet muddled by that lie, which drowns life in us, — that blessed feeling of meekness of spirit, when one wants to love all, — relatives, father, mother, brothers, and evil men, and enemies, and the dog, and the horse, and the grass; one wishes only this much, — that all should be happy and comfortable, and one wishes still more that one may be the cause of the happiness of all, and may give one’s whole life for the purpose of making all happy and comfortable for ever. This alone is that love in which man’s life consists.

This love, in which alone there is life, manifests itself in man’s soul as a barely perceptible, tender shoot amidst coarse shoots of -weeds, which resemble it, amidst man’s various lusts, which we call love. At first it seems to men, and to that man as well, that this shoot, — from which there is to grow a tree for the birds to hide in, — and all the other shoots are one and the same. Men at first even prefer the shoots of the weeds, which grow more rankly, and the only shoot of life is crowded, and dies. But still worse is what happens more frequently: men have heard that among these shoots there is one real, vital shoot, called love, and they tramp it down and in its place begin to raise up another shoot of a weed, calling it love. Worse still: men grasp the shoot itself with their gross hands, and shout, “Here it is, — we have found it; now we know it, and will foster it, — love, love! O highest sentiment, here it is!” And they begin to transplant it and to improve it, and they handle it so roughly and crush it so much that it dies without growing up, and then these people, or others, say: “All this is nonsense, foolishness, sentimentality.” The shoot of love, which at its appearance is tender and brooks no touch, is powerful only when full grown. Everything which people will do with it is only worse for it. It needs but one thing, — that nothing should conceal from it the sun of reason, which alone causes it to grow.

XXVI. The Endeavours of Men, Directed upon the Impossible Improvement of Their Existence, Deprive Them of the Possibility of Their Only, True Life

Nothing but the recognition of the illusion and deceptiveness of the animal existence and the liberation of the only, true life of love within man gives him the good. Now, what do men do in order to obtain this good? Men, whose existence consists in the slow annihilation of personality and approximation to the inevitable death of this personality, and who cannot help knowing this, during the whole time of their existence try with their might and main — this is all they busy themselves with — to strengthen this perishable personality, to satisfy its appetites, and thus to deprive themselves of the possibility of their only good of life, — of love.

The activity of men who do not understand life is during the whole time of their existence directed to the struggle for their existence, to the acquisition of pleasures, to the liberation from suffering, and to the removal from themselves of inevitable death.

But the increase of enjoyments increases the tension of the struggle and the sensitiveness to sufferings, and brings death nearer to them. To conceal this approach of death there is but one means, — to increase the enjoyments. But the increase of enjoyments reaches its limit, the enjoyments cannot be increased and pass into sufferings, and all there is left is a sensitiveness to sufferings, and the terror of death coming nearer and nearer amidst nothing but sufferings. There appears the vicious circle: one is the cause of the other, and one intensifies the other. The chief horror of the life of men who do not understand life consists in this, that that which by them is regarded as pleasures (all the pleasures of wealthy people), being such as cannot be evenly distributed among all men, must be taken from others and acquired by force, by evil, which destroys the possibility of that good-will toward men from which love grows. Thus the pleasures are always directly opposed to love, and the greater, the more so; thus, the stronger, the more tense the activity is for the attainment of pleasures, the more impossible becomes the only good accessible to man, — love.

Life is not understood as it is cognized by the rational consciousness, as an invisible, but unquestionable subjection of one's animal personality to the law of reason at every moment of the present, as a liberating good-will toward all men, which is characteristic of man, and as an activity of love resulting from it, but only as a carnal existence in the course of a given interval of time, under definite conditions created by us, which exclude the possibility of good-will toward all men.

To men of the worldly teaching, who have directed their reason to the establishment of certain conditions of existence, it seems that the increase of the good of life is due to a better external arrangement of their existence; but the better external arrangement of their existence depends on greater violence being exerted against people, which is directly opposed to love. Thus, the better the arrangement, the less there is left of the possibility of love, of the possibility of life.

Not having employed their reason for the comprehension of the good of the animal existence, which for all men alike is equal to zero, men recognize this zero as a magnitude which is capable of increase and diminution, and employ as much of their unapplied reason as they have left to this increase and multiplication of the zero.

These men do not see that nothing, zero, no matter by what it be multiplied, remains equal to any other zero; they do not see that the existence of the animal personality of each man is

equally wretched and cannot be made happy by any external conditions. These men do not wish to see that not one existence, as a carnal existence, can be happier than another, — that it is a law like this other law, according to which water cannot be raised on a lake above a given general level. The men who have distorted their reason do not see this, and use their distorted reason in this impossible work, and their whole existence passes in this impossible raising of the water at different places on the surface of the lake, — something like what children do in bathing, calling it “brewing beer.”

It seems to them that the existences of men may be more and less good and happy. The existence of a poor labourer or a sick man, they say, is bad and unhappy; the existence of a rich or healthy man is good and happy; and they strain all the powers of their reason for the purpose of avoiding a bad, unhappy, poor, and sickly existence and arranging for themselves one which is good, rich, healthy and happy.

The methods of arranging and maintaining these various most happy lives are worked out by generations, and the programmes of these imaginary best lives, as they call their animal existence, are transmitted by inheritance. People vie with each other in the endeavour to maintain that happy *life* which they have inherited from the arrangement of their parents, or try to prepare a new, still happier life for themselves. It seems to these people that maintaining their inherited arrangement of existence or a new existence, which in their opinion is better, they are doing something.

Supporting one another in this deception, men are often so sincerely convinced that life consists in this senseless stamping of the water, the insipidity of which is evident to them, — they convince themselves so much of it, that they contemptuously turn away from the appeal to the true life which they hear all the time in the teaching of the truth, and in the examples of the lives of living men, and in their deadened souls, in which the voice of reason and of love is never fully drowned.

A remarkable thing takes place: men, an enormous majority of men, who have the possibility for a rational life of love, are in the same condition that sheep are in, when they are being dragged out of a burning building; imagining that they are to be thrown into the fire, they employ all their forces for the purpose of struggling with those who want to save them.

Out of the fear of death men do not want to come away from it; out of the fear of suffering men torment themselves and deprive themselves of the good and the life which alone is impossible for them.

XXVI. The Endeavours of Men, Directed upon the Impossible Improvement of Their Existence, Deprive Them of the Possibility of Their Only, True Life

“There is no death,” the voice of truth tells people. “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?”

“There is no death,” all the great teachers of the world have said, and millions of people, who have comprehended the meaning of life, have borne witness to it with their lives. The same is felt in his soul by every living man, in a moment of enlightenment of his consciousness. But men who do not understand life cannot help but fear death. They see it and believe in it.

“What, there is no death?” these men cry, with indignation and malice. “This is a piece of sophistry. Death is before us: it has mowed down millions, and it will mow us down, too. No matter how you may insist that it is not, it will remain. Here it is !”

They are speaking of what they see, just as a deranged person sees the vision which terrifies him. He cannot feel the vision, for the vision has never touched him; he knows nothing of its intention, but he is so afraid of this imaginary vision and suffers from it so much that he is deprived of the possibility of life. The same is true of death. Man does not know his death and can never know it: it has never touched him, and of its intentions he knows nothing. So what is he afraid of?

“It has never seized me yet; but it will seize me, I am sure of that, —it will seize me, and will destroy me. And that is terrible,” say people who do not understand life.

If men with a false conception of life were able to reflect calmly, and reasoned correctly on the basis of that conception which they have of life, they would have to come to the conclusion that there is nothing disagreeable or terrible in this, that in my carnal existence there will take place that change which, I see, unceasingly takes place in all beings, and which I call death.

I shall die. Where is the terror in this? Have not very many changes taken place in my carnal existence without causing me fear? Why, then, am I afraid of this change, which has not yet taken place and in which there is not only nothing contrary to my reason and experience, but which is so intelligible, familiar, and natural to me that in the course of my life I have constantly made combinations, in which the death both of animals and men has been accepted by me as a necessary and often as an agreeable condition of life? Where is here the terror?

There are only two strictly logical views of life: one, the false view, by which life is understood as those visible phenomena which take place in my body from birth to death, and the other, the true view, by which life is understood as that invisible consciousness of life which I bear in myself. One view is false, the other true, but both are logical, and men may have the one or the other, but with neither is the dread of death possible.

The first, the false view, which understands life as the visible phenomena in the body from birth until death, is as old as the world. It is not, as many think, a view of life which has been worked out by the materialistic science and philosophy of our time: the science and philosophy of our time have only carried this conception to its farthest limits, where it has become more obvious than ever that this view is not compatible with the fundamental demands of human nature; this is an old, primitive view of those people who stood on a lower level of development: it is expressed by the Chinese, by the Buddhists, by the Jews, in the book of Job, and in the expression, “Dust thou art, and to dust returnest.”

This view, in its present expression, is as follows: life is an accidental play of forces in matter, as manifested in time and space. But that which we call our consciousness is not life: it is a certain deception of the sensations, which makes us believe that life consists in this consciousness. Consciousness is a spark which under certain conditions bursts into fire on the matter. This spark bursts into fire, flames up, goes out, and finally is no more. This spark, that is, consciousness, which is experienced by matter in the course of a definite period of time between two infinities, is nothing. And although consciousness sees itself and all the infinite world and all the play of accidents of this world, and, what is most important, in contradistinction to something not accidental, calls this game accidental, this consciousness is in itself nothing but the product of dead matter, a phantom, which rises and disappears without any residue or meaning. Everything

is the product of endlessly changing matter, and what is called life is only a certain condition of dead matter.

Such is one view of life. This view is quite logical. According to this view, man's rational consciousness is only an accident which is concomitant with a certain condition of matter; and so that which in our consciousness we call life is a phantom. There exists nothing but what is dead. What we call life is the play of death. With such a view of life, it is not death that ought to be terrible, but life, as something unnatural and irrational, as is the case with the Buddhists and the modern pessimists, Schopenhauer and Hartmann.

The other view of life is as follows: life is only what I am conscious of in myself. Now, I do not cognize my life as that I was or shall be (thus I reflect on life), but as that I am, — never beginning anywhere and never ending anywhere. With the consciousness of my life the concept of time and space is not compatible. My life is manifested in time and space, but that is only its manifestation. Life itself, as cognized by me, is cognized by me outside time and space. Thus, with this view it turns out, on the contrary, that it is not the consciousness of life which is a phantom, but that everything spatial and temporal is phantasmal. Consequently, the temporal and spatial cessation of bodily existence has with this view nothing that is real, and so cannot cut off, nor even impair, my true life. With this view death does not exist.

Neither with the one view of life nor with the other could there be any dread of death, if men strictly adhered to one of these two views.

Neither as an animal nor as a rational being can man fear death: the animal, having no consciousness of life, does not see death, and a rational being, having the consciousness of life, cannot see in animal death anything but the natural, never ceasing motion of matter. But if man is afraid, he is not afraid of death, which he does not know, but of life, which alone his animal and his rational being know. The feeling which in men is expressed as the fear of death is only the consciousness of the inner contradiction of life, even as the dread of visions is only the consciousness of a diseased state of the mind.

"I shall cease to exist, — I shall die, and everything in which I take my life to be will die," one voice says to man. "I am," says another voice, "and cannot and must not die. I must not die, and yet I am dying."

Not in death but in this contradiction is the cause of all that terror which seizes man at the thought of carnal death: the dread of death does not consist in this, that a man is afraid of the cessation of the existence of his animal, but in this, that he supposes that that which cannot and must not die is dying. The thought of future death is only a transference into the future of death which is accomplished in the present. The phantom of the future carnal death is not an awakening of thought in regard to death, but, on the contrary, an awakening of thought in regard to the life which man ought to have, but has not. This feeling is similar to what a man must experience who awakens to life in the grave, underground. There is life, and I am in death, there it is, death! It appears to him that what is and ought to be is being destroyed. And the human mind is beside itself and terrified. The best proof that the terror of death is not the terror of death, but of the false life, is this, that people frequently kill themselves out of the terror of death.

Men are not terrified at the thought of the carnal death because they are afraid lest their life may end with it, but because the carnal death shows them clearly the necessity for the true life, which they have not. And for this reason people who do not understand life do not like to mention death. To think of death is for them the same as admitting that they do not live as the rational consciousness demands that they shall.

People who are afraid of death fear it, because it appears to them as emptiness and darkness; but they see emptiness and darkness, because they do not see life.

XXVIII. The Carnal Death Destroys the Spatial Body and the Temporal Consciousness, but Cannot Destroy What Forms the Foundation of Life, the Special Relation Which Each Being Bears to the World

But if the people who do not see life only came nearer to those visions which frighten them, and touched them, they would see that even for them the vision is only a vision, and not reality.

The dread of death is in men always due to the fact that they are afraid that with their carnal death they will lose their individual ego, which, they feel, constitutes their life. I shall die, the body will decompose, and my ego will be destroyed. My ego is that which has lived so many years in my body.

Men esteem this their ego, and, supposing that this ego coincides with their carnal life, they conclude that it must be destroyed with the destruction of the carnal life.

This is a very usual conclusion, and it rarely occurs to one to doubt it, and yet this conclusion is quite arbitrary. People, both those who regard themselves as materialists, and those who regard themselves as spiritualists, are so accustomed to the notion that their ego is that consciousness of their bodies which has lived so and so many years, that it even does not occur to them to verify the truth of such an assertion.

I have lived for fifty-nine years, and all this time I have been conscious of myself in my body, and this conscious-

ness of myself by myself, it seems to me, has been my life. But that only seems so to me. I have not lived fifty-nine years, nor fifty-nine thousand years, nor fifty-nine seconds. Neither my body nor the time of its existence in any way determines the life of my ego. If at each minute of my life I shall ask myself what I am, I shall reply: something thinking and feeling, that is, something which bears its own peculiar relation to the world. Only this I recognize as my ego, and nothing else. I am positively not conscious of when and where I was born, when and where I began to feel and think as I am feeling and thinking now. All that my consciousness tells me is this: I am; I am with that relation of mine to the world in which I find myself now.

Of my birth, my childhood, my many periods of life, my adult years, of very recent times, I frequently do not remember anything. And if I do remember something, or I am reminded of something out of my past, I remember and recall these things like something told of others. How, then, on what ground, do I assert that during all the time of my existence I have been the same ego? I have certainly not had the same body: my body has all been matter, constantly flowing through something invisible and immaterial which recognizes this matter flowing through it as its body. My body has changed completely dozens of times; nothing old has remained: the muscles, the entrails, the bones, the brain — everything has changed.

My body is one only because there is something immaterial which recognizes all this changing body as one and its own. This immaterial something is what we call consciousness: it alone holds the body together and recognizes it as one and its own. Without this consciousness of self as apart from everything else, I should not know anything about my own nor about any other life.

And so it would appear at first thought that the foundation of everything, consciousness, must be something constant.

During our whole life we have had repeated the phenomenon of sleep, which seems very simple to us because we all sleep every day, but which is positively incomprehensible if we admit, what we cannot help but admit, that during sleep consciousness is frequently interrupted.

Every twenty-four hours, during full sleep, consciousness comes to a sudden stop and is later renewed. And yet this consciousness is the only foundation which holds the whole body together and recognizes it as its own. It would seem that with the cessation of consciousness the body ought to fall to pieces and lose its entity; but this is not the case, either in natural or in artificial sleep.

But not only is the consciousness, which holds the whole body together, periodically disrupted, and the body does not fall to pieces, but this consciousness, in addition, changes as much as the body. As there is nothing in common between the matter of my present body and what it was ten years ago, as there has not been one body, so there has not been in me one consciousness. My consciousness when I was a child of three years of age and now are as different as the matter of my present body and that of my body thirty years ago. There is not one consciousness, but only a series of consecutive consciousnesses, which may be broken up to infinity.

Thus, the consciousness which holds the whole body together and recognizes it as its own is not a unit but something which is interrupted and transformed. There is not in man the one consciousness of self, as we generally imagine it to be in us, any more than there is one body. There is not in man one and the same body, nor that one something which separates this body from everything else, — there is not the consciousness of constantly one man, one during his whole life; but there is only a series of consecutive consciousnesses, which are held together by something, — and man still feels himself to be one.

Our body is not one; and that which recognizes this changeable body as one and our own is not continuous in time, but only a series of varying consciousnesses, and we have many times lost our body and these consciousnesses; we lose the body constantly and we lose consciousness every day, when we fall asleep, and every day and hour we feel in ourselves the changes of this consciousness, and are not in the least afraid of it. Consequently, if there is such an ego, which we are afraid we shall lose at death, this ego cannot be in the body which we call our own, or in the consciousness which we call our own at a given time, but in something different, which unites the whole series of consecutive consciousnesses into one.

What is this something which binds together my fundamental and individual ego, which is not composed of my body and of a series of consciousnesses which take place in it, but that fundamental ego on which, as on a wire, are strung, one after another, the various temporally consecutive consciousnesses? The question seems very profound and wise, and yet there is not a child that does not know an answer to it and does not utter this answer twenty times a day. “*I love this, and I do not love that.*” These words are very simple, and yet in them lies the solution of the question as to what this special ego is which binds together all the consciousnesses. It is that ego which loves this and does not love that. Why a man loves this and does not love that, no one knows, and yet it is that which forms the basis of the life of each man; it is that which binds together all the temporally variant conditions of consciousness of each individual man. The external world acts on all men alike, but the impressions of men who are placed even under ideal conditions are endlessly varied, both as to the number of impressions received and capable of infinite division, and as to their strength. Of these impressions the series of consecutive

consciousnesses of each man is composed. But all these consecutive consciousnesses are bound together for the same reason that in the present some impressions act, and others do not act, on his consciousness. Now certain impressions act upon a man, or do not act upon him, because he loves this more or less, and does not love that.

Only in consequence of this greater or lesser degree of love there is formed in man a certain series of such or such impressions. Thus, it is nothing but the property of loving this more or less, and of not loving that, that is this special and fundamental ego of man, in which are collected all the scattered and interrupted consciousnesses. Though this property is developed during our life, it is brought by us into this life from some invisible and uncognizable past.

This special property of man to love one thing in a greater or lesser degree, and not to love another, is generally called character. By this word is frequently understood the peculiarity of the properties of every individual man, formed in consequence of certain conditions of time and place. But that is not correct. The fundamental property of man to love one thing more or less, and not to love another thing, is not due to spatial and temporal conditions, but, on the contrary, spatial and temporal conditions act upon a man, or do not act upon him, because a man, upon entering into the world, has already a very definite property of loving one thing and not loving another. This is the only reason why men who are born and brought up under precisely the same spatial and temporal conditions frequently present sharp contrasts as to their inner ego.

What unites all the scattered consciousnesses, which in their turn unite into one in our body, is something quite definite, though independent of spatial and temporal conditions, and is my real and actual ego. Myself I understand as this fundamental property; if I know any other men, I know them only as some special relations to the world. When we enter into serious spiritual communion with men, we are certainly not guided by their external signs, but try to penetrate into their essence, that is, to understand what their relation is to the world, what they love and to what extent, and what they do not love.

Every separate animal, a horse, a dog, a cow, if I know it and have a serious spiritual communion with it, is known to me not by external signs but by its special relation which it bears to the world, — that is, what, and to what extent, each of them loves, and what it does not love. If I know especial different breeds of animals, I know them, strictly speaking, not so much by external signs as by this, that each of them — a lion, a fish, a spider — represents a common special relation to the world. All lions in general like one thing, all fishes something else, and all spiders still something else; even because they all like something else they present themselves to my consciousness as different living beings.

The fact that I do not yet distinguish in each of these beings its special relation to the world does not prove that it does not exist, but only that this special relation to the world, which forms the life of one individual spider, is removed from that relation to the world in which I am, and that, therefore, I have not yet come to understand it, as Silvio Pellico understood his individual spider.

The foundation of everything which I know of myself and of the whole world is this special relation to the world in which I am and in consequence of which I see the other beings, which are in their special relation to the world. But my special relation to the world was not established in this life and did not begin with my body or with a series of temporally consecutive consciousnesses.

And so my body, which is united into one by my temporal consciousness, may be destroyed, and my temporal consciousness itself may be destroyed; but what cannot be destroyed is this

special relation to the world which forms my special ego, from which everything which is was built up. It cannot be destroyed, because it is that which alone is. If it did not exist, I should not know the series of my consecutive consciousnesses, nor my body, nor my life, nor any other life. And so the destruction of the body and of consciousness cannot serve as a sign of the destruction of my special relation to the world, which did not have a beginning or origin in this life.

XXIX. The Terror of Death Is Due to This, That Men Regard as Their Life One Small Part of It, Which Is Limited by Their Own False Conception of It

We are afraid that with our carnal death we lose our special ego, which unites into one both the body and the series of consciousnesses as manifested in time; but this special ego did not begin with my birth, and so the interruption of a certain temporal consciousness cannot destroy that which unites into one all the temporal consciousnesses.

The carnal death, indeed, destroys what holds the body together, — the consciousness of the temporal life. But this takes place with us all the time, every day, whenever we fall asleep. The question is as to whether the carnal death destroys what unites all the consecutive consciousnesses into one, that is, my special relation to the world. In order that we may affirm this, we must first prove that this special relation to the world, which unites into one all the consecutive consciousnesses, was born with my carnal existence, and so will die with it. But this is not true.

Judging on the basis of my consciousness, I see that that which has united all my consciousnesses into one, — a certain susceptibility for one thing and coldness for another, in consequence of which one thing remains in me and another disappears, the degree of my love of the good and hatred of the evil, — that this my special relation to the world, which forms me, my individual me, is not the product of some external cause, but the fundamental cause of all the remaining phenomena of my life.

But judging on the basis of observation, it appears to me at first that the causes of the peculiarity of my ego lie in the peculiarities of my parents and of the conditions which have acted upon me and upon them; but, continuing to reason on this path, I cannot help but see that if my special ego lies in the peculiarity of my parents and of the conditions which have acted upon them, it lies also in the peculiarity of all my ancestors and in the conditions of their existence — *ad infinitum*, that is, they are outside time and space, so that my special ego originated outside of space and outside of time, that is, precisely what I am conscious of.

In this, and only in this extra-temporal and extra-spatial basis of my special relation to the world, which unites all my remembered consciousnesses and the consciousnesses which preceded my remembered life (as Plato says and as we all feel), — in this, in this basis, in my special relation to the world, lies this special ego which we are afraid will be destroyed with the carnal death.

But we need only understand that what unites all the consciousnesses into one, what is man's special ego, is outside of time and has always been, and that what can be interrupted is only a series of consciousnesses of a certain time, in order that it may be clear that the destruction of the consciousness last in time, at the carnal death, can as little interrupt the true human ego as the daily sleep. Not one man is afraid of falling asleep, though in sleep the same takes place as at death, namely, consciousness in time is interrupted. Man is not afraid of falling asleep, though

the destruction of consciousness is precisely the same as at death, not because he has come to the conclusion that he has fallen asleep and awakened again before, and so will waken even now (this reflection is not correct: he may have wakened a thousand times, and not waken the thousand and first time), — no one ever makes this reflection, and it would not calm him; but man knows that his true ego lives outside of time, and that, therefore, the interruption of his consciousness, as manifested in time, cannot impair his life.

If a man fell asleep, as in the fairy tales, for a thousand years, he would fall asleep just as calmly as when he falls asleep for two hours. For the consciousness of the non-temporal, true life a million years of interruption or eight hours are the same, for time does not exist for such a life.

When the body is destroyed, the consciousness of the present day will be destroyed.

It is time that man became accustomed to the transformation of his body and the exchange of one series of temporal consciousnesses for another. These changes began as far back as man can remember himself, and they have taken place without cessation. Man is not afraid of the changes of his body, and not only is not terrified, but very frequently desires an acceleration of these changes, — desires to grow, to arrive at man's estate, to be cured. Man was a red piece of flesh, and all his consciousness consisted in the demands of his stomach: now he is a bearded, sensible man, or a woman who loves grown-up children. There is nothing in the body or in the consciousness like what it was, and man is not frightened at these changes which have brought him to the present condition, but hails them with joy. Where, then, is the terror in the imminent change? The destruction? But that on which all these changes take place, — the special relation to the world, — that in which the consciousness of the true life consists, did not begin with the birth of the body, but outside of the body and outside of time. How, then, can any temporal and spatial change destroy what is outside of it? Man arrests his attention on a small, tiny part of his life, does not want to see the whole of it, and trembles lest this tiny and beloved particle disappear from view. This reminds me of the anecdote of that madman who imagined that he was made of glass and when he was dropped said, "Crash !" and immediately died. In order that man may have life, he must take all of it, and not a small part of it as manifested in time and space. To him who takes the whole of life, it shall be given, but from him who takes part of it, even that which he has will be taken from him.

XXX. Life Is a Relation to the World. The Motion of Life Is the Establishment of a New, Higher Relation, and so Death Is the Entrance into a New Relation

Life we cannot understand otherwise than as a certain relation to the world: thus we understand life in ourselves and thus we understand it also in other beings.

But in ourselves we understand life not only as a once established relation to the world, but also as the establishment of a new relation to the world through a greater and ever greater subjection of the animal personality to reason, and as a manifestation of a greater degree of love. That inevitable destruction of the carnal existence which we see in ourselves, shows us that the relation in which we are toward the world is not constant, and that we are obliged to establish another relation. The establishment of this new relation, that is, the motion of life, destroys the conception of death. Death appears only to him who, not having recognized his life as consisting

in the establishment of a rational relation to the world and to its manifestation in a greater and ever greater love, has stopped at that relation, that is, at that degree of love for one and enmity toward another with which he entered into existence.

Life is an unceasing motion, but, by persisting in the same relation to the world, persisting in that degree of love with which he entered into the world, he feels its arrest, and death appears to him.

Death is visible and terrible only to such a man. The whole existence of such a man is one unceasing death. Death is visible and terrible to him, not only in the future, but also in the present, with all the manifestations of the diminution of the animal life, from childhood to old age, for the motion of existence from childhood to maturity only seems to be a temporary increase of forces, but is in reality just such an induration of the members, diminution of pliability and vitality, as do not cease from birth until death. Such a man continually sees death before him, and nothing can save him from it. With every day and hour the position of such a man becomes worse and worse, and nothing can improve it. His special relation to the world, his love for one and enmity toward another, presents itself to such a man as one of the conditions of his existence, and the one business of life, the establishment of a new relation to the world, the increase of love, presents itself to him as unnecessary. His whole life passes in the impossible, — in the attempt at liberating himself from the inevitable diminution of life, in its induration, weakening, aging, and death.

But not so for a man who understands life. Such a man knows that he has brought into his present life his special relation to the world, his love for one and enmity toward another from the past which is concealed from him. He knows that this his love for one and enmity toward another which is carried by him into his existence, is the very essence of his life; that it is not an accidental property of his life, but that this alone has the motion of life, — and he places his life in this motion alone, in the increase of love.

Looking at his past in this life, he sees, by the series of cognitions which is intelligible to him, that his relation to the world has changed, the subjection to the law of reason has increased and the power and sphere of love has increased all the time, without cessation, giving him an ever increasing, good independently of, and sometimes directly in inverse proportion to, the existence of personality.

Such a man, who accepts his life from the invisible past, and recognizes its constant uninterrupted growth, endures it and looks into the future, not only calmly, but even with joy.

They say that disease, old age, debility, dotage are the destruction of man's consciousness and life. For what man? I imagine John the Divine falling, according to the tradition, from old age into childhood. According to the tradition he says nothing but this: "Brethren, love one another!" The barely moving old man of one hundred years, with tearful eyes, lisps only these three words, "Love one another!" In such a man the animal existence is barely flickering, — it is all consumed by the new relation to the world, the new living being, which no longer finds its place in the existence of the carnal man.

For a man who understands life as it actually is to speak of the diminution of his life with diseases and old age, and to grieve about it, is the same as though a man on approaching the light should grieve about the diminution of his shadow, in proportion as he walks up to the light. To believe in the destruction of one's life, because the body is destroyed, is the same as believing that the destruction of the shadow of an object, when this object has entered into the full light, is a sure sign that the object itself is annihilated. Such a conclusion could be made only by a

man who has looked for so long a time into the shadow that at last he comes to imagine that the shadow is the object itself.

But to a man who knows himself, not from the reflection in his spatial and temporal existence, but from his increased love relation to the world, the destruction of the shadow of his spatial and temporal relations is only a sign of a greater degree of light. For a man who understands his life as a certain special relation to the world, with which he entered into existence, and which grew in his life with the increase of love, to believe in his annihilation is the same as though a man who knows the external visible laws of the world should believe that his mother found him under a cabbage-leaf, and that his body will suddenly fly away somewhere, so that nothing will be left.

XXXI. The Life of Dead People Does Not Cease in This World

And still more, I shall not say on the other hand, but according to the very essence of life, as we cognize it, does the superstition of death become clear to us. My friend, my brother lived just as I do, and now he has stopped living like me. His life was his consciousness and took place under the conditions of his bodily existence; consequently, there is no place and no time for the manifestation of his consciousness, and there is none for me. My brother was, I was in communion with him, and now he is not, and I shall never find out where he is.

“Between him and us all ties are broken. He does not exist for us and we similarly will not exist for those who will be left. What, then, is this, if not death?” Thus speak people who do not understand life.

These people see in the cessation of the external communion an unquestionable proof of actual death, whereas by nothing is the phantasmal conception of death more clearly and more obviously dispersed than by the cessation of the carnal existence of our friends. My brother has died, what has happened? Namely this, that the manifestation of his relation to the world, accessible to my observation in time and space, has disappeared from my eyes, and nothing is left.

“Nothing is left,” so would a chrysalis say which has not yet unfolded itself as a butterfly, as it observes that the cocoon which is lying near it is empty. But the chrysalis would say so if it could think and speak, because, having lost its neighbour, it would indeed feel the neighbour as being nothing. Not so with man. My brother has died: his cocoon, it is true, is empty, — I do not see him in the form in which I saw him heretofore, but his disappearance from my sight has not destroyed my relation to him. With me is left, as we say, his memory.

His memory is left, — not the remembrance of his face, his eyes, but the remembrance of his spiritual picture.

What is this memory, — such a simply and apparently intelligible word? The forms of crystals, of animals disappear, and there is no memory left among crystals and animals. But I preserve the memory of my friend and brother. And this memory is the more vivid the more the life of my friend and brother harmonized with the law of reason, the more it was manifested in love. This memory is not merely a notion, but something which acts upon me in precisely the same way as my brother’s life acted upon me during his earthly existence. This memory is the same invisible, immaterial atmosphere which surrounded his life and acted upon me and upon others during his carnal existence, even as it acts upon me after his death. This memory demands of me after his death the same that it demanded of me during his lifetime. More than this: this memory becomes

for me more obligatory after his death than it was during his life. That life force which was in my brother has not only not disappeared, or been diminished, but has not even remained the same, for it has increased, and acts more powerfully upon me than before.

His life force after his carnal death acts as much or even more strongly than before his death, and it acts like everything which is truly alive. On what ground, then, feeling upon myself this life force just as it was during the carnal existence of my brother, that is, as his relation to the world, which elucidated to me my relation to the world, can I affirm that my dead brother has no longer any life? I can say that he has gone out of that lower relation to the world, in which he was as an animal, and in which I still abide, — that is all; I can say that I do not see that centre of the new relation to the world in which he now is: but I cannot deny his life, because I feel its force upon myself. I have been looking at a reflecting surface to see how a man was holding me; the reflecting surface has grown dim. I no longer see how he is holding me, but I feel with my whole being that he is holding me as much as before, and so exists.

But, moreover, this invisible life of my dead brother not only acts upon me, but enters into me. His special living ego, his relation to the world, becomes my relation to the world. It is as though in the establishment of the relation to the world he raised me to that level to which he himself rose, and to me, to my especial living ego, is made clearer that next step to which he raised himself, disappearing from my vision, but drawing me after him. Thus I cognize the life of my brother who sleeps in carnal death, and so I cannot doubt it; but, as I observe the actions of this life, which has vanished from my vision upon the world, I become still more indubitably convinced of the actuality of this life which has vanished from my vision. The man is dead, but his relation to the world continues to act upon people, not as in his lifetime, but with an enormously greater force, and this action increases in accordance with its reasonableness and loveliness, and grows like everything which lives, never ceasing and knowing no interruptions.

Christ has been dead a very long time, and his carnal existence was short, and we have no clear conception of his carnal personality, but the force of his rational and lovable life, his relation to the world — nobody else's — acts even now upon millions of people, who receive in themselves his relation to the world and live by it. What is it, then, that acts? What is this which before was connected with the carnal existence of Christ and now forms the continuation and ramification of that his life? We say that it is not Christ's life, but its consequences. When we utter such absolutely meaningless words we imagine that we have said something more definite and clear than that this force is the living Christ itself. The same might be said by ants who dug around an acorn, which sprouted and grew to be an oak; the acorn gave way to the oak, which now tears up the ground with its roots, drops leaves, branches, and new acorns, wards off the light and the rain, and changes everything which lived round about it. "This is not the life of the acorn," the ants say, "but the consequences of its life, which came to an end when we dragged that acorn down and threw it into the hole."

My brother died yesterday or a thousand years ago, and that same force of his life which acted during his carnal existence continues to act more powerfully in me and in hundreds, thousands, millions of men, in spite of the fact that the visible centre of this force of his temporal carnal existence has disappeared from my sight. What does this mean? I saw before me the light of the burning grass. The grass has burned out, but the light is only stronger: I do not see the cause of this light, I do not know that anything is burning, but I can conclude that the same fire which burned the grass is now burning the distant forest, or something else that I cannot see. The light is such that I not only see it now, but it alone guides me and gives me life. I live by this light.

How can I deny it? I may think that the force of this life has now a different centre, which is invisible to me; but I cannot deny it, because I feel it, am moved and live by it. I cannot know what this centre is, what this life is in itself, — I can guess, if I am fond of guessing and am not afraid of blundering. But if I seek a rational comprehension of life, I shall be satisfied only with what is clear and indubitable, and will not spoil that which is clear and indubitable by adding to it obscure and arbitrary guesses. It is enough for me to know that everything I live by is composed of the lives of those who have lived before me and have now been long dead, and that, therefore, every man who has fulfilled the law of life and has subjected his animal personality to reason and has manifested the power of love, has lived and still lives in others after the disappearance of his carnal existence, in order that the insipid and terrible superstition of death should no longer trouble me.

In the men who have left after them the force which continues to be active we may observe also this, why they, who subjected their personality to reason and abandoned themselves to a life of love, never could have had any doubts about the possibility of the destruction of life.

In the lives of such men we can find the foundation of their faith in the uninterruptedness of life; and then, comprehending our own life, we may find these foundations in ourselves as well. Christ said that he would live after the disappearance of the phantasm of life. He said this, because even then, during his carnal existence, he entered into the true life, which cannot cease. Even during his carnal existence he lived in the beams of the light from that other centre of life, toward which he was walking, and saw in his lifetime that the beams of that light were illuminating the people round about him. The same is seen by every man who renounces his personality and lives a rational life of love.

No matter how narrow the circle of a man's activity may be, — whether he is Christ, or Socrates, or a good, inglorious, self-sacrificing old man, or youth, or woman, — if he lives, renouncing his personality for the good of others, he enters even here, in this life, into that new relation to the world, for which there is no death, and the establishment of which is for all men the work of till life.

A man who places his life in the subjection to the law of reason and in the manifestation of love sees even in this life, on the one hand, the beams of light of that new centre of life toward which he is walking, and, on the other, that action which this light, passing through it, produces on those who surround him. And this gives him an indubitable faith in the undiminishableness, undyingness, and eternal intensification of life. We cannot accept the belief of immortality from others, — we cannot convince ourselves of immortality. In order that there should be a belief in immortality, there has to be this immortality, and in order that it should be, we must understand our life as being immortal. Only he can believe in the future life, who has done his work of life, who has established in this life that new relation to the world, which is no longer contained in him.

XXXII. The Superstition of Death Is Due to This, That Man Confuses His Different Relations to the World

Yes, if we look upon life in its real meaning, it becomes difficult even to understand on what the strange superstition of death is based.

Thus, if you make out what it is that in the darkness frightened you as a phantasm, you can no longer reconstruct that phantasmal terror.

The fear of losing what alone exists is due to this alone, that life presents itself to man, not only in the one, to him known, but invisible, special relation of his rational consciousness to the world, but also in two, to him unknown, but visible relations: his animal relation and the relation of his body to the world. Everything in existence presents itself to man: (1) as the relation of his rational consciousness to the world, (2) as the relation of his animal consciousness to the world, and (3) as the relation of the matter of his body to the world. Failing to understand that the relation of his rational consciousness to the world is his only life, man imagines his life also in the visible relation of his animal consciousness and matter to the world, and is afraid of losing his special relation of the rational consciousness to the world, when in his personality there is impaired the former relation of his animal personality and of the matter composing him to the world.

To such a man it appears that he originates from the motion of matter, passing to the level of personal animal consciousness. It seems to him that this animal consciousness passes into a rational, consciousness, and that later this rational consciousness weakens, again passes back into the animal, and at last the animal weakens and passes into dead matter, from which it came. But the relation of his rational consciousness to the world presents itself in this view as something accidental, unnecessary, and perishable. With this view it turns out that the relation of his animal consciousness to the world cannot be destroyed, — the animal continues itself in its species; the relation of matter to the world can in no way be destroyed, and is eternal; but the most precious, — his rational consciousness, — is not only not eternal, but is only the gleam of something unnecessary, something superfluous.

And man feels that that cannot be. And in this lies the terror of death. In order to save themselves from this fear, some people want to assure themselves that the animal consciousness is their rational consciousness, and that the undyingness of the animal man, that is, of his species, his descent, satisfies that demand for the immortality of the rational consciousness which they contain in themselves. Others want to assure themselves that the life, which has never existed before, having suddenly appeared in the carnal form and having vanished again from it, will again be raised in the flesh and live. But it is impossible for people who do not recognize life in the relation of the rational consciousness to the world to believe either the one or the other. It is evident to them that the continuation of the human race does not satisfy the unceasing demand for the eternity of their special ego; but the conception of a life beginning anew includes the concept of a cessation of life, and if life did not exist before, nor always, it cannot exist later.

For either of these the earthly life is a wave. Out of the dead matter rises the personality, out of the personality the rational consciousness, — the crest of the wave; having risen to the crest, the wave, the rational consciousness and the personality, falls back to whence it came, and is destroyed. To either of these human life is the visible life. Man grows up, matures, and dies, and after death there can be nothing for him; what is left after him and of him, whether his posterity, or even his works, cannot satisfy him. He is sorry for *himself*, is afraid of the cessation of *his* life. He cannot believe that this life of his, which has begun here upon earth in his body and ends here, should rise again. He knows that if he did not exist before, and has appeared out of nothing and dies, his special ego will and can never exist again. Man is cognizant of this, that he will not die only when he will cognize that he was never born and has always existed and will always

exist. Man will believe in his immortality only when he will understand that his life is not a wave, but that eternal motion which in this life is manifested only as a wave.

It seems to me that I shall die and my life will come to an end, and this thought torments and frightens me, for I am sorry for myself. What will die? What am I sorry for? What am I from the commonest point of view? First of all I am flesh. Well, am I afraid and sorry for it? It turns out that I am not: the body, matter, can never, nowhere perish, — not one particle of it. Consequently this part of me is safe, and there is no reason for having any fears for it. Everything will be intact. But no, they say, it is not this that one is sorry for. I am sorry for myself, Lev Nikolaevich, Ivan Semé-nych. But a man is not what he was twenty years ago, and every day he is different. So for whom am I sorry? No, they say, it is not this that one is sorry for. What I am sorry for is the consciousness of myself, of my ego.

But this consciousness of yours was not always one, but there were different states of consciousness: there was one a year ago, and a quite different one before that; as far as you remember, it has changed all the time. Have you taken such a special liking for your present consciousness that you are sorry to lose it? If it were always one with you, this would be intelligible; but it has been doing nothing but changing all the time. You do not see its beginning, and you cannot find it, and suddenly you want that there should be no end to it, that the consciousness which is in you should remain for ever. As far back as you can remember yourself, you have been going. You came into the world yourself not knowing how; but you know that you came as that special ego that you are; then you walked and walked, until you reached the middle, and suddenly you were both rejoiced and frightened, and you are stubborn, and will not move from the spot, to move on, because you do not see what is there. But you have not seen even the place from which you have come, and you certainly came; you came in by the entrance gate, and you do not want to go out by the exit.

Your whole life has been a walking through the carnal existence: you walked and were in a hurry to walk, and suddenly you feel sorry because that is taking place which you have been desiring all the time. What you are terrified by is the great change of your state at the carnal death; but such a great change took place at your birth, and that not only did not result in anything bad for you, but, on the contrary, it resulted in something good, for you do not wish to part from it.

What is it that can frighten you? You say that you are sorry for your ego, with your present sensations and thoughts, with your view of the world, with your present relation to the world.

You are afraid you will lose your relation to the world. What is this relation? What does it consist in?

If it consists in this, that you eat, drink, beget, build, dress yourself in a certain way, and assume a certain relation to men and animals, all that is the relation of every man, as a reasoning animal, to life, and this relation can never pass away; there have been millions such, and there will be millions, and their species will as certainly be preserved as each particle of matter. The preservation of the species is implanted in all animals with such force, and, therefore, is so firmly grounded that there is no need of having any fears on that score. If you are an animal, you have no reason for fearing; but if you are matter, you are still better secured in your eternity.

But if you are afraid of losing what is not animal, you are afraid of losing your special rational relation to the world, — with which you have entered into this existence. But you know that it did not arise with your birth: it exists independently of your procreated animal; and so it cannot depend on its death.

XXXIII. The Visible Life Is a Part of the Infinite Motion of Life

My earthly life and the life of all other men presents itself to me like this:

I and every living man, — we find ourselves in this world in a certain definite relation to the world, with a certain degree of love. At first it seems to us that our life begins with this relation to the world, but observations over ourselves and over other men show us that this relation to the world, the degree of love of each one of us, did not begin with this life, but has been carried by us into life from the past, which is concealed from us by our carnal birth; besides, we see that the whole current of our life here is nothing but an unceasing increase and intensification of our love, which never ceases, but is only concealed from our view by our carnal death.

My visible life presents itself to me as a segment of a cone, the apex and base of which are hidden from my mental vision. The narrowest part of the cone is that relation of mine to the world with which I first become conscious of myself; the broadest part is that higher relation to life which I have now attained. The beginning of this cone, its apex, is hidden from me in time by my birth; the continuation is hidden from me in the future, which is equally unknown to me in my carnal existence and in my carnal death. I do not see the apex of the cone, nor its base, but from the part through which my visible, memorable life passes, I unquestionably know its properties.

At first it seems to me that this segment of the cone is my whole life, but in proportion as my true life advances, I see, on the one hand, that that which forms the foundation of my life is behind it, beyond its borders: in proportion with life I feel more clearly and more vividly my connection with my visible past; on the other hand, I see that this foundation leans against the future, which is unknown to me, and I feel more clearly and more vividly my connection with the future, and I conclude that my visible life, my earthly life, is only a small part of my whole life, which incontestably exists at both ends, — before birth and after death, — but which is hidden from my present consciousness. And so the cessation of the visibility of life after the carnal death, just like its invisibility before birth, does not deprive me of the undoubted knowledge of its existence before birth and after death.

I enter into life with certain ready properties of love to the world outside of me; my carnal existence — whether it be short or long — passes in the increase of this love which I brought with me into the world, and so I conclude indubitably that I lived before my birth and shall live, as after that moment of the present in which I, reflecting, now am, so also after any other moment of time before and after my carnal death. Looking outside of me at the carnal beginnings and ends of the existence of other men (even of beings in general), I see that one life seems to be longer, another shorter; one appears before, and is visible to me for a longer time; another appears later, and very quickly is again concealed from me; but in all of them I see the manifestation of one and the same law of every true life, — an increase of love, — so to speak, a broadening of the beams of life. Sooner or later the curtain will fall which conceals from me the temporal current of the life of men: the life of men is still a life exactly the same as any other, and it has no beginning and no end. The fact that a man has lived a longer or shorter time in the visible conditions of this existence can present no distinctions in his true life. The fact that one man passed more slowly through the field of vision open to me, or that another man passed through it more quickly, can by no means compel me to ascribe more actual life to the one and less to the other. I know without a doubt that, if I saw a man walking past my window, — whether he walked fast or slowly, — this

man existed before the time when I saw him, and will continue to exist, even though he is hidden from my view.

But why do some pass quickly, and others slowly? Why does a man Eve, who is old, dried up, morally ossified, and, in our opinion, incapable of performing the law of Efe, — of increasing love, — while a child, a youth, a girl, a man in the fuU vigour of his spiritual labour dies, passes out of the conditions of this carnal Efe, in which, according to our conception, he has only begun to establish in himself a regular relation to life?

We may understand the death of Pascal, of Goethe; but Chénier, Lérmontov, and thousands of other men, with whom the inner work, as we think, had just begun, whose work, as we think, might have been so well accomplished here?

But that only seems so to us. None of us knows anything about those principles of Efe which are brought into the world by others, about that motion of life which has taken place in it, about those obstacles against the motion of life, which are to be found in this existence, and, above all, about those other conditions of Efe, possible, but invisible to us, in the which the life of this or that man may be placed in the other existence.

It seems to us, as we look at the blacksmith's work, that the horseshoe is all made, — that he has to strike it but once or twice, — but he breaks it up and throws it into the fire, knowing that it has been overheated.

We cannot know whether the work of the true life has been accomplished in man or not. We know this only of ourselves. It seems to us that a man dies when he does not need to, but this cannot be. A man dies only when death is needed for his good, just as a man grows up and reaches man's estate only when that is needed for his good.

Indeed, if by life we understand life, and not the semblance of it; if the true life is the foundation of everything, the foundation cannot depend on what it produces: the cause cannot result from the result, — the current of the true life cannot be impaired by its change, by its manifestation. The incepted and unfinished motion of man's life cannot cease in this world, because he gets a boil, or a bacterium flies into him, or somebody discharges a pistol at him.

A man dies only because in this world the good of his true life can no longer be increased, and not because his lungs hurt, or because he has a cancer, or because he was shot, or a bomb was thrown at him. It generally seems to us that it is natural to live a carnal life, and unnatural to perish by fire, water, cold, lightning, diseases, pistol-shots, or a bomb, — but we need only think seriously, looking at men's lives from the side, in order that we may see that, on the contrary, it is very unnatural for a man to live a carnal life among these destructive conditions, among these universally distributed and generally fatal bacteria. It is natural for him to perish. And so the carnal life among these disastrous conditions is, on the contrary, something very unnatural in the material sense. If we live, this is not due to the fact that we are taking care of ourselves, but because in us is taking place the work of life which subjects to itself all these conditions. We live, not because we take care of ourselves, but because we are doing the work of life. When the work of life is done, and nothing can arrest the unceasing destruction of the human animal life, this destruction takes place, and one of the nearest causes of the carnal life, which always surround us, appears to us as its exclusive cause.

Our true life exists, — it alone we know, from it alone we know our animal life, — and so, if its semblance is subject to invariable laws, how can that which produces this semblance fail to be subject to laws?

But what troubles us is that we do not see the causes and actions of our true life in the same way as we see the causes and actions in external phenomena: we do not know why one enters into life with such properties of his ego, and another with other properties, — why one man's life is cut short, and another man's life is continued. We ask ourselves: what were the causes before my existence that I was born to be what I am? And what will be after my death as the result of my living in one way or another? And we regret that we do not receive any answers to these questions.

But to regret this, that I am unable to find out now what happened before my life and what will be after my death, is the same as regretting my inability to see what is beyond the limits of my vision. If I could see what is beyond the limits of my vision, I should not be able to see what is within these limits; but, for the good of my animal, I must above all else see what is around me.

The same is true of my reason, by means of which I cognize. If I could see what is beyond the limits of my reason, I should not see what is within its limits; but, for the good of true life, I must above all else know that to which I am obliged now and here to submit my animal personality, in order that I may obtain the good of life.

And reason reveals this to me: it reveals to me in this life that one path on which I do not see the cessation of my good.

It shows without a doubt that this life did not begin with birth, but has always been, — it shows that the good of this life grows, increases here, reaching those limits which can no longer contain it, and only then passes out of those conditions which retard its growth, in order to pass into another existence.

Reason places man on that one path of life which, like a cone-shaped, widening tunnel, amidst the walls which surround it on all sides, opens to it in the distance the unquestionable endlessness of life and of its good.

XXXIV. The Inexplicability of the Sufferings of the Earthly Existence Proves More Convincingly Than Anything Else to Man That His Life Is Not a Life of the Personality, Which Began with Birth and Ends with Death

But even if man could get along without fearing death or thinking of it, the terrible, aimless sufferings, which cannot be justified and which can never be averted, the sufferings to which he is subject, would suffice to destroy every rational meaning which is ascribed to life.

I am occupied with a good, unquestionably useful work, and suddenly I am seized by a disease which cuts short my work and torments and pesters me without sense or purpose. A screw has rusted in the rails, and it must happen so that on the day when it comes out, a good woman, a mother, is travelling on that train, in that particular car, and her children are killed in her sight. An earthquake causes the particular spot on which Lisbon or Vyérny stands to cave in, and absolutely innocent people are buried alive in the ground and die in terrible suffering. What sense has this? Why, for what purpose are these and thousands of similar senseless, terrible accidents of sufferings which afflict people?

The explanations of reason explain nothing. The explanations of reason of all such phenomena always get around the very essence of the question and show more convincingly its insolubility. I have fallen sick, because some kinds of microbes have settled somewhere in me; or the children were crushed to death by the train in their mother's sight, because the dampness affects the iron in such and such a way; or Vyérny caved in, because there exist certain geological laws. But the question is, why such or such people were subject to these terrible sufferings, and how I can free myself from these accidents of suffering?

There is no answer to this. Reflection, on the contrary, shows me that there is no law by which one man is subject to these casualties and another is not, and that there can be no such law; that there is an endless number of such casualties, and that, therefore, no matter what I may do, my life is every second subject to all the infinite accidents of most terrible suffering.

If men made only the deductions which inevitably follow from their world conception, these people, if they understand life as personal existence, would not remain alive a minute. Certainly not a labourer would work for a master who, hiring him, would reserve for himself the right every time when he pleased to roast the labourer over a slow fire, or to flay him alive, or to pull out his nerves, or do in general all those terrible things which, without any explanation or cause, he did with his labourers in full sight of him whom he was hiring. If men actually understood life fully as they say that they understand it, not one of them would, out of fear of all those painful and absolutely inexplicable sufferings, which he sees all around him, and to which he may be subject at any moment, remain alive in the world.

But although all people know different easy means for killing themselves and passing out of this life, which is so full of cruel and senseless sufferings, they continue to live: they complain of the sufferings and lament them, but continue to live.

It is impossible to say that this is due to the fact that there are more pleasures in life than sufferings, because, in the first place, not only a simple reflection, but also a philosophic investigation of life shows that the whole earthly life is a series of sufferings, which are by no means redeemed by the pleasures; in the second place, we know from ourselves and from others that people in positions which offer them nothing but a series of increasing sufferings without the possibility of alleviating them until death, none the less do not kill themselves and hold on to life.

There is but one explanation to this strange contradiction: all men know in the depth of their hearts that all kinds of suffering are necessary for the good of their life; and so continue to live, foreseeing them or submitting to them. They are provoked at these sufferings, because with the false view of life, which demands the good only for its personality, the impairment of this good, which does not lead to any palpable good, must present itself to them as something inexplicable and so provoking.

Men are terrified at these sufferings and marvel at them as at something quite unexpected and unintelligible. And yet every man has grown up with sufferings and his whole life is a series of sufferings, experienced by him and imposed by him on other beings, and it would seem that it is time to get used to sufferings, not to be terrified by them, and not to ask oneself why and for what these sufferings exist. If a man will only stop to think, he will see that all his pleasures are bought with the sufferings of other beings; that all his sufferings are necessary for his enjoyment; that without sufferings there are no pleasures; that sufferings and pleasures are two opposite conditions which are evoked one by the other and are necessary one for the other. So what do the questions mean, "Why? For what are these sufferings?" which a rational man puts to himself?

Why does a man who knows that suffering is united with enjoyment ask himself why and for what there is suffering, and not why and for what there are pleasures?

The whole life of an animal and of man, as an animal, is an uninterrupted chain of sufferings. The whole activity of an animal and of a man, as an animal, is called forth only by suffering. Suffering is a morbid sensation which rouses an activity that abolishes this morbid sensation, and which evokes a state of enjoyment. And the life of an animal and of man, as an animal, is not only not impaired by suffering, but takes place only in consequence of suffering. Suffering is, therefore, what moves life, and so is what it ought to be; so what, then, does man mean by asking why and for what there is suffering?

An animal does not ask that.

When a hungry perch torments a minnow, or a spider a fly, a wolf a sheep, they know that they do what must be; and so, when a perch, a spider, a wolf, are subjected to similar torments by those who are stronger than they, they, in running away, defending themselves, and escaping, know that they are doing everything which ought to be done, and so there cannot be the slightest doubt in them that what is taking place with them is as it ought to be. But a man who is troubling himself only about having his legs healed over that were torn off on the field of battle, where he tore off the legs of other men; or who is thinking only of how he may, in the best way possible, pass his time in the solitary confinement of the prison after he has directly or indirectly incarcerated others there; or who is thinking only of how he may ward off and escape the wolves, which are tearing him to pieces, after he has himself cut up and devoured thousands of animals, — such a man cannot find that what is taking place with him is right. He cannot acknowledge that what is happening to him is right, because, when he was subject to these sufferings, he did not do everything which he ought to have done. But, since he did not do everything which he ought to have done, it seems to him that what is happening to him is not right.

But what is it that a man who is being torn by wolves ought to do except to run away and defend himself? He ought to do what is proper for a rational being: to recognize the sin which has produced the suffering, by repenting it, and to recognize the truth.

The animal suffers only in the present, and so the activity which is evoked by its suffering and is directed upon itself in the present completely satisfies it. But man suffers not in the present alone, but also in the past and in the future, and so the activity which is evoked by his sufferings cannot satisfy him, if it is directed only upon the present of the human animal. Nothing but an activity which is directed upon the cause and the consequences of the suffering, upon the past and the future, satisfies a suffering man.

The animal is locked up and tries to get out of its cage, or its leg is broken and it licks the aching spot, or it is being devoured by another and tries to get away from it. The law of its life is impaired from without, and it directs its activity to its reestablishment, and there takes place what ought to take place. But man—I myself or a near friend of mine — is sitting in prison; I have lost my leg in battle, or wolves are tearing me to pieces; the activity which is directed to the flight from prison, to the healing of the leg, to defending myself against the wolves, does not satisfy me, because the imprisonment, the pain in my leg, the lacerating of the wolves, form only a tiny part of my suffering. I see the causes of my suffering in the past, in my own errors and in those of others, and if my activity is not directed to the cause of suffering, to the error, and I do not try to free myself from it, I am not doing what I ought to do, and so the suffering presents itself to me as what ought not to be, and it grows, not only in reality, but also in imagination, to terrible proportions, which exclude the possibility of life.

The cause of the suffering is for the animal, the violation of the law of the animal life: this violation is manifested in the consciousness of the pain, and the activity which is evoked by the violation of the law is directed to the removal of the pain; for the rational consciousness the cause of the suffering is the violation of the law of the life of the rational consciousness: this violation is manifested in the consciousness of error, of sin, and the activity which is evoked by the violation of the law is directed to the removal of the error, the sin. And as the suffering of the animal evokes an activity which is directed upon the pain, and this activity frees the suffering from its agony, so the sufferings of the rational being evoke an activity which is directed upon the error, and this activity frees the suffering from its agony.

The questions as to why and what for, which rise in a man's soul when he experiences or thinks of suffering, show only that he does not yet know the activity which ought to be evoked in him by the suffering, and which frees the suffering from its agony. Indeed, for a man who recognizes his life in the animal existence, there cannot be this activity which frees from suffering, and the less of it, the narrower the sense in which he understands his life.

When a man, who recognizes his personal existence as life, finds the causes of his personal suffering in his personal error, — when he understands that he grew ill because he ate something harmful, or that he was beaten because he himself went out to fight, or that he is hungry and naked because he did not want to work, — he knows that he is suffering because he has done what he ought not to do, and in order that he may not do so again in the future; and, directing his activity upon the destruction of the error, he is not provoked at the suffering, and bears it lightly and often with joy. But when such a man is assailed by suffering which is beyond the limit of the visible connection of suffering and error, — as when he suffers from causes which have always been outside his personal activity, or when the consequences of his sufferings cannot be of any use either to his personality, or to any other, — it seems to him that he is assailed by what ought not to be, and he asks himself why? what for? and, finding no object on which to direct his activity, he is provoked against the suffering, and his suffering becomes a terrible torment. But the majority of the sufferings of man are such that their causes or consequences — at times both — are hidden from him in space and time: such are hereditary diseases, unfortunate accidents, failures of crops, wrecks, fires, earthquakes, and so forth, which end in death.

The explanations that this is necessary in order to teach a lesson to future men, how they should not abandon themselves to those passions which are reflected as diseases on their posterity, or how they should build better trains and be more cautious with fire, — all these explanations do not give me any answer. I cannot recognize any meaning of my life in the illustration of the neglects of other people: my life is my life, with my striving after the good, and not an illustration for other lives. These explanations are good enough for conversation, but do not alleviate that terror before the meaninglessness of the sufferings with which I am threatened, and by which the possibility of life is excluded.

But even if it were possible in some way to understand this, that, while I by my errors cause others to suffer, I with my errors also bear the errors of others; if it is possible even most distantly to understand that every suffering is an indication of an error, which must be corrected by men in this life, there is still left an enormous series of sufferings which cannot be explained in any way. A man is all alone in the woods, where he is torn to pieces by wolves; or he is drowned, or frozen, or burned, or simply falls ill in solitude and dies, and no one ever finds out how he suffered, and thousands of similar cases. Of what use will this be to any one?

For a man who understands his life as animal existence there is no explanation, and there can be none, because for such a man the connection between the suffering and the error is only in phenomena which are visible to him, but this connection completely slips away from his mental vision at the time of his death agony.

A man has choice between two things: either, by not recognizing the connection between the sufferings which he experiences and his life, to continue to bear the majority of his sufferings as torments which have no meaning whatever, or to acknowledge that my errors and my acts, which are committed as the result of them,— my sins, no matter what they may be, are the cause of my sufferings, whatever they be, and that my sufferings are a liberation and redemption of my sins and of those of any other men.

Only these two relations to suffering are possible: one, that suffering is what it ought not to be, because I do not see its external meaning, and the other, that it is what it ought to be, because I know its internal meaning for my true life. The first results from acknowledging as the good the good of my separate personal life. The other results from recognizing as the good the good of my whole life of the past and the future in an uninterrupted union with the good of other men and beings. With the first view, the sufferings have no explanation whatever and evoke no other activity than a constantly growing and insoluble despair and infuriation; with the second, the sufferings avdke the same activity which forms the motion of the true life, — the consciousness of the sin, the liberation from error, and the subjection to the law of reason.

If it is not man's reason, it is the agony of his suffering that involuntarily compels him to recognize that his life is not coextensive with his personality; that personality is only the visible part of his whole life; that the external nexus of cause and action, which is visible to him from his personality, does not coincide with that internal nexus of cause and action, which is always known to man from his rational consciousness.

The connection between error and suffering, which is visible to the animal only in spatial and temporal relations, is always clear to man outside these conditions in his consciousness. Suffering, whatever it be, is always cognized by man as a result of his sin, whatever it be, and the repentance of his sin — as a liberation from suffering and attainment of the good.

The whole of man's life from the first days of his childhood consists in nothing but this: in the consciousness of sin through suffering, and in the hberation of self from error. I know that I came into this life with a certain knowledge of the truth, and that, the more error there was in me, the more suffering there was both of my own and of other men; the more I free myself from error, the less suffering there was of my own and of other people, and the greater was the good which I attained. And so I know that the greater the knowledge of the truth is which I carry out of this world, and which is given to me by my suffering, even though it be the last, before death, the greater is the good that I attain.

The agony of suffering is experienced by him alone who, having segregated himself from the life of the world, and not seeing those sins of his, by means of which he brought suffering into the world, regards himself as innocent, and so is provoked at those sufferings which he endures for the sins of the world.

And, strange to say, the same that is clear to the reason, mentally, is confirmed in the one true activity of life, in love. Reason says that a man who recognizes the connection of his sins and sufferings with the sins and sufferings of the world, is freed from the agony of suffering; love proves this in fact.

One-half of the life of each man passes in sufferings which he not only does not recognize as agonizing and does not notice, but even considers his good, only because they are endured as the consequences of error and as a means for alleviating the sufferings of beloved persons. Thus, the less there is love, the more is man subject to the agony of suffering, and the more there is love, the less there is of the agony of suffering; but a completely rational life, the whole activity of which is manifested only in love, excludes the possibility of any suffering. The agony of suffering is only that pain which men experience in the attempts at severing that chain of love for their ancestors, their posterity, their contemporaries, which unites the life of man with the life of the world.

XXXV. Physical Sufferings Form the Necessary Condition of the Life and Good of Man

“Still it pains, it pains bodily. What is this pain for?” ask people.

“Because we not only need it, but also could not live if we did not experience pain,” would reply he who caused us the pain, and made this pain as little as he could, and the good from this pain as great as he could.

Who does not know that the very first sensation of pain is our first and chief means for the preservation of our body and the continuation of our animal life, and that if this did not exist, we should, while we are children, have burned up and cut to pieces our whole body? Physical pain preserves the animal personality. And as long as pain acts as a preservative of the personality, as is the case in the child, this pain cannot be that terrifying torment as which we know pain at a time when we are in the full force of our rational consciousness and struggle against the pain, recognizing it as something which ought not to be. Pain in the animal and in the child is a very definite and insignificant quantity, which never rises to that agony, to which it rises in a being that is endowed with a rational consciousness. In the child we see that it sometimes cries as pitifully from the bite of a flea as from a pain that destroys its internal organs. The pain of an irrational being leaves no trace in the memory. Let a man try to recall his childish sufferings of pain, and he will see that he not only has no recollection of them, but is not even able to reconstruct them in his imagination. Our impression at the sight of the sufferings of children and animals is more our own suffering than theirs. The external expression of the suffering of irrational beings is immeasurably greater than the suffering itself, and so to an immeasurably greater degree provokes our sympathy, as we may see in the case of the diseases of the brain, of fevers, of all kinds of agonies.

At a time when the rational consciousness is not yet awakened, and the pain serves only as a preservation of the personality, it is not agonizing; but at a time when there is in man the possibility of a rational consciousness, it is a means for subjecting the animal personality to reason, and in proportion as this consciousness is awakened, it becomes less and less agonizing.

In reality, only when we are in full possession of our rational consciousness can we speak of sufferings, because only with this state begins that life and those conditions which we call sufferings. In this state the sensation of pain may be expanded to the greatest and narrowed down to the most insignificant proportions. Indeed, who does not know, without studying physiology, that there is a limit to sensitiveness, that with the increase of pain to a certain limit sensitiveness

stops, — there is syncope, dulness, delirium, — or death ensues. The increase of pain is, therefore, a very definite quantity, which cannot surpass its limits. But the sensation of pain may be increased from our relation to it to infinity, and even so may be reduced to an infinitely small amount.

We all know how a man, by submitting to pain and recognizing pain as something which ought to be, is able to reduce it to insensibility, even to the sensation of pleasure in enduring it. Not to speak of the martyrs, of Huss, who sang at the stake, simple people, from a desire of showing their bravery, endure without a cry, or jerking, operations which are considered extremely painful. There is a limit to the increase of pain, but there is no limit to the diminution of its sensation.

The torments of pain are really terrible for those men who have placed their life in the carnal existence. How can they help being terrible, since the force of reason which is given man for the purpose of destroying the agony of suffering is directed only to increasing it?

In Plato there is a myth about God's having at first set the term of seventy years to man's life, but later, when he saw that men fared worse from it, he changed it to what it is now, that is, he made it so that people do not know the hour of their death. Just as correctly would the rationale of what exists be defined by a myth which would say that men were originally created without the sensation of pain, but that later it was created for their good.

If the gods had created men without the sensation of pain, men would soon have begun to ask for it; without child labour women would bring forth children under such conditions that only extremely few would be left alive; children and young people would ruin their bodies, and grown men would never know the errors of men who lived before them or who are living now, nor, above all, their own errors: they would not know what to do in this life, — they would have no rational aim in their activity, could never make their peace with the thought of their imminent death, and would have no love.

For a man who understands life as the subjection of his personality to the law of reason, pain is not only no evil, but even a necessary condition, both of his animal and his rational life. If there were no pain, the animal personality would have no indication of the departures from this law; if the rational consciousness did not experience any suffering, man would not know the truth, — he would not know his law;

“But you are speaking,” some will say to this, “of your own sufferings: how can you deny the sufferings of others? The sight of these sufferings is the most agonizing suffering,” these people will say, not quite sincerely.

The suffering of others? But the sufferings of others, what you call sufferings, have never stopped. The whole world of men and animals suffer and have always suffered. Have we really just learned this? Wounds, mutilations, hunger, cold, diseases, all kinds of unfortunate accidents, and, above all, childbirth, without which none of us has ever come into the world, — all these are necessary conditions of existence. It is precisely this — the diminution of it, the aid offered to it — that forms the contents of the true life of men, and to it the true activity of life is directed. The comprehension of the sufferings of personalities and of the causes of human errors, and the activity for their reduction are precisely that which forms the business of the human life. This is precisely why I am a man, a personality, — that I may understand the sufferings of other people; and for this I am a rational consciousness, that in the suffering of each separate personality I may see the common cause of suffering, — of error, — and may be able to destroy it in myself and in others. How, then, can the material of his labour be the cause of the labourer's suffering? It is the same as though a ploughman should say that the unploughed land is his suffering. The

unploughed land can be a source of suffering only to him who wants to see the land ploughed, but does not consider it the business of his life to do the ploughing. .

The activity which is directed upon the immediate service of love to the sufferers and upon the destruction of the common causes of suffering — of errors — is that only joyful work which is incumbent on man and gives him that inalienable good in which his life consists.

There is but one suffering for man, and it is that which compels man against his will to abandon himself to the life in which alone his good lies.

This suffering is the consciousness of the contradiction between his sinfulness and that of the whole world on the one hand, and, on the other, the necessity, and not only the possibility, of realizing, through me, and not through any one else, the whole truth in my life and in that of the whole world. It is impossible to allay this suffering by not seeing one's own sin, while participating in the sin of the world, and still less, by ceasing to believe in the possibility, as well as in the necessity, of realizing, through myself, and not through any one else, the whole truth in my life and in that of the whole world. The first only increases my sufferings; the second deprives me of the forces of life. What allays this suffering is nothing but the consciousness and activity of the true life, which destroy the incommensurableness of the personal life with the aim, as cognized by man. Man must involuntarily admit that his life is not limited to his personality from birth until death, and that the aim which he recognizes is accessible, and that in striving after it, — in the recognition of his greater and still greater sinfulness and of the greater and ever greater realization of the whole truth in his life and in the life of the world has always consisted, and always will consist, the work of his life, which is inseparable from the life of the whole world.

If it is not the rational consciousness, it is the suffering, which results from the error in respect to the meaning of man's life, that against his will pushes him on the one true path of life, on which there are no obstacles, no evil, but only the inviolable, ungenerated, undying, ever-increasing good.

Conclusion

Man's life is a striving after the good, and what he strives after is given to him.

The evil in the shape of death and of sufferings is visible to man only when he takes the law of his carnal animal existence to be the law of his life.

Only when, being man, he descends to the level of an animal, does he see death and sufferings. Death and sufferings, like scarecrows, frighten him on all sides, and drive him back to the one open road of human life, which is subject to his law of reason and finds its expression in love. Death and sufferings are only man's transgressions of his law of life. For a man who lives according to his law there is no death and no suffering.

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (Matt. xi. 28-30).

Man's life is a striving after the good; what he is striving after is given to him, namely, life, which cannot be death, and the good, which cannot be evil.

Appendix I.

It is generally said that we study life not from the consciousness of our life, but in general from without. But this is the same as saying that we observe objects not with our eyes, but in general from without.

We see objects outside ourselves because we see them in our eyes, and we know life outside ourselves because we know it within ourselves. We see objects only as we see them in our eyes, and we define life outside ourselves only as we know it in ourselves. But we know life in ourselves as a striving after the good: and so, if we do not define life as a striving after the good, we not only are unable to observe, but even to see, life.

The first and chief act of our cognition of living beings is this, that we include many different objects in the concept of one living being, and exclude this living being from everything else. Both we do only on the basis of the definition of life, cognized alike by all of us, as a striving after the good, and of self, as a being distinct from the whole world.

We recognize that a man on a horse is not a multiplicity of beings and not one being, not because we observe all the parts which form a man and a horse, but because neither in the heads, nor in the legs, nor in any other parts of the man and the horse do we see such a separate striving after the good as we know in ourselves. And we know that the man on the horse is not one, but two beings, because we know in them two distinct strivings after the good, whereas in ourselves we know but one such.

Only thus do we know that there is life in the combination of the rider and horse, and in a herd of horses, and in birds, in insects, in trees, in the grass. If we did not know that the horse wishes its own good and a man his own, that the same is desired by every individual horse in the herd, that the individual good is desired by each bird, bug, tree, weed, we should not see the individuality of beings, and, not seeing the individuality, we should never be able to comprehend anything living: a regiment of cavalry, a herd, and the birds, and the insects, and the plants, — everything would be like waves on the ocean, and the whole world would blend for us into one ■(indistinguishable motion, in which we should entirely fail to find life.

If I know that the horse, and the dog, and the tick that is sticking to it, are living beings, and am able to observe them, this is so because the horse, the dog, and the tick have their individual aims, each for its own good. But this I know, because I know myself as such a being which is striving after the good.

In this striving after the good consists the foundation of .all knowledge of life. Without recognizing the fact that the striving after the good, which each man feels in himself, is the life and symptom of all life, no study of life, no observation of life, is possible. And so observation begins when life is already known, and no observation on the phenomena of life can (as the false science assumes) determine life itself.

Men do not acknowledge the definition of life as a striving after the good which they find in their consciousness, but they recognize the possibility of the knowledge of this striving in the tick, and on the basis of this assumed. unfounded knowledge of the good after which the tick strives, they make observations and conclusions as to the essence of life itself.

Every conception of mine about the external life is based on the consciousness of my striving after the good; and so, only by having come to understand wherein my good and my life consist,

shall I be able to know what the good and the life of other beings are. But, if I do not understand my own good, I shall never be able to understand that good and the life of other beings.

Observations on other beings, which strive after their own aims, that are unknown to me, and that form a semblance to that good the striving after which I know in myself, not only are unable to explain anything to me, but certainly can conceal from me my true knowledge of life.

To study the life of other beings, without having a definition of my own, is the same as describing a circle without having a centre. Only by establishing one invariable point as the centre, are we able to describe a circle. No matter what figures we draw, they will not be circles, if they have no centre.

Appendix II.

The false science, in studying the phenomena which accompany life, and purporting to study life itself, by this very intention corrupts the concept of life; and so, the longer it studies the phenomenon of what it calls life, the more it departs from the concept of life, which it wants to study.

At first they study the mammals, then other animals, the vertebrates, fishes, plants, corals, cells, microscopic organisms, and finally reach a point where we lose the distinction between animate and inanimate, between the limits of the organism and the non-organism, between the limits of one organism and another. They reach a point where that which cannot be observed presents itself as the most important subject of investigation and observation. The mystery of life and the explanation is sought in commas and twinkles invisible but assumed, discovered to-day, forgotten to-morrow. The explanation of everything is sought in those beings which are contained in the microscopic beings, and in those that are in them, and so forth, *ad infinitum*, as though the infinite divisibility of what is small were not the same kind of an infinity as the infinitely great. The mystery will be revealed when the whole infinity of the small shall be fully investigated, that is, never. And men do not see that the assumption that the question finds its solution in the infinitely small is an undoubted proof of this, that the question is incorrectly put. And this last stage of madness, which clearly shows the complete loss of sense in the investigations, is regarded as the triumph of science: the highest degree of blindness is considered as the highest degree of vision. Men have gone into a blind alley and so show the lie of the road on which they have been travelling. There is no end to their raptures: "We will make the microscopes just a little more powerful, and we shall understand the transition from the inorganic to the organic, and from the organic to the psychical, and the whole mystery of life will be revealed to us."

While studying the shadows instead of the objects, men have entirely forgotten that object the shadow of which they have been investigating, and busying themselves more and more with the shadow, they have come to complete darkness, and are happy to find the shadow so compact.

The meaning of life is revealed in the consciousness of man as a striving after the good. The elucidation of this good, a more and more exact definition of it, forms the chief aim and work of the life of all humanity, and now, because this work is difficult, that is, not play, but work, people decide that the definition of this good cannot be found where it is put down, that is, in the rational consciousness of man, and that, therefore, it has to be sought everywhere, except where it is shown.

This is something like what a man would do, who would throw away a note, on which precise directions are given to him, because he cannot read it, and would keep asking all the men whom he meets to tell him what it is he wants. The definition of life, which is sketched in man's soul with indelible letters, namely, in his striving after the good, is sought by men everywhere except in man's consciousness itself. This is the more strange since all humanity, in the persons of its wisest representatives, beginning with the Greek utterance, which was, "Know thyself," has always said the very opposite. All the religious teachings are nothing but definitions of life as a striving after the real, infallible good which is accessible to man.

Appendix III.

More and more clearly does man hear the voice of reason; more and more often does man listen to this voice, and the time is coming and is already at hand when this voice shall be stronger than the voice which calls to the personal good and to the deceptive duty. On the one hand it becomes more and more clear that the life of personality with its enticements cannot give the good, and, on the other, that the payment of any debt, as prescribed by men, is only a deception, which deprives man of the possibility of paying the one debt of man to that rational and good principle from which he has come. That ancient deception, which demands a faith in what has no rational explanation, is worn out, and we can no longer return to it.

Formerly they used to say: do not reflect, but believe in the duty alone which we prescribe. Reason will deceive you. Faith only will reveal the true good of your life to you. And man tried to believe, and believed; but his relations with other men showed him that other men believed in something quite different and asserted that that something else gave a greater good to man. It became inevitable to solve the question which of the many faiths was the more correct one; but this can be decided only by reason.

Man always cognizes everything through his reason, and not through faith. It was possible to deceive him, by asserting that he cognizes through faith, and not through reason; but the moment a man knows two faiths and sees men who profess another faith just as he professes his own, he is placed in the inevitable necessity of deciding the matter by means of his reason. A Buddhist who has become acquainted with Mohammedanism and yet remains a Buddhist will be such no longer by faith, but by reason. The moment there arises before him another faith and the question as to whether he should reject his own or the one which is proposed to him, the question will inevitably be decided by reason. And if he, having become acquainted with Mohammedanism, remains a Buddhist, his former blind faith in Buddha will now inevitably be based on rational foundations.

The attempts which are made in our day to pour the spiritual contents into a man through faith, despite his reason, — are the same as attempting to feed a man in any other way than through his mouth.

The communion of people among themselves has shown them that common foundation of cognition, and they can no longer return to their former errors, — and the time is coming and is already at hand when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and, having heard it, shall come to life.

It is impossible to drown this voice, because it is not the voice of just one person, but of the whole rational consciousness of humanity, which finds its expression in every separate man, and in the best men of humanity- and now even in the majority of men.

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