

## Eagle River Institute August 2023

### What in the world are we here for? Orthodox Mission Past and Present

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There is a lot to think about in the lectures and you will get more from them if you have thought about some of the key ideas before you hear the lectures. With this in mind, I am attaching some texts from the writings of St Innocent of Alaska for you to read beforehand. I have also added some questions to guide you towards some of the important ideas we will be discussing together. Please read through the texts (more than once if possible) and think about the questions. Discuss your ideas with a fellow ERI student before the lectures if you can.

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#### Lecture One: St Innocent of Alaska: Missionary Practice in Context

##### Text One: The Conversion of the Kolosh (Tlingits) of Sitka, Alaska

###### Introduction

In November 1834, Fr Ioann Veniaminov (the future Bishop Innocent) arrived with his family in Novoarkhangelsk (today Sitka), the central town of Russia's American colonies. He had come to serve as priest at the Cathedral church of the Archangel Michael. Before coming to Sitka he had lived from 1824-1834 on the Aleutian island of Unalaska, from which he had travelled around other islands to minister to the Aleuts. Many of the Aleuts had been baptised into the Orthodox faith before Fr Ioann's arrival so he devoted much of his time to catechetical instruction, teaching what it meant to be a follower of Christ. In Sitka, Fr Ioann faced a different challenge as the local indigenous inhabitants, the Kolosh (Tlingits), were hostile to the Russian settlers, had not been baptized into Orthodoxy, and kept their own indigenous rites and beliefs. Russia's colonies in Alaska were administered by the Russian American Company, referred to as 'the Company' in the text.

The following account is from a book by I. Barsukov who published a collection of Fr Ioann's (St Innocent's) writings, reports and letters, together with the stories of people who knew St Innocent, in 1883 in Moscow. At the beginning, Barsukov tells the story and then he quotes from a report by Fr Ioann himself.

“In Sitka, Fr Ioann Veniaminov devoted himself entirely to his ministry of evangelizing the Kolosh who lived nearby and had remained in their primitive state, i.e. savage and violent. Here, as in the Unalaska district (the Aleutian Islands), he started by trying to understand the everyday life of the Kolosh, in order to understand their spiritual needs, their customs and traditions, and their language. And only when, after lengthy, arduous efforts, he had successfully achieved his aim, did he resolve to boldly preach to these savages the light of the teachings of the Gospel. And in exactly the same way as on the island of Unalaska, you could always find Fr Ioann in the church of the Archangel Michael talking with his parishioners and preaching to the people at every church service with his lively, simple and persuasive words.

Of the Kolosh and their conversion to the light of Christ's teaching, Fr Ioann tells us the following in his writings: (Fr Ioann's own report starts here)

“The Kolosh, being entirely independent, brave, and strongly influenced by their shamans and female elders, would have remained in their ignorance, errors and obstinacy, and no amount of admonition or material gain could have persuaded them to change their faith, if the Lord himself had not touched them. The behaviour of many Russians, minor employees of the Company (explain) who lived near them, and especially of the Aleuts, whom the Kolosh know are all baptised, is, or at least was, an obstacle or even a threat, preventing them from adopting Christianity. The reason is that the Aleuts living in Sitkha did not show by their way of life that they were Christians and, unfortunately, were almost always from among the most immoral. As they lived separately from the Russians in special barracks, the material conditions of their life were not the least bit enviable for the Kolosh. What is more, most of the Aleuts living in Sitka were employed by the Company for a wage and, like all such employees, were entirely at the disposal of their employers and used by them for the work that was needed. But the Kolosh think that the Aleuts were formerly as independent as they are, and that if they were baptised they would become like slaves for the Russians, just like the Aleuts, of whom it can be said with all fairness that in their own territories they live with greater independence and liberty than the inhabitants of Kamchatka, and even all the baptised Asiatics.

The wildness of the Kolosh, as well as their ancient enmity towards the Russians as conquerors, were also obstacles to spreading Christianity among them. And these obstacles would have remained in place for a long time if Providence had not sent on them an illness which (...) in all fairness can be viewed as a boundary or dividing line between the Kolosh being under the sway of blind ignorance, and the beginning of their evangelisation. This illness was the so-called smallpox which raged so violently among them at the beginning of 1836 that in January and February it killed off more than half of the population. But this illness, while wiping them out, also brought them the greatest of benefits: 1) it had a greater impact on the old people as it carried off many of those who were sunk in ignorance, superstition and enmity towards the Russians and towards anything new, and who had great influence and even power over the opinions of the middle-aged and younger generations who were born not long before, and even after, the arrival of the Russians; 2) it was especially beneficial as it evidently convinced the Kolosh of the benefit of smallpox vaccinations, and consequently, that the Russians have more extensive and perfect knowledge than they have themselves; 3) as it entirely changed their attitudes towards Russians, it shook their faith in the shamans who, despite their own guardian-spirits, were dying together with those who sought their help.

When the smallpox epidemic started, the Kolosh, thinking that they would find among their shamans a remedy to curb its destructive impact, raised the alarm and began to zealously “shamanize” every day. But nothing helped, even their most faithful and widely-used remedies, for example, snow and ice during fever, and so on. They died in their tens and hundreds, while the very same smallpox did not affect any of the Russians who lived side by side with them, and who were in contact with them as previously. But despite the fact that the Kolosh' shamans so zealously desired the same misfortune for the Russians, and invoked their own spirits to turn this evil away from the Kolosh and send it on the Russians, and some of the evil shamans even said that the Russians had unleashed the smallpox on them. And even despite the fact, if rumours are to be believed, that in the very food, fish, game etc. that

the Kolosh sell to the Russians, smallpox scabs were found which were intended to infect the Russians, the Russians remained entirely unharmed.

Such a striking difference forced many of the Kolosh to pay attention to the reasons for such an unusual turn of events; and the cleverer ones among them, and those who were loyal to the Russians, grasped the real reason and immediately appealed to the Russians to save them from death. The Russians willingly gave a helping hand. Our colonies' doctor, Mr Bliashke, zealously began to vaccinate them against smallpox, and those whom he vaccinated all remained unaffected by the epidemic. This persuaded the others who were hesitant in their opinions, and even those who were still seeking the help of their shamans. And all at once, all the Kolosh living nearby began to come of their own accord, and even those living in distant locations travelled in order to receive the prophylactic measure against smallpox. We must remember, however, that three months previously, no one and no kind of power would have forced them to accept smallpox vaccination (...). After this memorable event in Kolosh historical chronicles, I also addressed my word to the Kolosh. For after this most eloquent form of persuasion, it was less difficult for me to convince them of the truth, or at least there were convenient opportunities for me to speak with them. They no longer received me as an enemy who wished them evil, but as a person who knew them better and in greater depth, and they listened to me attentively and spoke to me openly about their customs and faith. (...)

If I had hurried to start my conversations with the Kolosh before the smallpox appeared, then they would probably have attributed the misfortune and guilt of the deaths among them to me, as the Russian shaman or sorcerer who had unleashed such evil on them. And this would have been all the more so the case as almost no Russian priest had set foot among them, not only with the intention of preaching peace, but even out of plain curiosity. The consequences of such an untimely visit from me would have been dreadful. Their extremely natural enmity towards Russians, which had almost disappeared, could have been aroused again. I could have been killed by them as the main reason for their misfortune. But this is nothing in comparison with what could have been the long-term consequence: my visiting the Kolosh before the smallpox would probably have closed off access to them for preachers of the Word whom the Kolosh would always have looked upon as evil heralds of destruction and death. (...)

Concerning why so few of the Kolosh have been baptised, not only was it difficult to convince them, but before the smallpox nobody even tried to convince them. And after the smallpox, when I presented to them the Word of Truth, I did not suggest, nor did I want to suggest directly to them to receive baptism, but tried to influence their reasoning, then waited for them to take the initiative. And those who themselves expressed a desire to be baptised, I accepted with great willingness, but always asked permission from the chieftains, and especially the mothers of those desiring baptism, (who always granted permission) which they were very pleased about. (...)

In 1837, when I was at Stakhino for the first time since a fort had been established there, I had to celebrate the Liturgy and so I informed in advance the Kolosh living near the fort. As there is no chapel there, a place outside the fort (under the roof of a construction which was enclosed by a fence) was chosen to celebrate the sacrament. As I had invited them in advance, about 1500 Kolosh gathered and surrounded the place where the Liturgy was to be served. I was amazed by the respect and decorum

with which they watched what for them was a novel and incomprehensible event, and this aroused in me respect for them too. To do them justice, not only the adults, but even the children made no noise whatsoever and did nothing unseemly during the entire service which lasted more than an hour. I had wondered in particular whether there would be some sort of commotion when they saw their fellow tribesmen (whom I had baptised the same day) approaching to take Holy Communion with the Russians, as although I had baptised them with the permission of the chieftain and their relatives, there may have been many who did not know about this. But there was nothing in the least resembling commotion or grumbling, only an especial attentiveness. (...)

While living in Sitka, I often spent the evenings in the dwellings of the Kolosh who lived near the fort of Novoarkhangelsk, talking with them, asking and telling them everything I could. To do them justice, they always and in every place listened to me willingly and gave me a cordial welcome. Each head of family wanted me to visit him, although I did not manage to visit everyone. (...) And so, in conclusion, the Sitka church will soon see its numbers swelling twofold, threefold or even fivefold. There were as many as 5000 Kolosh in all. (...) You must imagine the change which has taken place among the Kolosh in less than 38 years. In 1804 the Kolosh, like ferocious animals, tried to capture Russians and tear them apart, so the Russians had to hide themselves in the fort or go out in armed groups. But in 1837 I went on my own, at night, to visit them in their homes, and not only was it not dangerous, but I was given a hearty welcome. In 1819 the Kolosh still looked on the Russians as their enemies and took revenge for the blood of their forebears (killed when they captured the fort). But in 1836, they came to the Russians as friends, asked for help, and conscientiously informed them of the unfriendly dispositions of their fellow tribesmen.

Translation A.R. Kolosova from I. Barsukov, *Innokentii, Mitropolit Moskovskii I Kolomenskii po ego sochineniiam, pis`mam I razskazam sovremennikov* (Moskva, 1883), 81-87.

### Questions to answer AFTER reading the text:

- 1) **What does the text tell us about how the colonial situation in Alaska a) hindered the spread of the Christian faith b) promoted the spread of the Christian faith?**
- 2) **In Fr Ioann's opinion, what were the main reasons that the Kolosh accepted the Christian faith?**
- 3) **Are there any general principles we can draw from Fr Ioann's activities/attitudes which you think are relevant to Orthodox missionary work today?**

## **Lecture One, Text Two: Instruction to Missionaries, 1840**

### **Introduction**

This Instruction to Missionaries was composed in 1840 at the time that Fr Ioann Veniaminov became Bishop Innocent of Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands. The Instruction refers to a Decree of 1777 showing that the text was drawn up on the basis of previous instructions to missionaries which Bishop Innocent revised. The Instruction became a key text issued to Russian missions in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries about how missionaries were to behave and teach.

**Questions to answer after reading the texts:**

- 1) **Why do you think St Innocent recommended that missionaries preach the Christian faith in this way?**
- 2) **What are the main recommendations of Part Two: how to teach the newly-converted? Is there anything that surprises you?**
- 3) **Are there general principles in the Instruction that are relevant for Orthodox missionary situations today?**

**INSTRUCTION TO MISSIONARIES 1840**

The order in which the faith must be preached

- 1) Christianity is a requirement, satisfaction and comfort above all of the heart, and not of the mind alone, and therefore in teaching the faith you must seek to act more on the heart than on the mind. (...) but in order to act on the heart, you must speak from the heart.
- 2) From the nature and good order of the visible world, show the omnipotence, power and glory of the Creator of the universe, His goodness, omniscience and so on. Tell them a little about the creation of the first man, from whom all people and nations are descended and so are living memorials and visible proof of the Creator's omnipotence and wisdom.
- 3) Then show them that the moral Law of Moses is the natural Law written down by God....you can hear from the savages themselves echoes and affirmations of the truths of this law indelibly inscribed on the scrolls of the heart of each.
- 4) After this begin to preach the Gospel itself as the Lord Himself began, with a proclamation of repentance and the drawing near of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- 5) The conditions on which those who desire can become Christ's disciples are: renounce all their former faith, give up shamanism and don't listen to the shamans, do not practice customs opposed to Christianity.
- 6) Finally, you must tell them that no-one (...) without God's help can be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and if Christ in his great love for people had not given us His own help, then no-one could become His follower. But now anyone who so desires can receive help from Him. This help is the Holy Spirit...He can be received above all through prayer. Prayer is turning the heart to God with meekness, faith and hope.

Part Two:

- 1) Make this your rule: while visiting outlying places, do not begin to conduct services or rites until you have offered the parishioners you are visiting at least a short homily...offer your word everywhere and to all, in accordance with their age, state, and time.
- 2) When preparing parishioners for confession and communion, it is more important for them to pray to God as often as possible in their heart for forgiveness of sins, and to observe as far as possible a strict fast. Teaching from the Word of God is always the best preparation for receiving the Sacraments, rather than reading the usual prayers and psalms, as none of them will understand what is read in Church for a long time to come.
- 3) Observing the fasts as they are usually observed i.e. by exchanging food from the animal kingdom for food from plants, is almost impossible for the local inhabitants owing to their environment, and so their fasting must not be in quality of food, but in the quantity and timing of the food consumed.
- 4) Attending the usual Divine services, apart from the Liturgy, is not to be an unswerving duty and you must not make this a strict requirement.... and only advise and remind them that during that time (while preparing for communion) they must pray as often as possible in their hearts to God for forgiveness of their sins and also observe, if possible, a strict fast.
- 5) It is impossible to abandon straight away their old customs which are not contrary to Christianity. But explain to them that they are being allowed to continue them out of lenience.
- 6) Do not show obvious scorn for their way of life and customs and so on, however much they may seem worthy of it, as nothing can insult and irritate the savages more than obvious scorn for them and mockery of all that is theirs.
- 7) Try to gain a thorough knowledge of their beliefs, rites, customs, inclinations, character and the entire way of life of your parishioners....doing justice to their good customs is of no small importance for your success.
- 8) Do not consider any marital unions and contracts concluded before baptism, to be an obstacle to Holy Baptism, and no marriages contracted before baptism, including the most consanguine, are to be annulled or investigated. You will find that some of the local savages practice polygamy....while drawing them to monogamy, act in a reasonable way and in no way behave in an imperious manner so as not to harden and irritate them.
- 9) On the Holy Antimins which has been given to you, you have the authority to conduct the Divine Liturgy in any place, whether in a clean uninhabited house or in the open air... although it would be best to have a special tent which can be put up in places as clean as possible. Persuade the local inhabitants to put up crosses in such locations which will then be a sign of the place where the bloodless sacrifice was brought, and a place for the inhabitants to meet for communal prayer during your absence.

10) On arrival in the place appointed, do not say that you are sent by the government, and do not make yourself out to be an official, but a simple wanderer desiring the true welfare of others.

11) If the one in charge of a redoubt (fort) or other place is situated far from the supervision of the (colonial) authorities, and his dealings and manner with the natives are too violent and intolerable, then first of all admonish and instruct such a person in a gentle, friendly way, but if such a measure is ineffective, then write a thorough and fair report in secret to the Dean (the senior priest in the region) who will bring it to the attention of the (colonial) authorities.

12) In order to be truly useful to your parishioners, you must in a short space of time learn their language, well enough at least to be able to understand. It is the indispensable duty of the subdeacon serving with you to learn their language fluently.

13) If it is convenient and possible, try to set up a primary school for teaching children the catechism, reading, and other subjects, similar to the schools which monasteries and churches must have according to the law... If such a school is not possible, then gather children of both sexes in your own home or in the chapel once or twice a week. At first, for Russians and Creoles living there, and then for the children of the newly baptized, teaching them their duties concerning God, their parents, the authorities, one another and neighbors.

14) Concerning earthly rewards, attention will be paid not so much to the numbers of people converted by you, but more to your zeal in carrying out your work, the translation of anything from the books of Holy Scripture into the language of your parishioners, and teaching at least fifty people to read the translations will be sufficient proof of your zeal and merit.

## **Lecture Two: St Innocent of Alaska: Key Themes of his Missionary and Catechetical Writings**

### **Introduction:**

Fr Ioann/Bishop Innokentii's catechetical teaching among the Aleuts and Kolosh (Tlingits) of Alaska eventually reached written and published form in two main texts, his most famous *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven*, written in 1833 in the Fox-Aleut language, and his *Teaching for those who are fasting or preparing for communion*, also written in the 1830s. His *Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven* became one of the most widespread catechetical texts in prerevolutionary Russia. It was published in Russian in St Petersburg in 1841 and was later translated into many other languages of the Empire, for example into the Chuvash language in 1893. There are also some extracts from one of his sermons for the Sunday of the Cross during Lent 1838, and other writings.

### **Questions to think about and discuss:**

- 1) **What are the main themes that these writings have in common?**
- 2) **Do any of the themes of St Innocent's writings remind you of the teachings of other famous saints of the Orthodox Church?**
- 3) **Why do you think St Innocent's catechetical writings were so popular? Are they popular today? Why/why not?**

### Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven, 1833

The first human being, being created in the image and likeness of God, was blessed by that very image and likeness of God, until he obscured the likeness of God through his self-will. (...) No human being through his own efforts has been able to restore that which was lost by Adam.

Jesus Christ by His resurrection destroyed the gates of hell and opened to us the doors of paradise which were closed by the disobedience of Adam, and conquered and broke the power of the devil and death, our enemies. (...) And all these benefits Jesus Christ gives not to one particular people, but to all without exception: whoever wants them can receive them.

Before following Jesus Christ, you must do the following: attentively study the foundations of Christianity, that is the very books of Holy Scripture, on which our Orthodox faith is based.

By the grace and benefits of Jesus Christ, we can now enter the Kingdom of Heaven and receive strength and help along the way, which means that there is nothing that hinders any of us from truly receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled by Him. Without the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to walk the way that Jesus Christ walked.

Every faithful soul will be filled with the Holy Spirit if it is cleansed from sins and is not blocked up and enclosed by self-love and pride. For the Holy Spirit always surrounds us and desires to fill us, but our evil deeds enclose us like a strong, stone wall, and are like evil guardsmen who prevent Him from gaining access to us and keep Him far from us.

The way into the Kingdom of Heaven is Jesus Christ Himself. Only the one who walks this way is the one who follows Jesus Christ. But how can we walk this way? Listen to what Jesus Christ Himself says: Whoever wants to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. (...) Jesus Christ entered His glory through sufferings. Consequently, we too can only enter through sufferings. All people bear their own crosses, one and all suffer and endure to a greater or lesser extent.

Following Jesus Christ means in all your deeds and actions to imitate the deeds and actions of Jesus Christ. As Jesus Christ lived and behaved on earth, so we also must live and behave.

You can receive the Holy Spirit by listening attentively to God's voice. You can hear God's voice speaking clearly, distinctly and persuasively in all places and through all things, but you need to have ears to hear.

You can receive the Holy Spirit through prayer. (...) You know also that you can pray to God at all times and in all places (...) when you are working or resting, on feast days and week days, standing, sitting, lying... Of course it is good if you can pray and praise God in psalms and spiritual hymns, but if you are illiterate, it is enough to know the most important prayers such as the Lord's Prayer (...) or ordinary prayers such as Lord, have mercy! or God, help me! or Lord, cleanse my sins! or Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner!



You can receive the Holy Spirit through reading and listening to Holy Scripture as the true Word of God. (...) Holy Scripture is one of the greatest gifts God has given to humankind, and a gift that anyone can use if only they so desire.(...) The most simple and unlearned person can understand and fathom the meaning of it, and many simple people, through reading and listening to Holy Scripture, have become godly and received the Holy Spirit.

Whoever worthily partakes of the Holy Mysteries (takes holy communion), is united sacramentally with Jesus Christ. That is, whoever with true repentance, with purity of soul and with fear of God and faith receives the Body and Blood of Christ, receives at the same time the Holy Spirit who, entering the human being, prepares a place for receiving Jesus Christ Himself and God the Father, and consequently, he becomes a temple and dwelling of the Living God.

### Sermon for the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the Holy Fast, 1838

**Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. (Mark 8,34)**

This is the way of salvation which Jesus Christ showed us, the way He Himself walked to the very end! And this is the only way set before disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, all those who desire to reach the Kingdom of glory and perfection!

For the Christian as Christ's follower who lives in expectation of the Kingdom of eternal life, there is no other way apart from the endeavor of the cross and self-denial.

*Whosoever will come after me.* Jesus Christ does not want his followers to be slaves as he is the King of freedom and of the free. He therefore does not force anyone to follow, but invites all of us to follow Him of their own free will....And this shows that we ourselves determine our future fate. It depends entirely upon us.

But if a person on the path of salvation cannot and must not rely on his reason, then where must he seek guidance? (...) A person's first guide is Holy Scripture, but not the letter, but the spirit of this Scripture, for the letter alone kills, and only the spirit gives life. A second guide is the example of Jesus Christ and His apostles. Then when a person has become established on this path, little by little a new light will appear to him, a light beyond the grasp of the carnal and worldly person, but giving wisdom and enlightenment to the mind, soul and heart of every person who walks the way of Christ.

Denying your reason, then, does not mean doing away with it entirely, but merely opening it up to enlightenment from the Most High and, as it were, making an immeasurably profitable purchase or exchange.

To take up one's cross or (...) to take up one's cross daily, means to endure everything unpleasant that may happen to us and to struggle within one's heart if its desires are impure or not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel. For example, we must not only not take revenge on our enemies, but also love them as brothers, bless those who curse and do good to those who hate us, desire good and pray for

those who are treacherous and weave webs of intrigue against us.

What is the origin of the crosses we bear? It goes without saying that a person's sufferings, his own crosses, are the fruit of the forbidden tree; but if we broaden our vision to take in not only human beings, but the lower beings and even inorganic nature itself, then we will see that everyone and everything is under the cross. The origin and beginning of the crosses we bear can be found in the very nature of things, and so the duty of the Christian to bear the cross is not a lot exclusive to him, but a lot common to each and every person. Everyone, whether they choose to or not, bears some kind of cross, if not the Christian cross, then the cross of the world or, as is more frequently the case, they suffer under the heavy yoke of their own passions. And when Jesus Christ preached about the cross, he was not presenting some entirely new teaching. He came to earth to teach human beings how to turn the earth's unavoidable evil into a source of healing, wisdom and spiritual endeavour, how to transform the cross hanging over humankind into the most effective means of salvation. How to fashion out of the bitter tree which crushes human beings and draws them down even to hell, a ladder leading upwards to the Kingdom of Heaven.

But why and for what purpose must a Christian walk this path of self-denial and the cross, especially when the faith teaches him that Jesus Christ died and suffered for him and has redeemed him by His Blood?

We must also walk this way of suffering as only on this path can we discover the true cost of blessedness and attain to the wisdom of which we are capable. Finally, by means of the cross we purify, burn out and destroy any root of sin and self-love which we harbor within us, and appear in God's complete purity and righteousness, just as gold acquires its true value only when it has passed through the furnace several times.

What we can be sure of most of all is that when a person has already journeyed a certain distance along the way, he will be gradually filled with the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, just as the apostles were filled with Him, and then no cross will be heavy.

#### Teachings for those who are fasting and preparing for communion, late 1830s

For what purpose were human beings created? Why do we live upon the earth? This is an important question which we must ask ourselves as often as possible.

Do we live on the earth only in order to be born, live for a short while, then die? (...) No, we are born for blessedness. (...) Is there really no happiness and well-being for us on this earth? No, there is happiness and blessedness, eternal happiness, (...) the Kingdom of Heaven. Only in the Kingdom of Heaven will a person be entirely satisfied, eternally happy, cheerful and joyful every minute, always at peace.

The Kingdom of Heaven means life with God. To be in the Kingdom of Heaven means to be with God. (...) The Kingdom of Heaven is in the soul and heart of every person, just as a seed which we need to discover and grow. And the person who with their heart and soul has clung to God and is united with Him, is the person who, while living here on earth, has within himself the Kingdom of Heaven, and already here on earth experiences the delights of paradise and the joys of heaven.

Anyone can receive the Kingdom of Heaven: whether poor or rich, a noble or a simple laborer, a person with official duties or with none, old or young, a person of great or little intelligence, a man or a woman. In short, each and every person who wants to and is willing to make an effort can receive the Kingdom of Heaven.

Hear and understand: in order to receive the Kingdom of Heaven you must receive the Holy Spirit and become holy. (...) Is it possible for human beings to be holy? (...) Were those people whom we consider saints (holy) not weak and sinful? They lived in the world like us, they loved the world and were concerned to obtain worldly happiness like us. Many of them had families and children like us. Many of them had various jobs like us. But this did not prevent them becoming holy. (...) Therefore, each and every person can become holy.

You do not need to search for the Holy Spirit in some special place. He is always with us, always surrounds us and as soon as He finds in some person a simple and pure heart, immediately occupies it little by little, just as water fills a vessel immersed in it.

(Explanation of Holy Communion): If you had one single vessel (bowl or bottle), the only thing you had received as an inheritance from your ancestors, which you, in your negligence or laziness, had gradually allowed to be filled with all kinds of filth so that not only could you not use the vessel, but could not look at it without loathing. And if the king began to regularly and freely distribute some fragrant and precious balsam, one drop of which can heal all kinds of illness and preserve your health, but you have not got a clean vessel. (What would you do?)

Cornelius (Book of Acts, chapter 10), although he did not yet know Jesus Christ and had not been baptised, feared God the Creator of the universe, together with all his household, and was a righteous man who gave alms and prayed, and so he was pleasing to God and worthy of the gift of the Holy Spirit; and such an occurrence shows that any pagan, any unbaptised person, if he has hope according to his own law, that is, fulfils all that his reason and conscience tell him to do, can soon receive the Holy Spirit, such a person only needs to hear of Jesus Christ and come to know Him.

#### **On translations into the Yakut language, 1850s**

We forget that it is in the word of God alone that there is power which acts on the human heart, and therefore you must teach catechumens first of all using the word of God itself, despite it seeming hard to understand for the catechumens and therefore untimely (...) and only then offer your own catechetical teachings.

A Note on how to educate children, 1869

Schools at present, enlighten and educate only the mind, and not the mind and heart together.

He recommended teaching children of pre-school age, from the age of two as:

This age is the most golden time for all that is good to be sown and take root in them, and also for all that is bad. It goes without saying that the heart of a person, as a field, cannot remain forever without plants. If good plants are not sown, then bad ones will inevitably grow.