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 THE MIRROR OF THE HUMAN SOUL

By Richard Wurmbrand

**"Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man who built a house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock".**

Luke, 6.47,48

WHAT IS THE SOUL?

When man started thinking about his own person, he saw that the natural instincts and needs of his body are relatively easy to satisfy. A little food, drink, clothing, a roof over his head and a life partner of the opposite sex – this is all man needs to have a fully satisfied body.

But in a short time, one amazingly must concede that even in one's happiest moments, when all these needs are fully satisfied, there is still remains inside a longing for something else.

The soul feels an emptiness, an undefined thirst. One has to be asking oneself: "Why are you sad, why do you sigh? You have what you need!"

The fact that man remains dissatisfied, although his body needs are satisfied, proves that man is not just a body. There is another part in him. The thirst of this constituent, which we name usually soul, is quenched by men through matters of no immediate use to

the body and which do not satisfy bodily needs: art, abstract thinking, religion, even perversions, etc.

The word told by Jesus to the Devil, that "man does not feed by bread alone", is an universal truth. The most satiated men live on something else, too: jokes, politics, shows, running after "strong" sensations proving in this way, that man is not just a stomach.

The part of the human life separated from the material life of the body is called soul. Man is made up of both body and soul.

"Life, which was the light of men", showed them that the soul is not only different from the body, but also independent from it, to a certain extent. The body may be extremely healthy, and the soul deeply depressed. People in the prime of their life and enjoying an exceptional health commit suicide. On the contrary, the body might be in deep suffering, and the soul could be exultantly joyful: an example are the martyrs of the different faiths, who were singing while they were burned to the stake; another example is the peace of the "red skin" Indians, while they were executed in terrible tortures.

That the soul, this non-bodily part of man, is not an insignificant part, is shown by the fact that many people sacrifice their bodies for something not of the body, for an artistic, political, sentimental ideal, etc. Artists live with little food and badly clothed, in order to serve their art; some people stay in jail and go to death for a political ideal, kill themselves for a woman or for a man etc. Of what sacrifice is man incapable, for the sake of a strong feeling? Are these sacrifices justified? What is the comparative value of these two parts of man?

Man found the answer to this question easily. He knew that the body was mortal. But the soul, which is different from the body, often independent from it, even in conflict with the body, does not die with it. Nothing entitles us to believe that the soul would be mortal.

The matter of our body, more specifically the cells which make up the body of a man, renew themselves almost completely within seven years. But something in our personality – that is the soul – proves to remain the same, in spite of the changes through which the body goes. Then why would the soul not outlive the great transformation of the body, death? God's revelation, the Holy Bible, has confirmed to men that when this body dies and is decomposed, the soul lives on.

The soul is not subjected to death: Lord Jesus says it, too.

But by this unique quality, of victory over death, the soul gains an enormous value. It surpasses the body in value, even more, it surpasses in value the entire world with its treasures. Because the entire world is transitory (the Scripture says it will be burned in fire; physics claims it will suffer death by entropy), while the soul lasts.

It is in this way justified the question Lord Jesus asked of us all:

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The Gospel according to Matthew, 16.26.

### WHAT IS THE SHAPE OF OUR SOUL?

Our soul will outlive our bodily death. But is it ready, in its present shape, to enjoy the future life in happiness, or must it first go through adequate transformations?

The soul, and with it the chance of an eternal life of glory and joy – can be lost. The question asked above by Lord Jesus shows us this fact. The soul may reach hell, which is an eternal fire, a place of torment.

It is proper, therefore, to thoroughly inquire into the state of our soul.

God's commandment speaks: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul", to love in Him the love, the light and the eternal assets, because God represents them all. But our soul, despising the value of the heavenly things, willingly abdicated, and from the body's superior became its slave, considering it its duty to refine and exacerbate the instinctual needs of the body (sexual lust, greed for money, political preoccupations, art with no value, which entertains and tickles, food refinements, luxury in home and clothing etc.); while love, light, the future assets of eternity, God – in a word: those for which the soul should prepare – are almost outside of its concerns.

So, in order to enjoy eternal life, the soul must be cleansed or saved.

This is what everything depends upon. And the saving of the body. Because it will resurrect, as well. But its coming back to life does not depend on its own shape, but on the shape of the soul.

### REPENTANCE

The decisive step towards the salvation of the soul is repentance.

The Greek word "metanoia", which is found in the Bible and is translated as "repentance", means to gain a new mind. Synonymous biblical expressions are "to get a new heart", "to become a new being", "to disavow oneself", "re-birth", "to become a child again", "to be all clean", and others.

But what exactly is wrong with our soul, that it needs to be radically changed?

Some believe that it is its content. And they fill their souls with new contents: the godly things, instead of the earthly things that used to fill them. But can a broken-down car be made to function well by simply changing the passengers? It will take the new passengers as far as it took the old ones.

And this is the experience of many people who have fooled themselves for a while that they are believers. They changed the content of their soul, but the soul remains thirsty, unsatisfied, unsaved; they remain in death and in hostility towards God, even though they think of Him, because the intimate structure of their soul, their nature, their psychological mechanism was not changed, because the fundamental flaw of their soul was not fixed.

Others believe it is enough to repair the mechanism of the soul. And in time, they manage to have a car that functions well. Only that since it functions well – Lord Jesus warns us – seven new devils will go in as passengers, seeing that the soul is empty and so inviting.

Repentance must then be a total change of our soul, a change both of the intimate structure of the soul, and of the content of our soul's life. We will first show what is broken in the mechanism of our soul.

### THE LOSS OF ANY SENSE OF PROPORTION

Our soul, darkened by sin, has lost the sense of proportion.

This is what Jesus seeks to give us in most of His sayings. He tells the Pharisees: "Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold... the gift or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?... Ye pay tithes of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith".

And the apostle Paul asks men: "Do we want to incite the Lord to jealousy? Are we greater than Him?"

Man makes his "I" the center around which all things must turn. He thinks of himself and loves himself. He judges things, events, and his peers by the benefit or the damage they bring him, as if all in this world happen for his sake. His "self" is above all. He considers important many small and insignificant things, such as gifts to the Temple from his little income, and he leaves unfulfilled the huge things of the God's law.

Repentance is a re-setting of proportions. I am not the center of the world, God is. God is the master, and I am only a spec of dust on a tiny planet, one of the tens of millions that must exist in the Universe. And with a lot of humbleness, each of us must

search for the will of the Master and for the mission He has entrusted us with. We must realize that after we have done all that we were commanded, we are still worthless slaves, who have done almost nothing; we have contributed in this world about as much as an ant contributes to the changing of the shape of the surface of the earth.

We must realize that God is the Mighty One, and we are the small ones; God is the mighty one, and we are the weak.

The un-repentant human soul is lost in details, as a Romanian saying states: "The country is perishing, and the old lady is combing her hair". The world is going through a catastrophe without precedent. Millions of people perish and I am fighting with my wife that the wardrobe is not properly dusted. We overheard a young lady crying, during a terrible bombing, that she had on old dress. Surrounded by all dangers, man finds delight in licking a little honey, instead of focusing his thoughts upon the possibility of escaping eternal danger.

Man's thought is out-of-focus and confused. He does not see clearly.

If a man, instead of concerning himself with the worldly things, concerns himself with the Bible, without having repented, without having fixed the mechanism of his soul, he will be followed by the same myopia and misunderstanding of the Bible. He will not be able to distinguish the great principles, he will be lost in its details and will make others lose themselves, too.

We must seek in the Bible the few great, unchanging principles. Let us not mistake them for the practical commandments, which are the way these principles are applied in changing circumstances!

For example, a great principle, unchanged in the Bible, is that "God is not worshipped by men's hands", and that He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (The Acts of the Apostles, 17.24-25). The practical commandments in the Old Testament, regarding the building of a temple, had exactly the purpose of making a temple in which the Israeli people were to be taught this great truth.

Another great biblical principle: "What enters the mouth does not defile man". Temporarily, in order to ease the partnership between Christians and the Jews of the first century of our era, who still were disgusted by blood – food forbidden in Israel – a practical commandment is given to all Christians: Do not eat blood!

Also a general principle is "God is not only of the Jews, but also of the gentiles". In reality, He revealed Himself first only to one people, which was to be His chosen tool.

A basic teaching of the Bible is "All is clean for the one who is clean". But for the weak in faith, for those whose hearts can easily be hurt, several rules of behaviour are given.

Another fundamental principle is that "righteousness is gained only through faith". In practice, the believer must observe on earth several rules, which are not the same in all circumstances.

Who has switched from reading novels to reading the Bible has not repented yet. Because otherwise, he will bring into the Bible the fuzziness of the novels. We must first repair that flaw of the soul's mechanism that makes it incapable to distinguish between great and important things and transitory details.

### THE IMPRESSION OF THE LAST EVENT

Another big flaw of our soul's mechanism is the fact that we judge and react always under the impression of the last fact, the last event, the last word we have heard.

One of the causes of ingratitude is that a man hurt us today and we react immediately, as if this would be our only meeting with him and as if the only thing we know about him is that he hurt us. Or, the psalmist urges us to remember the good deeds of the past. And the other way around: under the impression of a seducing word, we are ready to follow someone who does not deserve our trust, considering what we know about him from the past.

This flaw of the mechanism of our soul prevents us from looking upon people, things, and events in the light of everything we know of them. The Pharisees said about Lord Jesus: "This is a sinful man because He has broken the Sabbath". But is the breaking of a law in a certain circumstance enough to condemn a man, without considering his complete personality?

If someone becomes a believer, from an unbeliever, without having repented first, without having gained a new heart, he will manifest the same habit in evaluating his brothers and preachers, the biblical characters, and matters in the Bible. The passengers in his cars will be different, but these new passengers will sit in the same broken-down car.

### PRISONERS OF WORDS

Then, the human soul, sinful by nature, has the flaw of remaining at the surface of the things it judges. It is a prisoner of the words.

Words, formed at first as names from the surrounding realities and with the passing of time are emptied of the contents they had in the beginning. The soul, remaining behind, continues to give them the same significance, the same respect as when they still had a rich content. In this way, we hold dolls beautiful on the outside, but full of sawdust inside.

Let us give a few examples:

The word *bishop* indicated in the beginning a shepherd of the soul, the one most advanced in faith, who during persecution gave his life for the sheep. Today it is enough for a bum to get education by means of birth, the title of bishop by means of simony (by buying it with money), by high relations or by other means, and the unrepented Christians are ready to give him all the honour, although this poor bishop has no faith, cannot be of use to anyone on the path to salvation, and will run when hardship comes. We are seduced by the magic of words. For the repented soul, a bum remains a bum, no matter what he calls himself.

It is the same with the words *priest, shepherd, rabbi, church, Christian, Jew, believer, faith, religion, art*. The repented man does not allow himself to be impressed by any pompous word, but he goes to the heart of the matter. He first searches if the beautiful word has a corresponding valuable reality.

God reproaches people: "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me". Meaning that we speak a lot to God and about God. But it is all getting drunk on words. When we say "God", we do not have a real person before the eyes of our heart; when we speak of religion, we do not feel really bonded; when we chat about faith, we do not insist on this faith to be the true one, through which salvation is gained.

Words have replaced realities – this is a great flaw of the mechanism of the soul, flaw which repentance removes, teaching man to speak little, which does not refer as much to the number of words, as to the persevering examination that behind every word I say or I accept, stands a reality.

Other than that, many tin workers are named "Tailor", many unbelievers are called "Christians", and so on.

Let us remember that the high priest who condemned Jesus was called Ana, which in Hebrew means "the merciful"!! And what a man thirsty for blood he was, in spite of his beautiful name!

## "THE FEEDING ON CORPSES"

Continuing the listing of the flaws of the mechanism of the soul, we have to mention its sickening desire to feed on corpses, which is to endlessly live on chewing on the past.

As long as he is in the world, man lives remembering and always telling about his conquests, his experiences, his past adventures, and he comforts himself for his present empty life, instead of seeking to enrich the content of his present life. Others are melancholic, are always filled with remorse for the bad and failed things of the past, instead of working hard in succeeding and doing well now.

If man became a believer without having repented, without a profound change in the mechanism of his soul, his heart will be filled only with dead deeds, with past deeds.

There are some believers who live on their past experiences with Jesus, until mice eat them, instead of taking care and renewing such every day. Or they live in a continuing cry and remembrance of their past sins, which is a completely useless thing. It is preferable to expiate them from now on through a lot of love and purity.

If such an unrepented man becomes a preacher of the Gospel, his sermon will be as boring as a translation of the answers Jesus gave 2000 years ago to the Pharisees, instead of being a living answer, inspired by the Saviour, to the questions asked by the modern man in his present life.

## RELYING ON AUTHORITIES

Here is another habit of our sinful soul, losing his natural support in God, necessarily seeks authorities to rely upon. And this is a sickening characteristic. The soul, created to be independent and in direct partnership with God, lost its capacity to walk on its own feet.

For one, authority is science. He does not take the time to search its boundaries. He does not wonder to what extent everything the scientists is truly science and not prejudice of some poor sinful men as ourselves, who wear an impressive title. This soul walks around the world counting on results gained for it by others, and which it receives without control.

For many, what they have learned from their parents is an authority. You often hear: "This is what we have heard from our parents". And the soul no longer checks if parents – people who make mistakes, like us – were right or not.

For others, everything that exists from the ancient times has an undeniable authority. "We know it like this. This is the way we have always been doing it" – is their

argument. So, when you say to such a man that there should be no wars and that we should all join our efforts to reach this goal, he will shrug his shoulders carelessly, saying: "It has been like this for ages". In matters of religion, this man holds on to the ancient religion. This is the power of tradition, which is accepted, just like that, because it is old and not because it would be good.

If someone starts believing without having repented, he will continue to rely upon an authority in the new life, as well. The holy book of his religion will be for him an uncontrolled authority; the creeds and customs of his confession will have authority before him. For him any conversation ends when he can state: "This is what the founder of my religion said, as it is written in that book". He does not search with independent means the measure to which you can fully believe the words of the man who is an authority for him.

The soul lost, in this way, the most precious gift from God – its independence. Or, God wants so much the soul to keep its independence that He Himself wants no credit in any matter simply because He is God. In the Bible, He, the Master, brings proof for His statements, gives signs and performs miracles in order to persuade, He gives arguments, He tells the souls: "Judge yourselves between Me and you!" Even more, we are shown in the Bible cases when men defeat God by the justness of their argument. (See Zelophehad's daughters incident in Numbers 26:33ff).

### THE ALLEGIANCE TO A PARTY

A deep sickness of the structure of our soul, which must be healed through repentance, is the allegiance to preset views or partiality.

Scientists speak of emotionally charged ideas, called complexes. What are they? Certain feelings tie me to some people or to a specific way of thinking. These feelings separate me, of course, from people opposed to the object of my love and in their thinking opposed the ideas I prefer. As soon as such a "complex", or a sentimental preference, has gained roots inside someone's soul, this person becomes incapable of right judgement. He is from now on "partial". Only what serves to strengthen his complex is accepted by his mind. On the contrary, in his mind cannot enter anything that would shake this sentimental preference. In this man develops a major bias.

• If certain feelings tie him to a scientific concept, to a political party, to a confession, his mind refuses from the beginning anything that might serve as an argument to those who believe otherwise.

We will give some examples, in order to explain better.

Let us think of someone who has a certain scientific training, but who cannot stand religion. He has an anti-religious sentimental complex. Let us say he is a great chemist. He will believe in the laws regarding quantum physics, even though these laws refer to an object invented by the human mind. No one knows if atoms (the smallest particles of which the matter of the Universe is supposed to be made up) have a quantum physics real existence. The quantum physics laws are a construction of the scientists' imagination, as were other constructions before, some abandoned in the meantime, others maintained. This way, for instance, ether and its waves were never observed in nature. Scientists invented them in order to explain light and heat.

Our scientist knows these things. But, rightfully, he considers that the possible inexistence of quantum physics laws or of ether decreases in no way the value these two notions have for science. They give us the possibility to explain and to predict a series of facts. Or, this is enough. The scientist, therefore, will not only work with touchable realities, but also with notions that he is not sure have a corresponding reality.

But as soon as he is told about faith, he will become angry and he will demand palpable proof that there is a God and a future life. He does not consider starting to work with these suppositions, even though the acceptance in our minds of the existence of God and future life wonderfully explains many of the human life's secrets.

The method considered valid where it supports his complex is rejected in the things that go against it. And the poor soul does not even realize that it is inconsistent.

The scientist with an anti-religious complex will accept many dogmas of science (I think only about the axioms of geometry). But he will reject in horror the unproven dogmas of religion. If you will ask him why he uses axioms on geometry, he will answer that they satisfy science's great request – utility. When you will tell him that dogmas in matters of faith are at least as valuable, he will refuse to even search the value of your words.

This is a deformation due to the specific complex.

In politics, this deformation will appear as partiality. Everything your party does is good. The opposing party, on the contrary, is not right in any matter. If you are anti-Semitic, the Jews are never right. If you are a fascist, you truly believe that bolshevism did not accomplish anything. If you are a Catholic, the Protestants are never right. If you are a Protestant, everything the Catholics do is superstition. No one stops to think of the fact that so many good people, idealistic, intelligent, are on the opposite side, which would be impossible, if all truth were to be on your side. The emotional complex prevents man from thinking in a right way. My party, my confession, my nation, my country are always right.

How frequent are these deformations of the soul?

If a man was cheated by a priest or saw something unworthy in him, he will no longer appreciate the Orthodox teaching according to its true value. "This is what that cheating priest believes, too" – he will say, and will reject it from the start. From the cheating nature of one or more individuals, we can break up with a system of ideas. This was the history of the creation of a multitude of sects. On the other hand, people who have bad experiences with one or more Protestant pastors return to Orthodoxy, not because they are convinced that Orthodoxy is the right and just system of faith, but because they are convinced that "the others are cheaters".

The same thing happens with the sympathies and antipathies we have towards people. It is enough to develop within us a love complex or an anger complex towards a man – feeling based only on one or more of his characteristics, which make him pleasant or repulsive – and from now on things are different. If we like the man, we slowly start to be in sync with him. Everything he believes is received with joy, without an impartial search of the value of his thoughts. If, on the contrary, the man is repulsive for us, even though his lips may pour pearls with every word, I will bitterly criticize everything he will say or do. He can in no way get on my good side.

And truth suffers under the burden of these complexes.

The biggest misfortune is not that men lie, but that men are lies, they receive and spread as truth what is not the result of an objective, logical thinking joined with love, but the result of some complexes, some sympathies or antipathies owed to random circumstances.

The accusation brought to some by the Lord Jesus, that they come to Him only for the bread and the fish also stands towards those who do not seek material interests. Each one comes after the things he likes and shuts his ears when the objective truth comes into conflict with his sympathies or antipathies.

## DIVIDED SOULS

Then, our soul has the flaw of being divided. And, because it is divided, it lacks self-control or self restraint.

Each soul has certain precise convictions of what is good or bad. On the other hand, the soul has impulses it cannot restrain, it feels an inner impulse to do deeds opposing his convictions. You know that the things you are accustomed to doing, saying or thinking are evil. You realize you do wrong, but you cannot change anything. A certain bad habit you have gained ends up dominating you: you have become its slave. A certain

idea follows you and you are no longer able to yoke your thoughts or your deeds to your behaviour ideal.

How can you yoke them for Jesus, if your soul has lost control over the thoughts that torment it and that fight with each other? You know that what you do is absurd, that it will bring you misfortune, it will ruin your health, your career, and your life. You know that the things you believe go against all laws of logic. But you cannot resist the inner impulses. Something forces you to do this deed.

These souls are divided. They are "a house divided against itself and which cannot last". This soul may speak with passion, with complete sincerity, with tears in the eyes about a belief or a faith, and ten minutes later it may do a deed or think thoughts that are like a spit in the face of that ideal.

This dissociation of our soul is strange. Every one laughs or criticizes this state of matters in another. But who is, I wonder, the man consistent with his ideals?

The dissociation does not always take the form of the discrepancy between faith and deed, but also of the discrepancy between two systems of thinking and feeling, which live together.

A man might be very fond of his wife's fidelity, talk about it, praise it, guard it, and he can, at the same time, consider as good the deed of him taking someone else's wife. He can live like this for years, without realizing his inconsistency.

A man might protest with all his heart against a terrorist attack or against a barbarism of the opposite party, at the same time enjoying a very similar barbarian deed done by his party to the enemy. What he called "barbarism" in others, he calls "heroism" in his own. And that particular soul will be amazed when you will reproach its inconsistency.

This is a serious illness of the soul. How can that soul say it has no sin, when it has the serious sin of the lack of unity, of dissociation? That is why the Bible never ceases to present him an unique God, an unique Saviour, an unique faith, the one given to the saints once and for all, an unique baptism, which must not be repeated. "Only one thing is needed" – says the Lord Jesus. "I do only one thing" – says the apostle Paul. "I only want one thing" – says the psalmist David.

This unification of the soul is one of the results of repentance.

## SENTIMENTALISM

If we would search the "furniture" of every man's soul, we would see that it is made up of a vast number of very precise opinions on all kinds of complicated and difficult to understand subjects. Each person has an opinion about the origin of mankind and of the world, as well as about the sense of life. Each person has a certain conviction as to what will follow after death and about how a man's behaviour must be in this life. Each parent is convinced that he knows how to raise his child. Each man knows how the country or the factory should be administered and what the government should do to maintain peace. Each one is an expert on military strategy and can forecast the end of every future battle. The poor man does not even remember that all his forecasts about previous battles failed. Each person is an art critic. We all have convictions about literature. We are able to speak about the Czech novelists, Spinoza, and the progress of science.

Clearly, the biggest part of those "convictions" do not have any rational basis. Others smarter than you know about some of the questions to which you find such easy answers that they have no answer, while for other matters a high qualification is necessary in order to understand them.

The only attitude of a somewhat rational man would be not to express an opinion about the things he does not know, which means about 90% of his usual conversations. But, on the contrary, every person warmly defends his opinions, even though they are not based on anything solid or trustworthy. People are ready to die for them. And they are convinced that they could suffer death for their ideals. In fact, they listen to the herd instinct. They have appropriated without control the national ideals, the class, race, party or religious ideals of the herd to which they belong by birth or by who knows what other circumstance.

If someone believes in the Gospel, but has not repented, the herd instinct will remain inside him. He will have no personal relations with the Saviour, who could teach him what he has to do. For him, the things commonly done by the believers of the group he has joined will be the law. He will hold in all matters the opinion of those who have the same faith with him; he will be convinced that all these opinions are rational – without having searched their truthfulness – and will be able to pull out of his sleeve "solid" opinions about every biblical verse, however difficult, even though the experts on the matter, in spite of centuries of searching, still were not able to completely explain it.

We stop here because if we would want to list all the flaws of the mechanism of our soul we would never end.

In the category of flaws of the soul, which can be healed by repentance, we also have the satisfying of the impulses directed towards good, which were manifested only in our imagination.

A man can cry with warm tears for the injustices done 2000 years ago to Lord Jesus, can be honestly indignant that no one came to His defense, and spend in these tears and in this barren indignation towards things long gone, all his souls' energy directed towards good. And then, he may walk by, without protesting, today's injustices.

There are ladies able to cry for poor people described in movies and novels. This crying satisfies their good tendencies. But no thought is given to the beggars who stay in the cold at the entrance of the movie theaters!

How many people spend all their loving power in warm words and poetry! The poets who have written the most beautiful poems usually had the ugliest lives. What a wonder! Their power to do good was spent in the poems.

Others spend their energy building "castles in Spain", meaning they make beautiful plans in their imagination, without putting anything into practice.

## THE HERD INSTINCT

Psychology calls "herd instinct" another big flaw of the mechanism of our soul.

About Lord Jesus it is written in the Gospel that "He calls His sheep by name and takes them out of the stable". Satan, on the contrary, puts them in different stables: in the stable of nation, of cast, of social class, of age category, of sex, and so on. From now on, the only concern of the individual will be to bring into harmony, to match his behaviour with that of the community to which he belongs.

All the beliefs generally accepted by the group to which he belongs, he will also accept, without wondering about their point. In complete obedience, he will match the behaviour rules imposed by the herd.

What we call "our convictions", "our opinions", "our morals", aren't ours, but the herd's to which we belong. You do a certain thing because all your peers do the same. You believe certain things because this is what your peers believe.

Being asked, you will be able to indicate, of course, enough reasons for your beliefs and convictions, and you will be convinced yourself that for these reasons you have taken a certain attitude. But, in reality, your behaviour is dictated by the herd instinct, by the fact that all your peers do this, and you are reduced to the role of a parrot or a monkey.

opinion he has reached, although not through reason. And every one is dead set on being right. Every one builds with artistry rational supports from his attitudes, adopted as a result of a sick state of the soul.

People fool themselves when they believe they know why they do certain deeds. The human soul feels an overwhelming need to believe it proceeds rationally, when in fact a large part of our soul processes are the result of sentimental inclinations, or some complexes, or soul deformations. Being asked: "*Why did you do this?*", instead of simply answering: "*I followed an inner impulse which escapes my control and which I cannot restrain*", we will show 1,001 reasons, which are pure inventions. Our ideal is to be rational people, and this ideal opposes the state, in fact sock, of our soul. Therefore, we build artificial logical explanations for illogical attitudes.

Every politician will rationally justify any measure taken by the party to which he belongs, measure he has accepted, not because it is logical, but because it is of his party. He would have also accepted an opposite measure, if this party had taken it. How little have party politics or all the confessional attitudes have to do with logic is shown by the fact that in the name of the same logic – the alleged science of right thinking – the adversary builds opposing arguments.

Usually, people will not be able to answer why they do a certain deed or why they hold a certain conviction. They are caught in the chain of the inner lie of their sick soul.

A man can work for decades on the construction of a perfect atheistic system of thought. He can convincingly answer to the question: "*Why are you an atheist?*" with the thousands of arguments he has gathered. But a deeper analysis will show that, maybe, in his youth he was disappointed in the love he had for a believing girl. Since then in his heart appeared the antipathy towards any faith, and all the rest of his thinking is only the rational justification of an attitude adopted for sentimental reasons. These things are only rarely discovered by the specialist (some psychoanalyst doctor). In most cases, the individual has no idea about the reasons for which he has embraced a godless attitude.

This self-deceiving produces great inner conflicts. To the extent to which a man suspects the existence of a huge lie in his life, he rejects this thought, he takes it out of the field of his conscience. But the thought that his right to life is taken away from him continues to live on at the edge of the conscience and always seeks to re-enter under disturbing shapes. All of a sudden, the soul is under a state of torment, of deep sadness, melancholy, or, on the contrary, of nervousity which it cannot explain.

The man who swears that he has no sin, that he is not a liar, is full of lie. The girl who burns after a man will hide this desire from herself under the veil of exaggerated innocence.

## WE ALL HAVE SICK SOULS

The conclusion drawn from everything we have said up to this point is found in the Bible. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the feet even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment". "There is no righteous man, not even one. There is no one knowledgeable... They all went astray and became rascals. There is no one to do good, not even one..."

There is a science called psychiatry, which deals with mind's illnesses, with madness. But it holds in mankind the same place that the punishment for disloyalty and dishonesty holds among thieves. Thieves are very jealous in this concern. They are all thieves, but theft must not pass certain limits. Those who have stolen together must honestly share the loot, or be condemned according to the thieves' morals.

It is the same thing with psychiatry. The soul of all people is seriously sick; even the soul of the psychiatrist is disturbed, of the educated man who deals with illnesses of the soul. And psychiatry concerns itself only with the acute cases, which go beyond the "normal" general state of illness.

We are all sick, deeply ill in the soul. This is "the sin that lives inside us". Some say: "I have no sin", "I do not lie"; and yet they are in sin and lie, meaning that they are deformed, worthless from head to toes. The soul, the supreme part of their being, is disturbed, broken, and sinful.

It is easy to understand that we cannot speak of a good state of the soul as long as those deformations are within us. And, truly, men's souls either live in a permanent inner conflict, which shatters their life, or they give in to a continuous lie and an inner hypocrisy.

The conclusions that the human being reaches and the attitude taken, after seeing all events and people through the deformed prism of its sinful soul, are completely different from those it could have reached through truly logical thinking, in which every step is the natural continuation of the previous steps, in which proofs are impartially weighed and the probability of different solutions is considered dispassionately.

Or, such true proofs of logical thinking are extremely rare in a human life. The attitude of men towards the different circumstances of life, or towards their peers is, usually, completely different than what people or events deserve.

And the lie in which we are all caught, as in a vicious circle, is that we are totally unaware in our every day lives of the flaws of the mechanism of our souls.

Each man is convinced that the opinions he holds – result of all the deformations, complexes, sympathies, and antipathies – are formed through logical thinking. Every one believes that he is entitled, from the rational point of view, to have the attitude or the

The man dying of Tuberculosis, who knows deep in his soul that there is no hope for him, will be full of joy and of exaggerated optimism. The jokes and a noisy joyfulness often serve man to cover a pain that eats at his heart. A man will work passionately in the service of an ideal or of a faith and will work hard, with an unusual force and passion, to convince others of the noble character of his cause, especially in order to silence the voice of his conscience, which speaks differently. A man will thoroughly search every word and every letter of the Bible and will find brilliant explanations for every one of them, covering by this search his refusal to fulfill the great demands the Bible addresses to his soul.

Everything is lie and lie. We are walking lies. How can we be prepared for eternity, how can we be pleasant to God?

When our material interests are tied to a certain faith or state of facts, and when the shattering of these interests would damage the prestige we hold so dear in our pride, this faith becomes unshaken in our souls, no matter how absurd it may be. The soul necessarily wants to respect itself, and, therefore, it will never admit, not even in solitude, that it serves a faith that concerns itself with material interests or the prestige it derives from them. And the Devil, the father of the lie, is at hand to give everyone the sufficient arguments to prove even to the person in question and to others, that he lives for an ideal, even though the cruel truth is that he lives not for the ideal, but from the ideal.

But who is skillful enough to discover all the twists and the deceptions of the human soul, which likes to present itself as pure before men, but which is sinful by nature?

We are embodied liars, rascals.

The person to whom these things were revealed easily understands the chaos within the world and ourselves. In a broken-down car, such as that of our soul, which is able to distort and to stain everything that is good – proof are the hate, and the separation, and the evil, and the hypocrisy that exist among those who believe, if they have not truly repented, if they did not go through the great soul revolution of re-birth – people place, in their evilness, a bad content: intentional lie, whoring, killing, gossiping, cheating, and all the other sins.

The soul becomes in this way a true precipice of evil, a dark and deep precipice. The people's throat becomes – according to the Scripture – *an open grave*.

## THE COMMANDMENT TO REPENT

But God had mercy on our sinful souls. And He put a Shepherd over them: Lord Jesus. He cries to us all: "Repent!" It is not only an advice, it is a commandment. "God commands all men everywhere to repent".

The commandment is addressed to everyone. Jesus speaks only ironically about righteous men, who do not need repentance. Because is there one whose soul mechanism is different from what I described?

And as I said in the beginning, repentance does not mean the filling of the old and broken-down car with new passengers. It is not a question of receiving a new faith. Jesus says: "You cannot put new wine in old skins, nor a new patch to an old coat". The car, the skin, the coat, the soul must be totally renewed.

We can see this from the fact that Lord Jesus does not urge only believers to repent. He gives the same advice to the members of His Church, who are satisfied with only an intellectual faith in the Gospel. The believers must repent just as the non-believers. Because the new faith in the old skin is falsified and will be lost.

"Repent", says Jesus to the angel of the church in Pergamum. A prophet of the church in Thyatira must repent. "To Repent", is also advised the angel of the church in Laodicea.

We must all repent of our evil, our impurity, our whoring, we must repent of all the work of our hands which was not inspired by love, we must repent of the worshipping of idols and of all our dead deeds in the past.

Repentance is something completely different from a partial reform, consisting of giving up smoking and some other bad habits.

*Let us repent, for the Heavenly Kingdom is nigh!*

*Heaven is near. You are watched and known.*

*Let us repent, if we do not wish trouble, difficult circumstances, and finally eternal loss to come upon us.*

*Let us repent, also, the believers, if we do not want our churches to perish!*

*God's goodness urges us to repent.*

### JESUS GRANTS REPENTANCE AT THE REQUEST OF MAN

Repentance, the radical change in our souls, takes place when people with open hearts enter into personal contact with the Lord Jesus, the resurrected one.

Learning to know Him, their heart fills with love for Him, whose every deed and every word arises from truth and light, in this way confirming that He is the Son of God.

They see themselves that He had none of the sins they recognize in themselves.

Trembling, they later read about the terrible torment He had endured: the physical pains and the pain to see Himself disavowed by His own, the suffering to find Himself for a few moments apart from God because He had burdened Himself with our sins. They feel how their conscience is pressed by the terrible accusation brought to us all by the prophet Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities".

Filled with remorse, they ask forgiveness for the sufferings they have caused Him.

And kind Jesus, who has waited so much, receives them into His arms. All their past is erased and repaired. All things are new. Isn't this what He has shed His precious blood for?

Jesus will now be with them until the end of time, and the acknowledgement that the innocent Sacrifice for sins is always near them produces the believers a terrible horror towards sin. The past man, subject to all evil impulses, is dead.

The believer is born again and is full of energy. Relying on Jesus' steady help, he starts a new life, of a man with a repented soul, this time a life truly useful to his peers

Repentance is such a triumph of God's love that it is no wonder that the angels cry out with joy when they hear someone repents.

But all these feelings are a gift from above.

A man cannot repent on his own, just as a drowning man cannot save himself. How could our soul, so rotten, make right decisions and see them through, consistently? We must take into account both elements. Repentance cannot take place inside a heart without its consent. The man cannot sit passively and God should give him repentance like a Romanian proverb says it, "a fruit falling into a lazy man's mouth". But it is just as true that this total revolution inside our soul surpasses the human will and strength.

Here all depends on payer. You must pray and use the only good thing left in you – the capacity for faith – to believe that God exists, that He is good and He listens to those who approach Him. We must ask Him for repentance in a persevering way.

And He will give men of any nationality repentance and forgiveness of sins, so that from now on we can have life from God, eternal life, a life of knowing the truth.

The One who holds in His hand the soul of any creature, the breath of every human body, will have mercy on your soul, if you ask it with faith.

## THE ACCOMPANYING SIGNS OF REPENTANCE

The repented person, the man inside whose soul the radical change, we have spoken about before, was produced, will turn towards God in the most natural way. Freed of all deformities and lies, the soul naturally turns to God, with all its strength and gives glory to the Creator.

Now the road to a strong belief in the Gospel is open. All the sins of the repented soul are forgiven. The past deeds, which could have only been bad, are no longer taken into account. The man repented is a new being and it would not be fair that the new being is made responsible for the sins of the old one.

The soul now clearly distinguishes that Jesus is God's messenger and makes Him his friend.

The soul starts bringing very fine fruit: love, joy, peace, belief, kindness, and restraining of lusts, that you find nowhere else in the world.

Fulfilling Jesus' commandment, the repented man receives the baptism. He fears nothing anymore. Even if they will kill him for his new faith, he is not afraid. Because now he is sure he will benefit from a happy resurrection of the dead.