

seech you as aliens and exiles [in the world] to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul (1 Pet. 2:11).

8. You shall not steal.
We are here forbidden to steal (or take away) anything which belongs to another. We must obviously respect another's possessions; but we must also guard against such things as stealing another's happiness, or robbing him of a friendship. This commandment warns against any dishonesty, cheating, or deception in any form; for, as our Lord tells us, what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life (Matt. 16:26)? As St. Paul says, Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, nor thieves...will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Rather than taking from another, we should instead be willing to give, just as the Lord gave everything, even His own life, for us. For He tells us to do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High....Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap (Luke 6:35,38). Rather than stealing doing harm to others we should rather practice the Golden Rule As you wish that one would do to you, do so to them (Luke 6:31).

9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
Here we are forbidden to tell lies about anyone, anywhere, for lying lips are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 12:22). We should always remember that lies can be told not only in words, but also by our silence, by our actions or in many other ways. As Christians we are commanded to be straightforward in everything to be above reproach, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth evil...for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt. 12:34-35, 37). Instead of lies, we should only be forthright, as St. Paul says: Therefore, putting away falsehood let everyone speak the truth with his neighbors (Eph. 4:25).

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maid-servant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.
Here we are commanded to accept whatever state God places us in and not to be envious of others, or to look with hate on the well being and prosperity of another: There is great gain in godliness with contentment; for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world.... But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction (1 Tim. 6:8-9). Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have; for He has said, I will never fail you nor forsake you (Heb. 13:5).

Rather we should be content with our state and place our trust in God alone: Let every one lead the life which the Lord has assigned to him, and in which God has called him.... Every one should remain in the state in which he was called.... So, brethren, in whatever state each was called, there let him remain with God (1 Cor. 6:17,20,24). Envy and desire lead to spiritual death, as St. James tells us, for each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death (James 1:14-15).

In addition to the Ten Commandments in which we are given standards of conduct, our Lord gives us another, new commandment: A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another (John 13:34). This new love requires that we not only love those who love us, but also to love those who hate us: But! say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from him who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. Give to every one who begs from you; and of him who takes away your goods do not ask them again (Luke 6:27-30). It is not even necessary that we like someone in order to love him in the Christian manner, for this love means that we must always be ready to help, to forgive, to be just, and to live by the Golden Rule cited earlier. By doing this, as our Lord said, all the requirements of the law and prophets are fulfilled and as He further tells us, do this, and you will live (Luke 10:28).

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IS IT SUFFICIENT ONLY TO BELIEVE IN CHRIST IN ORDER TO BE SAVED?

According to some teachings, if one has believed in Christ, one is saved, that is, one's sins are forgiven. According to this belief one does not have to fear falls, and virtues will proceed from the heart by themselves. Christ is within the believer and will not abandon him for any reason; paradise and the kingdom of heaven are his, etc.

All that is left to do is to rejoice: there will be no more labours, no fears, no struggles with the passions — the road will be smooth and full of gladness. And it is no wonder that many cling to this teaching. It is very attractive. However, there is no truth in it, but only deception. In order to refute this false teaching, Theophan the Recluse begins by directing our attention to the way into the kingdom of heaven as described in the word of God.

The Savior said: «Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in therein...» [Matt. 7:13]. And He further taught: «If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.» [Matt. 16:24]. «The kingdom of heaven is taken by force (i.e., by forcing oneself and by the earnest labor in searching), and the forceful (i.e., those who force themselves to labor without feeling sorry for themselves), take it by force» [Matt. 11:12].

The holy Apostle Paul writes: «...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling» [Philippians 2:12]. «Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God» [2 Cor. 7:1]. By all means strive that «...your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ» [1 Thess. 5:23]. If you want to be a true Christian, imitate those who are of Christ, for they have»...crucified the flesh with the afflictions and lusts» [Gal. 5:24].

After that, St. Theophan with special force points out how strict the commandments of the Savior are concerning passionless and purity of heart, and how much attention and labor are needed to fulfill them. Do not dare to allow the slightest impulse of displeasure or anger against your brother: sin the slightest in this and you are already judged and in Gehenna [Matt. 5:22]. Meanwhile, we have another serious conflict. With regard to the opposite sex, how severe! One has only to glance in an improper way and already there is lust, and again Gehenna [Matt. 5:28-29]. And for judging others, how strict is the sentence! He who judges, in that very moment when he judges, and for that act alone, even if there are no others, is already judged, and not just some empty judgement like one's own, but judged by God, immovable and eternal [Matt. 7:1]. Even for every idle word one must answer [Matt. 12:36], and concerning a loose tongue, who can tame it [James 3:8]? Therefore, what strict attention one must pay to oneself and how vigilantly one must labor over oneself!

If the trifles which we do not now consider to be sins are dealt such strict sentences and judgements, then what can be said about serious sins and passions? They are so abhorrent to the Holy Spirit and Christ that they should not even be brought to mind by Christians. If they are in the heart of one who desires to enter the kingdom of heaven, undoubtedly it is necessary to

drive them out of there. What labors it requires and what battles with oneself.

Take the passion of lust, or take pride or vainglory, take stinginess, envy, lewdness, self-will and disobedience, or whatever passion you take, the eradication of it requires bloody sweat and tears. Therefore, see how those are forced to torment themselves who are entangled with some kind of passion and have undertaken to uproot it. One cannot reassure oneself that all of one's sins are forgiven simply by the Cross of Christ and simply by approaching the Lord with faith. Whoever reassures himself with this hope and neglects the cleansing of his heart is deceiving himself. In the Mysteries of Baptism and Repentance indeed all former sins are completely blotted out and already forgotten. But then having once received from God such mercy, one must thereafter guard oneself from all sin, from all passionate impulses, attractions and thoughts. With the forgiveness of former sins one is given the grace of the Holy Spirit in order to help eradicate from the heart those harmful habits and passions which remain in it and give birth to further sin. If one begins to sin again, this deprives him of the gift and again he enters the ranks of the unforgiven and graceless. That is why those who are zealous for the salvation of their souls, following their conversion to the Lord, immediately begin, with the help of the grace of God, a battle with their passions and lusts, an unyielding battle.

So then, this — and not rejoicing — is what greets those who come to the Lord in faith. While being preoccupied with rejoicing one cannot fight with passions. Such a struggle does not even begin in these cases. Passions will remain in such a person, turning him into a whitened sepulchre, the outside beautiful, but the inside filled with dead men's bones. Such people call themselves blessed, with such words as: «How fortunate I am! How glad I am! Christ has saved me, Christ has taken away my sins, Christ has granted me paradise!» Whereas Christ, looking at them, judges them righteously and condemns them to Gehenna.

The necessity of cleansing ourselves from all things sinful and passionate in order to inherit the kingdom of heaven, St. Theophan supports by example of God's Saints. In the lives of the Saints, those who pleased and glorified God, we are told that they conducted their entire lives in struggles of self-modification and in labors by occupying themselves in virtues with unceasing recourse to God and to the source of grace — the Sacraments of the Church. This brought them at last into a state where evil inclinations and passions were completely removed from their souls and bodies; and instead of them there were installed good inclinations. When by this means all sins and passions are cast out, human nature again takes on its pure, original appearance; their spirit, soul, and body, permeated with grace, shine with divine light, which serves as an obvious sign that they finally became temples of the Triune God, as the Lord Jesus Christ promised.

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[slightly modified]

