

# LEO TOLSTOY



READER



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &  
DISCUSSIONS  
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE ‘ANARCHIVE’  
“Anarchy is Order!”

*I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another Man's.  
I will not Reason & Compare: my business  
is to Create'*  
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The ‘anarchival’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order ( in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

**‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.**

**Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing texts from the CD (collecting all available texts at a given moment) that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts to friends and new ones to us,... Become your own anarchiv!!!**

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and autors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchiv offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*“...demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;  
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to  
squash us like horseflies;  
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance.”*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be sent to [A.O@advalvas.be](mailto:A.O@advalvas.be).

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

**WELCOME!!**

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## LEO TOLSTOY READER



I sit on a man's back, choking him, and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by any means possible, except getting off his back.

The changed form and substance of law is rather like what a jailer might do who shifted a prisoner's chains...or removed them and substituted bolts and bars.

"A Russian should rejoice if Poland, the Baltic Provinces, Finland, Armenia, should be separated, freed from Russia; so with an Englishman in regard to Ireland, India and other possessions; and each should help to do this, because the greater the state, the more wrong and cruel is its patriotism, and the greater is the sum of suffering upon which its power is founded. Therefore, if we really wish to be what we profess to be, we must not only cease our present desire for the growth of the state, but we must desire its decrease, its weakening, and help this forward with all our might."

Leo Tolstoy, from "Writings on Civil Disobedience and Nonviolence," written in 1886.

## LEO TOLSTOY BIBLIOGRAPHY

### **MAJOR WORKS**

#### NOVELS AND NOVELLAS:

Detstvo, Otrochestvo, and Yunost (respectively, 1852, 1854, and 1857; Childhood, Boyhood, Youth, 1886); Kazaki (1863; The Cossacks: A Tale of the Caucasus in 1852, 1878); Voyna i mir (1865-69; War and Peace, 1886); Anna Karenina (1875-77; Eng. trans., 1886); Smert Ivana Ilicha (1886; The Death of Ivan Ilyitch, in Ivan Ilyitch, and Other Stories, 1887); Kreytserova sonata (1891; The Kreutzer Sonata, 1890); Voskreseniye (1899; Resurrection, 1899); Khadzhi-Murat (1912; Hadji Murad, 1912); Otets Sergiy (1912; Father Sergius, in Father Sergius, and Other Stories, 1912).

#### STORIES:

"Rubka lesa" (1855; "The Wood-Cutting Expedition," in The Invaders, and Other Stories, 1887, better known as "The Woodfelling"); "Chem lyudi zhivy" (1882; "What People Live By," 1886); "Mnogo li cheloveku zemli nuzhno" (1885; "Does a Man Need Much Land," in Ivan Ilyitch and Other Stories, 1887, better known as "How Much Land Does a Man Need?"); "Dva starika" (1886; "The Two Pilgrims," 1887, better known as "Two Old Men"); "Kholstomer" (1886; "Kholstomir: A Story of a Horse," in The Invaders . . . , 1887); "Dyavol" (1911; "The Devil," 1926).

#### PLAYS:

Zhivoi trup (1911; The Living Corpse, 1911, also known as The Man Who Was Dead); Vlast Tmy (1912; The Dominion of Darkness, 1890, better known as The Power of Darkness).

#### PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIAL WRITINGS:

Tsarstvo bozhiye vnutri vas (first publication in French, 1893; The Kingdom of God Is Within You, 1893); Ispoved (1884; My Confession, 1887); V chyom moya vera? (1884; What I Believe, 1886); Issledovaniye dogmaticheskogo bogosloviya (1891; Critique of Dogmatic Theology, in My

Confession; Critique . . . , 1904); Chto takoye iskusstvo? (1898; What Is Art?, 1898); Tak chto zhe nam delat? (1906; What To Do?, 1887, also known as What Shall We Do Then? or What Then Must We Do?).

*Christianity and Patriotism*. Translated by Constance Garnett. Introduction by Edward Garnett. London: J. Cape, 1922. First published in 1894.

*Essays and Letters*. Translated Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1911.

*Essays from Tula*. Introduction Nicolas Berdyaev. London: Sheppard Pr., 1948.

*The Kingdom of God and the Peace Essays*. London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1951.

*The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*. Translated by M. K. Tolstoy. Foreword by B. Budberg. London: Anthony Blond, 1970.

*Letters on War*. Maldon, Essex: Free Age Pr., 1900.

*My Confession*. London: Bradde Bks., 1963.

*On Life and Essays on Religion*. Translated with introduction by Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1934.

*On Socialism*. London: Hogarth, 1936. Published Glasgow: Strickland Pr., 1940.

*The Only Commandment*. London: Unicorn Pr., 1962.

*Resurrection*. Moscow: Foreign Languages Pub. Hse., 1958.

*The Russian Revolution etc.*. Translated by Aylmer Maude and others. London: Everett & Co., 1907.

*The Slavery of Our Times*. Translated with introduction by Aylmer Maude. New York: Edwin C. Walker, 1900.

*Social Evils and Their Remedy*. Edited by Helen C. Matheson. London: Methuen, 1915.

*Some Social Remedies: Socialism. Anarchism etc.* Christchurch, 1 Hants.: Free Age Pr., 1900.

*The Teaching of Iesus*. I Translated by Aylmer Maude. London: Harper, 1909.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill." *Freedom* 14,153 (Dec. 1900): 4-5.

*To the Working People.* Translated by V. Tchertoft & I. F. Mayo. London: International Pubn. Co., 1900.

*What I Believe.* Also called *My Religion.* London: Allen & Unwin, 1966.

*What Is Art?* Translated by Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1946.

*What then Must We Do?* Translated by Aylmer Maude. London: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1942.

#### EDITIONS IN RUSSIAN AND IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

The definitive edition in Russian is the "Jubilee" collection: *Polnoe sobranie sochenenii*, ed. by V.G. CHERTKOV, 90 vol. (1928-58). Comprehensive, though incomplete, collections of his works in English include *The Works of Leo Tolstoy* trans. by LOUISE MAUDE and AYLME MAUDE, 21 vol. (1928-37), known as the "Tolstoy Centenary Edition"; and *The Complete Works of Count Tolstoy*, trans. by LEO WIENER, 24 vol. (1904-05, reprinted 1968).

There are numerous translations of Tolstoy's major works. *War and Peace*, trans. by ANN DUNNIGAN (1968, reissued 1993), is the superior version; also good is the translation by CONSTANCE GARNETT, 3 vol. (1904), and available in many later printings. The widely available Norton critical edition, *War and Peace: The Maude Translation: Backgrounds and Sources: Essays in Criticism*, ed. by GEORGE GIBIAN (1966), succeeds less well in capturing tone, in addition to changing Tolstoy's division of the book into sections and adding plot summaries to each chapter. *Anna Karenina*, ed. and rev. by LEONARD J. KENT and NINA BERBEROVA (1965), a revision of the Garnett translation, is the best version; it is followed by the Norton critical edition, *Anna Karenina: The Maude Translation: Backgrounds and Sources: Essays in Criticism*, ed. by GEORGE GIBIAN (1970).

As a general rule, where translations by Dunnigan or Garnett are not available, translations by the Maudes are to

be preferred. The Maude versions of many of Tolstoy's works have been included in Oxford University Press's series *The World's Classics*; especially worth consulting are their translations in this series titled *Twenty-Three Tales* (1906, reprinted 1975), their well-known edition of Tolstoy's short, didactic stories; *What Is Art? and Essays on Art* (1930, reissued 1975); *Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth* (1930, reissued 1969); and *A Confession, The Gospel in Brief, and What I Believe* (1940, reissued 1974). For Tolstoy's short stories, a good choice is *Short Stories*, compiled by ERNEST J. SIMMONS (1964), the Modern Library edition which, in addition to several Maude translations, includes George L. Kline's version of Tolstoy's first experiment in fiction, "A History of Yesterday." Modern Library has also reproduced Maude translations of his *Short Novels* (1965); and *Selected Essays* (1964). Tolstoy's *The Forged Coupon* (1985) is the best version of this posthumously published story.

Tolstoy's plays, which are often replete with peasant dialect and many of which were left unfinished, have until recently resisted good translation. Two early collections are *Plays*, trans. by LOUISE MAUDE and AYLMER MAUDE (1914, reissued 1950); and *The Dramatic Works of Lyof N. Tolstoï*, trans. by NATHAN HASKELL DOLE (1923). A superior edition is *Tolstoy: Plays* (1994- ), trans. by MARVIN KANTOR and TANYA TULCHINSKY.

An excellent selection of Tolstoy's correspondence is *Tolstoy's Letters*, ed. and trans. from Russian by R.F. CHRISTIAN, 2 vol. (1978). Selections from his diaries (which run to 13 volumes in the Jubilee edition) are collected in *Tolstoy's Diaries*, ed. and trans. from Russian by R.F. CHRISTIAN, 2 vol. (1985). The intriguing record of Tolstoy's last year is *Last Diaries*, ed. by LEON STILMAN (1960, reprinted 1979). Some other versions are marred by inaccuracy or the suppression of passages for the sake of propriety: *The Journal of Leo Tolstoi*, trans. by ROSE STRUNSKY (1917, reissued 1993), covering the

years 1895-1899; The Diaries of Leo Tolstoy, 3 vol., trans. by C.J. HOGARTH and A. SIRNIS (1917); and The Private Diary of Leo Tolstoy, 1853-1857, trans. by LOUISE MAUDE and AYLMER MAUDE (1927, reprinted 1972).

[Library of Congress HTML Citations](#)

"http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/queryess/r?books1/be,bf,dlib,dlib2,maps,music,olb,:@FIELD(author+@1(+Tolstoy,+Leo,++graf,++1828+1910.+)"

[COPAC Citations](#) http://cs6400.mcc.ac.uk/cgi-bin/nph-cgiwrap/copacw/nph-bcgi?s1=Leo+Tolstoy+1828-1910&s2=&s3=&s4=&s5=&s6=&f=S&u=%2Fcopac%2Fauthor.html&r=0&p=1&d=CONS&Sect1=CONS1&Sect2=HITOFF&Sect3=PLUROFF&Sect4=IMGCOPAC&Sect5=WRAPPER&co1=AND&co2=AND&co3=AND&co4

[Encyclopaedia Britannica Online](#)

http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5006/31/1.html&DBase=Articles&hits=40&context=all&pt=1&keywords=Tolstoy%2C%20Leo" \l "0010"

### **ABOUT TOLSTOY**

Wenzer, Kenneth C. (Oct. '97). "Tolstoy's Georgist spiritual political economy (1897-1910): anarchism and land reform." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. v. 56 p. 639-67.

## TOLSTOY'S BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born: Aug. 28 (Sept. 9, New Style), 1828,

Died: of heart failure at the railroad station of Astapovo (Ryazan province) on Nov. 7 (Nov. 20, New Style), 1910.

### TOLSTOY'S WORKS

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LIST OF TOLSTOY'S WORKS from "The Life of Tolstoy" by Paul Biryukoff, Cassell & Co., Ltd. 1911, pp. 158-164.

Those works which are generally accepted as the most important are printed in blacker type. The dates show when the works were first published.

#### **NOVELS**

<b>Childhood</b>		<b>1852</b>
<b>Boyhood</b>		<b>1854</b>
<b>Youth</b>		<b>1855-57</b>
Sebastopol		1854-55
The	Cossacks	1861
<b>War</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>Peace 1864-69</b>
<b>Anna</b>		<b>Karenin 1873-76</b>
<b>The</b>	<b>Kreutzer</b>	<b>Sonata 1889</b>
<b>Resurrection</b>		<b>1899</b>
Hadji	Murat	Not yet published
Father Sergius		Not yet published

#### **PLAYS**

The Power of Darkness (drama)	1886	
The Fruits of Enlightenment (comedy)	1889	
The Corpse (unfinished drama)	Not	vet

published

## STORIES AND SKETCHES

A Morning of a Landowner	1852	
A Raid	1852	
The Cutting of the Forest	1855	
Notes of a Billiard Marker	1856	
Two Hussars	1856	
An Encounter	1856	
The Snowstorm	1856	
Lucerne.	1857	
Albert	1857	
Three Deaths	1859	
Family Happiness	1859	
Polikushka	1860	
The Decembrists	1863-68	
The Prisoner of the Caucasus	1886	
The Death of Iyan Ilyitch	1872	
Holstomer	1888	
A Talk Among Idle People	1892	
Master and Seryant	1895	
Singing in the Village	1909	
Four Days in the Village	1910	
The False Coupon	Not published	yet
After the Ball	Not published	yet

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

First

Recollections 1878



Confession	1879
The Claim of Love (from his diary)	1899

## **EDUCATIONAL**

The following were the chief articles among many which Tolstoy published in his review *Yasnaya Polyana*:  
A Project for a General Plan for Elementary Schools

On Popular Education	1861-62
Education and Instruction	1872
Progress and the Definition of Instruction	1874
Instruction	1875
A Primer	
<b>On Popular Instruction</b>	
A New Primer	

## **ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS BOOKS AND ESSAYS**

<b>A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology</b>	<b>1880</b>
A Short Exposition of the Gospel	1881
The Four Gospels Unified and Translated	<b>1882</b>
<b>Church and State</b>	<b>1884</b>
<b>What Is My Faith ?</b>	1887
On Life.	1889
The Love of God and of One's Neighbour	1890
Timothy	Bondareff 1892
Why Do Men Intoxicate Themselves?	<b>1893</b>
<b>On Non-Resistance</b>	1893
The First Step (on vegetarianism)	<b>1893</b>
<b>The Kingdom of God is Within You;</b>	1894
<b>or</b>	1894

<b>Christianity not as a Mystical</b>	<b>1894</b>
<b>Teaching</b>	1896
<b>but as a New Conception of Life</b>	1896
Non-Activity	1896
<b>The Meaning of the Refusal of</b>	<b>1898</b>
<b>Military</b>	<b>Service</b>
Reason	and Religion 1900
Religion	and Morality <b>1901</b>
<b>Christianity</b>	<b>and Patriotism.</b> 1901
Non-Resistance (a letter to Ernest H. Crosby)	1901 1902
How to Read the Gospels	1903
The Deception by the Church	<b>1904</b>
<b>Christian</b>	<b>Teaching</b> 1905
On	Suicide 1905
Thou Shalt Not Kill	<b>1906</b>
<b>Reply to the Holy Synod</b>	1906
The Only Way	1906
On Religious Toleration	. 1907
What is Religion ?	1908
To the Orthodox Clergy.	1909
<b>Thoughts of Wise Men</b> (compilation)	<b>1909</b>
The Only Need	
The Great Sin	
<b>A Cycle of Reading</b> (compilation)	.
Do Not Kill	
Love Each Other	
An Appeal to Youth	
The Law of Violence and the Law of Love	
The Only Command	
<b>For Every Day</b> (compilation)	

## ART AND LITERATURE

What is Art ! 1897  
 Art and Not Art 1897  
 Shakespeare and the Drama 1906  
 Prefaces to :  
 A Translation of - Modern Science,"  
 by Edward Carpenter Dr. Alice  
 Stockham's " Toxology  
 Orloff's Album  
 Amiel  
 Free Translations of Stories by: Guy  
 de Maupassant  
 Bernardin de St. Pierre

## SHORT RELIGIOUS AND DIDACTIC STORIES AND TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE

What People are Living By 1881  
 Where Love is, There is God 1885  
 Two Old Men 1885  
 A Fire Neglected Consumes the House 1885  
 Nicolas Stick (Tsar Nicolas 1.) 1886  
 Does a Man Require Much Land? 1886  
 Ifias 1886  
 The Godson 1896  
 The Three Hermits 1886  
 The Candle 1886  
 The Repenting Sinner 1886  
 The First Distiller 1886  
 Ivan the Fool 1886  
 The Empty Drum 1887  
 Walk in the Light While the Light is With 1893  
 You 1894  
 Three Parables 1903  
 Esarheddon 1903

Three Questions 1903  
 The Restoration of Hell 1903  
 Work, Death and Sickness 1905  
 A Prayer 1905  
 Berries 1905  
 Korney Vasilyeff 1906  
 Why ? 1906  
 The Divine and the Human 1909  
 A Letter on Science to a Peasant 1911  
 -Published by Posrednik after Tolstoy's  
 death:  
 False Beliefs  
 Life in Reality  
 On Religion  
 The Soul  
 Love .  
 The Sexual Instinct  
 God .  
 Sins, Temptation and Superstitions  
 Excesses .  
 The Similarity of Men's Souls  
 Pride  
 Effort  
 Wrath  
 Vanity  
 Parasitism  
 False Science

## **SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ESSAYS AND ADDRESSES**

**The Census of Moscow** (in 1882) 1882  
 Letter to M. A. Engelhardt 1882  
**What Then Must We Do ?** 1886  
 On Women 1886  
 On Manual Labour 1887

**Mental Activity and Manual Labour 1889**  
 Culture's Feast (on the anniversary of 1889  
 the Moscow 1889  
 University) **1891-93**  
 Letter to a Revolutionist **1895**  
**On the Famine** (reports and letters) 1896  
**Shame !** (against corporal punishment) 1896  
 Patriotism and Peace 1896  
 To the Liberals 1896  
 To the Ministers 1897  
 The Approach of the End **1899**  
 A Letter to a Non-Commissioned 1899  
 Officer. 1899  
**On the Hague Peace Conference** 1899  
 Two Wars **1900**  
 Who Is to be Blamed ? 1900  
 Carthago Delenda Est **1900**  
**The Slavery of our Times** 1900  
 Where is the Issue ? **1901**  
**Patriotism and Government.** 1901  
 Is it Really Necessary 1901  
**To the Tsar and his Associates** 1901  
 The Nearing End of the Age **1902**  
 Mementoes for Soldiers **1902**  
 Mementoes for Officers **1902**  
**On the Working-Class Problem** 1903  
**Letters to the Tsar** **1903**  
 To the Working People 1903  
 To Men of Politics **1904**  
 To Social Reformers 1904  
 Letter to Pietro Mazzini 1905  
**Bethink Yourselves** **1905**  
 In the Russian Revolution **1905**  
 How to Emancipate the Working 1905  
 Classes 1906  
**A Great Injustice (on the land 1906**  
**problem)** 1906

**On the Social Movement in Russia** 1906  
 The End of the Age 1907  
 An Appeal to the People **1907**  
 On Military Service 1908  
 On the Meaning of the Russian Revolution 1908  
 What Must be Done? 1909  
 An Appeal to the Government, the Revolutionists and the People **1909**  
**The Only Solution of the Land Question**  
**1 Cannot be Silent** (a protest against the wholesale executions)  
 Concerning Molochnikoff's Arrest  
 The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
 The Inevitable Revolution  
**An Address to the Stockholm Peace Conference**  
 An Efficient Remedy (last article, published three days after his death by the St. Petersburg daily paper Rietch)

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Autobiography:

[Childhood](#)

[Boyhood](#)

[Encyclopaedia Britannica Online](#)

[Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#)

[Last days of Tolstoy](#)

[BURN! Site on Tolstoy](#)

[Tolstoi as Prophet](#), Lee, V. [psued.] (1909). *Gospels of anarchy*.

**REMINISCENCES OF GRAF LEO  
TOLSTOY, 1828-1910.**

Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/>

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/uvaonline.html>

*About the electronic version*

***Reminiscences of Tolstoy***

**Tolstoy, Leo graf, 1828-1910**

Creation of machine-readable version: Judy Boss

Creation of digital images: Lisa Spiro, Electronic Text Center

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Text prepared by the 1997-98 Graduate Fellow Lisa Spiro for the University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center. 160 kilobytes

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1997

Note: This electronic text has been synthesized from three print sources, the June (pp. 187-196), July (pp. 418-428), and August (pp. 561-573) 1914 issues of *The Century*

Magazine. Therefore, the page numbering is not sequential within the text. We have renumbered footnotes sequentially throughout each installment of the text.

Note: Judy Boss has closed contractions, e.g. "does n't" becomes "doesn't."

Note: The original spellings of all Russian names have been retained; these may or may not conform to modern standards of anglicized Russian spelling.

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*About the print version*

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**Count Ilyá Tolstoy** Translator George Calderon

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REMINISCENCES OF TOLSTOY

BY HIS SON, COUNT ILYÁ TOLSTOY

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE CALDERON

In one of his letters to his great-aunt, Alexándra Andréyevna Tolstoy, my father gives the following description of his children:

The eldest [Sergéi] is fair-haired and good-looking; there is something weak and patient in his expression, and very gentle. His laugh is not infectious; but when he cries, I can hardly refrain from crying, too. Every one says he is like my eldest brother.

I am afraid to believe it. It is too good to be true. My brother's chief characteristic was neither egotism nor self-renunciation, but a strict mean between the two. He never sacrificed himself for any one else; but not only always avoided injuring others, but also interfering with them. He kept his happiness and his sufferings entirely to himself.

Ilyá, the third, has never been ill in his life; broad-boned, white and pink, radiant, bad at lessons. Is

always thinking about what he is told not to think about. Invents his own games. Hot-tempered and violent, wants to fight at once; but is also tender-hearted and very sensitive. Sensuous; fond of eating and lying still doing nothing.

Tánya [Tatyána] is eight years old. Every one says that she is like Sonya, and I believe them, although I am pleased about that, too; I believe it only because it is obvious. If she had been Adam's eldest daughter and he had had no other children afterward, she would have passed a wretched childhood. The greatest pleasure that she has is to look after children.

The fourth is Lyoff. Handsome, dexterous, good memory, graceful. Any clothes fit him as if they had been made for him. Everything that others do, he does very skilfully and well. Does not understand much yet.

The fifth, Masha [Mary] is two years old, the one whose birth nearly cost Sonya her life. A weak and sickly child. Body white as milk, curly white hair; big, queer blue eyes, queer by reason of their deep, serious expression. Very intelligent and ugly. She will be one of the riddles; she will suffer, she

will seek and find nothing, will always be seeking what is least attainable.

The sixth, Peter, is a giant, a huge, delightful baby in a mob-cap, turns out his elbows, strives eagerly after something. My wife falls into an ecstasy of agitation and emotion when she holds him in her arms; but I am completely at a loss to understand. I know that he has a great store of physical energy, but whether there is any purpose for which the store is wanted I do not know. That is why I do not care for children under two or three; I don't understand.

This letter was written in 1872, when I was six years old. My recollections date from about that time. I can remember a few things before.

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## FAMILY LIFE IN THE COUNTRY

From my earliest childhood until the family moved into Moscow -- that was in 1881 -- all my life was spent, almost without a break, at Yásnaya Polyána.

This is how we live. The chief personage in the house is my mother. She settles everything. She interviews Nikolái, the cook, and orders dinner; she sends us out for walks, makes our shirts, is always nursing some baby at the breast; all day long she is bustling about the house with hurried steps. One can be naughty with her, though she is sometimes angry and punishes us.

She knows more about everything than anybody else. She knows that one must wash every day, that one must eat soup at dinner, that one must talk French, learn not to crawl about on all fours, not to put one's elbows on the table; and if she says that one is not to go out walking because it is just going to rain, she is sure to be right, and one must do as she says.

Papa is the cleverest man in the world. He always knows everything. There is no being naughty with *him*. When he is up in his study "working," one is not allowed to make a noise, and nobody may go into his room. What he does when he is at "work," none of us know. Later on, when I had learned to read, I was told that papa was a "writer."

This was how I learned. I was very pleased with some lines of poetry one day, and asked my mother who wrote them. She told me they were written by Pushkin, and Pushkin was a great writer. I was vexed at my father not being one, too. Then my mother said that my father was also a well-known writer, and I was very glad indeed.

At the dinner-table papa sits opposite mama and has his own round silver spoon. When old Natália Petrónna, who lives on the floor below with great-aunt Tatyána Alexándrovna, pours herself out a glass of kvass, he picks it up and drinks it right off, then says, "Oh, I'm so sorry, Natália Petrónna; I made a mistake!" We all laugh delightedly, and it seems odd that papa is not in the least afraid of Natália Petrónna. When there is jelly for pudding, papa says it is good for gluing paper boxes; we run off to get some paper, and papa makes it into boxes. Mama is angry, but he is not afraid of her either. We have the gayest times imaginable with him now and then. He can ride a horse better and run faster than anybody else, and there is no one in the world so strong as he is.

He hardly ever punishes us, but when he looks me in the eyes he knows everything that I think, and I am frightened. You can tell stories to mama, but not to papa, because he will see through you at once. So nobody ever tries.

Besides papa and mama, there was also Aunt Tatyána Alexándrovna Yergolsky. In her room she had a big eikon with a silver mount. We were very much afraid of this eikon, because it was very old and black.

When I was six, I remember my father teaching the village children. They had their lessons in "the other house,"<sup>1</sup> where Alexey Stepánytch, the bailiff, lived, and sometimes on the ground floor of the house we lived in.

There were a great number of village children who used to come. When they came, the front hall smelled of sheepskin jackets; they were taught by papa and Seryózha and Tánya and Uncle Kóstya all at once. Lesson-time was very gay and lively.

The children did exactly as they pleased, sat where they liked, ran about from place to place, and answered questions not one by one, but all together, interrupting one another, and helping one another to recall what they had read. If one left out a bit, up jumped another and then another, and the story or sum was reconstructed by the united efforts of the whole class.

What pleased my father most about his pupils was the picturesqueness and originality of their language. He never wanted a literal repetition of bookish expressions, and particularly encouraged every one to speak "out of his own head." I remember how once he stopped a boy who was running into the next room.

"Where are *you* off to?" he asked.

"To uncle, to bite off a piece of chalk."<sup>2</sup>

"Cut along, cut along! It's not for us to teach them, but for them to teach us," he said to some one when the boy was gone. Which of us would have expressed himself like that? You see, he did not say to "get" or to "break off," but to "bite off," which was right, because they did literally "bite" off the chalk from the lump with their teeth, and not break it off.

Notes:

[1] The name we gave to the stone annex.

[2] The instinct for lime, necessary to feed their bones, drives Russian children to nibble pieces of chalk or the whitewash off the wall. In this case the boy was running to one of the grown-ups in the house, and whom he called uncle, as Russian children call everybody uncle or aunt, to get a piece

of the chalk that he had for writing on the  
blackboard.

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## THE SERVANTS IN THE HOUSE

When my father married and brought home his young and inexperienced bride, Sófya Andréyevna, to Yásnaya Polyána, Nikolái Mikháilovitch Rumyántsef was already established as cook. Before my father's marriage he had a salary of five rubles a month; but when my mother arrived, she raised him to six, at which rate he continued the rest of his days; that is, till somewhere about the end of the eighties. He was succeeded in the kitchen by his son, Semyon Nikoláyevitch, my mother's godson, and this worthy and beloved man, companion of my childish games, still lives with us to this day. Under my mother's supervision he prepared my father's vegetarian diet with affectionate zeal, and without him my father would very likely never have lived to the ripe old age he did.

Agáfya Mikháilovna was an old woman who lived at first in the kitchen of "the other house" and afterward on the home farm. Tall and thin, with big, thoroughbred eyes, and long, straight hair, like a witch, turning gray, she was rather terrifying, but more than anything else she was queer.

Once upon a time long ago she had been housemaid to my great-grandmother, Countess Pelagéya Nikoláyevna Tolstoy, my father's grandmother, née Princess Gortchakóva. She was fond of telling about her young days. She would say:

I was very handsome. When there were gentlefolks visiting at the big house, the countess would call me, 'Gachette [Agáfya], femme de



chambre, apportez-moi un mouchoir!' Then I would say, 'Toute suite, Madame la Comtesse!' And every one would be staring at me, and couldn't take their eyes off. When I crossed over to the annex, there they were watching to catch me on the way. Many a time have I tricked them -- ran round the other way and jumped over the ditch. I never liked that sort of thing any time. A maid I was, a maid I am.

After my grandmother's death, Agáfya Mikháilovna was sent on to the home farm for some reason or other, and minded the sheep. She got so fond of sheep that all her days after she never would touch mutton.

After the sheep, she had an affection for dogs, and that is the only period of her life that I remember her in.

There was nothing in the world she cared about but dogs. She lived with them in horrible dirt and smells, and gave up her whole mind and soul to them. We always had setters, harriers, and borzois, and the whole kennel, often very numerous, was under Agáfya Mikháilovna's management, with some boy or other to help her, usually one as clumsy and stupid as could be found.

There are many interesting recollections bound up with the memory of this intelligent and original woman. Most of them are associated in my mind with my father's stories about her. He could always catch and unravel any interesting psychological trait, and these traits, which he would mention incidentally, stuck firmly in my mind. He used to

tell, for instance, how Agáfya Mikháilovna complained to him of sleeplessness.

"Ever since I can remember her, she has suffered from 'a birch-tree growing inside me from my belly up; it presses against my chest, and prevents my breathing.'

"She complains of her sleeplessness and the birch-tree and says: 'There I lay all alone and all quiet, only the clock ticking on the wall: "Who are you? What are you? Who are you? What are you?" And I began to think: "Who am I? What am I?" and so I spent the whole night thinking about it.'

"Why, imagine this is Socrates! 'Know thyself,'" said my father, telling the story with great enthusiasm.

In the summer-time my mother's brother, Styópa (Stephen Behrs), who was studying at the time in the school of jurisprudence, used to come and stay with us. In the autumn he used to go wolf-hunting with my father and us, with the borzois, and Agáfya Mikháilovna loved him for that.

Styópa's examination was in the spring. Agáfya Mikháilovna knew about it and anxiously waited for the news of whether he had got through.

Once she put up a candle before the eikon and prayed that Styópa might pass. But at that moment she remembered that her borzois had got out and had not come back to the kennels again.

"Saints in heaven! they'll get into some place and worry the cattle and do a mischief!" she cried. "'Lord, let my candle burn for the dogs to come back quick, and I'll buy another for Stepan Andréyevitch.' No sooner had I said this to myself than I heard the dogs in the porch rattling their collars. Thank God! they were back. That's what prayer can do."

Another favorite of Agáfya Mikháilovna was a young man, Mísha Stakhóvitch, who often stayed with us.

"See what you have been and done to me, little Countess!" she said reproachfully to my sister Tányá: "you've introduced me to Mikhail Alexandrovitch, and I've fallen in love with him in my old age, like a wicked woman!"

On the fifth of February, her name-day, Agáfya Mikháilovna received a telegram of congratulation from Stakhóvitch.

When my father heard of it, he said jokingly to Agáfya Mikháilovna:

"Aren't you ashamed that a man had to trudge two miles through the frost at night all for the sake of your telegram?"

"Trudge, trudge? Angels bore him on their wings. Trudge, indeed! You get three telegrams from an outlandish Jew woman," she growled, "and telegrams every day about your Golokhvotika. Never a trudge then; but I get name-day greetings, and it's trudge!"

And one could not but acknowledge that she was right. This telegram, the only one in the whole year that was addressed to the kennels, by the pleasure it gave Agáfya Mikháilovna was far more important of course than this news or the about a ball given in Moscow in honor of a Jewish banker's daughter, or about Olga Andréyevna Golokvástovy's arrival at Yásnaya.

Agáfya Mikháilovna died at the beginning of the nineties. There were no more hounds or sporting dogs at Yásnaya then, but till the end of her days she gave shelter to a motley collection of mongrels, and tended and fed them.

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## THE HOME OF THE TOLSTOYS

I can remember the house at Yásnaya Polyána in the condition it was in the first years after my father's marriage.

It was one of the two-storied wings of the old mansion-house of the Princes Volkónsky, which my father had sold for pulling down when he was still a bachelor.

From what my father has told me, I know that the house in which he was born and spent his youth was a three-storied building with thirty-six rooms. On the spot where it stood, between the two wings, the remains of the old stone foundation are still visible in the form of trenches filled with rubble, and the site is covered with big sixty-year-old trees that my father himself planted.

When any one asked my father where he was born, he used to point to a tall larch which grew on the site of the old foundations.

"Up there where the top of that larch waves," he used to say; "that's where my mother's room was, where I was born on a leather sofa."

My father seldom spoke of his mother, but when he did, it was delightful to hear him, because the mention of her awoke an unusual strain of gentleness and tenderness in him. There was such a ring of respectful affection, so much reverence for her memory, in his words, that we all looked on her as a sort of saint.

My father remembered his father well, because he was already nine years old when he died. He loved him, too, and always spoke of him reverently; but one always felt that his mother's memory, although he had never known her, was dearer to him, and his love for her far greater than for his father.

Even to this day I do not exactly know the story of the sale of the old house. My father never liked talking about it, and for that reason I could never make up my mind to ask him the details of the transaction. I only know that the house was sold for five thousand paper rubles<sup>3</sup> by one of his relatives, who had charge of his affairs by power of attorney when he was in the Caucasus.

It was said to have been done in order to pay off my father's gambling debts. That was quite true.

My father himself told me that at one time he was a great card-player, that he lost large sums of money, and that his financial affairs were considerably embarrassed.

The only thing about which I am in doubt is whether it was with my father's knowledge or by his directions that the house was sold, or whether the relative in question did not exceed his instructions and decide on the sale of his own initiative.

My father cherished his parents' memory to such an extent, and had such a warm affection for everything relating to his own childhood, that it is hard to believe that he would have raised his hand against the house in which he had been born and brought up and in which his mother had spent her whole life.

Knowing my father as I do, I think it is highly possible that he wrote to his relative from the Caucasus, "Sell something," not in the least expecting that he would sell the house, and that he afterward took the blame for it on himself. Is that not the reason why he was always so unwilling to talk about it?

In 1871, when I was five years old, the zala<sup>4</sup> and study were built on the house.

The walls of the zala were hung with old portraits of ancestors. They were rather alarming, and I was afraid of them at first; but we got used to them after a time, and I grew fond of one of them, of my great-grandfather, Ilyá Andréyevitch Tolstoy, because I was told that I was like him.

Beside him hung the portrait of another great-grandfather, Prince Nikolái Sergéyevitch Volkónsky, my grandmother's father, with thick, black eyebrows, a gray wig, and a red kaftan.<sup>5</sup>

This Volkónsky built all the buildings of Yásnaya Polyána. He was a model squire, intelligent and proud, and enjoyed the great respect of all the neighborhood.

On the ground floor, under the drawing-room, next to the entrance-hall, my father built his study. He had a semi-circular niche made in the wall, and stood a marble bust of his favorite dead brother Nikolái in it. This bust was made abroad from a death-mask, and my father told us that it was very like, because it was done by a good sculptor, according to his own directions.

He had a kind and rather plaintive face. The hair was brushed smooth like a child's, with the parting on one side. He had no beard or mustache, and his head was white and very, very clean. My father's study was divided in two by a partition of big bookshelves, containing a multitude of all sorts of books. In order to support them, the shelves were connected by big wooden beams, and between them was a thin birch-wood door, behind which stood my father's writing-table and his old-fashioned semicircular arm-chair.

There are portraits of Dickens and Schopenhauer and Fet<sup>6</sup> as a young man on the walls, too, and the well-known group of writers of the Sovreménnik<sup>7</sup> circle in 1856, with Turgénieff, Ostróvsky,

Gontcharóf, Grigoróvitch, Druzhínin, and my father, quite young still, without a beard, and in uniform.

My father used to come out of his bedroom of a morning -- it was in a corner on the top floor -- in his dressing-gown, with his beard uncombed and tumbled together, and go down to dress.

Soon after he would issue from his study fresh and vigorous, in a gray smock-frock, and would go up into the *zala* for breakfast. That was our déjeuner.

When there was nobody staying in the house, he would not stop long in the drawing-room, but would take his tumbler of tea and carry it off to his study with him.

But if there were friends and guests with us, he would get into conversation, become interested, and could not tear himself away.

At last he would go off to his work, and we would disperse, in winter to the different school-rooms, in summer to the croquet-lawn or somewhere about the garden. My mother would settle down in the drawing-room to make some garment for the babies, or to copy out something she had not finished overnight; and till three or four in the afternoon silence would reign in the house.

Then my father would come out of his study and go off for his afternoon's exercise. Sometimes he would take a dog and a gun, sometimes ride, and sometimes merely go for a walk to the imperial wood.

At five the big bell that hung on the broken bough of an old elm-tree in front of the house would ring and we would all run to wash our hands and collect for dinner.

He was very hungry, and ate voraciously of whatever turned up. My mother would try to stop

him, would tell him not to waste all his appetite on kasha, because there were chops and vegetables to follow. "You'll have a bad liver again," she would say; but he would pay no attention to her, and would ask for more and more, until his hunger was completely satisfied. Then he would tell us all about his walk, where he put up a covey of black game, what new paths he discovered in the imperial wood beyond Kudeyarof Well, or, if he rode, how the young horse he was breaking in began to understand the reins and the pressure of the leg. All this he would relate in the most vivid and entertaining way, so that the time passed gaily and animatedly.

After dinner he would go back to his room to read, and at eight we had tea, and the best hours of the day began -- the evening hours, when everybody gathered in the zala. The grown-ups talked or read aloud or played the piano, and we either listened to them or had some jolly game of our own, and in anxious fear awaited the moment when the English grandfather-clock on the landing would give a click and a buzz, and slowly and clearly ring out ten.

Perhaps mama would not notice? She was in the sitting-room, making a copy.

"Come, children, bedtime! Say good night," she would call.

"In a minute, Mama; just five minutes."

"Run along; it's high time; or there will be no getting you up in the morning to do your lessons."

We would say a lingering good night, on the lookout for any chance for delay, and at last would go down-stairs through the arches, annoyed at the thought that we were children still and had to go to bed while the grown-ups could stay up as long as ever they liked.



Notes:

[3] About \$3000.

[4] The zala is the chief room of a house, corresponding to the English drawing-room, but on a grand scale. The gostinaya -- literally guest-room, usually translated as drawing-room -- is a place for more intimate receptions. At Yásnaya Polyána meals were taken in the zala, but this is not the general Russian custom, houses being provided also with a stolóvaya, or dining-room.

[5] Kaftan, a long coat of various cuts, including military and naval frock-coat, and the long gown worn by coachmen.

[6] Afanáysi Shénshin, the poet, who adopted his mother's name, Fet, for a time, owing to official difficulties about his birth-certificate. An intimate friend of Tolstoy's.

[7] The "Sovreménnik," or "Contemporary Review," edited by the poet Mekrasof, was the rallying-place for the "men of the forties," the new school of realists. Ostróvsky is the dramatist; Gontcharóf the novelist, author of "Oblómof"; Grigoróvitch wrote tales about peasant life, and was the discoverer of Tchékhof's talent as a serious writer.

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## A JOURNEY TO THE STEPPES

When I was still a child and had not yet read "War and Peace," I was told that *Natasha Rostóf* was Aunt Tánya. When my father was asked whether that was true, and whether *Dmitry Rostóf* was such and such a person and *Levin* such and such another, he never gave a definite answer, and one could not but feel that he disliked such questions and was rather offended by them.

In those remote days about which I am talking, my father was very keen about the management of his estate, and devoted a lot of energy to it. I can remember his planting the huge apple orchard at Yásnaya and several hundred acres of birch and pine forest, and at the beginning of the seventies, for a number of years, he was interested in buying up land cheap in the province of Samara, and breeding droves of steppe horses and flocks of sheep.

I still have pretty clear, though rather fragmentary and inconsequent, recollections of our three summer excursions to the steppes of Samara.

My father had already been there before his marriage in 1862, and afterward by the advice of Dr. Zakháryin, who attended him. He took the kumiss-cure in 1871 and 1872, and at last, in 1873, the whole family went there.

At that time my father had bought several hundred acres of cheap Bashkir lands in the district of Buzulúk, and we went to stay on our new property at a *khutor*, or farm.

In Samara we lived on the farm in a tumble-down wooden house, and beside us, in the steppe, were erected two felt kibitkas, or Tatar frame tents, in which our Bashkir, Muhammed Shah Romanytch, lived with his wives.

Morning and evening they used to tie the mares up outside the kibitkas, where they were milked by veiled women, who then hid themselves from the sight of the men behind a brilliant chintz curtain, and made the kumiss.

The kumiss was bitter and very nasty, but my father and my uncle Stephen Behrs were very fond of it, and drank it in large quantities.

When we boys began to get big, we had at first a German tutor for two or three years, Fyódor Fyódorovitch Kaufmann.

I cannot say that we were particularly fond of him. He was rather rough, and even we children were struck by his German stupidity. His redeeming feature was that he was a devoted sportsman. Every morning he used to jerk the blankets off us and shout, "Auf, Kinder! auf!" and during the daytime plagued us with German calligraphy.

## OUTDOOR SPORTS

The chief passion of my childhood was riding. I well remember the time when my father used to put me in the saddle in front of him and we would ride out to bathe in the Voronka. I have several interesting recollections connected with these rides.

One day as we were going to bathe, papa turned round and said to me:

"Do you know, Ilyúsha, I am very pleased with myself to-day. I have been bothered with her for three whole days, and could not manage to make her go into the house; try as I would, it was impossible. It never would come right. But to-day I remembered that there is a mirror in every hall, and that every lady wears a bonnet.

"As soon as I remembered that, she went where I wanted her to, and did everything she had to. You would think a bonnet is a small affair, but everything depended on that bonnet."

As I recall this conversation, I feel sure that my father was talking about that scene in "Anna Karénina" where *Anna* went to see her son.

Although in the final form of the novel nothing is said in this scene either about a bonnet or a mirror, -- nothing is mentioned but a thick black veil, -- still, I imagine that in its original form, when he was working on the passage, my father may have brought Anna up to the mirror, and made her straighten her bonnet or take it off.

I can remember the interest with which he told me this, and it now seems strange that he should have talked about such subtle artistic experiences to a boy of seven who was hardly capable of understanding him at the time. However, that was often the case with him.

I once heard from him a very interesting description of what a writer needs for his work:

"You cannot imagine how important one's mood is,"

he said.

"Sometimes you get up in the morning, fresh and vigorous, with your head clear, and you begin to write. Everything is sensible and consistent. You read it over next day, and have to throw the whole thing away, because, good as it is, it misses the main thing. There is no imagination in it, no subtlety, none of the necessary something, none of that only just without which all your cleverness is worth nothing. Another day you get up after a bad night, with your nerves all on edge, and you think, 'To-day I shall write well, at any rate.' And as a matter of fact, what you write is beautiful, picturesque, with any amount of imagination. You look it through again; it is no good, because it is written stupidly. There is plenty of color, but not enough intelligence.

"One's writing is good only when the intelligence and the imagination are in equilibrium. As soon as one of them overbalances the other, it's all up; you may as well throw it away and begin afresh."

As a matter of fact, there was no end to the rewriting in my father's works. His industry in this particular was truly marvelous.

We were always devoted to sport from our earliest childhood. I can remember as well as I remember myself my father's favorite dog in those days, an Irish setter called Dora. They would bring round the cart, with a very quiet horse between the shafts, and we would drive out to the marsh, to Degatná or to Malákhov. My father and sometimes my mother or a coachman sat on the seat, while I and Dora lay on the floor.

When we got to the marsh, my father used to get out, stand his gun on the ground, and, holding it with his left hand, load it.

Dora meanwhile fidgeted about, whining impatiently and wagging her thick tail.

While my father splashed through the marsh, we drove round the bank somewhat behind him, and eagerly followed the ranging of the dog, the getting up of the snipe, and the shooting. My father sometimes shot fairly well, though he often lost his head, and missed frantically.

But our favorite sport was coursing with greyhounds. What a pleasure it was when the footman Sergei Petrovitch came in and woke us up before dawn, with a candle in his hand!

We jumped up full of energy and happiness, trembling all over in the morning cold; threw on our clothes as quickly as we could, and ran out into the zala, where the samovar was boiling and papa was waiting for us.

Sometimes mama came in in her dressing-gown, and made us put on all sorts of extra woolen stockings, and sweaters and gloves.

"What are you going to wear, Lyovótchka?" she would say to papa. "It's very cold to-day, and there is a wind. Only the Kuzminsky overcoat again today? You must put on something underneath, if only for my sake."

Papa would make a face, but give in at last, and buckle on his short gray overcoat under the other and sally forth. It would then be growing light. Our horses were brought round, we got on, and rode first to "the other house," or to the kennels to get the dogs.

Agáfya Mikháilovna would be anxiously waiting us on the steps. Despite the coldness of the morning, she would be bareheaded and lightly clad, with her black jacket open, showing her withered, old bosom. She carried the dog-collars in her lean, knotted hands.

"Have you gone and fed them again?" asks my father, severely, looking at the dogs' bulging stomachs.

"Fed them? Not a bit; only just a crust of bread apiece."

"Then what are they licking their chops for?"

"There was a bit of yesterday's oatmeal left over."

"I thought as much! All the hares will get away again. It really is too bad! Do you do it to spite me?"

"You can't have the dogs running all day on empty stomachs, Lyoff Nikolaievich," she grunted, going angrily to put on the dogs' collars.

At last the dogs were got together, some of them on leashes, others running free; and we would ride out at a brisk trot past Bitter Wells and the grove into the open country.

My father would give the word of command, "Line out!" and point out the direction in which we were to go, and we spread out over the stubble fields and meadows, whistling and winding about along the lee side of the steep balks,<sup>8</sup> beating all the bushes with our hunting-crops, and gazing keenly at every spot or mark on the earth.

Something white would appear ahead. We stared hard at it, gathered up the reins, examined the leash, scarcely believing the good luck of having come on a hare at last. Then riding up closer and closer, with our eyes on the white thing, it would turn out to be not a hare at all, but a horse's skull. How annoying!

We would look at papa and Seryózha, thinking, "I wonder if they saw that I took that skull for a hare." But papa would be sitting keen and alert on his English saddle, with the wooden stirrups, smoking a cigarette, while Seryózha would perhaps have got his leash entangled and could not get it straight.

"Thank heaven!" we would exclaim, "nobody saw me! What a fool I should have felt!" So we would ride on.

The horse's even pace would begin to rock us to sleep, feeling rather bored at nothing getting up; when all of a sudden, just at the moment we least expected it, right in front of us, twenty paces away, would jump up a gray hare as if from the bowels of the earth.

The dogs had seen it before we had, and had started forward already in full pursuit. We began to bawl, "Tally-ho! tally-ho!" like madmen, flogging our horses with all our might, and flying after them.

The dogs would come up with the hare, turn it, then turn it again, the young and fiery Sultan and



Darling running over it, catching up again, and running over again; and at last the old and experienced Winger, who had been galloping on one side all the time, would seize her opportunity, and spring in. The hare would give a helpless cry like a baby, and the dogs, burying their fangs in it, in a star-shaped group, would begin to tug in different directions.

"Let go! Let go!"

We would come galloping up, finish off the hare, and give the dogs the tracks,<sup>9</sup> tearing them off toe by toe, and throwing them to our favorites, who would catch them in the air. Then papa would teach us how to strap the hare on the back of the saddle.

After the run we would all be in better spirits, and get to better places near Yásenki and Rétinka. Gray hares would get up oftener. Each of us would have his spoils in the saddle-straps now, and we would begin to hope for a fox.

Not many foxes would turn up. If they did, it was generally Tumashka, who was old and staid, who distinguished himself. He was sick of hares, and made no great effort to run after them; but with a fox he would gallop at full speed, and it was almost always he who killed.

It would be late, often dark, when we got back home.

Notes:

[8] The balks are the banks dividing the fields of different owners or crops. Hedges are not used for this purpose in Russia.

[9] *Pazanki*, tracks of a hare, name given to the last joint of the hind legs.

## "ANNA KARÉNINA"

I remember my father writing his alphabet and reading-book in 1871 and 1872, but I cannot at all remember his beginning "Anna Karénina." I probably knew nothing about it at the time. What did it matter to a boy of seven what his father was writing? It was only later, when one kept hearing the name again and again, and bundles of proofs kept arriving, and were sent off almost every day, that I understood that "Anna Karénina" was the name of the novel on which my father and mother were both at work.

My mother's work seemed much harder than my father's, because we actually saw her at it, and she worked much longer hours than he did. She used to sit in the sitting-room off the *zala*, at her little writing-table, and spend all her free time writing.

Leaning over the manuscript and trying to decipher my father's scrawl with her short-sighted eyes, she used to spend whole evenings over it, and often sat up late at night after everybody else had gone to bed. Sometimes, when anything was written quite illegibly, she would go to my father's study and ask him what it meant. But this was very rare, because my mother did not like to disturb him.

When it happened, my father used to take the manuscript in his hand, and ask with some annoyance, "What on earth is the difficulty?" and would begin to read it out aloud. When he came to the difficult place he would mumble and hesitate, and sometimes had the greatest difficulty in making out, or, rather, in guessing, what he had written. He had a very bad handwriting, and a terrible habit of writing in whole sentences between the lines, or in

the corners of the page, or sometimes right across it.

My mother often discovered gross grammatical errors, and pointed them out to my father, and corrected them.

When "Anna Karénina" began to come out in the "Russky Vyéstnik,"<sup>10</sup> long galley-proofs were posted to my father, and he looked them through and corrected them.

At first the margins would be marked with the ordinary typographical signs, letters omitted, marks of punctuation, etc.; then individual words would be changed, and then whole sentences, till in the end the proof-sheet would be reduced to a mass of patches quite black in places, and it was quite impossible to send it back as it stood, because no one but my mother could make head or tail of the tangle of conventional signs, transpositions, and erasures.

My mother would sit up all night copying the whole thing out afresh.

In the morning there would lie the pages on her table, neatly piled together, covered all over with her fine, clear handwriting, and everything ready so that when "Lyovótchka" got up he could send the proof-sheets off by post.

My father carried them off to his study to have "just one last look," and by the evening it would be just as bad again, the whole thing having been rewritten and messed up.

"Sonya my dear, I am very sorry, but I've spoiled all your work again; I promise I won't do it any more," he would say, showing her the passages he had inked over with a guilty air. "We'll send them

off to-morrow without fail." But this to-morrow was often put off day by day for weeks or months together.

"There's just one bit I want to look through again," my father would say; but he would get carried away and recast the whole thing afresh.

There were even occasions when, after posting the proofs, he would remember some particular words next day, and correct them by telegraph. Several times, in consequence of these rewritings, the printing of the novel in the "Russky Vyěstnik" was interrupted, and sometimes it did not come out for months together.

In the last part of "Anna Karénina" my father, in describing the end of *Vronsky's* career, showed his disapproval of the volunteer movement and the Panslavonic committees, and this led to a quarrel with Katkóf.

I can remember how angry my father was when Katkóf refused to print those chapters as they stood, and asked him either to leave out part of them or to soften them down, and finally returned the manuscript, and printed a short note in his paper to say that after the death of the heroine the novel was strictly speaking at an end; but that the author had added an epilogue of two printed sheets, in which he related such and such facts, and he would very likely "develop these chapters for the separate edition of his novel."

In concluding, I wish to say a few words about my father's own opinion of "Anna Karénina."

In 1875 he wrote to N. N. Strákhof:

"I must confess that I was delighted by the success of the last piece of 'Anna Karénina.' I had by no means expected it, and to tell you the truth,

I am surprised that people are so pleased with such ordinary and *empty* stuff."

The same year he wrote to Fet:

"It is two months since I have defiled my hands with ink or my heart with thoughts. But now I am setting to work again on my *tedious, vulgar 'Anna Karénina,'* with only one wish, to clear it out of the way as soon as possible and give myself leisure for other occupations, but not schoolmastering, which I am fond of, but wish to give up; it takes up too much time."

In 1878, when the novel was nearing its end, he wrote again to Strákhof:

"I am frightened by the feeling that I am getting into my summer mood again. I *loathe* what I have written. The proof-sheets for the April number [of "Anna Karénina" in the "Russky Vyéstnik"] now lie on my table, and I am afraid that I have not the heart to correct them. *Everything* in them is *beastly*, and the whole thing ought to be rewritten, -- all that has been printed, too, -- scrapped and melted down, thrown away, renounced. I ought to say, 'I am sorry; I will not do it any more,' and try to write something fresh instead of all this

incoherent, neither-fish-nor-flesh-nor-fowl-ish stuff."

That was how my father felt toward his novel while he was writing it. Afterward I often heard him say much harsher things about it.

"What difficulty is there in writing about how an officer fell in love with a married woman?" he used to say. "There's no difficulty in it, and above all no good in it."

I am quite convinced that if my father could have done so, he long ago would have destroyed this novel, which he never liked and always wanted to disown.

Notes:

[10] A Moscow monthly, founded by Katkóf, who somehow managed to edit both this and the daily "Moskóvskiya Vyédomosti," on which "Uncle Kóstya" worked at the same time.

In the summer, when both families were together at Yásnaya, our own and the Kuzmínsky's, when both the house and the annex were full of the family and their guests, we used our letter-box.

It originated long before, when I was still small and had only just learned to write, and it continued with intervals till the middle of the eighties.

It hung on the landing at the top of the stairs beside the grandfather's clock; and every one dropped his compositions into it, the verses, articles, or stories that he had written on topical subjects in the course of the week.

On Sundays we would all collect at the round table in the *zala*, the box would be solemnly opened, and one of the grown-ups, often my father himself, would read the contents aloud.

All the papers were unsigned, and it was a point of honor not to peep at the handwriting; but, despite this, we almost always guessed the author, either by the style, by his self-consciousness, or else by the strained indifference of his expression.

When I was a boy, and for the first time wrote a set of French verses for the letter-box, I was so shy when they were read that I hid under the table, and sat there the whole evening until I was pulled out by force.

For a long time after, I wrote no more, and was always fonder of hearing other people's compositions read than my own.

All the events of our life at Yásnaya Polyána found their echo in one way or another in the letter-box, and no one was spared, not even the grown-ups.

All our secrets, all our love-affairs, all the incidents of our complicated life were revealed in

the letter-box, and both household and visitors were good-humoredly made fun of.

Unfortunately, much of the correspondence has been lost, but bits of it have been preserved by some of us in copies or in memory. I cannot recall everything interesting that there was in it, but here are a few of the more interesting things from the period of the eighties.



## THE LETTER BOX

The old foggy continues his questions. Why, when women or old men enter the room, does every well-bred person not only offer them a seat, but give them up his own?

Why do they make Ushakóf or some Servian officer who comes to pay a visit necessarily stay to tea or dinner?

Why is it considered wrong to let an older person or a woman help you on with your overcoat?

And why are all these charming rules considered obligatory toward others, when every day ordinary people come, and we not only do not ask them to sit down or to stop to dinner or spend the night or render them any service, but would look on it as the height of impropriety?

Where do those people end to whom we are under these obligations? By what characteristics are the one sort distinguished from the others? And are not all these rules of politeness bad, if they do not extend to all sorts of people?

And is not what we call politeness  
an illusion, and a very ugly illusion?

Lyoff Tolstoy.

Question: Which is the most  
"beastly plague," a cattle-plague  
case for a farmer, or the ablative  
case for a school-boy?

Lyoff Tolstoy.

Answers are requested to the  
following questions:

Why do Ustyúsha, Masha, Alyóna,  
Peter, etc., have to bake, boil,  
sweep, empty slops, wait at table,  
while the gentry have only to eat,  
gobble, quarrel, make slops, and eat  
again?

Lyoff Tolstoy.

My Aunt Tánya, when she was in a bad temper  
because the coffee-pot had been spilt or because  
she had been beaten at croquet, was in the habit of  
sending every one to the devil. My father wrote the  
following story, "Susóitchik," about it.

The devil, not the chief devil, but  
one of the rank and file, the one  
charged with the management of  
social affairs, Susóitchik by name,  
was greatly perturbed on the 6th of  
August, 1884. From the early

morning onward, people kept arriving who had been sent him by Tatyána Kuzmínsky.

The first to arrive was Alexander Mikháilovitch Kuzmínsky; the second was Mísha Islávin; the third was Vyatcheslaf; the fourth was Seryózha Tolstoy, and last of all came old Lyoff Tolstoy, senior, accompanied by Prince Urúsof. The first visitor, Alexander Mikháilovitch, caused Susóitchik no surprise, as he often paid Susóitchik visits in obedience to the behests of his wife.

"What, has your wife sent you again?"

"Yes," replied the presiding judge of the district-court, shyly, not knowing what explanation he could give of the cause of his visit.

"You come here very often. What do you want?"

"Oh, nothing in particular; she just sent her compliments," murmured Alexander Mikháilovitch, departing from the exact truth with some effort.

"Very good, very good; come whenever you like; she is one of my best workers."

Before Susóitchik had time to show the judge out, in came all the children, laughing and jostling, and hiding one behind the other.

"What brought you here, youngsters? Did my little Tanyítchka send you? That's right; no harm in coming. Give my compliments to Tánya, and tell her that I am always at her service. Come whenever you like. Old Susóitchik may be of use to you."

No sooner had the young folk made their bow than old Lyoff Tolstoy appeared with Prince Urúsof.

"Aha! so it's the old boy! Many thanks to Tanyítchka. It's a long time since I have seen you, old chap. Well and hearty? And what can I do for you?"

Lyoff Tolstoy shuffled about, rather abashed.

Prince Urúsof, mindful of the etiquette of diplomatic receptions, stepped forward and explained Tolstoy's appearance by his wish to make acquaintance with Tatyána Andréyevna's oldest and most faithful friend.

"Les amis des nos amis sont nos amis."

"Ha! ha! ha! quite so!" said Susóitchik. "I must reward her for to-day's work. Be so kind, Prince, as to hand her the marks of my good-will."

And he handed over the insignia of an order in a morocco case. The insignia consisted of a necklace of imp's tails to be worn about the throat, and two toads, one to be worn on the bosom and the other on the bustle.

Lyoff Tolstoy, Senior

## SERGÉI NIKOLÁYEVITCH TOLSTOY

I can remember my Uncle Seryózha (Sergéi) from my earliest childhood. He lived at Pirogóvo, twenty miles from Yásnaya, and visited us often.

As a young man he was very handsome. He had the same features as my father, but he was slenderer and more aristocratic-looking. He had the same oval face, the same nose, the same intelligent gray eyes, and the same thick, overhanging eyebrows. The only difference between his face and my father's was defined by the fact that in those distant days, when my father cared for his personal appearance, he was always worrying about his ugliness, while Uncle Seryózha was considered, and really was, a very handsome man.

This is what my father says about Uncle Seryózha in his fragmentary reminiscences:

"I and Nítenka<sup>1</sup> were chums, Nikólenka I revered, but Seryózha I admired enthusiastically and imitated; I loved him and wished to be he.

"I admired his handsome exterior, his singing, -- he was always a singer, -- his drawing, his gaiety, and above all, however strange a thing it may seem to say, the directness of his egoism.<sup>2</sup>

"I always remembered myself, was aware of myself, always divined rightly or wrongly what others thought about me and felt toward

me; and this spoiled the joy of life for me. This was probably the reason why I particularly delighted in the opposite of this in other people; namely, directness of egoism. That is what I especially loved in Seryózha, though the word 'loved' is inexact.

"I loved Nikólenka, but I admired Seryózha as something alien and incomprehensible to me. It was a human life very beautiful, but completely incomprehensible to me, mysterious, and therefore especially attractive.

"He died only a few days ago, and while he was ill and while he was dying he was just as inscrutable and just as dear to me as he had been in the distant days of our childhood.

"In these latter days, in our old age, he was fonder of me, valued my attachment more, was prouder of me, wanted to agree with me, but could not, and remained just the same as he had always been; namely, something quite apart, only himself, handsome, aristocratic, proud, and, above all, truthful and sincere to a degree that I never met in any other man.

"He was what he was; he concealed nothing, and did not wish to appear anything different."

Uncle Seryózha never treated children affectionately; on the contrary, he seemed to put up with us rather than to like us. But we always treated him with particular reverence. The result, as I can see now, partly of his aristocratic appearance, but chiefly because of the fact that he called my father "Lyovótchka" and treated him just as my father treated us.

He was not only not in the least afraid of him, but was always teasing him, and argued with him like an elder person with a younger. We were quite alive to this.

Of course every one knew that there were no faster dogs in the world than our black-and-white Darling and her daughter Wizard. Not a hare could get away from them. But Uncle Seryózha said that the gray hares about us were sluggish creatures, not at all the same thing as steppe hares, and neither Darling nor Wizard would get near a steppe hare.

We listened with open mouths, and did not know which to believe, papa or Uncle Seryózha.

Uncle Seryózha went out coursing with us one day. A number of gray hares were run down, not one, getting away; Uncle Seryózha expressed no surprise, but still maintained that the only reason was because they were a poor lot of hares. We could not tell whether he was right or wrong.

Perhaps, after all, he was right, for he was more of a sportsman than papa and had run down ever so many wolves, while we had never known papa run any wolves down.



Afterward papa kept dogs only because there was Agáfya Mikháilovna to be thought of, and Uncle Seryózha gave up sport because it was impossible to keep dogs.

"Since the emancipation of the peasants," he said, "sport is out of the question; there are no huntsmen to be had, and the peasants turn out with sticks and drive the sportsmen off the fields. What is there left to do nowadays? Country life has become impossible."

With all his good breeding and sincerity, Uncle Seryózha never concealed any characteristic but one; with the utmost shyness he concealed the tenderness of his affections, and if it ever forced itself into the light, it was only in exceptional circumstances and that against his will.

He displayed with peculiar clearness a family characteristic which was partly shared by my father, namely, an extraordinary restraint in the expression of affection, which was often concealed under the mask of indifference and sometimes even of unexpected harshness. In the matter of wit and sarcasm, on the other hand, he was strikingly original.

At one period he spent several winters in succession with his family in Moscow. One time, after a historic concert given by Anton Rubinstein, at which Uncle Seryózha and his daughter had been, he came to take tea with us in Weavers' Row.<sup>3</sup>

My father asked him how he had liked the concert.

"Do you remember Himbut, Lyovótchka? Lieutenant Himbut, who was forester near Yásnaya? I once asked him what was the happiest moment of his life. Do you know what he answered?"

"When I was in the cadet corps,' he said, 'they used to take down my breeches now and again and lay me across a bench and flog me. They flogged and they flogged; when they stopped, that was the happiest moment of my life.' Well, it was only during the entr'actes, when Rubinstein stopped playing, that I really enjoyed myself."

He did not always spare my father.

Once when I was out shooting with a setter near Pirogóvo, I drove in to Uncle Seryózha's to stop the night.

I do not remember apropos of what, but Uncle Seryózha averred that Lyovótchka was proud. He said:

"He is always preaching humility and non-resistance, but he is proud himself.

"Náshenka's<sup>4</sup> sister had a footman called Forna. When he got drunk, he used to get under the staircase, tuck in his legs, and lie down. One day they came and told him that the countess was calling him. 'She can come and find me if she wants me,' he answered.

"Lyovótchka is just the same. When Dolgóruky sent his chief secretary Istómin to ask him to come and have a talk with him about Syntáyef, the sectarian, do you know what he answered?

"Let him come here, if he wants me.' Isn't that just the same as Forna?

"No, Lyovótchka is very proud. Nothing would induce him to go, and he was quite right; but it's no good talking of humility."

During the last years of Sergéi Nikoláyevitch's life my father was particularly friendly and affectionate with him, and delighted in sharing his thoughts with him.

A. A. Fet in his reminiscences describes the character of all the three Tolstoy brothers with extraordinary perspicacity:

I am convinced that the fundamental type of all the three Tolstoy brothers was identical, just as the type of all maple-leaves is identical, despite the variety of their configurations. And if I set myself to develop the idea, I could show to what a degree all three brothers shared in that passionate enthusiasm without which it would have been impossible for one of them to turn into the poet Lyoff Tolstoy. The difference of their attitude to life was determined by the difference of the ways in which they turned their backs on their unfulfilled dreams. Nikolái quenched his ardor in skeptical derision, Lyoff renounced his unrealized dreams with silent reproach, and Sergéi with morbid misanthropy. The greater the original store of love in such characters, the stronger, if only for a time, is their resemblance to *Timon of Athens*.

In the winter of 1901-02 my father was ill in the Crimea, and for a long time lay between life and death. Uncle Seryózha, who felt himself getting weaker, could not bring himself to leave Pirogóvo, and in his own home followed anxiously the course of my father's illness by the letters which several

members of our family wrote him, and by the bulletins in the newspapers.

When my father began to improve, I went back home, and on the way from the Crimea went to Pirogóvo, in order to tell Uncle Seryózha personally about the course of the illness and about the present condition of my father's health. I remember how joyfully and gratefully he welcomed me.

"How glad I am that you came! Now tell me all about it. Who is with him? All of them? And who nurses him most? Do you go on duty in turn? And at night, too? He can't get out of bed. Ah, that's the worst thing of all!

"It will be my turn to die soon; a year sooner or later, what does it matter? But to lie helpless, a burden to every one, to have others doing everything for you, lifting you and helping you to sit up, that's what's so awful.

"And how does he endure it? Got used to it, you say? No; I cannot imagine having Vera to change my linen and wash me. Of course she would say that it's nothing to her, but for me it would be awful.

"And tell me, is he afraid to die? Does he say not? Very likely; he's a strong man, he may be able to conquer the fear of it. Yes, yes, perhaps he's not afraid; but still --

"You say he struggles with the feeling? Why, of course; what else can one do?

"I wanted to go and be with him; but I thought, how can I? I shall crack up myself, and then there will be two invalids instead of one.

"Yes, you have told me a great deal; every detail is interesting. It is not death that's so terrible, it's illness, helplessness and, above all, the fear that you are a burden to others. That's awful, awful."

Uncle Seryózha died in 1904 of cancer in the face. This is what my aunt, María Nikoláyevna,<sup>5</sup> the nun, told me about his death. Almost to the last day he was on his legs, and would not let any one nurse him. He was in full possession of his faculties and consciously prepared for death.

Besides his own family, the aged María Mikháilovna and her daughters, his sister, María Nikoláyevna, who told me the story, was with him, too, and from hour to hour they expected the arrival of my father, for whom they had sent a messenger to Yásnaya. They were all troubled with the difficult question whether the dying man would want to receive the holy communion before he died.

Knowing Sergéi Nikoláyevitch's disbelief in the religion of the church, no one dared to mention the subject to him, and the unhappy María Mikháilovna hovered round his room, wringing her hands and praying.

They awaited my father's arrival impatiently, but were secretly afraid of his influence on his brother, and hoped against hope that Sergéi Nikoláyevitch would send for the priest before his arrival.

"Imagine our surprise and delight," said María Tolstoy, "when Lyovótchka came out of his room and told María Mikháilovna that Seryózha wanted a priest sent for. I do not know what they had been talking about, but when Seryózha said that he wished to take the communion, Lyovótchka answered that he was quite right, and at once came and told us what he wanted."

My father stayed about a week at Pirogóvo, and left two days before my uncle died.

When he received a telegram to say he was worse, he drove over again, but arrived too late; he was no longer living. He carried his body out from

the house with his own hands, and himself bore it to the churchyard.

When he got back to Yásnaya he spoke with touching affection of his parting with this "inscrutable and beloved" brother, who was so strange and remote from him, but at the same time so near and so akin.

Notes:

[1] Dmitry. My father's brother Dmitry died in 1856; Nikolái died September 20, 1860.

[2] That is to say, his eyes went always on the straightest road to attain satisfaction for himself.

[3] Khamsvniki, a street in Moscow.

[4] Maria Mikháilovna, his wife.

[5] Tolstoy's sister. She became a nun after her husband's death and the marriage of her three daughters.

## FET, STRAKHOF, GAY

"What's this saber doing here?" asked a young guardsman, Lieutenant Afanásiyi Afanásiyevitch Fet, of the footman one day as he entered the hall of Iván Sergéyevitch Turgéniéff's flat in St. Petersburg in the middle of the fifties.

"It is Count Tolstoy's saber; he is asleep in the drawing-room. And Iván Sergéyevitch is in his study having breakfast," replied Zalchar.

"During the hour I spent with Turgéniéff," says Fet, in his reminiscences, "we talked in low voices, for fear of waking the count, who was asleep on the other side of the door."

"He's like that all the time," said Turgéniéff, smiling; "ever since he got back from his battery at Sebastopol,<sup>6</sup> and came to stay here, he has been going the pace. Orgies, Gipsies, and gambling all night long, and then sleeps like a dead man till two o'clock in the afternoon. I did my best to stop him, but have given it up as a bad job.

"It was in this visit to St. Petersburg that I and Tolstoy became acquainted, but the acquaintance was of a purely formal character, as I had not yet seen a line of his writings, and had never heard of his name in literature, except that Turgéniéff mentioned his 'Stories of Childhood.'"

Soon after this my father came to know Fet intimately, and they struck up a firm and lasting friendship, and established a correspondence which lasted almost till Fet's death.

It was only during the last years of Fet's life, when my father was entirely absorbed in his new ideas, which were so at variance with Afanásiyi Afanásiyevitch's whole philosophy of life, that they became estranged and met more rarely.

It was at Fet's, at Stepánovka, that my father and Turgénieff quarreled.

Before the railway was made, when people still had to drive, Fet, on his way into Moscow, always used to turn in at Yásnaya Polyána to see my father, and these visits became an established custom. Afterward, when the railway was made and my father was already married, Afanási Afanásiyevitch still never passed our house without coming in, and if he did, my father used to write him a letter of earnest reproaches, and he used to apologize as if he had been guilty of some fault. In those distant times of which I am speaking my father was bound to Fet by a common interest in agriculture as well as literature.

Some of my father's letters of the sixties are curious in this respect.

For instance, in 1860, he wrote a long dissertation on Turgénieff's novel "On the Eve," which had just come out, and at the end added a postscript:

"What is the price of a set of the best quality of veterinary instruments? And what is the price of a set of lancets and bleeding-cups for human use?"

In another letter there is a postscript:

"When you are next in Oryol, buy me six-hundred weight of various ropes, reins, and traces,"

and on the same page:

"'Tender art thou,' and the whole thing is charming. You have never



done anything better; it is all charming."

The quotation is from Fet's poem:

The lingering clouds' last throng  
flies over us.

But it was not only community of interests that brought my father and Afanásyi Afanásyevitch together. The reason of their intimacy lay in the fact that, as my father expressed it, they "thought alike with their heart's mind."

I also remember Nikolái Nikoláyevitch Strakhof's visits. He was a remarkably quiet and modest man. He appeared at Yásnaya Polyána in the beginning of the seventies, and from that time on came and stayed with us almost every summer till he died.

He had big, gray eyes, wide open, as if in astonishment; a long beard with a touch of gray in it; and when he spoke, at the end of every sentence he gave a shy laugh.

When he addressed my father, he always said "Lef Nikoláyevitch" instead of Lyoff Nikolaievich, like other people.

He always stayed down-stairs in my father's study, and spent his whole day there reading or writing, with a thick cigarette, which he rolled himself, in his mouth.

Strakhof and my father came together originally on a purely business footing. When the first part of my father's "Alphabet and Reading-Book" was printed, Strakhof had charge of the proof-reading. This led to a correspondence between him and my father, of a business character at first, later developing into a philosophical and friendly one. While he was writing "Anna Karénina," my father

set great store by his opinion and valued his critical instinct very highly.

"It is enough for me that that is your opinion,"

he writes in a letter of 1872, probably apropos of the "Alphabet."

In 1876, apropos of "Anna Karénina" this time, my father wrote:

"You ask me whether you have understood my novel aright, and what I think of your opinion. Of course you understood it aright. Of course I am overjoyed at your understanding of it; but it does not follow that everybody will understand it as you do."

But it was not only his critical work that drew my father to Strakhof. He disliked critics on the whole and used to say that the only people who took to criticism were those who had no creative faculty of their own. "The stupid ones judge the clever ones," he said of professional critics. What he valued most in Strakhof was the profound and penetrating thinker. He was a "real friend" of my father's, -- my father himself so described him, -- and I recall his memory with deep affection and respect.

At last I have come to the memory of the man who was nearer in spirit to my father than any other human being, namely, Nikolái Nikoláyevitch Gay. Grandfather Gay, as we called him, made my father's acquaintance in 1882. While living on his farm in the Province of Tchernigoff, he chanced to read my father's pamphlet "On the Census," and

finding a solution in it of the very questions which were troubling him at the time, without delay he started out and hurried into Moscow. I remember his first arrival, and I have always retained the impression that from the first words they exchanged he and my father understood each other, and found themselves speaking the same language.

Just like my father, Gay was at this time passing through a great spiritual crisis; and traveling almost the same road as my father in his search after truth, he had arrived at the study of the Gospel and a new understanding of it. My sister Tatyána wrote:

For the personality of Christ he entertained a passionate and tender affection, as if for a near and familiar friend whom he loved with all the strength of his soul. Often during heated arguments Nikolái Nikoláyevitch would take the Gospel, which he always carried about with him, from his pocket, and read out some passage from it appropriate to the subject in hand. "This book contains everything that a man needs," he used to say on these occasions.

While reading the Gospel, he often looked up at the person he was talking to and went on reading without looking at the book. His face glowed at such moments with such inward joy that one could see how near and dear the words he was reading were to his heart.

He knew the whole Gospel almost by heart, but he said that every time he read it he enjoyed a new and genuine spiritual delight. He said that not only was everything intelligible to him in the Gospel, but that when he read it he seemed to be reading in his own soul, and felt himself capable of rising higher and higher toward God and merging himself in Him.

Notes:

[6] Tolstoy was in the artillery, and commanded a battery in the Crimea.

## TURGENIEV

I do not mean to recount all the misunderstandings which existed between my father and Turgéniéff, which ended in a complete breach between them in 1861. The actual external facts of that story are common property, and there is no need to repeat them.<sup>7</sup> According to general opinion, the quarrel between the two greatest writers of the day arose out of their literary rivalry.

It is my intention to show cause against this generally received opinion, and before I come to Turgéniéff's visits to Yásnaya Polyána, I want to make as clear as I can the real reason of the perpetual discords between these two good-hearted people, who had a cordial affection for each other -- discords which led in the end to an out-and-out quarrel and the exchange of mutual defiance.

As far as I know, my father never had any serious difference with any other human being during the whole course of his existence. And Turgéniéff, in a letter to my father in 1865, wrote, "You are the only man with whom I have ever had misunderstandings."

Whenever my father related his quarrel with Iván Sergéyevitch, he took all the blame on himself. Turgéniéff, immediately after the quarrel, wrote a letter apologizing to my father, and never sought to justify his own part in it.

Why was it that, as Turgéniéff himself put it, his "constellation" and my father's "moved in the ether with unquestioned enmity"?

This is what my sister Tatyána wrote on the subject in her article "Turgéniéff," published in the supplement to the "Novoye Vrémya," February 2, 1908:

All question of literary rivalry, it seems to me, is utterly beside the mark. Turgénieff, from the very outset of my father's literary career, acknowledged his enormous talents, and never thought of rivalry with him. From the moment when, as early as 1854, he wrote to Kolbásina, "If Heaven only grant Tolstoy life, I confidently hope that he will surprise us all," he never ceased to follow my father's work with interest, and always expressed his unbounded admiration of it.

"When this young wine has done fermenting," he wrote to Druzhénin in 1856, "the result will be a liquor worthy of the gods." In 1857 he wrote to Polónsky, "This man will go far, and leave deep traces behind him."

Nevertheless, somehow these two men never could "hit it off" together. When one reads Turgénieff's letters to my father, one sees that from the very beginning of their acquaintance misunderstandings were always arising, which they perpetually endeavored to smooth down or to forget, but which arose again after a time, sometimes in another form, necessitating new explanations and reconciliations.

In 1856 Turgénieff wrote to my father:

Your letter took some time reaching me, dear Lyoff Nikolaievich. Let me begin by saying that I am very grateful to you for sending it to me. I shall never cease to love you and

to value your friendship, although, probably through my fault, each of us will long feel considerable awkwardness in the presence of the other. . . . I think that you yourself understand the reason of this awkwardness of which I speak. You are the only man with whom I have ever had misunderstandings.

This arises from the very fact that I have never been willing to confine myself to merely friendly relations with you. I have always wanted to go further and deeper than that; but I set about it clumsily. I irritated and upset you, and when I saw my mistake, I drew back too hastily, perhaps; and it was this which caused this "gulf" between us.

But this awkwardness is a mere physical impression, nothing more; and if when we meet again, you see the old "mischievous look in my eyes," believe me, the reason of it will not be that I am a bad man. I assure you that there is no need to look for any other explanation. Perhaps I may add, also, that I am much older than you, and I have traveled a different road. . . . Outside of our special, so-called "literary" interests, I am convinced, we have few points of contact. Your whole being stretches out hands toward the future; mine is built up

in the past. For me to follow you is impossible. For you to follow me is equally out of the question. You are too far removed from me, and besides, you stand too firmly on your own legs to become any one's disciple. I can assure you that I never attributed any malice to you, never suspected you of any literary envy. I have often thought, if you will excuse the expression, that you were wanting in common sense, but never in goodness. You are too penetrating not to know that if either of us has cause to envy the other, it is certainly not you that has cause to envy me.

The following year he wrote a letter to my father which, it seems to me, is a key to the understanding of Turgénieff's attitude toward him:

You write that you are very glad you did not follow my advice and become a pure man of letters. I don't deny it; perhaps you are right. Still, batter my poor brains as I may, I cannot imagine what else you are if you are not a man of letters. A soldier? A squire? A philosopher? The founder of a new religious doctrine? A civil servant? A man of business? . . . Please resolve my difficulties, and tell me which of these suppositions is correct. I am joking, but I really do



wish beyond all things to see you  
under way at last, with all sails set.

It seems to me that Turgéniéff, as an artist, saw nothing in my father beyond his great literary talent, and was unwilling to allow him the right to be anything besides an artist and a writer. Any other line of activity on my father's part offended Turgéniéff, as it were, and he was angry with my father because he did not follow his advice. He was much older than my father,<sup>8</sup> he did not hesitate to rank his own talent lower than my father's, and demanded only one thing of him, that he should devote all the energies of his life to his literary work. And, lo and behold! my father would have nothing to do with his magnanimity and humility, would not listen to his advice, but insisted on going the road which his own tastes and nature pointed out to him. Turgéniéff's tastes and character were diametrically opposed to my father's. While opposition always inspired my father and lent him strength, it had just the opposite effect on Turgéniéff.

Being wholly in agreement with my sister's views, I will merely supplement them with the words uttered by his brother, Nikolái Nikoláyevitch, who said that "Turgéniéff cannot reconcile himself to the idea that Lyovótchka is growing up and freeing himself from his tutelage."

As a matter of fact, when Turgéniéff was already a famous writer, no one had ever heard of Tolstoy, and, as Fet expressed it, there was only "something said about his stories from 'Childhood.'"

I can imagine with what secret veneration a young writer, just beginning, must have regarded Turgéniéff at that time, and all the more because

Iván Sergéyevitch was a great friend of my father's elder and beloved brother Nikolái.

I do not like to assert it positively, but it seems to me that just as Turgéniéff was unwilling to confine himself to "merely friendly relations," so my father also felt too warmly toward Iván Sergéyevitch, and that was the very reason why they could never meet without disagreeing and quarreling. In confirmation of what I say here is a passage from a letter written by V. Bótkin, a close friend of my father's and of Iván Sergéyevitch's, to A. A. Fet, written immediately after their quarrel:

I think that Tolstoy really has a passionately affectionate nature and he would like to love Turgéniéff in the warmest way possible; but unfortunately his impulsive feeling encounters nothing but a kindly, good-natured indifference, and he can by no means reconcile himself to that.

Turgéniéff himself said that when they first came to know each other my father dogged his heels "like a woman in love," and at one time he used to avoid him, because he was afraid of his spirit of opposition.

My father was perhaps irritated by the slightly patronizing tone which Turgéniéff adopted from the very outset of their acquaintance; and Turgéniéff was irritated by my father's "crankiness," which distracted him from "his proper métier, literature."

In 1870, before the date of the quarrel, Turgéniéff wrote to Fet:

"Lyoff Tolstoy continues to play the crank. It was evidently written in his stars. When will he turn his last somersault and stand on his feet at last?"

TurgéniEFF was just the same about my father's "Confession," which he read not long before his death. Having promised to read it,

"to try to understand it," and "not to lose my temper," he "started to write a long letter in answer to the 'Confession,' but never finished it . . . for fear of becoming disputatious."

In a letter to D. V. Grigórevitch he called the book, which was based, in his opinion, on false premises,

"a denial of all live human life" and  
"a new sort of Nihilism."

It is evident that even then TurgéniEFF did not understand what a mastery my father's new philosophy of life had obtained over him, and he was inclined to attribute his enthusiasm along with the rest to the same perpetual "crankinesses" and "somersaults" to which he had formerly attributed his interest in school-teaching, agriculture, the publication of a paper, and so forth.

IVÁN SERGÉYEVITCH three times visited Yásnaya Polyána within my memory, in: August and September, 1878, and the third and last time at the beginning of May, 1880. I can remember all these visits, although it is quite possible that some details have escaped me.

I remember that when we expected TurgéniEFF on his first visit, it was a great occasion, and the most

anxious and excited of all the household about it was my mother. She told us that my father had quarreled with Turgéniéff and had once challenged him to a duel, and that he was now coming at my father's invitation to effect a reconciliation.

Turgéniéff spent all the time sitting with my father, who during his visit put aside even his work, and once in the middle of the day my mother collected us all at a quite unusual hour in the drawing-room, where Iván Sergéyevitch read us his story of "The Dog."

I can remember his tall, stalwart figure, his gray, silky, yellowish hair, his soft tread, rather waddling walk, and his piping voice, quite out of keeping with his majestic exterior. He had a chuckling kind of laugh, like a child's, and when he laughed his voice was more piping than ever.

In the evening, after dinner, we all gathered in the *zala*. At that time Uncle Seryózha, Prince Leoníd Dmítryevitch Urúsof, Vice-Governor of the Province of Tula; Uncle Sasha Behrs and his young wife, the handsome Georgian Patty; and the whole family of the Kuzmínskys, were staying at Yásnaya.

Aunt Tánya was asked to sing. We listened with beating hearts, and waited to hear what Turgéniéff, the famous connoisseur, would say about her singing. Of course he praised it, sincerely, I think. After the singing a quadrille was got up. All of a sudden, in the middle of the quadrille, Iván Sergéyevitch, who was sitting at one side looking on, got up and took one of the ladies by the hand, and, putting his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat, danced a cancan according to the latest rules of Parisian art. Every one roared with laughter, Turgéniéff more than anybody.

After tea the "grown-ups" started some conversation, and a warm dispute arose among them. It was Prince Urúsof who disputed most warmly, and "went for" Turgénieff.

Of Turgénieff's third visit I remember the woodcock shooting. This was on the second or third of May, 1880.

We all went out together beyond the Voronka, my father, my mother and all the children. My father gave Turgénieff the best place and posted himself one hundred and fifty paces away at the other end of the same glade.

My mother stood by Turgénieff, and we children lighted a bonfire not far off.

My father fired several shots and brought down two birds; Iván Sergéyevitch had no luck, and was envying my father's good fortune all the time. At last, when it was beginning to get dark, a woodcock flew over Turgénieff, and he shot it.

"Killed it?" called out my father.

"Fell like a stone; send your dog to pick him up," answered Iván Sergéyevitch.

My father sent us with the dog, Turgénieff showed us where to look for the bird; but search as we might, and the dog, too, there was no woodcock to be found. At last Turgénieff came to help, and my father came; there was no woodcock there.

"Perhaps you only winged it; it may have got away along the ground," said my father, puzzled. "It is impossible that the dog shouldn't find it; he couldn't miss a bird that was killed."

"I tell you I saw it with my own eyes, Lyoff Nikolaievich; it fell like a stone. I didn't wound it; I killed it outright. I can tell the difference."

"Then why can't the dog find it? It's impossible; there's something wrong."

"I don't know anything about that," insisted Turgénieff. "You may take it from me I'm not lying; it fell like a stone where I tell you."

There was no finding the woodcock, and the incident left an unpleasant flavor, as if one or the other of them was in the wrong. Either Turgénieff was bragging when he said that he shot it dead, or my father, in maintaining that the dog could not fail to find a bird that had been killed.

And this must needs happen just when they were both so anxious to avoid every sort of misunderstanding! That was the very reason why they had carefully fought shy of all serious conversation, and spent all their time merely amusing themselves.

When my father said good night to us that night, he whispered to us that we were to get up early and go back to the place to have a good hunt for the bird.

And what was the result? The woodcock, in falling, had caught in the fork of a branch, right at the top of an aspen-tree, and it was all we could do to knock it out from there.

When we brought it home in triumph, it was something of an "occasion," and my father and Turgénieff were far more delighted than we were. It turned out that they were both in the right, and everything ended to their mutual satisfaction.

Iván Sergéyevitch slept down-stairs in my father's study. When the party broke up for the night, I used to see him to his room, and while he was undressing I sat on his bed and talked sport with him.

He asked me if I could shoot. I said yes, but that I didn't care to go out shooting because I had nothing but a rotten old one-barreled gun.

"I'll give you a gun," he said. "I've got two in Paris, and I have no earthly need for both. It's not an expensive gun, but it's a good one. Next time I come to Russia I'll bring it with me."

I was quite taken aback and thanked him heartily. I was tremendously delighted at the idea that I was to have a real central-fire gun.

Unfortunately, Turgéniéff never came to Russia again. I tried afterward to buy the gun he had spoken of from his legatees not in the quality of a central-fire gun, but as Turgéniéff's gun; but I did not succeed.

That is all that I can remember about this delightful, naïvely cordial man, with the childlike eyes and the childlike laugh, and in the picture my mind preserves of him the memory of his grandeur melts into the charm of his good nature and simplicity.

In 1883 my father received from Iván Sergéyevitch his last farewell letter, written in pencil on his death-bed, and I remember with what emotion he read it. And when the news of his death came, my father would talk of nothing else for several days, and inquired everywhere for details of his illness and last days.

Apropos of this letter of Turgéniéff's, I should like to say that my father was sincerely annoyed, when he heard applied to himself the epithet "great writer of the land of Russia," which was taken from this letter.

He always hated *clichés*, and he regarded this one as quite absurd.

"Why not 'writer of the land'? I never heard before that a man could be the writer of a land. People get attached to some nonsensical expression, and go on repeating it in season and out of season."

I have given extracts above from Turgénieff's letters, which show the invariable consistency with which he lauded my father's literary talents. Unfortunately, I cannot say the same of my father's attitude toward Turgénieff.

In this, too, the want of dispassionateness in his nature revealed itself. Personal relations prevented him from being objective.

In 1867, apropos of Turgénieff's "Smoke," which had just appeared, he wrote to Fet:

There is hardly any love of anything in "Smoke" and hardly any poetry. The only thing it shows love for is light and playful adultery, and for that reason the poetry of the story is repulsive. . . . I am timid in expressing this opinion, because I cannot form a sober judgment about an author whose personality I dislike.

In 1865, before the final breach with Turgénieff, he wrote, again to Fet:

"I do not like 'Enough'! A personal subjective treatment is never good unless it is full of life and passion; but the subjectivity in this case is full of lifeless suffering.

In the autumn of 1883, after Turgénieff's death, when the family had gone into Moscow for the winter, my father stayed at Yásnaya Polyána alone, with Agáfya Mikháilovna, and set earnestly about reading through all Turgénieff's works.

This is what he wrote to my mother at the time:



I am always thinking about Turgéniéff. I am intensely fond of him, and sorry for him, and do nothing but read him. I live entirely with him. I shall certainly give a lecture on him, or write it to be read; tell Yúryef.

"Enough" -- read it; it is perfectly charming.

Unfortunately, my father's intended lecture on Turgéniéff never came off. The Government forbade him to pay this last tribute to his dead friend, with whom he had quarreled all his life only because he could not be indifferent to him.

Notes:

[7] Fet, at whose house the quarrel took place, tells all about it in his memoirs. Tolstoy dogmatized about lady-like charity, apropos of Turgéniéff's daughter. Turgéniéff, in a fit of nerves, threatened to box his ears. Tolstoy challenged him to a duel, and Turgéniéff apologized.

[8] Turgéniéff was ten years older than Tolstoy.

At this point I shall turn back and try to trace the influence which my father had on my upbringing, and I shall recall as well as I can the impressions that he left on my mind in my childhood, and later in the melancholy days of my early manhood, which happened to coincide with the radical change in his whole philosophy of life.

In 1852, tired of life in the Caucasus and remembering his old home at Yásnaya Polyána, he wrote to his aunt, Tatyána Alexándrovna:

After some years, I shall find myself, neither very young nor very old, back at Yásnaya Polyána again: my affairs will all be in order; I shall have no anxieties for the future and no troubles in the present.

You also will be living at Yásnaya. You will be getting a little old, but you will be healthy and vigorous. We shall lead the life we led in the old days; I shall work in the mornings, but we shall meet and see each other almost all day.

We shall dine together in the evening. I shall read you something that interests you. Then we shall talk: I shall tell you about my life in the Caucasus; you will give me reminiscences of my father and mother; you will tell me some of those "terrible stories" to which we

used to listen in the old days with frightened eyes and open mouths.

We shall talk about the people that we loved and who are no more.

You will cry, and I, too; but our tears will be refreshing, tranquilizing tears. We shall talk about my brothers, who will visit us from time to time, and about dear Masha, who will also spend several months every year at Yásnaya, which she loves, with all her children.

We shall have no acquaintances; no one will come in to bore us with gossip.

It is a wonderful dream; but that is not all that I let myself dream of.

I shall be married. My wife will be gentle, kind, and affectionate; she will love you as I do; we shall have children who will call you granny; you will live in the big house, in the same room on the top floor where my grandmother lived before.

The whole house will be run on the same lines as it was in my father's time, and we shall begin the same life over again, but with a change of rôles.

You will take my grandmother's place, but you will be better still than she was; I shall take my father's place, though I can never hope to be worthy of the honor.

My wife will take my mother's place, and the children ours.

Masha will fill the part of both my aunts, except for their sorrow; and there will even be Gasha there to take the place of Prashovya Ilyínitchna.

The only thing lacking will be some one to take the part you played in the life of our family. We shall never find such a noble and loving heart as yours. There is no one to succeed you.

There will be three new faces that will appear among us from time to time: my brothers, especially one who will often be with us, Nikólenka, who will be an old bachelor, bald, retired, always the same kindly, noble fellow.

Just ten years after this letter, my father married, and almost all his dreams were realized, just as he had wished. Only the big house, with his grandmother's room, was missing, and his brother Nikólenka, with the dirty hands, for he died two years before, in 1860. In his family life my father witnessed a repetition of the life of his parents, and

in us children he sought to find a repetition of himself and his brothers. We were brought up as regular gentlefolk, proud of our social position and holding aloof from all the outer world. Everything that was not us was below us, and therefore unworthy of imitation. I knew that my father felt very earnestly about the chastity of young people; I knew how much strength he laid on purity. An early marriage seemed to me the best solution of the difficult question that must harass every thoughtful boy when he attains to man's estate.

Two or three years later, when I was eighteen and we were living in Moscow, I fell in love with a young lady I knew, my present wife, and went almost every Saturday to her father's house.

My father knew, but said nothing. One day when he was going out for a walk I asked if I might go with him. As I very seldom went for walks with him in Moscow, he guessed that I wanted to have a serious talk with him about something, and after walking some distance in silence, evidently feeling that I was shy about it and did not like to break the ice, he suddenly began:

"You seem to go pretty often to the F -- -- s'."

I said that I was very fond of the eldest daughter.

"Oh, do you want to marry her?"

"Yes."

"Is she a good girl? Well, mind you don't make a mistake, and don't be false to her," he said with a curious gentleness and thoughtfulness.

I left him at once and ran back home, delighted, along the Arbat. I was glad that I had told him the truth, and his affectionate and cautious way of taking it strengthened my affection both for him, to whom I was boundlessly grateful for his cordiality, and for her, whom I loved still more warmly from

that moment, and to whom I resolved still more fervently never to be untrue.

My father's tactfulness toward us amounted almost to timidity. There were certain questions which he could never bring himself to touch on for fear of causing us pain. I shall never forget how once in Moscow I found him sitting writing at the table in my room when I dashed in suddenly to change my clothes.

My bed stood behind a screen, which hid him from me.

When he heard my footsteps he said, without looking round:

"Is that you, Ilyá?"

"Yes, it's I."

"Are you alone? Shut the door. There's no one to hear us, and we can't see each other, so we shall not feel ashamed. Tell me, did you ever have anything to do with women?"

When I said no, I suddenly heard him break out sobbing, like a little child.

I sobbed and cried, too, and for a long time we stayed weeping tears of joy, with the screen between us, and we were neither of us ashamed, but both so joyful that I look on that moment as one of the happiest in my whole life.

No arguments or homilies could ever have effected what the emotion I experienced at that moment did. Such tears as those shed by a father of sixty can never be forgotten even in moments of the strongest temptation.

My father observed my inward life most attentively between the ages of sixteen and twenty, noted all my doubts and hesitations, encouraged me in my good impulses, and often found fault with me for inconsistency.

I still have some of his letters written at that time.  
Here are two:

I had just written you, my dear friend Ilyá, a letter that was true to my own feelings, but, I am afraid, unjust, and I am not sending it. I said unpleasant things in it, but I have no right to do so. I do not know you as I should like to and as I ought to know you. That is my fault. And I wish to remedy it. I know much in you that I do not like, but I do not know everything. As for your proposed journey home, I think that in your position of student, not only student of a gymnase, but at the age of study, it is better to gad about as little as possible; moreover, all useless expenditure of money that you can easily refrain from is immoral, in my opinion, and in yours, too, if you only consider it. If you come, I shall be glad for my own sake, so long as you are not inseparable from G -- -- .

Do as you think best. But you must work, both with your head, thinking and reading, and with your heart; that is, find out for yourself what is really good and what is bad, although it seems to be good. I kiss you.

L. T.

Dear Friend Ilyá:

There is always somebody or something that prevents me from answering your two letters, which are important and dear to me, especially the last. First it was Baturlín, then bad health, insomnia, then the arrival of D -- -- , the friend of H -- -- that I wrote you about. He is sitting at tea talking to the ladies, neither understanding the other; so I left them, and want to write what little I can of all that I think about you.

Even supposing that S -- -- A -- -- demands too much of you, <sup>1</sup> there is no harm in waiting; especially from the point of view of fortifying your opinions, your faith. That is the one important thing. If you don't, it is a fearful disaster to put off from one shore and not reach the other.

The one shore is an honest and good life, for your own delight and the profit of others. But there is a bad life, too -- a life so sugared, so common to all, that if you follow it, you do not notice that it is a bad life, and suffer only in your conscience, if you have one; but if you leave it, and do not reach the real shore, you will be made miserable by solitude and by the



reproach of having deserted your fellows, and you will be ashamed. In short, I want to say that it is out of the question to want to be rather good; it is out of the question to jump into the water unless you know how to swim. One must be truthful and wish to be good with all one's might, too. Do you feel this in you? The drift of what I say is that we all know what *Princess Márya Alexévna's*<sup>2</sup> verdict about your marriage would be: that if young people marry without a sufficient fortune, it means children, poverty, getting tired of each other in a year or two; in ten years, quarrels, want - - hell. And in all this *Princess Márya Alexévna* is perfectly right and plays the true prophet, unless these young people who are getting married have another purpose, their one and only one, unknown to *Princess Márya Alexévna*, and that not a brainish purpose, not one recognized by the intellect, but one that gives life its color and the attainment of which is more moving than any other. If you have this, good; marry at once, and give the lie to *Princess Márya Alexévna*. If not, it is a hundred to one that your marriage will lead to nothing but misery. I am speaking to you from the bottom of my heart. Receive my words into the bottom of yours, and weigh them well. Besides love for

you as a son, I have love for you also as a man standing at the cross-ways. I kiss you and Lyólya and Nolétchka and Seryózha, if he is back. We are all alive and well.

The following letter belongs to the same period:

Your letter to Tánya has arrived, my dear friend Ilyá, and I see that you are still advancing toward that purpose which you set up for yourself; and I want to write to you and to her -- for no doubt you tell her everything -- what I think about it. Well, I think about it a great deal, with joy and with fear mixed. This is what I think. If one marries in order to enjoy oneself more, no good will ever come of it. To set up as one's main object, ousting everything else, marriage, union with the being you love, is a great mistake. And an obvious one, if you think about it. Object, marriage. Well, you marry; and what then? If you had no other object in life before your marriage, it will be twice as hard to find one.

As a rule, people who are getting married completely forget this.

So many joyful events await them in the future, in wedlock and the arrival of children, that those events

seem to constitute life itself. But this is indeed a dangerous illusion.

If parents merely live from day to day, begetting children, and have no purpose in life, they are only putting off the question of the purpose of life and that punishment which is allotted to people who live without knowing why; they are only putting it off and not escaping it, because they will have to bring up their children and guide their steps, but they will have nothing to guide them by. And then the parents lose their human qualities and the happiness which depends on the possession of them, and turn into mere breeding cattle.

That is why I say that people who are proposing to marry because their life *seems* to them to be full must more than ever set themselves to think and make clear to their own minds for the sake of what each of them lives.

And in order to make this clear, you must consider the circumstances in which you live, your past. Reckon up what you consider important and what unimportant in life. Find out what you believe in; that is, what you look on as eternal and immutable truth, and what you will take for your guide in life. And not

only find out, but make clear to your own mind, and try to practise or to learn to practise in your daily life; because until you practise what you believe you cannot tell whether you believe it or not.

I know your faith, and that faith, or those sides of it which can be expressed in deeds, you must now more than ever make clear to your own mind, by putting them into practice.

Your faith is that your welfare consists in loving people and being loved by them. For the attainment of this end I know of three lines of action in which I perpetually exercise myself, in which one can never exercise oneself enough and which are specially necessary to you now.

First, in order to be able to love people and to be loved by them, one must accustom oneself to expect as little as possible from them, and that is very hard work; for if I expect much, and am often disappointed, I am inclined rather to reproach them than to love them.

Second, in order to love people not in words, but in deed, one must train oneself to do what benefits them. That needs still harder work,

especially at your age, when it is one's natural business to be studying.

Third, in order to love people and to b. l. b. t.,<sup>3</sup> one must train oneself to gentleness, humility, the art of bearing with disagreeable people and things, the art of behaving to them so as not to offend any one, of being able to choose the least offense. And this is the hardest work of all -- work that never ceases from the time you wake till the time you go to sleep, and the most joyful work of all, because day after day you rejoice in your growing success in it, and receive a further reward, unperceived at first, but very joyful after, in being loved by others.

So I advise you, Friend Ilyá, and both of you, to live and to think as sincerely as you can, because it is the only way you can discover if you are really going along the same road, and whether it is wise to join hands or not; and at the same time, if you are sincere, you must be making your future ready.

Your purpose in life must not be the joy of wedlock, but, by your life to bring more love and truth into the world. The object of marriage is to

help one another in the attainment of that purpose.

The vilest and most selfish life is the life of the people who have joined together only in order to enjoy life; and the highest vocation in the world is that of those who live in order to serve God by bringing good into the world, and who have joined together for that very purpose. Don't mistake half-measures for the real thing. Why should a man not choose the highest? Only when you have chosen the highest, you must set your whole heart on it, and not just a little. Just a little leads to nothing. There, I am tired of writing, and still have much left that I wanted to say. I kiss you.

Notes:

[1] I had written to my father that my fiancée's mother would not let me marry for two years.

[2] My father took Griboyéhof's *Princess Márya Alexévna* as a type. The allusion here is to the last words of Griboyéhof's famous comedy, "The Misfortune of Cleverness," "What will *Princess Márya Alexévna* say?"

[3] Be loved by them.

## HELP FOR THE FAMINE STRICKEN

After my father had come to the conclusion that it was not only useless to help people with money, but immoral, the part he took in distributing food among the peasants during the famines of 1890, 1891, and 1898 may seem to have shown inconsistency and contradiction of thought.

"If a horseman sees that his horse is tired out, he must not remain seated on its back and hold up its head, but simply get off," he used to say, condemning all the charities of the well-fed people who sit on the back of the working classes, continue to enjoy all the benefits of their privileged position, and merely give from their superfluity.

He did not believe in the good of such charity and considered it a form of self-hallucination, all the more harmful because people thereby acquire a sort of moral right to continue that idle, aristocratic life and get to go on increasing the poverty of the people.

In the autumn of 1890 my father thought of writing an article on the famine, which had then spread over nearly all Russia.

Although from the newspapers and from the accounts brought by those who came from the famine-stricken parts he already knew about the extent of the peasantry's disaster, nevertheless, when his old friend Ivánovitch Rayóvsky called on him at Yásnaya Polyána and proposed that he should drive through to the Dankóvski District with him in order to see the state of things in the villages for himself, he readily agreed, and went with him to his property at Begitchóvka.

He went there with the intention of staying only for a day or two; but when he saw what a call there was for immediate measures, he at once set to work to help Rayóvsky, who had already instituted several kitchens in the villages, in relieving the distress of the peasantry, at first on a small scale, and then, when big subscriptions began to pour in from every side, on a continually increasing one. The upshot of it was that he devoted two whole years of his life to the work.

It is wrong to think that my father showed any inconsistency in this matter. He did not delude himself for a moment into thinking he was engaged on a virtuous and momentous task, but when he saw the sufferings of the people, he simply could not bear to go on living comfortably at Yásnaya or in Moscow any longer, but had to go out and help in order to relieve his own feelings. Once he wrote:

There is much about it that is not what it ought to be; there is S. A.'s money<sup>4</sup> and the subscriptions; there is the relation of those who feed and those who are fed. *There is sin without end*, but I cannot stay at home and write. I feel the necessity of taking part in it, of doing something.

Six years later I worked again at the same job with my father in Tchornski and Mtsenski districts.

After the bad crops of the two preceding years it became clear by the beginning of the winter of 1898 that a new famine was approaching in our neighborhood, and that charitable assistance to the peasantry would be needed. I turned to my father for help. By the spring he had managed to collect



some money, and at the beginning of April he came himself to see me.

I must say that my father, who was very economical by nature, was extraordinarily cautious and, I may say, even parsimonious in charitable matters. It is of course easy to understand, if one considers the unlimited confidence which he enjoyed among the subscribers and the great moral responsibility which he could not but feel toward them. So that before undertaking anything he had himself to be fully convinced of the necessity of giving aid.

The day after his arrival, we saddled a couple of horses and rode out. We rode as we had ridden together twenty years before, when we went out coursing with our greyhounds; that is, across country, over the fields.

It was all the same to me which way we rode, as I believed that all the neighboring villages were equally distressed, and my father, for the sake of old memories, wanted to revisit Spásskoye Lyutovinóvo, which was only six miles from me, and where he had not been since Turgéniéff's death. On the way there I remember he told me all about Turgéniéff's mother, who was famous through all the neighborhood for her remarkable intelligence, energy, and craziness. I do not know that he ever saw her himself, or whether he was telling me only the reports that he had heard.

As we rode across the Turgéniéff's [sic] park, he recalled in passing how of old he and Ivan Sergéyevitch had disputed which park was best, Spásskoye or Yásnaya Polyána. I asked him:

"And now which do you think?"

"Yásnaya Polyána *is* the best, though this is very fine, very fine indeed."

In the village we visited the head-man's and two or three other cottages, and came away disappointed. There was no famine.

The peasants, who had been endowed at the emancipation with a full share of good land, and had enriched themselves since by wage-earnings, were hardly in want at all. It is true that some of the yards were badly stocked; but there was none of that acute degree of want which amounts to famine and which strikes the eye at once.

I even remember my father reproaching me a little for having sounded the alarm when there was no sufficient cause for it, and for a little while I felt rather ashamed and awkward before him.

Of course when he talked to the peasants he asked each of them if he remembered Turgénieff and eagerly picked up anything they had to say about him. Some of the old men remembered him and spoke of him with great affection.

Notes:

[4] His wife's.

## MY FATHER'S ILLNESS IN THE CRIMEA

In the autumn of 1901 my father was attacked by persistent feverishness, and the doctors advised him to spend the winter in the Crimea. Countess Panina kindly lent him her Villa Gaspra, near Koréiz, and he spent the winter there.

Soon after his arrival, he caught cold and had two illnesses one after the other, enteric fever and inflammation of the lungs. At one time his condition was so bad that the doctors had hardly any hope that he would ever rise from his bed again. Despite the fact that his temperature went up very high, he was conscious all the time; he dictated some reflections every day, and deliberately prepared for death.

The whole family was with him, and we all took turns in helping to nurse him. I look back with pleasure on the nights when it fell to me to be on duty by him, and I sat in the balcony by the open window, listening to his breathing and every sound in his room. My chief duty, as the strongest of the family, was to lift him up while the sheets were being changed. When they were making the bed, I had to hold him in my arms like a child.

I remember how my muscles quivered one day with the exertion. He looked at me with astonishment and said:

"You surely don't find me heavy? What nonsense!"

I thought of the day when he had given me a bad time at riding in the woods as a boy, and kept asking, "You're not tired?"

Another time during the same illness he wanted me to carry him down-stairs in my arms by the winding stone staircase.

"Pick me up as they do a baby and carry me."

He had not a grain of fear that I might stumble and kill him. It was all I could do to insist on his being carried down in an arm-chair by three of us.

Was my father afraid of death?

It is impossible to answer the question in one word. With his tough constitution and physical strength, he always instinctively fought not only against death, but against old age. Till the last year of his life he never gave in, but always did everything for himself and even rode on horseback.

To suppose, therefore, that he had no instinctive fear of death is out of the question. He had that fear, and in a very high degree, but he was constantly fighting to overcome it.

Did he succeed?

I can answer definitely yes. During his illness he talked a great deal of death and prepared himself for it firmly and deliberately. When he felt that he was getting weaker, he wished to say good-by to everybody, and he called us all separately to his bedside, one after the other, and gave his last words of advice to each. He was so weak that he spoke in a half-whisper, and when he had said good-by to one, he had to rest for a while and collect his strength for the rest.

When my turn came, he said as nearly as I can remember:

"You are still young and strong and tossed by storms of passion. You have not therefore yet been able to think over the chief questions of life. But this stage will pass. I am sure of it. When the time comes, believe me, you will find the truth in the teachings of the Gospel. I am dying peacefully simply because I have come to know that teaching and believe in it. May God grant you this knowledge soon! Good-by."

I kissed his hand and left the room quietly. When I got to the front door, I rushed to a lonely stone tower, and there sobbed my heart out in the darkness like a child. Looking round at last, I saw that some one else was sitting on the staircase near me, also crying.

So I said farewell to my father years before his death, and the memory of it is dear to me, for I know that if I had seen him before his death at Astapova he would have said just the same to me.

To return to the question of death, I will say that so far from being afraid of it, in his last days he often desired it; he was more interested in it than afraid of it. This "greatest of mysteries" interested him to such a degree that his interest came near to love. How eagerly he listened to accounts of the death of his friends, Turgénieff, Gay, Leskóf,<sup>5</sup> Zhemtchúzhnikof<sup>6</sup> and others! He inquired after the smallest matters; no detail, however trifling in appearance, was without its interest and importance to him.

His "Circle of Reading," November 7, the day he died, is devoted entirely to thoughts on death.

"Life is a dream, death is an awakening," he wrote, while in expectation of that awakening.

Apropos of the "Circle of Reading," I cannot refrain from relating a characteristic incident which I was told by one of my sisters.

When my father had made up his mind to compile that collection of the sayings of the wise, to which he gave the name of "Circle of Reading," he told one of his friends about it.

A few days afterward this friend came to see him again, and at once told him that he and his wife had been thinking over his scheme for the new book and had come to the conclusion that he ought to call it "For Every Day," instead of "Circle of Reading."

To this my father replied that he preferred the title "Circle of Reading" because the word "circle" suggested the idea of continuous reading, which was what he meant to express by the title.

Half an hour later the friend came across the room to him and repeated exactly the same remark again. This time my father made no reply. In the evening, when the friend was preparing to go home, as he was saying good-by to my father, he held his hand in his and began once more:

"Still, I must tell you, Lyoff Nikolaievich, that I and my wife have been thinking it over, and we have come to the conclusion," and so on, word for word the same.

"No, no, I want to die -- to die as soon as possible," groaned my father when he had seen the friend off.

"Isn't it all the same whether it's 'Circle of Reading' or 'For Every Day'? No, it's time for me to die: I cannot live like this any longer."

And, after all, in the end, one of the editions of the sayings of the wise was called "For Every Day" instead of "Circle of Reading."

"Ah, my dear, ever since this Mr. -- -- turned up, I really don't know which of Lyoff Nikolaievich's writings are by Lyoff Nikolaievich and which are by Mr. -- -- !" murmured our old friend, the pure-hearted and far from malicious Márya Alexandróvna Schmidt.

This sort of intrusion into my father's work as an author bore, in the "friend's" language, the modest title of "corrections beforehand," and there is no doubt that Márya Alexandróvna was right, for no one will ever know where what my father wrote ends and where his concessions to Mr. -- -- 's persistent "corrections beforehand" begin, all the more as this careful adviser had the forethought to

arrange that when my father answered his letters he was always to return him the letters they were answers to.<sup>7</sup>

Besides the desire for death that my father displayed, in the last years of his life he cherished another dream, which he made no secret of his hope of realizing, and that was the desire to suffer for his convictions. The first impulse in this direction was given him by the persecution on the part of the authorities to which, during his lifetime, many of his friends and fellow-thinkers were subjected.

When he heard of any one being put in jail or deported for disseminating his writings, he was so disturbed about it that one was really sorry for him. I remember my arrival at Yásnaya some days after Gúsef's arrest.<sup>8</sup> I stayed two days with my father, and heard of nothing but Gúsef. As if there were nobody in the world but Gúsef! I must confess that, sorry as I was for Gúsef, who was shut up at the time in the local prison at Krapivna, I harbored a most wicked feeling of resentment at my father's paying so little attention to me and the rest of those about him and being so absorbed in the thought of Gúsef.

I willingly acknowledge that I was wrong in entertaining this narrow-minded feeling. If I had entered fully into what my father was feeling, I should have seen this at the time.

As far back as 1896, in consequence of the arrest of a doctor, Miss N -- -- , in Tula, my father wrote a long letter to Muravyof, the Minister of Justice, in which he spoke of the "unreasonableness, uselessness, and cruelty of the measures taken by the Government against those who disseminate these forbidden writings," and begged him to "direct the measures taken to punish or intimidate the perpetrators of the evil, or to put an end to it,

against the man whom you regard as the real instigator of it . . . all the more, as I assure you beforehand, that I shall continue without ceasing till my death to do what the Government considers evil and what I consider my sacred duty before God."

As every one knows, neither this challenge nor the others that followed it led to any result, and the arrests and deportations of those associated with him still went on.

My father felt himself morally responsible toward all those who suffered on his account, and every year new burdens were laid on his conscience.

Notes:

[5] A novelist, died 1895.

[6] One of the authors of "Junker Schmidt."

[7] The curious may be disposed to trace to some such "corrections beforehand" the remarkable discrepancy of style and matter which distinguishes some of Tolstoy's later works, published after his death by Mr. Tchertkof and his literary executors.

[8] Tolstoy's private secretary, arrested and banished in 1908.



## MASHA'S DEATH

As I reach the description of the last days of my father's life, I must once more make it clear that what I write is based only on the personal impressions I received in my periodical visits to Yásnaya Polyána.

Unfortunately, I have no rich shorthand material to rely on, such as Gúsef and Bulgákof had for their memoirs, and more especially Dushán Petróvitch Makowicki, who is preparing, I am told, a big and conscientious work, full of truth and interest.

In November, 1906, my sister Masha died of inflammation of the lungs. It is a curious thing that she vanished out of life with just as little commotion as she had passed through it. Evidently this is the lot of all the pure in heart.

No one was particularly astonished by her death. I remember that when I received the telegram, I felt no surprise. It seemed perfectly natural to me. Masha had married a kinsman of ours, Prince Obolénski; she lived on her own estate at Pirogóvo, twenty-one miles from us, and spent half the year with her husband at Yásnaya. She was very delicate and had constant illnesses.

When I arrived at Yásnaya the day after her death, I was aware of an atmosphere of exaltation and prayerful emotion about the whole family, and it was then I think for the first time that I realized the full grandeur and beauty of death.

I definitely felt that by her death Masha, so far from having gone away from us, had come nearer to us, and had been, as it were, welded to us forever in a way that she never could have been during her lifetime.

I observed the same frame of mind in my father. He went about silent and woebegone, summoning

all his strength to battle with his own sorrow; but I never heard him utter a murmur of a complaint, only words of tender emotion. When the coffin was carried to the church he changed his clothes and went with the cortège. When he reached the stone pillars he stopped us, said farewell to the departed, and walked home along the avenue. I looked after him and watched him walk away across the wet, thawing snow with his short, quick old man's steps, turning his toes out at a sharp angle, as he always did, and never once looking round.

My sister Masha had held a position of great importance in my father's life and in the life of the whole family. Many a time in the last few years have we had occasion to think of her and to murmur sadly: "If only Masha had been with us! If only Masha had not died!"

In order to explain the relations between Masha and my father I must turn back a considerable way. There was one distinguishing and, at first sight, peculiar trait in my father's character, due perhaps to the fact that he grew up without a mother, and that was that all exhibitions of tenderness were entirely foreign to him.

I say "tenderness" in contradistinction to heartiness. Heartiness he had and in a very high degree.

His description of the death of my Uncle Nikolái is characteristic in this connection. In a letter to his other brother, Sergéi Nikoláyevitch, in which he described the last day of his brother's life, my father tells how he helped him to undress.

"He submitted, and became a different man. . . . He had a word of praise for everybody, and said to me, 'Thanks, my friend.' You

understand the significance of the words as between us two."

It is evident that in the language of the Tolstoy brothers the phrase "my friend" was an expression of tenderness beyond which imagination could not go. The words astonished my father even on the lips of his dying brother.

During all his lifetime I never received any mark of tenderness from him whatever.

He was not fond of kissing children, and when he did so in saying good morning or good night, he did it merely as a duty.

It is therefore easy to understand that he did not provoke any display of tenderness toward himself, and that nearness and dearness with him were never accompanied by any outward manifestations.

It would never have come into my head, for instance, to walk up to my father and kiss him or to stroke his hand. I was partly prevented also from that by the fact that I always looked up to him with awe, and his spiritual power, his greatness, prevented me from seeing in him the mere man -- the man who was so plaintive and weary at times, the feeble old man who so much needed warmth and rest.

The only person who could give him that warmth was Masha.

She would go up to him, stroke his hand, caress him, and say something affectionate, and you could see that he liked it, was happy, and even responded in kind. It was as if he became a different man with her. Why was it that Masha was able to do this, while no one else even dared to try? If any other of us had done it, it would have seemed unnatural, but Masha could do it with perfect simplicity and sincerity.

I do not mean to say that others about my father loved him less than Masha; not at all; but the display of love for him was never so warm and at the same time so natural with any one else as with her.

So that with Masha's death my father was deprived of this natural source of warmth, which, with advancing years, had become more and more of a necessity for him.

Another and still greater power that she possessed was her remarkably delicate and sensitive conscience. This trait in her was still dearer to my father than her caresses.

How good she was at smoothing away all misunderstandings! How she always stood up for those who were found any fault with, justly or unjustly! It was all the same to her. Masha could reconcile everybody and everything.

During the last years of his life my father's health perceptibly grew worse. Several times he had the most sudden and inexplicable sort of fainting fits, from which he used to recover the next day, but completely lost his memory for a time.

Seeing my brother Andréi's children, who were staying at Yásnaya, in the zala one day, he asked with some surprise, "Whose children are these?" Meeting my wife, he said, "Don't be offended, my dear; I know that I am very fond of you, but I have quite forgotten who you are"; and when he went up to the zala after one of these fainting fits, he looked round with an astonished air and said, "Where's my brother Nítenka." Nítenka had died fifty years before.

The day following all traces of the attack would disappear.

During one of these fainting fits my brother Sergéi, in undressing my father, found a little note-

book on him. He put it in his own pocket, and next day, when he came to see my father, he handed it back to him, telling him that he had not read it.

"There would have been no harm in *your* seeing it," said my father, as he took it back.

This little diary in which he wrote down his most secret thoughts and prayers was kept "for himself alone," and he never showed it to any one. I saw it after my father's death. It is impossible to read it without tears.

It is curious that the sudden decay of my father's memory displayed itself only in the matter of real facts and people. He was entirely unaffected in his literary work, and everything that he wrote down to the last days of his life is marked by his characteristic logicalness and force. It may be that the reason he forgot the details of real life was because he was too deeply absorbed in his abstract work.

My wife was at Yásnaya Polyána in October, and when she came home she told me that there was something wrong there. "Your mother is nervous and hysterical; your father is in a silent and gloomy frame of mind."

I was very busy with my office work, but made up my mind to devote my first free day to going and seeing my father and mother.

When I got to Yásnaya, my father had already left it.

I paid Aunt Masha a visit some little time after my father's funeral. We sat together in her comfortable little cell, and she repeated to me once more in detail the oft-repeated story of my father's last visit to her.

"He sat in that very arm-chair where you are sitting now, and how he cried!" she said.

"When Sasha arrived with her girl friend, they set to work studying this map of Russia and planning out a route to the Caucasus. Lyovótchka sat there thoughtful and melancholy.

"Never mind, Papa; it'll be all right,' said Sasha, trying to encourage him.

"Ah, you women, you women!' answered her father, bitterly. 'How can it ever be all right?'

"I so much hoped that he would settle down here; it would just have suited him. And it was his own idea, too; he had even taken a cottage in the village," Aunt Masha sadly recalled.

"When he left me to go back to the hotel where he was staying, it seemed to me that he was rather calmer.

"When he said good-by, he even made some joke about his having come to the wrong door.

"I certainly would never have imagined that he would go away again that same night."

It was a grievous trial for Aunt Masha when the old confessor Iosif, who was her spiritual director, forbade her to pray for her dead brother because he had been excommunicated. She was too broad-minded to be able to reconcile herself to the harsh intolerance of the church, and for a time she was honestly indignant. Another priest to whom she applied also refused her request.

Márya Nikoláyevna could not bring herself to disobey her spiritual fathers, but at the same time she felt that she was not really obeying their injunction, for she prayed for him all the same, in thought, if not in words.

There is no knowing how her internal discord would have ended if her father confessor, evidently understanding the moral torment she was suffering, had not given her permission to pray for her

brother, but only in her cell and in solitude, so as not to lead others astray.

## MY FATHER'S WILL. CONCLUSION

Although my father had long since renounced the copyright in all his works written after 1883, and although, after having made all his real estate over to his children, he had, as a matter of fact, no property left, still he could not but be aware that his life was far from corresponding to his principles, and this consciousness perpetually preyed upon his mind. One has only to read some of his posthumous works attentively to see that the idea of leaving home and radically altering his whole way of life had presented itself to him long since and was a continual temptation to him.

This was the cherished dream that always allured him, but which he did not think himself justified in putting into practice.

The life of the Christian must be a "reasonable and happy life *in all possible circumstances*," he used to say as he struggled with the temptation to go away, and gave up his own soul for others.

I remember reading in Gúsef's memoirs how my father once, in conversation with Gusoryóf, the peasant, who had made up his mind to leave his home for religious reasons, said, "My life is a hundred thousand times more loathsome than yours, but yet I cannot leave it."

I shall not enumerate all the letters of abuse and amazement which my father received from all sides, upbraiding him with luxury, with inconsistency, and even with torturing his peasants. It is easy to imagine what an impression they made on him.

He said there was good reason to revile him; he called their abuse "a bath for the soul," but internally he suffered from the "bath," and saw no



way out of his difficulties. He bore his cross, and it was in this self-renunciation that his power consisted, though many either could not or would not understand it. He alone, despite all those about him, knew that this cross was laid on him not of man, but of God; and while he was strong, he loved his burden and shared it with none.

Just as thirty years before he had been haunted by the temptation to suicide, so now he struggled with a new and more powerful temptation, that of flight.

A few days before he left Yásnaya he called on Márya Alexandróvna Schmidt at Ovsyanniki and confessed to her that he wanted to go away.

The old lady held up her hands in horror and said: "Gracious Heavens, Lyoff Nikolaievich, have you come to such a pitch of weakness?"

When I learned, on October 28, 1910, that my father had left Yásnaya, the same idea occurred to me, and I even put it into words in a letter I sent to him at Shamerdino by my sister Sasha.

I did not know at the time about certain circumstances which have since made a great deal clear to me that was obscure before.

From the moment of my father's death till now I have been racking my brains to discover what could have given him the impulse to take that last step. What power could compel him to yield in the struggle in which he had held firmly and tenaciously for many years? What was the last drop, the last grain of sand that turned the scales, and sent him forth to search for a new life on the very edge of the grave?

Could he really have fled from home because the wife that he had lived with for forty-eight years had developed neurasthenia and at one time showed certain abnormalities characteristic of that malady? Was that like the man who so loved his fellows and

so well knew the human heart? Or did he suddenly desire, when he was eighty-three, and weak and helpless, to realize the idea of a pilgrim's life?

If so, why did he take my sister Sasha and Dr. Makowicki with him? He could not but know that in their company he would be just as well provided with all the necessaries of life as he would have been at Yásnaya Polyána. It would have been the most palpable self-deception.

Knowing my father as I did, I felt that the question of his flight was not so simple as it seemed to others, and the problem lay long unsolved before me until it was suddenly made clear by the will that he left behind him.

I remember how, after N. S. Leskóf's death, my father read me his posthumous instructions with regard to a pauper funeral, with no speeches at the grave, and so on, and how the idea of writing his own will then came into his head for the first time.

His first will was written in his diary, on March 27, 1895.<sup>9</sup>

The fourth paragraph, to which I wish to call particular attention, contains a request to his next of kin to transfer the right of publishing his writings to society at large, or, in other words, to renounce the copyright of them.

"But I only request it, and do not direct it. It is a good thing to do. And it will be good for you to do it; but if you do not do it, that is your affair. It means that you are not yet ready to do it. The fact that my writings have been bought and sold during these last ten years has been the most painful thing in my whole life to me."

Three copies were made of this will, and they were kept by my sister Masha, my brother Sergéi, and Tchertkof.

I knew of its existence, but I never saw it till after my father's death, and I never inquired of anybody about the details.

I knew my father's views about copyright, and no will of his could have added anything to what I knew. I knew, moreover, that this will was not properly executed according to the forms of law, and personally I was glad of that, for I saw in it another proof of my father's confidence in his family. I need hardly add that I never doubted that my father's wishes would be carried out.

My sister Masha, with whom I once had a conversation on the subject, was of the same opinion.

In 1909 my father stayed with Mr. Tchertkof at Krekshin, and there for the first time he wrote a formal will, attested by the signature of witnesses. How this will came to be written I do not know, and I do not intend to discuss it. It afterward appeared that it also was imperfect from a legal point of view, and in October, 1909, it had all to be done again.

As to the writing of the third we are fully informed by Mr. F. Strakhof in an article which he published in the St. Petersburg "Gazette" on November 6, 1911.

Mr. Strakhof left Moscow at night. He had calculated on Sófya Andréyevna,<sup>10</sup> whose presence at Yásnaya Polyána was highly inexpedient for the business on which he was bound, being still in Moscow.

The business in question, as was made clear in the preliminary consultation which V. G. Tchertkof

held with N. K. Muravyof, the solicitor, consisted in getting fresh signatures from Lyoff Nikolaievich, whose great age made it desirable to make sure, without delay, of his wishes being carried out by means of a more unassailable legal document. Strakhof brought the draft of the will with him, and laid it before Lyoff Nikolaievich. After reading the paper through, he at once wrote under it that he agreed with its purport, and then added, after a pause:

"All this business is very disagreeable to me, and it is unnecessary. To insure the propagation of my ideas by taking all sorts of measures -- why, no word can perish without leaving its trace, if it expresses a truth, and if the man who utters it believes profoundly in its truth. But all these outward means for insuring it only come of our disbelief in what we utter."

And with these words Lyoff Nikolaievich left the study.

Thereupon Mr. Strakhof began to consider what he must do next, whether he should go back with empty hands, or whether he should argue it out.

He decided to argue it out, and endeavored to explain to my father how painful it would be for his friends after his death to hear people blaming him for not having taken any steps, despite his strong opinion on the subject, to see that his wishes were carried out, and for having thereby helped to transfer his copyrights to the members of his family.

Tolstoy promised to think it over, and left the room again.

At dinner Sófya Andréyevna "was evidently far from having any suspicions." When Tolstoy was not by, however, she asked Mr. Strakhof what he had come down about. Inasmuch as Mr. Strakhof

had other affairs in hand besides the will, he told her about one thing and another with an easy conscience.

Mr. Strakhof described a second visit to Yásnaya, when he came to attest the same will as a witness.

When he arrived, he said: "The countess had not yet come down. I breathed again."

Of his departure, he said:

As I said good-by to Sófyá Andréyevna, I examined her countenance attentively. Such complete tranquillity and cordiality toward her departing guests were written on it that I had not the smallest doubt of her complete ignorance of what was going on. . . . I left the house with the pleasing consciousness of a work well done - - a work that was destined to have a considerable historic consequence. I only felt some little twinge within, certain qualms of conscience about the conspiratorial character of the transaction.

But even this text of the will did not quite satisfy my father's "friends and advisers"; it was redrafted for the fourth and last time in July, 1910.

This last draft was written by my father himself in the Limonovski Forest, two miles from the house, not far from Mr. Tchertkof's estate.

Such is the melancholy history of this document, which was destined to have historic consequences. "All this business is very disagreeable to me, and it is unnecessary," my father said when he signed the paper that was thrust before him. That was his real

opinion about his will, and it never altered to the end of his days.

Is there any need of proof for that? I think one need know very little of his convictions to have no doubt about it.

Was Lyoff Nikolaievich Tolstoy likely of his own accord to have recourse to the protection of the law? And, if he did, was he likely to conceal it from his wife and children?

He had been put into a position from which there was absolutely no way out. To tell his wife was out of the question; it would have grievously offended his friends. To have destroyed the will would have been worse still; for his friends had suffered for his principles morally, and some of them materially, and had been exiled from Russia. He felt himself bound to them.

And on the top of all this were his fainting fits, his increasing loss of memory, the clear consciousness of the approach of death, and the continually growing nervousness of his wife, who felt in her heart of hearts the unnatural estrangement of her husband, and could not understand it. If she asked him what it was that he was concealing from her, he would either have to say nothing or to tell her the truth. But that was impossible.

So it came about that the long-cherished dream of leaving Yásnaya Polyána presented itself as the only means of escape. It was certainly not in order to enjoy the full realization of his dream that he left his home; he went away only as a choice of evils.

"I am too feeble and too old to begin a new life," he had said to my brother Sergéi only a few days before his departure.

Harassed, ill in body and in mind, he started forth without any object in view, without any thought-out

plan, merely in order to hide himself somewhere, wherever it might be, and get some rest from the moral tortures which had become insupportable to him.

"To fly, to fly!" he said in his deathbed delirium as he lay at Astapova.

"Has papa considered that mama may not survive the separation from him?" I asked my sister Sasha on October 29, when she was on the point of going to join him at Shamerdino.

"Yes, he has considered all that, and still made up his mind to go, because he thinks that nothing could be worse than the state that things have come to here," she answered.

I confess that my explanation of my father's flight by no means exhausts the question. Life is complex and every explanation of a man's conduct is bound to suffer from one-sidedness. Besides, there are circumstances of which I do not care to speak at the present moment, in order not to cause unnecessary pain to people still living. It may be that if those who were about my father during the last years of his life had known what they were doing, things would have turned out differently.

The years will pass. The accumulated incrustations which hide the truth will pass away. Much will be wiped out and forgotten. Among other things my father's will will be forgotten -- that will which he himself looked upon as an "unnecessary outward means." And men will see more clearly that legacy of love and truth in which he believed deeply, and which, according to his own words, "cannot perish without a trace."

In conclusion I cannot refrain from quoting the opinion of one of my kinsmen, who, after my father's death, read the diaries kept both by my

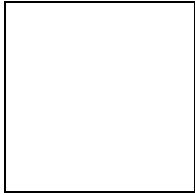
father and my mother during the autumn before Lyoff Nikolaievich left Yásnaya Polyána.

"What a terrible misunderstanding!" he said. "Each loved the other with such poignant affection, each was suffering all the time on the other's behalf, and then this terrible ending! . . . I see the hand of fate in this."

Notes:

[9] Five weeks after Leskóf's death.

[10] The Countess Tolstoy.



THE END

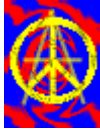


# THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF

LEO TOLSTOY

(1891)

Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
(<http://www.myspot.org/tolstoy/index.html>)



From: <http://www.jtrapp.com/>

PREFACE BY TOLSTOY

A PROLOGUE

THE SON OF GOD

THE SERVICE OF GOD

THE SOURCE OF LIFE

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE TRUE LIFE

THE FALSE LIFE

I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE

LIFE IS NOT TEMPORAL

TEMPTATIONS

THE STRUGGLE WITH TEMPTATION

THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE

THE VICTORY OF SPIRIT OVER MATTER

A SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

## PREFACE BY TOLSTOY

THIS short exposition of the Gospel is a summary of a large work which exists in manuscript and cannot be published in Russia. That work consists of four parts:

1. An account (Confession) of the course of my own life and of the thoughts which led me to the conviction that the Christian teaching contains the truth.
2. An examination of the Christian teaching: first according to its interpretation by the Orthodox Russo-Greek Church, then according to its interpretation by the Church in general-by the Apostles, the Councils, the so-called Fathers of the Church-and an exposure of what is false in those interpretations.
3. An examination of Christian teaching not according to those interpretations but solely according to what has come down to us of Christ's teaching, as ascribed to him in the Gospels.
4. An exposition of the real meaning of Christ's teaching, the reasons why it has been perverted, and, the consequences to which it should lead.

From the third of those parts the present account as been compiled.

The harmonization of the four Gospels has been in accord with the sense of the teaching. In making it I hardly had to digress from the order in it is set down in the Gospels, so that there are not more but fewer transpositions of the verses than in most of the concordances known to me, or than in Grechulevich's arrangement of the Four Gospels. In my treatment of the Gospel of John there are no transpositions, but everything follows the order of the original.

The division of the Gospel into twelve chapters (or six if each two be united) came about of itself from the sense of the teaching. This is the meaning of those chapters:

1. Man is the son of an infinite source: a son of that Father not by the flesh but by the spirit.

2. Therefore man should serve that source in spirit.
3. The life of all men has a divine origin. It alone is holy.
4. Therefore man should serve that source in the life of all men. Such is the will of the Father.
5. The service of the will of that Father of life gives life.
6. Therefore the gratification of one's own will is not necessary for life.
7. Temporal life is food for the true life.
8. Therefore the true life is independent of time: it is in the present.
9. Time is an illusion of life; life in the past and in the future conceals from men the true life of the present.
10. Therefore man should strive to destroy the illusion of the temporal life of the past and future.
11. True life is life in the present, common to all men and manifesting itself in love.
12. Therefore, he who lives by love in the present, through the common life of all men, unites with the Father, the source and foundation of life. So each two chapters are related as cause and effect. In addition to these twelve chapters an introduction from the first chapter of the Gospel of John is added, in which the writer of that Gospel speaks, in his own name, as to the meaning of the whole teaching, and a conclusion from the same writer's Epistle (written probably before the Gospel) containing a general deduction from all that precedes.

These two parts do not form an essential part of the teaching, but though they both might be omitted without losing the sense of the teaching (the more so as they come in the name of John and not of Jesus) I have retained them because in a straightforward understanding of Christ's teaching these parts, confirming one another and the whole, furnish, in contradiction to the queer interpretation of the Churches, the plainest indication of the meaning that should be ascribed to the teaching.

At the beginning of each chapter, besides a brief indication of its subject, I have given the words which correspond to that chapter from the prayer Jesus taught his disciples.

When I had finished my work I found to my surprise and joy that the Lord's Prayer is nothing but a very concise expression of the whole teaching of Jesus in the very order in which I had arranged the chapters, and that each phrase of the prayer corresponds to the meaning and sequence of the chapters:

1. Our Father, Man is a son of God
2. Which art in Heaven, God is the infinite spiritual source of life.
3. Hallowed be Thy Name, May this source of life be held holy
4. Thy Kingdom come, May his power be realized in all men
5. Thy will be done, as in heaven, May the will of his infinite source be fulfilled as it is in himself
6. So on earth, so also in the bodily life.
7. Give us our daily bread, Temporal life is the food of the true life.
8. Each day. True life is in the present.
9. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, And let not the mistakes and errors of the past hide that true life from us.
10. And lead us not into temptation, And may they not lead us into delusion,
11. But deliver us from evil, And so there shall be no evil.
12. For thine is the kingdom the power, and the glory, And may thy power, and strength, and wisdom, prevail.

In the full exposition, in the third part, everything in the Gospels is set down without any omissions. But in the present rendering the following are omitted: the conception and birth of John the Baptist, his imprisonment and death, the birth of Jesus, his genealogy, his mother's flight with him to Egypt; his miracles at Cana and Capernaum; the casting out of the devils; the walking on the sea; the

blasting of the fig-tree; the healing of the sick; the raising of the dead; the resurrection of Christ himself, and the references to prophecies fulfilled by his life.

Those passages are omitted in the present short exposition because, containing nothing of the teaching but only describing events that took place before, during, or after the period in which Jesus taught, they complicate the exposition. Those verses, however they may be understood, do not contain either contradiction or confirmation of the teaching. Their sole significance for Christianity was to prove the divinity of Jesus to those who did not believe in it. But for one who understands that a story of miracles is unconvincing, and who also doubts that the divinity of Jesus is asserted in his teaching, those verses drop away of themselves as superfluous.

In the larger work every deviation from the ordinary version, as well as every inserted comment and every omission, is explained and justified by comparison of the different variants of the Gospels, by examination of contexts, and by philological and other considerations. In the present brief rendering all such proofs and refutations of the false understanding of the Churches, as well as the detailed notes and references, are omitted, on the ground that however exact and correct the discussions of each separate passage may be, they cannot carry conviction as to the true understanding of the teaching. The justness of the understanding of the teaching is better proved not by the discussion of particular passages but by its own unity, clarity, simplicity and completeness, and by its accordance with the inner feeling of all who seek the truth. In respect of all the divergences of my rendering from the Church's authorized text, the reader should not forget that the customary conception that the four Gospels with all their verses and syllables are sacred books is a very gross error.

The reader should remember that Jesus never wrote any book himself, as Plato, Philo, or Marcus Aurelius did; nor even, like Socrates, transmitted his teaching to educated

men, but that he spoke to many uneducated men and only long after his death did people begin to write down what they had heard about him. The reader should remember that there were very many such accounts from among which the Churches selected first three Gospels and then one more, and that in selecting those best Gospels as the proverb, - 'There is no stick without knots' says - they had to take in many knots with what they selected from the whole mass of writings about Christ, and that there are many passages in the canonical Gospels just as poor as in the rejected apocryphal ones.

The reader should remember that it is the teaching of Christ which may be sacred, but certainly not any definite number of verses and syllables, and that certain verses picked out from here to there cannot become sacred merely because people say they are.

Moreover the reader should remember that these selected Gospels are also the work of thousands of different human brains and hands, that they have been selected, added to, and commented on, for centuries, that all the copies that have come down to us from the fourth century are written in continuous script without punctuation, so that even after the fourth and fifth centuries they have been subject to very diverse readings, and that there are not less than fifty thousand such variations of the Gospels.

This should all be borne in mind by the reader, that he may not be misled by the customary view that the Gospels in their present form have come to us direct from the Holy Ghost.

The reader should remember that far from it being blameworthy to discard useless passages from the Gospels and elucidate some passages by others, it is on the contrary irrational not to do so and to hold a certain number of verses and syllables as sacred.

On the other hand I beg readers to remember that if I do not regard the Gospels as sacred books that have come down to us from the Holy Ghost, even less do I regard them as mere

historical monuments of religious literature. I understand the theological as well as the historical view of the Gospels, but regard them myself differently, and so I beg the reader not to be confused either by the church view or by the historical view customary in day among educated people, neither of which I hold.

I regard Christianity neither as an inclusive divine revelation nor as an historical phenomenon, but as a teaching which-gives us the meaning of life. I was led to Christianity neither by theological nor historical investigations but by this-that when I was fifty years old, having asked myself and all the learned men around me what I am and what is the meaning of my life, and received the answer that I am a fortuitous concatenation of atoms and that life has no meaning but is itself an evil, I fell into despair and wanted to put an end to my life; but remembered that formerly in childhood when I believed, life had a meaning for me, and that for the great mass of men about me who believe and are not corrupted by riches life has a meaning; and I doubted the validity of the reply given me by the learned men of my circle and I tried to understand the reply Christianity gives to those who live a real life. And I began to seek Christianity in the Christian teaching that guides such men's lives. I began to study the Christianity which I saw applied in life and to compare that applied Christianity with its source.

The source of Christian teaching is the Gospels, and in them I found the explanation of the spirit which guides the life of all who really live. But together with this source of the pure water of life I found, wrongfully united with it, mud and slime which had hidden its purity from me: by the side of and bound up with the lofty Christian teaching I found a Hebrew and a Church teaching alien to it. I was in the position of a man who receives a bag of stinking dirt, and only after long struggle and much labor finds that amid that dirt lie priceless pearls; and he understands that he was not to blame for disliking the stinking dirt, and that those

who have collected and preserved these pearls together with the dirt are also not to blame but deserve love and respect.

I did not know the light and had thought there was no light of truth to be found in life, but having convinced myself that men live by that light alone, I began to look for its source and found it in the Gospels, despite the false Church interpretations. And on reaching that source of light I was dazzled by it, and found full replies to my questions as to the meaning of my own life and that of others-answers in full agreement with those I knew of from other nations, but which in my opinion were superior to them all.

I was looking for an answer to the question of life and not to theological or historical questions, and so for me the chief question was not whether Jesus was or was not God, or from whom the Holy Ghost proceeded and so forth, and equally unimportant and unnecessary was it for me to know when and by whom each Gospel was written and whether such and such a parable may, or may not, be ascribed to Christ. What was important to me was this light which has enlightened mankind for eighteen hundred years and which enlightened and still enlightens me; but how to name the source of that light, and what materials he or someone else had kindled, did not concern me.

On that this preface might end were the Gospels recently discovered books and had Christ's teaching not suffered eighteen hundred years of false interpretation. But now to understand the teaching of Jesus it is necessary to know clearly the chief methods used in these false interpretations. The most customary method of false interpretation, and one which we have grown up with, consists of preaching under the name of Christianity not what Christ taught but a church teaching composed of explanations of very contradictory writings into which Christ's teaching enters only to a small degree, and even then distorted and twisted to fit together with other writings. According to this false interpretation Christ's teaching is only one link in a chain



of revelations beginning with the commencement of the world and continuing in the Church until now. These false interpreters call Jesus God; but the fact that they recognize him as God does not make them attribute more importance to his words and teaching than to the words of the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, the Apocalypse, or even to the decisions of the Councils and the writings of the Fathers of the Church.

These false interpreters do not admit any understanding of the teaching of Jesus which does not conform to the previous and subsequent revelations; so that their aim is not to explain the meaning of Christ's teaching, but as far as possible to harmonize various extremely contradictory writings, such as the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Acts-that is, all that is supposed to constitute the Holy Scriptures.

Such explanations aiming not at truth but at reconciling the irreconcilable, namely, the writings of the Old and the New Testament, can obviously be innumerable, as indeed they are. Among them are the Epistles of Paul and the decisions of the Councils (which begin with the formulary: 'It has pleased Us and the Holy Ghost'), and such enactments as those of the Popes, the Synods, the pseudo-Christ's, and all the false interpreters who affirm that the Holy Ghost speaks through their lips. They all employ one and the same gross method of affirming, the truth of their interpretations by the assertion that their interpretations are not human utterances but revelations from the Holy Ghost. Without entering on an examination of these beliefs, each of which calls itself the true one, one cannot help seeing that by the method common to them all of acknowledging the whole immense quantity of so-called scriptures of the Old and New Testament as equally sacred, they themselves impose an insuperable obstacle to an understanding of Christ's teaching; and that from this mistake arises the possibility and inevitability of endlessly divergent interpretations of the teaching. The reconciliation of a number of revelations

can be infinitely varied, but the interpretation of the teaching of one person (and one looked upon as God) should not occasion discord.

If God descended to earth to teach people, his teaching, by the very purpose of his coming, cannot be understood in more than one way. If God came down to earth to reveal truth to men, at least he would have revealed it so that all might understand: if he did not do that he was not God; and if the divine truths are such that even God could not make them intelligible to mankind, men certainly cannot do so.

If Jesus is not God, but a great man, then still less can his teaching produce discord. For the teaching of a great man is only great because it expresses intelligibly and clearly what others have expressed unintelligibly and obscurely. What is incomprehensible in a great man's teaching is not great, and therefore a great man's teaching does not engender sects. Only an exposition which affirms that it is a revelation from the Holy Ghost and is the sole truth, and that all other expositions are lies, gives birth to discord and to the mutual animosities among the Churches that result therefrom. However much the various Churches affirm that they do not condemn other communities, that they have no hatred of them but pray for union, it is untrue. Never, since the time of Arius, has the affirmation of any dogma arisen from any other cause than the desire to condemn a contrary belief as false. It is a supreme degree of pride and ill will to others to assert that a particular dogma is a divine revelation proceeding from the Holy Ghost: the highest presumption because nothing more arrogant can be said than that the words spoken by me are uttered through me by God; and the greatest ill will because the avowal of oneself as in possession of the sole indubitable truth implies an assertion of the falsity of all who disagree. Yet that is just what all the Churches say, and from this alone flows and has flowed all the evil which has been committed and still is committed in the world in the name of religion.

But besides the temporary evil which such an interpretation by the Churches and the sects produces, it has another important inner defect which gives an obscure, indefinite, and insincere character to their assertions. This defect consists in the fact that all the Churches-having acknowledged the latest revelation of the Holy Ghost, who descended on the apostles and has passed and still passes to the supposedly elect-nowhere define directly, definitely, and finally, in what that revelation consists; and yet they base their belief on that supposedly continuing revelation and call it Christian. All the churchmen who acknowledge the revelation from the Holy Ghost recognize (like the Mohammedans) three revelations: that of Moses, of Jesus, and of the Holy Ghost. But in the Mohammedan religion it is believed that after Moses and Jesus, Mahomet is the last of the prophets and that he explained the revelations of Moses and Jesus, and this revelation of Mahomet every True Believer has before him.

But it is not so with the Church faith. That also, like the Mohammedan, acknowledges three revelations: that of Moses, of Jesus, and of the Holy Ghost, but it does not call itself Holy Ghostism after the name of the last revealer, but affirms that the basis of its faith is the teaching of Christ. So that while preaching, its own doctrines it attributes their authority to Christ. Churchmen acknowledging the last revelation explaining all previous ones, should say so and call their religion by the name of whoever received the last revelation- acknowledging it to be that of Paul, or of this or that Council of the Church, or of the Pope, or of the Patriarch. And if the last revelation was that of the Fathers, a decree of the Eastern Patriarchs, a Papal encyclical, or the syllabus or catechism of Luther or of Philaret-they should say so and call their religion accordingly, because the last revelation which explains all the preceding is always the most important one. But they do not do so, but while preaching doctrines quite alien to Christ's teaching, affirm that their doctrine was taught by Christ. So that according

to their teaching Jesus declared that by his blood he had redeemed the human race ruined by Adam's sins; that God is three persons; that the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles and was transmitted to the priesthood by the laying on of hands; that seven sacraments are necessary for salvation; that communion should be received in two kinds, and so on. They would have us believe that all this is the teaching of Jesus, whereas in reality there is not a word about any of it in his teaching. Those false teachers should call their teaching and religion the teaching, and religion of the Holy Ghost but not of Christ; for only that faith can be called Christian which recognizes the revelation of Christ reaching us in the Gospels as the final revelation. It would seem that the matter is plain and not worth speaking about, but, strange to say, up to now the teaching of Christ is not separated on the one side from an artificial and quite unjustifiable amalgamation with the Old Testament, and on the other from the arbitrary additions and perversions made in the name of the Holy Ghost.

To this day there are some who, calling Jesus the second person of the Trinity, do not conceive of his teaching otherwise than in conjunction with those pseudo revelations of the third Person which they find in the Old Testament, the Epistles, the decrees of the Councils and the decisions of the Fathers, and they preach the strangest beliefs, affirming them to be the religion of Christ. Others not acknowledging Jesus as God, similarly conceive of his teaching not as he could have taught it but as understood by Paul and other commentators. While regarding Jesus not as God but as a man, these commentators deny him a most legitimate human right, that of answering only for his own words and not for false interpretations of them. Trying to explain his teaching, these learned commentators attribute to Jesus things he never thought of saying. The representatives of this school of interpreters—beginning with the most popular of them, Renan—without troubling to separate what Jesus himself taught from what the slanders

of his commentators have laid upon him, and without troubling to understand his teaching more profoundly, try to understand the meaning of his appearance and the spread of his teaching by, the events of his life and the circumstances of his time.

The problem that confronts them is this: eighteen hundred years ago a certain pauper appeared and said certain things. He was flogged and executed. And ever since that time (though there have been numbers of just men who died for their faith), milliards of people, wise and foolish, learned and ignorant, have clung to the belief that this man alone among men was God. How is this amazing fact to be explained? The churchmen say that it occurred because Jesus was God. In that case it is all understandable. But if he was not God how are we to explain that everyone looked upon just this common man as God? And the learned men of that school assiduously explore every detail of the life of Jesus, without noticing that however much they explore those details (in reality they have gathered none), even if they were able to reconstruct his whole life in the minutist detail, the question why he, just he, had such an influence on people would still remain unanswered. The answer is not to be found in knowledge of the society Jesus was born into, or how he was educated, and so on, still less is it to be found in knowledge of what was being done in Rome, or in the fact that the people of that time were inclined to superstition, but only by knowing what this man preached that has caused people, from that time to this, to distinguish him from all others and to acknowledge him as God. It would seem that the first thing to do is to try to understand that man's teaching, and naturally his own teaching and not coarse interpretations of it that have been spread since his time. But this is not done. These learned historians of Christianity are so pleased to have understood that Jesus was not God and are so anxious to prove that his teaching is not divine and is therefore not obligatory, that forgetting that the more they prove him to have been an ordinary man

and his teaching not to be divine the further they are from solving the problem before them-they strain all their strength to do so. To see this surprising error clearly, it is worth recalling an article by Havet, a follower of Renan's, who affirms that Jesus Christ n'avait rien de chr,tien, or Souris, who enthusiastically argues that Jesus Christ was a very coarse and stupid man.

The essential thing is, not to prove that Jesus was not God and that therefore his doctrine is not divine, or to prove that he was a Catholic, but to know in all its purity what constituted that which was so lofty and so precious to men that they, have acknowledged and still acknowledge its preacher to have been God.

And so if the reader belongs to the great majority of educated people brought up in the Church belief but who have abandoned its incompatibilities with common sense and conscience-whether he has retained a love and respect for the spirit of the Christian teaching or (as the proverb puts it 'has thrown his fur coat into the fire because he is angry with the bugs') considers all Christianity a harmful superstition-I ask him to remember that what repels him and seems to him a superstition is not the teaching of Christ; that Christ cannot be held responsible for that monstrous tradition that has been interwoven with his teaching and presented as Christianity: that to prejudge of Christianity, on the teaching of Christ as it has come down to us must be learned -that is, the words and actions attributed to Christ and that have an instructive meaning. Studying the teaching of Christ in that way the reader will convince himself that Christianity, far from being a mixture of the lofty and the low, or a superstition, is a very strict, pure, and complete metaphysical and ethical doctrine, higher than which the reason of man has not yet reached, and in the orbit of which (without recognizing the fact) human activity-political, learned, poetic, and philosophic-is moving.

If the reader belongs to that small minority of educated people who hold to the Church religion and profess it not for outward purposes but for inward tranquillity, I ask him to remember that the teaching of Christ as set forth in this book (despite the identity of name) is quite a different teaching from that which he professes, and that therefore the question for him is not whether the doctrine here offered agrees or disagrees with his belief, but is simply, which best accords with his reason and conscience—the Church teaching composed of adjustments of many scriptures, or the teaching of Christ alone? The question for him is merely whether he wishes to accept the new teaching or to retain his own belief.

But if the reader is one of those who outwardly profess the Church creed and values it not because he believes it to be true but because he considers that to profess and preach it is profitable to him, then let him remember that however many adherents he may have, however powerful they may be, on whatever thrones they may sit, and by whatever great names they may call themselves, he is not one of the accusers but of the accused. Let such readers remember that there is nothing for them to prove, that they have long ago said what they had to say and that even if they could prove what they wish to, they would only prove, each for himself, what is proved by all the hundreds of opposing Churches; and that it is not for them to demonstrate, but to excuse themselves: to excuse themselves for the blasphemy of adjusting the teaching of the God-Christ to suit the teaching of Ezras, of the Councils, and Theophilacts, and allowing themselves to interpret and alter the words of God in conformity with the words of men; to excuse themselves for their libels on God by which they have thrown all the fanaticism they had in their hearts onto the God-Jesus and given it out as his teaching; to excuse themselves for the fraud by which, having hidden the teaching of God who came to bestow blessing on the world, they have replaced it by their own blasphemous creed, and by that substitution

have deprived and still deprive milliards of people of the blessing Christ brought to men, and instead of the peace and love he brought have introduced into the world sects, condemnations, murders, and all manner of crimes.

For such readers there are only two ways out: humble confession and renunciation of their lies, or a persecution of those who expose them for what they have done and are still doing.

If they will not disavow their lies, only one thing remains for them: to persecute me-for which I, completing what I have written, prepare myself with joy and with fear of my own weakness.

LEO TOLSTOY.

YASNAYA POLYANA, 1883.



## THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF

Announcement of welfare by Jesus Christ the Son of God

### A PROLOGUE

#### THE UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE

Jesus Christ's announcement replaced the belief in an external God by an understanding of life.

THE announcement of welfare by Jesus Christ, the son of God.

The announcement of welfare consists in this, that all men who believe that they are the sons of God obtain true life. The understanding of life is at the basis and the beginning of all. The understanding of life is God. And by the announcement of Jesus it has become the basis and beginning of all things.

All things have come to life by understanding, and without it nothing can live. Understanding gives true life. Understanding is the light of truth, and the light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot extinguish it.

The true light has always existed in the world and enlightens every man who is born in the world. It was in the world, and the world only lived because it had that light of understanding.

But the world did not retain it. He came unto his own, and his own retained him not.

Only those who understood the enlightenment were able to become like him because they believed in his reality. Those who believed that life lies in the understanding became no longer sons of the flesh, but sons of understanding.

And the understanding of life, in the person of Jesus Christ, manifested itself in the flesh, and we understood his meaning to be that the son of understanding, man in the flesh, of one nature with the Father the source of life, is such as the Father, the source of life.

The teaching of Jesus is the full and true faith, for by fulfilling the teaching of Jesus we understand a new faith instead of the former. Moses gave us a law, but we received the true faith through Jesus Christ.

No one has seen God or will ever see God, only his son, who is in the Father, has shown us the path of life.

# I THE SON OF GOD

Man, the son of God, is weak in the flesh but free in the spirit.

'OUR FATHER'

THE birth of Jesus Christ was thus: His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph. But before they began to live as man and wife it appeared that Mary was pregnant. Joseph however was a good man and did not wish to shame her: he took her as his wife and had no relations with her till she had given birth to her first son and had named him Jesus.

And the boy grew and matured and was intelligent beyond his years.

When Jesus was twelve years old Mary went once with Joseph for the holiday at Jerusalem and took the boy with her. When the holiday was over they started homeward and forgot about the boy. Then they remembered, but thought he had gone with other lads, and on the way they inquired about him but he was nowhere to be found, so they went back for him to Jerusalem. And not till the third day did they find the boy in the church, where he was sitting with the teachers and asking questions. And everyone was surprised at his intelligence. His mother saw him and said: 'What have you done to us? Your father and I have been looking for you and grieving.' And he said to them: 'But where did you look for me? Surely you knew that a son should be looked for in his Father's house?' And they did not understand him, nor did they understand whom he called his Father.

And after this Jesus lived with his mother and obeyed her in everything. And he advanced in stature and in intelligence. And everyone thought that Jesus was the son of Joseph. And so he lived to the age of thirty.

At that time a prophet John announced himself in Judea. He lived in the open country of Judea near the Jordan. His

dress was of camelhair belted with a strap, and he fed on bark and on herbs.

John said: Bethink yourselves, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. He called on the people to change their lives and get rid of wickedness, and as a sign of that change of life he bathed them in the Jordan. He said: A voice calls to you; Open a way for God through the wilderness, level a path for him. Make it so that all may be level, that there may be neither hollows nor hills, neither high nor low. Then God will be among you and all will find salvation. And the people asked him: What must we do? He replied: Let him that has two suits of clothes give one to him that has none, and let him that has food give to him that has none. And tax-gatherers came to him and asked: What are we to do? He said to them: Extort nothing beyond what is due. And soldiers asked: How are we to live? He said: Do no one any harm, nor defraud any man, and be content with what is served out to you.

And inhabitants of Jerusalem came to him, and the Jews in the neighborhood of Judea near the Jordan. And they acknowledged their wrong-doings to him, and as a sign of a changed life he bathed them in the Jordan.

And many of the Orthodox and conventional religionists came to John, but secretly. He recognized them and said: You are a race of vipers: or have you also seen that you cannot escape the will of God? Then bethink yourselves and change your faith! And if you wish to change your faith let it be seen by your fruits that you have bethought yourselves. The axe is already laid to the tree. If the tree produces bad fruit it will be cut down and cast into the fire. As a sign of a changed life I cleanse you in water, but as well as that bathing you must also be cleansed with the spirit. The spirit will cleanse you as a master cleanses his threshing-floor when he gathers the wheat and burns the chaff.

Jesus, too, came from Galilee to the Jordan to be bathed by John, and was bathed and heard John's preaching.

And from the Jordan he went into the wild places and there felt the power of the spirit.

Jesus remained in the desert forty days and forty nights without food or drink. And the voice of the flesh said to him: If you were the son of Almighty God you could make bread out of stones, but you cannot do so, therefore you are not a son of God.

But Jesus said to himself. If I cannot make bread out of stones, it means that I am not a son of God in the flesh but in the spirit. I am alive not by bread but by the spirit. And my spirit is able to disregard the flesh.

But still hunger tormented him, and the voice of the flesh again said to him: If you live only by the spirit and can disregard the flesh, you can throw off the flesh and your spirit will remain alive.

And it seemed to him that he was standing on the roof of the temple and the voice of the flesh said to him: If you are a son of God in the spirit, throw yourself from the temple, you will not hurt yourself but an unseen force will keep you, support you, and save you from all harm. But Jesus said to himself. I can disregard the flesh, but I may not throw it off, for I was born by the spirit into the flesh. That was the will of the Father of my spirit, and I cannot oppose him.

Then the voice of the flesh said to him: If you cannot oppose your Father by throwing yourself from, the temple and discarding life, then you cannot oppose your Father by hungering when you need to eat. You must not make light of the desires of the flesh; they are placed in you, and you must serve them. Then Jesus seemed to see all the kingdoms of the earth and all the peoples, just as they live and labor for the flesh, expecting gain therefrom. And the voice of the flesh said to him: There, you see, these people work for me and I give them what they wish for. If you will work for me you will have the same. But Jesus said to himself: My Father is not flesh but spirit. I live by him. I am always aware of his presence in me. Him alone I honor

and for him alone I work, expecting reward from him alone.

Then the temptations ceased and Jesus knew the power of the spirit. And when he had experienced the power of the spirit, Jesus went out of the wild places and came again to John and stayed with him.

And when Jesus was leaving John, John said of him: That is the saviour of men. On hearing those words of John two of his pupils left their former teacher and went after Jesus. He, seeing them following him, stopped and said: What do you want? They replied: Teacher, we wish to be with you and to know your teaching. He said: Come with me and I will tell you everything. They went with him and stayed with him, listening to him till ten o'clock.

One of these pupils was called Andrew. He had a brother Simon. Having heard Jesus, Andrew went to his brother Simon and said to him: We have found him of whom the prophets wrote-the Messiah has told us of our salvation. Andrew took Simon and brought him also to Jesus. Jesus called this brother of Andrew's, Peter, which means a stone. And both these brothers became pupils of Jesus. Afterwards, before entering Galilee, Jesus met Philip and called him to go with him. Philip was from Bethsaida and a fellow-villager of Peter and Andrew. When Philip had got to know Jesus he went and found his brother Nathanael and said to him: We have found the chosen of God of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. This is Jesus, the son of Joseph of Nazareth. Nathanael was surprised that he of whom the prophets wrote should be from a neighboring village, and he said: It is most unlikely that the messenger of God should be from Nazareth. Philip said: Come with me, you shall see and hear for yourself. Nathaniel agreed and went with his brother and met Jesus, and when he had heard him he said to Jesus: Yes, now I see that it is true that you are a son of God and the King of Israel. Jesus said to him: Learn something more important than that: henceforth the heavens are opened and men may be in communion

with the heavenly powers. Henceforth God will no longer be separate from men.

And Jesus came home to Nazareth and on a holiday went as usual into the Assembly and began to read. They gave him the book of the prophet Isaiah; and unrolling it he read. In the book was written: The spirit of the Lord is in me. He has chosen me to announce happiness to the unfortunate and the brokenhearted, to announce freedom to those who are bound, light to the blind, and salvation and rest to the tormented, to announce to all men the day of God's mercy. He folded the book, returned it to the attendant, and sat down. And all waited to hear what he would say. And he said to them: That writing has now been fulfilled before your eyes.

## II THE SERVICE OF GOD

Therefore man should work not for the flesh, but for the spirit.

"WHICH ART IN HEAVEN"

IT happened that Jesus was walking across a field with his pupils one Saturday. The pupils were hungry, and on the way they plucked ears of corn and rubbed them in their hands and ate the grain. But according to the teaching of the Orthodox, God had given Moses a law that everyone should observe Saturday and do nothing that day. According to the teaching of the Orthodox, God had ordered that anyone who worked on Saturday should be stoned.

The Orthodox noticed that the pupils rubbed ears of corn on a Saturday and said to them: It is wrong to do that on a Saturday. One must not work on Saturday, and you are rubbing ears of corn. God made Saturday holy, and commanded that the breaking of it should be punished by death.

Jesus heard this, and said: If you understood what is meant by the words of God: 'I desire love and not sacrifice'-you would not condemn what is harmless. Man is more important than Saturday. It happened another time on a Saturday that when Jesus was teaching in the Assembly a sick woman came to him and asked him to help her. And Jesus began to cure her.

The Orthodox church-elder was angry with Jesus, and said to the people: In the law of God it is said: 'There are six days in the week on which to work. But Jesus then asked the Orthodox professors of the law: Do you think it is wrong to help a man on Saturday? And they did not know what to answer.

Then Jesus said: Deceivers! Does not each of you untie his ox from its manger and take it to water on Saturday? And if his sheep fell into a well would not any one of you pull it



out even on Saturday? A man is much better than a sheep: yet you say that it is wrong to help a man. What then do you think we should do on Saturday-good or evil? Save life or destroy it? Good should be done always, even on Saturday.

Jesus one day saw a tax-gatherer receiving taxes. The tax-gatherer's name was Matthew. Jesus talked to him and Matthew understood him, liked his teaching, and invited him to his house and showed him hospitality.

When Jesus came to Matthew's house some of Matthew's friends were also there tax-gatherers and unbelievers. Jesus did not disdain them, but he and his pupils sat down with them. And when the Orthodox saw him, they said to his pupils: How is it that your teacher eats with tax-gatherers and unbelievers? For according to the teaching of the Orthodox, God forbids any intercourse with unbelievers. Jesus heard this, and said: He who boasts of good health needs no doctor, but a sick man does. Understand what the words of God mean: 'I desire love and not sacrifice.' I cannot teach a change of faith to those who consider themselves Orthodox, but to those who consider themselves unbelievers.

Some Orthodox professors of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem. And they saw that his pupils, and Jesus himself, ate bread without having washed their hands, and these Orthodox began to blame him for that, for they themselves strictly observed the Church tradition as to how the dishes should be washed, and would not eat unless they had been so washed. And they would also not eat anything from the market until they had washed their hands.

And the Orthodox professors of the law asked him: Why do you not follow the Church traditions, but take bread with unwashed hands and eat it? And he answered them: How is it that you with your Church traditions break God's commandment? God said to you: 'Honour your father and mother'. But you have arranged that anyone may say-. 'I give to God what I used to give to my parents', and then he

is not bound to feed his father and mother. So by the Church tradition you break the law of God. Deceivers! Well did the prophet Isaiah say of you: 'Because these people fall down before me only in words, and honour me only with their tongue, while their heart is far from me; and because their fear of me is only a human law which they have learnt by rote, I will do a wonderful, an extraordinary thing among them: the wisdom of their wise men shall be lost, and the understanding of their thinkers shall be dimmed. Woe to those who seek to hide their desires from the Highest, and who do their deeds in darkness.'

So it is with you: You neglect what is important in the law-the commandment of God-but observe your own traditions as to the washing of cups. And Jesus called the people to him and said: Hear all of you and understand: there is nothing in the world that entering a man can defile him; but what goes forth from him, that can defile a man. Let love and mercy be in your soul, then all will be clean. Try to understand this.

And when he returned home his pupils asked him what those words meant. And he said: Do you also not understand? Do you not understand that what is external, bodily, cannot defile a man? For it does not enter his soul but his belly. It enters his belly and passes out again. Only that which goes out of him from his soul can defile a man. For out of a man's soul proceed evil, adulteries, obscenity, murders, thefts, covetousness, wrath, deceit, insolence, envy, calumny, pride, and every kind of folly. And this evil is out of man's soul and it alone can defile him.

After this came the Passover, and Jesus went to Jerusalem and entered the temple. In the courts of the temple were cattle: cows, bulls, and sheep; and there were cotes for pigeons; and money-changers behind their counters. All this was wanted for offerings to God. The animals were killed and offered up in the Temple. That was how the Jews prayed, as they had been taught by the Orthodox professors of the law. Jesus went into the Temple, plaited a whip,

drove all the cattle out of the porch, turned out all the doves, and scattered all the money, and bade them not bring such things into the Temple.

He said: The prophet Isaiah said to you: 'The house of God is not the Temple in Jerusalem, but the whole world of God's people.' And the prophet Jeremiah also told you: 'Do not believe the falsehood that the house of God is here; do not believe this, but change your lives: do not judge falsely, do not oppress a stranger, a widow, or an orphan, do not shed innocent blood, and do not come into the house of God and say: Now we can quietly do evil. Do not make my house a den of thieves.'

And the Jews objected and said: You say that our way of serving God is wrong. How can you prove that? And Jesus turned to them and said: Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise a new, living temple. And the Jews said: How can you suddenly build a new temple, when this one took forty years to build? And Jesus said to them: I speak to you of what is more important than the temple. You would not speak as you do if you understood the meaning of the prophet's words: 'I, God, do not rejoice in your sacrifices, but in your love of one another.' The living temple is the whole world of men when they love one another.

And many people in Jerusalem believed in what he said. But he himself believed in nothing external for he knew that everything is within man. He had no need that anyone should give witness of man, for he knew that the spirit is in man. And Jesus had once to pass through Samaria. He came to the Samaritan village of Sychar, near the place that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, being tired by his journey, sat down by it while his pupils went into the town to fetch bread.

And a woman came from Sychar to draw water, and Jesus asked her to give him to drink. She said to him: How is it that you ask me to give you water? For you Jews have no dealings with us Samaritans. But he said to her: If you

knew me and knew what I teach you would not say that, but would give me to drink and I would give you the water of life. Whoever drinks of the water from this well will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water of life shall always be satisfied, and it will bring him to everlasting life. The woman understood that he was speaking of divine things, and said to him: I see that you are a prophet and wish to teach me. But how can you teach me divine things when you are a Jew and I am a Samaritan? Our people pray to God upon this mountain, but you Jews say that the house of God is only in Jerusalem. You cannot teach me divine things, for you have one religion and we have another. Then Jesus said to her: Believe me, woman, the time has arrived when people will come neither to this mountain nor to Jerusalem to pray to the Father. The time has come when the real worshippers of God will honour the heavenly Father in spirit and by their works. The Father has need of such worshippers. The woman did not understand what he meant by saying that God is a spirit, and she said: I have heard that a messenger of God will come, he whom they call the anointed. He will tell us everything.

Jesus said to her: It is I who am speaking to you. Do not expect anything more. After this Jesus came to the country of the Jews and lived there with his pupils and taught. At that time John was teaching near Salim, and bathing people in the river Enon, for he had not yet been imprisoned. And a dispute arose between John's pupils and those of Jesus as to which was better-John's cleansing by water, or the teaching of Jesus. And they came to John and said to him: You cleanse with water, but Jesus only teaches, and all go to him. What do you say about him?

John said: A man can of himself teach nothing unless God teach him. He who speaks of the earth is of the earth, but he who speaks of God is from God. It cannot be proved whether spoken words are from God or not from God. God is a spirit; He cannot be measured and cannot be proved. He who understands the words of the spirit proves thereby

that he is of the spirit. The Father, loving his son, has entrusted everything to him. He who believes in the son has life, but he who does not believe in the son has no life. God is the spirit in man. After this one of the Orthodox came to Jesus and invited him to dinner. Jesus went in and sat down to table. The Orthodox man noticed that Jesus did not wash before the meal and was surprised. Jesus said to him: You Orthodox people wash everything outside, but is everything clean within you? Be kind to all men and everything will be clean.

And while he was in the house of the Orthodox man, a woman of the town, who was a wrong-doer came there. She had learnt that Jesus was in that house and came there and brought a bottle of perfume. And she knelt at his feet and wept, and wetting his feet with her tears wiped them with her hair, and poured the perfume over them.

The Orthodox man saw this and thought to himself: He can hardly be a prophet. If he were really a prophet he would know what sort of a woman it is that is washing his feet: he would know that she is a wrong-doer and would not let her touch him.

Jesus, guessing his thought, turned to him and said: Shall I tell you what I think? Yes, do so, replied his host. Then Jesus said: There were two men who held themselves debtors to one master, one for five hundred pieces of money and the other for fifty. And neither of them had anything to pay with. And the creditor forgave them both. Which of them do you think would love the creditor and care for him most? The host replied: He of course that owed most. Then Jesus pointed to the woman and said: So it is with you and this woman. You consider yourself Orthodox. And therefore a small debtor; she considers herself wrong-doer and therefore a great debtor. I came into your house and you did not give me water to wash my feet; she washes them with her tears and wipes them with her hair. You did not kiss me, but she kisses my feet. You gave me no oil for my head, but she anoints my feet with

precious perfume. He who considers himself Orthodox will not do works of love; only he who considers himself a wrong-doer will do them. And for works of love everything is forgiven. And he said to her: Your wickedness is forgiven you. And Jesus said: Everything depends on what a man considers himself to be. He who considers himself good will not be good, but he who considers himself bad is good.

And he added: Two men came into the Temple to pray. One was Orthodox, and the other was a tax-farmer.

The Orthodox man prayed: I thank thee, O God, that I am not as other men, not miserly, nor a libertine, nor a deceiver, nor such a wretch as that tax-farmer. I fast twice a week, and give away a tenth of my property. But the tax-farmer stood far away, and dared not look up to heaven but only beat his breast, saying: God, look upon me, sinner that I am.

This was a better prayer than that of the Orthodox man, for he who exalts himself abases himself, and he who humbles himself raises himself. Then some pupils of John came to Jesus and said: Why do your pupils not fast, while we and the Orthodox fast a great deal? The law of God orders fasting. And Jesus said to them: While the bridegroom is at the wedding no one grieves. Only when the bridegroom has gone do they grieve.

Having life, one should not grieve. The external service of God cannot be combined with the activity of love. The old teaching of external service of God cannot be combined with my teaching of active love of one's neighbour. To unite my teaching with the old is like tearing a piece from a new garment and sewing it onto an old one. The new one will be torn and the old one will not be mended. Either all my teaching must be accepted or all the old, and having accepted my teaching it is impossible to keep the old teaching of purification, fasting, and keeping Saturday-just as new wine must not be poured into old wine-skins, or the old skins will burst and the wine will be spilt. New wine

must be put into new wineskins and then they will both be preserved.

### III THE SOURCE OF LIFE

The life of all men proceeds from the spirit of the Father.

'HALLOWED BE THY NAME'

LATER on, some of John's pupils came to ask Jesus whether it was he of whom John spoke: Did he reveal the Kingdom of God and renew men by the spirits Jesus answered and said: Look for yourselves, and listen to the teaching-and tell John whether the Kingdom of God has begun and whether people are being renewed by the spirit. Tell him what Kingdom of God I am preaching. It is said in the prophecies that when the Kingdom of God comes all men will be blessed. Tell him that my Kingdom of God is such that the poor are blessed, and so is everyone who understands the teaching.

And having let John's pupils go, Jesus began to speak to the people about the Kingdom of God that John announced. He said: When you went to John in the wilderness to be baptized, what did you go to see? Orthodox teachers of the law went to see John too, but they did not understand what he was talking about, and considered him of no account. Those Orthodox teachers of the law only consider true what they themselves invent and hear from one another, or the law they have themselves devised; but what John says and what I say, they do not listen to and do not understand. Of what John says they have only understood that he fasts in the wilderness, and they say: 'There is a devil in him. Of what I say they have understood only that I do not fast, and they say: 'He eats and drinks with tax-gatherers and sinners- he is a friend of theirs.' They are like children in the street who chatter to one another and wonder that no one listens to them. And you may judge of their wisdom by what they do. If you went to John to see a man dressed in rich clothes-why, such men live here in the palaces. What then is it you went to see in the wilderness? Did you go because you think John is like other prophets? Do not think



so! John is not a prophet like the others. He is more than all the prophets. The others foretold what might happen. He announces what is: namely, that the Kingdom of God was, and is, here on earth. I tell you truly: no one greater than John has ever been born. He has declared the Kingdom of God on earth and is therefore above all the others. The law and the prophets were necessary till John came, but now he has announced that the Kingdom of God is on earth, and that he who makes an effort can enter into it.

And some of the Orthodox came to Jesus and asked him: How and when will the Kingdom of God come? And he answered them: The Kingdom of God which I preach is not what the former prophets preached. They said that God would come with diverse visible signs, but I speak of a Kingdom of God the coming of which cannot be seen with the eyes. And if anyone tells you: See, it has come, or is coming; or, See, it is here, or there; do not believe them. The Kingdom of God is not in any definite time or place. It is like lightning—here, there and everywhere. And it has neither time nor place, for the Kingdom of God that I preach is within you.

After that, one of the Orthodox, a Jewish ruler named Nicodemus, came to Jesus at night and said: You do not bid men keep Saturday, or tell them to observe cleanliness, or to offer sacrifices, or to fast, and you would abolish the temple, and say that God is a spirit and that the Kingdom of God is within us.

What is this Kingdom of God?

And Jesus answered him: Understand that if man is conceived from heaven there must be something heavenly in him. You must be born again.

Nicodemus did not understand this, and said: How can a man, born of the flesh and grown up, return to his mother's womb and be conceived afresh? And Jesus answered him: Understand what I say: I say that man is born not from the flesh alone but also from the spirit, and so every man is conceived of flesh and of spirit, and therefore the kingdom

of heaven is within him. Of the flesh he is flesh, From flesh spirit cannot be born; spirit can come only from spirit. The spirit is the living thing within you which lives in freedom and reason; it is that of which you know neither the beginning nor the end and which every man feels within him. So why do you wonder that I said that we must be born from heaven?

Nicodemus said: Still I do not believe that this can be so. Then Jesus said to him: What kind of a teacher are you if you do not understand this? Understand that I am not talking any kind of mystery; I speak of what we all know, and assure you of what we all see. How will you believe in what is in heaven if you do not believe in what is on earth and within yourself? No one has ever gone up to heaven, and we have only man on earth who has come from heaven and is himself of heaven. It is this heavenly son of man that must be exalted, that all may believe in him and not perish but have heavenly life. Not for man's destruction, but for their good, did God implant in man this son of his, like unto Himself. He gave him that everyone should believe in him and not perish but have eternal life. He did not bring this son of his (this inner life) into the world of men to destroy it, but brought forth his son (this inner life) that the world of men should live by him.

He who commits his life to this son of man does not die, but he who does not commit his life to him destroys himself by not trusting to what is life itself Division (death) consists in this, that life came into the world, but men go away from that life.

Light is the life of men; light came into the world, but men prefer darkness to light, and do not go to the light. He who does wrong avoids the light that his deeds may not be seen, and so deprives himself of life. But he who lives in the truth goes to the light that his deeds may be seen, and he has life and is united to God.

The Kingdom of God must be understood not as you imagine-that the Kingdom of God will come for all men at

a certain time and in a certain place-but thus: in the whole world there are always some people who rely on the heavenly son of man, and these become sons of the Kingdom; the others who do not rely on him perish. The Father of the spirit in man is the Father of those only who acknowledge themselves as his sons. And therefore only those exist to him who have preserved within them what he gave them.

After this Jesus began to explain to the people what the Kingdom of God is, and he taught it them by parables.

He said: The Father-who is the spirit-sows the life of understanding in the world as a husbandman sows grain in his field. He sows over the whole field without remarking which seeds fall in what place. And some seeds fall on the path and the birds come and eat it. Other seeds fall among stones and though they come up they wither, because there is no room for their roots. Others again fall among wormwood and the wormwood chokes them, and though ears form they do not fill. But other seeds fall on good ground and grow and make up for the lost seed, and bear ears which fill, and which yield thirtyfold, or sixtyfold, or a hundredfold. So God also has sown the spirit broadcast in man: in some it is lost but in others it yields a hundredfold. It is these last that form the Kingdom of God.

So the Kingdom of God is not what you imagine-that God will come to reign over you. God has sown the spirit, and the Kingdom of God will be only in those who preserve it.

God does not force men but, like a sower, casts seed on the ground and thinks no more of it. The seed itself swells, sprouts, puts forth leaf, stalk, and ears that fill with grain. Only when it has ripened does the husbandman send reapers to gather in the harvest. In the same way God gave His Son-the spirit-to the world; and the spirit grows in the world of itself, and the sons of the spirit make up the Kingdom of God.

A woman puts yeast into a kneading trough and mixes it with flour. She then mixes it no more but lets the yeast and

the bread rise. As long as people live God does not interfere with their life. He gave the spirit to the world and the spirit lives in men, and those who live by the spirit constitute the Kingdom of God. For the spirit there is neither death nor evil. Death and evil exist for the flesh but not for the spirit.

The Kingdom of God may be compared to this: a farmer sowed good seed in his field. The farmer is the spirit, the Father; the field is the world; the good seed are the sons of the Kingdom of God. Then the farmer lay down to sleep and an enemy came and sowed darnel in the field. The enemy is temptation, and the darnel represents those who yield to temptation. Then the laborers came to the farmer and said: Can you have sown bad seed? Much darnel has come up on your field. Send us to weed it out. And the farmer said: No, do not do that, or in I weeding out the darnel you will trample the wheat. Let them grow together. When the harvest comes I will tell the reapers to gather the darnel and burn it, but the wheat I will store in the barn. The harvest is the end of human life, the harvesters are the powers of heaven. They will burn the darnel, but the wheat will be winnowed and gathered. So also at life's end all that was temporary illusion will perish, and the true life of the spirit will alone be left. Evil does not exist for the Father, the spirit. The spirit keeps what it needs and what is not of it does not exist for it.

The kingdom of heaven is like a net. When spread out in the sea it catches all kinds of fish, and when it is drawn in, the worthless fish are set aside and thrown back into the sea. So will it be at the end of the age: the powers of heaven will take the good and the evil will be cast away. And when he had finished speaking, his pupils asked him what these parables meant. And he said to them: These parables must be understood in two ways. I speak all these parables because there are some like you, my pupils, who understand what the Kingdom of God consists of, and understand that it is within each man, and understand how

to enter it; but others do not understand this. They look but do not see, they hear but do not understand, for their hearts have become gross. So I speak these parables with two meanings, for these people and for those. To the others I speak of God, of what His Kingdom is for Him, and they may understand that. But for you I speak of what the Kingdom of God is for you-the kingdom that is within you. And see that you understand the parable of the sower rightly. For you that parable means this: To everyone who has understood the meaning Of the Kingdom of God, but has not accepted it in his heart, evil comes and robs him of what was sown; this is the seed by the wayside. That which was sown on stony ground represents the man who receives the teaching readily and gladly, but has no root and only accepts it for a time, and as soon as pressure and persecution comes because of the meaning of the kingdom, he at once denies it. That which is sown among the wormwood is he who understands the meaning of the kingdom, but worldly cares and eagerness for riches strangle the meaning in him and he does not bear fruit. And that which was sown on good ground is he who understands the meaning of the kingdom and takes it into his heart; he bears fruit a hundredfold, or sixtyfold, or thirtyfold. For to him that keeps the spirit much is given; but from him who does not keep it everything will be taken away. So see how you understand these parables. Understand them so as not to yield to deceptions, wrongdoings, and cares, but so as to yield thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or a hundredfold.

The kingdom of heaven in the soul grows up from nothing but gives everything. It is like a birch-seed, which is a very small seed, but when it grows up becomes a very big tree, and the birds of heaven build their nests in it.

## IV THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Therefore the will of the Father is the life and we are of all men.

"THY KINGDOM COME"

JESUS went about in the towns and villages and taught all men the happiness of doing the Father's will. And he was sorry for people because they perish without knowing what true life consists of, and trouble and torment themselves without knowing why, like scattered sheep that have no shepherd. Once many people came to Jesus to hear his teaching and he went up on a hill and sat down. His pupils surrounded him. And he began to teach the people what the Father's will is. He said:

Blessed are the poor and the homeless, for they live in the will of the Father. If they are hungry they shall be satisfied, and if they sorrow and weep they shall be comforted. If people despise them, thrust them aside, and drive them away, let them be glad of it, for so God's people have always been treated and they receive a heavenly reward.

But woe to the rich, for they have already got what they wanted, and will get nothing more. Now they are satisfied, but they too will be hungry. Now they rejoice, but they too will be sad. Woe to those whom everyone praises, for only deceivers are praised by everybody.

Blessed are the poor and homeless; but blessed only if they are poor not merely outwardly but also in spirit-just as salt is good only when it has saltiness in it and is not salt merely in appearance.

So you also, the poor and homeless, are the teachers of the world; you are blessed if you know that true happiness is in being homeless and poor. But if you are poor only outwardly then, like salt that has no savor, you are good for nothing. You are the light of the world, therefore do not hide your light but let men see it. When a man lights a candle he does not put it under the bench but on the table

that it should give light to everyone in the room. So you, too, should not hide your light but show it by your actions, that men may see that you have the truth, and seeing your good deeds may understand your heavenly Father.

And do not think that I free you from the law. I teach not release from the law but fulfillment of the eternal law. As long as there are men under heaven the eternal law remains. There will be no release from law till men of themselves fulfill the eternal law completely. And now, I give you the commandments of that eternal law. If anyone releases himself from any of these short commandments and teaches others that they may do so, he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven, but he who fulfills them and thereby teaches others to fulfill them shall be great in the kingdom of heaven. For if your virtue is no more than the virtue of the Orthodox legalists you will never reach the kingdom of heaven. These are the commandments:

In the former law it was said: Do not kill, and if anyone kills another he must be judged.

But I tell you that everyone who grows angry with' his brother-man deserves judgment, and still more to blame is he who speaks abusively to his brother-man. So if you wish to pray to God, first think whether there is anyone who has something against you. If you remember even one man who considers that you have offended him, leave your prayers and go first to make peace with your brotherman, and then you may pray. Know that God requires neither sacrifice nor prayer, but only peace, concord, and love among men; and that you can neither pray nor think of God if there is a single man towards whom you do not feel love. So this is the first commandment: Do not be angry, and do not rail; and if you have spoken harshly to anyone make peace with him and do it so that no one should have a grudge against you.

In the former law it was said: Do not commit adultery, and if you wish to put away your wife, give her a letter of divorcement. But I tell you that if you look lustfully at a

woman's beauty you are already committing adultery. All sensuality destroys the soul, and so it is better for you to renounce the pleasures of the flesh than to destroy your life. And if you put away your wife, then besides being vicious yourself you drive her to wantonness too, as well as him with whom she may unite. So that is the second commandment: Do not think that love of a woman is good, do not desire women, but live with her with whom you have become united, and do not leave her.

In the former law it was said: Do not utter the name of the Lord God in vain, do not call upon God when lying, and do not dishonor the name of your God. Do not swear to any untruth and so profane your God.

But I tell you that every oath is a profanation of God. Therefore do not swear at all. Man cannot promise anything, for he is wholly in the power of the Father. He cannot make one gray hair black. How then can he swear beforehand that he will do this or that, and swear to it by God? Every oath is a profanation of God, for if a man is compelled to fulfill under an oath that which is against the will of God it shows that he had promised to act contrary to God's will, and so every oath is an evil. But when men ask you about anything, say Yes if it is yes, or no if it is no; anything added to that is evil.

So the third commandment is: Never swear anything for anyone. Say Yes when it is yes, No when it is no, and understand that every oath is evil. In the former law it was said that if a man killed another he must give a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, an arm for an arm, an ox for an ox, a slave for a slave, and much else. But I say to you: Do not fight evil by evil, and not only do not exact at law an ox for an ox, a slave for a slave, a life for a life, but do not resist evil at all. If anyone wishes to take an ox from you, give him another; if he wants to take your coat by law, give him your shirt as well; if anyone knocks out a tooth on one side, turn the other side to him. If he would make you do one piece of work for him, do two. If



men wish to take your property, let them have it. If they owe you money and do not return it, do not demand it. And therefore: Do not judge or go to law, do not punish, and you yourself will not be judged or punished. Forgive everyone and you will be forgiven; but if you judge others they will judge you also.

You cannot judge, for men are all blind and do not see the truth. How can you see a speck in your brother's eye when there is dust in your own? You must first get your own eye clear-but whose eyes are perfectly clear? Can a blind man lead the blind? They will both fall into the pit. And those who judge and punish are like blind men leading the blind.

Those who judge, and condemn others to violent treatment, wounds, mutilation, or death, wish to correct them, but what can come of their teaching except that the pupils will learn to become just like their teacher? What then will they do when they have learnt the lesson? Only what their teacher does: violence and murder. And do not expect to find justice in the courts. To entrust one's love of justice to men's courts is like throwing precious pearls to swine: they will trample on them and will tear you to pieces. And therefore the fourth commandment is: However men may wrong you, do not return evil, do not judge or go to law, do not sue, and do not punish. In the former law it was said: Do good to men of your own nation and do harm to foreigners.

But I tell you: Love not only your own countrymen, but people of other nations also. Let others hate you, attack you, and wrong you, but speak well of them and do good to them. If you are attached only to your own countrymen, remember that all men are attached to their own countrymen, and wars result from that. But behave equally well to men of all nations, and you will be sons of the Father. All men are His children, so they are all brothers to you.

And so this is the fifth commandment: Treat foreigners as I have told you to treat one another. To the Father of all men

there are no separate nations or separate kingdoms: all are brothers, all sons of one Father. Make no distinctions among people as to nations and kingdoms.

And so:

1. Do not be angry, but live at peace with all men.
2. Do not indulge yourself in sexual gratification.
3. Do not promise anything on oath to anyone.
4. Do not resist evil, do not judge and do not go to law.
5. Make no distinction of nationality, but love foreigners as your own people.

All these commandments are contained in one:

All that you wish men to do to you, do you to them.

Do not fulfill these commandments for praise from men. If you do it for men, then from men you have your reward. But if you do it not for men, your reward is from your heavenly Father. So if you do good to others do not boast about it before men. That is what the hypocrites do, to obtain praise. And they get what they seek. But if you do good to men, do it so that no one sees it, and that your left hand should not know what your right hand does. And your Father will see it and will give you what you need.

And if you wish to pray, do not do it as the hypocrites do. They love to pray in the churches and in the sight of men. They do it for men's praise, and from men receive what they aim at.

But if you wish to pray, go where no one will see you, and pray to the Father of your spirit, and He will see what is in your soul and will give you what your soul desires.

When you pray, do not wag your tongue as the hypocrites do. Your Father knows what you need before you open your lips.

Pray only thus:

Our Father, without beginning and without end, like the heavens!

May Thy being alone be holy.

May power be Thine alone, so that Thy will may be done,  
without beginning and  
without end, on earth.

Give me the food of life this present day.

Efface my former mistakes and wipe them out, as I efface  
and wipe out all the  
mistakes my brothers have made; that I may not fall into  
temptation, but be  
saved from evil.

For the power and strength are Thine, and the decision is  
Thine.

If you pray, free yourself above all from malice against  
anyone. For if you do not forgive others their faults, your  
Father will not forgive you yours.

If you fast, do so without any parade of it before others.  
The hypocrites fast that people should see it and praise  
them-and people do praise them, so they get what they  
wanted. But you should not do so; if you suffer want, go  
about with a cheerful face that men may not see, but that  
your Father may see and give you what you need.

Do not lay up store for yourself on earth. On earth maggots  
consume, and rust eats, and thieves steal: but lay up for  
yourselves heavenly riches. Heavenly riches are not  
consumed by maggots, nor eaten away by rust, nor do  
thieves steal them. Where your riches are, there will your  
heart be also.

The light of the body is the eye, and the light of the soul is  
the heart. If your eye is dim your whole body will be in  
darkness. And if the light of your heart is dim your whole  
soul will be in darkness. You cannot serve two masters at  
the same time. If you please the one you will offend the  
other. You cannot serve both God and the flesh. Either you  
will work for the earthly life or for God. Therefore do not  
be anxious about what you will eat or drink, or how you  
will be dressed. For the life is more wonderful than food  
and clothing and God has given you this.

Look on God's creatures, the birds. They do not sow or reap or gather in the harvest, yet God feeds them. In God's sight man is not less than a bird. If God gave man life, He will be able to feed him too. And you yourselves know that you can do nothing of yourselves, however you may strive. You cannot lengthen your life by an hour. And why do you trouble about clothing? The flowers of the field do no work and do not spin, but they are adorned as Solomon in all his luxury never was.

And if God has so adorned the grass which grows to-day, and to-morrow is cut down, will He not clothe you?

Do not be afraid and do not worry; do not say that you must think of what you will eat and how you will be clothed. All men need these things and God knows that you need them. So do not trouble about the future. Live in the present day. Take care to be in the Father's will. Desire that which alone is important, and the rest will come of itself. Seek only to be in the will of the Father, and do not trouble about the future, for when it comes its trouble will come too. There is enough evil in the present.

Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it will be opened to you. Where is there a father who would give his son a stone instead of bread, or a snake instead of a fish? Then why do you think if we wicked men can give our children what they need, that your Father in heaven will not give you what you truly need, if you ask Him? Ask, and the heavenly Father will give the spirit of life to them that ask Him.

Narrow is the path to life, but enter by that narrow way. There is only one entry to life—a strait and narrow one. Great and wide is the field around, but it leads to destruction. The narrow way alone leads to life, and few find it. But do not be afraid, little flock! The Father has prepared the Kingdom for you. Only, beware of false prophets and teachers; they come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits—by what comes from them—you will know them. From the

burdock you do not gather grapes, nor apples from an aspen. A good tree bears good fruit and a bad tree bad fruit. So you will know these men by the fruits of their teaching.

A good man out of his good heart brings forth all that is good. But an evil man out of his evil heart brings forth all that is evil. For from the overflow of the heart the lips speak. And therefore if teachers tell you to do to others what would be bad for yourselves, if they teach violence, executions, and wars- then you may know that they are false teachers.

For it is not those who say: 'Lord, Lord!' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but those who fulfill the will of the heavenly Father. The false teachers will say: 'Lord, Lord! We taught your doctrine, and by your teaching drove out evil. But I will disown them and say: 'No, I never recognized you and do not recognize you now, Go away from me; you do what is unlawful.'

He who hears these words of mine and acts on them is like a reasonable man who builds his house on a rock. And his house will stand against all storms. But he who hears these words of mine and does not act on them is like a foolish man who builds his house on the sand. When a storm comes his house will fall and all in it will perish.

And the people were all astonished at this teaching, for the teaching of Jesus was quite different from that of the Orthodox professors of the law. They taught a law that had to be obeyed, but Jesus taught that all men are free. And in Jesus Christ were fulfilled the prophecies of Isaiah: that a people living in darkness, in the shadow of death, saw the light of life. That he who brought this light of truth did no violence or harm to men, but was meek and gentle. To bring truth into the world he neither disputes nor shouts, nor is his voice raised, and he will not break a straw or put out the smallest light, and all the hope of men is in his teaching.

## V

### THE TRUE LIFE

The satisfaction of the personal will leads to death; the satisfaction of the Father's will gives true life.

"THY WILL BE DONE"

AND Jesus rejoiced in the power of the spirit and said:

I acknowledge the spirit of the Father, the source of everything in heaven and earth, who has revealed what was hidden from the wise and learned to the simple, because they acknowledge themselves sons of the Father.

All who are concerned for the happiness of the body have put on a yoke not made for them, and have harnessed themselves to a load they cannot draw. Understand my teaching and follow it and you shall have peace and joy in life. I give you another yoke and another load-the spiritual life. Yoke yourselves to this, and you shall learn from me peace and happiness.

Be tranquil and meek-hearted and you will find blessedness in your life. For my teaching is a yoke made for you, and to obey my teaching is to have a light load with a yoke suited to you.

Once when he was asked whether he wished to eat, he replied: I have food you do not know of. They thought someone had brought him food, but he said: My food is to do the will of Him who gave me life and to accomplish what he has entrusted to me. Do not say: There is still time, as a farmer says while waiting for the harvest. He who fulfills the will of the Father is always satisfied and knows neither hunger nor thirst. The fulfillment of the will of God always satisfies and is always a reward in itself. You must not say: 'I will do the will of God later.' While you have life you always can and should do the will of the Father. Our life is a field God has sown, and our business is to gather its fruits. If we gather its fruits we receive the reward of a life beyond time. We do not give ourselves life, someone else gives it us. And if we labor to gather in life, then like

harvestmen, we receive a reward. I teach you to gather in this life which the Father gives you.

Once Jesus went to Jerusalem. There was then a bathing-place in the city, of which people said that an angel came, down into it, and that his coming stirred the water and he who first plunged in after that would be cured of whatever illness he had. There were shelters set up around the pool, and under those shelters sick people lay, waiting for the water in the pool to bubble, in order to plunge into it.

And there was a man who had been there thirty-eight years, and was weak. Jesus asked him what ailed him. And the man told him that he had been ill for thirty-eight years and was waiting to get into the pool first after the water bubbled, in order to be healed, but all these thirty-eight years he had not been able to get in first for someone always got into the pool before him. And Jesus saw that the man was old, and said to him: Do you wish to get well? The man replied: Yes, I do wish to, but I have no one to help me into the pool in time. Someone always gets in before me.

And Jesus said to him: Arouse yourself, take up your bedding and go. And the sick man took up his bedding and walked away.

And it was on a Saturday. And the Orthodox said: You must not carry your bedding for today is Saturday.

He replied: He who raised me told me to take up my bedding.

And the infirm man went away and told the Orthodox that it was Jesus who had cured him. And they were angry, And accused Jesus because he did such things on Saturday.

And Jesus said: What the Father always does, I also do. I tell you truly: the son can do nothing for himself; he does only what he has understood from the Father. What the Father does, he also does. The Father loves the son, and has taught him all the things the son needs to know.

As the Father gives life to the dead so the son gives life to him who desires it, because as the business of the Father is

life so the business of the son must be life. The Father has not condemned men to death, but has given them power to die or live at will. And if they Honor the son as the Father they will live.

I tell you truly that he who has understood my teaching and believed in the common Father of all men, has life already and is delivered from death. They who have understood the meaning of human life have already escaped from death and will always live. For as the Father has life in Himself so He has given the son to have life in himself also, and has given him freedom. It is in this way that he is the son of man.

Henceforth mortals are divided into two kinds: those who do good and thereby find life, and those who do evil and are thereby destroyed. And this is not my decision, but is what I have understood from the Father. And my decision is just, for I decide so not in order to do what I wish, but in order that all may do the will of the Father of all men.

If I assure you that my teaching is true, that does not confirm my teaching; what confirms it is the conduct I teach. That shows that I do not teach from myself but from the Father of all men. And my Father, He who has taught me, confirms the truth of my commandments in the souls of all.

But you do not wish to understand or to know His voice. And you do not accept the meaning that voice declares. You do not wish to believe in that voice in yourselves which is the spirit that has descended from heaven.

Enter into the meaning of your scriptures. You will find in them the same as in my teaching: commands to live not for yourselves alone but to do good to men. Why then do you not wish to believe my commandments-which are those that give life to all men? I teach you in the name of the common Father of all men, and you do not accept my teaching, but if someone teaches you in his own name, him you believe.



You should not believe all that people say to one another, but must believe only that there is in every man a son like the Father.

And that men should not think that the kingdom of heaven is something visible- but should understand that it consists in fulfillment of the Father's will and that that fulfillment depends on each man's efforts-and that people might understand that life is given not for oneself personally but only for the fulfillment of the Father's will, which alone saves us from death and gives life, Jesus spoke a parable, and said:

There was a rich man who had to leave home. Before he set out he called his slaves and gave them ten pounds, one to each, and said: While I am away, work each of you, at what I have set you. And it happened that when he had gone, some of the people of that town said: We do not wish to serve him any more. When the rich man returned, he called the slaves to whom he had given the money, and asked what each of them had done with it.

The first one came and said: See, master, with your one pound I have earned ten. And the master said to him: Well done, good slave, you have been faithful in a small matter and I will set you over much: be one with me in all my estate. A second slave came and said: See master, with your pound I have earned five. And the master said to him: Well done, good slave, be one with me in all my estate.

Another one came and said: See, here is your pound. I put it in a cloth and buried it because I was afraid of you. You are a hard man, you take where you did not store and gather where you did not sow.

And the master said to him: Foolish slave! I will judge you by your own words. You say that from fear of me you hid the pound in the earth and did not make use Of it. If you knew that I am severe and take where I have not given, then why did you not do as I bade you? If you had used my pound the estate would have been added to and you would have fulfilled what I bade you. But now you have not done

what the pound was given you for, and so you must not have it.

And the master had the pound taken from him who had not used it and given to him who had done most. But the slaves remonstrated, and said to him: Master, he has a great deal already. But the master said: Give to him who worked much, for to him who looks after what he has, more shall be given. Drive out those who did not wish to be in my power, and let none of them remain.

The master is the source of life, the spirit, the Father. His slaves are men.

The pounds are the life of the spirit. As the master did not work on his estate himself but told the slaves each to work by himself, so also the spirit of life in men has told them to work for the life of all men, and has then left them alone. Those who sent to say that they did not acknowledge the master's power are those who do not acknowledge the spirit of life. The return of the master and his call for an account is the destruction of the bodily life and the decision of the people's fate: whether they have increased the life that was given them. Some, those slaves who fulfill the master's will, use what is given them and greatly increase it. These are they who, having received life, understand that life is the will of the Father and is given them to serve the life of others. The foolish and wicked slave who hid his pound and did not use it, represents those who only follow their own desires and not the will of the Father, and do not serve the life of others. The slaves who fulfill the Master's will and work to increase his estate become sharers in the master's whole estate, but the slaves who do not fulfill the master's will and do not work for him are bereft of what was given them. Men who fulfill the Father's will and serve life become sharers in the life of the Father and receive more life notwithstanding the destruction of the flesh. Those who do not fulfill the will and do not serve life are bereft of what life they had, and are destroyed. Those who do not wish to acknowledge the master's authority do not

exist for him: he drives them forth. Those who do not acknowledge the life of the spirit within themselves-the life of the son of man-do not exist for the Father.

After this Jesus went into a desert place and many people followed him. He went up a hill and sat down there with his pupils. And he saw many people coming and said: Where can we get bread for all these people? Philip said: Even two hundred pennyworth would not be enough to give each of them something. We have only a little bread and fish. And another pupil said: Some of them have bread: there is a boy who has five loaves and two small fishes. And Jesus said: Tell them all to lie down on the grass.

And Jesus took the bread he had, and gave it to his pupils and bade them give it to the other people. And so they all began to give to one another what they had, and they all had enough to eat and much was left over.

Next day the people again came to Jesus, and he said to them: You come to me not because you have seen wonders, but because you ate bread and were satisfied. Do not work for food which perishes, but for food which will last for ever, such as only the spirit of the son of man, sealed by the Father, gives you.

The Jews said: What must we do to fulfill the will of God?

And Jesus said: The work of God consists in believing in the life He has given you.

They said: Give us proofs that we may believe. What do you do? Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness. God gave them food to eat, so it is written.

Jesus answered them: The true heavenly bread is the spirit of the son of man, which the Father gives. For the food of man is the spirit that descends from heaven. It is that which gives life to the world.

My teaching gives true nourishment. He who follows me will not hunger, and he who believes in my teaching will never know thirst. But I have already told you that you have seen this and yet do not believe.

All that life which the Father has given to the son will be realized by my teaching, and everyone who believes in it will share that life. For I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the Father who gave me life. And the will of the Father who sent me is that I should keep all the life He gave and not lose any of it. So it is the will of the Father who sent me, that everyone who sees the son and believes in him should have everlasting life. And my teaching gives life at the last day (of the flesh).

The Jews were disturbed at his saying that his teaching had come down from heaven. They said: Why, this is Jesus the son of Joseph: we know his father and mother. How is it that he says his teaching has come down from heaven?

And Jesus said: Do not discuss who I am and where I came from. My teaching is true, not because, like Moses, I declare that God spoke to me on Sinai, but because it exists in you too. Everyone who believes my commandments does so not because it is I who speak, but because our common Father draws him to Himself; and my teaching will give him life at the last day. It is written in the prophets that all men shall be taught of God. Everyone who understands the Father, and learns to know His will, yields himself to my teaching.

No one has ever seen the Father, but he that is of God has seen and sees Him. He who believes in me (in my teaching) has everlasting life. My teaching is the food of life. Your fathers ate manna, food sent from heaven, and yet died. But the true food of life which descends from heaven is such that he who feeds on it will not die. And my teaching is this food of life that has descended from heaven. He who feeds on it lives forever. And this food which I teach is my body which I give for the life of mankind.

The Jews did not at all understand what he said, and began to dispute as to how it was possible to give one's body for the life of men, and why.

And Jesus said to them: If you do not give your body for the life of the spirit there will be no life in you. He who

does not give his body for the life of the spirit has no real life. Only that in me which gives up the body for the spirit has real life. And therefore our bodies are truly food for the real life. Only that in me which consumes my body, that which gives up the bodily life for the true life-is really I-it is in me, and I am in it. And as I live in the body by the will of the Father, so that which lives in me lives by my will.

And some of his pupils when they heard this, said: These are hard words, and it is difficult to understand them.

And Jesus said to them: Your minds are so confused, that my saying about what man was, is, and always will be, seems to you difficult. Man is a spirit in the flesh, and the spirit alone gives life-the flesh does not give life. In the words that seem to you so difficult I said no more than that the spirit is life. Afterwards Jesus chose seventy men from among those near him, and sent them to places he himself wished to go to. He said to them: Many men do not know the blessing of real life. I am sorry for them all, and wish to teach them. But as a husbandman cannot himself reap his whole harvest, so I, too, cannot do all that is needed. Go you to different towns and proclaim everywhere the fulfillment of the will of the Father.

Say: The will of the Father is this: not to be angry, not to lust, not to take oaths, not to resist evil, and not to make any distinction between people. And accordingly fulfill these laws yourselves in everything.

I send you like sheep among wolves. Be wise as serpents and pure as doves. Above all, have nothing of your own; take nothing with you, neither wallet, nor bread, nor money, only the clothes you wear and shoes. Make no distinction between people; do not choose out the people with whom you will stay. But stay in whatever house you first come to. When you enter a house, greet the master. If he take you in, stay there; if not, go to another house.

For what you will say they will hate you and fall upon you and drive you away. But when you are driven out go to another village, and if you are driven from there, go to yet

another. You will be pursued as wolves pursue sheep, but do not be afraid, endure to the last hour. They will take you to the Courts and try you, and will flog you and take you before the authorities for you to justify yourselves before them. But do not be afraid when you are taken to the Courts, and do not prepare what you will say: the spirit of the Father in you will tell you what to say. Before you have passed through all the towns some people will understand your teaching and turn to it.

So be not afraid. What is hidden in men's souls will come forth. What you will say to two or three will spread among thousands. Above all, do not be afraid of those who can kill your body. They can do nothing to your souls, so fear them not. Fear rather that which can destroy both body and soul by the non- fulfillment of the Father's will-fear that. Five sparrows are sold for a farthing, but even they do not die without the Father's will. And no hair falls from the head without the Father's will. So what have you to fear if you live in that will?

Not everyone will believe in my teaching. And those who do not believe will hate it because it deprives them of what they love. So dissensions will come from my teaching. It will kindle the world like a fire, and from it strife must arise. There will be dissension in every house, father against son, mother against daughter. Families will hate those members who understand my teaching, and will kill them. For to him who understands my teaching there will be no meaning in 'father', or 'mother', or 'wife', or 'children', or 'property'.

Then the learned Orthodox gathered at Jerusalem and went to Jesus who was in a village near by. A crowd of people had thronged into the house where he was and stood around it.

The Orthodox began to speak to the people, telling them not to listen to the teaching of Jesus. They said that he was possessed of a devil, and that if men lived by his

commandments there would be still more evil in the world than now. They said that he drove out evil by evil means.

Jesus called them to him and said: You say that I drive out evil by evil. But no power destroys itself. If it destroyed itself it would cease to exist. You try to drive out evil by threats, executions, and murders, but evil still exists precisely because it cannot fight against itself. I do not drive out evil by evil as you try to.

I drive out evil by calling on men to fulfill the will of the Father's spirit which gives life to all men. Five commandments express the will of that spirit, which gives happiness and life. And they therefore destroy evil. That is a proof that they are true.

If men were not sons of one spirit it would not be possible to overcome evil, just as it is not possible to enter a strong man's house and rob it. To rob his house it is necessary first to bind the strong man. And men are bound by their unity in the spirit of life.

And so I say to you that all mistakes of men and every false opinion shall escape punishment, but false interpretations of the holy spirit, which gives life to all, will not be forgiven.

If anyone speaks ill of a man it may not be counted against him, but if anyone speaks against the holy spirit in man, that cannot pass without harm to him. Abuse me as much as you like, but do not decry the commandments of life I have disclosed to you. It cannot pass harmlessly for a man if he calls what is good- evil.

Man must be at one with the spirit of life. He who is not at one with it is against it. Man must serve the spirit of life and goodness in all men, and not in himself alone.

Either you believe life and happiness to be good for the whole world, and should then love life and happiness for all men, or you believe life and happiness to be evil, and should then not love them even for yourself. Either you consider a tree good and its fruit good, or else you consider

the tree bad and its fruit bad. For a tree is valued by its fruit.



VI  
THE FALSE LIFE

To obtain true life, man must on earth resign the false life of the flesh and live by the spirit.

"AS IN HEAVEN SO ON EARTH"

ONCE his mother and brothers came to Jesus, and could not get to him because there were so many around him. A man seeing them went to Jesus and said: Your family, your mother and brothers, are standing outside wanting to see you. But Jesus said: My mother and my brothers are those who have understood the will of the Father, and do it.

And a woman exclaimed: Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that you have sucked!

And Jesus replied: Only they are blessed who have understood the spirit of the Father and keep it.

And a man said to Jesus: I will follow you wherever you may go.

Jesus answered him: There is nowhere for you to follow me to: I have neither house nor any place to live in. The beasts have their dens and their lairs, but man is at home everywhere if he lives by the spirit.

It happened once that Jesus was sailing with his pupils in a boat. He said: Let us cross to the other side. A storm arose on the lake and the boat began to fill so that it nearly sank. But Jesus lay in the stern and slept. They woke him and said: Master, is it nothing to you if we are drowned? And when the storm subsided he said: Why are you so timid? You have no faith in the life of the spirit.

To one man Jesus said: Follow me.

But the man replied: I have a father who is old; let me first bury him and then I will follow you.

And Jesus said to him: Let the dead bury the dead, but if you wish really to live fulfill the Father's will and publish it.

Another man said: I wish to be your pupil and will fulfill the Father's will as you command, but let me first arrange my family affairs.

And Jesus said to him: If a ploughman looks back he cannot plough. As long as you look back you cannot plough. You must forget everything except the furrow you are driving and only then can you plough. If you consider what may befall your bodily life you cannot live, because you have not understood the real life. After this it happened that Jesus went with his pupils into a village, and a woman named Martha asked him into her house. She had a sister, Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his teaching, while Martha was busy preparing a good meal for them.

And Martha went up to Jesus and said: Do you not see that my sister leaves me to do all the work? Tell her to help me with it.

In reply Jesus said to her: Martha, Martha! You busy yourself and are anxious about many things, but only one thing is needful; Mary has chosen that one necessary thing which no one shall take from her. The one thing needful for life is food for the soul.

And Jesus said to them all:

He who wishes to follow me, let him put aside his own will and be ready to endure all hardships and sufferings of the flesh throughout his life; only then can he follow me. He who wishes to take heed for his bodily life will destroy his true life, but he who obeys the will of the Father, even though he may destroy his bodily life, will save his true life. And what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world but destroys or harms his true life?

And he said: Beware of riches, for your life does not depend on possessing more than others.

There was once a rich man who had a large harvest. And he thought to himself, I will rebuild my barns and put up larger ones and gather all my wealth into them, and I will say to my soul: There, my soul, you have all you desire; rest, eat, drink, and live for your pleasure. But God said to

him: Foolish man, tonight your soul will be taken and all that you have stored up will go to others. So it is with everyone who provides for his bodily life and does not live in God.

And Jesus said to them: You tell me that Pilate slew the Galileans. Were those Galileans any worse than others, that this happened to them? Not at all. We are all such, and we also shall all perish unless we find salvation from death. Or were those eighteen men who were crushed by a falling tower, worse than all the other people of Jerusalem? Not at all. If we do not save ourselves from death, today or tomorrow we too shall perish.

If we have not yet perished as they did, we must think of our position thus:

A man had an apple-tree in his garden and he came and looked at the tree and saw there was no fruit on it. And he said to the gardener: This is the third year I have been here and found that apple tree always barren. It must be cut down, for it only takes up space uselessly. But the gardener said: Let us wait awhile, master. I will dig round it, manure it, and we will see next summer. Perhaps it will bear fruit, but if not, then cut it down.

So we, too, while we live in the flesh and do not bear fruit of the life of the spirit, are barren apple trees. Only by someone's mercy are we left for another year. But if we do not bear fruit we too shall perish, like him who rebuilt his barns, like the Galileans, like the eighteen men crushed by the falling tower, and like all who do not bear fruit, perishing and dying for ever.

To understand this no wisdom is necessary; everyone can see it for himself. Not only in domestic affairs but in all that goes on in the world we can reason and guess what is coming. If the wind is from the west, we say: It will rain, and so it happens. But if there is wind from the south, we say: It will be fine, and so it happens. How is it that we can tell the weather, but cannot foresee that we shall all die and

perish, and that the only salvation for us is in the life of the spirit, the fulfillment of its will?

And many people followed Jesus, and he again said to them all:

He who would be my follower, let him put out of mind his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and all his property, and let him at all times be ready for anything. Only he who does what I do and follows my teaching can save himself from death.

For every man before beginning anything considers whether what he would do is profitable; if it seems profitable he does it, but if it seems unprofitable he will abandon it. Every man who builds a house first sits down and reckons how much it will cost, how much he has, and whether he can finish it; that it may not happen that having, begun to build he should be unable to finish, and so be laughed at.

So also he who wishes to live the life of the flesh should first consider how he can finish what he is engaged on.

Every king who wishes to go to war will first consider whether he can go against twenty thousand men with only ten thousand. If he sees that he cannot, he will send an ambassador to make peace, and will not go to war.

So let every man, before giving himself to the life of the flesh, bethink himself whether he can resist death or whether death is stronger than he, and whether he had not better make peace at once.

Each of you should first reckon all that he considers his own: family, money, and property. When he has considered what all this avails him, and understands that it avails him nothing, only then can he be my follower.

And hearing this, a man said: That is well if there be a life of the spirit. But what if we give up everything and there is no such life?

To that Jesus replied: Not so. Everyone knows the life of the spirit. You all know it. You do not practice what you know, not because you doubt, but because you are diverted

from the true life by false cares and excuse yourself from it. This is like what you do: A master prepared a dinner and sent to invite guests, but they began to decline. One said: I have bought some land and must go to see it. Another said: I have bought some oxen and must try them. A third said: I have married and must give a wedding feast. And the servants came and told the master that no one would come. Then the master sent his servants to call in the poor, and they did not refuse but came. And when they had come there was still room to spare, so the master sent to call in others, saying: Go and persuade everyone you meet to come to my dinner, that there may be still more guests. But those who refused because they were busy missed the dinner.

All men know that the fulfillment of the will of the Father gives life, but they do not accept his invitation because they are drawn away by the guile of riches. He who gives up false transitory riches for true life in accord with the Father's will, acts as a clever steward did.

There was a steward to a rich master. This steward saw that his master would soon dismiss him and he would be left without food or shelter. And he thought to himself. This is what I will do. I will secretly give away some of my master's goods to the peasants and reduce their debts, and then if my master sends me away the peasants will remember my kindness and will help me. And he did so. He called the peasants who were in debt to his master, and re-wrote their quittances. For him who owed a hundred he made it fifty; instead of sixty he put down twenty, and for the others in the same way. When the master heard of this he said to himself: My steward has acted cleverly, for he saw he would have been left with nothing. He has caused me loss, but he has acted cleverly for himself. For in the bodily life we all understand what is advantageous, but in regard to the life of the spirit we do not wish to understand. We should give away the transitory and false riches of this life in order to I obtain the life of the spirit. If we grudge

such trifles as riches for the life of the spirit, we shall not receive it. If we do not give up the false life our true life will not be given us.

It is not possible to serve two masters at once-God and riches: the will of the Father and your own will. You must serve either the one or the other.

The Orthodox heard this, and as they loved wealth they ridiculed him.

But he said to them: You think that because you are honored by men for your wealth you are really honorable. It is not so. God does not look at the exterior, but at the heart. That which is esteemed among men is despicable in God's sight. Even now the Kingdom of God is attainable on earth, and they who enter it are great. And it is not the rich who enter that kingdom, but those who have nothing. This always was so, and is so by your law and by Moses and the prophets. Listen how the rich the and poor stand, even in your belief.

There was a rich man, who dressed in fine clothes and went to amuse himself and to make merry every day. And there was a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores, who came to the rich man's yard to see if some scraps might not be left over from the rich man's feast; but Lazarus did not get even these, the rich man's dogs ate them all up and even licked Lazarus's sores. And both Lazarus and the rich man died. And when in hell the rich man saw Abraham afar off, and the beggar Lazarus sitting with him. And the rich man cried: Father Abraham, Lazarus the beggar is sitting with you, who used to lie outside my fence. I dare not trouble you; but send Lazarus the beggar to me: let him but dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am burning in the fire. But Abraham said: Why should I send Lazarus into the fire to you? In the world you had what you wished, but Lazarus only had sorrow, so now he must be comforted. And even though I might like to do it, I cannot send him to you, for there is a great gulf between us and you which cannot be crossed. We

are living and you are dead. Then the rich man said: Well, Father Abraham, at least send Lazarus to my house. I have five brothers and am sorry for them. Let him tell them everything, and show them how harmful riches are, or they too may fall into this torment. But Abraham said: They know already that it is harmful. Moses and all the prophets have told them so. But the rich man said: Still, it would be better if someone were to rise from the dead and go to them, they would then bethink themselves. But Abraham said: If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they would not listen even to one who rose from the dead.

That a man ought to share with his brother and do good to all men, is known to everyone. The whole law of Moses and the prophets only says that. You know it, but because you love riches you cannot obey it.

And a rich Orthodox official came to Jesus and said to him: You are a good teacher. What must I do to obtain everlasting life? Jesus said to him: Why do you call me good? Only the father is good. If you wish to have life, fulfill the commandments.

The official said: There are many commandments-which must I fulfill?

And Jesus said: Do not kill, do not lust, do not lie, do not steal. Also, honor your Father and fulfill his will, and love your neighbor as yourself. And the Orthodox official said: I have kept all those commandments since I was a child; but I ask what else must I do according to your teaching? Jesus looked at him and at his rich clothes, smiled, and said: One little thing you have not yet done. You have not fulfilled everything, as you say. If you wish to fulfill the commandments: not to kill, not to lust, not to steal, not to lie, and the chief command, to love your neighbor as yourself-then sell all your possessions at once and give to the poor. Then you will fulfill the Father's will.

Hearing this, the official frowned and went away, for he was loathe to part with his possessions.

And Jesus said to his pupils: As you see, it is quite impossible to be rich and to fulfill the Father's will.

The pupils were horrified at these words, but Jesus repeated them again, and said: Yes, children, it is impossible for him who has riches to be in the Father's will. A camel can pass through the eye of a needle sooner than he who trusts in riches fulfill the will of the Father. And they were still more horrified and said: How then can one preserve one's life?

But he said: To a man it seems that he cannot support his life without property, but God preserves a man's life without property.

Jesus was once passing through the town of Jericho. And a prominent tax-farmer was there, a rich man named Zacchaeus, who had heard of Jesus' teaching and believed in it, and when he learnt that Jesus was in Jericho he wished to see him. But there was such a crowd round Jesus that it was impossible to push through to him. Zacchaeus was a small man, so he ran ahead and climbed a tree that he might see Jesus as he went past. When passing the tree Jesus saw him, and knowing that he believed in his teaching said: Come down from the tree and go home. I will come to you. Zacchaeus climbed down, ran home, made ready to welcome Jesus, and received him joyfully.

The people disapproved of this and said of Jesus: Why, he has gone to a taxfarmer's, to a scoundrel's house!

At that very time Zacchaeus was saying to Jesus: See, Master, what I will do: I will give half my property to the poor, and out of what is left I will repay fourfold to all whom I have wronged.

And Jesus said: You have saved yourself. You were dead but have come to life; you were lost, but have found yourself; for you have done as Abraham did when by being ready to kill his own son he showed his faith. For herein is the whole life of man; to find and save that which is perishing in his soul. A sacrifice cannot be measured by its size.



It happened once that Jesus was sitting with his pupils near a collecting box. People were placing contributions in the box for God's service. Rich men went up to the box and put in much, and a poor widow came and put in two farthings.

And Jesus pointed to her and said: See, this poor widow, a beggar-woman, has given two farthings, and she has given more than all the others. For they gave what they did not need, while she has given all she had; she has put in her whole substance.

It happened that Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper. And a woman came into the house and she had ajar of precious oil, worth thirty pounds. Jesus was saying to his pupils that his death was near, and the woman heard this and was sorry for him, and to show him her love poured oil on his head. And she forgot everything, and broke her jar, and anointed both his head and his feet, and poured out all the oil.

And the pupils began to discuss it, and said she had acted badly. And Judas, who afterwards betrayed Jesus, said: See how much she has wasted. That oil might have been sold for thirty pounds, with which many poor people could have been clothed. And the pupils began blaming the woman, who was abashed and did not know whether she had done well or ill.

Then Jesus said: You are wrong to trouble the woman; she has indeed done a good deed, and you are wrong to speak about the poor. If you want to do good to them, do so—they are always there. But why speak of them now? If you pity the poor, go with your pity and do them good. But this woman has pitied me and done good truly, for she has given away all that she had. Which of you can tell what is needful and what is not? How do you know that there was no need to anoint me with the oil? She has poured it on me to prepare my body for burial, and for that it was wanted. She has truly done the will of the Father by forgetting herself and pitying another. She forgot her worldly reckonings and gave away all that she had.

And Jesus said: My teaching is to do the Father's will, and His will can only be fulfilled by deeds, and not by words only. If a man's son keeps saying, 'I will, I will', to his father's bidding, but does not do what his father says, then he does not fulfill his father's will. But if another son says: 'I do not wish to obey', but then goes and does his father's bidding-he indeed fulfills his father's will. So also with men: not he is in the Father's will who says: 'I am in the Father's will', but he who does what the Father wishes.

## VII

### I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE

The true food of everlasting life is the fulfillment Of the Father's will

"GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD"

AFTER that the Jews wished to condemn Jesus to death, and he went away into Galilee and lived with his relations.

The Jewish feast of tabernacles was come, and the brothers of Jesus prepared to go to the feast, and called him to go with them. They did not believe in his teaching and said to him: You say that the Jewish service of God is wrong and that you know the real way to serve God by deeds. If you really think that no one but you knows how to serve God come with us to the feast. Many people will be there and you can declare before them all that the teaching of Moses is wrong. If they all believe you, then your pupils also will see that you are right. Why hide yourself? You say that our service is wrong, and that you know the true service of God: well then, show it to everybody.

And Jesus said: You have a special time and place in which to serve God, but for me there is none. I work for God everywhere and always. That is just what I show to people. I show them that their service of God is wrong and that is why they hate me. Go you to the feast, and I will go when I am ready. And his brothers went, but he remained behind, and only went up at the middle of the feast.

The Jews were shocked that he did not honor their feast and delayed coming to it, and they disputed about his teaching. Some said that he was right, while others said that he only disturbed the people.

In the middle of the feast Jesus went into the Temple and began to teach the people that their service of God was wrong, and that God should be served not in a temple and by sacrifices, but in the spirit and by deeds.

They all listened to him and wondered that he, an unlearned man, should have such wisdom. And Jesus, knowing that

all wondered at his wisdom, said to them: My teaching is not my own, but His that sent me. If any man wishes to do the will of the spirit that sent us into life, he will know that I have not invented this teaching but that it is of God. For a man who invents from himself follows his own imagination, but he who seeks to know the mind of Him that sent him is true and there is no falsehood in him.

Your law of Moses is not the Father's law, and so those who follow it do not fulfill the Father's law, but do evil and tell falsehoods. I teach you the fulfillment of the will of the Father alone. In my teaching there can be no contradictions, but your written Mosaic law is full of contradictions. Do not judge by externals, but by the spirit. And some said: They said he was a false prophet, but he condemns the law and no one says anything to him. Perhaps he is really a true prophet and even the rulers have recognized him. But there is one reason for not believing him: it is written that when God's messenger shall come no one will know whence he came, but we know where this man was born and we know his whole family.

The people still did not understand his teaching, and still sought proofs.

Then Jesus said to them: You know me, and where I came from in the body, but you do not know where I come from in the spirit. You do not know Him from whom I come in spirit, and that is the one thing it is necessary to know. If I had said: 'I am the Christ', you would have believed me, the man, but you would not have believed the Father who is in me and in you. You should believe in the Father only.

For the short space of my life I point out to you the path to that source of life from which I have come. But you ask of me proofs, and wish to condemn me. If you do not know that path, then when I am no longer here you will not be able to find it. You should not judge me but should follow me. He who does what I say will know whether what I say is true. He for whom the life of the flesh has not become

merely food for the spirit, he who does not seek truth as a thirsty man seeks for water, cannot understand me. He who thirsts for truth, let him come to me and drink. And he who believes my teaching will obtain true life. He will receive the life of the spirit.

And many believed his teaching and said: What he says is true, and is of God. Others did not understand him, and were always seeking in the prophecies for proofs that he was sent from God. And many disputed with him but no one was able to controvert him. The Orthodox teachers of the law sent their assistants to contend with him, but these assistants returned to them and said: We can do nothing with him.

And the chief priest said: How is it you have not convicted him? They replied: No one ever spoke as he does.

Then the Orthodox said: It signifies nothing that you cannot refute him and that the people believe his teaching. We do not believe it and none of the rulers believe it. The people are accursed, they always were stupid and ignorant, and will believe anyone.

But Nicodemus, to whom Jesus had explained his teaching, said to the chief priests: A man should not be condemned without being heard, and without understanding what he teaches.

But they said to him: There is nothing to hear or to understand. We know that no prophet can come from Galilee.

Another time Jesus spoke to the Orthodox and said: There can be no proof of the truth of my teaching, just as you cannot have an illumination of light. My teaching is the real light by which people see what is good and what is bad, and so it is impossible to prove my teaching; everything else is proved by it. He who follows me will not be in darkness but will have life. Life and enlightenment are one and the same.

But the Orthodox said: It is only you who say this.

And he replied: If I alone say it, still I am right, for I know whence I come and whither I go. In my teaching life has a meaning, but according to yours it has none. Besides, not I alone teach this, but my Father, the spirit, teaches it too.

They said: Where is your Father?

He replied: You do not understand my teaching or you would know my Father. You do not know whence you are nor whither you go. I show you the way, but instead of following me you discuss who I am; and so you cannot reach that salvation and life to which I wish to lead you. And you will perish if you remain in this error and do not follow me.

The Jews asked: Who are you?

He said: I told you when I first began to teach: I am the son of man, acknowledging the spirit as my Father, and what I have understood from him I tell to the world. When you exalt the son of man in yourselves you will know what I am, because I do and speak not of myself as a man, but what the Father has taught me. He who sent me is always in me and will not leave me, for I do His will. He who keeps to my understanding of life and fulfills the will of the Father will be truly taught by me. To know the truth you must do good to men. He who does harm to men loves the darkness and goes towards it; he who does good to men goes to the light. So to understand my teaching you must do good. He who does good will know the truth; he will be free from evil, from death. For everyone who errs becomes the slave of his error.

And as a slave does not always live in his master's house while the master's son does, so a man if he errs in life and becomes the slave of his errors does not live always, but dies. Only he who is in the truth remains always living. To know truth is to be a son and not a slave. If you err, you will be slaves and will die; but if you are in the truth you will be free sons and will live. You say of yourselves that you are sons of Abraham, and that you know the truth. Yet you wish to kill me because you do not understand my

teaching. And it comes to this, that I speak what I have understood from my Father while you wish to do what you have understood from your father.

They said: Our father is Abraham.

Jesus said to them: If you were the sons of Abraham you would do his deeds. But you wish to kill me because I have told you what I have learnt from God. Abraham did not act like that. You do not serve God, but serve another father.

They said to him: We are not bastards, we are all sons of one Father, we are all God's children.

And Jesus said to them: If your father were one with me you would love me, for I came forth from the Father; I was not born of myself. You are not children of one Father with me, so you do not understand my words and my understanding of life finds no place in you. If I am of the Father and you are of the same Father, then you cannot wish to kill me. If you wish to kill me, we are not of the same Father.

I am from the Father of goodness, God: but you are from the father of evil, the devil. You wish to do the lusts of your father who always was a murderer and a liar with no truth in him. If he, the devil, says anything, he says not what is common to all, but what is his own, and he is the father of lies. So you are servants of the devil and are his children.

You see how plainly you are convicted of error. If I err, convict me; but if there is no error in me why do you not believe me.

And the Jews began to revile him and to say that he was possessed. He said: I am not possessed. I honor thy Father, and you wish to kill me, which shows that you are not my brothers but sons of another father. It is not I who affirm that I am right, but the truth that speaks for me. And so I repeat to you: he who comprehends my teaching and performs it shall not see death.

And the Jews said: Now, were we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a devil? You convict yourself!

The prophets died, so did Abraham, yet you say that he who fulfills your teaching shall not see death. Abraham died, and will you not die? Or are you greater than Abraham?

The Jews discussed what he-Jesus of Galilee-was, whether he was an important or an unimportant prophet, and forgot that he had told them that he said nothing of himself as a man but spoke of the spirit that was within him.

And Jesus said: I do not make myself out to be anything. If I spoke of myself, of what I imagine, then all I might say would be of no importance. But there is that source of all things which you call God. It is of that I speak. You have not known, and do not know, the true God. But I know Him and if I said I do not know Him I should be a liar like you. I know Him and know and fulfill His will. Your father Abraham saw and rejoiced at what I understand.

The Jews said: You are not yet thirty: how could you be alive in Abraham's day? He replied: Before Abraham existed there was the understanding of good that I tell you of.

Then the Jews picked up stones to throw at him, but he escaped. And on the road, Jesus saw a man who had no understanding from the time of his birth.

And his pupils asked him: Who is at fault that this man is without understanding since his birth? He, or his parents for not having taught him?

And Jesus replied: Neither his parents nor lie are at fault. It is God's doing, that there may be light where there was darkness. If I have a teaching, it is the light of the world.

And Jesus explained to the ignorant man that he was a son of God in the spirit, and on receiving this teaching the ignorant man was conscious of light. Those who had known him previously did not recognize him. Though resembling what he had been, he had now become another man. But he said: I am he, and Jesus has shown me that I am a son of God, and the light has reached me, so that now I see what I used not to see.



This man was taken to the Orthodox teachers; and it was on a Saturday. The Orthodox asked him how he had come to understand what he had not seen before.

He said: I do not know how; I only know that now I understand everything. They said: You do not understand in a godly way, for Jesus did this on a Saturday, and besides, a layman cannot enlighten people. And they began to dispute, and asked of the man who had been enlightened: What do you think of Jesus?

He said: I think he is a prophet.

But the Jews did not believe that he had been ignorant and was now enlightened, so they called his parents and asked them: Is this your son, who has been ignorant since his birth? How is it he has now become enlightened? His parents said: We know that he is our son and that he was ignorant from his birth, but how he has become enlightened we do not know. He is of age, you should ask him.

The Orthodox called the man a second time, and said: Pray to our God, the real God. The man who enlightened you is a layman, and is not sent by God. We are sure of that.

And the man who had been enlightened said: Whether he is from God or not I do not know. But I know that I used not to see the light and that I see it now. The Orthodox again asked: What did he do to you when he enlightened you? He replied: I have told you already, but you do not believe. If you wish to be his pupils I will tell you again.

They began to revile him and said: You are his pupil, but we are the pupils of Moses. God Himself spoke to Moses, but we do not even know whence this man is. And the man answered: It is strange that he has enlightened me and yet you do not know whence he is. God does not hear sinners but hears those who honour Him and do His will. It can never be that one who is not from God could enlighten an ignorant man. If he were not from God he could do nothing.

The Orthodox were angry at this, and said: You are altogether sunk in delusions and yet you want to teach us.

And they drove him away. And Jesus said: My teaching is an awakening to life. He who believes in my teaching, though he die in the flesh, remains living, and everyone who lives and believes in me will not die.

And yet a third time Jesus taught the people. He said: Men accept my teaching not because I myself prove it. It is impossible to prove the truth. The truth itself proves all else. But men accept my teaching because there is no other that is native to them and promises life.

My teaching is to men like the familiar voice of the shepherd to the sheep, when he comes to them through the door and gathers them to lead them to pasture. No one believes your teaching, for it is foreign to them, and they see your own lusts in it. Men feel with you as sheep do at the sight of someone who does not enter by the door but climbs over the fence: the sheep do not know him, and feel that he is a robber. My teaching is the one true teaching, like the one door for the sheep. All your teachings of the law of Moses are false, as thieves and robbers are to the sheep. He who yields to my teaching will find true life—just as the sheep go forth and find food if they follow the shepherd. A thief only comes to steal, rob, and destroy...but the shepherd comes to give life. And my teaching alone promises to give true life.

There are shepherds for whom the sheep are their life and who are ready to give their life for the sheep. These are the true shepherds. But there are hirelings

who care nothing for the sheep, because they are hirelings and the sheep are not theirs. If a wolf comes they abandon the sheep and run away, and the wolf devours them. They are false shepherds. So also there are false teachers who care nothing for the life of people, but true teachers give up their lives for the life of men.

I am such a teacher. My teaching is this—to give up one's life for the life of men. No one will take my life from me, but I myself freely give it up for men to receive true life. That commandment I have received from my Father. As

my Father knows me so also I know Him, and therefore I lay down my life for men. And my Father loves me because I fulfill His commandment.

And all men, not only those here and now, but all men, shall understand my voice; and they will all come together in me and all men shall be one and their teaching one.

And the Jews surrounded him and said: What you say is hard to understand and does not agree with our scriptures. Do not torment us, but tell us simply and plainly whether you are the Messiah, who according to our scriptures should come into the world.

Jesus answered them: I have already told you who I am, but you do not believe. If you do not believe my words then believe my works; by them you can understand who I am and for what I have come.

You do not believe because you do not follow me. He who follows me and does what I say will understand me. And those who understand my teaching and fulfill it, receive true life. My Father has united them with me, and no one can disunite us. I and the Father are one.

And the Jews were offended at this and took up stones to kill him. But he said to them: I have shown you many good works and have disclosed the teaching of my Father. For which of these good works do you wish to stone me? They said: Not for your good works do We wish to stone you, but because you, a man, make yourself God.

And Jesus replied to them: The same is written in your scriptures where it is said that God Himself said to the wicked rulers: 'Ye are Gods.' If He called even wicked men Gods, why do you consider it blasphemous to call what God in his love has sent into the world, 'the son of God'?" Every man in the spirit is a son of', God. If I do not live in God's way, then do not believe that I am a son of God. But if I live after God's way then believe by my life that I am with the Father, and understand that the Father is in me and I in Him.

And the Jews began to dispute. Some said that he was possessed and others said: A man who is possessed cannot enlighten men.

And they did not know what to do with him and could not condemn him. And he again went beyond the Jordan and stayed there.

And many believed in his teaching and said that it was true as the teaching of John was. Therefore many believed in it.

And Jesus once asked his pupils: Tell me, how do people understand my teaching about the son of God and the son of man?

They said: Some understand it like the teaching of John: others like the prophecies of Isaiah: others again say it is like the teaching of Jeremiah. They understand that you are a prophet.

And he asked them: But how do you understand my teaching?

And Simon Peter said to him: I think your teaching is that you are the chosen son of the God of life. You teach that God is the life within man.

And Jesus said to him: Happy are you, Simon, that you have understood this. No man could disclose it to you: you have understood it because the divine spirit in you has disclosed it to you. Not human understanding and not I by my words have disclosed it to you, but God, my Father, has disclosed it to you directly. And on this is founded the society of men for whom there is no death.

VIII  
LIFE IS NOT TEMPORAL

Therefore true life must be lived in the present.

"EACH DAY"

JESUS said: He who is not prepared to suffer all bodily sufferings and deprivations has not understood me. He who obtains all that is best for his bodily life destroys the true life. But he who sacrifices his bodily life in fulfilling my teaching will receive the true life.

And at those words, Peter said to him: See, we have obeyed you, have thrown off all ties and property, and have followed you. What reward shall we receive for this?

Jesus said to him: Everyone who has given up home, sisters, brothers, father, mother, wife, children, or lands, for my teaching, shall receive a hundredfold more than sisters, brothers, and fields, and all that is needful in this life, and besides that obtains also life beyond the bounds of time. There are no rewards in the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven is its own aim and reward. In the kingdom of heaven all are equal, there is neither first nor last. For the kingdom of heaven is like this: The master of a house went in the morning to hire laborers for his garden. He hired them at a penny a day, and set them to work. At midday he went again and hired more laborers and sent them to work in his garden; towards evening he hired some more, and sent them to work.

And he agreed with them all at a penny. When the time came for payment, the master had them all paid alike: first those who were hired last, and afterwards those who had been hired first. When those who had been hired first saw that those hired last received a penny each, they thought they would receive more, but they also were paid a penny. They took it and said: How is it that the others who worked only one shift and we who worked all four shifts receive the same? That is not fair. But the master came and said: Why are you dissatisfied? Have I wronged you? I have

given you what we agreed on. Our agreement was for a penny. Take your pay and go. If I give to these last the same as to you, have I not the right to do what I will with my own? Or are you envious because you see that I am good?

In the kingdom of heaven there is no first or last-it is the same for all. After this, two of his pupils, James and John, came to Jesus and said: Teacher, promise us that you will give us what we ask.

He said: What do you want?

They said: That we may be equal with you.

Jesus said to them: You do not know what you are asking. You can live as I do and can cleanse yourselves from the fleshly life like me, but it is not in my power to make you like myself. Each man can by his own efforts enter the kingdom of the Father by submitting to His power and fulfilling His will.

On hearing this the other pupils grew angry with the two brothers for having wished to be equal to their teacher, and chiefs among the pupils.

But Jesus called them, and said: If you brothers, John and James, have asked me to make you such as I am in order to be chief among my pupils, you made a mistake; and if you, my other pupils, were angry with them for wishing to be above you, then you also made a mistake. In the world, kings and governors reckon by seniority, that they may rule the people: but among you there can be neither senior nor junior.

Among you, to be more than another you must be the servant of all. Among you, let him who wishes to be first consider himself last. For the will of the Father is that the son of man should live not to be served but to serve all and give up his bodily life as a ransom for the life of the spirit.

Jesus said to the people: The Father seeks to save that which is perishing, He rejoices over it as a shepherd rejoices when he finds a lost sheep. If one sheep is lost, the shepherd will leave ninety-nine and go to save the lost one.

And if a woman loses a penny, she will sweep out the whole hut and seek till she finds it. The Father loves the son and calls him to himself.

And he told them another parable showing that they who live according to God's will must not exalt themselves. He said: If you are invited to a dinner, do not seat yourself in a front place, or someone of more importance than you will come and the host will say to you: 'Leave your place and let someone better than yourself have it', and you will be put to shame. Take the lowest place: the host will then find you and call you to a higher one, and you will be honored.

So also in the kingdom of God there is no room for pride. He who exalts himself, by so doing lowers himself; but he who humbles himself and considers himself unworthy, raises himself in the kingdom of God.

A man had two sons. The younger son said to his father: Father, give me my share of the property.

And the father gave him his share. The younger son took it, went to a far country, squandered it all, and fell into want. In that far country he became a swineherd, and he was so hungry that he ate acorns with the pigs. And he bethought himself of his life, and said: Why did I take my share and leave my father? He had plenty of everything, even his laborers were well fed. But here am I eating the same food as the pigs. I will go to my father, fall at his feet, and say: I have done wrong, father, and am unworthy to be your son. Take me back as a laborer. So he thought, and he went to his father. And as he drew near, his father recognized him at a distance, and ran to meet him and embraced him and began to kiss him. And the son said: Father I am to blame before you, and am unworthy to be your son. But the father did not even listen, and said to the servants: Bring the best clothes and the best boots, quickly, and put them on him. And go and catch a fatted calf and kill it, and we will rejoice because this son of mine was dead and is now alive, was lost and is now found.

Then the elder brother came from the field, and as he drew near he heard sounds of music in the house and called a boy and said: Why are they making merry? And the boy said: Have you not heard that your brother has returned?

Your father is glad, and has had the fatted calf killed for joy that his son has come home. But the elder brother was vexed and did not go into the house. His father came out and called him, but he said to his father: Father, I have worked for you for many years, and have never disobeyed your orders, but you never killed a fatted calf for me. My younger brother left home and has squandered all his property with drunkards, and for him you have had a calf killed. And his father said: You are always with me and all that is mine is yours; you should not be vexed but rejoice that your brother who was dead has become alive again—was lost and is found.

A master planted a garden, cultivated it, and did everything to make it yield as much fruit as possible. And he sent laborers into the garden to work there, pay him for it according to agreement, and gather the fruit.

(The master is the Father; the garden the world; the laborers men. The Father has sent His son—the son of man—into the world only that men should make return of that—the understanding of life—which He implanted in them.) The time came when the master sent a servant to receive payment. (The Father has always told men that they must fulfill His will.) The laborers drove away the master's servant empty-handed and remained in the garden imagining that it was their own, and that they were settled in it of their own will. (Men reject reminders of the will of God, and continue to live each one for himself, imagining that the purpose of life is to serve the flesh.) Then the master sent, one after another, his chosen ones and finally his son, to remind the laborers of their debt. But they quite lost their reason and imagined that if they killed the master's son, who reminded them that the garden was not theirs, they would be left alone. So they killed him.



(People do not like even a reminder of the spirit that lives in them and shows them that it is eternal and that they are not so; and as far as they can they have killed their consciousness of the spirit: they have wrapped the talent in a cloth and buried it.)

What then was the master to do? Simply to drive out those laborers and send others.

What is the Father to do? Sow until there is fruit. And this He does. Men have not understood and do not understand that the consciousness of the spirit that is in them, and which they hide because it troubles them, brings life to them. They reject the stone on which everything rests. And they who do not take the life of the spirit as their foundation do not enter the kingdom of heaven and do not receive life. To have faith and to receive life it is necessary to understand your position and not expect rewards.

Then the pupils said to Jesus: Increase our faith in us; tell us what will make us believe more firmly in the life of the spirit, that we may not regret the life of the flesh. See how much has to be sacrificed, and continually sacrificed, for the life of the spirit. Yet you yourself say that there is no reward.

To this Jesus replied: You can readily believe that a great tree grows from a birch seed-if you had as much faith in the seed of the spirit which is within you and whence true life springs, you would not ask me to increase your faith. Faith does not consist in believing something wonderful, but it consists in understanding your position and where salvation lies. If you understand your position you will not expect rewards but will believe in that which has been entrusted to you.

When a master returns from the field with his laborers, he does not seat them at table but bids them see to the cattle, and get his supper ready, and only afterwards says to them: Sit down and eat and drink. The master does not thank the laborer for having done what he ought to do. And the laborer, if he understands that he is a laborer, is not

offended but does his work believing that he will receive his due.

So you too should fulfill the will of the Father and remember that we are unprofitable servants who have only done what we ought to, and not expect rewards but be satisfied that you will receive your due. You should not be anxious to believe that there will be a reward and life, that cannot be otherwise, but be careful not to destroy this life and do not forget that it is given us that we may bring forth its fruits and fulfill the will of the Father.

So be always ready, like servants awaiting a master, to answer Him immediately he comes. The servants do not know whether he will come early or late, but they should always be ready. And if they meet their master they have fulfilled his will and it will be well for them.

So it is in life. Always, at every minute of the present, you should live the life of the spirit, not thinking of the past or the future and not saying to yourself then or there I will do this or that.

If a master knew when a thief would come, he would not sleep, so you too should never sleep; because for the life of the son of man time is nothing; he lives only in the present and does not know when his life begins or ends.

Our life is like the life of a slave whom his master has left to manage his household. It is well for that slave if he always does his master's will. But if he says: The master will not return just yet, and neglects his business, his master will come unexpectedly and drive him out.

Do not be downcast, but live always in the present, by the spirit. For the life of the spirit there is no time. Look to it that you do not weigh yourself down with cares, and do not befog yourself with drunkenness or gluttony, and do not let the time for salvation pass. The time for salvation is thrown like a net over all-it is always there. Live therefore always the life of the son of man. We may compare the kingdom of heaven to this: Ten maidens went with lamps to meet a bridegroom. Five of them were wise and five were foolish.

The foolish ones took lamps without any extra oil, but the wise ones took lamps and a supply of oil. While they waited for the bridegroom they went to sleep. When the bridegroom was approaching the foolish maidens saw that they had too little oil and went to buy some, but while they were gone the bridegroom came. And the wise maidens who had oil went in with him and the doors were shut. Their business was only this: to meet the bridegroom with lights. But the foolish ones had forgotten that it was important not only that the lights should burn, but that they should burn at the proper time. And in order that they should be alight when the bridegroom came, it was necessary that they should burn all the time.

Life is only for this: to exalt the son of man, and the son of man is always here, he does not belong to some particular time, and so to serve him one must live without time-in the present alone.

Therefore strive to enter into the life of the spirit now. If you do not make efforts you will not enter it. You will say: We said so and so. But there will be no good works to show, and there will be no life. For the son of man-the one true spirit of life-will appear in each man according to his deeds.

Mankind is divided according to the way men serve the son of man. And by their works men will be separated into two groups, as sheep from goats in a flock. The one will live, the other will perish.

They who have served the son of man will receive what has been theirs from the beginning of the world-the life which they have preserved. They have preserved life by serving the son of man. They have fed the hungry, clothed the naked, welcomed strangers, visited those in prison. They have lived by the son of man, felt that he is the same in all men, and have therefore loved their neighbors. Those who have not lived by the son of man, have not served him, have not understood that he is the same in all men and have

therefore not united with him, have lost the life they had in him and have perished.

## IX TEMPTATIONS

The deceptions of temporal life hide from men the true life in the present.

"AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS"

Some children were brought to Jesus and he saw that his pupils were sending them away. He was grieved at this. and said: It is wrong to send children away. They are better than anyone, for they live according to the will of the Father: they are indeed in the kingdom of heaven. Instead of sending them away you should learn from them, for to live in the Father's will you must live as children do.

They do not abuse people, do not bear ill-will, do not lust, do not bind themselves by oaths, do not resist evil, do not go to law with anyone, acknowledge no difference between their own and other nations; and so they are better than grown-up people and are in the kingdom of heaven. If you do not become as children and refrain from all the snares of the flesh, you will not be in the kingdom of heaven.

Only he understands my teaching who recognizes that children are better than we, because they do not infringe the Father's will.

Only he who understands my teaching understands the will of the Father. We must not despise children. They are better than we, and their hearts are always with the Father and are pure in his sight.

Not one child perishes by the Father's will. They perish only because men entice them and draw them away from the truth. Be careful therefore not to lead a child away from the Father and from true life; for he who leads a child away from purity does evil. To lead a child away from goodness, to tempt him, is as bad as to hang a millstone about his neck and throw him into the water. It is hard for him to get out, and he is more likely to drown. Equally hard is it for a

child to escape from the temptations into which a grownup man leads him.

The world of men is unhappy only because of temptations. Temptations are everywhere in the world; they always were and always will be, and man perishes on account of them.

So give up everything, sacrifice everything, in order to avoid falling into temptation. If a fox is caught in a trap it will wrench off its paw to escape, and the paw will heal and the fox remain alive. You too should be ready to give up everything in order not to sink into temptation.

Beware of the temptation to break the first commandment: not to be angry with people when they injure you and you wish for revenge.

If a man has injured you do not forget that he is a son of the same Father and is your brother. If he has offended you go and appeal to his conscience face to face. If he listens to you, you are a gainer and have found a new brother. If he does not listen to you, take two or three others with you to persuade him, and if he repents forgive him. Forgive him always, even if he offends you seven times and seven times asks for forgiveness. If he will not listen to you then tell the congregation of those who believe in my reaching, and if he will not listen to them, still forgive him, and have nothing more to do with him.

For the Kingdom of God may be compared to this: A king began to settle with his vassals. And they brought to him a man who owed him a million and had nothing to pay with. And the king would have had to sell the vassal's land, his wife, his children, and the man himself. But the vassal begged mercy of the king, and the king had mercy on him and forgave him all his debt. Now this same man went home and saw a peasant who owed him fifty pence. And he seized the peasant and began to throttle him, and said: Pay what you owe me. And the peasant fell at his feet and said: Have patience with me and I will pay you all. But the other showed him no mercy and put him in prison, to stay there till he paid everything. Other peasants saw this and went to

the king and told what the vassal had done. Then the king called the vassal and said to him: Wretched man, I forgave you all your debt because you begged me to, and you should have forgiven your debtor as I forgave you. And the king was angry and handed the vassal over to be tortured till his whole debt should be paid.

And the Father will deal with you in like manner if you do not with your whole heart forgive all those who are to blame in your sight.

You know that if you have a quarrel with a man, it is better to make it up with him without going to law. You know that and act accordingly, because you know that if you go to law you will lose more. So it is with all anger. If you know that anger is an evil thing and separates you from the Father, then get rid of the anger as quickly as possible and make peace.

You know that as you become bound on earth, so will you be bound before the Father. And as you free yourselves on earth so you will also be free before the Father.

Understand that if two or three are united on earth in my teaching, all that they desire they already have from my Father. Because where two or three are joined together in the name of the spirit in man, that spirit of man already lives in them.

Beware also of temptation under the second commandment: about men changing their wives.

Some Orthodox teachers once came to Jesus, and trying him, said: May a man put away his wife?

He answered: From the very beginning man was created male and female: that was the Father's will.

Therefore a man leaves father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and the husband and wife unite in one body. So that his wife is for a man the same as his own flesh. Therefore a man must not break the natural law of God and divide what is united. In your law of Moses it is said that you may put away your wife and take another, but that is wrong. According to the Father's will it is not so. And I tell

you that he who casts off his wife drives both her and him who unites with her into depravity. And by casting off his wife a man spreads dissoluteness abroad.

And his pupils said to Jesus: It is too hard to be always bound to one wife. If that must be, it would be better not to marry at all. He said to them: You may refrain from marriage but you must understand what that means. If a man wishes to live without a wife, let him be quite pure and not approach women: but let him who loves women unite with one wife and not cast her off or look at other women.

Beware of temptation against the third commandment: about being forced to fulfill obligations as a result of taking oaths. The tax-collectors once came to Peter and asked him: What about your teacher- does he pay the tax? Peter said: No, he does not. And he went and told Jesus that the tax-collectors had stopped him and had said that everyone was bound to pay the taxes.

Then Jesus said to him: A king does not take taxes from his sons, nor do they have to pay them to anyone else. Is that not so? So it is with us. If we are sons of God we are bound to no one but God, and are free from all obligations. But if they demand the tax from you, then pay: not that you are under obligation to do so but because you must not resist evil. Otherwise resistance to evil will produce worse evil.

Another time the Orthodox together with Caesar's officials went to Jesus to entrap him in his words. They said to him: You teach everyone according to the truth. Tell us, then, are we bound to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Jesus understood that they wished to convict him of not acknowledging the duty to Caesar. And he said to them: Show me what the taxes to Caesar are paid with. They handed him a coin. He looked at it and said: What is this on it? Whose is this image and inscription? They said: Caesar's. And he said: Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, but that which is God's-your soul-give to no one but God. Money, property, your labor, give to him who asks them of you. But give your soul to no one but God.



Your Orthodox teachers go about everywhere making people swear and vow that they will fulfill the law. But by this they only pervert people and make them worse than before. It is impossible to let the body put the soul under obligation. In your soul, God is; and you cannot make promises on God's behalf to other men. Beware of the temptation to break the fourth commandment about judging and executing people and calling on others to take part in these judgments and executions.

The pupils of Jesus once went into a village and asked for a night's lodging but were not admitted. Then they went to Jesus to complain, and said: Let lightning destroy these people!

Jesus answered: You still do not understand of what spirit you are. I do not teach to destroy people but to save them.

Once a man came to Jesus and said: Bid my brother give me my inheritance. Jesus said to him: No one has made me a judge over you, and I judge no one. Neither may you sentence anyone.

The Orthodox once brought a woman to Jesus and said: See, this woman was taken in adultery. Now by the law she should be stoned to death, but what do you say about it?

Jesus answered nothing, and waited for them to bethink themselves. But they pressed him, and asked him what he would adjudge to this woman? Then he said: Let him among you who has no fault cast the first stone at her. And he said nothing more.

Then the Orthodox looked within themselves and their conscience smote them, and those in front drew behind the others and they all went away. Jesus remained alone with the woman. He looked round, saw that there was no one else, and said to her: Has no one condemned you?

She said: No one!

Then he said: Neither do I condemn you. Go, and in future do not sin.

Beware! The temptation against the fifth commandment is for men to consider it their duty to do good to their fellow-countrymen only and to regard other nations as enemies.

A teacher of the law wished to test, Jesus and said to him: What must I do to obtain life?

Jesus replied: You yourself know what to do: love your Father, God, and your brothers, His sons, whether they are your fellow-countrymen or not.

And the teacher of the law said: That would be well if there were not different nations, but how am I to love an enemy of my own people?

And Jesus said: There was a Jew who fell into misfortune. He was beaten, robbed, and left on the road. A Jewish priest passed by, looked at the injured man and went on. Then a Jewish Levite passed, looked at the injured man and also passed by. Then there came a man of another, a hostile nation, a Samaritan. This Samaritan saw the Jew and pitied him, not thinking of the Jews' contempt for the Samaritans. He washed and bound up his wounds, took him on his own ass to an inn, paid money for him to the innkeeper and promised to call again and pay for him.

See that you too behave like that to foreigners and to those who despise and ruin you. Then you will obtain true life.

Jesus said: The world loves its own but hates God's people. Therefore men of the world-priests, preachers, officials-will harass those who fulfill the Father's will. I am going to Jerusalem and they will torture and kill me, but my spirit cannot be killed and will remain alive.

Having heard that Jesus would be tortured and killed in Jerusalem, Peter was sad and took Jesus by the hand and said to him: If that is so, you had better not go to Jerusalem. Then Jesus said to Peter: Do not say that. What you say is a temptation. If you fear tortures and death for me it means that you are not thinking of what is godly-of the spirit-but are thinking of what is human.

And having called the people and his pupils to him Jesus said: He that wishes to live according to my teaching let

him forsake his fleshly life and be ready for all physical sufferings: he who fears for his physical life will ruin his true life, but he who disregards his fleshly life will save his true life.

But they did not understand this, and then some materialists came, and he explained to all what true life and the awakening from death means.

These materialists believed that after the death of the body there is no other life. They said: How can anybody rise from the dead? If everybody rose, they could not live together. For instance, there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died. His wife married the second brother, and he died; and she then married the third, who also died, and so on to the seventh. Now how can those seven brothers all live with one wife if they all rise from the dead?

Jesus answered them: Either you purposely confuse things or you do not understand what the awakening to life is. In this life people marry. But those who earn everlasting life and awaken from death do not marry and cannot die, for they are united to the Father. In your scriptures it is written that God said: I am the God of Abraham and Jacob. And this was said when Abraham and Jacob had died from among men. So those who are dead from among men are alive to God. If God is, and God does not die, then they who are with God live always. The awakening from death is to live in the will of the Father. For the Father there is no time, and therefore by fulfilling the Father's will and uniting with him man departs from time and death.

When they heard this the Orthodox did not know what to devise to silence Jesus, and together they began to question him. And one of them said: Teacher, which in your opinion is the chief commandment of the whole law?

They thought that Jesus would get confused in answering about the law.

But Jesus said: The chief commandment is that you should love with all your soul the Lord your God in whose power

you are. And the other commandment to love your neighbor follows from it, for the same Lord God is in him also. In this is the substance of all that is written in your scriptures.

And he said further: What in your opinion is Christ? Is he someone's son?

They said: In our opinion Christ is the son of David.

He replied: How then is it that David calls Christ his Lord? Christ is neither David's son, nor anyone's son after the flesh, but Christ is that same Lord, our Ruler, whom we know in ourselves as our life. Christ is that consciousness which is within us.

And Jesus said: Beware of the leaven of the Orthodox teachers. Beware also of the leaven of the materialists and of the rulers. But most of all, beware of the leaven of the self-styled 'Orthodox', for in them is the chief stumbling-block. And when the people understood what he was speaking about, he repeated: Most of all, beware of the teaching of the scholars, the self-styled Orthodox. Beware of them, because they occupy the place of the prophets who declared the will of God to the people. They have of themselves assumed the authority to preach the will of God to the people. They preach words, but do nothing. They only say: Do this and do that. But there is nothing to do, because they do nothing good, but only talk. They tell people to do what cannot be done, and they themselves do nothing. They only try to keep the teaching in their own hands, and for that purpose strive to appear imposing; they dress themselves up and exalt themselves. Know therefore that no one should call himself a teacher and leader.

The self-appointed Orthodox call themselves teachers, and by so doing hinder you from entering into the kingdom of heaven, and do not enter it themselves. These Orthodox think that people can be brought to God by external ceremonies and pledges. Like blind men they do not see that the outside show is of no importance and that everything depends on the soul. They themselves do what

is easy and external, but what is needful and difficult-love, mercy, and truth-they neglect. They only wish to appear to be within the law and to bring others outwardly to the law. Therefore they are like painted tombs, which seem clean externally but are loathsome within. They outwardly honor the holy martyrs, but in fact they are just the people who torture and kill the saints. They were, and are, the enemies of all that is good. All the evil in the world comes of them, because they hide the good and put forward evil in its stead. Most of all to be feared, therefore, are the self-appointed teachers. You yourselves know that every other mistake may be corrected, but if people are mistaken as to what is good it cannot be corrected, and that is the case with the self-appointed leaders.

And Jesus said: I wished here in Jerusalem to unite all men in one understanding of true happiness, but the people here are only capable of putting the teachers of goodness to death. Therefore they will remain as godless as they were, and will not know the true God till they lovingly accept the understanding of Him.

And Jesus went away from the temple.

Then his pupils said to him: But what will happen to the temple of God, with all the embellishments people have brought to it to give to God?

And Jesus said: I tell you truly that this whole temple with all its embellishments will be destroyed, and nothing will be left of it. There is only one true temple of God-the hearts of men when they love one another.

And they asked him: When will that temple be?

And Jesus said to them: It will not be yet. People will for a long time be deceived in the name of my teaching, and this will cause wars and rebellions. There will be much wrongdoing and little love. But when the true teaching spreads abroad among all men, then there will be an end of evil and temptations.

## X

### THE STRUGGLE WITH TEMPTATION

So, not to fall into temptation, we must at every moment Of our life be at one with the Father.

"AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION"

AFTER this, the Orthodox chief priests tried to do all they could to ensnare Jesus, so as in one way or other to destroy him. They assembled in council and began to consider.

They said: We must somehow finish with this man. He so proves his teaching that if we let him alone everyone will believe in him and cast off our belief. Now already half the people believe in him. But if the Jews come to believe his teaching that all men are sons of one Father and are brothers, and that our Hebrew people are not different from others, then the Romans will overwhelm us completely and we shall no longer have a Hebrew kingdom.

And the Orthodox chief priests and scholars long consulted together and could not decide what to do with him, for they could not make up their minds to kill him.

Then one of them, Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year, said to them: You must remember that it is expedient to kill one man rather than let the whole people perish, and if we leave this man alone the people will perish. I warn you of that, so it is better to kill Jesus. Even if the people did not perish, still they will be scattered and will go astray from the one faith unless we kill this man. So it is better to kill him.

And when Caiaphas said this they all agreed not to hesitate, but that it was necessary to kill Jesus without fail.

They would at once have taken him and killed him, but he withdrew from them into the desert. But just then the feast of the Passover occurred, when many people assembled in Jerusalem for the holiday; and the Orthodox chief priests counted on Jesus coming with the people to the feast. So they made known to the people that if anyone saw Jesus he should bring him to them.

And it so happened that six days before the Passover Jesus said to his pupils:

Let us go to Jerusalem.

But the pupils said to him: Do not go. The chief priests have resolved to stone you to death. If you go there they will kill you.

Jesus said to them: I cannot fear anything because I live in the light of understanding. And as every man, that he may not stumble, walks by day and not by night, so every man, that he may not doubt or fear, must live by this understanding. Only that man doubts and fears who lives by the flesh; he who lives by understanding neither doubts nor fears anything.

And Jesus came to the village of Bethany near Jerusalem, to the house of Martha and Mary. And when he sat at supper Martha waited on him. But Mary took a pound of fresh scented oil, poured it over his feet and wiped them with her hair.

When the scent of the oil had filled the whole room, Judas Iscariot said: Mary was wrong to waste this expensive oil; it would have been better to sell it for three hundred pence and give it to the poor.

But Jesus said: You will have the poor always with you, but I shall soon have gone away. She has done well! She has prepared my body for its burial. In the morning Jesus went to Jerusalem where many people had come for the feast, and when they recognized Jesus they surrounded him, tore branches from the trees, and threw down their clothes on the road before him, and all shouted: He is our true King, he has taught us to know the true God.

Jesus rode on an ass's foal, and the people ran before him and shouted. So he entered Jerusalem. And when he had ridden thus into the town all the people were excited and asked: Who is he? And those who knew him answered: Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee.

And Jesus went into the temple and again drove out thence all the buyers and sellers.

When the Orthodox chief priests saw all this they said to each other: See what this man is doing. All the people follow him. And they dared not take him straight from among the people, because they saw that the people were on his side, and they considered how to take him by cunning.

Meanwhile Jesus was in the temple and taught the people, among whom besides the Jews there were Greeks who were heathen. The Greeks had heard of Jesus's teaching and understood that he taught the truth not only to Hebrews but to all men; so they also wished to be his pupils and spoke about this to Philip. And

Philip told it to Andrew.

These two feared to bring Jesus and the Greeks together. They feared that the people would be angry with Jesus for not making any difference between the Hebrews and other nations, and they long hesitated about telling him. Afterwards they told him both together, and hearing that the Greeks wished to be his pupils Jesus was troubled. He knew that the people would hate him for making no difference between Hebrews and heathen, and yet he acknowledged himself to be one with the heathen.

He said: The time is come to explain what I understand by the 'son of man'. And though I perish in explaining this because I destroy the distinction between Jews and heathen, I will still speak the truth. A grain of wheat only fructifies when it itself perishes. He who loves his fleshly life loses the true life, but he who disregards the life of the flesh preserves the life everlasting. Let him who wishes to follow my teaching do as I do. And he who does as I do shall be rewarded by my Father. My soul is now troubled: shall I yield to consideration for my temporal life, or fulfill the will of the Father now at this hour? Can it be that now, when the hour in which I live has come, I shall say: Father, deliver me from that which I ought to do? I cannot say that, for I now live.

Therefore I say: Father, show Thyself in me.



And Jesus said: Henceforth the present society of men is doomed to destruction. From this time that which rules this world shall be destroyed. And when the son of man is exalted above the earthly life he will unite all in one.

Then the Jews said to him: We understand from the scriptures that there is an eternal Christ. How then do you say that the son of man shall be exalted? What does it mean-to exalt the son of man?

To this Jesus replied: To exalt the son of man means to live by the light of understanding that is in you. To exalt the son of man above the earthly life means to believe in the light while there is light, in order to be a son of understanding.

He who believes in my teaching believes not in me but in that spirit which gave life to the world. And he who understands my teaching understands that spirit which gave life to the world. If anyone hears my words and does not fulfill them, it is not I who blame him, for I came not to accuse but to save. He who does not accept my teaching is accused, not by my teaching but by the understanding which is in himself. It is that which accuses him. I do not speak of myself, but say what my Father-the living spirit within me-suggests to me. That which I say has been told me by the spirit of understanding, and that which I teach is the true life. Having said this, Jesus went away and again hid from the chief priests.

And among those who heard these words of Jesus were many powerful and wealthy people who believed his teaching but were afraid to acknowledge it to the chief priests. Not one of the chief priests acknowledged that he believed the teaching, for they were accustomed to judge by human standards and not by God's.

After Jesus had hidden himself, the chief priests and elders again gathered together at the palace of Caiaphas. And they began to plan how to take Jesus unknown to the people, for they were afraid to take him openly.

And one of the first twelve pupils of Jesus, Judas Iscariot, came to their council and said: If you want to take Jesus

secretly so that the people may not see it, I will find a time when there will be few people with him, and will show you where he is and then you can take him. But what will you give me for that? They promised him thirty pieces of silver. He agreed; and from that time began to seek opportunity to lead the chief priests upon Jesus to take him.

Meanwhile Jesus withdrew from the people and only his pupils were with him. When the first feast of unleavened bread was at hand the pupils said to Jesus: Where shall we keep the Passover? And Jesus said: Go into the village, enter a house, say that you have not had time to prepare for the feast, and ask the man who lives there to admit us to celebrate the Passover.

The pupils did this: they asked a man in the village and he invited them in. So they came and sat down to table Jesus and twelve pupils, Judas among them. Jesus knew that Judas Iscariot had already promised to betray him to death: but he did not accuse him and did not revenge himself, but as all his life he had taught his pupils love, so now he only reproved Judas lovingly. When they all twelve had sat down to table, he looked at them and said: Among you sits one who has betrayed me. Yes, he who eats and drinks with me will destroy me. And he said nothing more, so that they did not know of whom he spoke, and began to eat.

When they began to eat, Jesus took bread, broke it into twelve pieces, gave each of the pupils a piece, and said: Take and eat this-it is my body. And then he filled a cup with wine, handed it to the pupils and said: Drink all of you of this cup. And when they had all drunk he said: This is my blood. I shed it that people may know my will that they should forgive one another their sins. For I shall soon die and shall not be with you any more in this world, but shall join you only in the kingdom of heaven.

After that, Jesus rose from table, girt himself with a towel, took a ewer of water, and began to wash the feet of all the pupils. When he came to Peter, Peter protested and said: Why should you wash my feet? Jesus said to him: It seems

strange to you that I should wash your feet, but you will soon know why I do this. Though you are clean, not all of you are so: among you is my betrayer, to whom I gave bread and wine with my own hands and whose feet I wish to wash. And when Jesus had washed the feet of all his pupils, he sat down again and said: Do you understand why I did this? I have done it that you may always do the same to one another. I, your teacher, do this that you may know how to behave with those who do you harm. If you have understood this and will do it, then you will be happy. When I said that one of you would betray me I did not speak of you all, for only one of you, whose feet I washed and who ate bread with me, will destroy me.

And having said this Jesus was troubled in spirit and again said: Yes, yes, one of you will betray me.

And again the pupils began to look at one another, not knowing of whom he spoke. One of them sat near Jesus, and Simon. Peter made a sign to him that he should ask Jesus who the betrayer was. And he did so.

Jesus said: I will soak a bit of bread and will give it to him and he to whom I give it is my betrayer. And he gave the bread to Judas Iscariot and said to him: What you wish to do, do quickly.

And Judas understood that he must go away, and as soon as he had taken the sop he at once went out. And he could not be followed as it was night.

When Judas had gone, Jesus said: It is now clear to you what the son of man is that in him is God, to make him as blessed as God Himself.

Children! I shall not be with you long. Do not argue over my teaching, as I said to the Orthodox, but do what I do. I give you a new commandment: as I have always and to the end loved you; do you always and to the end love one another. By that alone will you be distinguished. Seek only thus to be distinguished from other men-love one another.

And after that they went to the Mount of Olives.

On the way there Jesus said to them: Now the time is coming when what was said in the scriptures will happen: the shepherd will be killed and the sheep will all be scattered. It will happen tonight. I shall be taken and you will all abandon me and scatter.

And Peter said to him: Though all others may be frightened and scatter, I will not deny you. I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.

And Jesus said to him: I tell you that tonight, after I have been taken, before cock crows, you will deny me not once but thrice.

Peter answered that he would never deny him; and all the other pupils said the same.

Then Jesus said to them: Formerly neither I nor you lacked anything. You went without a wallet and without change of shoes, as I bade you. But now that I am considered an outlaw we can no longer do this, but must procure supplies and get knives that we may not perish uselessly.

The pupils said: See, we have two knives-and Jesus replied: It is well.

Having said this, Jesus went with the pupils to the garden of Gethsemane. And on reaching the garden he said: Wait you here, I wish to pray.

And coming up to Peter and the two sons of Zebedee he was sorrowful and distressed and he said to them: It is very hard for me-I am sad before my death. Wait here, and do not be cast down as I am.

And he went off a little way, lay prone on the ground, and began to pray, saying: My Father, the spirit! Let it be not as I wish, which is that I should not die, but as you wish. Let me die. But for you, as a spirit, all is possible- grant that I may not fear death and may not be tempted by the flesh.

Then he arose, went to the pupils, and saw that they were cast down. And he said to them: How is it that you are not able for one hour to live in the spirit as I do? Exalt your spirit, so as not to yield to the temptation of the flesh. The spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak.

And again Jesus went apart from them, and again began to pray, saying: Father! If I must suffer and die, then let me die, and let Thy will be done! Having said this, he again came to the pupils and saw that they were still more cast down and were ready to weep.

And he again went apart from them and for the third time said: Father, let Thy will be done.

Then he returned to his pupils and said to them: Now calm yourselves and be at ease, for it is now decided that I shall give myself up into the hands of worldly men.

XI  
THE FAREWELL DISCOURSE

The personal life is an illusion of the flesh, an evil. The true life is a life common to all men.

"BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL"

AND Peter said to Jesus: Where are you going? Jesus replied: You cannot come where I am going now, but later on you will go there too.

And Peter said: Why do you think I have not the strength now to go where you are going? I would give my life for you.

Jesus said: You say you would give your life for me: see that you do not deny me thrice before cock-crow.

And he turned to the pupils and said: Do not be troubled or afraid, but believe in the true God of life, and in my teaching.

The life of the Father is not only the life here on earth, there is another life also. If the life of the Father were only such a life as this, I would promise you that when I die I would go to Abraham's bosom and prepare a place for you there and that I would come and take you and that we should be happy together in Abraham's bosom. But I point out to you the path to another life.

Thomas said: But we do not know where you are going and so we cannot know the way. We want to know what there is after death.

Jesus said: I cannot show you what will be there; my teaching is the way and the truth and the life. It is impossible to be joined with the Father of life except through my teaching. If you fulfill my teaching you will know the Father. Philip said: But who is the Father?

Jesus replied: The Father is He who gives life. I have fulfilled the Father's will and therefore by my life you can recognize the will of the Father. I live in the Father and the Father lives in me. All that I say and do, I do by the will of the Father. My teaching is that I am in the Father and the

Father in me. If you do not understand my teaching, yet you see me and what I do: and by this you may understand what the Father is. You know that he who follows my teaching may do the same as I, and even more, for I shall die, while he will still be alive. He who lives according to my teaching shall have all that he desires, for the son will be one with the Father. Whatever wish you may have that accords with my teaching will be fulfilled. But for that, you must love my teaching. My teaching will give you an intercessor and a comforter in my place. That comforter will be the consciousness of truth which worldly men do not understand, but you will know it in yourselves. You will never be alone, for the spirit of my teaching will be in you. I shall die and worldly men will not see me, but you will see me because my teaching lives and you will live by it. And then if my teaching is in you, you will understand that I am in the Father and the Father in me. He who fulfills in my teaching will feel the Father in him and my spirit will live in him.

Then Judas (not Iscariot) said to him: But why cannot all men live by the spirit of truth?

And Jesus replied: The Father loves only him who fulfills my teaching and only in him can my spirit abide. My Father cannot love him who does not fulfill my teaching, for that teaching is not mine but the Father's. This is all I can tell you now. But my spirit, the spirit of truth which will take up its abode in you after I am gone, will reveal all things to you and you will remember and will understand much of what I have told you: so that you may always have a peaceful spirit, not the peace that worldly people seek, but such peace of mind that you will not fear anything. If you fulfill my teaching you need not regret my death.

I, as the spirit of truth, will come to you and settle in your hearts together with a knowledge of the Father. If you fulfill my teaching you should rejoice, for instead of having me with you in the flesh, you will have the Father with you in your heart, and that is better for you.

My teaching is a tree of life. The Father is He who tends the tree. He prunes and cherishes those branches on which there is fruit, that they may yield more. Hold to my teaching of life and you will have more life. As a shoot lives not of itself but by being part of the tree, so you should live by my teaching. My teaching is the tree, you are the shoots. He who lives by my teaching of life will bring forth much fruit, for without my teaching there is no life. He who does not live by my teaching withers and perishes, just as dead branches are cut off and burnt.

If you live by my teaching and fulfill it you will have all you desire. For it is the will of the Father that you may live the true life and have what you desire. As my Father has given me what is good, so I give you the same. Hold on to this good. I have life because the Father loves me and I love the Father. You too should live by that same love, and if you live by it you will be blessed. My commandment is that you love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than to sacrifice one's life for others as I have done.

You are my equals if you do what I have taught you. I do not consider you as slaves to whom orders are given, but as equals, for I have explained to you all that I have understood from the Father. You do not choose my teaching of your own will, you choose it because I have shown you the one truth by which you can live, and from which you will have all that you wish.

The whole teaching is-to love one another.

If the world hates you, do not be surprised: it hates my teaching. If you were at one with the world it would love you. But I have taken you out of the world, and for that it will hate you.

If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also, and they will do all this because they do not know the true God. I explained to them, but they did not wish to hear me. They did not understand my teaching because they did not understand the Father. They saw my life and my life



showed them their error, and they hated me yet more on that account.

The spirit of truth which will come to you will confirm this to you. But confirm it yourselves. I tell you this beforehand, that you may not be deceived when they persecute you. They will cast you out; they will think that by killing you they are doing what pleases God. And they will do all this because they do not understand either my teaching or the true God. I tell you this beforehand that you may not be surprised when it comes about.

So I go now to that spirit which sent me, and now that you understand, you need not ask me where I am going to. Before this you were grieved that I did not tell you whither I go.

But I tell you truly that it is well for you that I am going. If I do not die the spirit of truth will not come to you, but if I die it will abide in you. That spirit will dwell in you, and it will be clear to you what is false, what is true, and how to make decision. The falsity is, that men do not believe in the life of the spirit: the truth is, that I am one with the Father: and the decision is, to destroy the power of bodily life.

I would say much more to you, but it is hard for you to understand. But when the spirit of truth dwells in you it will show you the whole truth because it will not tell you a new thing of its own, but what is from God; and it will show you the way in all circumstances of life. It too will be from the Father as I am from the Father and therefore it will tell you the same that I do.

But when I, as the spirit of truth, shall be in you, you will not always know that I am there. Sometimes you will, and sometimes you will not, hear me.

And the pupils said to one another: What does this mean? He says: Sometimes you will, and sometimes you will not, hear me. What does it mean Sometimes you will and sometimes you will not?

Jesus said to them: Do you not understand what it means- Sometimes you will, and sometimes you will not, hear me?

You know how it is in the world: some are sad and grieved while others rejoice. You too will grieve, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman in labor suffers torment, but when it is over she does not remember the suffering, for joy that she has brought a child into the world. So you will grieve, and will then suddenly realize my presence: the spirit of truth will enter into you and your grief will be turned into joy. Then you will ask nothing of me, because you will have all you desire. Then all that any one of you desires in the spirit he will have from his Father.

You formerly asked nothing of the spirit, but then you shall ask what you will and it will all be yours, so that your joy will be full. Now, as a man, I cannot tell you this clearly in words, but then-when as the spirit of truth I shall live in you-I will proclaim to you clearly about the Father. Then all that you ask of the Father in the name of the spirit will be given you not by me but by the Father, for He loves you for having received my teaching and understood that the spirit comes into the world from the Father and returns from the world to the Father.

Then the pupils said to Jesus: Now we understand everything and have nothing more to ask. We believe that you are from God.

And Jesus said: All that I have told you is to give you peace and confidence in my teaching. Whatever ills may befall you in the world, fear nothing: my teaching will overcome the world.

After that Jesus raised his eyes to heaven, and said: My Father! You have given your son the freedom of life in order that he should receive the true life. Life is the knowledge of the true God of the understanding revealed by me. I have revealed you to men on earth. I have done what you bade me. I have shown men on earth that you exist. They were yours before, but by your will I have revealed the truth to them and they have recognized you. They have understood that all they have, their very life, is from you alone and that I have taught them not of myself,

but that I as well as they have come from you. I pray to you for those who acknowledge you. They have understood that all I have is yours and that what is yours is mine. I am no longer of this world, for I am returning to you; but they are in the world, and therefore, Father, I pray you, preserve in them your understanding. I do not ask that you should take them from the world, but that you should deliver them from the evil of the world and confirm them in your truth. An understanding of you is the truth. My Father! I wish them to be as I am, to understand as I do that the true life began before the commencement of the world: that they should all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, and that they should be one with us-I in them and you in me, so that all should be one: and that men should understand that they were not self-created, but that you have sent them into the world in love, as you sent me. Father of truth! The world did not know you, but I knew you and men have known you through me. I have made plain to them what you are. You are in me that the love with which you have loved me may be in them also. You have given them life, which is proof that you love them. I have taught them to know this and to love you, so that your love may return to you from them.

## XII

### THE VICTORY OF SPIRIT OVER MATTER

And so for a man who lives not the personal life but the common life in the will of the Father, there is no death. Physical death is union with the Father.

"FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY"

AFTER this Jesus said: Come now, let us go: he who will betray me is near.

Hardly had he said this before Judas, one of the twelve pupils, appeared, and with him a large throng carrying sticks and swords. Judas said to them: I will show you where he is with his pupils, and that you may know him among them all, he whom I shall first kiss, is he. And he at once went up to Jesus and said:

Hail, master! and kissed him.

And Jesus said to him: Why are you here, friend?

Then the guard surrounded Jesus and were about to take him.

And Peter snatched a sword from a servant of the high priest and slashed the man's ear.

But Jesus rebuked him and said: You must not resist evil. Do not do so. Give back the sword to him from whom you took it, for he who takes the sword shall perish with the sword.

Then he turned to the crowd and said: Why have you come out against me with weapons as if I were a robber? I was among you every day teaching in the temple and you did not take me. But now is your hour and the power of darkness. And seeing that he was taken, the pupils all fled.

Then the officer told the soldiers to take Jesus and bind him. They did so and took him first to Annas. This was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year and lived in the same palace with Annas. He was the same Caiaphas who had planned how to destroy Jesus, saying that it was good for the people that Jesus should be killed,

and that if this was not done it would be worse for the whole people. So Jesus was taken to the palace where this high priest lived.

When Jesus came there one of his pupils, Peter, followed him from afar to see where they would take him, and when Jesus was led into the court of the high priest, Peter went in also to see how the matter would end. And a girl in the yard saw Peter and I said to him: You also were with Jesus of Galilee! But Peter was afraid that he might be accused, and said aloud before all the people: I do not know what you are talking about! Afterwards, when Jesus had been taken into the house, Peter also went into the passage with the people. A woman was warming herself there at the fire, and Peter went up to it. She looked at Peter and said to the others: See, this man is like one who was with Jesus of Nazareth. Peter was still more frightened, and swore that he had never been with Jesus and did not know him at all. A little later people went up to Peter and said: It is easy to see that you also were one of these disturbers. We can tell by your speech that you are from Galilee. Then Peter began to affirm and swear that he had never known or seen Jesus.

And he had hardly said this before the cock crew. And he remembered the words Jesus had said to him when he had assured Jesus that though all should abandon him he would not deny him: 'Before the cock crows this night you will deny me thrice.' And Peter went out into the yard and wept bitterly. He wept because he had fallen into temptation: he had fallen into one temptation, that of strife, when he tried to defend Jesus, and into another temptation, the fear of death, when he denied Jesus.

And the Orthodox chief priests, the scribes, and the officers, came together to the high priest. And when they were all assembled, they brought in Jesus, and the high priest asked him what his teaching was and who were his pupils. And Jesus answered: I always spoke openly before all men and hid nothing, and I hide nothing from anyone.

Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard and understood my teaching. They will tell you.

When Jesus said this, a servant of the high priest struck him in the face and said: To whom are you speaking? Is that the way to answer the High Priest? Jesus said: If I have spoken ill, tell me what I have said that is wrong. But if I said nothing ill, why strike me?

The Orthodox chief priests tried to accuse Jesus, but at first found no proof on which he could be condemned. Then they found two witnesses who said of him: We ourselves heard this man say: 'I will destroy this temple of yours made with hands and in three days will build up another temple to God, not made with hands.' But this evidence also was not enough to convict him. And so the high priest called Jesus up and said: Why do you not answer their evidence?

Jesus remained silent.

Then the high priest said to him: Tell me, are you the Christ, a son of God? Jesus answered him and said: Yes, I am the Christ, a son of God. And you will yourself now see that the son of man is equal to God.

Then the high priest cried out: you blasphemer! Now we need no more evidence. We have all heard that you are a blasphemer! And the high priest turned to the assembly and said: You have yourselves heard that he blasphemes God. What do you condemn him to for that?

And they answered: We condemn him to death.

Then all the people and the guards fell upon Jesus and spat in his face and struck him and mishandled him. They bound his eyes, and hit him on the cheek and asked: Now, prophet, who was it that struck you? Jesus held his peace.

Having reviled him, they led him bound to Pontius Pilate and took him to the hall of judgment.

Pilate the governor came out to them and asked: Of what do you accuse this man?

They said: He is an evil doer, so we have brought him to you.

Pilate said to them: But if he does you harm, judge him yourselves according to your law.

But they replied: We have brought him to you that you may execute him, for the law does not allow us to kill anyone.

And so what Jesus had expected came to pass. He had said that he must be ready to die on the cross at the hands of the Romans instead of dying a natural death or perishing at the hands of the Jews.

And when Pilate asked what they accused him of, they said he was guilty of stirring up the people, forbidding them to pay tribute to Caesar, and made himself out to be the Christ and a king.

Pilate listened to what they had to say, and then ordered Jesus to be brought to him to the judgment seat. When he came in, Pilate said: So you are king of the Jews?

Jesus replied: Do you really think I am a king, or are you only repeating what has been told you?

Pilate said: I am not a Jew so you cannot be my king, but your own people have brought you to me. What kind of a man are you?

Jesus replied: I am a king, but my kingdom is not an earthly one. If I were an earthly king my subjects would fight for me and would not have given me up to the chief priests. But, as you see, my kingdom is not an earthly one.

Pilate replied: Yet you consider yourself a king? Jesus said: Not only I, but you also, cannot but account me a king. I only teach in order to reveal to all men the truth of the kingdom of heaven. And everyone who lives by the truth is a king.

Pilate said: You speak of 'the truth' but what is truth?

And having said this he turned away and went out to the chief priests and said to them: I do not find that this man has done anything wrong.

But the chief priests insisted, and said that he did much evil and stirred up the people and had raised all Judea, right from Galilee.

Then Pilate again began to question Jesus in the presence of the chief priests, but Jesus did not answer. Pilate then said to him: Do you not hear how they accuse you? Why do you not defend yourself?

But Jesus was still silent and said not another word, so that Pilate wondered at him.

Then Pilate remembered that Galilee was under the jurisdiction of King Herod, and asked: Is he not from Galilee?

They told him: Yes.

Then he said: If he is from Galilee he is under Herod's authority and I will send him to him.

Herod was then in Jerusalem, and Pilate, to rid himself of Jesus, sent him to Herod.

Herod was very glad to see Jesus when they brought him. He had heard much about him and wished to know what kind of a man he was. So he called him up before him and began to question him about all he wished to know. But Jesus gave him no answer. And the chief priests and scribes accused him vehemently, as they had done before Pilate, and said that he was a rioter. And Herod regarded Jesus as an empty fellow, and to mock him had him dressed in a crimson robe, and sent him back to Pilate. Herod was pleased that Pilate had treated him with respect by sending Jesus to him to be judged, and so they were reconciled after having previously been at variance.

Now, when Jesus was brought back to Pilate, Pilate again called the chief priests and rulers of the Jews and said to them. You brought this man to me for stirring up the people, and I examined him in your presence and do not find him to be a rioter. I sent him with you to Herod, and you see that again he is not convicted of any wrong-doing. I do not see any reason for condemning him to death: would it not be better to chastise him and let him go? But when the chief priests heard this, they all cried out: No, punish him in the Roman way! Crucify him!



Pilate listened to the chief priests and said to them: Very well! But you have a custom at the feast of the Passover to pardon one prisoner. Well, here I have in prison Barabbas, a murderer and robber. Which of the two shall be released: Jesus or Barabbas?

Pilate wished thus to save Jesus, but the chief priests had so influenced the people that they all cried out: Barabbas! Barabbas!

And Pilate said: But what shall be done with Jesus?

They again cried: Crucify him in the Roman way, crucify him!

And Pilate tried to persuade them, and said: Why are you so hard on him? He has done nothing to deserve death and has done you no harm. I will let him go, for I find no fault in him.

The chief priests and their servants cried: Crucify him! Crucify him! And Pilate said to them: Then take him and crucify him yourselves, for I see no fault in him.

The chief priests answered: We ask only what our law demands. By our law he ought to die for making himself out to be a son of God.

When Pilate heard these words he was troubled, for he did not know what the term 'son of God' meant. And returning to the judgment hall he again called up Jesus and asked him: Who are you and where are you from?

But Jesus did not answer him.

Then Pilate said to him: Why do you not answer me? Do you not see that you are in my power and that I can crucify you or set you free?

Jesus answered him: You have no power. All power is above.

Still Pilate wished to release Jesus, and he said to the Jews: How is it that you wish to crucify your king?

But they said to him: If you release Jesus you will show yourself a disloyal servant to Caesar, for he who sets himself up as a king is Caesar's enemy. Our king is Caesar; but let this man be crucified!

When Pilate heard these words he understood that he could not refuse to execute Jesus. And he went out to the Jews, took some water, washed his hands, and said: I am not guilty of the blood of this just man.

And the people all cried: Let his blood be upon us and on our children! So the chief priests prevailed. And Pilate sat on his judgment seat and ordered Jesus first to be scourged. After the soldiers had scourged him they put a wreath on his head and a rod in his hand and threw a red cloak on him and began to mock him, bowing down before him mocking and saying: Hail, King of the Jews! And they struck him on the cheek and on the head, and spat in his face.

But the chief priests cried: Crucify him! Our king is Caesar! Crucify him!

So Pilate gave orders that he should be crucified.

They stripped Jesus of the red cloak and put on him his own clothing, and bade him carry the cross to a place called Golgotha, there to be crucified. And he carried his cross and so came to Golgotha. And there they stretched him on a cross between two other men.

When they were nailing him to the cross, Jesus said: Father, forgive them: they know not what they do.

And when Jesus was hanging on the cross the people thronged round him and railed at him. They went up, wagged their heads at him, and said: So you wished to destroy the temple of Jerusalem and rebuild it in three days! Well now, save yourself and come down from the cross! And the chief priests and leaders stood there also and mocked him, saying: He saved others, but cannot save himself. Show us now that you are the Christ. Come down from the cross and we will believe you. He said he was the son of God and that God would not forsake him! Has not God forsaken him? And the people and the chief priests and the soldiers railed at him, and even one of the robbers crucified with him railed at him. This robber, railing at him, said: If you are the Christ, save yourself and us! But the other robber heard this and said: Do you not fear God? You

are yourself on the cross and yet rail at an innocent man. You and I are executed for our deserts, but this man has done no harm.

And turning to Jesus he said: Lord, remember me in your kingdom!

And Jesus said to him: Even now you are blessed with me! And at the ninth hour, Jesus, worn out, cried aloud: Eli, Eli, lama sabaclithani! which means: My God, my God! Why hast thou forsaken me?

And when the people heard this, they began to jeer and said: He is calling the prophet Elias! Let us see whether Elias will come!

Then Jesus said: I thirst! And a man took a sponge, dipped it in vinegar that stood by, and gave it to Jesus on a reed.

And when Jesus had sucked the sponge he cried out in a loud voice: It is finished! Father, into Thy hands I resign my spirit! And letting his head droop he gave up the ghost.

## A SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

JESUS in his childhood spoke of God as his Father, There was in Judaea at that time a prophet named John, who preached the coming of God on earth. He said that if people changed their way of life, considered all men equal, and instead of injuring, helped one another, God would appear and His Kingdom would be established on earth.

### I

HAVING heard this preaching, Jesus withdrew into the desert to consider the meaning of man's life and his relation to the infinite origin of all, called God. Jesus recognized as his Father that infinite source of being whom John called God.

Having stayed in the desert for some days without food, Jesus suffered hunger and thought within himself.

As a son of God Almighty I ought to be all-powerful as He is, but now that I want to eat and cannot create bread to satisfy my hunger, I see that I am not all-powerful. But to this reflection he made answer: I cannot make bread out of stones, but I can refrain from eating, and so, though I am not all-powerful in the body I am all-powerful in spirit and can quell the body. Therefore I am a son of God not through the flesh but through the spirit.

Then he said to himself: I am a son of the spirit. Let me therefore renounce the body and do away with it. But to this he replied: I am born as spirit embodied in flesh. Such is the will of my Father and I must not resist His will. But he went on thinking-if I can neither satisfy the needs of my body nor free myself from it, then I ought to devote myself to the body and enjoy all the pleasures it can afford me. But to this he replied: I cannot satisfy the needs of my body, and cannot rid myself of it; but my life is all-powerful in that it is the spirit of my Father. Therefore in my body I should serve the spirit, my Father, and work for Him alone.

And becoming convinced that man's true life lies only in the spirit of the Father, Jesus left the desert and began to declare this teaching to men. He said that the spirit dwelt in him, that henceforth the heavens were open and the powers of heaven brought to man, and a free and boundless life had begun for man, and that all men, however unfortunate in the body, might be happy.

## II

THE Jews who considered themselves Orthodox worshipped an external God, whom they regarded as creator and ruler of the universe. According to their teaching this external God had made an agreement with them by which He had promised to help them if they would worship Him. A chief condition of this alliance was the keeping of Saturday, the Sabbath.

But Jesus said: The Sabbath is a human institution. That man should live in the spirit is more than all external ceremonies. Like all external forms of religion the keeping of the Sabbath involves a delusion. You are forbidden to do anything on the Sabbath, but good actions should always be done and if keeping the Sabbath hinders the doing of a good action then the keeping of the Sabbath is an error.

According to the Orthodox Jews another condition of the agreement with God was avoidance of intercourse with unbelievers. Of this Jesus said that God desires not sacrifice to Himself, but that men should love one another.

Yet another condition of the agreement related to rules for washing and purifying, as to which Jesus said that what God demands is not external cleanliness, but pity and love towards man. He also said that external rules are harmful, and that the church tradition is itself an evil. Their church tradition set aside the most important things, such as love for one's mother and father- and justified this by its traditional railings.

Of all the external regulations of the old law defining the cases in which a man was considered to have defiled

himself, Jesus said: Know all of you, that nothing from outside can defile a man, only what he thinks and does can defile him.

After this Jesus went to Jerusalem, the city considered holy, and entered into the temple where the Orthodox considered that God Himself dwelt, and there he said that it was useless to offer God sacrifices, that man is more important than a temple, and that our only duty is to love our neighbor and help him. Furthermore Jesus taught that it is not necessary to worship God in any particular place, but to serve the Father in spirit and in deed. The spirit cannot be seen or shown. The spirit is man's consciousness of his sonship to the Infinite Spirit. No temple is necessary. The true temple is the society of men united in love. He said that all external worship of God is not only false and injurious when it conduces to wrong-doing-like the Jew's worship which prescribed killing as a punishment-and allowed the neglect of parents-but also because a man performing external rites accounts himself righteous and free from the need of doing what love demands. He said that only he seeks what is good and does good deeds, who feels his own imperfections. To do good deeds a man must be conscious of his own faults, but external worship leads to a false self-satisfaction. All external worship is unnecessary, and should be thrown aside.

Deeds of love are incompatible with ceremonial performances, and good cannot be done in that way. Man is a spiritual son of God and should therefore serve the Father in spirit.

### III

JOHN'S pupils asked Jesus what he meant by his 'kingdom of heaven' and he answered them: The heaven I preach is the same as that preached by John-that all men, however poor, may be happy.

And Jesus said to the people: John is the first prophet to preach to men a Kingdom of God which is not of the

external world, but in the soul of man. The Orthodox went to hear John, but understood nothing because they know only what they have themselves invented about an external God; they teach their inventions and are astonished that no one pays heed to them. But John preached the truth of the Kingdom of God within us, and therefore he did more than anybody before him. By his teaching the law and the prophets, and all external forms of worship, are superseded. Since he taught, it has been made clear that the Kingdom of God is in man's soul.

The beginning and the end of everything is the soul of man. Every man, though he realizes that he was conceived by a bodily father in his mother's womb, is conscious also that he has within him a spirit that is free, intelligent, and independent of the body.

That eternal spirit proceeding from the infinite, is the origin of all and is what we call God. We know Him only as we recognize Him within ourselves. That spirit is the source of our life; we must rank it above everything and by it we must live. By making it the basis of our life we obtain true and everlasting life. The Father-spirit who has given that spirit to man cannot have sent it to deceive men-that while conscious of everlasting life in themselves they should lose it. This infinite spirit in man must have been given that through him men should have an infinite life. Therefore the man who conceives of this spirit as his life has infinite life, while a man who does not so conceive it has no true life. Men can themselves choose life or death: life in the spirit, or death in the flesh. The life of the spirit is goodness and light: the life of the flesh is evil and darkness. To believe in the spirit. means to do good deeds; to disbelieve means to do evil. Goodness is life, evil is death. God-an external creator, the beginning of all beginnings-we do not know. Our conception of Him can only be this: that He has sown the spirit in men as a sower sows his seed, everywhere, not discriminating as to what part of the field; and the seed that falls on good ground grows, but what falls on sterile ground

perishes. The spirit alone gives life to men, and it depends on them to preserve it or lose it. For the spirit, evil does not exist. Evil is an illusion of life. There is only that which lives and that which does not live.

Thus the world presents itself to all men, and each man has a consciousness of the kingdom of heaven in his soul. Each one can of his own free will enter that kingdom or not. To enter it he must believe in the life of the spirit, for he who believes in that life has everlasting life.

#### IV

JESUS was sorry for people because they did not know true happiness, therefore he taught them. He said: Blessed are they who have no property or fame and do not care for them, and unhappy are they who seek riches and fame; for the destitute and the oppressed are in the Father's will, but the rich and famous seek only rewards from men in this temporal life.

To fulfill the will of the Father do not fear to be poor and despised, but rejoice that you can show men what true happiness is.

To carry out the will of the Father which gives life and welfare to all men, five commandments must be obeyed:

The first commandment is to do no ill to anyone so as not to arouse anger, for evil begets evil.

The second commandment is not to go after women and not to desert the wife with whom you have once been joined; for desertion and change of wives causes all the world's dissoluteness.

The third commandment is to take no oath of any kind. A man can promise nothing, for he is altogether in the Father's power; and oaths are taken for bad purposes.

The fourth commandment is not to resist evil, not to condemn, and not to go to law; but to endure wrong and to do even more than people demand, for every man is full of faults and incapable of guiding others. By taking revenge, we only teach others to do the same.



The fifth commandment is not to discriminate between fellow-countrymen and foreigners, for all are children of one Father.

These five commandments should be observed not to win praise from men, but for your own welfare; therefore do not pray, or fast, in the sight of men.

The Father knows all that people need, and there is no need to pray for anything; all that is necessary is to seek to be in the Father's will. And His will is that we should not feel enmity towards anyone. It is unnecessary to fast, for men fast merely to win praise from men and their praise should be avoided. It is necessary only to take care to live in the Father's will, and the rest will all be added of itself. A man concerned with the things of the body cannot be concerned with the kingdom of heaven. Even though a man does not trouble about food and clothing, he can live: the Father will give life. All that is needful is to be in the will of the Father at the present moment, for the Father gives his children what they need. Desire only the power of the spirit, which the Father gives. The five commandments show the path to the kingdom of heaven, and this narrow path alone leads to everlasting life. False teachers-wolves pretending to be sheep always try to lead people astray from this path. Beware of them! False teachers can always be detected by the fact that they teach evil in the name of good. If they teach violence and executions they are false teachers. By what they teach they may be known. Not he fulfills the Father's will who calls on the name of God, but he who does what is good. He who fulfills these five commandments will have a secure and true life, of which nothing can deprive him: but he who does not fulfill them will have an insecure life which will soon be taken from him, leaving him nothing.

The teaching of Jesus surprised and attracted the people by the fact that it recognized all men as free. It was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, that God's chosen one would bring light to men, would overcome evil and re-

establish truth, not by violence but by gentleness, meekness, and kindness.

## V

WISDOM lies in recognizing life as the offspring of the Father's spirit. People set themselves the aims of the bodily life, and in seeking these aims torment themselves and others. But they will find full satisfaction in the life meant for them-the life of the spirit-if they accept the doctrine of the spiritual life and of subduing and controlling the body. It happened once that Jesus asked a woman of another religion to give him some water to drink. She refused on the plea that she was of a different faith. Jesus then said to her: If you understood that he who is asking for water is a living man in whom the spirit of the Father lives, you would not refuse him, but by doing a kindness would try to unite yourself in spirit with the Father, and that spirit would give you not such water as this-after drinking which a man thirsts again-but water that gives everlasting life. One need not pray to God in any special place, but should serve Him, by deeds of love-by ministering to those in whom His spirit dwells.

And Jesus said to his pupils: The true food of man is to fulfill the will of the Father-spirit, and this fulfillment is always possible. Our whole life is a gathering up of the fruits of the spirit sown within us by the Father. Those fruits are the good we do to men. We should do good to men unceasingly and expect no reward.

After this Jesus happened to be in Jerusalem and came to a bathing-place beside which lay a sick man, waiting for a miracle to cure him. Jesus said this to him: Do not expect to be cured by a miracle, but live according to your strength and do not mistake the meaning of life. The invalid obeyed Jesus, got up, and went away. Seeing this, the Orthodox began to reproach Jesus for having cured an invalid on the Sabbath. Jesus said to them: I have done nothing new. I have only done what our common Father-spirit does. He

lives and gives life to men, and I have done likewise. To do this is every man's business. Everyone has freedom to choose life or reject it. To choose life is to fulfill the will of the Father by doing good to others; to reject it is to do one's own will and not do good to others. It is in each one's power to do the one or the other: to receive life or destroy it.

The true life of man can be compared to this: A master apportioned to his slaves a valuable property and told them each to work on what was given him. Some of them worked, others simply put away what had been given them. Then the master demanded an account of what they had done, and to those who had worked he gave still more of his property, while from those who had not worked he took away all that they had.

The portion of the master's valuable property is the spirit of life in man, who is the son of the Father spirit. He who in this life works for the sake of the spirit-life receives infinite life, he who does not work loses what was given him.

The only true life is the life common to all, and not the life of the individual. Each should work for the life of others.

After that Jesus went to a desert place and many people followed him. Towards evening his pupils came and said: How can we feed all these people?

Among the gathering were some who had no food, and some who had bread and fish. Jesus said to his pupils: Give me what bread you have. And he took the loaves and gave the bread to his pupils, and they gave it away to others, who began to do the same. So everyone ate what was distributed in this way, and they all had enough without eating all the food that was there. And Jesus said: That is how you should always act. It is not necessary for each man to obtain food for himself but it is needful to do what the spirit in man demands, namely to share what there is with others.

The true food of man is the spirit of the Father. Man lives only by the spirit. We must serve all that has life, for life

lies not in doing one's own will but the will of the Father of life. And that will is that the life of the spirit, which each one has, should remain in him and that all should cherish the life of the spirit in them until the hour of death. The Father, the source of all life, is the spirit. Life consists only in carrying out the will of the Father, and to carry out that will of the spirit one must surrender the body. The body is food for the life of the spirit. Only by sacrificing the body does the spirit live.

After this Jesus chose certain pupils and sent them about to preach the doctrine of the life of the spirit. When sending them he said: You are going to preach the life of the spirit, therefore renounce in advance all fleshly desires and have nothing of your own. Be prepared for persecution, privation, and suffering. Those who love the life of the body will hate you, torment you, and kill you; but do not be afraid. If you fulfill the will of the Father you possess the life of the spirit, of which no one can deprive you.

The pupils set out and when they returned they announced that they had everywhere overcome the teaching of evil.

Then the Orthodox said to Jesus that his teaching, even if it overcame evil, was itself an evil, for those who carry it out must endure sufferings. To this Jesus said: Evil cannot overcome evil. Evil can only be mastered by goodness, and that goodness is the will of the Father-spirit, common to all men. Every man knows what is good for himself, and if he does that for others-if he does that which is the will of the Father-he will do good. And so the carrying out of the will of the Father-spirit is good even if it be accompanied by the suffering and death of those who fulfill that will.

## VI

JESUS said that his mother and his brothers had no prior claim on him as such, only those were never to him who fulfilled the will of their common Father. A man's life and blessedness depend not on family relationships, but on the life of the spirit. Jesus said: Blessed are those who retain

their understanding of the Father. A man living in the spirit has no home—the spirit cannot own a house. He said that he himself had no fixed abode. To fulfill the Father's will no special place is needed, for it is always and everywhere possible. The death of the body cannot be dreadful to a man who resigns himself to the will of the Father, for the life of the spirit does not depend on that of the body. Jesus says that he who believes in the life of the spirit can fear nothing.

No cares make it impossible for a man to live in the spirit. To one who said that he would obey the teaching of Jesus later, but must first bury his father, Jesus replied: Only the dead trouble about the burial of the dead, the living live always by fulfilling the will of the Father. Family and household cares must not hinder the life of the spirit. He who is troubled about what results to his bodily life from the fulfillment of the Father's will, acts like a ploughman who looks back while ploughing, instead of in front of him. Cares for the pleasure of the bodily life, which seem so important to men, are delusions. The only real business of life is the announcement of the Father's will, attention to it, and fulfillment of it. When Martha complained that she alone busied herself about the supper, while her sister Mary listened to his teaching instead of helping, Jesus replied: You blame her unjustly. If you need the results of your work, busy yourself with it, but let those who do not need physical pleasures attend to the one thing essential for life.

Jesus said: He who desires to obtain true life, consisting in the fulfillment of the Father's will, must first of all give up his own personal desires. He must not only not plan his life according to his own wishes, but must be ready to endure privation and suffering at any moment.

He who desires to arrange his bodily life according to his own desires, will wreck the true life of fulfillment of the Father's will. And there is no advantage in gain for the physical life if that gain wrecks the life of the spirit.

Most ruinous of all for the ills of the spirit is the love of gain, of getting rich. Men forget that whatever riches or goods they obtain they may die at any moment, and that property is not essential for life. Death hangs over each of us. Sickness, murder, or accident may at any moment end our life. Bodily death is an inescapable condition of every second of our life. While a man lives he should regard every hour of life as a postponement of death granted by someone's kindness. We should remember this, and not say we do not know it. We know and foresee all that happens on earth and in the sky, but forget death, which we know awaits us at any moment. Unless we forget death we cannot yield ourselves to the life of the body; for we cannot reckon on it. To follow the teaching of Christ we must count up the advantages of following our own will and serving the bodily life, and the advantages of fulfilling the Father's will. Only he who has clearly taken account of this can be a disciple of Christ. But he who makes the calculation will not regret having to forgo this unreal happiness and unreal life in order to obtain the true good and the true life. True life is given to men and they know it and hear its call, but constantly distracted by the cares of the moment they deprive themselves of it. True life is like a feast a rich man gave, and to which he invited guests. He called them-just as the voice of the Father-spirit calls all men to Himself. But some of those invited were busy with trading, others with their farms, others again with family affairs, and they did not go to the feast. Only the poor who had no worldly cares went to the feast and gained happiness. So men distracted by cares for the bodily life deprive themselves of true life. He who does not wholly reject the cares and gains of the bodily life cannot fulfill the Father's will, for no man can serve himself a little and the Father a little: he has to consider whether it is better to serve his body and whether it is possible to arrange his life according to his own will. He must do as a man does who wishes to build a house, or to prepare for war. That man first considers whether he has

means to finish his house, or to conquer his enemy. And if he sees that he has not, he will not waste his labor or his army uselessly, and make himself a laughing-stock to his neighbors. If a man could arrange his bodily life to his own will, then it might be well to serve the body, but as that is impossible, it is better to reject bodily things and serve the spirit. Otherwise you will gain neither the one thing nor the other. You will not arrange the bodily life satisfactorily, and will lose the life of the spirit. Therefore to fulfill the Father's will it is necessary to sacrifice the bodily life.

The bodily life is wealth entrusted to us by another, which we should use so as to gain our own true riches.

If a rich man has a manager who knows that however well he may serve his master, that master will dismiss him leaving him with nothing, the manager will be wise if while managing his master's affairs he does favors to other people. Then when the master dismisses him, those whom he has benefited will receive him and sustain him. That is how men deal in their bodily life. The bodily life is that wealth, not our own, which is entrusted to us for a time. If we make good use of that wealth which is not our own, then we shall receive true wealth which will be our own.

If we do not give up wealth that is not our own, we shall not receive our true wealth. We cannot serve both the illusory life of the body and the life of the spirit; we must serve the one or the other. A man cannot serve property and God. What is honorable among men is an abomination before God. In God's sight riches are evil. A rich man is guilty in that he eats much and luxuriously, while at his door the poor are hungry. And everyone knows that property not shared with others is held in non-fulfillment of the Father's will.

A rich, Orthodox ruler came once to Jesus and began to boast that he fulfilled all the commandments of the law. Jesus reminded him that there is a commandment to love others as oneself and that that is the Father's will. The ruler said he kept that also. Then Jesus said to him: That is not

true; if you really wished to fulfill the Father's will you would not possess property. You cannot fulfill the Father's will if you have property of your own which you do not give to others. And Jesus said to his pupils: Men think it impossible to live without property, but I tell you that true life consists in giving what you have to others.

A certain man named Zaccheus heard the teaching of Jesus and believed it, and having invited Jesus to his house said to him: I am giving half my fortune to the poor and will restore fourfold to those I have wronged. And Jesus said: Here is a man who fulfills the Father's will, for a man's whole life must be passed in fulfillment of that will, and there is no condition in which a man can say: 'I have fulfilled the will of God.'

Good cannot be measured; it is impossible to say who has done more or less. A widow who gives away her last farthing gives more than a rich man who gives thousands. Nor can goodness be measured by its usefulness.

Let the case of the woman who felt pity for Jesus and recklessly poured over his feet many pounds' worth of costly oil serve as an example. Judas said she had acted foolishly because the cost of the oil would have sufficed to feed many people. But Judas was a thief and a liar, and when he spoke of the material advantage he was not thinking of the poor. The essential thing lies not in the utility of an action or the largeness of a gift, but what is necessary is always, every moment, to love others and give them what one has.

## VII

ANSWERING the Jews' demand for proofs of the truth of his teaching, Jesus said: The truth of my teaching lies in the fact that I teach not something of my own but what comes from the common Father of us all. I teach what is good for the Father of all and is therefore good for all men.

Do what I say, fulfill the five commandments, and you will see that what I say is true. Fulfillment of these five



commandments will drive away all evil from the world, and therefore they are certainly true. It is clear that he who teaches the will of Him who sent him, and not his own will, teaches the truth. The law of Moses teaches the fulfillment of human desires and so it is full of contradictions; my teaching is to fulfill the will of the Father and so it is harmonious.

The Jews did not understand him and looked for external proofs of whether he was the Christ mentioned in the prophecies. On this he said to them: Do not question who I am and whether it is of me that your prophecies speak, but attend to my teaching and to what I say about our common Father.

You need not believe in me as a man, but you should believe what I tell you in the name of the common Father of us all.

It is not necessary to inquire about external matters as to where I come from, but it is necessary to follow my teaching. He who follows it will receive true life. There can be no proofs of the truth of my teaching. It is the light itself, and as light cannot be illuminated, so truth cannot be proven true. My teaching is the light. He who sees it has light and life and needs no proofs, but he who is in darkness must come to the light.

But the Jews again asked him who he was as to his bodily personality. He said to them: I am, as I told you from the first, a man, the son of the Father of life. Only he who so regards himself (this is the truth I teach) will fulfill the will of the common Father; only he will cease to be a slave and become a free man. We are enslaved only by the error of taking the life of the body to be the true life. He who understands the truth-that life consists only in the fulfillment of the Father's will-becomes free and immortal. As a slave does not always remain in the house of his master, but the son does; so a man who lives as a slave to the flesh does not remain alive for ever, but he who fulfills in his soul the Father's will has eternal life. To understand

me you must understand that my Father is not the same as your father whom you call God. Your father is a god of the flesh, but my Father is the spirit of life. Your father, your god, is a jealous god, a man-slayer, one who executes men. My Father gives life, and so we are the children of different fathers. I seek the truth, and you wish to kill me for that, to please your god. Your god is the devil, the source of evil, and in serving him you serve the devil. My teaching is that we are sons of the Father of life, and he who believes in my teaching shall not see death. The Jews asked: How can it be that a man will not die, when all those who pleased God most-even Abraham-have died? How then can you say that you, and those who believe in your teaching, will not die?

To this Jesus replied: I speak not by my own authority. I speak of that same source of life that you call God, and that dwells in men. That source I know and cannot help knowing, and I know His will and fulfill it, and of that source of life I say that it has been, is, and will be, and that for it there is no death. Demands for proofs of the truth of my teaching are as if one demanded from a man who had been born blind, proofs of why and how he sees the light when his sight has been restored.

The blind man whose sight has been restored, remaining the same man he was, can only say that he was blind but now sees. And one who formerly did not understand the meaning of life but now does understand it, can only say the same, an nothing else.

Such a man can only say that formerly he did not know the true good in life but now he knows it. A blind man whose sight has been restored, if told that he has not been cured in a proper manner and that he, who restored his sight is an evil-doer, and that he should be cured differently, can only reply: I know nothing about the correctness of my cure or the sinfulness of him who cured me, or of a better way of being cured; I only know that whereas I was blind, now I see. And in the same way one who has understood the meaning of the teaching of true welfare and of the

fulfillment of the Father's will, can say nothing as to the regularity of that teaching or whether he who disclosed it to him was a sinner, or of the possibility of a still greater blessedness, but can only say: Formerly I did not see the meaning of life, but now I see it and that is all I know.

And Jesus said: My teaching is the awakening of a life till then asleep: he who believes my teaching awakens to eternal life and lives after death. My teaching is not proven in any way: men yield to it because it alone has the promise of life for all men.

As sheep follow the shepherd who gives them food and guards their life, so men accept my teaching because it gives life to all. And as the sheep do not follow a thief who climbs over into the fold, but shy away from him, so men cannot believe these doctrines which teach violence and executions. My teaching is as a door for the sheep, and all who follow me shall find true life. As only those shepherds are good who own and love the sheep and devote their lives to them, while hirelings who do not love the sheep are bad shepherds, so also only that teacher is true who does not spare himself, and he is worthless who cares only for himself. My teaching is that a man should not spare himself, but should sacrifice the life of the body for the life of the spirit. This I teach and fulfill.

The Jews still did not understand and still wanted proofs of whether or not Jesus was the Christ, and whether, therefore, they should believe him or not. They said: Do not torment us, but tell us plainly, are you the Christ or not? And to this Jesus replied: Belief must be given not to words but to deeds. By the example I set, you may know whether I teach the truth or not. Do what I do, and do not discuss words. Fulfill the will of the Father, and then you will all be united with me and with the Father; for I, the son of man, am the same as the Father and the same that you call God and that I call the Father. I and the Father are one. Even in your own scriptures it is said that God said to men: 'You are Gods.' Every man by his spirit is a son of this Father. And if a man

lives fulfilling the Father's will he becomes one with the Father. If I fulfill His will, the Father is in me and I am in the Father.

After this Jesus asked his pupils how they understood his teaching about the son of man. Simon Peter answered him: Your teaching is that you are the son of the God of life, and God is the life of the spirit in man. And Jesus said to him: You are happy, Simon, to have understood that. Man could not have disclosed it to you, but you have understood it because the God in you has revealed it to you. On this understanding the true life of men is founded. For that life there is no death.

### VIII

IN reply to doubts expressed by his pupils as to the reward resulting for renouncing the life of the flesh, Jesus said: For him who understands the meaning of my teaching there can be no question of a reward, first because a man who for its sake gives up family, friends, and possessions, gains a hundredfold more friends and more possessions, and secondly, because a man who seeks a reward seeks to have more than others have, and that is quite contrary to the fulfillment of the Father's will. In the kingdom of heaven there is neither greater nor less, all are equal. Those who seek a reward for goodness are like laborers who, because in their opinion they were more deserving than others, demanded larger pay than they had agreed upon with their employer. According to the teaching of Jesus no one can be either higher or more important than another.

All can fulfill the Father's will, but in doing so no one becomes superior or more important or better than another. Only kings and those who serve them reckon in that way. According to my teaching, said Jesus, there can be no superior rank; he who wishes to be better should be the servant of all. My teaching is, that life is given to man not that others may serve him, but that he should give his

whole life to the service of others. He who exalts himself instead of doing this, will fall lower than he was.

The meaning and purpose of life must be understood before a man can be rid of thoughts of his own elevation. The meaning of life lies in fulfilling the will of the Father, and His will is that what He has given us shall be returned to Him. As a shepherd leaves his whole flock and goes to seek a lost sheep, and as a woman will search everywhere to find a lost penny, so the Father's continual work is manifested to us by the fact that He draws to Himself that which pertains to Him.

We must understand wherein true life consists. True life always appears in the lost being restored to where it belongs, and in the awakening of those that sleep. People who have the true life and have returned to the source of their being, cannot, like worldly men, account others as being better or worse, but being sharers of the Father's life can only rejoice at the return of the lost to the Father. If a son who has gone astray repents and returns to the father he had left, how can other sons of the same father be envious of his joy, or fail to rejoice at their brother's return?

To believe in the teaching and to change our way of life and fulfill that teaching, what is needed is not external proofs or promises of rewards, but a clear understanding of what true life is. If men think themselves completely masters of their own lives, and believe that life is given them for bodily enjoyment, then clearly any sacrifice they make for others will seem to them an act worthy of reward, and without such reward they will give nothing. If tenants forgot that a garden was let to them on condition that they returned the fruits to the owner, and that rent was demanded of them again and again, they would seek to kill the collector. So it is with those who think themselves masters of their own lives and do not understand that life is granted them by an understanding which demands the fulfillment of its will. To believe and to act, it is necessary to understand that man can do nothing of himself, and that

if he gives up his bodily life to serve goodness he does nothing that deserves either thanks or reward. We must understand that in doing good a man only does his duty and what he necessarily must do. Only when he understands life in that way can a man have faith enabling him to do truly good deeds.

The kingdom of heaven consists in that understanding of life. It is not a visible kingdom that can be pointed out in this or that place. The kingdom of heaven is in man's understanding. The whole world lives as of old: men eat and drink, marry, trade, and die, and along with this in the souls of men lives the kingdom of heaven—an understanding of life growing as a tree that in spring puts out leaves of itself.

True life is the fulfillment of the will of the Father, not in the past or in the future, but now; it is what each of us must do at the present moment. And therefore to live the true life we must never relax. Men are set to guard life, not in the past or in the future, but the life now being lived, and in it to fulfill the will of the Father of all men. If they let this life escape them by not fulfilling the Father's will, they will not receive it back again. A watchman set to watch all night does not perform his duty if he falls asleep even for a moment, for a thief may come at that moment. So man should direct his whole strength to the present hour, for only then can he fulfill the Father's will; and that will is the life and blessing of all men. Only those live who are doing good. Good done to men now in the present, is the life that unites us with the common Father.

## IX

MAN is born with a knowledge of the true life which lies in the fulfillment of the Father's will. Children live by that knowledge: in them the will of the Father is seen. To understand the teaching of Jesus one must understand the life of children and be like them.

Children live in the Father's will, not infringing the five commandments, and they would never infringe them were they not misled by adults. Men ruin children by leading them to break these commandments. And by so doing they act as if they tied a millstone to a man's neck and threw him into the river. The world is unhappy only because people yield to temptations, but for that the world would be happy. Temptations lure men to do evil for the sake of imaginary advantages in their temporal life. Yielding to temptation ruins men, and therefore everything should be sacrificed rather than fall into temptation. The temptation to infringe the first commandment comes from men considering themselves in the right towards others, and others in the wrong towards themselves. To avoid falling into that temptation we must remember that all men are always infinitely in debt to the Father and can only acquit themselves of that debt by forgiving their brother men.

Therefore men must forgive injuries, and not be deterred though the offender injures them again and again. However often a man may be wronged he must forgive, not remembering the wrong; for only by forgiveness can the kingdom of heaven be attained. If we do not forgive others, we act as a certain debtor did when, heavily in debt, he went to his creditor and begged for mercy. His creditor forgave him everything, but the debtor went away and meeting a man who owed him only a small sum, began to throttle him. To have life we must fulfill the Father's will. We ask forgiveness of Him for failing to fulfill His will, and hope to be forgiven. What then are we doing if we do not ourselves forgive others? We are doing to them what we dread for ourselves.

The will of the Father is well-being; and evil is that which separates us from the Father. How then can we fail to seek to quench evil as quickly as possible, since it is that which ruins us and robs us of life? Evil entangles us in bodily destruction. In so far as we escape from that entanglement

we obtain life and have all that we can desire. We are not separated from one another by evil but are united by love.

Men are tempted to infringe the second commandment by thinking of woman as created for bodily pleasure, and by supposing that by leaving one wife and taking another they will obtain more pleasure. To avoid falling into this temptation we must remember that the Father's will is, not that man should delite himself with woman's charms, but that each man having chosen a wife should be one with her. The Father's will is for each man to have one wife and each wife one husband. If each man keeps to one wife, each man will have a wife and each woman a husband. He who changes his wife deprives her of a husband and gives occasion for some other man to leave his wife and take the deserted one. A man need not marry at all, but must not have more than one wife, for if he does he goes against the will of the Father which is that one man should unite with one woman.

Men are tempted to infringe the third commandment by creating, for the advantage of their temporal life, established authorities, and demanding from one another oaths by which they bind themselves to do what those authorities demand. To avoid falling into this temptation men must remember that they are indebted for their life to no power but God. The demands of authorities should be regarded as violence but, following the command of non-resistance to evil, men should yield what goods and labor the authorities may demand. But they must not pledge their conduct by taking oaths, for the oaths that are imposed lead to evil. He who recognizes his life as being in the will of the Father cannot bind his actions by pledges, for such a man holds his life most sacred.

Men are tempted to infringe the fourth commandment by thinking that they can reform others by themselves yielding to anger and revenge. If a man wrongs another, people think he should be punished and that justice lies in human judgment.



To avoid falling into this temptation we must remember that men are called not to judge but to save one another, and that they cannot judge one another's faults because they are themselves full of wickedness. The one thing they can do is to teach others by an example of purity, forgiveness, and love.

Men are tempted to infringe the fifth commandment by thinking that there is a difference between their own countrymen and those of other nations, and that it is therefore necessary to defend themselves against other nations and do them harm. To avoid falling into this temptation it is necessary to know that all the commandments may be summed up in this: to do good to all men without distinction, and thus fulfill the will of the Father who has given life and well-being to all. Even if others make such distinctions, and though nations, considering themselves alien to one another, go to war, yet each man, to fulfill the will of the Father, should do good to all—even to those belonging to a nation with which his country is at war.

To avoid falling into human illusions we must think not of the physical but the spiritual life. If a man understands that life consists solely in now being in the Father's will, neither privations, nor sufferings, nor death, can seem dreadful to him. Only that man receives true life who is ready at every moment to give up his physical life in order to fulfill the Father's will. And that everyone may understand that true life is that in which there is no death, Jesus said: Eternal life should not be understood as being like the present life. For true life in the will of the Father there is neither space nor time.

Those who are awake to the true life live in the Father's will for which there is neither space nor time. They live with the Father. If they have died for us, they live for God. Therefore one commandment includes in itself all: to love all men, each of whom has the source of life within him.

And Jesus said: That source of life is the Christ you are awaiting. The comprehension of that source of life, for whom there is no distinction of persons and no time or place, is the son of man whom I teach. All that hides that source of life, from men is temptation. There is the temptation of the scribes, of the bookmen, and of the materialists-do not yield to it. There is the temptation of authority, do not yield to that: and there is also the most terrible temptation, from the religious teachers who call themselves Orthodox. Beware of this last temptation more than of all the others, because these self-ordained teachers, just they, by devising the worship of a false God decoy you from the true God. Instead of serving the Father of life by deeds, they substitute words, and teach words while they themselves do nothing. You can learn nothing from them but words, and the Father requires deed. They can teach nothing because they themselves know nothing, and only for their own advantage A wish to set themselves up as teachers. But you know that no man can be the teacher of another. There is one teacher for all men-the Lord of life the understanding. But these self-styled teachers, thinking to teach others, deprive themselves of true life and hinder others from understanding it. They teach men that their God will be pleased by external rites, and think they can bring men to religion by vows. They are only concerned about externals. An outward assumption of religion satisfies them, but they do not think of what goes on in men's hearts. And so they are like showy sepulchers, handsome outside but loathsome within. In words they honor the saints and the martyrs, but they are just the people who formerly killed and tortured and who now kill and torture the saints. From them come all the world's temptations for under the guise of good they teach evil. The evil they create is the root of all others, for they defile the most holy thing in the world. They will continue their deceptions and increase evil in the world, and it will be long before they are changed. But a time will come when

all their churches and all external worship of God will be destroyed, and men will understand, and unite in love, to serve the one God of life and to fulfill His will.

## X

THE Jews saw that the teaching of Jesus would destroy their State religion and their nationality, and at the same time saw that they could not refute it, so they decided to kill him. His innocence and rectitude hindered them but the high priest Caiaphas devised a pretext for killing him even though Jesus was not guilty in any way. Caiaphas said: We need not discuss whether this man is innocent or guilty; we have to consider whether we wish our people to remain a separate Jewish nation or whether we wish it to be broken up and dispersed. The nation will perish and the people be scattered if we let this man alone and do not put him to death. This argument decided the matter, and the Orthodox agreed that Jesus must be put to death; and they instructed the people to seize him as soon as he appeared in Jerusalem.

Though he knew of this, Jesus nevertheless went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. His pupils entreated him not to go, but he said: What the Orthodox wish to do to me, and all that any man may do, cannot alter the truth for me. If I see the light I know where I am and where I am going. Only he who does not know the truth can fear anything or doubt anything. Only he who does not see, stumbles. And he went to Jerusalem, stopping on the way at Bethany. There Mary emptied a jar of precious oil on him, and when the pupils reproached her for wasting so much precious oil, Jesus, knowing that his bodily death was near at hand, said that what she had done was a preparation for his burial. When he left Bethany and went to Jerusalem crowds met and followed him, and this convinced the Orthodox still more of the need to kill him. They only wanted an opportunity to seize him. He knew that the least indiscreet word from him now, contrary to the law, would

be used as a reason for his execution; but notwithstanding this he went into the temple and again declared that the Jewish worship of God with sacrifices and libations was false, and he again announced his teaching. But his teaching, based on the prophets, was such that the Orthodox could still find no palpable breach of this law for which they could condemn him to death, especially as most of the common people were on his side. But at the feast there were certain heathen who having heard of Jesus's teaching, wished to discuss it with him. The pupils hearing of this were alarmed. They feared lest Jesus by talking with the heathen might betray himself and excite the people. At first they did not want to put the heathen in touch with Jesus, but afterwards they decided to tell him that these men wished to speak with him. On hearing this, Jesus was troubled. He understood that his talk with the heathen would make clear his rejection of the whole Jewish law, would turn the crowd from him, and would give occasion to the Orthodox to accuse him of having intercourse with the hated heathen; and knowing this he was troubled. But he also knew that his mission was to make clear to men, the sons of one Father, their unity without distinction of faith. He knew that to do this would cost him his bodily life but that its loss would give men a true understanding of life, and therefore he said: As a grain of wheat perishes to bear fruit, so I, a man, must give up my bodily life in order to bear spiritual fruit. He who holds fast to his bodily life loses his true life, but he who does not grudge his bodily life obtains the true life. I am troubled at what awaits me, but I have lived till now only in preparation for this hour, how then can I fail to act as I ought? So let the Father's will be manifested through me now.

And turning to the people, heathen and Jews, Jesus declared openly what he had only said privately to Nicodemus. He said: Men's lives, with their different creeds and governments, must all be changed. All human authorities must disappear. It is only necessary to

understand the nature of man as a son of the Father of life, and this understanding destroys all divisions of men and of authorities and makes all men one. The Jews said: You are destroying our whole creed. Our law tells of a Christ, but you speak only of a Son of Man and say that he should be exalted. What does that mean? He replied: To exalt the son of man means living by the light of understanding that exists in man, and while there is light, living by that light. I teach no new faith but only what each man may know within himself. Each man knows the life in himself, and each man knows that life is given to him and to all men by the Father of life. My teaching is only that man should love the life that the Father gives to us all. Many of the unofficial folk believed Jesus; but the notables and official classes did not believe him, because they did not wish to consider the universal purport of what he said, and thought only of its temporal bearings. They saw that he turned the people from them and they wished to kill him; but they feared to take him openly, and wanted to do so secretly-not in Jerusalem and in the daytime. And one of his twelve pupils, Judas Iscariot, came to them, and they bribed him to take their emissaries to Jesus when he should be away from the people. Judas promised to do this, and went back to Jesus, awaiting a suitable opportunity to betray him. On the first day of the feast Jesus kept the Passover with his pupils, and Judas, thinking that Jesus was not aware of his treachery, was with them. But Jesus knew that Judas had sold him, and as they all sat at table he took bread, broke it into twelve pieces, and gave one to each of the pupils, to Judas as well as to the others, and without naming anyone, said: Take, eat my body. Then he took a cup with wine, gave it to them all, including Judas, to drink, and said: One of you will shed my blood. Drink my blood. Then he rose and washed all the pupils' feet, and when he had done so said: I know that one of you will betray me to death and will shed my blood, but I have fed him and given him drink and washed his feet. I have done this to show you how to

behave to those who harm you. If you act so, you will be blessed. And the pupils all asked which of them was the betrayer. But Jesus did not name him, that they might not turn on him. When it grew dark, however, Jesus indicated Judas and at the same time told him to go away, and Judas got up from the table and went off and no one hindered him. Then Jesus said: This is what it means to exalt the son of man. To exalt the son of man is to be as kind as the Father not only to those who love us but to all men, even to those who do us harm. Therefore do not argue about my teaching, do not pick it to pieces as the Orthodox do, but do as I do and as I have now done before your eyes. This one commandment I give you: love men. My whole teaching is to love men always and to the end . After this, fear came over Jesus, and he went in the dark with his pupils to a garden to be out of the way. And on the road he said to them: You are all of you wavering and timid; if they come to take me you will all run away. To this Peter replied: No, I will never desert you and will defend you even to the death. And the other pupils all said the same.

Then Jesus said: If that is so, then prepare for defense, get weapons to defend yourselves and collect your provisions, for we shall have to hide. The pupils replied that they had two knives. When Jesus heard the mention of knives, anguish came over him. And going to a lonely spot he began to pray and urged the pupils to do the same, but they did not understand him. Jesus said: My Father- the spirit! End in me this struggle with temptation. Confirm me in the fulfillment of Thy will. I want to overcome my own wish to defend my bodily life, and to do Thy will-not resisting evil. The pupils still did not understand. And he said to them: Do not consider the body, but try to exalt the spirit in yourselves; strength is in the spirit, but the flesh is weak. And again he said: My Father! If suffering must be, then let it come: but in the suffering I want one thing only, that not my will, but Thine, may be fulfilled in me. The pupils did not understand. And again he strove with temptation and at

last overcame it; and coming to his pupils he said: Now it is decided, you can be at rest. I shall not fight, but shall give myself up into the hands of the men of this world.

## XI

AND Jesus, feeling himself prepared for death, went to give himself up, but Peter stopped him and asked where he was going. Jesus replied: I am going where you cannot go. I am ready for death, but you are not yet ready for it. Peter said: I am ready to give my life for you now. Jesus replied: A man cannot pledge himself to anything. And he said to all his pupils: I know that death awaits me, but I believe in the life of the Father and therefore do not fear it. Do not be disturbed at my death, but believe in the true God and Father of life, and then my death will not seem dreadful to you. If I am United to the Father of life, then I cannot be deprived of life. It is true that I do not tell you what or where my life after death will be, but I point out to you the way to true life. My teaching does not tell you what that life is to be, but it reveals the only true path to that life, which is to be in unity with the Father. The Father is the source of life. My teaching is that man should live in the will of the Father and fulfill His will for the life and welfare of all men. Your teacher when I am gone will be your knowledge of the truth. In fulfilling my teaching on will always feel that you are in the truth and you in the Father. That the Father is in you. And knowing the Father of life in yourselves, you will experience a peace nothing can deprive you of. And therefore if you know the truth and live in it, neither my death nor your own can alarm you.

Men think of themselves as separate beings, each with his own separate will to live, but that is only an illusion. The only true life is that which recognizes the Father's will as the source of life. My teaching reveals this oneness of life, and presents life not as separate growths but as one tree on which all the branches grow. Only he lives who lives in the Father's will like a branch on its parent tree: he who wishes

to live by his own will dies like a branch that has been torn away. The Father gave me life to do good, and I have taught you to live to do good. If you fulfill my commandments you will be blessed, and the commandment which sums up my whole teaching is simply that all men should love one another. And love is to sacrifice the bodily life for the sake of another: there is no other definition. And in fulfilling my law of love you will not fulfill it like slaves who obey their master's orders without understanding them; but you will live as free men like myself, for I have made clear to you the purpose of life flowing from a knowledge of the Father of life. You have received my teaching not because you accidentally chose it, but because it is the only truth by which men are made free.

The teaching of the world is that men should do evil to one another, but my teaching is that they should love one another. Therefore the world will hate you as it has hated me. The world does not understand my teaching and therefore will persecute you and do you harm, thinking to serve God by so doing. Do not be surprised at this, but understand that it must be so. The world, not understanding the true God, must persecute you, but you must affirm the truth. You are distressed at their killing me, but they kill me for declaring the truth, and my death is necessary for the confirmation of the truth. My death, at which I do not recede from the truth will strengthen you, and you will understand what is false and what is true and what results from a knowledge of falsehood and of truth. You will understand that it is falsehood for men to believe in the bodily life and not in the life of the spirit, and that truth consists in unity with the Father from which results the victory of the spirit over the flesh.

When I am no longer with you in the bodily life, my spirit will be with you; but like all men you will not always feel within you the strength of the spirit. Sometimes you will weaken and lose the strength of the spirit and fall into temptation, and sometimes you will again awaken to the



true life. Hours of bondage to the flesh will come upon you, but only for a time; you will suffer and be again restored to the spirit as a woman suffers in childbirth and then feels joy that she has brought a human being into the world. You will experience the same when after being enslaved by the body you again rise in spirit, and feel such joy that there will be nothing more for you to desire. Know this in advance: in despite of persecution, of inward struggle and depression of spirit, the spirit lives within you and the one true God is the knowledge of the Father's will that I have revealed.

And addressing the Father, the spirit, Jesus said: I have done what Thou commandedst me, and have revealed to men that Thou art the source of all things, and they have understood me. I have taught them that they all come from one source of infinite life and that therefore they are all one, and that as the Father is in me and I am in the Father, so they, too, are one with me and the Father. I have revealed to them also that as Thou in love hast sent them into the world, they too should serve the world by love.

## XII

WHEN Jesus had finished speaking to his pupils, he rose and, instead of running away or defending himself, went to meet Judas who was bringing soldiers to take him. Jesus went to him and asked him why he had come. But Judas did not answer and a crowd of soldiers came round Jesus. Peter rushed to defend him and, drawing a knife, began to fight. But Jesus stopped him and told him to give up the knife, saying that he who fights with a knife himself perishes by a knife. Then he said to those who had come to take him: I have till now gone about among you alone without fear, and I feel no fear now, I give myself up to you to do with me as you please. And all his pupils ran away and deserted him. Then the officer of the soldiers ordered Jesus to be bound and taken to Annas, a former high priest who lived in the same house as Caiaphas, who was high

priest that year and who had devised the pretext upon which it was decided to kill Jesus: namely, that if he were not killed the whole nation would perish. Jesus, feeling himself in the will of the Father, was ready for death and did not resist when they took him, and was not afraid when they led him away; but that very Peter who had just assured Jesus that he would rather die than renounce him, the same Peter who had tried to defend Jesus, now when he saw Jesus being led to execution was afraid they would execute him too, and when the door-keeper asked whether he had not been with Jesus, denied him and deserted him. Only later, when the cock crowed, did Peter understand all that Jesus had said to him. He understood that there are two temptations of the flesh-fear and strife-and that Jesus had resisted these when he prayed in the garden and asked the pupils to pray. And now he, Peter, had yielded to both these temptations against which Jesus had warned him: he had tried to resist evil and to defend the truth had been ready to fight and do evil himself; and now in fear of bodily suffering he had renounced his master. Jesus had not yielded either to the temptation to fight when the pupils had two knives ready for his defense, or to the temptation of fear-first before the people in Jerusalem when the heathen wished to speak to him, and now before the soldiers when they bound him and led him to trial. Jesus was brought before Caiaphas, who began to question him about his teaching. But knowing that Caiaphas asked not to find out about his teaching but only to convict him, Jesus did not reply, but said: I have concealed nothing and conceal nothing now: if you wish to know what my teaching is, ask those who heard it and understood it. For this answer the high priest's servant struck Jesus on the cheek. Jesus asked why he struck him, but the man did not answer him and the high priest continued the trial. Witnesses were brought and gave evidence that Jesus had boasted that he would destroy the Jewish faith. And the high priest questioned Jesus, but seeing that they did not ask in order to learn anything, but

only to pretend that it was a just trial, he answered nothing. Then the high priest asked him: Tell me, are you Christ, a son of God? Jesus said: Yes, I am Christ, a son of God; and now in torturing me you will see how the son of man resembles God.

The high priest was glad to hear these words and said to the other judges: Are not these words enough to condemn him? And the judges said: They are enough: we sentence him to death. And when they said this, the people threw themselves upon Jesus and began to strike him, to spit in his face, and to insult him. He remained silent.

The Jews had not the right to put anyone to death: to do this permission was needed from the Roman governor. So having condemned, Jesus in their court, and having subjected him to ignominy, they took him to the Roman governor Pilate that he might order his execution. Pilate asked why they wished to put Jesus to death, and they answered that he was a criminal. Pilate said that if that was so, they should judge him by their own law. They answered: We want you to put him to death, because he is guilty before the Roman Caesar: he is a rebel, he agitates the people, forbids them to pay taxes to Caesar, and calls himself the King of the Jews. Pilate called Jesus before him, and said: What is the meaning of this-are you King of the Jews? Jesus said: Do you really wish to know what my kingdom is, or are you only asking me for form's sake? Pilate answered: I am not a Jew, and it is the same to me whether you call yourself King of the Jews or not, but I ask you who you are and why do they call you a king? Jesus replied: They say truly that I call myself a king. I am indeed a king, but my kingdom is not an earthly one, it is a heavenly one. Earthly kings have armies and go to war and fight, but as you see they have bound and beaten me and I did not resist. I am a heavenly king and my power is in the spirit.

Pilate said: So it is true that you consider yourself a king? Jesus replied: You know it yourself. Everyone who lives by

the spirit is free. I live by this alone, and teach only to show men the truth that they are free if they live by the spirit. Pilate said: You teach the truth, but nobody knows what truth is. Everyone has his own truth. And having said this he turned away from Jesus and went back again to the Jews, and said: I find nothing criminal in this man. Why do you wish me to put him to death? The chief priests said: He ought to be executed because he stirs up the people. Then Pilate began to examine Jesus before the chief priests, but Jesus, seeing that this was only for form's sake, answered nothing. Then Pilate said: I alone cannot condemn him. Take him to Herod.

At the trial before Herod, Jesus again did not answer the chief priests' accusations, and Herod, taking Jesus to be an empty fellow, mockingly ordered him to be dressed in a red cloak and sent back to Pilate. Pilate pitied Jesus and began to persuade the chief priests to forgive him, if only on account of the feast; but they held to their demand, and they all, and the people with them, cried out to have Jesus crucified. Pilate again tried to persuade them to let Jesus go, but the priests and the people cried out that he must be executed. They said: He is guilty of calling himself a son of God. Pilate again called Jesus to him, and asked. What does it mean that you call yourself a son of God? Who are you? Jesus answered nothing. Then Pilate said: How is it that you do not answer me, when I have the power to execute you or to set you free? Jesus replied: You have no power over me. All power is from above. And Pilate for the third time tried to persuade the Jews to set Jesus free, but they said to him: If you will not execute this man whom we have denounced as a rebel against Caesar, then you yourself are not a friend to Caesar, but a foe. And on hearing these words Pilate gave way and ordered the execution of Jesus. But they first stripped Jesus and flogged him, and then dressed him again in the red cloak. And they beat him and insulted him and mocked him. Then they gave him a cross to carry and led him to the place of execution,

and there they nailed him to the cross, and as he hung on the cross the people all mocked at him. And to this mockery Jesus answered: Father, do not punish them for this, they do not know what they are doing. And later, when he was already near to death, he said: My Father! Into Thy care I yield my spirit. And bowing his head he breathed his last.

## A CONFESSION

**LEV NIKOLAYEVICH TOLSTOY**  
**(1828-1910)**

First distributed in Russia in 1882, first published in 1884.



### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Count Leo Tolstoy was baptized Orthodox into a life of privilege and wealth in Czarist Russia in 1828. His young adulthood is best summed up with his own words from his book *Confession*:

*I cannot recall those years without horror, loathing, and heart-rending pain. I killed people in war, challenged men to duels with the purpose of killing them, and lost at cards; I squandered the fruits of the peasants' toil and then had them executed; I was a fornicator and a cheat. Lying, stealing, promiscuity of every kind, drunkenness, violence, murder - there was not a crime I did not commit...Thus I lived for ten years."*

Later in life, Tolstoy formulated a unique Christian philosophy which espoused non-resistance to evil as the proper response to aggression, and which put great emphasis on fair treatment of the poor and working class. Tolstoy also gave a strong plea for Christians to reject the State when seeking answers to questions of morality and instead to look within themselves and to God for their answers.

Tolstoy's books *Confession* (1884), *What Then Must We Do?* (1886), and most notably *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894) clearly outline his radical and well-reasoned revision of traditional Christian thinking. *The Kingdom of God is Within You* is the book which won over Gandhi to the idea of non-resistance to evil.

Despite having written *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy, at age 51, looked back on his life and considered it to be a meaningless, regrettable failure. *A Confession* gives insight into Tolstoy's thinking as he began to forever change his ideas and actions and develop his radical philosophy. This book was first distributed in 1882 and published in 1884 after some fun with the censors.

## I

I was baptized and brought up in the Orthodox Christian faith. I was taught it in childhood and throughout my boyhood and youth. But when I abandoned the second course of the university at the age of eighteen I no longer believed any of the things I had been taught.

Judging by certain memories, I never seriously believed them, but had merely relied on what I was taught and on what was professed by the grown-up people around me, and that reliance was very unstable.

I remember that before I was eleven a grammar school pupil, Vladimir Milyutin (long since dead), visited us one Sunday and announced as the latest novelty a discovery made at his school. This discovery was that there is no God and that all we are taught about Him is a mere invention (this was in 1838). I remember how interested my elder brothers were in this information. They called me to their council and we all, I remember, became very animated, and accepted it as something very interesting and quite possible.

I remember also that when my elder brother, Dmitriy, who was then at the university, suddenly, in the passionate way natural to him, devoted himself to religion and began to attend all the Church services, to fast and to lead a pure and moral life, we all - even our elders - unceasingly held him up to ridicule and for some unknown reason called him "Noah". I remember that Musin-Pushkin, the then Curator of Kazan University, when inviting us to dance at his home, ironically persuaded my brother (who was declining the invitation) by the argument that even David danced before the Ark. I sympathized with these jokes made by my elders, and drew from them the conclusion that though it is necessary to learn the catechism and go to church, one must



not take such things too seriously. I remember also that I read Voltaire when I was very young, and that his raillery, far from shocking me, amused me very much.

My lapse from faith occurred as is usual among people on our level of education. In most cases, I think, it happens thus: a man lives like everybody else, on the basis of principles not merely having nothing in common with religious doctrine, but generally opposed to it; religious doctrine does not play a part in life, in intercourse with others it is never encountered, and in a man's own life he never has to reckon with it. Religious doctrine is professed far away from life and independently of it. If it is encountered, it is only as an external phenomenon disconnected from life.

Then as now, it was and is quite impossible to judge by a man's life and conduct whether he is a believer or not. If there be a difference between a man who publicly professes orthodoxy and one who denies it, the difference is not in favor of the former. Then as now, the public profession and confession of orthodoxy was chiefly met with among people who were dull and cruel and who considered themselves very important. Ability, honesty, reliability, good-nature and moral conduct, were often met with among unbelievers.

The schools teach the catechism and send the pupils to church, and government officials must produce certificates of having received communion. But a man of our circle who has finished his education and is not in the government service may even now (and formerly it was still easier for him to do so) live for ten or twenty years without once remembering that he is living among Christians and is himself reckoned a member of the orthodox Christian Church.

So that, now as formerly, religious doctrine, accepted on trust and supported by external pressure, thaws away gradually under the influence of knowledge and experience of life which conflict with it, and a man very often lives on, imagining that he still holds intact the religious doctrine imparted to him in childhood whereas in fact not a trace of it remains.

S., a clever and truthful man, once told me the story of how he ceased to believe. On a hunting expedition, when he was already twenty-six, he once, at the place where they put up for the night, knelt down in the evening to pray - a habit retained from childhood. His elder brother, who was at the hunt with him, was lying on some hay and watching him. When S. had finished and was settling down for the night, his brother said to him: "So you still do that?"

They said nothing more to one another. But from that day S. ceased to say his prayers or go to church. And now he has not prayed, received communion, or gone to church, for thirty years. And this not because he knows his brother's convictions and has joined him in them, nor because he has decided anything in his own soul, but simply because the word spoken by his brother was like the push of a finger on a wall that was ready to fall by its own weight. The word only showed that where he thought there was faith, in reality there had long been an empty space, and that therefore the utterance of words and the making of signs of the cross and genuflections while praying were quite senseless actions. Becoming conscious of their senselessness he could not continue them.

So it has been and is, I think, with the great majority of people. I am speaking of people of our educational level who are sincere with themselves, and not of those who make the profession of faith a means of attaining worldly aims. (Such people are the most fundamental infidels, for if

faith is for them a means of attaining any worldly aims, then certainly it is not faith.) these people of our education are so placed that the light of knowledge and life has caused an artificial erection to melt away, and they have either already noticed this and swept its place clear, or they have not yet noticed it.

The religious doctrine taught me from childhood disappeared in me as in others, but with this difference, that as from the age of fifteen I began to read philosophical works, my rejection of the doctrine became a conscious one at a very early age. From the time I was sixteen I ceased to say my prayers and ceased to go to church or to fast of my own volition. I did not believe what had been taught me in childhood but I believed in something. What it was I believed in I could not at all have said. I believed in a God, or rather I did not deny God - but I could not have said what sort of God. Neither did I deny Christ and his teaching, but what his teaching consisted in I again could not have said.

Looking back on that time, I now see clearly that my faith - my only real faith - that which apart from my animal instincts gave impulse to my life - was a belief in perfecting myself. But in what this perfecting consisted and what its object was, I could not have said. I tried to perfect myself mentally - I studied everything I could, anything life threw in my way; I tried to perfect my will, I drew up rules I tried to follow; I perfected myself physically, cultivating my strength and agility by all sorts of exercises, and accustoming myself to endurance and patience by all kinds of privations. And all this I considered to be the pursuit of perfection. the beginning of it all was of course moral perfection, but that was soon replaced by perfection in general: by the desire to be better not in my own eyes or those of God but in the eyes of other people. And very soon this effort again changed into a desire to be stronger than

others: to be more famous, more important and richer than others.

## II

Some day I will narrate the touching and instructive history of my life during those ten years of my youth. I think very many people have had a like experience. With all my soul I wished to be good, but I was young, passionate and alone, completely alone when I sought goodness. Every time I tried to express my most sincere desire, which was to be morally good, I met with contempt and ridicule, but as soon as I yielded to low passions I was praised and encouraged.

Ambition, love of power, covetousness, lasciviousness, pride, anger, and revenge - were all respected.

Yielding to those passions I became like the grown-up folk and felt that they approved of me. The kind aunt with whom I lived, herself the purest of beings, always told me that there was nothing she so desired for me as that I should have relations with a married woman: 'Rien ne forme un jeune homme, comme une liaison avec une femme comme il faut'. [Footnote: Nothing so forms a young man as an intimacy with a woman of good breeding.] Another happiness she desired for me was that I should become an aide-de-camp, and if possible aide-de-camp to the Emperor. But the greatest happiness of all would be that I should marry a very rich girl and so become possessed of as many serfs as possible.

I cannot think of those years without horror, loathing and heartache. I killed men in war and challenged men to duels in order to kill them. I lost at cards, consumed the labor of the peasants, sentenced them to punishments, lived loosely, and deceived people. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, murder - there was no crime I did not commit, and in spite of that people praised my conduct and my contemporaries considered and consider me to be a comparatively moral man.

So I lived for ten years.

During that time I began to write from vanity, covetousness, and pride. In my writings I did the same as in my life. to get fame and money, for the sake of which I wrote, it was necessary to hide the good and to display the evil. and I did so. How often in my writings I contrived to hide under the guise of indifference, or even of banter, those strivings of mine towards goodness which gave meaning to my life! And I succeeded in this and was praised.

At twenty-six years of age [Footnote: He was in fact 27 at the time.] I returned to Petersburg after the war, and met the writers. They received me as one of themselves and flattered me. And before I had time to look round I had adopted the views on life of the set of authors I had come among, and these views completely obliterated all my former strivings to improve - they furnished a theory which justified the dissoluteness of my life.

The view of life of these people, my comrades in authorship, consisted in this: that life in general goes on developing, and in this development we - men of thought - have the chief part; and among men of thought it is we - artists and poets - who have the greatest influence. Our vocation is to teach mankind. And lest the simple question should suggest itself: What do I know, and what can I teach? it was explained in this theory that this need not be known, and that the artist and poet teach unconsciously. I was considered an admirable artist and poet, and therefore it was very natural for me to adopt this theory. I, artist and poet, wrote and taught without myself knowing what. For this I was paid money; I had excellent food, lodging, women, and society; and I had fame, which showed that what I taught was very good.

This faith in the meaning of poetry and in the development of life was a religion, and I was one of its priests. To be its priest was very pleasant and profitable. And I lived a considerable time in this faith without doubting its validity. But in the second and still more in the third year of this life I began to doubt the infallibility of this religion and to examine it. My first cause of doubt was that I began to notice that the priests of this religion were not all in accord among themselves. Some said: We are the best and most useful teachers; we teach what is needed, but the others teach wrongly. Others said: No! we are the real teachers, and you teach wrongly. and they disputed, quarrelled, abused, cheated, and tricked one another. There were also many among us who did not care who was right and who was wrong, but were simply bent on attaining their covetous aims by means of this activity of ours. All this obliged me to doubt the validity of our creed.

Moreover, having begun to doubt the truth of the authors' creed itself, I also began to observe its priests more attentively, and I became convinced that almost all the priests of that religion, the writers, were immoral, and for the most part men of bad, worthless character, much inferior to those whom I had met in my former dissipated and military life; but they were self- confident and self-satisfied as only those can be who are quite holy or who do not know what holiness is. These people revolted me, I became revolting to myself, and I realized that that faith was a fraud.

But strange to say, though I understood this fraud and renounced it, yet I did not renounce the rank these people gave me: the rank of artist, poet, and teacher. I naively imagined that I was a poet and artist and could teach everybody without myself knowing what I was teaching, and I acted accordingly.

From my intimacy with these men I acquired a new vice: abnormally developed pride and an insane assurance that it was my vocation to teach men, without knowing what.

To remember that time, and my own state of mind and that of those men (though there are thousands like them today), is sad and terrible and ludicrous, and arouses exactly the feeling one experiences in a lunatic asylum.

We were all then convinced that it was necessary for us to speak, write, and print as quickly as possible and as much as possible, and that it was all wanted for the good of humanity. And thousands of us, contradicting and abusing one another, all printed and wrote - teaching others. And without noticing that we knew nothing, and that to the simplest of life's questions: What is good and what is evil? we did not know how to reply, we all talked at the same time, not listening to one another, sometimes seconding and praising one another in order to be seconded and praised in turn, sometimes getting angry with one another - just as in a lunatic asylum.

Thousands of workmen laboured to the extreme limit of their strength day and night, setting the type and printing millions of words which the post carried all over Russia, and we still went on teaching and could in no way find time to teach enough, and were always angry that sufficient attention was not paid us.

It was terribly strange, but is now quite comprehensible. Our real innermost concern was to get as much money and praise as possible. To gain that end we could do nothing except write books and papers. So we did that. But in order to do such useless work and to feel assured that we were very important people we required a theory justifying our activity. And so among us this theory was devised: "All



that exists is reasonable. All that exists develops. And it all develops by means of Culture. And Culture is measured by the circulation of books and newspapers. And we are paid money and are respected because we write books and newspapers, and therefore we are the most useful and the best of men." This theory would have been all very well if we had been unanimous, but as every thought expressed by one of us was always met by a diametrically opposite thought expressed by another, we ought to have been driven to reflection. But we ignored this; people paid us money and those on our side praised us, so each of us considered himself justified.

It is now clear to me that this was just as in a lunatic asylum; but then I only dimly suspected this, and like all lunatics, simply called all men lunatics except myself.

### III

So I lived, abandoning myself to this insanity for another six years, till my marriage. During that time I went abroad. Life in Europe and my acquaintance with leading and learned Europeans [Footnote: Russians generally make a distinction between Europeans and Russians. - A.M.] confirmed me yet more in the faith of striving after perfection in which I believed, for I found the same faith among them. That faith took with me the common form it assumes with the majority of educated people of our day. It was expressed by the word "progress". It then appeared to me that this word meant something. I did not as yet understand that, being tormented (like every vital man) by the question how it is best for me to live, in my answer, "Live in conformity with progress", I was like a man in a boat who when carried along by wind and waves should reply to what for him is the chief and only question. "whither to steer", by saying, "We are being carried somewhere".

I did not then notice this. Only occasionally - not by reason but by instinct - I revolted against this superstition so common in our day, by which people hide from themselves their lack of understanding of life....So, for instance, during my stay in Paris, the sight of an execution revealed to me the instability of my superstitious belief in progress. When I saw the head part from the body and how they thumped separately into the box, I understood, not with my mind but with my whole being, that no theory of the reasonableness of our present progress could justify this deed; and that though everybody from the creation of the world had held it to be necessary, on whatever theory, I knew it to be unnecessary and bad; and therefore the arbiter of what is good and evil is not what people say and do, nor is it progress, but it is my heart and I. Another instance of a realization that the superstitious belief in progress is

insufficient as a guide to life, was my brother's death. Wise, good, serious, he fell ill while still a young man, suffered for more than a year, and died painfully, not understanding why he had lived and still less why he had to die. No theories could give me, or him, any reply to these questions during his slow and painful dying. But these were only rare instances of doubt, and I actually continued to live professing a faith only in progress. "Everything evolves and I evolve with it: and why it is that I evolve with all things will be known some day." So I ought to have formulated my faith at that time.

On returning from abroad I settled in the country and chanced to occupy myself with peasant schools. This work was particularly to my taste because in it I had not to face the falsity which had become obvious to me and stared me in the face when I tried to teach people by literary means. Here also I acted in the name of progress, but I already regarded progress itself critically. I said to myself: "In some of its developments progress has proceeded wrongly, and with primitive peasant children one must deal in a spirit of perfect freedom, letting them choose what path of progress they please." In reality I was ever revolving round one and the same insoluble problem, which was: How to teach without knowing what to teach. In the higher spheres of literary activity I had realized that one could not teach without knowing what, for I saw that people all taught differently, and by quarrelling among themselves only succeeded in hiding their ignorance from one another. But here, with peasant children, I thought to evade this difficulty by letting them learn what they liked. It amuses me now when I remember how I shuffled in trying to satisfy my desire to teach, while in the depth of my soul I knew very well that I could not teach anything needful for I did not know what was needful. After spending a year at school work I went abroad a second time to discover how to teach others while myself knowing nothing.

And it seemed to me that I had learnt this abroad, and in the year of the peasants' emancipation (1861) I returned to Russia armed with all this wisdom, and having become an Arbiter [Footnote: To keep peace between peasants and owners.-A.M.] I began to teach, both the uneducated peasants in schools and the educated classes through a magazine I published. Things appeared to be going well, but I felt I was not quite sound mentally and that matters could not long continue in that way. And I should perhaps then have come to the state of despair I reached fifteen years later had there not been one side of life still unexplored by me which promised me happiness: that was my marriage.

For a year I busied myself with arbitration work, the schools, and the magazine; and I became so worn out - as a result especially of my mental confusion - and so hard was my struggle as Arbiter, so obscure the results of my activity in the schools, so repulsive my shuffling in the magazine (which always amounted to one and the same thing: a desire to teach everybody and to hide the fact that I did not know what to teach), that I fell ill, mentally rather than physically, threw up everything, and went away to the Bashkirs in the steppes, to breathe fresh air, drink kumys [Footnote: A fermented drink prepared from mare's milk.-A. M.], and live a merely animal life.

Returning from there I married. The new conditions of happy family life completely diverted me from all search for the general meaning of life. My whole life was centred at that time in my family, wife and children, and therefore in care to increase our means of livelihood. My striving after self-perfection, for which I had already substituted a striving for perfection in general, i.e. progress, was now again replaced by the effort simply to secure the best possible conditions for myself and my family.

So another fifteen years passed. In spite of the fact that I now regarded authorship as of no importance - the temptation of immense monetary rewards and applause for my insignificant work - and I devoted myself to it as a means of improving my material position and of stifling in my soul all questions as to the meaning of my own life or life in general.

I wrote: teaching what was for me the only truth, namely, that one should live so as to have the best for oneself and one's family.

So I lived; but five years ago something very strange began to happen to me. At first I experienced moments of perplexity and arrest of life, and though I did not know what to do or how to live; and I felt lost and became dejected. But this passed and I went on living as before. Then these moments of perplexity began to recur oftener and oftener, and always in the same form. They were always expressed by the questions: What is it for? What does it lead to?

At first it seemed to me that these were aimless and irrelevant questions. I thought that it was all well known, and that if I should ever wish to deal with the solution it would not cost me much effort; just at present I had no time for it, but when I wanted to I should be able to find the answer. The questions however began to repeat themselves frequently, and to demand replies more and more insistently; and like drops of ink always falling on one place they ran together into one black blot.

Then occurred what happens to everyone sickening with a mortal internal disease. At first trivial signs of indisposition appear to which the sick man pays no attention; then these signs reappear more and more often and merge into one

uninterrupted period of suffering. The suffering increases, and before the sick man can look round, what he took for a mere indisposition has already become more important to him than anything else in the world - it is death!

That is what happened to me. I understood that it was no casual indisposition but something very important, and that if these questions constantly repeated themselves they would have to be answered. And I tried to answer them. The questions seemed such stupid, simple, childish ones; but as soon as I touched them and tried to solve them I at once became convinced, first, that they are not childish and stupid but the most important and profound of life's questions; and secondly that, occupying myself with my Samara estate, the education of my son, or the writing of a book, I had to know *\*why\** I was doing it. As long as I did not know why, I could do nothing and could not live. Amid the thoughts of estate management which greatly occupied me at that time, the question would suddenly occur: "Well, you will have 6,000 desyatinas [Footnote: The desyatina is about 2.75 acres.-A.M.] of land in Samara Government and 300 horses, and what then?" ... And I was quite disconcerted and did not know what to think. Or when considering plans for the education of my children, I would say to myself: "What for?" Or when considering how the peasants might become prosperous, I would suddenly say to myself: "But what does it matter to me?" Or when thinking of the fame my works would bring me, I would say to myself, "Very well; you will be more famous than Gogol or Pushkin or Shakespeare or Moliere, or than all the writers in the world - and what of it?" And I could find no reply at all. The questions would not wait, they had to be answered at once, and if I did not answer them it was impossible to live. But there was no answer.

I felt that what I had been standing on had collapsed and that I had nothing left under my feet. What I had lived on no longer existed, and there was nothing left.

## IV

My life came to a standstill. I could breathe, eat, drink, and sleep, and I could not help doing these things; but there was no life, for there were no wishes the fulfillment of which I could consider reasonable. If I desired anything, I knew in advance that whether I satisfied my desire or not, nothing would come of it. Had a fairy come and offered to fulfill my desires I should not have known what to ask. If in moments of intoxication I felt something which, though not a wish, was a habit left by former wishes, in sober moments I knew this to be a delusion and that there was really nothing to wish for. I could not even wish to know the truth, for I guessed of what it consisted. The truth was that life is meaningless. I had as it were lived, lived, and walked, walked, till I had come to a precipice and saw clearly that there was nothing ahead of me but destruction. It was impossible to stop, impossible to go back, and impossible to close my eyes or avoid seeing that there was nothing ahead but suffering and real death - complete annihilation.

It had come to this, that I, a healthy, fortunate man, felt I could no longer live: some irresistible power impelled me to rid myself one way or other of life. I cannot say I \*wished\* to kill myself. The power which drew me away from life was stronger, fuller, and more widespread than any mere wish. It was a force similar to the former striving to live, only in a contrary direction. All my strength drew me away from life. The thought of self-destruction now came to me as naturally as thoughts of how to improve my life had come formerly. and it was seductive that I had to be cunning with myself lest I should carry it out too hastily. I did not wish to hurry, because I wanted to use all efforts to disentangle the matter. "If I cannot unravel matters, there will always be time." and it was then that I, a man favoured by fortune, hid a cord from myself lest I should hang



myself from the crosspiece of the partition in my room where I undressed alone every evening, and I ceased to go out shooting with a gun lest I should be tempted by so easy a way of ending my life. I did not myself know what I wanted: I feared life, desired to escape from it, yet still hoped something of it.

And all this befell me at a time when all around me I had what is considered complete good fortune. I was not yet fifty; I had a good wife who loved me and whom I loved, good children, and a large estate which without much effort on my part improved and increased. I was respected by my relations and acquaintances more than at any previous time. I was praised by others and without much self-deception could consider that my name was famous. And far from being insane or mentally diseased, I enjoyed on the contrary a strength of mind and body such as I have seldom met with among men of my kind; physically I could keep up with the peasants at mowing, and mentally I could work for eight and ten hours at a stretch without experiencing any ill results from such exertion. And in this situation I came to this - that I could not live, and, fearing death, had to employ cunning with myself to avoid taking my own life.

My mental condition presented itself to me in this way: my life is a stupid and spiteful joke someone has played on me. Though I did not acknowledge a "someone" who created me, yet such a presentation - that someone had played an evil and stupid joke on me by placing me in the world - was the form of expression that suggested itself most naturally to me.

Involuntarily it appeared to me that there, somewhere, was someone who amused himself by watching how I lived for thirty or forty years: learning, developing, maturing in body and mind, and how, having with matured mental powers

reached the summit of life from which it all lay before me, I stood on that summit - like an arch-fool - seeing clearly that there is nothing in life, and that there has been and will be nothing. And \*he\* was amused. ...

But whether that "someone" laughing at me existed or not, I was none the better off. I could give no reasonable meaning to any single action or to my whole life. I was only surprised that I could have avoided understanding this from the very beginning - it has been so long known to all. Today or tomorrow sickness and death will come (they had come already) to those I love or to me; nothing will remain but stench and worms. Sooner or later my affairs, whatever they may be, will be forgotten, and I shall not exist. Then why go on making any effort? ... How can man fail to see this? And how go on living? That is what is surprising! One can only live while one is intoxicated with life; as soon as one is sober it is impossible not to see that it is all a mere fraud and a stupid fraud! That is precisely what it is: there is nothing either amusing or witty about it, it is simply cruel and stupid.

There is an Eastern fable, told long ago, of a traveller overtaken on a plain by an enraged beast. Escaping from the beast he gets into a dry well, but sees at the bottom of the well a dragon that has opened its jaws to swallow him. And the unfortunate man, not daring to climb out lest he should be destroyed by the enraged beast, and not daring to leap to the bottom of the well lest he should be eaten by the dragon, seizes a twig growing in a crack in the well and clings to it. His hands are growing weaker and he feels he will soon have to resign himself to the destruction that awaits him above or below, but still he clings on. Then he sees that two mice, a black one and a white one, go regularly round and round the stem of the twig to which he is clinging and gnaw at it. And soon the twig itself will snap and he will fall into the dragon's jaws. The traveller

sees this and knows that he will inevitably perish; but while still hanging he looks around, sees some drops of honey on the leaves of the twig, reaches them with his tongue and licks them. So I too clung to the twig of life, knowing that the dragon of death was inevitably awaiting me, ready to tear me to pieces; and I could not understand why I had fallen into such torment. I tried to lick the honey which formerly consoled me, but the honey no longer gave me pleasure, and the white and black mice of day and night gnawed at the branch by which I hung. I saw the dragon clearly and the honey no longer tasted sweet. I only saw the unescapable dragon and the mice, and I could not tear my gaze from them. and this is not a fable but the real unanswerable truth intelligible to all.

The deception of the joys of life which formerly allayed my terror of the dragon now no longer deceived me. No matter how often I may be told, "You cannot understand the meaning of life so do not think about it, but live," I can no longer do it: I have already done it too long. I cannot now help seeing day and night going round and bringing me to death. That is all I see, for that alone is true. All else is false.

The two drops of honey which diverted my eyes from the cruel truth longer than the rest: my love of family, and of writing - art as I called it - were no longer sweet to me.

"Family"...said I to myself. But my family - wife and children - are also human. They are placed just as I am: they must either live in a lie or see the terrible truth. Why should they live? Why should I love them, guard them, bring them up, or watch them? That they may come to the despair that I feel, or else be stupid? Loving them, I cannot hide the truth from them: each step in knowledge leads them to the truth. And the truth is death.

"Art, poetry?"...Under the influence of success and the praise of men, I had long assured myself that this was a thing one could do though death was drawing near - death which destroys all things, including my work and its remembrance; but soon I saw that that too was a fraud. It was plain to me that art is an adornment of life, an allurements to life. But life had lost its attraction for me, so how could I attract others? As long as I was not living my own life but was borne on the waves of some other life - as long as I believed that life had a meaning, though one I could not express - the reflection of life in poetry and art of all kinds afforded me pleasure: it was pleasant to look at life in the mirror of art. But when I began to seek the meaning of life and felt the necessity of living my own life, that mirror became for me unnecessary, superfluous, ridiculous, or painful. I could no longer soothe myself with what I now saw in the mirror, namely, that my position was stupid and desperate. It was all very well to enjoy the sight when in the depth of my soul I believed that my life had a meaning. Then the play of lights - comic, tragic, touching, beautiful, and terrible - in life amused me. No sweetness of honey could be sweet to me when I saw the dragon and saw the mice gnawing away my support.

Nor was that all. Had I simply understood that life had no meaning I could have borne it quietly, knowing that that was my lot. But I could not satisfy myself with that. Had I been like a man living in a wood from which he knows there is no exit, I could have lived; but I was like one lost in a wood who, horrified at having lost his way, rushes about wishing to find the road. He knows that each step he takes confuses him more and more, but still he cannot help rushing about.

It was indeed terrible. And to rid myself of the terror I wished to kill myself. I experienced terror at what awaited me - knew that that terror was even worse than the position

I was in, but still I could not patiently await the end. However convincing the argument might be that in any case some vessel in my heart would give way, or something would burst and all would be over, I could not patiently await that end. The horror of darkness was too great, and I wished to free myself from it as quickly as possible by noose or bullet. that was the feeling which drew me most strongly towards suicide.

## V

"But perhaps I have overlooked something, or misunderstood something?" said to myself several times. "It cannot be that this condition of despair is natural to man!" And I sought for an explanation of these problems in all the branches of knowledge acquired by men. I sought painfully and long, not from idle curiosity or listlessly, but painfully and persistently day and night - sought as a perishing man seeks for safety - and I found nothing.

I sought in all the sciences, but far from finding what I wanted, became convinced that all who like myself had sought in knowledge for the meaning of life had found nothing. And not only had they found nothing, but they had plainly acknowledged that the very thing which made me despair - namely the senselessness of life - is the one indubitable thing man can know.

I sought everywhere; and thanks to a life spent in learning, and thanks also to my relations with the scholarly world, I had access to scientists and scholars in all branches of knowledge, and they readily showed me all their knowledge, not only in books but also in conversation, so that I had at my disposal all that science has to say on this question of life.

I was long unable to believe that it gives no other reply to life's questions than that which it actually does give. It long seemed to me, when I saw the important and serious air with which science announces its conclusions which have nothing in common with the real questions of human life, that there was something I had not understood. I long was timid before science, and it seemed to me that the lack of conformity between the answers and my questions arose not by the fault of science but from my ignorance, but the matter was for me not a game or an amusement but one of

life and death, and I was involuntarily brought to the conviction that my questions were the only legitimate ones, forming the basis of all knowledge, and that I with my questions was not to blame, but science if it pretends to reply to those questions.

My question - that which at the age of fifty brought me to the verge of suicide - was the simplest of questions, lying in the soul of every man from the foolish child to the wisest elder: it was a question without an answer to which one cannot live, as I had found by experience. It was: "What will come of what I am doing today or shall do tomorrow? What will come of my whole life?"

Differently expressed, the question is: "Why should I live, why wish for anything, or do anything?" It can also be expressed thus: "Is there any meaning in my life that the inevitable death awaiting me does not destroy?"

To this one question, variously expressed, I sought an answer in science. And I found that in relation to that question all human knowledge is divided as it were into two opposite hemispheres at the ends of which are two poles: the one a negative and the other a positive; but that neither at the one nor the other pole is there an answer to life's questions.

The one series of sciences seems not to recognize the question, but replies clearly and exactly to its own independent questions: that is the series of experimental sciences, and at the extreme end of it stands mathematics. The other series of sciences recognizes the question, but does not answer it; that is the series of abstract sciences, and at the extreme end of it stands metaphysics.

From early youth I had been interested in the abstract sciences, but later the mathematical and natural sciences

attracted me, and until I put my question definitely to myself, until that question had itself grown up within me urgently demanding a decision, I contented myself with those counterfeit answers which science gives.

Now in the experimental sphere I said to myself: "Everything develops and differentiates itself, moving towards complexity and perfection, and there are laws directing this movement. You are a part of the whole. Having learnt as far as possible the whole, and having learnt the law of evolution, you will understand also your place in the whole and will know yourself." Ashamed as I am to confess it, there was a time when I seemed satisfied with that. It was just the time when I was myself becoming more complex and was developing. My muscles were growing and strengthening, my memory was being enriched, my capacity to think and understand was increasing, I was growing and developing; and feeling this growth in myself it was natural for me to think that such was the universal law in which I should find the solution of the question of my life. But a time came when the growth within me ceased. I felt that I was not developing, but fading, my muscles were weakening, my teeth falling out, and I saw that the law not only did not explain anything to me, but that there never had been or could be such a law, and that I had taken for a law what I had found in myself at a certain period of my life. I regarded the definition of that law more strictly, and it became clear to me that there could be no law of endless development; it became clear that to say, "in infinite space and time everything develops, becomes more perfect and more complex, is differentiated", is to say nothing at all. These are all words with no meaning, for in the infinite there is neither complex nor simple, neither forward nor backward, nor better or worse.



Above all, my personal question, "What am I with my desires?" remained quite unanswered. And I understood that those sciences are very interesting and attractive, but that they are exact and clear in inverse proportion to their applicability to the question of life: the less their applicability to the question of life, the more exact and clear they are, while the more they try to reply to the question of life, the more obscure and unattractive they become. If one turns to the division of sciences which attempt to reply to the questions of life - to physiology, psychology, biology, sociology - one encounters an appalling poverty of thought, the greatest obscurity, a quite unjustifiable pretension to solve irrelevant question, and a continual contradiction of each authority by others and even by himself. If one turns to the branches of science which are not concerned with the solution of the questions of life, but which reply to their own special scientific questions, one is enraptured by the power of man's mind, but one knows in advance that they give no reply to life's questions. Those sciences simply ignore life's questions. They say: "To the question of what you are and why you live we have no reply, and are not occupied with that; but if you want to know the laws of light, of chemical combinations, the laws of development of organisms, if you want to know the laws of bodies and their form, and the relation of numbers and quantities, if you want to know the laws of your mind, to all that we have clear, exact and unquestionable replies."

In general the relation of the experimental sciences to life's question may be expressed thus: Question: "Why do I live?" Answer: "In infinite space, in infinite time, infinitely small particles change their forms in infinite complexity, and when you have understood the laws of those mutations of form you will understand why you live on the earth."

Then in the sphere of abstract science I said to myself: "All humanity lives and develops on the basis of spiritual principles and ideals which guide it. Those ideals are expressed in religions, in sciences, in arts, in forms of government. Those ideals become more and more elevated, and humanity advances to its highest welfare. I am part of humanity, and therefore my vocation is to forward the recognition and the realization of the ideals of humanity." And at the time of my weak-mindedness I was satisfied with that; but as soon as the question of life presented itself clearly to me, those theories immediately crumbled away. Not to speak of the unscrupulous obscurity with which those sciences announce conclusions formed on the study of a small part of mankind as general conclusions; not to speak of the mutual contradictions of different adherents of this view as to what are the ideals of humanity; the strangeness, not to say stupidity, of the theory consists in the fact that in order to reply to the question facing each man: "What am I?" or "Why do I live?" or "What must I do?" one has first to decide the question: "What is the life of the whole?" (which is to him unknown and of which he is acquainted with one tiny part in one minute period of time. To understand what he is, one man must first understand all this mysterious humanity, consisting of people such as himself who do not understand one another.

I have to confess that there was a time when I believed this. It was the time when I had my own favourite ideals justifying my own caprices, and I was trying to devise a theory which would allow one to consider my caprices as the law of humanity. But as soon as the question of life arose in my soul in full clearness that reply at once flew to dust. And I understood that as in the experimental sciences there are real sciences, and semi-sciences which try to give answers to questions beyond their competence, so in this sphere there is a whole series of most diffused sciences which try to reply to irrelevant questions. Semi-sciences of

that kind, the juridical and the social-historical, endeavour to solve the questions of a man's life by pretending to decide each in its own way, the question of the life of all humanity.

But as in the sphere of man's experimental knowledge one who sincerely inquires how he is to live cannot be satisfied with the reply - "Study in endless space the mutations, infinite in time and in complexity, of innumerable atoms, and then you will understand your life" - so also a sincere man cannot be satisfied with the reply: "Study the whole life of humanity of which we cannot know either the beginning or the end, of which we do not even know a small part, and then you will understand your own life." And like the experimental semi-sciences, so these other semi-sciences are the more filled with obscurities, inexactitudes, stupidities, and contradictions, the further they diverge from the real problems. The problem of experimental science is the sequence of cause and effect in material phenomena. It is only necessary for experimental science to introduce the question of a final cause for it to become nonsensical. The problem of abstract science is the recognition of the primordial essence of life. It is only necessary to introduce the investigation of consequential phenomena (such as social and historical phenomena) and it also becomes nonsensical.

Experimental science only then gives positive knowledge and displays the greatness of the human mind when it does not introduce into its investigations the question of an ultimate cause. And, on the contrary, abstract science is only then science and displays the greatness of the human mind when it puts quite aside questions relating to the consequential causes of phenomena and regards man solely in relation to an ultimate cause. Such in this realm of science - forming the pole of the sphere - is metaphysics or philosophy. That science states the question clearly: "What

am I, and what is the universe? And why do I exist, and why does the universe exist?" And since it has existed it has always replied in the same way. Whether the philosopher calls the essence of life existing within me, and in all that exists, by the name of "idea", or "substance", or "spirit", or "will", he says one and the same thing: that this essence exists and that I am of that same essence; but why it is he does not know, and does not say, if he is an exact thinker. I ask: "Why should this essence exist? What results from the fact that it is and will be?" ... And philosophy not merely does not reply, but is itself only asking that question. And if it is real philosophy all its labour lies merely in trying to put that question clearly. And if it keeps firmly to its task it cannot reply to the question otherwise than thus: "What am I, and what is the universe?" "All and nothing"; and to the question "Why?" by "I do not know".

So that however I may turn these replies of philosophy, I can never obtain anything like an answer - and not because, as in the clear experimental sphere, the reply does not relate to my question, but because here, though all the mental work is directed just to my question, there is no answer, but instead of an answer one gets the same question, only in a complex form.

## VI

In my search for answers to life's questions I experienced just what is felt by a man lost in a forest.

He reaches a glade, climbs a tree, and clearly sees the limitless distance, but sees that his home is not and cannot be there; then he goes into the dark wood and sees the darkness, but there also his home is not.

So I wandered in that wood of human knowledge, amid the gleams of mathematical and experimental science which showed me clear horizons but in a direction where there could be no home, and also amid the darkness of the abstract sciences where I was immersed in deeper gloom the further I went, and where I finally convinced myself that there was, and could be, no exit.

Yielding myself to the bright side of knowledge, I understood that I was only diverting my gaze from the question. However alluringly clear those horizons which opened out before me might be, however alluring it might be to immerse oneself in the limitless expanse of those sciences, I already understood that the clearer they were the less they met my need and the less they applied to my question.

"I know," said I to myself, "what science so persistently tries to discover, and along that road there is no reply to the question as to the meaning of my life." In the abstract sphere I understood that notwithstanding the fact, or just because of the fact, that the direct aim of science is to reply to my question, there is no reply but that which I have myself already given: "What is the meaning of my life?" "There is none." Or: "What will come of my life?" "Nothing." Or: "Why does everything exist that exists, and why do I exist?" "Because it exists."

Inquiring for one region of human knowledge, I received an innumerable quantity of exact replies concerning matters about which I had not asked: about the chemical constituents of the stars, about the movement of the sun towards the constellation Hercules, about the origin of species and of man, about the forms of infinitely minute imponderable particles of ether; but in this sphere of knowledge the only answer to my question, "What is the meaning of my life?" was: "You are what you call your 'life'; you are a transitory, casual cohesion of particles. The mutual interactions and changes of these particles produce in you what you call your "life". That cohesion will last some time; afterwards the interaction of these particles will cease and what you call "life" will cease, and so will all your questions. You are an accidentally united little lump of something, that little lump ferments. The little lump calls that fermenting its 'life'. The lump will disintegrate and there will be an end of the fermenting and of all the questions." So answers the clear side of science and cannot answer otherwise if it strictly follows its principles.

From such a reply one sees that the reply does not answer the question. I want to know the meaning of my life, but that it is a fragment of the infinite, far from giving it a meaning destroys its every possible meaning. The obscure compromises which that side of experimental exact science makes with abstract science when it says that the meaning of life consists in development and in cooperation with development, owing to their inexactness and obscurity cannot be considered as replies.

The other side of science - the abstract side - when it holds strictly to its principles, replying directly to the question, always replies, and in all ages has replied, in one and the same way: "The world is something infinite and incomprehensible part of that incomprehensible 'all'."

Again I exclude all those compromises between abstract and experimental sciences which supply the whole ballast of the semi-sciences called juridical, political, and historical. In those semi-sciences the conception of development and progress is again wrongly introduced, only with this difference, that there it was the development of everything while here it is the development of the life of mankind. The error is there as before: development and progress in infinity can have no aim or direction, and, as far as my question is concerned, no answer is given.

In truly abstract science, namely in genuine philosophy - not in that which Schopenhauer calls "professorial philosophy" which serves only to classify all existing phenomena in new philosophic categories and to call them by new names - where the philosopher does not lose sight of the essential question, the reply is always one and the same - the reply given by Socrates, Schopenhauer, Solomon, and buddha.

"We approach truth only inasmuch as we depart from life", said Socrates when preparing for death. "For what do we, who love truth, strive after in life? To free ourselves from the body, and from all the evil that is caused by the life of the body! If so, then how can we fail to be glad when death comes to us?"

"The wise man seeks death all his life and therefore death is not terrible to him."

And Schopenhauer says:

"Having recognized the inmost essence of the world as \*will\*, and all its phenomena - from the unconscious working of the obscure forces of Nature up to the completely conscious action of man - as only the objectivity of that will, we shall in no way avoid the

conclusion that together with the voluntary renunciation and self-destruction of the will all those phenomena also disappear, that constant striving and effort without aim or rest on all the stages of objectivity in which and through which the world exists; the diversity of successive forms will disappear, and together with the form all the manifestations of will, with its most universal forms, space and time, and finally its most fundamental form - subject and object. Without will there is no concept and no world. Before us, certainly, nothing remains. But what resists this transition into annihilation, our nature, is only that same wish to live - \*Wille zum Leben\* - which forms ourselves as well as our world. That we are so afraid of annihilation or, what is the same thing, that we so wish to live, merely means that we are ourselves nothing else but this desire to live, and know nothing but it. And so what remains after the complete annihilation of the will, for us who are so full of the will, is, of course, nothing; but on the other hand, for those in whom the will has turned and renounced itself, this so real world of ours with all its suns and milky way is nothing."

"Vanity of vanities", says Solomon - "vanity of vanities - all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labor which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation commeth: but the earth abideth for ever....The thing that hath been, is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there anything whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us. there is no remembrance of former things; neither shall there be any remembrance of things that are to come with those that shall come after. I the Preacher was King over Israel in Jerusalem. And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith. I have seen all



the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit....I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo, I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me over Jerusalem: yea, my heart hath great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

"I said in my heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold this also is vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth, What doeth it? I sought in my heart how to cheer my flesh with wine, and while my heart was guided by wisdom, to lay hold on folly, till I might see what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven the number of the days of their life. I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits: I made me pools of water, to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared: I got me servants and maidens, and had servants born in my house; also I had great possessions of herds and flocks above all that were before me in Jerusalem: I gathered me also silver and gold and the peculiar treasure from kings and from the provinces: I got me men singers and women singers; and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments and all that of all sorts. So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever mine eyes desired I kept not from them. I withheld not my heart from any joy....Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit from them under the sun. And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness, and folly.... But I perceived that one even

happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me, and why was I then more wise? then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity. For there is no remembrance of the wise more than of the fool for ever; seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten. And how dieth the wise man? as the fool. Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit. Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: seeing that I must leave it unto the man that shall be after me.... For what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, even in the night his heart taketh no rest. this is also vanity. Man is not blessed with security that he should eat and drink and cheer his soul from his own labour.... All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the evil; to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one event unto all; yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead. For him that is among the living there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."

So said Solomon, or whoever wrote those words. [Footnote: Tolstoy's version differs slightly in a few places from our own Authorized or Revised version. I have followed his text, for in a letter to Fet, quoted on p. 18, vol.

ii, of my "Life of Tolstoy," he says that "The Authorized English version [of Ecclesiastes] is bad." - A.M.]

And this is what the Indian wisdom tells:

Sakya Muni, a young, happy prince, from whom the existence of sickness, old age, and death had been hidden, went out to drive and saw a terrible old man, toothless and slobbering. The prince, from whom till then old age had been concealed, was amazed, and asked his driver what it was, and how that man had come to such a wretched and disgusting condition, and when he learnt that this was the common fate of all men, that the same thing inevitably awaited him - the young prince - he could not continue his drive, but gave orders to go home, that he might consider this fact. So he shut himself up alone and considered it. and he probably devised some consolation for himself, for he subsequently again went out to drive, feeling merry and happy. But this time he saw a sick man. He saw an emaciated, livid, trembling man with dim eyes. The prince, from whom sickness had been concealed, stopped and asked what this was. And when he learnt that this was sickness, to which all men are liable, and that he himself - a healthy and happy prince - might himself fall ill tomorrow, he again was in no mood to enjoy himself but gave orders to drive home, and again sought some solace, and probably found it, for he drove out a third time for pleasure. But this third time he saw another new sight: he saw men carrying something. 'What is that?' 'A dead man.' 'What does \*dead\* mean?' asked the prince. He was told that to become dead means to become like that man. The prince approached the corpse, uncovered it, and looked at it. 'What will happen to him now?' asked the prince. He was told that the corpse would be buried in the ground. 'Why?' 'Because he will certainly not return to life, and will only produce a stench and worms.' 'And is that the fate of all men? Will the same thing happen to me? Will they bury me, and shall I cause a

stench and be eaten by worms?' 'Yes.' 'Home! I shall not drive out for pleasure, and never will so drive out again!'

And Sakya Muni could find no consolation in life, and decided that life is the greatest of evils; and he devoted all the strength of his soul to free himself from it, and to free others; and to do this so that, even after death, life shall not be renewed any more but be completely destroyed at its very roots. So speaks all the wisdom of India.

These are the direct replies that human wisdom gives when it replies to life's question.

"The life of the body is an evil and a lie. Therefore the destruction of the life of the body is a blessing, and we should desire it," says Socrates.

"Life is that which should not be - an evil; and the passage into Nothingness is the only good in life," says Schopenhauer.

"All that is in the world - folly and wisdom and riches and poverty and mirth and grief - is vanity and emptiness. Man dies and nothing is left of him. And that is stupid," says Solomon.

"To life in the consciousness of the inevitability of suffering, of becoming enfeebled, of old age and of death, is impossible - we must free ourselves from life, from all possible life," says Buddha.

And what these strong minds said has been said and thought and felt by millions upon millions of people like them. And I have thought it and felt it.

So my wandering among the sciences, far from freeing me from my despair, only strengthened it. One kind of

knowledge did not reply to life's question, the other kind replied directly confirming my despair, indicating not that the result at which I had arrived was the fruit of error or of a diseased state of my mind, but on the contrary that I had thought correctly, and that my thoughts coincided with the conclusions of the most powerful of human minds.

It is no good deceiving oneself. It is all - vanity! Happy is he who has not been born: death is better than life, and one must free oneself from life.

## VII

Not finding an explanation in science I began to seek for it in life, hoping to find it among the people around me. And I began to observe how the people around me - people like myself - lived, and what their attitude was to this question which had brought me to despair.

And this is what I found among people who were in the same position as myself as regards education and manner of life.

I found that for people of my circle there were four ways out of the terrible position in which we are all placed.

The first was that of ignorance. It consists in not knowing, not understanding, that life is an evil and an absurdity. People of this sort - chiefly women, or very young or very dull people - have not yet understood that question of life which presented itself to Schopenhauer, Solomon, and Buddha. They see neither the dragon that awaits them nor the mice gnawing the shrub by which they are hanging, and they lick the drops of honey. but they lick those drops of honey only for a while: something will turn their attention to the dragon and the mice, and there will be an end to their licking. From them I had nothing to learn - one cannot cease to know what one does know.

The second way out is epicureanism. It consists, while knowing the hopelessness of life, in making use meanwhile of the advantages one has, disregarding the dragon and the mice, and licking the honey in the best way, especially if there is much of it within reach. Solomon expresses this way out thus: "Then I commended mirth, because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: and that this should accompany him in his

labour the days of his life, which God giveth him under the sun.

"Therefore eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart.... Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity...for this is thy portion in life and in thy labours which thou takest under the sun.... Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is not work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

That is the way in which the majority of people of our circle make life possible for themselves. Their circumstances furnish them with more of welfare than of hardship, and their moral dullness makes it possible for them to forget that the advantage of their position is accidental, and that not everyone can have a thousand wives and palaces like Solomon, that for everyone who has a thousand wives there are a thousand without a wife, and that for each palace there are a thousand people who have to build it in the sweat of their brows; and that the accident that has today made me a Solomon may tomorrow make me a Solomon's slave. The dullness of these people's imagination enables them to forget the things that gave Buddha no peace - the inevitability of sickness, old age, and death, which today or tomorrow will destroy all these pleasures.

So think and feel the majority of people of our day and our manner of life. The fact that some of these people declare the dullness of their thoughts and imaginations to be a philosophy, which they call Positive, does not remove them, in my opinion, from the ranks of those who, to avoid seeing the question, lick the honey. I could not imitate these people; not having their dullness of imagination I could not artificially produce it in myself. I could not tear

my eyes from the mice and the dragon, as no vital man can after he has once seen them.

The third escape is that of strength and energy. It consists in destroying life, when one has understood that it is an evil and an absurdity. A few exceptionally strong and consistent people act so. Having understood the stupidity of the joke that has been played on them, and having understood that it is better to be dead than to be alive, and that it is best of all not to exist, they act accordingly and promptly end this stupid joke, since there are means: a rope round one's neck, water, a knife to stick into one's heart, or the trains on the railways; and the number of those of our circle who act in this way becomes greater and greater, and for the most part they act so at the best time of their life, when the strength of their mind is in full bloom and few habits degrading to the mind have as yet been acquired.

I saw that this was the worthiest way of escape and I wished to adopt it.

The fourth way out is that of weakness. It consists in seeing the truth of the situation and yet clinging to life, knowing in advance that nothing can come of it. People of this kind know that death is better than life, but not having the strength to act rationally - to end the deception quickly and kill themselves - they seem to wait for something. This is the escape of weakness, for if I know what is best and it is within my power, why not yield to what is best? ... I found myself in that category.

So people of my class evade the terrible contradiction in four ways. Strain my attention as I would, I saw no way except those four. One way was not to understand that life is senseless, vanity, and an evil, and that it is better not to live. I could not help knowing this, and when I once knew it could not shut my eyes to it. the second way was to use



life such as it is without thinking of the future. And I could not do that. I, like Sakya Muni, could not ride out hunting when I knew that old age, suffering, and death exist. My imagination was too vivid. Nor could I rejoice in the momentary accidents that for an instant threw pleasure to my lot. The third way, having understood that life is evil and stupid, was to end it by killing oneself. I understood that, but somehow still did not kill myself. The fourth way was to live like Solomon and Schopenhauer - knowing that life is a stupid joke played upon us, and still to go on living, washing oneself, dressing, dining, talking, and even writing books. This was to me repulsive and tormenting, but I remained in that position.

I see now that if I did not kill myself it was due to some dim consciousness of the invalidity of my thoughts. However convincing and indubitable appeared to me the sequence of my thoughts and of those of the wise that have brought us to the admission of the senselessness of life, there remained in me a vague doubt of the justice of my conclusion.

It was like this: I, my reason, have acknowledged that life is senseless. If there is nothing higher than reason (and there is not: nothing can prove that there is), then reason is the creator of life for me. If reason did not exist there would be for me no life. How can reason deny life when it is the creator of life? Or to put it the other way: were there no life, my reason would not exist; therefore reason is life's son. Life is all. Reason is its fruit yet reason rejects life itself! I felt that there was something wrong here.

Life is a senseless evil, that is certain, said I to myself. Yet I have lived and am still living, and all mankind lived and lives. How is that? Why does it live, when it is possible not to live? Is it that only I and Schopenhauer are wise enough to understand the senselessness and evil of life?

The reasoning showing the vanity of life is not so difficult, and has long been familiar to the very simplest folk; yet they have lived and still live. How is it they all live and never think of doubting the reasonableness of life?

My knowledge, confirmed by the wisdom of the sages, has shown me that everything on earth - organic and inorganic - is all most cleverly arranged - only my own position is stupid. and those fools - the enormous masses of people - know nothing about how everything organic and inorganic in the world is arranged; but they live, and it seems to them that their life is very wisely arranged! ...

And it struck me: "But what if there is something I do not yet know? Ignorance behaves just in that way. Ignorance always says just what I am saying. When it does not know something, it says that what it does not know is stupid. Indeed, it appears that there is a whole humanity that lived and lives as if it understood the meaning of its life, for without understanding it could not live; but I say that all this life is senseless and that I cannot live.

"Nothing prevents our denying life by suicide. well then, kill yourself, and you won't discuss. If life displeases you, kill yourself! You live, and cannot understand the meaning of life - then finish it, and do not fool about in life, saying and writing that you do not understand it. You have come into good company where people are contented and know what they are doing; if you find it dull and repulsive - go away!"

Indeed, what are we who are convinced of the necessity of suicide yet do not decide to commit it, but the weakest, most inconsistent, and to put it plainly, the stupidest of men, fussing about with our own stupidity as a fool fusses about with a painted hussy? For our wisdom, however

indubitable it may be, has not given us the knowledge of the meaning of our life. But all mankind who sustain life - millions of them - do not doubt the meaning of life.

Indeed, from the most distant time of which I know anything, when life began, people have lived knowing the argument about the vanity of life which has shown me its senselessness, and yet they lived attributing some meaning to it.

From the time when any life began among men they had that meaning of life, and they led that life which has descended to me. All that is in me and around me, all, corporeal and incorporeal, is the fruit of their knowledge of life. Those very instruments of thought with which I consider this life and condemn it were all devised not be me but by them. I myself was born, taught, and brought up thanks to them. They dug out the iron, taught us to cut down the forests, tamed the cows and horses, taught us to sow corn and to live together, organized our life, and taught me to think and speak. And I, their product, fed, supplied with drink, taught by them, thinking with their thoughts and words, have argued that they are an absurdity! "There is something wrong," said I to myself. "I have blundered somewhere." But it was a long time before I could find out where the mistake was.

## VIII

All these doubts, which I am now able to express more or less systematically, I could not then have expressed. I then only felt that however logically inevitable were my conclusions concerning the vanity of life, confirmed as they were by the greatest thinkers, there was something not right about them. Whether it was in the reasoning itself or in the statement of the question I did not know - I only felt that the conclusion was rationally convincing, but that that was insufficient. All these conclusions could not so convince me as to make me do what followed from my reasoning, that is to say, kill myself. And I should have told an untruth had I, without killing myself, said that reason had brought me to the point I had reached. Reason worked, but something else was also working which I can only call a consciousness of life. A force was working which compelled me to turn my attention to this and not to that; and it was this force which extricated me from my desperate situation and turned my mind in quite another direction. This force compelled me to turn my attention to the fact that I and a few hundred similar people are not the whole of mankind, and that I did not yet know the life of mankind.

Looking at the narrow circle of my equals, I saw only people who had not understood the question, or who had understood it and drowned it in life's intoxication, or had understood it and ended their lives, or had understood it and yet from weakness were living out their desperate life. And I saw no others. It seemed to me that that narrow circle of rich, learned, and leisured people to which I belonged formed the whole of humanity, and that those milliards of others who have lived and are living were cattle of some sort - not real people.

Strange, incredibly incomprehensible as it now seems to me that I could, while reasoning about life, overlook the whole life of mankind that surrounded me on all sides; that I could to such a degree blunder so absurdly as to think that my life, and Solomon's and Schopenhauer's, is the real, normal life, and that the life of the milliards is a circumstance undeserving of attention - strange as this now is to me, I see that so it was. In the delusion of my pride of intellect it seemed to me so indubitable that I and Solomon and Schopenhauer had stated the question so truly and exactly that nothing else was possible - so indubitable did it seem that all those milliards consisted of men who had not yet arrived at an apprehension of all the profundity of the question - that I sought for the meaning of my life without it once occurring to me to ask: "But what meaning is and has been given to their lives by all the milliards of common folk who live and have lived in the world?"

I long lived in this state of lunacy, which, in fact if not in words, is particularly characteristic of us very liberal and learned people. But thanks either to the strange physical affection I have for the real labouring people, which compelled me to understand them and to see that they are not so stupid as we suppose, or thanks to the sincerity of my conviction that I could know nothing beyond the fact that the best I could do was to hang myself, at any rate I instinctively felt that if I wished to live and understand the meaning of life, I must seek this meaning not among those who have lost it and wish to kill themselves, but among those milliards of the past and the present who make life and who support the burden of their own lives and of ours also. And I considered the enormous masses of those simple, unlearned, and poor people who have lived and are living and I saw something quite different. I saw that, with rare exceptions, all those milliards who have lived and are living do not fit into my divisions, and that I could not class them as not understanding the question, for they themselves

state it and reply to it with extraordinary clearness. Nor could I consider them epicureans, for their life consists more of privations and sufferings than of enjoyments. Still less could I consider them as irrationally dragging on a meaningless existence, for every act of their life, as well as death itself, is explained by them. To kill themselves they consider the greatest evil. It appeared that all mankind had a knowledge, unacknowledged and despised by me, of the meaning of life. It appeared that reasonable knowledge does not give the meaning of life, but excludes life: while the meaning attributed to life by millions of people, by all humanity, rests on some despised pseudo-knowledge.

Rational knowledge presented by the learned and wise, denies the meaning of life, but the enormous masses of men, the whole of mankind receive that meaning in irrational knowledge. And that irrational knowledge is faith, that very thing which I could not but reject. It is God, One in Three; the creation in six days; the devils and angels, and all the rest that I cannot accept as long as I retain my reason.

My position was terrible. I knew I could find nothing along the path of reasonable knowledge except a denial of life; and there - in faith - was nothing but a denial of reason, which was yet more impossible for me than a denial of life. From rational knowledge it appeared that life is an evil, people know this and it is in their power to end life; yet they lived and still live, and I myself live, though I have long known that life is senseless and an evil. By faith it appears that in order to understand the meaning of life I must renounce my reason, the very thing for which alone a meaning is required.

## IX

A contradiction arose from which there were two exits. Either that which I called reason was not so rational as I supposed, or that which seemed to me irrational was not so irrational as I supposed. And I began to verify the line of argument of my rational knowledge.

Verifying the line of argument of rational knowledge I found it quite correct. The conclusion that life is nothing was inevitable; but I noticed a mistake. The mistake lay in this, that my reasoning was not in accord with the question I had put. The question was: "Why should I live, that is to say, what real, permanent result will come out of my illusory transitory life - what meaning has my finite existence in this infinite world?" And to reply to that question I had studied life.

The solution of all the possible questions of life could evidently not satisfy me, for my question, simple as it at first appeared, included a demand for an explanation of the finite in terms of the infinite, and vice versa.

I asked: "What is the meaning of my life, beyond time, cause, and space?" And I replied to quite another question: "What is the meaning of my life within time, cause, and space?" With the result that, after long efforts of thought, the answer I reached was: "None."

In my reasonings I constantly compared (nor could I do otherwise) the finite with the finite, and the infinite with the infinite; but for that reason I reached the inevitable result: force is force, matter is matter, will is will, the infinite is the infinite, nothing is nothing - and that was all that could result.

It was something like what happens in mathematics, when thinking to solve an equation, we find we are working on an identity. the line of reasoning is correct, but results in the answer that a equals a, or x equals x, or o equals o. the same thing happened with my reasoning in relation to the question of the meaning of my life. The replies given by all science to that question only result in - identity.

And really, strictly scientific knowledge - that knowledge which begins, as Descartes's did, with complete doubt about everything - rejects all knowledge admitted on faith and builds everything afresh on the laws of reason and experience, and cannot give any other reply to the question of life than that which I obtained: an indefinite reply. Only at first had it seemed to me that knowledge had given a positive reply - the reply of Schopenhauer: that life has no meaning and is an evil. But on examining the matter I understood that the reply is not positive, it was only my feeling that so expressed it. Strictly expressed, as it is by the Brahmins and by Solomon and Schopenhauer, the reply is merely indefinite, or an identity: o equals o, life is nothing. So that philosophic knowledge denies nothing, but only replies that the question cannot be solved by it - that for it the solution remains indefinite.

Having understood this, I understood that it was not possible to seek in rational knowledge for a reply to my question, and that the reply given by rational knowledge is a mere indication that a reply can only be obtained by a different statement of the question and only when the relation of the finite to the infinite is included in the question. And I understood that, however irrational and distorted might be the replies given by faith, they have this advantage, that they introduce into every answer a relation between the finite and the infinite, without which there can be no solution.



In whatever way I stated the question, that relation appeared in the answer. How am I to live? - According to the law of God. What real result will come of my life? - Eternal torment or eternal bliss. What meaning has life that death does not destroy? - Union with the eternal God: heaven.

So that besides rational knowledge, which had seemed to me the only knowledge, I was inevitably brought to acknowledge that all live humanity has another irrational knowledge - faith which makes it possible to live. Faith still remained to me as irrational as it was before, but I could not but admit that it alone gives mankind a reply to the questions of life, and that consequently it makes life possible. Reasonable knowledge had brought me to acknowledge that life is senseless - my life had come to a halt and I wished to destroy myself. Looking around on the whole of mankind I saw that people live and declare that they know the meaning of life. I looked at myself - I had lived as long as I knew a meaning of life and had made life possible.

Looking again at people of other lands, at my contemporaries and at their predecessors, I saw the same thing. Where there is life, there since man began faith has made life possible for him, and the chief outline of that faith is everywhere and always identical.

Whatever the faith may be, and whatever answers it may give, and to whomsoever it gives them, every such answer gives to the finite existence of man an infinite meaning, a meaning not destroyed by sufferings, deprivations, or death. This means that only in faith can we find for life a meaning and a possibility. What, then, is this faith? And I understood that faith is not merely "the evidence of things not seen", etc., and is not a revelation (that defines only one of the indications of faith, is not the relation of man to God

(one has first to define faith and then God, and not define faith through God); it not only agreement with what has been told one (as faith is most usually supposed to be), but faith is a knowledge of the meaning of human life in consequence of which man does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the strength of life. If a man lives he believes in something. If he did not believe that one must live for something, he would not live. If he does not see and recognize the illusory nature of the finite, he believes in the finite; if he understands the illusory nature of the finite, he must believe in the infinite. Without faith he cannot live.

And I recalled the whole course of my mental labour and was horrified. It was now clear to me that for man to be able to live he must either not see the infinite, or have such an explanation of the meaning of life as will connect the finite with the infinite. Such an explanation I had had; but as long as I believed in the finite I did not need the explanation, and I began to verify it by reason. And in the light of reason the whole of my former explanation flew to atoms. But a time came when I ceased to believe in the finite. And then I began to build up on rational foundations, out of what I knew, an explanation which would give a meaning to life; but nothing could I build. Together with the best human intellects I reached the result that  $0 = 0$ , and was much astonished at that conclusion, though nothing else could have resulted.

What was I doing when I sought an answer in the experimental sciences? I wished to know why I live, and for this purpose studied all that is outside me. Evidently I might learn much, but nothing of what I needed.

What was I doing when I sought an answer in philosophical knowledge? I was studying the thoughts of those who had found themselves in the same position as I, lacking a reply to the question "why do I live?" Evidently I could learn

nothing but what I knew myself, namely that nothing can be known.

What am I? - A part of the infinite. In those few words lies the whole problem.

Is it possible that humanity has only put that question to itself since yesterday? And can no one before me have set himself that question - a question so simple, and one that springs to the tongue of every wise child?

Surely that question has been asked since man began; and naturally for the solution of that question since man began it has been equally insufficient to compare the finite with the finite and the infinite with the infinite, and since man began the relation of the finite to the infinite has been sought out and expressed.

All these conceptions in which the finite has been adjusted to the infinite and a meaning found for life - the conception of God, of will, of goodness - we submit to logical examination. And all those conceptions fail to stand reason's criticism.

Were it not so terrible it would be ludicrous with what pride and self-satisfaction we, like children, pull the watch to pieces, take out the spring, make a toy of it, and are then surprised that the watch does not go.

A solution of the contradiction between the finite and the infinite, and such a reply to the question of life as will make it possible to live, is necessary and precious. And that is the only solution which we find everywhere, always, and among all peoples: a solution descending from times in which we lose sight of the life of man, a solution so difficult that we can compose nothing like it - and this solution we light-heartedly destroy in order again to set the

same question, which is natural to everyone and to which we have no answer.

The conception of an infinite god, the divinity of the soul, the connexion of human affairs with God, the unity and existence of the soul, man's conception of moral goodness and evil - are conceptions formulated in the hidden infinity of human thought, they are those conceptions without which neither life nor I should exist; yet rejecting all that labour of the whole of humanity, I wished to remake it afresh myself and in my own manner.

I did not then think like that, but the germs of these thoughts were already in me. I understood, in the first place, that my position with Schopenhauer and Solomon, notwithstanding our wisdom, was stupid: we see that life is an evil and yet continue to live. That is evidently stupid, for if life is senseless and I am so fond of what is reasonable, it should be destroyed, and then there would be no one to challenge it. Secondly, I understood that all one's reasonings turned in a vicious circle like a wheel out of gear with its pinion. However much and however well we may reason we cannot obtain a reply to the question; and o will always equal o, and therefore our path is probably erroneous. Thirdly, I began to understand that in the replies given by faith is stored up the deepest human wisdom and that I had no right to deny them on the ground of reason, and that those answers are the only ones which reply to life's question.

## X

I understood this, but it made matters no better for me. I was now ready to accept any faith if only it did not demand of me a direct denial of reason - which would be a falsehood. And I studied Buddhism and Mohammedanism from books, and most of all I studied Christianity both from books and from the people around me.

Naturally I first of all turned to the orthodox of my circle, to people who were learned: to Church theologians, monks, to theologians of the newest shade, and even to Evangelicals who profess salvation by belief in the Redemption. And I seized on these believers and questioned them as to their beliefs and their understanding of the meaning of life.

But though I made all possible concessions, and avoided all disputes, I could not accept the faith of these people. I saw that what they gave out as their faith did not explain the meaning of life but obscured it, and that they themselves affirm their belief not to answer that question of life which brought me to faith, but for some other aims alien to me.

I remember the painful feeling of fear of being thrown back into my former state of despair, after the hope I often and often experienced in my intercourse with these people.

The more fully they explained to me their doctrines, the more clearly did I perceive their error and realized that my hope of finding in their belief an explanation of the meaning of life was vain.

It was not that in their doctrines they mixed many unnecessary and unreasonable things with the Christian truths that had always been near to me: that was not what repelled me. I was repelled by the fact that these people's

lives were like my own, with only this difference - that such a life did not correspond to the principles they expounded in their teachings. I clearly felt that they deceived themselves and that they, like myself found no other meaning in life than to live while life lasts, taking all one's hands can seize. I saw this because if they had had a meaning which destroyed the fear of loss, suffering, and death, they would not have feared these things. But they, these believers of our circle, just like myself, living in sufficiency and superfluity, tried to increase or preserve them, feared privations, suffering, and death, and just like myself and all of us unbelievers, lived to satisfy their desires, and lived just as badly, if not worse, than the unbelievers.

No arguments could convince me of the truth of their faith. Only deeds which showed that they saw a meaning in life making what was so dreadful to me - poverty, sickness, and death - not dreadful to them, could convince me. And such deeds I did not see among the various believers in our circle. On the contrary, I saw such deeds done [Footnote: this passage is noteworthy as being one of the few references made by Tolstoy at this period to the revolutionary or "Back-to-the-People" movement, in which many young men and women were risking and sacrificing home, property, and life itself from motives which had much in common with his own perception that the upper layers of Society are parasitic and prey on the vitals of the people who support them. - A.M.] by people of our circle who were the most unbelieving, but never by our so-called believers.

And I understood that the belief of these people was not the faith I sought, and that their faith is not a real faith but an epicurean consolation in life.

I understood that that faith may perhaps serve, if not for a consolation at least for some distraction for a repentant Solomon on his death-bed, but it cannot serve for the great majority of mankind, who are called on not to amuse themselves while consuming the labour of others but to create life.

For all humanity to be able to live, and continue to live attributing a meaning to life, they, those milliards, must have a different, a real, knowledge of faith. Indeed, it was not the fact that we, with Solomon and Schopenhauer, did not kill ourselves that convinced me of the existence of faith, but the fact that those milliards of people have lived and are living, and have borne Solomon and us on the current of their lives.

And I began to draw near to the believers among the poor, simple, unlettered folk: pilgrims, monks, sectarians, and peasants. The faith of these common people was the same Christian faith as was professed by the pseudo-believers of our circle. Among them, too, I found a great deal of superstition mixed with the Christian truths; but the difference was that the superstitions of the believers of our circle were quite unnecessary to them and were not in conformity with their lives, being merely a kind of epicurean diversion; but the superstitions of the believers among the labouring masses conformed so with their lives that it was impossible to imagine them to oneself without those superstitions, which were a necessary condition of their life. the whole life of believers in our circle was a contradiction of their faith, but the whole life of the working-folk believers was a confirmation of the meaning of life which their faith gave them. And I began to look well into the life and faith of these people, and the more I considered it the more I became convinced that they have a real faith which is a necessity to them and alone gives their life a meaning and makes it possible for them to live. In

contrast with what I had seen in our circle - where life without faith is possible and where hardly one in a thousand acknowledges himself to be a believer - among them there is hardly one unbeliever in a thousand. In contrast with what I had seen in our circle, where the whole of life is passed in idleness, amusement, and dissatisfaction, I saw that the whole life of these people was passed in heavy labour, and that they were content with life. In contradistinction to the way in which people of our circle oppose fate and complain of it on account of deprivations and sufferings, these people accepted illness and sorrow without any perplexity or opposition, and with a quiet and firm conviction that all is good. In contradistinction to us, who the wiser we are the less we understand the meaning of life, and see some evil irony in the fact that we suffer and die, these folk live and suffer, and they approach death and suffering with tranquillity and in most cases gladly. In contrast to the fact that a tranquil death, a death without horror and despair, is a very rare exception in our circle, a troubled, rebellious, and unhappy death is the rarest exception among the people. and such people, lacking all that for us and for Solomon is the only good of life and yet experiencing the greatest happiness, are a great multitude. I looked more widely around me. I considered the life of the enormous mass of the people in the past and the present. And of such people, understanding the meaning of life and able to live and to die, I saw not two or three, or tens, but hundreds, thousands, and millions. and they all - endlessly different in their manners, minds, education, and position, as they were - all alike, in complete contrast to my ignorance, knew the meaning of life and death, laboured quietly, endured deprivations and sufferings, and lived and died seeing therein not vanity but good.

And I learnt to love these people. The more I came to know their life, the life of those who are living and of others who are dead of whom I read and heard, the more I loved them



and the easier it became for me to live. So I went on for about two years, and a change took place in me which had long been preparing and the promise of which had always been in me. It came about that the life of our circle, the rich and learned, not merely became distasteful to me, but lost all meaning in my eyes. All our actions, discussions, science and art, presented itself to me in a new light. I understood that it is all merely self-indulgence, and the to find a meaning in it is impossible; while the life of the whole labouring people, the whole of mankind who produce life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that \*that\* is life itself, and that the meaning given to that life is true: and I accepted it.

## XI

And remembering how those very beliefs had repelled me and had seemed meaningless when professed by people whose lives conflicted with them, and how these same beliefs attracted me and seemed reasonable when I saw that people lived in accord with them, I understood why I had then rejected those beliefs and found them meaningless, yet now accepted them and found them full of meaning. I understood that I had erred, and why I erred. I had erred not so much because I thought incorrectly as because I lived badly. I understood that it was not an error in my thought that had hid truth from me as much as my life itself in the exceptional conditions of epicurean gratification of desires in which I passed it. I understood that my question as to what my life is, and the answer - and evil - was quite correct. The only mistake was that the answer referred only to my life, while I had referred it to life in general. I asked myself what my life is, and got the reply: An evil and an absurdity. and really my life - a life of indulgence of desires - was senseless and evil, and therefore the reply, "Life is evil and an absurdity", referred only to my life, but not to human life in general. I understood the truth which I afterwards found in the Gospels, "that men loved darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For everyone that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved." I perceived that to understand the meaning of life it is necessary first that life should not be meaningless and evil, then we can apply reason to explain it. I understood why I had so long wandered round so evident a truth, and that if one is to think and speak of the life of mankind, one must think and speak of that life and not of the life of some of life's parasites. That truth was always as true as that two and two are four, but I had not acknowledged it, because on admitting two and two to be four I had also to admit that I was bad; and to feel myself to be good was for me more

important and necessary than for two and two to be four. I came to love good people, hated myself, and confessed the truth. Now all became clear to me.

What if an executioner passing his whole life in torturing people and cutting off their heads, or a hopeless drunkard, or a madman settled for life in a dark room which he has fouled and imagines that he would perish if he left - what if he asked himself: "What is life?" Evidently he could not other reply to that question than that life is the greatest evil, and the madman's answer would be perfectly correct, but only as applied to himself. What if I am such a madman? What if all we rich and leisured people are such madmen? and I understood that we really are such madmen. I at any rate was certainly such.

And indeed a bird is so made that it must fly, collect food, and build a nest, and when I see that a bird does this I have pleasure in its joy. A goat, a hare, and a wolf are so made that they must feed themselves, and must breed and feed their family, and when they do so I feel firmly assured that they are happy and that their life is a reasonable one. then what should a man do? He too should produce his living as the animals do, but with this difference, that he will perish if he does it alone; he must obtain it not for himself but for all. And when he does that, I have a firm assurance that he is happy and that his life is reasonable. But what had I done during the whole thirty years of my responsible life? Far from producing sustenance for all, I did not even produce it for myself. I lived as a parasite, and on asking myself, what is the use of my life? I got the reply: "No use." If the meaning of human life lies in supporting it, how could I - who for thirty years had been engaged not on supporting life but on destroying it in myself and in others - how could I obtain any other answer than that my life was senseless and an evil? ... It was both senseless and evil.

The life of the world endures by someone's will - by the life of the whole world and by our lives someone fulfills his purpose. To hope to understand the meaning of that will one must first perform it by doing what is wanted of us. But if I will not do what is wanted of me, I shall never understand what is wanted of me, and still less what is wanted of us all and of the whole world.

If a naked, hungry beggar has been taken from the cross-roads, brought into a building belonging to a beautiful establishment, fed, supplied with drink, and obliged to move a handle up and down, evidently, before discussing why he was taken, why he should move the handle, and whether the whole establishment is reasonably arranged - the beggar should first of all move the handle. If he moves the handle he will understand that it works a pump, that the pump draws water and that the water irrigates the garden beds; then he will be taken from the pumping station to another place where he will gather fruits and will enter into the joy of his master, and, passing from lower to higher work, will understand more and more of the arrangements of the establishment, and taking part in it will never think of asking why he is there, and will certainly not reproach the master.

So those who do his will, the simple, unlearned working folk, whom we regard as cattle, do not reproach the master; but we, the wise, eat the master's food but do not do what the master wishes, and instead of doing it sit in a circle and discuss: "Why should that handle be moved? Isn't it stupid?" So we have decided. We have decided that the master is stupid, or does not exist, and that we are wise, only we feel that we are quite useless and that we must somehow do away with ourselves.

## XII

The consciousness of the error in reasonable knowledge helped me to free myself from the temptation of idle ratiocination. the conviction that knowledge of truth can only be found by living led me to doubt the rightness of my life; but I was saved only by the fact that I was able to tear myself from my exclusiveness and to see the real life of the plain working people, and to understand that it alone is real life. I understood that if I wish to understand life and its meaning, I must not live the life of a parasite, but must live a real life, and - taking the meaning given to live by real humanity and merging myself in that life - verify it.

During that time this is what happened to me. During that whole year, when I was asking myself almost every moment whether I should not end matters with a noose or a bullet - all that time, together with the course of thought and observation about which I have spoken, my heart was oppressed with a painful feeling, which I can only describe as a search for God.

I say that that search for God was not reasoning, but a feeling, because that search proceeded not from the course of my thoughts - it was even directly contrary to them - but proceeded from the heart. It was a feeling of fear, orphanage, isolation in a strange land, and a hope of help from someone.

Though I was quite convinced of the impossibility of proving the existence of a Deity (Kant had shown, and I quite understood him, that it could not be proved), I yet sought for god, hoped that I should find Him, and from old habit addressed prayers to that which I sought but had not found. I went over in my mind the arguments of Kant and Schopenhauer showing the impossibility of proving the existence of a God, and I began to verify those arguments

and to refute them. Cause, said I to myself, is not a category of thought such as are Time and Space. If I exist, there must be some cause for it, and a cause of causes. And that first cause of all is what men have called "God". And I paused on that thought, and tried with all my being to recognize the presence of that cause. And as soon as I acknowledged that there is a force in whose power I am, I at once felt that I could live. But I asked myself: What is that cause, that force? How am I to think of it? What are my relations to that which I call "God"? And only the familiar replies occurred to me: "He is the Creator and Preserver." This reply did not satisfy me, and I felt I was losing within me what I needed for my life. I became terrified and began to pray to Him whom I sought, that He should help me. But the more I prayed the more apparent it became to me that He did not hear me, and that there was no one to whom to address myself. And with despair in my heart that there is no God at all, I said: "Lord, have mercy, save me! Lord, teach me!" But no one had mercy on me, and I felt that my life was coming to a standstill.

But again and again, from various sides, I returned to the same conclusion that I could not have come into the world without any cause or reason or meaning; I could not be such a fledgling fallen from its nest as I felt myself to be. Or, granting that I be such, lying on my back crying in the high grass, even then I cry because I know that a mother has borne me within her, has hatched me, warmed me, fed me, and loved me. Where is she - that mother? If I have been deserted, who has deserted me? I cannot hide from myself that someone bored me, loving me. Who was that someone? Again "God"? He knows and sees my searching, my despair, and my struggle."

"He exists," said I to myself. And I had only for an instant to admit that, and at once life rose within me, and I felt the possibility and joy of being. But again, from the admission

of the existence of a God I went on to seek my relation with Him; and again I imagined \*that\* God - our Creator in Three Persons who sent His Son, the Saviour - and again \*that\* God, detached from the world and from me, melted like a block of ice, melted before my eyes, and again nothing remained, and again the spring of life dried up within me, and I despaired and felt that I had nothing to do but to kill myself. And the worst of all was, that I felt I could not do it.

Not twice or three times, but tens and hundreds of times, I reached those conditions, first of joy and animation, and then of despair and consciousness of the impossibility of living.

I remember that it was in early spring: I was alone in the wood listening to its sounds. I listened and thought ever of the same thing, as I had constantly done during those last three years. I was again seeking God.

"Very well, there is no God," said I to myself; "there is no one who is not my imagination but a reality like my whole life. He does not exist, and no miracles can prove His existence, because the miracles would be my imagination, besides being irrational.

"But my \*perception\* of God, of Him whom I seek," I asked myself, "where has that perception come from?" And again at this thought the glad waves of life rose within me. All that was around me came to life and received a meaning. But my joy did not last long. My mind continued its work.

"The conception of God is not God," said I to myself. "The conception is what takes place within me. The conception of God is something I can evoke or can refrain from evoking in myself. That is not what I seek. I seek that

without which there can be no life." And again all around me and within me began to die, and again I wished to kill myself.

But then I turned my gaze upon myself, on what went on within me, and I remembered all those cessations of life and reanimations that recurred within me hundreds of times. I remembered that I only lived at those times when I believed in God. As it was before, so it was now; I need only be aware of God to live; I need only forget Him, or disbelieve Him, and I died.

What is this animation and dying? I do not live when I lose belief in the existence of God. I should long ago have killed myself had I not had a dim hope of finding Him. I live, really live, only when I feel Him and seek Him. "What more do you seek?" exclaimed a voice within me. "This is He. He is that without which one cannot live. To know God and to live is one and the same thing. God is life."

"Live seeking God, and then you will not live without God." And more than ever before, all within me and around me lit up, and the light did not again abandon me.

And I was saved from suicide. When and how this change occurred I could not say. As imperceptibly and gradually the force of life in me had been destroyed and I had reached the impossibility of living, a cessation of life and the necessity of suicide, so imperceptibly and gradually did that force of life return to me. And strange to say the strength of life which returned to me was not new, but quite old - the same that had borne me along in my earliest days.

I quite returned to what belonged to my earliest childhood and youth. I returned to the belief in that Will which produced me and desires something of me. I returned to the belief that the chief and only aim of my life is to be better,



i.e. to live in accord with that Will. and I returned to the belief that I can find the expression of that Will in what humanity, in the distant past hidden from, has produced for its guidance: that is to say, I returned to a belief in God, in moral perfection, and in a tradition transmitting the meaning of life. There was only this difference, that then all this was accepted unconsciously, while now I knew that without it I could not live.

What happened to me was something like this: I was put into a boat (I do not remember when) and pushed off from an unknown shore, shown the direction of the opposite shore, had oars put into my unpractised hands, and was left alone. I rowed as best I could and moved forward; but the further I advanced towards the middle of the stream the more rapid grew the current bearing me away from my goal and the more frequently did I encounter others, like myself, borne away by the stream. There were a few rowers who continued to row, there were others who had abandoned their oars; there were large boats and immense vessels full of people. Some struggled against the current, others yielded to it. And the further I went the more, seeing the progress down the current of all those who were adrift, I forgot the direction given me. In the very centre of the stream, amid the crowd of boats and vessels which were being borne down stream, I quite lost my direction and abandoned my oars. Around me on all sides, with mirth and rejoicing, people with sails and oars were borne down the stream, assuring me and each other that no other direction was possible. And I believed them and floated with them. And I was carried far; so far that I heard the roar of the rapids in which I must be shattered, and I saw boats shattered in them. And I recollected myself. I was long unable to understand what had happened to me. I saw before me nothing but destruction, towards which I was rushing and which I feared. I saw no safety anywhere and did not know what to do; but, looking back, I perceived

innumerable boats which unceasingly and strenuously pushed across the stream, and I remembered about the shore, the oars, and the direction, and began to pull back upwards against the stream and towards the shore.

That shore was God; that direction was tradition; the oars were the freedom given me to pull for the shore and unite with God. And so the force of life was renewed in me and I again began to live.

### XIII

I turned from the life of our circle, acknowledging that ours is not life but a simulation of life - that the conditions of superfluity in which we live deprive us of the possibility of understanding life, and that in order to understand life I must understand not an exceptional life such as ours who are parasites on life, but the life of the simple labouring folk - those who make life - and the meaning which they attribute to it. The simplest labouring people around me were the Russian people, and I turned to them and to the meaning of life which they give. That meaning, if one can put it into words, was as follows: Every man has come into this world by the will of God. And God has so made man that every man can destroy his soul or save it. The aim of man in life is to save his soul, and to save his soul he must live "godly" and to live "godly" he must renounce all the pleasures of life, must labour, humble himself, suffer, and be merciful. That meaning the people obtain from the whole teaching of faith transmitted to them by their pastors and by the traditions that live among the people. This meaning was clear to me and near to my heart. But together with this meaning of the popular faith of our non-sectarian folk, among whom I live, much was inseparably bound up that revolted me and seemed to me inexplicable: sacraments, Church services, fasts, and the adoration of relics and icons. The people cannot separate the one from the other, nor could I. And strange as much of what entered into the faith of these people was to me, I accepted everything, and attended the services, knelt morning and evening in prayer, fasted, and prepared to receive the Eucharist: and at first my reason did not resist anything. The very things that had formerly seemed to me impossible did not now evoke in me any opposition.

My relations to faith before and after were quite different. Formerly life itself seemed to me full of meaning and faith

presented itself as the arbitrary assertion of propositions to me quite unnecessary, unreasonable, and disconnected from life. I then asked myself what meaning those propositions had and, convinced that they had none, I rejected them. Now on the contrary I knew firmly that my life otherwise has, and can have, no meaning, and the articles of faith were far from presenting themselves to me as unnecessary - on the contrary I had been led by indubitable experience to the conviction that only these propositions presented by faith give life a meaning. formerly I looked on them as on some quite unnecessary gibberish, but now, if I did not understand them, I yet knew that they had a meaning, and I said to myself that I must learn to understand them.

I argued as follows, telling myself that the knowledge of faith flows, like all humanity with its reason, from a mysterious source. That source is God, the origin both of the human body and the human reason. As my body has descended to me from God, so also has my reason and my understanding of life, and consequently the various stages of the development of that understanding of life cannot be false. All that people sincerely believe in must be true; it may be differently expressed but it cannot be a lie, and therefore if it presents itself to me as a lie, that only means that I have not understood it. Furthermore I said to myself, the essence of every faith consists in its giving life a meaning which death does not destroy. Naturally for a faith to be able to reply to the questions of a king dying in luxury, of an old slave tormented by overwork, of an unreasoning child, of a wise old man, of a half-witted old woman, of a young and happy wife, of a youth tormented by passions, of all people in the most varied conditions of life and education - if there is one reply to the one eternal question of life: "Why do I live and what will result from my life?" - the reply, though one in its essence, must be endlessly varied in its presentation; and the more it is one,

the more true and profound it is, the more strange and deformed must it naturally appear in its attempted expression, conformably to the education and position of each person. But this argument, justifying in my eyes the queerness of much on the ritual side of religion, did not suffice to allow me in the one great affair of life - religion - to do things which seemed to me questionable. With all my soul I wished to be in a position to mingle with the people, fulfilling the ritual side of their religion; but I could not do it. I felt that I should lie to myself and mock at what was sacred to me, were I to do so. At this point, however, our new Russian theological writers came to my rescue.

According to the explanation these theologians gave, the fundamental dogma of our faith is the infallibility of the Church. From the admission of that dogma follows inevitably the truth of all that is professed by the Church. The Church as an assembly of true believers united by love and therefore possessed of true knowledge became the basis of my belief. I told myself that divine truth cannot be accessible to a separate individual; it is revealed only to the whole assembly of people united by love. To attain truth one must not separate, and in order not to separate one must love and must endure things one may not agree with.

Truth reveals itself to love, and if you do not submit to the rites of the Church you transgress against love; and by transgressing against love you deprive yourself of the possibility of recognizing the truth. I did not then see the sophistry contained in this argument. I did not see that union in love may give the greatest love, but certainly cannot give us divine truth expressed in the definite words of the Nicene Creed. I also did not perceive that love cannot make a certain expression of truth an obligatory condition of union. I did not then see these mistakes in the argument and thanks to it was able to accept and perform all the rites of the Orthodox Church without understanding

most of them. I then tried with all strength of my soul to avoid all arguments and contradictions, and tried to explain as reasonably as possible the Church statements I encountered.

When fulfilling the rites of the Church I humbled my reason and submitted to the tradition possessed by all humanity. I united myself with my forefathers: the father, mother, and grandparents I loved. They and all my predecessors believed and lived, and they produced me. I united myself also with the missions of the common people whom I respected. Moreover, those actions had nothing bad in themselves ("bad" I considered the indulgence of one's desires). When rising early for Church services I knew I was doing well, if only because I was sacrificing my bodily ease to humble my mental pride, for the sake of union with my ancestors and contemporaries, and for the sake of finding the meaning of life. It was the same with my preparations to receive Communion, and with the daily reading of prayers with genuflections, and also with the observance of all the fasts. However insignificant these sacrifices might be I made them for the sake of something good. I fasted, prepared for Communion, and observed the fixed hours of prayer at home and in church. During Church service I attended to every word, and gave them a meaning whenever I could. In the Mass the most important words for me were: "Let us love one another in conformity!" The further words, "In unity we believe in the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost", I passed by, because I could not understand them.

## XIV

In was then so necessary for me to believe in order to live that I unconsciously concealed from myself the contradictions and obscurities of theology. but this reading of meanings into the rites had its limits. If the chief words in the prayer for the Emperor became more and more clear to me, if I found some explanation for the words "and remembering our Sovereign Most-Holy Mother of God and all the Saints, ourselves and one another, we give our whole life to Christ our God", if I explained to myself the frequent repetition of prayers for the Tsar and his relations by the fact that they are more exposed to temptations than other people and therefore are more in need of being prayed for - the prayers about subduing our enemies and evil under our feet (even if one tried to say that \*sin\* was the enemy prayed against), these and other prayers, such as the "cherubic song" and the whole sacrament of oblation, or "the chosen Warriors", etc. - quite two- thirds of all the services - either remained completely incomprehensible or, when I forced an explanation into them, made me feel that I was lying, thereby quite destroying my relation to God and depriving me of all possibility of belief.

I felt the same about the celebration of the chief holidays. To remember the Sabbath, that is to devote one day to God, was something I could understand. But the chief holiday was in commemoration of the Resurrection, the reality of which I could not picture to myself or understand. And that name of "Resurrection" was also given the weekly holiday. [Footnote: In Russia Sunday was called Resurrection-day. - A. M.] And on those days the Sacrament of the Eucharist was administered, which was quite unintelligible to me. The rest of the twelve great holidays, except Christmas, commemorated miracles - the things I tried not to think about in order not to deny: the Ascension, Pentecost, Epiphany, the Feast of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin,

etc. At the celebration of these holidays, feeling that importance was being attributed to the very things that to me presented a negative importance, I either devised tranquillizing explanations or shut my eyes in order not to see what tempted me.

Most of all this happened to me when taking part in the most usual Sacraments, which are considered the most important: baptism and communion. There I encountered not incomprehensible but fully comprehensible doings: doings which seemed to me to lead into temptation, and I was in a dilemma - whether to lie or to reject them.

Never shall I forge the painful feeling I experienced the day I received the Eucharist for the first time after many years. The service, confession, and prayers were quite intelligible and produced in me a glad consciousness that the meaning of life was being revealed to me. The Communion itself I explained as an act performed in remembrance of Christ, and indicating a purification from sin and the full acceptance of Christ's teaching. If that explanation was artificial I did not notice its artificiality: so happy was I at humbling and abasing myself before the priest - a simple, timid country clergyman - turning all the dirt out of my soul and confessing my vices, so glad was I to merge in thought with the humility of the fathers who wrote the prayers of the office, so glad was I of union with all who have believed and now believe, that I did not notice the artificiality of my explanation. But when I approached the altar gates, and the priest made me say that I believed that what I was about to swallow was truly flesh and blood, I felt a pain in my heart: it was not merely a false note, it was a cruel demand made by someone or other who evidently had never known what faith is.

I now permit myself to say that it was a cruel demand, but I did not then think so: only it was indescribably painful to



me. I was no longer in the position in which I had been in youth when I thought all in life was clear; I had indeed come to faith because, apart from faith, I had found nothing, certainly nothing, except destruction; therefore to throw away that faith was impossible and I submitted. And I found in my soul a feeling which helped me to endure it. This was the feeling of self-abasement and humility. I humbled myself, swallowed that flesh and blood without any blasphemous feelings and with a wish to believe. But the blow had been struck and, knowing what awaited me, I could not go a second time.

I continued to fulfil the rites of the Church and still believed that the doctrine I was following contained the truth, when something happened to me which I now understand but which then seemed strange.

I was listening to the conversation of an illiterate peasant, a pilgrim, about God, faith, life, and salvation, when a knowledge of faith revealed itself to me. I drew near to the people, listening to their opinions of life and faith, and I understood the truth more and more. So also was it when I read the Lives of Holy men, which became my favourite books. Putting aside the miracles and regarding them as fables illustrating thoughts, this reading revealed to me life's meaning. There were the lives of Makarius the Great, the story of Buddha, there were the words of St. John Chrysostom, and there were the stories of the traveller in the well, the monk who found some gold, and of Peter the publican. There were stories of the martyrs, all announcing that death does not exclude life, and there were the stories of ignorant, stupid men, who knew nothing of the teaching of the Church but who yet were saved.

But as soon as I met learned believers or took up their books, doubt of myself, dissatisfaction, and exasperated disputation were roused within me, and I felt that the more

I entered into the meaning of these men's speech, the more  
I went astray from truth and approached an abyss.

## XV

How often I envied the peasants their illiteracy and lack of learning! Those statements in the creeds which to me were evident absurdities, for them contained nothing false; they could accept them and could believe in the truth - the truth I believed in. Only to me, unhappy man, was it clear that with truth falsehood was interwoven by finest threads, and that I could not accept it in that form.

So I lived for about three years. At first, when I was only slightly associated with truth as a catechumen and was only scenting out what seemed to me clearest, these encounters struck me less. When I did not understand anything, I said, "It is my fault, I am sinful"; but the more I became imbued with the truths I was learning, the more they became the basis of my life, the more oppressive and the more painful became these encounters and the sharper became the line between what I do not understand because I am not able to understand it, and what cannot be understood except by lying to oneself.

In spite of my doubts and sufferings I still clung to the Orthodox Church. But questions of life arose which had to be decided; and the decision of these questions by the Church - contrary to the very bases of the belief by which I lived - obliged me at last to renounce communion with Orthodoxy as impossible. These questions were: first the relation of the Orthodox Eastern Church to other Churches - to the Catholics and to the so-called sectarians. At that time, in consequence of my interest in religion, I came into touch with believers of various faiths: Catholics, protestants, Old-Believers, Molokans [Footnote: A sect that rejects sacraments and ritual.], and others. And I met among them many men of lofty morals who were truly religious. I wished to be a brother to them. And what happened? That teaching which promised to unite all in one

faith and love - that very teaching, in the person of its best representatives, told me that these men were all living a lie; that what gave them their power of life was a temptation of the devil; and that we alone possess the only possible truth. And I saw that all who do not profess an identical faith with themselves are considered by the Orthodox to be heretics, just as the Catholics and others consider the Orthodox to be heretics. And I saw that the Orthodox (though they try to hide this) regard with hostility all who do not express their faith by the same external symbols and words as themselves; and this is naturally so; first, because the assertion that you are in falsehood and I am in truth, is the most cruel thing one man can say to another; and secondly, because a man loving his children and brothers cannot help being hostile to those who wish to pervert his children and brothers to a false belief. And that hostility is increased in proportion to one's greater knowledge of theology. And to me who considered that truth lay in union by love, it became self-evident that theology was itself destroying what it ought to produce.

This offence is so obvious to us educated people who have lived in countries where various religions are professed and have seen the contempt, self-assurance, and invincible contradiction with which Catholics behave to the Orthodox Greeks and to the Protestants, and the Orthodox to Catholics and Protestants, and the Protestants to the two others, and the similar attitude of Old- Believers, Pashkovites (Russian Evangelicals), Shakers, and all religions - that the very obviousness of the temptation at first perplexes us. One says to oneself: it is impossible that it is so simple and that people do not see that if two assertions are mutually contradictory, then neither of them has the sole truth which faith should possess. There is something else here, there must be some explanation. I thought there was, and sought that explanation and read all I could on the subject, and consulted all whom I could. And

no one gave me any explanation, except the one which causes the Sumsky Hussars to consider the Sumsky Hussars the best regiment in the world, and the Yellow Uhlans to consider that the best regiment in the world is the Yellow Uhlans. The ecclesiastics of all the different creeds, through their best representatives, told me nothing but that they believed themselves to have the truth and the others to be in error, and that all they could do was to pray for them. I went to archimandrites, bishops, elders, monks of the strictest orders, and asked them; but none of them made any attempt to explain the matter to me except one man, who explained it all and explained it so that I never asked any one any more about it. I said that for every unbeliever turning to a belief (and all our young generation are in a position to do so) the question that presents itself first is, why is truth not in Lutheranism nor in Catholicism, but in Orthodoxy? Educated in the high school he cannot help knowing what the peasants do not know - that the Protestants and Catholics equally affirm that their faith is the only true one. Historical evidence, twisted by each religion in its own favour, is insufficient. Is it not possible, said I, to understand the teaching in a loftier way, so that from its height the differences should disappear, as they do for one who believes truly? Can we not go further along a path like the one we are following with the Old-Believers? They emphasize the fact that they have a differently shaped cross and different alleluias and a different procession round the altar. We reply: You believe in the Nicene Creed, in the seven sacraments, and so do we. Let us hold to that, and in other matters do as you please. We have united with them by placing the essentials of faith above the unessentials. Now with the Catholics can we not say: You believe in so and so and in so and so, which are the chief things, and as for the Filioque clause and the Pope - do as you please. Can we not say the same to the Protestants, uniting with them in what is most important?

My interlocutor agreed with my thoughts, but told me that such conceptions would bring reproach to the spiritual authorities for deserting the faith of our forefathers, and this would produce a schism; and the vocation of the spiritual authorities is to safeguard in all its purity the Greco-Russian Orthodox faith inherited from our forefathers.

And I understood it all. I am seeking a faith, the power of life; and they are seeking the best way to fulfil in the eyes of men certain human obligations. and fulfilling these human affairs they fulfil them in a human way. However much they may talk of their pity for their erring brethren, and of addressing prayers for them to the throne of the Almighty - to carry out human purposes violence is necessary, and it has always been applied and is and will be applied. If of two religions each considers itself true and the other false, then men desiring to attract others to the truth will preach their own doctrine. And if a false teaching is preached to the inexperienced sons of their Church - which as the truth - then that Church cannot but burn the books and remove the man who is misleading its sons. What is to be done with a sectarian - burning, in the opinion of the Orthodox, with the fire of false doctrine - who in the most important affair of life, in faith, misleads the sons of the Church? What can be done with him except to cut off his head or to incarcerate him? Under the Tsar Alexis Mikhaylovich people were burned at the stake, that is to say, the severest method of punishment of the time was applied, and in our day also the severest method of punishment is applied - detention in solitary confinement. [Footnote: At the time this was written capital punishment was considered to be abolished in Russia. - A.M.]

The second relation of the Church to a question of life was with regard to war and executions.

At that time Russia was at war. And Russians, in the name of Christian love, began to kill their fellow men. It was impossible not to think about this, and not to see that killing is an evil repugnant to the first principles of any faith. Yet prayers were said in the churches for the success of our arms, and the teachers of the Faith acknowledged killing to be an act resulting from the Faith. And besides the murders during the war, I saw, during the disturbances which followed the war, Church dignitaries and teachers and monks of the lesser and stricter orders who approved the killing of helpless, erring youths. And I took note of all that is done by men who profess Christianity, and I was horrified.

## XVI

And I ceased to doubt, and became fully convinced that not all was true in the religion I had joined. Formerly I should have said that it was all false, but I could not say so now. The whole of the people possessed a knowledge of the truth, for otherwise they could not have lived. Moreover, that knowledge was accessible to me, for I had felt it and had lived by it. But I no longer doubted that there was also falsehood in it. And all that had previously repelled me now presented itself vividly before me. And though I saw that among the peasants there was a smaller admixture of the lies that repelled me than among the representatives of the Church, I still saw that in the people's belief also falsehood was mingled with the truth.

But where did the truth and where did the falsehood come from? Both the falsehood and the truth were contained in the so-called holy tradition and in the Scriptures. Both the falsehood and the truth had been handed down by what is called the Church.

And whether I liked or not, I was brought to the study and investigation of these writings and traditions - which till now I had been so afraid to investigate.

And I turned to the examination of that same theology which I had once rejected with such contempt as unnecessary. Formerly it seemed to me a series of unnecessary absurdities, when on all sides I was surrounded by manifestations of life which seemed to me clear and full of sense; now I should have been glad to throw away what would not enter a health head, but I had nowhere to turn to. On this teaching religious doctrine rests, or at least with it the only knowledge of the meaning of life that I have found is inseparably connected. However wild it may seem too my firm old mind, it was the only



hope of salvation. It had to be carefully, attentively examined in order to understand it, and not even to understand it as I understand the propositions of science: I do not seek that, nor can I seek it, knowing the special character of religious knowledge. I shall not seek the explanation of everything. I know that the explanation of everything, like the commencement of everything, must be concealed in infinity. But I wish to understand in a way which will bring me to what is inevitably inexplicable. I wish to recognize anything that is inexplicable as being so not because the demands of my reason are wrong (they are right, and apart from them I can understand nothing), but because I recognize the limits of my intellect. I wish to understand in such a way that everything that is inexplicable shall present itself to me as being necessarily inexplicable, and not as being something I am under an arbitrary obligation to believe.

That there is truth in the teaching is to me indubitable, but it is also certain that there is falsehood in it, and I must find what is true and what is false, and must disentangle the one from the other. I am setting to work upon this task. What of falsehood I have found in the teaching and what I have found of truth, and to what conclusions I came, will form the following parts of this work, which if it be worth it and if anyone wants it, will probably some day be printed somewhere.

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU**  
**(LAST CHAPTER)**

LEO TOLSTOY

1828-1910

This is the last chapter of *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, which is Tolstoy's best non-fiction work. This chapter, which is entitled *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*, is one of Tolstoy's most powerful. Tolstoy insists that Christians must aspire to the Kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of the world.

Part One - Chance Meeting with a Train Carrying Soldiers to Restore Order Among the Famishing Peasants - Reason of the Expedition - How the Decisions of the Higher Authorities are Enforced in Cases of Insubordination on Part of the Peasants - What Happened at Orel, as an Example of How the Rights of the Propertied Classes are Maintained by Murder and Torture - All the Privileges of the Wealthy are Based on Similar Acts of Violence.

Part Two - The Elements that Made up the Force Sent to Toula, and the Conduct of the Men Composing it - How these Men Could Carry Out such Acts - The Explanation is Not to be Found in Ignorance, Conviction, Cruelty, Heartlessness, or Want of Moral Sense - They do these Things Because they are Necessary to Support the Existing Order, which they Consider it Every Man's Duty to Support - The Basis of this Conviction that the Existing Order is Necessary and Inevitable - In the Upper Classes this Conviction is Based on the Advantages of the Existing Order for Themselves - But what Forces Men of the Lower Classes to Believe in the Immutability of the Existing Order, from which they Derive no Advantage, and which they Aid in Maintaining, Facts Contrary to their Conscience? - This is the Result of the Lower Classes being Deluded by the Upper, Both as to the Inevitability of the Existing Order and the Lawfulness of the Acts of Violence Needed to Maintain it - Deception in General - Special Form of Deception in Regard to Military Service - Conscription.

Part Three - How can Men Allow that Murder is Permissible while they Preach Principles of Morality, and How can they Allow for the Existence in their Midst of a Military Organization of Physical Force which is a Constant Menace to Public Security? - It is only Allowed by the Upper Classes, who Profit by this Organization, Because their Privileges are Maintained by it - The Upper Classes Allow it, and the Lower Classes Carry it into Effect in Spite of their Consciousness of the Immorality of the Deeds of Violence, the More Readily Because Through the Arrangements of the Government the Moral Responsibility of such Deeds is Divided among a Great Number of Participants in it, and Everyone Throws the Responsibility on Someone Else - Moreover, the Sense of Moral Responsibility is Lost through the Delusion of Inequality, and the Consequent Intoxication of Power on the Part of Superiors, and Servility on the Part of Inferiors - The Condition of these Men, Acting against the Dictates of their Conscience, is Like that of Hypnotized Subjects Acting by Suggestion - The Difference between this Obedience to Government Suggestion, and Obedience to Public Opinion, and to the Guidance of Men of a Higher Moral Sense - The Existing Order of Society, which is the Result of an Extinct Public Opinion and is Inconsistent with the Already Existing Public Opinion of the Future, is only Maintained by the Stupefaction of the Conscience, Produced Spontaneously by Self-interest in the Upper Classes and Through Hypnotizing in the Lower Classes - The Conscience or the Common Sense of such Men may Awaken, and there are Examples of its Sudden Awakening, so that one can Never be Sure of the Deeds of Violence they are Prepared for - It Depends entirely on the Point which the Sense of the Unlawfulness of Acts of Violence has Reached, and this Sense may Spontaneously Awaken in Men, or may be Reawakened by the Influence of Men of more Conscience.

[Part Four](#) - Everything Depends on the Strength of the Consciousness of Christian Truths in Each Individual Man - The Leading Men of Modern Times, however, do not Think it Necessary to Preach or Practice the Truths of Christianity, but Regard the Modification of the External Conditions of Existence within the Limit Imposed by Governments as Sufficient to Reform the Life of Humanity - On this Scientific Theory of Hypocrisy, which has Replaced the Hypocrisy of Religion, Men of the Wealthy Classes Base their Justification of their Position by Force and Fraud, and Still Pretend to be Christians to One Another and be Easy in their Minds - This Hypocrisy Allows Men who Preach Christianity to Take Part in Institutions Based on Violence - No External Reformation of Life will Render it Less Miserable - Its Misery the Result of Disunion Caused by Following Lies, not the Truth - Union only Possible in Truth - Hypocrisy Hinders this Union, since Hypocrites Conceal from themselves and Others the Truth they Know - Hypocrisy Turns all Reforms of Life to Evil - Hypocrisy Distorts the Idea of Good and Evil, and so Stands in the Way of the Progress of Men toward Perfection - Undisguised Criminals and Malefactors do Less Harm than those who Live by Legalized violence, Disguised by Hypocrisy - All Men Feel the Iniquity of our Life, and would Long Ago have Transformed it if it had not been Dissimulated by Hypocrisy - But Seem to have Reached the Extreme Limits of Hypocrisy, and we Need only Make an Effort of Conscience to Awaken as from a Nightmare to a Different Reality.

[Part Five](#) - Can Man Make this Effort? - According to the Hypocritical Theory of the Day, Man is not Free to Transform his Life - Man is not Free in his Actions, but he is Free to Admit or to Deny the Truth he Knows - When Truth is Once Admitted, it Becomes the Basis of Action - Man's Threefold Relations to Truth - The Reason of the

Apparent Insolubility of the Problem of Free Will - Man's Freedom Consists in the Recognition of the Truth Revealed to him. There is no Other Freedom - Recognition of Truth Gives Freedom, and Shows the Path Along which, Willingly or Unwillingly by Mankind, Man Must Advance - The Recognition of Truth and Real Freedom Enables Man to Share in the Work of God, not as the Slave, but as the Creator of Life - Men Need only Make the Effort to Renounce all Thought of Bettering the External Conditions of Life and Bend all their Efforts to Recognizing and Preaching the Truth they Know, to put an End to the Existing Miserable State of Things, and to Enter upon the Kingdom of God so far as it is yet Accessible to Man - All that is Needed is to Make an End of Lying and Hypocrisy - But then what Awaits us in the Future? - What will Happen to Humanity if Men Follow the Dictates of their Conscience, and how can Life go on with the Conditions of Civilized Life to which we are Accustomed? - All Uneasiness on these Points may be Removed by the Reflection that Nothing True and Good can be Destroyed by the Realization of Truth, but will only be Freed from the Alloy of Falsehood.

[Part Six](#) - Our Life has Reached the Extreme Limit of Misery and Cannot be Improved by any Systems of Organization - All our Life and all our Institutions are Quite Meaningless - Are we Doing what God Wills of us by Preserving our Privileges and Duties to Government? - We are put in this Position not Because the World is so Made and it is Inevitable, but Because we Wish it to be so, Because it is to the Advantage of Some of us - Our Conscience is in Opposition to our Position and all our Conduct, and the Way Out of the Contradiction is to be Found in the Recognition of the Christian Truth: Do Not unto Others what You Would Not they should Do unto You - As our Duties to Self Must be Subordinated to our Duties to Others, so Must our Duties to Others be Subordinated to

our Duties to God - The Only Way Out of our Position Lies, if not in Renouncing our Position and our Privileges, at least in Recognizing our Sin and not Justifying it nor Disguising it - The Only Object of Life is to Learn the Truth and to Act on it - Acceptance of the Position and of State Action Deprives Life of all Object - It is God's Will that we should Serve Him in our Life, that is, that we should Bring About the Greatest Unity of all that has Life, a Unity only Possible in Truth.

## **CONCLUSION: REPENT YE, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.**

From the book *The Kingdom of God is Within You*

### **PART ONE**

I was finishing this book, which I had been working at for two years, when I happened on the 9th of September to be traveling by rail through the governments of Toula and Riazan, where the peasants were starving last year and where the famine is even more severe now. At one of the railway stations my train passed an extra train which was taking a troop of soldiers under the conduct of the governor of the province, together with muskets, cartridges, and rods, to flog and murder these same famishing peasants. The punishment of flogging by way of carrying the decrees of the authorities into effect has been more and more frequently adopted of late in Russia, in spite of the fact that corporal punishment was abolished by law thirty years ago.

I had heard of this, I had even read in the newspapers of the fearful floggings which had been inflicted in Tchernigov, Tambov, Saratov, Astrakhan, and Orel, and of those of which the governor of Nijni-Novgorod, General Baranov, had boasted. But I had never before happened to see men in the process of carrying out these punishments.

And here I saw the spectacle of good Russians full of the Christian spirit traveling with guns and rods to torture and kill their starving brethren. The reason for their expedition was as follows:

On one of the estates of a rich landowner the peasants had common rights on the forest, and having always enjoyed



these rights, regarded the forest as their own, or at least as theirs in common with the owner. The landowner wished to keep the forest entirely to himself and began to fell the trees. The peasants lodged a complaint. The judges in the first instance gave an unjust decision (I say unjust on the authority of the lawyer and governor, who ought to understand the matter), and decided the case in favor of the landowner. All the later decisions, even that of the senate, though they could see that the matter had been unjustly decided, confirmed the judgment and adjudged the forest to the landowner. He began to cut down the trees, but the peasants, unable to believe that such obvious injustice could be done them by the higher authorities, did not submit to the decision and drove away the men sent to cut down the trees, declaring that the forest belonged to them and they would go to the Tzar before they would let them cut it down.

The matter was referred to Petersburg, and the order was transmitted to the governor to carry the decision of the court into effect. The governor asked for a troop of soldiers. And here were the soldiers with bayonets and cartridges, and moreover, a supply of rods, expressly prepared for the purpose and heaped up in one of the trucks, going to carry the decision of the higher authorities into effect.

The decisions of the higher authorities are carried into effect by means of murder or torture, or threats of one or the other, according to whether they offer resistance or not.

In the first case if the peasants offer resistance the practice is in Russia, and it is the same everywhere where a state organization and private property exist, as follows:

The governor delivers an address in which he demands submission. The excited crowd, generally deluded by their

leaders, don't understand a word of what the representative of authority is saying in the pompous official language, and their excitement continues. Then the governor announces that if they do not submit and disperse, he will be obliged to have recourse to force. If the crowd does not disperse even on this, the governor gives the order to fire over the heads of the crowd. If the crowd does not even then disperse, the governor gives the order to fire straight into the crowd; the soldiers fire and the killed and wounded fall about the street. Then the crowd usually runs away in all directions, and the troops at the governor's command take those who are supposed to be the ringleaders and lead them off under escort. Then they pick up the dying, the wounded, and the dead, covered with blood, sometimes women and children among them. The dead they bury and the wounded they carry to the hospital. Those whom they regard as the ringleaders they take to the town hall and have them tried by a special court-martial. And if they have had recourse to violence on their side, they are condemned to be hanged. And then the gallows is erected. And they solemnly strangle a few defenseless creatures.

This is what has often been done in Russia, and is and must always be done where the social order is based on force.

But in the second case, when the peasants do submit, something quite special, peculiar to Russia, takes place. The governor arrives on the scene of action and delivers an harangue to the people, reproaching them for their insubordination, and either stations troops in the houses of the villages, where sometimes for a whole month the soldiers drain the resources of the peasants, or contenting himself with threats, he mercifully takes leave of the people, or what is the most frequent course, he announces that the ringleaders must be punished, and quite arbitrarily without any trial selects a certain number of men, regarded

as ringleaders, and commands them to be flogged in his presence.

In order to give an idea of how such things are done I will describe a proceeding of the kind which took place in Orel, and received the full approval of the highest authorities.

This is what took place in Orel. just as here in the Toula province, a landlord wanted to appropriate the property of the peasants and just in the same way the peasants opposed it. The matter in dispute was a fall of water, which irrigated the peasants' fields, and which the landowner wanted to cut off and divert to turn his mill. The peasants rebelled against this being done. The landowner laid a complaint before the district commander, who illegally (as was recognized later even by a legal decision) decided the matter in favor of the landowner, and allowed him to divert the water course. The landowner sent workmen to dig the conduit by which the water was to be let off to turn the mill. The peasants were indignant at this unjust decision, and sent their women to prevent the landowner's men from digging this conduit. The women went to the dykes, overturned the carts, and drove away the men. The landowner made a complaint against the women for thus taking the law into their own hands. The district commander made out an order that from every house throughout the village one woman was to be taken and put in prison. The order was not easily executed. For in every household there were several women, and it was impossible to know which one was to be arrested. Consequently the police did not carry out the order. The landowner complained to the governor of the neglect on the part of the police, and the latter, without examining into the affair, gave the chief official of the police strict orders to carry out the instructions of the district commander without delay. The police official, in obedience to his superior, went to the village and with the insolence peculiar to Russian officials ordered his policemen to take one woman

out of each house. But since there were more than one woman in each house, and there was no knowing which one was sentenced to imprisonment, disputes and opposition arose. In spite of these disputes and opposition, however, the officer of police gave orders that some woman, whichever came first, should be taken from each household and led away to prison. The peasants began to defend their wives and mothers, would not let them go, and beat the police and their officer. This was a fresh and terrible crime: resistance was offered to the authorities. A report of this new offense was sent to the town. And so this governor - precisely as the governor of Toulou was doing on that day - with a battalion of soldiers with guns and rods, hastily brought together by means of telegraphs and telephones and railways, proceeded by a special train to the scene of action, with a learned doctor whose duty it was to insure the flogging being of an hygienic character. Herzen's prophecy of the modern Ghenghis Khan with his telegrams is completely realized by this governor.

Before the town hall of the district were the soldiery, a battalion of police with their revolvers slung round them with red cords, the persons of most importance among the peasants, and the culprits. A crowd of one thousand or more people were standing round. The governor, on arriving, stepped out of his carriage, delivered a prepared harangue, and asked for the culprits and a bench. The latter demand was at first not understood. But a police constable whom the governor always took about with him, and who undertook to organize such executions - by no means exceptional in that province - explained that what was meant was a bench for flogging. A bench was brought as well as the rods, and then the executioners were summoned (the latter had been selected beforehand from some horse stealers of the same village, as the soldiers refused the office). When everything was ready, the governor ordered the first of the twelve culprits pointed out by the landowner

as the most guilty to come forward. The first to come forward was the head of a family, a man of forty who had always stood up manfully for the rights of his class, and therefore was held in the greatest esteem by all the villagers. He was led to the bench and stripped, and then ordered to lie down.

The peasant attempted to supplicate for mercy, but seeing it was useless, he crossed himself and lay down. Two police constables hastened to hold him down. The learned doctor stood by, in readiness to give his aid and his medical science when they should be needed. The convicts spit into their hands, brandished the rods, and began to flog. It seemed, however, that the bench was too narrow, and it was difficult to keep the victim writhing in torture upon it. Then the governor ordered them to bring another bench and to put a plank across them. Soldiers, with their hands raised to their caps, and respectful murmurs of "Yes, your Excellency," hasten obediently to carry out this order. Meanwhile the tortured man, half naked, pale and scowling, stood waiting, his eyes fixed on the ground and his teeth chattering. When another bench had been brought they again made him lie down, and the convicted thieves again began to flog him.

The victim's back and thighs and legs, and even his sides, became more and more covered with scars and wheals, and at every blow there came the sound of the deep groans which he could no longer restrain. In the crowd standing round were heard the sobs of wives, mothers, children, the families of the tortured man and of all the others picked out for punishment.

The miserable governor, intoxicated with power, was counting the strokes on his fingers, and never left off smoking cigarettes, while several officious persons hastened on every opportunity to offer him a burning match

to light them. When more than fifty strokes had been given, the peasant ceased to shriek and writhe, and the doctor, who had been educated in a government institution to serve his sovereign and his country with his scientific attainments, went up to the victim, felt his pulse, listened to his heart, and announced to the representative of authority that the man undergoing punishment had lost consciousness, and that, in accordance with the conclusions of science, to continue the punishment would endanger the victim's life. But the miserable governor, now completely intoxicated by the sight of blood, gave orders that the punishment should go on, and the flogging was continued up to seventy strokes, the number which the governor had for some reason fixed upon as necessary. When the seventieth stroke had been reached, the governor said "Enough! Next one!" And the mutilated victim, his back covered with blood, was lifted up and carried away unconscious, and another was led up. The sobs and groans of the crowd grew louder. But the representative of the state continued the torture.

Thus they flogged each of them up to the twelfth, and each of them received seventy strokes. They all implored mercy, shrieked and groaned. The sobs and cries of the crowd of women grew louder and more heart-rending, and the men's faces grew darker and darker. But they were surrounded by troops, and the torture did not cease till it had reached the limit which had been fixed by the caprice of the miserable half-drunken and insane creature they called the governor.

The officials, and officers, and soldiers not only assisted in it, but were even partly responsible for the affair, since by their presence they prevented any interference on the part of the crowd.

When I inquired of one of the governors why they made use of this kind of torture when people had already

submitted and soldiers were stationed in the village, he replied with the important air of a man who thoroughly understands all the subtleties of statecraft, that if the peasants were not thoroughly subdued by flogging, they would begin offering, opposition to the decisions of authorities again. When some of them had been thoroughly tortured, the authority of the state would be secured forever among them.

And so that was why the Governor of Toula was going in his turn with his subordinate officials, officers, and soldiers to carry out a similar measure. By precisely the same means, *i.e.*, by murder and torture, obedience to the decision of the higher authorities was to be secured. And this decision was to enable a young landowner, who had an income of one hundred thousand, to gain three thousand rubles more by stealing a forest from a whole community of cold and famished peasants, to spend it, in two or three weeks in the saloons of Moscow, Petersburg, or Paris. That was what those people whom I met were going to do.

After my thoughts had for two years been turned in the same direction, fate seemed expressly to have brought me face to face for the first time in my life with a fact which showed me absolutely unmistakably in practice what had long been clear to me in theory, that the organization of our society rests, not as people interested in maintaining the present order of things like to imagine, on certain principles of jurisprudence, but on simple brute force, on the murder and torture of men.

People who own great estates or fortunes, or who receive great revenues drawn from the class who are in want even of necessities, the working class, as well as all those who like merchants, doctors, artists, clerks, learned professors, coachmen, cooks, writers, valets, and barristers, make their living about these rich people, like to believe that the

privileges they enjoy are not the result of force, but of absolutely free and just interchange of services, and that their advantages, far from being gained by such punishments and murders as took place in Orel and several parts of Russia this year, and are always taking place all over Europe and America, have no kind of connection with these acts of violence. They like to believe that their privileges exist apart and are the result of free contract among people; and that the violent cruelties perpetrated on the people also exist apart and are the result of some general judicial, political, or economical laws. They try not to see that they all enjoy their privileges as a result of the same fact which forces the peasants who have tended the forest, and who are in the direct need of it for fuel, to give it up to a rich landowner who has taken no part in caring for its growth and has no need of it whatever - the fact, that is, that if they don't give it up they will be flogged or killed.

And yet if it is clear that it was only by means of menaces, blows, or murder, that the mill in Orel was enabled to yield a larger income, or that the forest which the peasants had planted became the property of a landowner, it should be equally clear that all the other exclusive rights enjoyed by the rich, by robbing the poor of their necessities, rest on the same basis of violence. If the peasants, who need land to maintain their families, may not cultivate the land about their houses, but one man, a Russian, English, Austrian, or any other great landowner, possesses land enough to maintain a thousand families, though he does not cultivate it himself, and if a merchant profiting by the misery of the cultivators, taking corn from them at a third of its value, can keep this corn in his granaries with perfect security while men are starving all around him, and sell it again for three times its value to the very cultivators he bought it from, it is evident that all this too comes from the same cause. And if one man may not buy of another a commodity from the other side of a certain fixed line,



called the frontier, without paying certain duties on it to men who have taken no part whatever in its production and if men are driven to sell their last cow to pay taxes which the government distributes among its functionaries, and spends on maintaining soldiers to murder these very taxpayers - it would appear self-evident that all this does not come about as the result of any abstract laws, but is based on just what was done in Orel, and which may be done in Toula, and is done periodically in one form or another throughout the whole world wherever there is a government, and where there are rich and poor.

Simply because torture and murder are not employed in every instance of oppression by force, those who enjoy the exclusive privileges of the ruling classes persuade themselves and others that their privileges are not based on torture and murder, but on some mysterious general causes, abstract laws, and so on. Yet one would think it was perfectly clear that if men, who consider it unjust (and all the working classes do consider it so nowadays), still pay the principal part of the produce of their labor away to the capitalist and the landowner, and pay taxes, though they know to what a bad use these taxes are put, they do so not from recognition of abstract laws of which they have never heard, but only because they know they will be beaten and killed if they don't do so.

And if there is no need to imprison, beat, and kill men every time the landlord collects his rents, every time those who are in want of bread have to pay a swindling merchant three times its value, every time the factory hand has to be content with a wage less than half of the profit made by the employer, and every time a poor man pays his last ruble in taxes, it is because so many men have been beaten and killed for trying to resist these demands, that the lesson has now been learnt very thoroughly.

Just as a trained tiger, who does not eat meat put under his nose, and jumps over a stick at the word of command, does not act thus because he likes it, but because he remembers the red-hot irons or the fast with which he was punished every time he did not obey; so men submitting to what is disadvantageous or even ruinous to them, and considered by them as unjust, act thus because they remember what they suffered for resisting it.

As for those who profit by the privileges gained by previous acts of violence, they often forget and like to forget how these privileges were obtained. But one need only recall the facts of history, not the history of the exploits of different dynasties of rulers, but real history, the history of the oppression of the majority by a small number of men, to see that all the advantages the rich have over the poor are based on nothing but flogging, imprisonment, and murder.

One need but reflect on the unceasing, persistent struggle of all to better their material position, which is the guiding motive of men of the present day, to be convinced that the advantages of the rich over the poor could never and can never be maintained by anything but force.

There may be cases of oppression, of violence, and of punishments, though they are rare, the aim of which is not to secure the privileges of the propertied classes. But one may confidently assert that in any society where, for every man living in ease, there are ten exhausted by labor, envious, covetous, and often suffering with their families from direct privation, all the privileges of the rich, all their luxuries and superfluities, are obtained and maintained only by tortures, imprisonment, and murder.

## PART TWO

The train I met on the 9th of September going with soldiers, guns, cartridges, and rods, to confirm the rich landowner in the possession of a small forest which he had taken from the starving peasants, which they were in the direst need of, and he was in no need of at all, was a striking proof of how men are capable of doing deeds directly opposed to their principles and their conscience without perceiving it.

The special train consisted of one first-class carriage for the governor, the officials, and officers, and several luggage vans crammed full of soldiers. The latter, smart young fellows in their clean new uniforms, were standing about in groups or sitting swinging their legs in the wide open doorways of the luggage vans. Some were smoking, nudging each other, joking, grinning, and laughing, others were munching sunflower seeds and spitting out the husks with an air of dignity. Some of them ran along the platform to drink some water from a tub there, and when they met the officers they slackened their pace, made their stupid gesture of salutation, raising their hands to their heads with serious faces as though they were doing something of the greatest importance. They kept their eyes on them till they had passed by them, and then set off running still more merrily, stamping their heels on the platform, laughing and chattering after the manner of healthy, good-natured young fellows, traveling in lively company.

They were going to assist at the murder of their fathers or grandfathers just as if they were going on a party of pleasure, or at any rate on some quite ordinary business.

The same impression was produced by the well-dressed functionaries and officers who were scattered about the platform and in the first-class carriage. At a table covered

with bottles was sitting the governor, who was responsible for the whole expedition, dressed in his half-military uniform and eating something while he chatted tranquilly about the weather with some acquaintances he had met, as though the business he was upon was of so simple and ordinary a character that it could not disturb his serenity and his interest in the change of weather.

At a little distance from the table sat the general of the police. He was not taking any refreshment, and had an impenetrable bored expression, as though he were weary of the formalities to be gone through. On all sides officers were bustling noisily about in their red uniforms trimmed with gold; one sat at a table finishing his bottle of beer, another stood at the buffet eating a cake, and brushing the crumbs off his uniform, threw down his money with a self-confident air; another was sauntering before the carriages of our train, staring at the faces of the women.

All these men who were going to murder or to torture the famishing and defenseless creatures who provide them their sustenance had the air of men who knew very well that they were doing their duty, and some were even proud, were "glorying" in what they were doing.

What is the meaning of it?

All these people are within half an hour of reaching the place where, in order to provide a wealthy young man with three thousand rubles stolen from a whole community of famishing peasants, they may be forced to commit the most horrible acts one can conceive, to murder or torture, as was done in Orel, innocent beings, their brothers. And they see the place and time approaching with untroubled serenity.

To say that all these government officials, officers, and soldiers do not know what is before them is impossible, for

they are prepared for it. The governor must have given directions about the rods, the officials must have sent an order for them, purchased them, and entered the item in their accounts. The military officers have given and received orders about cartridges. They all know that they are going to torture, perhaps to kill, their famishing fellow creatures, and that they must set to work within an hour.

To say, as is usually said, and as they would themselves repeat, that they are acting from conviction of the necessity for supporting the state organization, would be a mistake. For in the first place, these men have probably never even thought about state organization and the necessity of it; in the second place, they cannot possibly be convinced that the act in which they are taking part will tend to support rather than to ruin the state; and thirdly, in reality the majority, if not all, of these men, far from ever sacrificing their own pleasure or tranquility to support the state, never let slip an opportunity of profiting at the expense of the state in every way they can increase their own pleasure and ease. So that they are not acting thus for the sake of the abstract principle of the state.

What is the meaning of it?

Yet I know all these men. If I don't know all of them personally, I know their characters pretty nearly, their past, and their way of thinking. They certainly all have mothers, some of them wives and children. They are certainly for the most part good, kind, even tender-hearted fellows, who hate every sort of cruelty, not to speak of murder; many of them would not kill or hurt an animal. Moreover, they are all professed Christians and regard all violence directed against the defenseless as base and disgraceful.

Certainly not one of them would be capable in everyday life, for his own personal profit, of doing a hundredth part

of what the Governor of Orel did. Every one of them would be insulted at the supposition that he was capable of doing anything of the kind in private life.

And yet they are within half an hour of reaching the place where they may be reduced to the inevitable necessity of committing this crime.

What is the meaning of it?

But it is not only these men who are going by train prepared for murder and torture. How could the men who began the whole business, the landowner, the commissioner, the judges, and those who gave the order and are responsible for it, the ministers, the Tzar, who are also good men, professed Christians, how could they elaborate such a plan and assent to it, knowing its consequences? The spectators even, who took no part in the affair, how could they, who are indignant at the sight of any cruelty in private life, even the overtaking of a horse, allow such a horrible deed to be perpetrated? How was it they did not rise in indignation and bar the roads, shouting, "No; flog and kill starving men because they won't let their last possession be stolen from them without resistance, that we won't allow!" But far from anyone doing this, the majority, even of those who were the cause of the affair, such as the commissioner, the landowner, the judge, and those who took part in it and arranged it, as the Governor, the ministers, and the Tzar, are perfectly tranquil and do not even feel a prick of conscience. And apparently all the men who are going to carry out this crime are equally undisturbed.

The spectators, who one would suppose could have no personal interest in the affair, looked rather with sympathy than with disapproval at all these people preparing to carry out this infamous action. In the same compartment with me

was a wood merchant, who had risen from a peasant. He openly expressed aloud his sympathy with such punishments. "They can't disobey the authorities," he said; "that's what the authorities are for. Let them have a lesson; send their fleas flying! They'll give over making commotions, I warrant you. That's what they want."

What is the meaning of it?

It is not possible to say that all these people who have provoked or aided or allowed this deed are such worthless creatures that, knowing all the infamy of what they are doing, they do it against their principles, some for pay and for profit, others through fear of punishment. All of them in certain circumstances know how to stand up for their principles. Not one of these officials would steal a purse, read another man's letter, or put up with an affront without demanding satisfaction. Not one of these officers would consent to cheat at cards, would refuse to pay a debt of honor, would betray a comrade, run away on the field of battle, or desert the flag. Not one of these soldiers would spit out the holy sacrament or eat meat on Good Friday. All these men are ready to face any kind of privation, suffering, or danger rather than consent to do what they regard as wrong. They have therefore the strength to resist doing what is against their principles.

It is even less possible to assert that all these men are such brutes that it is natural and not distasteful to them to do such deeds. One need only talk to these people a little to see that all of them, the landowner even, and the judge, and the minister and the Tzar and the government, the officers and the soldiers, not only disapprove of such things in the depth of their soul, but suffer from the consciousness of their participation in them when they recollect what they imply. But they try not to think about it.

One need only talk to any of these who are taking part in the affair from the landowner to the lowest policeman or soldier to see that in the depth of their soul they all know it is a wicked thing, that it would be better to have nothing, to do with it, and are suffering from the knowledge.

A lady of liberal views, who was traveling in the same train with us, seeing the governor and the officers in the first-class saloon and learning the object of the expedition, began, intentionally raising her voice so that they should hear, to abuse the existing order of things and to cry shame on men who would take part in such proceedings. Everyone felt awkward, none knew where to look, but no one contradicted her. They tried to look as though such remarks were not worth answering. But one could see by their faces and their averted eyes that they were ashamed. I noticed the same thing in the soldiers. They too knew that what they were sent to do was a shameful thing, but they did not want to think about what was before them.

When the wood merchant, as I suspect insincerely only to show that he was a man of education, began to speak of the necessity of such measures, the soldiers who heard him all turned away from him, scowling and pretending not to hear.

All the men who, like the landowner, the commissioner, the minister, and the Tzar, were responsible for the perpetration of this act, as well as those who were now going to execute it, and even those who were mere spectators of it, knew that it was a wickedness, and were ashamed of taking any share in it, and even of being present at it.

Then why did they do it, or allow it to be done?



Ask them the question. And the landowner who started the affair, and the judge who pronounced a clearly unjust even though formally legal decision, and those who commanded the execution of the decision, and those who, like the policemen, soldiers, and peasants, will execute the deed with their own hands, flogging and killing their brothers, all who have devised, abetted, decreed, executed, or allowed such crimes, will make substantially the same reply.

The authorities, those who have started, devised, and decreed the matter, will say that such acts are necessary for the maintenance of the existing order; the maintenance of the existing order is necessary for the welfare of the country and of humanity, for the possibility of social existence and human progress.

Men of the poorer class, peasants and soldiers, who will have to execute the deed of violence with their own hands, say that they do so because it is the command of their superior authority, and the superior authority knows what he is about. That those are in authority who ought to be in authority, and that they know what they are doing appears to them a truth of which there can be no doubt. If they could admit the possibility of mistake or error, it would only be in functionaries of a lower grade; the highest authority on which all the rest depends seems to them immaculate beyond suspicion.

Though expressing the motives of their conduct differently, both those in command and their subordinates are agreed in saying that they act thus because the existing order is the order which must and ought to exist at the present time, and that therefore to support it is the sacred duty of every man.

On this acceptance of the necessity and therefore immutability of the existing order, all who take part in acts of violence on the part of government base the argument

always advanced in their justification. "Since the existing order is immutable," they say, "the refusal of a single individual to, perform the duties laid upon him will effect no change in things, and will only mean that some other man will be put in his place who may do the work worse, that is to say, more cruelly, to the still greater injury of the victims of the act of violence."

This conviction that the existing order is the necessary and therefore immutable order, which it is a sacred duty for every man to support, enables good men, of high principles in private life, to take part with conscience more or less untroubled in crimes such as that perpetrated in Orel, and that which the men in the Toula train were going to perpetrate.

But what is this conviction based on? It is easy to understand that the landowner prefers to believe that the existing order is inevitable and immutable, because this existing order secures him an income from his hundreds and thousands of acres, by means of which he can lead his habitual indolent and luxurious life.

It is easy to understand that the judge readily believes in the necessity of an order of things through which he receives a wage fifty times as great as the most industrious laborer can earn, and the same applies to all the higher officials. It is only under the existing *regime* that as governor, prosecutor, senator, members of the various councils, they can receive their several thousands of rubles a year, without which they and their families would at once sink into ruin, since if it were not for the position they occupy they would never by their own abilities, industry, or acquirements get a thousandth part of their salaries. The minister, the Tzar, and all the higher authorities are in the same position. The only distinction is that the higher and the more exceptional their position, the more necessary it is for them to believe that

the existing order is the only possible order of things. For without it they would not only be unable to gain an equal position, but would be found to fall lower than all other people. A man who has of his own free will entered the police force at a wage of ten rubles, which he could easily earn in any other position, is hardly dependent on the preservation of the existing *regime*, and so he may not believe in its immutability. But a king or an emperor, who receives millions for his post, and knows that there are thousands of people round him who would like to dethrone him and take his place, who knows that he will never receive such a revenue or so much honor in any other position, who knows, in most cases through his more or less despotic rule, that if he were dethroned he would have to answer for all his abuse of power - he cannot but believe in the necessity and even sacredness of the existing order. The higher and the more profitable a man's position, the more unstable it becomes, and the more terrible and dangerous a fall from it for him, the more firmly the man believes in the existing order, and therefore with the more ease of conscience can such a man perpetrate cruel and wicked acts, as though they were not in his own interest, but for the maintenance of that order.

This is the case with all men in authority, who occupy positions more profitable than they could occupy except for the present *regime*, from the lowest police officer to the Tzar. All of them are more or less convinced that the existing order is immutable, because - the chief consideration - it is to their advantage. But the peasants, the soldiers, who are at the bottom of the social scale, who have no kind of advantage from the existing order, who are in the very lowest position of subjection and humiliation, what forces them to believe that the existing order in which they are in their humble and disadvantageous position is the order which ought to exist, and which they ought to support even at the cost of evil actions contrary to their conscience?

What forces these men to the false reasoning that the existing order is unchanging, and that therefore they ought to support it, when it is so obvious, on the contrary, that it is only unchanging because they themselves support it?

What forces these peasants, taken only yesterday from the plow and dressed in ugly and unseemly costumes with blue collars and gilt buttons, to go with guns and sabers and murder their famishing fathers and brothers? They gain no kind of advantage and can be in no fear of losing the position they occupy, because it is worse than that from which they have been taken.

The persons in authority of the higher orders - land owners, merchants, judges, senators, governors, ministers, tzars, and officers - take part in such doings because the existing order is to their advantage. In other respects they are often good and kind-hearted men, and they are more able to take part in such doings because their share in them is limited to suggestions, decisions, and orders. These persons in authority never do themselves what they suggest, decide, or command to be done. For the most part they do not even see how all the atrocious deeds they have suggested and authorized are carried out. But the unfortunate men of the lower orders, who gain no kind of advantage from the existing *regime*, but, on the contrary, are treated with the utmost contempt, support it even by dragging people with their own hands from their families, handcuffing them, throwing them in prison, guarding them, shooting them.

Why do they do it? What forces them to believe that the existing order is unchanging and they must support it?

All violence rests, we know, on those who do the beating, the handcuffing, the imprisoning, and the killing with their own hands. If there were no soldiers or armed policemen,

ready to kill or outrage anyone as they are ordered, not one of those people who sign sentences of death, imprisonment, or galley-slavery for life would make up his mind to hang, imprison, or torture a thousandth part of those whom, quietly sitting in his study, he now orders to be tortured in all kinds of ways, simply because he does not see it nor do it himself, but only gets it done at a distance by these servile tools.

All the acts of injustice and cruelty which are committed in the ordinary course of daily life have only become habitual because there are these men always ready to carry out such acts of injustice and cruelty. If it were not for them, far from anyone using violence against the immense masses who are now ill-treated, those who now command their punishment would not venture to sentence them, would not even dare to dream of the sentences they decree with such easy confidence at present. And if it were not for these men, ready to kill or torture anyone at their commander's will, no one would dare to claim, as all the idle landowners claim with such assurance, that a piece of land, surrounded by peasants, who are in wretchedness from want of land, is the property of a man who does not cultivate it, or that stores of corn taken by swindling from the peasants ought to remain untouched in the midst of a population dying of hunger because the merchants must make their profit. If it were not for these servile instruments at the disposal of the authorities, it could never have entered the head of the landowner to rob the peasants of the forest they had tended, nor of the officials to think they are entitled to their salaries, taken from the famishing people, the price of their oppression; least of all could anyone dream of killing or exiling men for exposing falsehood and telling the truth. All this can only be done because the authorities are confidently assured that they have always these servile tools at hand, ready to carry all their demands into effect by means of torture and murder.

All the deeds of violence of tyrants from Napoleon to the lowest commander of a company who fires upon a crowd, can only be explained by the intoxicating effect of their absolute power over these slaves. All force, therefore, rests on these men, who carry out the deeds of violence with their own hands, the men who serve in the police or the army, especially the army, for the police only venture to do their work because the army is at their back.

What, then, has brought these masses of honest men, on whom the whole thing depends, who gain nothing by it, and who have to do these atrocious deeds with their own hands, what has brought them to accept the amazing delusion that the existing order, unprofitable, ruinous, and fatal as it is for them, is the order which ought to exist?

Who has led them into this amazing delusion?

They can never have persuaded themselves that they ought to do what is against their conscience, and also the source of misery and ruin for themselves, and all their class, who make up nine-tenths of the population.

"How can you kill people, when it is written in God's commandment: 'Thou shalt not kill'?" I have often inquired of different soldiers. And I always drove them to embarrassment and confusion by reminding them of what they did not want to think about. They knew they were bound by the law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," and knew too that they were bound by their duty as soldiers, but had never reflected on the contradiction between these duties. The drift of the timid answers I received to this question was always approximately this: that killing in war and executing criminals by command of the government are not included in the general prohibition of murder. But when I said this distinction was not made in the law of God, and

reminded them of the Christian duty of fraternity, forgiveness of injuries, and love, which could not be reconciled with murder, the peasants usually agreed, but in their turn began to ask me questions. "How does it happen," they inquired, "that the government [which according to their ideas cannot do wrong] sends the army to war and orders criminals to be executed." When I answered that the government does wrong in giving such orders, the peasants fell into still greater confusion, and either broke off the conversation or else got angry with me.

"They must have found a law for it. The archbishops know as much about it as we do, I should hope," a Russian soldier once observed to me. And in saying his the soldier obviously set his mind at rest, in the full conviction that his spiritual guides had found a law which authorized his ancestors, and the tzars and their descendants, and millions of men, to serve as he was doing himself, and that the question I had put him was a kind of hoax or conundrum on my part.

Everyone in our Christian society knows, either by tradition or by revelation or by the voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most fearful crimes a man can commit, as the Gospel tells us, and that the sin of murder cannot be limited to certain persons, that is, murder cannot be a sin for some and not a sin for others. Everyone knows that if murder is a sin, it is always a sin, whoever are the victims murdered, just like the sin of adultery, theft, or any other. At the same time from their childhood up men see that murder is not only permitted, but even sanctioned by the blessing of those whom they are accustomed to regard as their divinely appointed spiritual guides, and see their secular leaders with calm assurance organizing murder, proud to wear murderous arms, and demanding of others in the name of the laws of the country, and even of God, that they should take part in murder. Men see that there is some

inconsistency here, but not being able to analyze it, involuntarily assume that this apparent inconsistency is only the result of their ignorance. The very grossness and obviousness of the inconsistency confirms them in this conviction.

They cannot imagine that the leaders of civilization, the educated classes, could so confidently preach two such opposed principles as the law of Christ and murder. A simple uncorrupted youth cannot imagine that those who stand so high in his opinion, whom he regards as holy or learned men, could for any object whatever mislead him so shamefully. But this is just what has always been and always is done to him. It is done (1) by instilling, by example and direct instruction, from childhood up, into the working people, who have not time to study moral and religious questions for themselves, the idea that torture and murder are compatible with Christianity, and that for certain objects of state, torture and murder are not only admissible, but ought to be employed; and (2) by instilling into certain of the people, who have either voluntarily enlisted or been taken by compulsion into the army, the idea that the perpetration of murder and torture with their own hands is a sacred duty, and even a glorious exploit, worthy of praise and reward.

The general delusion is diffused among all people by means of the catechisms or books, which nowadays replace them, in use for the compulsory education of children. In them it is stated that violence, that is, imprisonment and execution, as well as murder in civil or foreign war in the defense and maintenance of the existing state organization (whatever that may be, absolute or limited monarchy, convention, consulate, empire of this or that Napoleon or Boulanger, constitutional monarchy, commune or republic) is absolutely lawful and not opposed to morality and Christianity.



This is stated in all catechisms or books used in schools. And men are so thoroughly persuaded of it that they grow up, live and die in that conviction without once entertaining a doubt about it.

This is one form of deception, the general deception instilled into everyone, but there is another special deception practiced upon the soldiers or police who are picked out by one means or another to do the torturing and murdering necessary to defend and maintain the existing *regime*.

In all military instructions there appears in one form or another what is expressed in the Russian military code in the following words:

*Article 87.* To carry out exactly and without comment the orders of a superior officer means: to carry out an order received from a superior officer exactly without considering whether it is good or not, and whether it is possible to carry it out. The superior officer is responsible for the consequences of the order he gives.

*Article 88.* The subordinate ought never to refuse to carry out the orders of a superior officer except when he sees clearly that in carrying out his superior officer's command, he breaks [the law of God, one involuntarily expects; not at all] *his oath of fidelity and allegiance to the Tzar*.

It is here said that the man who is a soldier can and ought to carry out all the orders of his superior without exception. And as these orders for the most part involve murder, it follows that he ought to break all the laws of God and man. The one law he may not break is that of fidelity and allegiance to the man who happens at a given moment to be in power.

Precisely the same thing is said in other words in all codes of military instruction. And it could not be otherwise, since the whole power of the army and the state is based in reality on this delusive emancipation of men from their duty to God and their conscience, and the substitution of duty to their superior officer for all other duties.

This, then, is the foundation of the belief of the lower classes that the existing *regime* so fatal for them is the *regime* which ought to exist, and which they ought therefore to support even by torture and murder.

This belief is founded on a conscious deception practiced on them by the higher classes.

And it cannot be otherwise. To compel the lower classes, which are more numerous, to oppress and ill treat themselves, even at the cost of actions opposed to their conscience, it was necessary to deceive them. And it has been done accordingly.

Not many days ago I saw once more this shameless deception being openly practiced, and once more I marveled that it could be practiced so easily and impudently.

At the beginning of November, as I was passing through Toula, I saw once again at the gates of the Zemsky Courthouse the crowd of peasants I had so often seen before, and heard the drunken shouts of the men mingled with the pitiful lamentations of their wives and mothers. It was the recruiting session.

I can never pass by the spectacle. It attracts me by a kind of fascination of repulsion. I again went into the crowd, took my stand among the peasants, looked about and asked

questions. And once again I was amazed that this hideous crime can be perpetrated so easily in broad daylight and in the midst of a large town.

As the custom is every year, in all the villages and hamlets of the one hundred millions of Russians, on the 1st of November, the village elders had assembled the young men inscribed on the lists, often their own sons among them, and had brought them to the town.

On the road the recruits have been drinking without intermission, unchecked by the elders, who feel that going on such an insane errand, abandoning their wives and mothers and renouncing all they hold sacred in order to become a senseless instrument of destruction, would be too agonizing if they were not stupefied with spirits.

And so they have come, drinking, swearing, singing, fighting and scuffling with one another. They have spent the night in taverns. In the morning they have slept off their drunkenness and have gathered together at the Zemsky Court-house.

Some of them, in new sheepskin pelisses, with knitted scarves round their necks, their eyes swollen from drinking, are shouting wildly to one another to show their courage; others, crowded near the door, are quietly and mournfully waiting their turn, between their weeping wives and mothers (I had chanced upon the day of the actual enrolling, that is, the examination of those whose names are on the list); others meantime were crowding into the hall of the recruiting office.

Inside the office the work was going on rapidly. The door is opened and the guard calls Piotr Sidorov. Piotr Sidorov starts, crosses himself, and goes into a little room with a glass door, where the conscripts undress. A comrade of

Piotr Sidorov's, who has just been passed for service, and come naked out of the revision office, is dressing hurriedly, his teeth chattering. Sidorov has already heard the news, and can see from his face too that he has been taken. He wants to ask him questions, but they hurry him and tell him to make haste and undress. He throws off his pelisse, slips his boots off his feet, takes off his waistcoat and draws his shirt over his headland naked, trembling all over, and exhaling an odor of tobacco, spirits, and sweat, goes into the revision office, not knowing what to do with his brawny bare arms.

Directly facing him in the revision office hangs in a great gold frame a portrait of the Tzar in full uniform with decorations, and in the corner a little portrait of Christ in a shirt and a crown of thorns. In the middle of the room is a table covered with green cloth, on which there are papers lying and a three-cornered ornament surmounted by an eagle - the zertzal. Round the table are sitting the revising officers, looking collected and indifferent. One is smoking a cigarette; another is looking through some papers. Directly Sidorov comes in, a guard goes up to him, places him under the measuring frame, raising him under his chin, and straightening his legs.

The man with the cigarette - he is the doctor - comes up, and without looking at the recruit's face, but somewhere beyond it, feels his body over with an air of disgust, measures him, tests him, tells the guard to open his mouth, tells him to breathe, to speak. Someone notes something down. At last without having once looked him in the face the doctor says, "Right. Next one!" and with a weary air sits down again at the table. The soldiers again hustle and hurry the lad. He somehow gets into his trousers, wraps his feet in rags, puts on his boots, looks for his scarf and cap, and bundles his pelisse under his arm. Then they lead him into the main hall, shutting him off apart from the rest by a

bench, behind which all the conscripts who have been passed for service are waiting. Another village lad like himself, but from a distant province, now a soldier armed with a gun with a sharp-pointed bayonet at the end, keeps watch over him, ready to run him through the body if he should think of trying to escape.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives, hustled by the police, are pressing round the doors to hear whose lad has been taken, whose is let off. One of the rejected comes out and announces that Piotr is taken, and at once a shrill cry is heard from Piotr's young wife, for whom this word "taken" means separation for four or five years, the life of a soldier's wife as a servant, often a prostitute.

But here comes a man along the street with flowing hair and in a peculiar dress, who gets out of his droskhy and goes into the Zemsky Court-house. The police clear a way for him through the crowd. It is the reverend father "come to administer the oath, And this father," who has been persuaded that he is specially and exclusively devoted to the service of Christ, and who, for the most part, does not himself see the deception in which he lives, goes into the hall where the conscripts are waiting. He throws round him a kind of curtain of brocade, pulls his long hair out over it, opens the very Gospel in which swearing is forbidden, takes the cross, the very cross on which Christ was crucified because he would not do what this false servant of his is telling men to do, and puts them on the lectern. And all these unhappy, defenseless, and deluded lads repeat after him the lie, which he utters with the assurance of familiarity.

He reads and they repeat after him:

"I promise and swear by Almighty God upon his holy Gospel," etc., "to defend," etc., and that is, to murder

anyone I am told to, and to do everything I am told by men I know nothing of, and who care nothing for me except as an instrument for perpetrating the crimes by which they are kept in their position of power, and my brothers in their condition of misery. All the conscripts repeat these ferocious words without thinking. And then the so-called "father" goes away with a sense of having correctly and conscientiously done his duty. And all these poor deluded lads believe that these nonsensical and incomprehensible words which they have just uttered set them free for the whole time of their service from their duties as men, and lay upon them fresh and more binding duties as soldiers.

And this crime is perpetrated publicly and no one cries out to the deceiving and the deceived: "Think what you are doing; this is the basest, falsest lie, by which not bodies only, but souls too, are destroyed."

No one does this. On the contrary, when all have been enrolled, and they are to be let out again, the military officer goes with a confident and majestic air into the hall where the drunken, cheated lads are shut up, and cries in a bold, military voice: "Your health, my lads congratulate you on I serving the Tzar!" And they, poor fellows (someone has given them a hint beforehand), mutter awkwardly, their voices thick with drink, something to the effect that they are glad.

Meantime the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives is standing at the doors waiting. The women keep their tearful eyes fixed on the doors. They open at last, and out come the conscripts, unsteady, but trying to put a good face on it. Here are Piotr and Vania and Makar trying not to look their dear ones in the face. Nothing is heard but the wailing of the wives and mothers. Some of the lads embrace them and weep with them, others make a show of courage, and others try to comfort them.

The wives and mothers, knowing that they will be left for three, four, or five years without their breadwinners, weep and rehearse their woes aloud. The fathers say little. They only utter a clucking sound with their tongues and sigh mournfully, knowing that they will see no more of the steady lads they have reared and trained to help them, that they will come back not the same quiet hard-working laborers, but for the most part conceited and demoralized, unfitted for their simple life.

And then all the crowd get into their sledges again and move away down the street to the taverns and pot-houses, and louder than ever sounds the medley of singing and sobbing, drunken shouts, and the wailing of the wives and mothers, the sounds of the accordion and oaths. They all turn into the taverns, whose revenues go to the government, and the drinking bout begins, which stifles their sense of the wrong which is being done them.

For two or three weeks they go on living at home, and most of that time they are "jaunting," that is, drinking.

On a fixed day they collect them, drive them together like a flock of sheep, and begin to train them in the military exercises and drill. Their teachers are fellows like themselves, only deceived and brutalized two or three years sooner. The means of instruction are: deception, stupefaction, blows and vodka. And before a year has passed these good, intelligent, healthy-minded lads will be as brutal beings as their instructors.

"Come, now, suppose your father were arrested and tried to make his escape?" I asked a young soldier.

"I should run him through with my bayonet," he answered with the foolish intonation peculiar to soldiers; "and if he

made off, I ought to shoot him," he added, obviously proud of knowing what he must do if his father were escaping.

And when a good-hearted lad has been brought to a state lower than that of a brute, he is just what is wanted by those who use him as an instrument of violence. He is ready; the man has been destroyed and a new instrument of violence has been created. And all this is done every year, every autumn, everywhere, through all Russia in broad daylight in the midst of large towns, where all may see it, and the deception is so clever, so skillful, that though all men know the infamy of it in their hearts, and see all its horrible results, they cannot throw it off and be free.



### PART THREE

When one's eyes are opened to this awful deception practiced upon us, one marvels that the teachers of the Christian religion and of morals, the instructors of youth, or even the good-hearted and intelligent parents who are to be found in every society, can teach any kind of morality in a society in which it is openly admitted (it is so admitted, under all governments and all churches) that murder and torture form an indispensable element in the life of all, and that there must always be special men trained to kill their fellows, and that any one of us may. have to become such a trained assassin.

How can children, youths, and people generally be taught any kind of morality - not to speak of teaching in the spirit of Christianity - side by side with the doctrine that murder is necessary for the public weal, and therefore legitimate, and that there are men, of whom each of us may have to be one, whose duty is to murder and torture and commit all sorts of crimes at the will of those who are in possession of authority. If this is so, and one can and ought to murder and torture, there is not, and cannot be, any kind of moral law, but only the law that might is right. And this is just how it is. In reality that is the doctrine justified to some by the theory of the struggle for existence which reigns in our society.

And, indeed, what sort of ethical doctrine could admit the legitimacy of murder for any object whatever? It is as impossible as a theory of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three.

There may be a semblance of mathematics admitting that two is equal to three, but there can be no real science of mathematics. And there can only be a semblance of ethics in which murder in the shape of war and the execution of

criminals is allowed, but no true ethics. The recognition of the life of every man as sacred is the first and only basis of all ethics.

The doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth has been abrogated by Christianity, because it is the justification of immorality, and a mere semblance of equity, and has no real meaning. Life is a value which has no weight nor size, and cannot be compared to any other, and so there is no sense in destroying a life for a life. Besides, every social law aims at the amelioration of man's life. What way, then, can the annihilation of the life of some men ameliorate men's life? Annihilation of life cannot be a means of the amelioration of life; it is a suicidal act.

To destroy another life for the sake of justice is as though a man, to repair the misfortune of losing one arm, should cut off the other arm for the sake of equity.

But putting aside the sin of deluding men into regarding the most awful crime as a duty, putting aside the revolting sin of using the name and authority of Christ to sanction what he most condemned, not to speak of the curse on those who cause these "little ones" to offend - how can people who cherish their own way of life, their progress, even from the point of view of their personal security, allow the formation in their midst of an overwhelming force as senseless, cruel, and destructive as every government is organized on the basis of an army? Even the most cruel band of brigands is not so much to be dreaded as such a government.

The power of every brigand chief is at least so far limited that the men of his band preserve at least some human liberty, and can refuse to commit acts opposed to their conscience. But, owing to the perfection to which the discipline of the army has been brought, there is no limit to

check men who form part of a regularly organized government. There are no crimes so revolting that they would not readily be committed by men who form part of a government or army, at the will of anyone (such as Boulanger, Napoleon, or Pougachef) who may chance to be at their head.

Often when one sees conscription levies, military drills and maneuvers, police officers with loaded revolvers, and sentinels at their posts with bayonets on their rifles; when one hears for whole days at a time (as I hear it in Hamovniky where I live) the whistle of balls and the dull thud as they fall in the sand; when one sees in the midst of a town where any effort at violence in self-defense is forbidden, where the sale of powder and of chemicals, where furious driving and practicing as a doctor without a diploma, and so on, are not allowed, thousands of disciplined troops, trained to murder, and subject to one man's will; one asks oneself how can people who prize their security quietly allow it, and put up with it? Apart from the immorality and evil effects of it, nothing can possibly be more unsafe. What are people thinking about? I don't mean now Christians, ministers of religion, philanthropists, and moralists, but simply people who value their life, their security, and their comfort. This organization, we know, will work just as well in one man's hands as another's. Today, let us assume, power is in the hands of a ruler who can be endured, but tomorrow it may be seized by a Biron, an Elizabeth, a Catherine, a Pougachef, a Napoleon I., or a Napoleon III.

And the man in authority, endurable today, may become a brute tomorrow, or may be succeeded by a mad or imbecile heir, like the King of Bavaria or our Paul I.

And not only the highest authorities, but all little satraps scattered over everywhere, like so many General Baranovs,

governors, police officers even, and commanders of companies, can perpetrate the most awful crimes before there is time for them to be removed from office. And this is what is constantly happening.

One involuntarily asks how can men let it go on, not from higher considerations only, but from regard to their own safety?

The answer to this question is that it is not all people who do tolerate it (some - the greater proportion - deluded and submissive, have no choice and have to tolerate anything). It is tolerated by those who only under such an organization can occupy a position of profit. They tolerate it, because for them the risks of suffering from a foolish or cruel man being at the head of the government or the army are always less than the disadvantages to which they would be exposed by the destruction of the organization itself.

A judge, a commander of police, a governor, or an officer will keep his position just the same under Boulanger or the republic, under Pougachef or Catherine. He will lose his profitable position for certain, if the existing order of things which secured it to him is destroyed. And so all these people feel no uneasiness as to who is at the head of the organization, they will adapt themselves to anyone; they only dread the downfall of the organization itself, and that is the reason - though often an unconscious one - that they support it.

One often wonders why independent people, who are not forced to do so in any way, the so-called *elite* of society, should go into the army in Russia, England, Germany, Austria, and even France, and seek opportunities of becoming murderers. Why do even high-principled parents send their boys to military schools? Why do mothers buy their children toy helmets, guns, and swords as playthings?

(The peasant's children never play at soldiers, by the way). Why do good men and even women, who have certainly no interest in war, go into raptures over the various exploits of Skobeloff and others, and vie with one another in glorifying them? Why do men, who are not obliged to do so, and get no fee for it, devote, like the marshals of nobility in Russia, whole months of toil to a business physically disagreeable and morally painful - the enrolling of conscripts? Why do all kings and emperors wear the military uniform? Why do they all hold military reviews, why do they organize maneuvers, distribute rewards to the military, and raise monuments to generals and successful commanders? Why do rich men of independent position consider it an honor to perform a valet's duties in attendance on crowned personages, flattering them and cringing to them and pretending to believe in their peculiar superiority? Why do men who have ceased to believe in the superstitions of the medieval Church, and who could not possibly believe in them seriously and consistently, pretend to believe in and give their support to the demoralizing and blasphemous institution of the church? Why is it that not only governments but private persons of the higher classes, try so jealously to maintain the ignorance of the people? Why do they fall with such fury on any effort at breaking down religious superstitious or really enlightening the people? Why do historians, novelists, and poets, who have no hope of gaining anything by their flatteries, make heroes of kings, emperors, and conquerors of past times? Why do men, who call themselves learned, dedicate whole lifetimes to making theories to prove that violence employed by authority against the people is not violence at all, but a special right? One often wonders why a fashionable lady or an artist, who, one would think, would take no interest in political or military questions, should always condemn strikes of working people, and defend war; and should always be found without hesitation opposed to the one, favorable to the other.

But one no longer wonders when one realizes that in the higher classes there is an unerring instinct of what tends to maintain and of what tends to destroy the organization by virtue of which they enjoy their privileges. The fashionable lady had certainly not reasoned out that if there were no capitalists and no army to defend them, her husband would have no fortune, and she could not have her entertainments and her ball-dresses. And the artist certainly does not argue that he needs the capitalists and the troops to defend them, so that they may buy his pictures. But instinct, replacing reason in this instance, guides them unerringly. And it is precisely this instinct which leads all men, with few exceptions, to support all the religious, political, and economic institutions which are to their advantage.

But is it possible that the higher classes support the existing order of things simply because it is to their advantage? Cannot they see that this order of things is essentially irrational, that it is no longer consistent with the stage of moral development attained by people, and with public opinion, and that it is fraught with perils? The governing classes, or at least the good, honest, and intelligent people of them, cannot but suffer from these fundamental inconsistencies, and see the dangers with which they are threatened. And is it possible that all the millions of the lower classes can feel easy in conscience when they commit such obviously evil deeds as torture and murder from fear of punishment? Indeed, it could not be so, neither the former nor the latter could fail to see the irrationality of their conduct, if the complexity of government organization did not obscure the unnatural senselessness of their actions.

So many instigate, assist, or sanction the commission of every one of these actions that no one who has a hand in them feels himself morally responsible for it.

It is the custom among assassins to oblige all the witnesses of a murder to strike the murdered victim, that the responsibility may be divided among as large a number of people as possible. The same principle in different forms is applied under the government organization in the perpetration of the crimes, without which no government organization could exist. Rulers always try to implicate as many citizens as possible in all the crimes committed in their support.

Of late this tendency has been expressed in a very obvious manner by the obligation of all citizens to take part in legal processes as jurors, in the army as soldiers, in the local government, or legislative assembly, as electors or members.

Just as in a wicker basket all the ends are so hidden away that it is hard to find them, in the state organization the responsibility for the crimes committed is so hidden away that men will commit the most atrocious acts without seeing their responsibility for them.

In ancient times tyrants got credit for the crimes they committed, but in our day the most atrocious infamies, inconceivable under the Neros, are perpetrated and no one gets blamed for them.

One set of people have suggested, another set have proposed, a third have reported, a fourth have decided, a fifth have confirmed, a sixth have given the order, and a seventh set of men have carried it out. They hang, they flog to death women, old men, and innocent people, as was done recently among us in Russia at the Yuzovsky factory, and is always being done everywhere in Europe and America in the struggle with the anarchists and all other rebels against the existing order; they shoot and hang men by hundreds and thousands, or massacre millions in war, or

break men's hearts in solitary confinement, and ruin their souls in the corruption of a soldier's life, and no one is responsible.

At the bottom of the social scale soldiers, armed with guns, pistols, and sabers, injure and murder people, and compel men through these means to enter the army, and are absolutely convinced that the responsibility for the actions rests solely on the officers who command them.

At the top of the scale - the Tzars, presidents, ministers, and parliaments decree these tortures and murders and military conscription, and are fully convinced that since they are either placed in authority by the grace of God or by the society they govern, which demands such decrees from them, they cannot be held responsible. Between these two extremes are the intermediary personages who superintend the murders and other acts of violence, and are fully convinced that the responsibility is taken off their shoulders partly by their superiors who have given the order, partly by the fact that such orders are expected from them by all who are at the bottom of the scale.

The authority who gives the orders and the authority who executes them at the two extreme ends of the state organization, meet together like the two ends of a ring they support and rest on one another and enclose all that lies within the ring.

Without the conviction that there is a person or persons who will take the whole responsibility of his acts, not one soldier would ever lift a hand to commit a murder or other deed of violence.

Without the conviction that it is expected by the whole people not a single king, emperor, president, or parliament would order murders or acts of violence.



Without the conviction that there are persons of a higher grade who will take the responsibility, and people of a lower grade who require such acts for their welfare, not one of the intermediate class would superintend such deeds.

The state is so organized that wherever a man is placed in the social scale, his irresponsibility is the same. The higher his grade the more he is under the influence of demands from below, and the less he is controlled by orders from above, and *vice versa*.

All men, then, bound together by state organization, throw the responsibility of their acts on one another, the peasant soldier on the nobleman or merchant who is his officer, and the officer on the nobleman who has been appointed governor, the governor on the nobleman or son of an official who is minister, the minister on the member of the royal family who occupies the post of Tzar, and the Tzar again on all these officials, noblemen, merchants, and peasants. But that is not all. Besides the fact that men (yet rid of the sense of responsibility for their actions in this way, they lose their moral sense of responsibility also, by the fact that in forming themselves into a state organization they persuade themselves and each other so continually, and so indefatigably, that they are not all equal, but "as the stars apart," that they come to believe it genuinely themselves. Thus some are persuaded that they are not simple people like everyone else, but special people who are to be specially honored. It is instilled into another set of men by every possible means that they are inferior to others, and therefore must submit without a murmur to every order given them by their superiors.

On this inequality, above all, on the elevation of some and the degradation of others, rests the capacity men have of being blind to the insanity of the existing order of life, and

all the cruelty and criminality of the deception practiced by one set of men on another.

Those in whom the idea has been instilled that they are invested with a special supernatural grandeur and consequence, are so intoxicated with a sense of their own imaginary dignity that they cease to feel their responsibility for what they do.

While those, on the other hand, in whom the idea is fostered that they are inferior animals, bound to obey their superiors in everything, fall, through this perpetual humiliation, into a strange condition of stupefied servility, and in this stupefied state do not see the significance of their actions and lose all consciousness of responsibility for what they do.

The intermediate class, who obey the orders of their superiors on the one and regard themselves as superior beings on the other, are intoxicated by power and stupefied by servility at the same time and so lose the sense of their responsibility.

One need only glance during a review at the commander-in-chief, intoxicated with self-importance, followed by his retinue, all on magnificent and gayly appareled horses, in splendid uniforms and wearing decorations, and see how they ride to the harmonious and solemn strains of music before the ranks of soldiers, all presenting arms and petrified with servility. One need only glance at this spectacle to understand that at such moments, when they are in a state of the most complete intoxication, commander-in-chief, soldiers, and intermediate officers alike, would be capable of committing crimes of which they would never dream under other conditions.

The intoxication produced by such stimulants as parades, reviews, religious solemnities, and coronations, is, however, an acute and temporary condition; but there are other forms of chronic, permanent intoxication, to which those are liable who have any kind of authority, from that of the Tzar to that of the lowest police officer at the street corner, and also those who are in subjection to authority and in a state of stupefied servility. The latter, like all slaves, always find a justification for their own servility, in ascribing the greatest possible dignity and importance to those they serve.

It is principally through this false idea of inequality, and the intoxication of power and of servility resulting from it, that men associated in a state organization are enabled to commit acts opposed to their conscience without the least scruple or remorse.

Under the influence of this intoxication, men imagine themselves no longer simply men as they are, but some special beings - noblemen, merchants, governors, judges, officers, tzars, ministers, or soldiers - no longer bound by ordinary human duties, but by other duties far more weighty - the peculiar duties of a nobleman, merchant, governor, judge, officer, czar, minister, or soldier.

Thus the landowner, who claimed the forest, acted as he did only because he fancied himself not a simple man, having the same rights to life as the peasants living beside him and everyone else, but a great landowner, a member of the nobility, and under the influence of the intoxication of power he felt his dignity offended by the peasants' claims. It was only through this feeling that, without considering the consequences that might follow, he sent in a claim to be reinstated in his pretended rights.

In the same way the judges, who wrongfully adjudged the forest to the proprietor, did so simply because they fancied themselves not simply men like everyone else, and so bound to be guided in everything only by what they consider right, but, under the intoxicating influence of power, imagined themselves the representatives of the justice which cannot err; while under the intoxicating influence of servility they imagined themselves bound to carry out to the letter the instructions inscribed in a certain book, the so-called law. In the same way all who take part in such an affair, from the highest representative of authority who signs his assent to the report, from the superintendent presiding at the recruiting sessions, and the priest who deludes the recruits, to the lowest soldier who is ready now to fire on his own brothers, imagine, in the intoxication of power or of servility, that they are some conventional characters. They do not face the question that is presented to them, whether or not they ought to take part in what their conscience judges an evil act, but fancy themselves various conventional personages one as the Tzar, God's anointed, an exceptional being, called to watch over the happiness of one hundred millions of men; another as the representative of nobility; another as a priest, who has received special grace by his ordination; another as a soldier, bound by his military oath to carry out all he is commanded without reflection.

Only under the intoxication of the power or the servility of their imagined positions could all these people act as they do.

Were not they all firmly convinced that their respective vocations of tzar, minister, governor, judge, nobleman, landowner, superintendent, officer, and soldier are something real and important, not one of them would even think without horror and aversion of taking part in what they do now.

The conventional positions, established hundreds of years, recognized for centuries and by everyone, distinguished by special names and dresses, and, moreover, confirmed by every kind of solemnity, have so penetrated into men's minds through their senses, that, forgetting the ordinary conditions of life common to all, they look at themselves and everyone only from this conventional point of view, and are guided in their estimation of their own actions and those of others by this conventional standard.

Thus we see a man of perfect sanity and ripe age, simply because he is decked out with some fringe, or embroidered keys on his coat tails, or a colored ribbon only fit for some gayly dressed girl, and is told that he is a general, a chamberlain, a knight of the order of St. Andrew, or some similar nonsense, suddenly become self-important, proud, and even happy, or, on the contrary, grow melancholy and unhappy to the point of falling ill, because he has failed to obtain the expected decoration or title. Or what is still more striking, a young man, perfectly sane in every other matter, independent and beyond the fear of want, simply because he has been appointed judicial prosecutor or district commander, separates a poor widow from her little children, and shuts her up in prison, leaving her children uncared for, all because the unhappy woman carried on a secret trade in spirits, and so deprived the revenue of twenty-five rubles, and he does not feel the least pang of remorse. Or what is still more amazing; a man, otherwise sensible and good-hearted, simply because he is given a badge or a uniform to wear, and told that he is a guard or customs officer, is ready to fire on people, and neither he nor those around him regard him as to blame for it, but, on the contrary, would regard him as to blame if he did not fire. To say nothing of judges and juries who condemn men to death, and soldiers who kill men by thousands without the slightest scruple merely because it has been instilled

into them that they are not simply men, but jurors, judges, generals, and soldiers.

This strange and abnormal condition of men under state organization is usually expressed in the following words: as a man, I pity him; but as guard, judge, general, governor, tzar, or soldier, it is my duty to kill or torture him." Just as though there were some positions conferred and recognized, which would exonerate us from the obligations laid on each of us by the fact of our common humanity.

So, for example, in the case before us, men are going to murder and torture the famishing, and they admit that in the dispute between the peasants and the landowner the peasants are right (all those in command said as much to me). They know that the peasants are wretched, poor, and hungry, and the landowner is rich and inspires no sympathy. Yet they are all going to kill the peasants to secure three thousand rubles for the landowner, only because at that moment they fancy themselves not men but governor, official, general of police, officer, and soldier, respectively, and consider themselves bound to obey, not the eternal demands of the conscience of man, but the casual, temporary demands of their positions as officers or soldiers.

Strange as it may seem, the sole explanation of this astonishing phenomenon is that they are in the condition of the hypnotized, who, they say, feel and act like the creatures they are commanded by the hypnotizer to represent. When, for instance, it is suggested to the hypnotized subject that he is lame, he begins to walk lame, that he is blind, and he cannot see, that he is a wild beast, and he begins to bite. This is the state, not only of those who were going on this expedition, but of all men who fulfill their state and social duties in preference to and in detriment of their human duties.

The essence of this state is that under the influence of one suggestion they lose the power of criticizing their actions, and therefore do, without thinking, everything consistent with the suggestion to which they are led by example, precept, or insinuation.

The difference between those hypnotized by scientific men and those under the influence of the state hypnotism, is that an imaginary position is suggested to the former suddenly by one person in a very brief space of time, and so the hypnotized state appears to us in a striking and surprising form, while the imaginary position suggested by state influence is induced slowly, little by little, imperceptibly from childhood, sometimes during years, or even generations, and not in one person alone but in a whole society.

"But," it will be said, "at all times, in all societies, the majority of persons - all the children, all the women absorbed in the bearing and rearing of the young, all the great mass of the laboring population, who are under the necessity of incessant and fatiguing physical labor, all those of weak character by nature, all those who are abnormally enfeebled intellectually by the effects of nicotine, alcohol, opium, or other intoxicants - are always in a condition of incapacity for independent thought, and are either in subjection to those who are on a higher intellectual level, or else under the influence of family or social traditions, of what is called public opinion, and there is nothing unnatural or incongruous in their subjection."

And truly there is nothing unnatural in it, and the tendency of men of small intellectual power to follow the lead of those on a higher level of intelligence is a constant law, and it is owing to it that men can live in societies and on the same principles at all. The minority consciously adopt

certain rational principles through their correspondence with reason, while the majority act on the same principles unconsciously because it is required by public opinion.

Such subjection to public opinion on the part of the unintellectual does not assume an unnatural character till the public opinion is split into two.

But there are times when a higher truth, revealed at first to a few persons, gradually gains ground till it has taken hold of such a number of persons that the old public opinion, founded on a lower order of truths, begins to totter and the new is ready to take its place, but has not yet been firmly established. It is like the spring, this time of transition, when the old order of ideas has not quite broken up and the new has not quite gained a footing. Men begin to criticize their actions in the light of the new truth, but in the meantime in practice, through inertia and tradition, they continue to follow the principles which once represented the highest point of rational consciousness, but are now in flagrant contradiction with it.

Then men are in an abnormal, wavering condition, feeling the necessity of following the new ideal, and yet not bold enough to break with the old-established traditions.

Such is the attitude in regard to the truth of Christianity not only of the men in the Toulou train, but of the majority of men of our times, alike of the higher and the lower orders.

Those of the ruling classes, having no longer any reasonable justification for the profitable positions they occupy, are forced, in order to keep them, to stifle their higher rational faculty of loving, and to persuade themselves that their positions are indispensable. And those of the lower classes, exhausted by toil and brutalized of set purpose, are kept in a permanent deception, practiced



deliberately and continuously by the higher classes upon them.

Only in this way can one explain the amazing contradictions with which our life is full, and of which a striking example was presented to me by the expedition I met on the 9th of September; good, peaceful men, known to me personally, going with untroubled tranquillity to perpetrate the most beastly, senseless, and vile of crimes. Had not they some means of stifling their conscience, not one of them would be capable of committing a hundredth part of such a villainy.

It is not that they have not a conscience which forbids them from acting thus, just as, even three or four hundred years ago, when people burnt men at the stake and put them to the rack they had a conscience which prohibited it; the conscience is there, but it has been put to sleep - in those in command by what the psychologists call auto-suggestion; in the soldiers, by the direct conscious hypnotizing exerted by the higher classes.

Though asleep, the conscience is there, and in spite of the hypnotism it is already speaking in them, and it may awake.

All these men are in a position like that of a man under hypnotism, commanded to do something opposed to everything he regards as good and rational, such as to kill his mother or his child. The hypnotized subject feels himself bound to carry out the suggestion - he thinks he cannot stop - but the nearer he gets to the time and the place of the action, the more the benumbed conscience begins to stir, to resist, and to try to awake. And no one can say beforehand whether he will carry out the suggestion or not; which will gain the upper hand, the rational conscience

or the irrational suggestion. It all depends on their relative strength.

That is just the case with the men in the Toula train and in general with everyone carrying out acts of state violence in our day.

There was a time when men who set out with the object of murder and violence, to make an example, did not return till they had carried out their object, and then, untroubled by doubts or scruples, having calmly flogged men to death, they returned home and caressed their children, laughed, amused themselves, and enjoyed the peaceful pleasures of family life. In those days it never struck the landowners and wealthy men who profited by these crimes, that the privileges they enjoyed had any direct connection with these atrocities. But now it is no longer so. Men know now, or are not far from knowing, what they are doing and for what object they do it. They can shut their eyes and force their conscience to be still, but so long as their eyes are opened and their conscience undulled, they must all - those who carry out and those who profit by these crimes alike - see the import of them. Sometimes they realize it only after the crime has been perpetrated, sometimes they realize it just before its perpetration. Thus those who commanded the recent acts of violence in Nijni-Novgorod, Saratov, Orel, and the Yuzovsky factory realized their significance only after their perpetration, and now those who commanded and those who carried out these crimes are ashamed before public opinion and their conscience. I have talked to soldiers who had taken part in these crimes, and they always studiously turned the conversation off the subject, and when they spoke of it it was with horror and bewilderment. There are cases, too, when men come to themselves just before the perpetration of the crime. Thus I know the case of a sergeant-major who had been beaten by two peasants during the repression of disorder and had

made a complaint. The next day, after seeing the atrocities perpetrated on the other peasants, he entreated the commander of his company to tear up his complaint and let off the two peasants. I know cases when soldiers, commanded to fire, have refused to obey, and I know many cases of officers who have refused to command expeditions for torture and murder. So that men sometimes come to their senses long before perpetrating the suggested crime, sometimes at the very moment before perpetrating it, sometimes only afterward.

The men traveling in the Toula train were going with the object of killing and injuring their fellow-creatures, but none could tell whether they would carry out their object or not. However obscure his responsibility for the affair is to each, and however strong the idea instilled into all of them that they are not men, but governors, officials, officers, and soldiers, and as such beings can violate every human duty, the nearer they approach the place of the execution, the stronger their doubts as to its being right, and this doubt will reach its highest point when the very moment for carrying it out has come.

The governor, in spite of all the stupefying effect of his surroundings, cannot help hesitating when the moment comes to give final decisive command. He knows that the action of the Governor of Orel has called down upon him the disapproval of the best people, and he himself, influenced by the public opinion of the circles in which he moves, has more than once expressed his disapprobation of him. He knows that the prosecutor, who ought to have come, flatly refused to have anything to do with it, because he regarded it as disgraceful. He knows, too, that there may be changes any day in the government, and that what was a ground for advancement yesterday may be the cause of disgrace tomorrow. And he knows that there is a press, if not in Russia, at least abroad, which may report the affair

and cover him with ignominy forever. He is already conscious of a change in public opinion which condemns what was formerly a duty. Moreover, he cannot feel fully assured that his soldiers will at the last moment obey him. He is wavering, and none can say beforehand what he will do.

All the officers and functionaries who accompany him experience in greater or less degree the same emotions. In the depths of their hearts they all know that what they are doing is shameful, that to take part in it is a discredit and blemish in the eyes of some people whose opinion they value. They know that after murdering and torturing the defenseless, each of them will be ashamed to face his betrothed or the woman he is courting. And besides, they too, like the governor, are doubtful whether the soldiers' obedience to orders can be reckoned on. What a contrast with the confident air they all put on as they sauntered about the station and platform! Inwardly they were not only in a state of suffering but even of suspense. Indeed they only assumed this bold and composed manner to conceal the wavering within. And this feeling increased as they drew near the scene of action.

And imperceptible as it was, and strange as it seems to say so, all that mass of lads, the soldiers, who seemed so submissive, were in precisely the same condition.

These are not the soldiers of former days, who gave up the natural life of industry and devoted their whole existence to debauchery, plunder, and murder, like the Roman legionaries or the warriors of the Thirty Years War, or even the soldiers of more recent times who served for twenty-five years in the army. They have mostly been only lately taken from their families, and are full of the recollections of the good, rational, natural life they have left behind them.

All these lads, peasants for the most part, know what is the business they have come about; they know that the landowners always oppress their brothers the peasants, and that therefore it is most likely the same thing here. Moreover, a majority of them can now read, and the books they read are not all such as exalt a military life; there are some which point out its immorality. Among them are often free-thinking comrades - who have enlisted voluntarily - or young officers of liberal ideas, and already the first germ of doubt has been sown in regard to the unconditional legitimacy and glory of their occupation.

It is true that they have all passed through that terrible, skillful education, elaborated through centuries, which kills all initiative in a man, and that they are so trained to mechanical obedience that at the word of command: "Fire! - All the line! - Fire!" and so on, their guns will rise of themselves and the habitual movements will be performed. But "Fire!" now does not mean shooting into the sand for amusement, it means firing on their broken-down, exploited fathers and brothers whom they see there in the crowd, with women and children shouting and waving their arms. Here they are - one with his scanty beard and patched coat and plaited shoes of reed, just like the father left at home in Kazan or Riazan province; one with gray beard and bent back, leaning on a staff like the old grandfather; one, a young fellow in boots and a red shirt, just as he was himself a year ago - he, the soldier who must fire upon him. There, too, a woman in reed shoes and panyova, just like the mother left at home.

Is it possible they must fire on them? And no one knows what each soldier will do at the last minute. The least word, the slightest allusion would be enough to stop them.

At the last moment they will all find themselves in the position of a hypnotized man to whom it has been

suggested to chop a log, who coming up to what has been indicated to him is a log, with the axe already lifted to strike, sees that it is not a log but his sleeping brother. He may perform the act that has been suggested to him, and he may come to his senses at the moment of performing it. In the same way all these men may come to themselves in time or they may go on to the end.

If they do not come to themselves, the most fearful crime will be committed, as in Orel, and then the hypnotic suggestion under which they act will be strengthened in all other men. If they do come to themselves, not only this terrible crime will not be perpetrated, but many also who hear of the turn the affair has taken will be emancipated from the hypnotic influence in which they were held, or at least will be nearer being emancipated from it.

Even if a few only come to themselves, and boldly explain to the others all the wickedness of such a crime, the influence of these few may rouse the others to shake off the controlling suggestion, and the atrocity will not be perpetrated.

More than that, if a few men, even of those who are not taking part in the affair but are only present at the preparations for it, or have heard of such things being done in the past, do not remain indifferent but boldly and plainly express their detestation of such crimes to those who have to execute them, and point out to them all the senselessness, cruelty, and wickedness of such acts, that alone will be productive of good.

That was what took place in the instance before us. It was enough for a few men, some personally concerned in the affair and others simply outsiders, to express their disapproval of floggings that had taken place elsewhere, and their contempt and loathing for those who had taken

part in inflicting them, for a few persons in the Toula case to express their repugnance to having any share in it; for a lady traveling by the train, and a few other bystanders at the station, to express to those who formed the expedition their disgust at what they were doing; for one of the commanders of a company, who was asked for troops for the restoration of order, to reply that soldiers ought not to be butchers - and thanks to these and a few other seemingly insignificant influences brought to bear on these hypnotized men, the affair took a completely different turn, and the troops, when they reached the place, did not inflict any punishment, but contented themselves with cutting down the forest and giving it to the landowner.

Had not a few persons had a clear consciousness that what they were doing was wrong, and consequently influenced one another in that direction, what was done at Orel would have taken place at Toula. Had this consciousness been still stronger, and had the influence exerted been therefore greater than it was, it might well have been that the governor with his troops would not even have ventured to cut down the forest and give it to the landowner. Had that consciousness been stronger still, it might well have been that the governor would not have ventured to go to the scene of action at all; even that the minister would not have ventured to form this decision or the Tzar to ratify it.

## PART FOUR

All depends, therefore, on the strength of the consciousness of Christian truth on the part of each individual man.

And, therefore, one would have thought that the efforts of all men of the present day who profess to wish to work for the welfare of humanity would have been directed to strengthening this consciousness of Christian truth in themselves and others.

But, strange to say, it is precisely those people who profess most anxiety for the amelioration of human life, and are regarded as the leaders of public opinion, who assert that there is no need to do that, and that there are other more effective means for the amelioration of men's condition. They affirm that the amelioration of human life is effected not by the efforts of individual men, to recognize and propagate the truth, but by the gradual modification of the general conditions of life, and that therefore the efforts of individuals should be directed to the gradual modification of external conditions for the better. For every advocacy of a truth inconsistent with the existing order by an individual is, they maintain, not only useless but injurious, since it provokes coercive measures on the part of the authorities, restricting these individuals from continuing any action useful to society. According to this doctrine all modifications in human life are brought about by precisely the same laws as in the life of the animals.

So that, according to this doctrine, all the founders of religions, such as Moses and the prophets, Confucius, Lao Tse, Buddha, Christ, and others, preached their doctrines and their followers accepted them, not because they loved the truth, but because the political, social, and above all economic conditions of the peoples among whom these



religions arose were favorable for their origination and development.

And therefore the chief efforts of the man who wishes to serve society and improve the condition of humanity ought, according to this doctrine, to be directed not to the elucidation and propagation of truth, but to the improvement of the external political, social, and above all economic conditions. And the modification of these conditions is partly effected by serving the government and introducing liberal and progressive principles into it, partly in promoting the development of industry and the propagation of socialistic ideas, and most of all by the diffusion of science. According to this theory it is of no consequence whether you profess the truth revealed to you, and therefore realize it in your life, or at least refrain from committing actions opposed to the truth, such as serving the government and strengthening its authority when you regard it as injurious, profiting by the capitalistic system when you regard it as wrong, showing veneration for various ceremonies which you believe to be degrading superstitions, giving support to the law when you believe it to be founded on error, serving as a soldier, taking oaths, and lying, and lowering yourself generally. It is useless to refrain from all that; what is of use is not altering the existing forms of life, but submitting to them against your own convictions, introducing liberalism into the existing institutions, promoting commerce, the propaganda of socialism, and the triumphs of what is called science, and the diffusion of education. According to this theory one can remain a landowner, merchant, manufacturer, judge, official in government pay, officer or soldier, and still be not only a humane man, but even a socialist and revolutionist.

Hypocrisy, which had formerly only a religious basis in the doctrine of original sin, the redemption, and the Church,

has in our day gained a new scientific basis and has consequently caught in its nets all those who had reached too high a stage of development to be able to find support in religious hypocrisy. So that while in former days a man who professed the religion of the Church could take part in all the crimes of the state, and profit by them, and still regard himself as free from any taint of sin, so long as he fulfilled the external observances of his creed, nowadays all who do not believe in the Christianity of the Church, find similar well-founded irrefutable reasons in science for regarding themselves as blameless and even highly moral in spite of their participation in the misdeeds of government and the advantages they gain from them.

A rich landowner - not only in Russia, but in France, England, Germany, or America - lives on the rents exacted from the people living on his land, and robs these generally poverty-stricken people of all he can get from them. This man's right of property in the land rests on the fact that at every effort on the part of the oppressed people, without his consent, to make use of the land he considers his, troops are called out to subject them to punishment and murder. One would have thought that it was obvious that a man living ill this way was an evil, egoistic creature and could not possibly consider himself a Christian or a liberal. One would have supposed it evident that the first thing such a man must do, if he wishes to approximate to Christianity or liberalism, would be to cease to plunder and ruin men by means of acts of state violence in support of his claim to the land. And so it would be if it were not for the logic of hypocrisy, which reasons that from a religious point of view possession or non-possession of land is of no consequence for salvation, and from the scientific point of view, giving up the ownership of land is a useless individual renunciation, and that the welfare of mankind is not promoted in that way, but by a gradual modification of external forms. And so we see this man, without the least

trouble of mind or doubt that people will believe in his sincerity, organizing an agricultural exhibition, or a temperance society, or sending some soup and stockings by his wife or children to three old women, and boldly in his family, in drawing rooms, in committees, and in the press, advocating the Gospel or humanitarian doctrine of love for one's neighbor in general and the agricultural laboring population in particular whom he is continually exploiting and oppressing. And other people who are in the same position as he believe him, commend him, and solemnly discuss with him measures for ameliorating the condition of the working class, on whose exploitation their whole life rests, devising all kinds of possible methods for this, except the one without which all improvement of their condition is impossible, *i.e.*, refraining from taking from them the land necessary for their subsistence. (A striking example of this hypocrisy was the solicitude displayed by the Russian landowners last year, their efforts to combat the famine which they had caused, and by which they profited, selling not only bread at the highest price, but even potato haulm at five rubles the dessiatine (about 21 acres) for fuel to the freezing peasants.)

Or take a merchant whose whole trade-like all trade indeed - is founded on a series of trickery, by means of which, profiting by the ignorance or need of others, he buys goods below their value and sells them again above their value. One would have fancied it obvious that a man whose whole occupation was based on what in his own language is called swindling, if it is done under other conditions, ought to be ashamed of his position, and could not any way, while he continues a merchant, profess himself a Christian or a liberal.

But the sophistry of hypocrisy reasons that the merchant can pass for a virtuous man without giving up his pernicious course of action; a religious man need only have

faith and a liberal man need only promote the modification of external conditions - the progress of industry. And so we see the merchant (who often goes further and commits acts of direct dishonesty, selling adulterated goods, using false weights and measures, and trading in products injurious to health, such as alcohol and opium) boldly regarding himself and being regarded by others, so long as he does not directly deceive his colleagues in business, as a pattern of probity and virtue. And if he spends a thousandth part of his stolen wealth on some public institution, a hospital or museum or school, then he is even regarded as the benefactor of the people on the exploitation and corruption of whom his whole prosperity has been founded: if he sacrifices, too, a portion of his ill-gotten gains on a Church and the poor, then he is an exemplary Christian.

A manufacturer is a man whose whole income consists of value squeezed out of the workmen, and whose whole occupation is based on forced, unnatural labor, exhausting whole generations of men. It would seem obvious that if this man professes any Christian or liberal principles, he must first of all give up ruining human lives for his own profit. But by the existing theory he is promoting industry, and he ought not to abandon his pursuit. It would even be injuring society for him to do so. And so we see this man, the harsh slave-driver of thousands of men, building almshouses with little gardens two yards square for the workmen broken down in toiling for him, and a bank, and a poorhouse, and a hospital-fully persuaded that he has amply expiated in this way for all the human lives morally and physically ruined by him - and calmly going on with his business, taking pride in it.

Any civil, religious, or military official in government employ, who serves the state from vanity, or, as is most often the case, simply for the sake of the pay wrung from the harassed and toilworn working classes (all taxes,

however raised, always fall on labor), if he, as is very seldom the case, does not directly rob the government in the usual way, considers himself, and is considered by his fellows, as a most useful and virtuous member of society.

A judge or a public prosecutor knows that through his sentence or his prosecution hundreds or thousands of poor wretches are at once torn from their families and thrown into prison, where they may go out of their minds, kill themselves with pieces of broken glass, or starve themselves; he knows that they have wives and mothers and children, disgraced and made miserable by separation from them, vainly begging for pardon for them or some alleviation of their sentence, and this judge or this prosecutor is so hardened in his hypocrisy that he and his fellows and his wife and his household are all fully convinced that he may be a most exemplary man. According to the metaphysics of hypocrisy it is held that he is doing a work of public utility. And this man who has ruined hundreds, thousands of men, who curse him and are driven to desperation by his action, goes to mass, a smile of shining benevolence on his smooth face, in perfect faith in good and in God, listens to the Gospel, caresses his children, preaches moral principles to them, and is moved by imaginary sufferings.

All these men and those who depend on them, their wives, tutors, children, cooks, actors, jockeys, and so on, are living on the blood which by one means or another, through one set of blood-suckers or another, is drawn out of the working class, and every day their pleasures cost hundreds or thousands of days of labor. They see the sufferings and privations of these laborers and their children, their aged, their wives, and their sick, they know the punishments inflicted on those who resist this organized plunder, and far from decreasing, far from concealing their luxury, they insolently display it before these oppressed laborers who

hate them, as though intentionally provoking them with the pomp of their parks and palaces, their theaters, hunts, and races. At the same time they continue to persuade themselves and others that they are all much concerned about the welfare of these working classes, whom they have always trampled under their feet, and on Sundays, richly dressed, they drive in sumptuous carriages to the houses of God built in very mockery of Christianity, and there listen to men, trained to this work of deception, who in white neckties or in brocaded vestments, according to their denomination, preach the love for their neighbor which they all gainsay in their lives. And these people have so entered into their part that they seriously believe that they really are what they pretend to be.

The universal hypocrisy has so entered into the flesh and blood of all classes of our modern society, it has reached such a pitch that nothing in that way can rouse indignation. Hypocrisy in the Greek means "acting," and acting-playing a part is always possible. The representatives of Christ give their blessing to the ranks of murderers holding their guns loaded against their brothers; "for prayer" priests, ministers of various Christian sects are always present, as indispensably as the hangman, at executions, and sanction by their presence the compatibility of murder with Christianity (a clergyman assisted at the attempt at murder by electricity in America) but such facts cause no one any surprise.

There was recently held at Petersburg an international exhibition of instruments of torture, handcuffs, models of solitary cells, that is to say instruments of torture worse than knouts or rods, and sensitive ladies and gentlemen went and amused themselves by looking at them.

No one is surprised that together with its recognition of liberty, equality, and fraternity, liberal science should prove

the necessity of war, punishment, customs, the censure, the regulation of prostitution, the exclusion of cheap foreign laborers, the hindrance of emigration, the justifiableness of colonization, based on poisoning and destroying whole races of men called savages, and so on.

People talk of the time when all men shall profess what is called Christianity (that is, various professions of faith hostile to one another), when all shall be well-fed and clothed, when all shall be united from one end of the world to the other by telegraphs and telephones, and be able to communicate by balloons, when all the working classes are permeated by socialistic doctrines, when the Trades Unions possess so many millions of members and so many millions of rubles, when everyone is educated and all can read newspapers and learn all the sciences.

But what good or useful thing can come of all these improvements, if men do not speak and act in accordance with what they believe to be the truth?

The condition of men is the result of their disunion. Their disunion results from their not following the truth.

But how can men be united in the truth or even approximate to it, if they do not even express the truth they know, but hold that there is no need to do so, and pretend to regard as truth what they believe to be false?

And therefore no improvement is possible so long as men are hypocritical and hide the truth from themselves, so long as they do not recognize that their union and therefore their welfare is only possible in the truth, and do not put the recognition and profession of the truth revealed to them higher than everything else.

All the material improvements that religious and scientific men can dream of may be accomplished; all men may accept Christianity, and all the reforms desired by the Bellamys may be brought about with every possible addition and improvement, but if the hypocrisy which rules nowadays still exists, if men do not profess the truth they know, but continue to feign belief in what they do not believe and veneration for what they do not respect, their condition will remain the same, or even grow worse and worse. The more men are freed from privation; the more telegraphs, telephones, books, papers, and journals there are; the more means there will be of diffusing inconsistent lies and hypocrisies, and the more disunited and consequently miserable will men become, which indeed is what we see actually taking place.

All these material reforms may be realized, but the position of humanity will not be improved. But only let each man, according to his powers, at once realize in his life the truth he knows, or at least cease to support the falsehoods he is supporting in the place of the truth, and at once, in this year 1893, we should see such reforms as we do not dare to hope for within a century - the emancipation of men and the reign of truth upon earth.

Not without good reason was Christ's only harsh and threatening reproof directed against hypocrites and hypocrisy. It is not theft nor robbery nor murder nor fornication, but falsehood, the special falsehood of hypocrisy, which corrupts men, brutalizes them and makes them vindictive, destroys all distinction between right and wrong in their conscience, deprives them of what is the true meaning of all real human life, and debars them from all progress toward perfection.

Those who do evil through ignorance of the truth provoke sympathy with their victims and repugnance for their



actions, they do harm only to those they attack; but those who know the truth and do evil masked by hypocrisy, injure themselves and their victims, and thousands of other men as well who are led astray by the falsehood with which the wrongdoing is disguised.

Thieves, robbers, murderers, and cheats, who commit crimes recognized by themselves and everyone else as evil, serve as an example of what ought not to be done, and deter others from similar crimes. But those who commit the same thefts, robberies, murders, and other crimes, disguising them under all kinds of religious or scientific or humanitarian justifications, as all landowners, merchants, manufacturers, and government officials do, provoke others to imitation, and so do harm not only to those who are directly the victims of their crimes, but to thousands and millions of men whom they corrupt by obliterating their sense of the distinction between right and wrong.

A single fortune gained by trading in goods necessary to the people or in goods pernicious in their effects, or by financial speculations, or by acquiring land at a low price the value of which is increased by the needs of the population, or by an industry ruinous to the health and life of those employed in it, or by military or civil service of the state, or by any employment which trades on men's evil instincts - a single fortune acquired in any of these ways, not only with the sanction, but even with the approbation of the leading men in society, and masked with an ostentation of philanthropy, corrupts men incomparably more than millions of thefts and robberies committed against the recognized forms of law and punishable as crimes.

A single execution carried out by prosperous educated men uninfluenced by passion, with the approbation and assistance of Christian ministers, and represented as something necessary and even just, is infinitely more

corrupting and brutalizing to men than thousands of murders committed by uneducated working people under the influence of passion. An execution such as was proposed by Joukovsky, which would produce even a sentiment of religious emotion in the spectators, would be one of the most perverting actions imaginable. (See vol. iv. of the works of Joukovsky.)

Every war, even the most humanely conducted, with all its ordinary consequences, the destruction of harvests, robberies, the license and debauchery, and the murder with the justifications of its necessity and justice, the exaltation and glorification of military exploits, the worship of the flag, the patriotic sentiments, the feigned solicitude for the wounded, and so on, does more in one year to pervert men's minds than thousands of robberies, murders, and arsons perpetrated during hundreds of years by individual men under the influence of passion.

The luxurious expenditure of a single respectable and so-called honorable family, even within the conventional limits, consuming as it does the produce of as many days of labor as would suffice to provide for thousands living in privation near, does more to pervert men's minds than thousands of the violent orgies of coarse trades people, officers, and workmen of drunken and debauched habits, who smash up glasses and crockery for amusement.

One solemn religious procession, one service, one sermon from the altar-steps or the pulpit, in which the preacher does not believe, produces incomparably more evil than thousands of swindling tricks, adulteration of food, and so on.

We talk of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But the hypocrisy of our society far surpasses the comparatively innocent hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They had at least an

external religious law, the fulfillment of which hindered them from seeing their obligations to their neighbors. Moreover, these obligations were not nearly so clearly defined in their day. Nowadays we have no such religious law to exonerate us from our duties to our neighbors (I am not speaking now of the coarse and ignorant persons who still fancy their sins can be absolved by confession to a priest or by the absolution of the Pope). On the contrary, the law of the Gospel which we all profess in one form or another directly defines these duties. Besides, the duties which had then been only vaguely and mystically expressed by a few prophets have now been so clearly formulated, have become such truisms, that they are repeated even by schoolboys and journalists. And so it would seem that men of today cannot pretend that they do not know these duties.

A man of the modern world who profits by the order of things based on violence, and at the same time protests that he loves his neighbor and does not observe what he is doing in his daily life to his neighbor, is like a brigand who has spent his life in robbing men, and who, caught at last, knife in hand, in the very act of striking his shrieking victim, should declare that he had no idea that what he was doing was disagreeable to the man he had robbed and was prepared to murder. just as this robber and murderer could not deny what was evident to everyone, so it would seem that a man living upon the privations of the oppressed classes cannot persuade himself and others that he desires the welfare of those he plunders, and that he does not know how the advantages he enjoys are obtained.

It is impossible to convince ourselves that we do not know that there are a hundred thousand men in prison in Russia alone to guarantee the security of our property and tranquillity, and that we do not know of the law tribunals in which we take part, and which, at our initiative, condemn

those who have attacked our property or our security to prison, exile, or forced labor, whereby men no worse than those who condemn them are ruined and corrupted; or that we do not know that we only possess all that we do possess because it has been acquired and is defended for us by murder and violence.

We cannot pretend that we do not see the armed policeman who marches up and down beneath our windows to guarantee our security while we eat our luxurious dinner, or look at the new piece at the theater, or that we are unaware of the existence of the soldiers who will make their appearance with guns and cartridges directly our property is attacked.

We know very well that we are only allowed to go on eating our dinner, to finish seeing the new play, or to enjoy to the end the ball, the Christmas fete, the promenade, the races or the hunt, thanks to the policeman's revolver or the soldier's rifle, which will shoot down the famished outcast who has been robbed of his share, and who looks round the corner with covetous eyes at our pleasures, ready to interrupt them instantly, were not the policeman and the soldier there prepared to run up at our first call for help.

And therefore just as a brigand caught in broad daylight in the act cannot persuade us that he did not lift his knife in order to rob his victim of his purse, and had no thought of killing him, we too, it would seem, cannot persuade ourselves or others that the soldiers and policemen around us are not to guard us, but only for defense against foreign foes, and to regulate traffic and fetes and reviews; we cannot persuade ourselves and others that we do not know that men do not like dying of hunger, bereft of the right to gain their subsistence from the earth on which they live; that they do not like working underground, in the water, or in stifling heat, for ten to fourteen hours a day, at night in

factories to manufacture objects for our pleasure. One would imagine it impossible to deny what is so obvious. Yet it is denied.

Still, there are, among the rich, especially among the young, and among women, persons whom I am glad to meet more and more frequently, who, when they are shown in what way and at what cost their pleasures are purchased, do not try to conceal the truth, but hiding their heads in their hands, cry: "Ah! don't speak of that. If it is so, life is impossible." But though there are such sincere people who even though they cannot renounce their fault, at least see it, the vast majority of the men of the modern world have so entered into the parts they play in their hypocrisy that they boldly deny what is staring everyone in the face.

"All that is unjust," they say no one forces the people to work for the landowners and manufacturers. That is an affair of free contract. Great properties and fortunes are necessary, because they provide and organize work for the working classes. And labor in the factories and workshops is not at all the terrible thing you make it out to be. Even if there are some abuses in factories, the government and the public are taking steps to obviate them and to make the labor of the factory workers much easier, and even agreeable. The working classes are accustomed to physical labor, and are, so far, fit for nothing else. The poverty of the people is not the result of private property in land, nor of capitalistic oppression, but of other causes: it is the result of the ignorance, brutality, and intemperance of the people. And we men in authority who are striving against this impoverishment of the people by wise legislation, we capitalists who are combating it by the extension of useful inventions, we clergymen by religious instruction, and we liberals by the formation of trades unions, and the diffusion of education, are in this way increasing the prosperity of the people without changing our own positions. We do not

want all to be as poor as the poor; we want all to be as rich as the rich. As for the assertion that men are ill treated and murdered to force them to work for the profit of the rich, that is a sophism. The army is only called out against the mob, when the people, in ignorance of their own interests, make disturbances and destroy the tranquillity necessary for the public welfare. In the same way, too, it is necessary to keep in restraint the malefactors for whom the prisons and gallows are established. We ourselves wish to suppress these forms of punishment and are working in that direction."

Hypocrisy in our day is supported on two sides: by false religion and by false science. And it has reached such proportions that if we were not living in its midst, we could not believe that men could attain such a pitch of self-deception. Men of the present day have come into such an extraordinary condition, their hearts are so hardened, that seeing they see not, hearing they do not hear, and understand not.

Men have long been living in antagonism to their conscience. If it were not for hypocrisy they could not go on living such a life. This social organization in opposition to their conscience only continues to exist because it is disguised by hypocrisy. <P> divergence between actual life and men's conscience, greater extension of hypocrisy. But even hypocrisy has its limits. And it seems to me that we have reached those limits in the present day.

Every man of the present day with the Christian principles assimilated involuntarily in his conscience, finds himself in precisely the position of a man asleep who dreams that he is obliged to do something which even in his dream he knows he ought not to do. He knows this in the depths of his conscience, and all the same he seems unable to change his position; he cannot stop and cease doing what he ought

not to do. And just as in a dream, his position becoming more and more painful, at last reaches such a pitch of intensity that he begins sometimes to doubt the reality of what is passing and makes a moral effort to shake off the nightmare which is oppressing him.

This is just the condition of the average man of our Christian society. He feels that all that he does himself and that is done, around him is something absurd, hideous, impossible, and opposed to his conscience; he feels that his position is becoming more and more unendurable and reaching a crisis of intensity.

It is not possible that we modern men, with the Christian sense of human dignity and equality permeating us soul and body, with our need for peaceful association and unity between nations, should really go on living in such a way that every joy, every gratification we have is bought by the sufferings, by the lives of our brother men, and moreover, that we should be every instant within a hairsbreadth of falling on one another, nation against nation, like wild beasts, mercilessly destroying men's lives and labor, only because some benighted diplomatist or ruler says or writes some stupidity to another equally benighted diplomatist or ruler.

It is impossible. Yet every man of our day sees that this is so and awaits the calamity. And the situation becomes more and more insupportable.

And as the man who is dreaming does not believe that what appears to him can be truly the reality and tries to wake up to the actual real world again, so the average man of modern days cannot in the bottom of his heart believe that the awful position in which he is placed and which is growing worse and worse can be the reality, and tries to wake up to a true, real life, as it exists in his conscience.

And just as the dreamer need only make a moral effort and ask himself, "Isn't it a dream?" and the situation which seemed to him so hopeless will instantly disappear, and he will wake up to peaceful and happy reality, so the man of the modern world need only make a moral effort to doubt the reality presented to him by his own hypocrisy and the general hypocrisy around him, and to ask himself, "Isn't it all a delusion?" and he will at once, like the dreamer awakened, feel himself transported from an imaginary and dreadful world to the true, calm, and happy reality.

And to do this a man need accomplish no great feats or exploits. He need only make a moral effort.



## PART FIVE

But can a man make this effort?

According to the existing theory so essential to support hypocrisy, man is not free and cannot change his life.

"Man cannot change his life, because he is not free. He is not free, because all his actions are conditioned by previously existing causes. And whatever the man may do there are always some causes or other through which he does these or those acts, and therefore man cannot be free and change his life," say the champions of the metaphysics of hypocrisy. And they would be perfectly right if man were a creature without conscience and incapable of moving toward the truth; that is to say, if after recognizing a new truth, man always remained at the same stage of moral development. But man is a creature with a conscience and capable of attaining a higher and higher degree of truth. And therefore even if man is not free as regards performing these or those acts because there exists a previous cause for every act, the very causes of his acts, consisting as they do for the man of conscience of the recognition of this or that truth, are within his own control.

So that though man may not be free as regards the performance of his actions, he is free as regards the foundation on which they are performed. just as the mechanician who is not free to modify the movement of his locomotive when it is in motion, is free to regulate the machine beforehand so as to determine what the movement is to be.

Whatever the conscious man does, he acts just as he does, and not otherwise, only because he recognizes that to act as he is acting is in accord with the truth, or because he has recognized it at some previous time, and is now only

through inertia, through habit, acting in accordance with his previous recognition of truth.

In any case, the cause of his action is not to be found in any given previous fact, but in the consciousness of a given relation to truth, and the consequent recognition of this or that fact as a sufficient basis for action.

Whether a man eats or does not eat, works or rests, runs risks or avoids them, if he has a conscience he acts thus only because he considers it right and rational, because he considers that to act thus is in harmony with truth, or else because he has made this reflection in the past.

The recognition or non-recognition of a certain truth depends not on external causes, but on certain other causes within the man himself. So that at times under external conditions apparently very favorable for the recognition of truth, one man will not recognize it, and another, on the contrary, under the most unfavorable conditions will, without apparent cause, recognize it. As it is said in the Gospel, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." That is to say, the recognition of truth, which is the cause of all the manifestations of human life, does not depend on external phenomena, but on certain inner spiritual characteristics of the man which escape our observation.

And therefore man, though not free in his acts, always feels himself free in what is the motive of his acts—the recognition or non-recognition of truth. And he feels himself independent not only of facts external to his own personality, but even of his own actions.

Thus a man who under the influence of passion has committed an act contrary to the truth he recognizes, remains none the less free to recognize it or not to

recognize it; that is, he can by refusing to recognize the truth regard his action as necessary and justifiable, or he may recognize the truth and regard his act as wrong and censure himself for it.

Thus a gambler or a drunkard who does not resist temptation and yields to his passion is still free to recognize gambling and drunkenness as wrong or to regard them as a harmless pastime. In the first case even if he does not at once get over his passion, he gets the more free from it the more sincerely he recognizes the truth about it; in the second case he will be strengthened in his vice and will deprive himself of every possibility of shaking it off.

In the same way a man who has made his escape alone from a house on fire, not having had the courage to save his friend, remains free, recognizing the truth that a man ought to save the life of another even at the risk of his own, to regard his action as bad and to censure himself for it, or, not recognizing this truth, to regard his action as natural and necessary and to justify it to himself. In the first case, if he recognizes the truth in spite of his departure from it, he prepares for himself in the future a whole series of acts of self-sacrifice necessarily flowing from this recognition of the truth; in the second case, a whole series of egoistic acts.

Not that a man is always free to recognize or to refuse to recognize every truth. There are truths which he has recognized long before or which have been handed down to him by education and tradition and accepted by him on faith, and to follow these truths has become a habit, a second nature with him; and there are truths, only vaguely, as it were distantly, apprehended by him. The man is not free to refuse to recognize the first, nor to recognize the second class of truths. But there are truths of a third kind, which have not yet become an unconscious motive of action, but yet have been revealed so clearly to him that he

cannot pass them by, and is inevitably obliged to do one thing or the other, to recognize or not to recognize them. And it is in regard to these truths that the man's freedom manifests itself.

Every man during his life finds himself in regard to truth in the position of a man walking in the darkness with light thrown before him by the lantern he carries. He does not see what is not yet lighted up by the lantern; he does not see what he has passed which is hidden in the darkness; but at every stage of his journey he sees what is lighted up by the lantern, and he can always choose one side or the other of the road.

There are always unseen truths not yet revealed to the man's intellectual vision, and there are other truths outlived, forgotten, and assimilated by him, and there are also certain truths that rise up before the light of his reason and require his recognition. And it is in the recognition or Nonrecognition of these truths that what we call his freedom is manifested.

All the difficulty and seeming insolubility of the question of the freedom of man results from those who tried to solve the question imagining man as stationary in his relation to the truth.

Man is certainly not free if we imagine him stationary, and if we forget that the lift of a man and of humanity is nothing but a continual movement from darkness into light, from a lower stage of truth to a higher, from a truth more alloyed with errors to a truth more purified from them.

Man would not be free if he knew no truth at all, and in the same way he would not be free and would not even have any idea of freedom if the whole truth which was to guide

him in life had been revealed once for all to him in all its purity without any admixture of error.

But man is not stationary in regard to truth, but every individual man as he passes through life, and humanity as a whole in the same way, is continually learning to know a greater and greater degree of truth, and growing more and more free from error.

And therefore men are in a threefold relation to truth. Some truths have been so assimilated by them that they have become the unconscious basis of action, others are only just on the point of being revealed to him, and a third class, though not yet assimilated by him, have been revealed to him with sufficient clearness to force him to decide either to recognize them or to refuse to recognize them.

These, then, are the truths which man is free to recognize or to refuse to recognize.

The liberty of man does not consist in the power of acting independently of the progress of life and the influences arising from it, but in the capacity for recognizing and acknowledging the truth revealed to him, and becoming the free and joyful participator in the eternal and infinite work of God, the life of the world; or on the other hand for refusing to recognize the truth, and so being a miserable and reluctant slave dragged whither he has no desire to go.

Truth not only points out the way along which human life ought to move, but reveals also the only way along which it can move. And therefore all men must willingly or unwillingly move along the way of truth, some spontaneously accomplishing the task set them in life, others submitting involuntarily to the law of life. Man's freedom lies in the power of this choice.

This freedom within these narrow limits seems so insignificant to men that they do not notice it. Some - the determinists - consider this amount of freedom so trifling that they do not recognize it at all. Others - the champions of complete free will - keep their eyes fixed on their hypothetical free will and neglect this which seemed to them such a trivial degree of freedom.

This freedom, confined between the limits of complete ignorance of the truth and a recognition of a part of the truth, seems hardly freedom at all, especially since, whether a man is willing or unwilling to recognize the truth revealed to him, he will be inevitably forced to carry it out in life.

A horse harnessed with others to a cart is not free to refrain from moving the cart. If he does not move forward the cart will knock him down and go on dragging him with it, whether he will or not. But the horse is free to drag the cart himself or to be dragged with it. And so it is with man.

Whether this is a great or small degree of freedom in comparison with the fantastic liberty we should like to have, it is the only freedom that really exists, and in it consists the only happiness attainable by man.

And more than that, this freedom is the sole means of accomplishing the divine work of the life of the world.

According to Christ's doctrine, the man who sees the significance of life in the domain in which it is not free, in the domain of effects, that is, of acts, has not the true life. According to the Christian doctrine, that man is living in the truth who has transported his life to the domain in which it is free-the domain of causes, that is, the knowledge and recognition, the profession and realization in life of revealed truth.

Devoting his life to works of the flesh, a man busies himself with actions depending on temporary causes outside himself. He himself does nothing really, he merely seems to be doing something. In reality all the acts which seem to be his are the work of a higher power, and he is not the creator of his own life, but the slave of it. Devoting his life to the recognition and fulfillment of the truth revealed to him, he identifies himself with the source of universal life and accomplishes acts not personal, and dependent on conditions of space and time, but acts unconditioned by previous causes, acts which constitute the causes of everything else, and have an infinite, unlimited significance.

"The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (Matt. xi. 12.)

It is this violent effort to rise above external conditions to the recognition and realization of truth by which the kingdom of heaven is taken, and it is this effort of violence which must and can be made in our times.

Men need only understand this, they need only cease to trouble themselves about the general external conditions in which they are not free, and devote one-hundredth part of the energy they waste on those material things to that in which they are free, to the recognition and realization of the truth which is before them, and to the liberation of themselves and others from deception and hypocrisy, and, without effort or conflict, there would be an end at once of the false organization of life which makes men miserable, and threatens them with worse calamities in the future. And then the kingdom of God would be realized, or at least that first stage of it for which men are ready now by the degree of development of their conscience.

Just as a single shock may be sufficient, when a liquid is saturated with some salt, to precipitate it at once in crystals, a slight effort may be perhaps all that is needed now that the truth already revealed to men may gain a mastery over hundreds, thousands, millions of men, that a public opinion consistent with conscience may be established, and through this change of public opinion the whole order of life may be transformed. And it depends upon us to make this effort.

Let each of us only try to understand and accept the Christian truth which in the most varied forms surrounds us on all sides and forces itself upon us; let us only cease from lying and pretending that we do not see this truth or wish to realize it, at least in what it demands from us above all else; only let us accept and boldly profess the truth to which we are called, and we should find at once that hundreds, thousands, millions of men are in the same position as we, that they see the truth as we do, and dread as we do to stand alone in recognizing it, and like us are only waiting for others to recognize it also.

Only let men cease to be hypocrites, and they would at once see that this cruel social organization, which holds them in bondage, and is represented to them as something stable, necessary, and ordained of God, is already tottering and is only propped up by the falsehood of hypocrisy, with which we, and others like us, support it.



## PART SIX

But if this is so, if it is true that it depends on us to break down the existing organization of life, have we the right to destroy it, without knowing clearly what we shall set up in its place? What will become of human society when the existing order of things is at an end?

"What shall we find the other side of the walls of the world we are abandoning?"

"Fear will come upon us - a void, a vast emptiness, freedom - how are we to go forward not knowing whither, how face loss, not seeing hope of gain?...If Columbus had reasoned thus he would never have weighed anchor. It was madness to set off upon the ocean, not knowing the route, on the ocean on which no one had sailed, to sail toward a land whose existence was doubtful. By this madness he discovered a new world. Doubtless if the peoples of the world could simply transfer themselves from one furnished mansion to another and better one - it would make it much easier; but unluckily there is no one to get humanity's new dwelling ready for it. The future is even worse than the ocean - there is nothing there - it will be what men and circumstances make it.

"If you are content with the old world, try to preserve it, it is very sick and cannot hold out much longer. But if you cannot bear to live in everlasting dissonance between your beliefs and your life, thinking one thing and doing another, get out of the medieval whitened sepulchers, and face your fears. I know very well it is not easy.

It is not a little thing to cut one's self off from all to which a man has been accustomed from his birth, with which he has grown up to maturity. Men are ready for tremendous sacrifices, but not for those which life demands of them.

Are they ready to sacrifice modern civilization, their manner of life, their religion, the received conventional morality?

"Are we ready to give up all the results we have attained with such effort, results of which we have been boasting for three centuries; to give up every convenience and charm of our existence, to prefer savage youth to the senile decay of civilization, to pull down the palace raised for us by our ancestors only for the pleasure of having a hand in the founding of a new house, which will doubtless be built long after we are gone?" (Herzen, vol. v. P. 55-)

Thus wrote almost half a century ago the Russian writer, who with prophetic insight saw clearly then, what even the most unreflecting man sees today, the impossibility, that is, of life continuing on its old basis, and the necessity of establishing new forms of life.

It is clear now from the very simplest, most commonplace point of view, that it is madness to remain under the roof of a building which cannot support its weight, and that we must leave it. And indeed it is difficult to imagine a position more wretched than that of the Christian world today, with its nations armed against one another, with its constantly increasing taxation to maintain its armies, with the hatred of the working class for the rich ever growing more intense, with the Damocles sword of war forever hanging over the heads of all, ready every instant to fall, certain to fall sooner or later.

Hardly could any revolution be more disastrous for the great mass of the population than the present order or rather disorder of our life, with its daily sacrifices to exhausting and unnatural toil, to poverty, drunkenness, and profligacy, with all the horrors of the war that is at band, which will

swallow up in one year more victims than all the revolutions of the century.

What will become of humanity if each of us performs the duty God demands of us through the conscience implanted within us? Will not harm come if, being wholly in the power of a master, I carry out, in the workshop erected and directed by him, the orders he gives me, strange though they may seem to me who do not know the Master's final aims?

But it is not even this question "What will happen" that agitates men when they hesitate to fulfill the Master's will. They are troubled by the question how to live without those habitual conditions of life which we call civilization, culture, art, and science. We feel ourselves all the burdensomeness of life as it is; we see also that this organization of life must inevitably be our ruin, if it continues. At the same time we want the conditions of our life which arise out of this organization - our civilization, culture, art, and science - to remain intact. It is as though a man, living in an old house and suffering from cold and all sorts of inconvenience in it, knowing, too, that it is on the point of falling to pieces, should consent to its being rebuilt, but only on the condition that he should not be required to leave it: a condition which is equivalent to refusing to have it rebuilt at all.

"But what if I leave the house and give up every convenience for a time, and the new house is not built, or is built on a different plan so that I do not find in it the comforts to which I am accustomed?" But seeing that the materials and the builders are here, there is every likelihood that the new house will on the contrary be better built than the old one. And at the same time, there is not only the likelihood but the certainty that the old house will fall down and crush those who remain within it. Whether the

old habitual conditions of life are supported, or whether they are abolished and altogether new and better conditions arise; in any case, there is no doubt we shall be forced to leave the old forms of life which have become impossible and fatal, and must go forward to meet the future.

"Civilization, art, science, culture, will disappear!"

Yes, but all these we know are only various manifestations of truth, and the change that is before us is only to be made for the sake of a closer attainment and realization of truth. How then can the manifestations of truth disappear through our realizing it? These manifestations will be different, higher, better, but they will not cease to be. Only what is false in them will be destroyed; all the truth there was in them will only be stronger and more flourishing.

Take thought, oh, men, and have faith in the Gospel, in whose teaching is your happiness. If you do not take thought, you will perish just as the men perished, slain by Pilate, or crushed by the tower of Siloam; as millions of men have perished, slayers and slain, executing and executed, torturers and tortured alike, and as the man foolishly perished, who filled his granaries full and made ready for a long life and died the very night that he planned to begin his life. Take thought and have faith in the Gospel, Christ said eighteen hundred years ago, and he says it with even greater force now that the calamities foretold by him have come to pass, and the senselessness of our life has reached the furthest point of suffering and madness.

Nowadays, after so many centuries of fruitless efforts to make our life secure by the pagan organization of life, it must be evident to everyone that all efforts in that direction only introduce fresh dangers into personal and social life, and do not render it more secure in any way.

Whatever names we dignify ourselves with, whatever uniforms we wear, whatever priests we anoint ourselves before, however many millions we possess, however many guards are stationed along our road, however many policemen guard our wealth, however many so-called criminals, revolutionists, and anarchists we punish, whatever exploits we have performed, whatever states we may have founded, fortresses and towers we may have erected - from Babel to the Eiffel Tower - there are two inevitable conditions of life, confronting all of us, which destroy its whole meaning; (1) death, which may at any moment pounce upon each of us; and (2) the transitoriness of all our works, which so soon pass away and leave no trace. Whatever we may do - found companies, build palaces and monuments, write songs and poems - it is all not for long time. Soon it passes away, leaving no trace. And therefore, however we may conceal it from ourselves, we cannot help seeing that the significance of our life cannot lie in our personal fleshly existence, the prey of incurable suffering and inevitable death, nor in any social institution or organization. Whoever you may be who are reading these lines, think of your position and of your duties - not of your position as landowner, merchant, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, soldier, which has been temporarily allotted you by men, and not of the imaginary duties laid on you by those positions, but of your real positions in eternity as a creature who at the will of someone has been called out of unconsciousness after an eternity of non-existence to which you may return at any moment at his will. Think of your duties - not your supposed duties as a landowner to your estate, as a merchant to your business, as emperor, minister, or official to the state, but of your real duties, the duties that follow from your real position as a being called into life and endowed with reason and love.

Are you doing what he demands of you who has sent you into the world, and to whom you will soon return? Are you doing what he wills? Are you doing his will, when as landowner or manufacturer you rob the poor of the fruits of their toil, basing your life on this plunder of - the workers, or when, as judge or governor, you ill treat men, sentence them to execution, or when as soldiers you prepare for war, kill and plunder?

You will say that the world is so made that this is inevitable, and that you do not do this of your own free will, but because you are forced to do so. But can it be that you have such a strong aversion to men's sufferings, ill treatment, and murder, that you have such an intense need of love and co-operation with your fellows that you see clearly that only by the recognition of the equality of all, and by mutual services, can the greatest possible happiness be realized; that your head and your heart, the faith you profess, and even science itself tell you the same thing, and yet that in spite of it all you can be forced by some confused and complicated reasoning to act in direct opposition to all this; that as landowner or capitalist you are bound to base your whole life on the oppression of the people; that as emperor or president you are to command armies, that is, to be the head and commander of murderers; or that as government official you are forced to take from the poor their last pence for rich men to profit and share them among themselves; or that as judge or juryman you could be forced to sentence erring men to ill treatment and death because the truth was not revealed to them, or above all, for that is the basis of all the evil, that you could be forced to become a soldier, and renouncing your free will and your human sentiments, could undertake to kill anyone at the command of other men?

It cannot be.

Even if you are told that all this is necessary for the maintenance of the existing order of things, and that this social order with its pauperism, famines, prisons, gallows, armies, and wars is necessary to society; that still greater disasters would ensue if this organization were destroyed; all that is said only by those who profit by this organization, while those who suffer from it - and they are ten times as numerous - think and say quite the contrary. And at the bottom of your heart you know yourself that it is not true, that the existing organization has outlived its time, and must inevitably be reconstructed on new principles, and that consequently there is no obligation upon you to sacrifice your sentiments of humanity to support it.

Above all, even if you allow that this organization is necessary, why do you believe it to be your duty to maintain it at the cost of your best feelings? Who has made you the nurse in charge of this sick and moribund organization? Not society nor the state nor anyone; no one has asked you to undertake this; you who fill your position of landowner, merchant, tzar, priest, or soldier know very well that you occupy that position by no means with the unselfish aim of maintaining the organization of life necessary to men's happiness, but simply in your own interests, to satisfy your own covetousness or vanity or ambition or indolence or cowardice. If you did not desire that position, you would not be doing your utmost to retain it. Try the experiment of ceasing to commit the cruel, treacherous, and base actions that you are constantly committing in order to retain your position, and you will lose it at once. Try the simple experiment, as a government official, of giving up lying, and refusing to take a part in executions and acts of violence; as a priest, of giving up deception ; as a soldier, of giving up murder; as landowner or manufacturer, of giving up defending your property by fraud and force; and you will at once lose the position

which you pretend is forced upon you, and which seems burdensome to you.

A man cannot be placed against his will in a situation opposed to his conscience.

If you find yourself in such a position it is not because it is necessary to anyone whatever, but simply because you wish it. And therefore knowing that your position is repugnant to your heart and your head, and to your faith, and even to the science in which you believe, you cannot help reflecting upon the question whether in retaining it, and above all trying to justify it, you are doing what you ought to do.

You might risk making a mistake if you had time to see and retrieve your fault, and if you ran the risk for something of some value. But when you know beyond all doubt that you may disappear any minute, without the least possibility either for yourself or those you draw after you into your error, of retrieving the mistake, when you know that whatever you may do in the external organization of life it will all disappear as quickly and surely as you will yourself, and will leave no trace behind, it is clear that you have no reasonable ground for running the risk of such a fearful mistake.

It would be perfectly simple and clear if you did not by your hypocrisy disguise the truth which has so unmistakably been revealed to us.

Share all that you have with others, do not heap up riches, do not steal, do not cause suffering, do not kill, do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you, all that has been said not eighteen hundred, but five thousand years ago, and there could be no doubt of the truth of this law if it were not for hypocrisy. Except for hypocrisy men could not



have failed, if not to put the law in practice, at least to recognize it, and admit that it is wrong not to put it in practice.

But you will say that there is the public good to be considered, and that on that account one must not and ought not to conform to these principles; for the public good one may commit acts of violence and murder. It is better for one man to die than that the whole people perish, you will say like Caiaphas, and you sign the sentence of death of one man, of a second, and a third; you load your gun against this man who is to perish for the public good, you imprison him, you take his possessions. You say that you commit these acts of cruelty because you are a part of the society and of the state; that it is your duty to serve them, and as landowner, judge, emperor, or soldier to conform to their laws. But besides belonging to the state and having duties created by that position, you belong also to eternity and to God, who also lays duties upon you. And just as your duties to your family and to society are subordinate to your superior duties to the state, in the same way the latter must necessarily be subordinated to the duties dictated to you by the eternal life and by God. And just as it would be senseless to pull up the telegraph posts for fuel for a family or society and thus to increase its welfare at the expense of public interests, in the same way it is senseless to do violence, to execute, and to murder to increase the welfare of the nation, because that is at the expense of the interests of humanity.

Your duties as a citizen cannot but be subordinated to the superior obligations of the eternal life of God, and cannot be in opposition to them. As Christ's disciples said eighteen centuries ago: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye" (Acts iv. 19); and, "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts V. 29).

It is asserted that, in order that the unstable order of things, established in one corner of the world for a few men, may not be destroyed, you ought to commit acts of violence which destroy the eternal and immutable order established by God and by reason. Can that possibly be?

And therefore you cannot but reflect on your position as landowner, manufacturer, judge, emperor, president, minister, priest, and soldier, which is bound up with violence, deception, and murder, and recognize its unlawfulness.

I do not say that if you are a landowner you are bound to give up your lands immediately to the poor; if a capitalist or manufacturer, your money to your workpeople; or that if you are Tzar, minister, official, judge, or general, you are bound to renounce immediately the advantages of your position; or if a soldier, on whom all the system of violence is based, to refuse immediately to obey in spite of all the dangers of insubordination.

If you do so, you will be doing the best thing possible. But it may happen, and it is most likely, that you will not have the strength to do so. You have relations, a family, subordinates and superiors; you are under an influence so powerful that you cannot shake it off; but you can always recognize the truth and refuse to tell a lie about it. You need not declare that you are remaining a landowner, manufacturer, merchant, artist, or writer because it is useful to mankind; that you are governor, prosecutor, or tzar, not because it is agreeable to you, because you are used to it, but for the public good; that you continue to be a soldier, not from fear of punishment, but because you consider the army necessary to society. You can always avoid lying in this way to yourself and to others, and you ought to do so; because the one aim of your life ought to be to purify

yourself from falsehood and to confess the truth. And you need only do that and your situation will change directly of itself.

There is one thing, and only one thing, in which it is granted to you to be free in life, all else being beyond your power: that is to recognize and profess the truth.

And yet simply from the fact that other men as misguided and as pitiful creatures as yourself have made you soldier, tzar, landowner, capitalist, priest, or general, you undertake to commit acts of violence obviously opposed to your reason and your heart, to base your existence on the misfortunes of others, and above all, instead of filling the one duty of your life, recognizing and professing the truth, you feign not to recognize it and disguise it from yourself and others.

And what are the conditions in which you are doing this? You who may die any instant, you sign sentences of death, you declare war, you take part in it, you judge, you punish, you plunder the working people, you live luxuriously in the midst of the poor, and teach weak men who have confidence in you that this must be so, that the duty of men is to do this, and yet it may happen at the moment when you are acting thus that a bacterium or a bull may attack you and you will fall and die, losing forever the chance of repairing the harm you have done to others, and above all to yourself, in uselessly wasting a life which has been given you only once in eternity, without having accomplished the only thing you ought to have done.

However commonplace and out of date it may seem to us, however confused we may be by hypocrisy and by the hypnotic suggestion which results from it, nothing can destroy the certainty of this simple and clearly defined truth. No external conditions can guarantee our life, which

is attended with inevitable sufferings and infallibly terminated by death, and which consequently can have no significance except in the constant accomplishment of what is demanded by the Power which has placed us in life with a sole certain guide - the rational conscience.

That is why that Power cannot require of us what is irrational and impossible: the organization of our temporary external life, the life of society or of the state. That Power demands of us only what is reasonable, certain, and possible: to serve the kingdom of God, that is, to contribute to the establishment of the greatest possible union between all living beings - a union possible only in the truth; and to recognize and to profess the revealed truth, which is always in our power.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi. 33.)

The sole meaning of life is to serve humanity by contributing to the establishment of the kingdom of God, which can only be done by the recognition and profession of the truth by every man.

"The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show; neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke xvii. 20-21.)

THE END

# A LETTER TO RUSSIAN LIBERALS

LEO TOLSTOY

(1896)

From: Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
(<http://jtrapp.com/tolstoy/index.html>)



<http://www.jtrapp.com/>

I should be very glad to join you and your associates - whose work I know and appreciate- in standing up for the rights of the Literature Committee and opposing the enemies of popular education. But in the sphere in which you are working I see no way to resist them.

My only consolation is that I, too, am constantly engaged in struggling against the same enemies of enlightenment, though in another manner.

Concerning the special question with which you are preoccupied, I think that in place of the Literature Committee which has been prohibited, a number of other Literature Associations to pursue the same objects should be formed without consulting the Government and without asking permission from any censor. Let Government, if it likes, prosecute these Literature Associations, punish the members, banish them, etc. If the Government does that, it will merely cause people to attach special importance to

good books and to libraries, and it will strengthen the trend towards enlightenment.

It seems to me that it is now specially important to do what is right quietly and persistently not only without asking permission from Government, but consciously avoiding its participation. The strength of the Government lies in the people's ignorance, and the Government knows this, and will therefore always oppose true enlightenment. It is time we realized at fact. And it is most undesirable to let the Government, while it is spreading darkness, pretend to be busy with the enlightenment of the people. It is doing this now by means of all sorts of pseudo-educational establishments which it controls: schools, high-schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses. But good is good, and enlightenment is enlightenment, only when it is quite good and quite enlightened, and not when it is toned down to meet the requirements of Delyfinofs or Dourano's circulars. And I am extremely sorry when I see valuable, disinterested, and self-sacrificing efforts spent unprofitably. It is strange to see good, wise people spending their strength in a struggle against struggle on the basis of Government, but carrying on that whatever laws the Government itself likes to make. This is how the matter appears to me: There are people (we ourselves are such) who realize that our Government is very bad, and who struggle against it. From before the days of Radistchef and the Decembrists there have been two ways of carrying on the struggle. One way is that of Stenka Razin, Pougatchef the Decembrists, the Revolutionary army of the 'sixties, the Terrorists of March 1, and others. The other way is that which is preached and practised by you, the method of the 'Gradualists,' which consists in carrying on the struggle without violence and within the limits of the law, conquering constitutional rights bit by bit.

Within my memory both these methods have been employed unremittingly for more than half a century, and yet the state of things grows worse and worse. Even such

signs of improvement as do show themselves have come not from either of these kinds of activity, but from causes of which I will speak later on and in spite of the harm done by these two kinds of activity. Meanwhile, the power against which we struggle grows ever greater, stronger, and more insolent. The last gleams of self-government-Local Government, public trial, your Literature Committee, etc etc. -are all being done away with.

Now that both methods have been tried without effect for so long a time, we may, it seems to me, see clearly that neither the one nor the other will do, and see also why this is so. To me, at least., who have always disliked our Government, but have never adopted either of the above methods of resisting it, the defects of both methods are apparent.

The first method is unsatisfactory, because even could an attempt to alter the existing regime by violent means succeed, there would be no guarantee that the new organization would be durable, and that the enemies of that new order would not, at some convenient opportunity, triumph, by using violence such as had been used against them, as has happened over and over again in France and wherever else there have been revolutions. And so the new order of things, established by violence would have continually to be supported by violence-*i.e.*, by wrongdoing- And, consequently, it would inevitably, and very quickly, be vitiated, like the order it replaced. And in case of failure the violence Of the Revolutionists only strengthens the order of things they strive against (as has always been the case., in our Russian experience, from Pougatchef's rebellion to the attempt of March 1), for it drives the whole crowd of undecided people- who stand wavering between the two parties-into the camp of the conservative and retrograde party. So I think that, guided both by reason and experience, we may boldly say that this means, besides being immoral, is irrational and ineffectual

The other method is, in my opinion, even less effectual or rational. It is ineffectual and irrational because Government- holding in its grasp the whole power (the army, the administration, the Church, the schools, and the police), and framing what are called the laws on the basis of which the Liberals wish to resist it- this Government knows very well what is really dangerous to it. and will never let people who submit to it and act under its guidance do anything that will undermine its authority. For instance take the cue before us: a Government such as ours, or any other which rests on the ignorance of the people. will never consent to their being really enlightened. it will sanction all kinds of pseudo-educational organizations controlled by itself- schools, high schools, universities, academies, and all kinds of committees and congresses, and publications sanctioned by the censor- so long as these organizations and publications serve its purpose- that is, stupefy the people, or at least do not hinder their stupefaction. But as soon as those organizations or publications attempt to cure that on which the power of Government rests (namely, the blindness of the people), the Government will simply, and without rendering any account to anyone, or saying why it acts so and not otherwise, pronounce its veto, and will rearrange or close the establishments and organizations, and forbid the publications. And therefore, as both reason and experience clearly show, such an illusory, gradual conquest of rights is a self-deception which suits the Government admirably, and which it, therefore. is even ready to encourage.

But not only is this activity irrational and ineffectual, it is also harmful. It is harmful because enlightened, good, and honest people by entering the ranks of the Government give it a moral authority which but for them it would not possess. If the Government were made up entirely of that coarse element-the men of violence, self-seekers, and flatterers- who form its core, it could not continue to exist. The fact that honest and enlightened people are found



participating in the affairs of the Government gives Government whatever moral prestige it possesses.

That is one evil resulting from the activity of Liberals who participate in the affairs of Government, or who come to terms with it. Another evil of such activity is that to secure opportunities to carry on their work, these highly-enlightened and honest people have to begin to compromise, and so, little by little, Come to consider that for a good end one may swerve somewhat from truth in word and deed. For instance, that one may., though not believing in the established Church, take part in its ceremonies; may take oaths; may, when necessary for the success of some affair, present petitions couched in language which is untruthful and derogatory to man's natural dignity; may enter the army; may take part in a Local Government which has been stripped of all its powers; may serve as a master or a professor, teaching not what one considers necessary one's self, but what one is told to teach by the Government; that one may even become a *Zemsky Natchalnik* submitting to Governmental demands and instructions which violate one's conscience ; may edit newspapers and periodicals, remaining silent about what ought to be mentioned, and printing what one is ordered to print : and entering into these compromises-the limits of which cannot be foreseen-enlightened and honest people, who alone could form some barrier to the infringements of human liberty by the Government, retreating, little by little, further and further from the demands of conscience, fall at last into a position Of complete dependency on the Government. They receive rewards and salaries from it, and, continuing to imagine that they are forwarding Liberal ideas, become the humble servants and supporters of the very order against which they set out to fight.

It is true that there are also better, sincere people in the Liberal camp, whom the Government cannot bribe, and who remain unbought and free from salaries and position.

But even these people, having been ensnared in the nets spread by Government, beat their wings in their cages (as you are now doing in your Committee) unable to advance from the spot they are on. Or else, becoming enraged, they go over to the revolutionary camp; or they shoot themselves; or take to drink; or they abandon the whole struggle in despair, and, oftentimes of all, retire into literary activity, in which- yielding to the demands of the censor, they say only what they are allowed to say, and by that very silence about what is most important convey. to the public distorted views, which just suit the Government. But they continue to imagine that they are serving society by the writings which give them means of subsistence.

Thus, reflection and experience alike show me that both the means of combating Government used heretofore, are not only ineffectual, but actually tend to strengthen the power and irresponsibility of the Government.

What is to be done? Evidently not what for seventy years past has proved fruitless, and has only produced reverse results. What is to be done? Just what those have done, to whose activity we owe the progress towards light and good that has been achieved since the world began, and that is still being achieved to-day. That is what must be done! And what is it?

Merely the simple, quiet, truthful carrying on of what you consider good and, needful, quite independently of the Government, or of whether it likes it or not. In other words: standing up for one's rights, not as a member of the 'Literature Committee,' nor as a deputy, nor as a land-owner, nor as a merchant, nor even as a Member of Parliament; but standing up for one's rights as a rational and free man, and defending them- not as the rights of Local Boards or Committees are defended, with concessions and compromises. but without any concessions or compromises- in the only way in which moral and human dignity can be defended.

Successfully to defend a fortress, one has to burn all the houses in the suburbs and leave only what is strong, and what you intend not to surrender on any account. Only from the basis of this firm stronghold can we conquer all we require. True, the rights of a Member of Parliament, or even of a member of a Local Board, are greater than the rights of an ordinary man; and it seems as though we could do much by using those rights. But the hitch is that to obtain the rights of a Member of Parliament, or of a committee-man, one has to abandon part of one's rights as a man. And having abandoned part, of one's rights as a man, there is no longer any fixed point of leverage, and one can no longer either conquer or maintain any real right. In order to lift others out of a quagmire one must one's self stand on firm ground; and if, hoping the better to assist others, you go into the quagmire, you will not pull others out, but will yourself sink in.

It may be very desirable and useful to get an eight-hours' day legalized by Parliament, or to get a Liberal programme for school libraries sanctioned through your Committee ; but if as a means to this end a Member of Parliament must publicly lift up his hand and lie, lie when taking an oath, by expressing in words respect for what he does not respect; or (in our own case) if, in order to pass programmes however Liberal, it is necessary to take part in public worship, to be sworn, to wear a uniform, to write mendacious and flattering petitions, and to make speeches of a similar character, etc., etc. -then, by doing these things and foregoing our dignity as men. we lose much more than we gain, and by trying to reach one definite aim, (which very often is not reached) we deprive ourselves of the possibility of reaching other aims which are of supreme importance. Only people who have something which they will on no account and under no circumstances yield can resist a Government and curb it. To have power to resist, you must stand on firm ground.

And the Government knows this very well, and is, above all else, concerned to worm out of men that which will not yield- namely, their dignity as men. When that is wormed out of them, the Government calmly proceeds to do what it likes, knowing that it will no longer meet any real resistance. A man who consents publicly to swear, pronouncing the degrading and mendacious words of the oath; or submissively to wait several hours, dressed up in a uniform, at a Minister's reception ; or to inscribe himself as a Special Constable for the Coronation ; or to fast and receive Communion for respectability's sake ; or to ask the Head-Censor whether he may, or may not, express such and such thoughts, etc.- such a man is no longer feared by Government.

Alexander II. said he did not fear the Liberals, because he knew they could all be bought- if not with money, then with honours.

People who take part in Government, or work under its direction, may deceive themselves or their sympathizers by making a show of struggling; but those against whom they struggle (the Government) know quite well, by the strength of the resistance experienced, that these people are not really pulling, but are only pretending to. Our Government knows this with respect to the Liberals, and constantly tests the quality of the opposition, and finding that genuine resistance is practically non-existent, it continues its course in full assurance that it can do what it likes with such opponents.

The Government of Alexander III. knew this very well, and, knowing it, deliberately destroyed all that the Liberals ought they had achieved, and were so proud of. It altered and limited Trial by Jury; it abolished the office of Judge of the Peace; it canceled the rights of the Universities; it perverted the whole system of instruction in the High Schools; it re-established the Cadet Corps, and even the State-sale of intoxicants; it established the *Zemsky Natchalniks*; it legalized flogging ; it almost abolished the

Local Government ; it gave uncontrolled power to the Governors of Provinces; it encouraged the quartering of troops on the peasants in punishment; it increased the practice of 'administrative' banishment and imprisonment, and the capital punishment of political offenders; it renewed religious persecutions; it brought to a climax the use of barbarous superstitions ; it legalized murder in duels; under the name of a 'State of Siege' it established lawlessness with capital punishment as a normal condition of things-and in all this it met with no protest except from one honourable woman, who boldly told the Government the truth as she saw it.

The Liberals whispered among themselves that these things displeased them, but they continued to take part in legal proceedings, and in the Local Governments, and in the Universities, and in Government service, and on the Press. In the Press they hinted at what they were allowed to hint at , and kept silence on matters they had to be silent about, but they printed whatever they were told to print. So that every reader (not privy to the whisperings of the editorial rooms), on receiving a Liberal paper or magazine, read the announcement of the most cruel and irrational measures unaccompanied by comment or sign of disapproval, together with sycophantic and flattering addresses to those guilty of enacting these measures, and frequently even praise of the measures themselves. Thus all the dismal activity of the Government of Alexander III-destroying whatever good had begun to take root in the days of Alexander II., and striving to turn Russia back to the barbarity of the commencement of this century-all this dismal activity of gallows, rods, persecutions, and stupefaction of the people, has become (even in the Liberal papers and magazines) the basis of an insane laudation of Alexander III. and of his acclamation as a great man and a model of human dignity.

This same thing is being continued in the new reign. The young man who succeeded the late Tsar, having no

understanding of life, was assured by the men in power, to whom it was profitable to say so., that the best way to rule a hundred million people is to do as his father (lid- that is, not to ask advice from anyone, but to do just what comes into his head, or what the first flatterer about him advises. And, fancying that unlimited autocracy is a sacred life-principle of the Russian people, the young man begins to reign; and instead of asking the representatives of the Russian people to help him with their advice in the task of ruling (about which he, educated in a cavalry regiment, knows nothing and can know nothing), he rudely and insolently shouts at those representatives of the Russian people who visit him it congratulations, and he calls the desire, timidly expressed by some of them, to be allowed to inform the authorities of their needs, 'insensate dreams.'

And what followed? Was Russian society shocked? Did enlightened and honest people-the Liberals- express their indignation and repulsion? Did they at least refrain from laudation of this Government, and from participating in it and encouraging it? Not at all. From that time a specially intense competition in adulation commenced, both of the father and of the son who imitated him. And not a protesting voice was heard, except in one anonymous letter, cautiously expressing disapproval of the young Tsar's conduct. From all sides fulsome and flattering addresses were brought to the Tsar, as well as (for some reason or other) icons which nobody wanted and which serve merely as objects of idolatry to benighted people. An insane expenditure of money: a Coronation amazing in its absurdity, was arranged ; the arrogance of the rulers and their contempt of the people caused thousands to perish in a fearful calamity-which was regarded as a slight eclipse of the festivities, which did not terminate on that account. An exhibition was organized, which no one wanted except those who organized it, and which cost millions of roubles. In the Chancellery of the Holy Synod, with unparalleled effrontery. a new and supremely stupid means of

mystifying people was devised—namely, the enshrinement of the incorruptible body Of a Saint whom nobody knew anything about. The stringency of the Censor was increased. Religious persecution was made more severe. The State of Siege (i.e., the legalization of lawlessness) was continued, and the state of things is still becoming worse and worse.

And I think that all this would not have happened if those enlightened, honest people who are now occupied in Liberal activity on the basis of legality, in Local Governments, in the Committees, in Censor-ruled literature, etc., had not devoted their energies to the task of circumventing the Government and—without abandoning the forms it has itself arranged—of finding ways to make it act so as to harm and injure itself: but, abstaining from taking any part in Government or in any business bound up with Government, had merely claimed their rights as men.

'You wish, instead of Judges of the Peace, to institute *Zemsky Natchalniks* with birch-rods: that is your business, but we will not go to law before your *Zemsky Natchalniks*, and will not ourselves accept appointment to such an office. You wish to make trial by jury a mere formality : that is your business, but we will not serve as judges, or as advocates, or as jurymen. You wish, under the name of a "State of Siege," to establish despotism : that is your business, but we will not participate in it, and will plainly call the "State of Siege "

despotism, and capital Punishment inflicted without trial—murder. You wish to organize Cadet Corps, or Classical High Schools in which military exercises and the Orthodox Faith are taught : that is your affair, but we will not teach in such schools, nor send our children to them, but will educate our children as seems to us right. You decide to reduce the Local Governments to impotence : we will not take part in them. You prohibit the publication of literature that displeases you: you may seize books and punish the printers, but you cannot prevent our speaking and writing, and we shall continue to do so. You demand an oath of

allegiance to the Tsar : we will not accede to what is so stupid, false, and degrading. You order us to serve in the army : we will not do so, because wholesale murder is as opposed to our conscience as individual murder, and, above all, because to promise to murder whomsoever a commander may tell us to murder is the meanest act a man can commit. You profess a religion which is a thousand years behind the times with an "Iberian Mother of God" relics, and coronations: that is your affair, but we do not acknowledge idolatry and superstition to be religion, but call them idolatry and superstition, and we try to free people from them.'

And what can the Government do against such activity? It can banish or imprison a man for preparing a bomb, or even for printing a proclamation to working men; it can transfer your Literature Committee from one Ministry to another. or close a Parliament ; but what can a Government do with a man who is not willing publicly to lie with uplifted hand, or who is not willing to send his children to an establishment which he considers bad, or who is not willing to learn to kill people, or is not willing to take part in idolatry, or is not willing to take part in coronations, deputations and addresses, or who says and writes what he thinks and feels? By prosecuting such a man the Government secures for him general sympathy, making him a martyr, and it undermines the foundations on which it is itself built, for, in so acting, instead of protecting human rights it itself infringes them.

And it is only necessary for all those good, enlightened, and honest people whose strength is now wasted in Revolutionary, Socialistic, or Liberal activity (harmful to themselves and to their cause) to begin to act thus, and a nucleus of honest, enlightened, and moral people would form around them, united in the same thoughts and the same feelings. And to this nucleus the ever- wavering crowd of average people would at once gravitate, and public opinion-the only power which subdues



Governments-would become evident, demanding freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, justice and humanity. And as soon as public opinion was formulated, not only would it be impossible to suppress the Literature Committee, but if those inhuman organizations-the 'State of Siege,' the Secret Police, the Censor, Schlusselfburg, the Holy Synod, and the rest- against which the Revolutionists and the Liberals are now struggling, would disappear of themselves.

So that two methods of opposing the Government have been tried, both unsuccessfully, and it now remains, to try a third and last method, one not yet tried, but one which, I think, cannot but be successful. Briefly, it is this: That all enlightened and honest people should try to be as good as they can; and not even good in all respects but only in one, namely, in observing one of the most elementary virtues-to be honest and not to lie, but so to act and speak that your motives should be intelligible to an affectionate seven-year-old boy; to act so that your boy should not say: 'But why, papa, did you say so-and-so, and now you do and say something quite different?' This method seems very weak, and yet I am convinced that it is this method, and this method alone, that has moved humanity since the race began. Only because there were straight men-truthful and courageous, who made no concessions that infringed their dignity as men have all those beneficent revolutions been accomplished of which mankind now has the advantage-from the abolition of torture and slavery up to liberty of speech and of conscience. Nor can this be otherwise, for what is demanded by conscience (the highest forefeeling man possesses of the truth to which he can attain) is always and in all respects the thing most fruitful and most necessary. for humanity at the given time. Only a man who lives according to his conscience can exert influence on people, and only activity that accords with one's conscience can be useful.

But I must make my meaning quite plain. To say that the most effectual means of achieving the ends towards which Revolutionists and Liberals are striving is by activity in accord with their consciences, does not mean that people can begin to live conscientiously in order to achieve those ends. To begin to live conscientiously on purpose to achieve external ends is impossible.

To live according to one's conscience is possible only as a result of firm and clear religious convictions; the beneficent result of these on our external life will inevitably follow. Therefore the gist of what I wished to say to you is this : That it is unprofitable for good, sincere people to spend their powers of mind and soul on gaining small practical ends-for instance, in the various struggles of nationalities, or parties ' or in Liberal wire-pulling- while they have not reached a clear and firm religious perception,, that is., a consciousness of the meaning and purpose of life. I think that all the era of soul and mind of good men, who wish to be of service to humanity, should be directed to that end. When that is accomplished all else will also be accomplished.

Forgive me for sending you so long a letter, which perhaps you did not at all need, but I have long wished to express my views on this question. I even began a long article about it, but I shall hardly have time to finish it before death comes, and therefore I wished to get at least part of it said. Forgive me if I am in error about anything.</FONT.< P>

# LETTER TO ERNEST HOWARD CROSBY

LEO TOLSTOY

(1896)

From: Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
(<http://www.myspot.org/tolstoy/index.html>)



<http://www.jtrapp.com/>

My Dear Crosby: -- I am very glad to hear of your activity and that it is beginning to attract attention. Fifty years ago Garrison's proclamation of non-resistance only cooled people toward him, and the whole fifty years' activity of Ballou in this direction was met with stubborn silence. I read with great pleasure in \*Peace\* the beautiful ideas of the American authors in regard to non-resistance. I make an exception only in the case of Mr. Bemis's old, unfounded opinion, which calumniates Christ in assuming that Christ's expulsion of the cattle from the temple means that he struck the men with a whip, and commanded his disciples to do likewise.

The ideas expressed by these writers, especially by H. Newton and G. Herron, are beautiful, but it is to be regretted that they do not answer the question which Christ put before men, but answer the question which the so-called orthodox teachers of the churches, the chief and most dangerous enemies of Christianity, have put in its place.

Mr. Higginson says that the law of non-resistance is not admissible as a general rule. H. Newton says that the practical results of the application of Christ's teaching will depend on the degree of faith which men will have in this teaching. Mr. C. Martyn assumes that the stage at which

we are is not yet suited for the application of the teaching about non-resistance. G. Herron says that in order to fulfil the law of non-resistance, it is necessary to learn to apply it to life. Mrs. Livermore says the same, thinking that the fulfilment of the law of non-resistance is possible only in the future.

All these opinions treat only the question as to what would happen to people if all were put to the necessity of fulfilling the law of non-resistance; but, in the first place, it is quite impossible to compel all men to accept the law of non-resistance, and, in the second, if this were possible, it would be a most glaring negation of the very principle which is being established. To compel all men not to practise violence against others! Who is going to compel men?

In the third place, and above all else, the question, as put by Christ, does not consist in this, whether non-resistance may become a universal law for all humanity, but what each man must do in order to fulfil his destiny, to save his soul, and do God's work, which reduces itself to the same.

The Christian teaching does not prescribe any laws for all men; it does not say, "follow such and such rules under fear of punishment, and you will all be happy," but explains to each separate man his position in the world and shows him what for him personally results from this position. The Christian teaching says to each individual man that his life, if he recognizes his life to be his, and its aim, the worldly good of his personality or of the personalities of other men, can have no rational meaning, because this good, posited as the end of life, can never be attained, because, in the first place, all beings strive after the goods of the worldly life, and these goods are always attained by one set of beings to the detriment of others, so that every separate man cannot receive the desired good, but, in all probability, must even endure many unnecessary sufferings in his struggle for these unattained goods; in the second place, because if a man even attains the worldly goods, these, the more of

them he attains, satisfy him less and less, and he wishes for more and more new ones; in the third place, mainly because the longer a man lives, the more inevitably do old age, diseases, and finally death, which destroys the possibility of any worldly good, come to him.

Thus, if a man considers his life to be his, and its end to be the worldly good, for himself or for other men, this life can have for him no rational meaning. Life receives a rational meaning only when a man understands that the recognition of his life as his own, and the good of personality, of his own or of that of others, as its end, is an error, and that the human life does not belong to him, who has received this life from some one, but to Him who produced this life, and so its end must not consist in the attainment of his own good or of the good of others, but only in the fulfilment of the will of Him who produced it. Only with such a comprehension of life does it receive a rational meaning, and its end, which consists in the fulfilment of God's will, become attainable, and, above all, only with such a comprehension does man's activity become clearly defined, and he no longer is subject to despair and suffering, which were inevitable with his former comprehension.

"The world and I in it," such a man says to himself, "exist by the will of God. I cannot know the whole world and my relation to it, but I can know what is wanted of me by God, who sent men into this world, endless in time and space, and therefore inaccessible to my understanding, because this is revealed to me in the tradition, that is, in the aggregate reason of the best people in the world, who lived before me, and in my reason, and in my heart, that is, in the striving of my whole being.

"In the tradition, the aggregate of the wisdom of all the best men, who lived before me, I am told that I must act toward others as I wish that others would act toward me; my reason tells me that the greatest good of men is possible only when all men will act likewise.

"My heart is at peace and joyful only when I abandon myself to the feeling of love for men, which demands the same. And then I can not only know what I must do, but also the cause for which my activity is necessary and defined.

"I cannot grasp the whole divine work, for which the world exists and lives, but the divine work which is being accomplished in this world and in which I am taking part with my life is accessible to me. This work is the destruction of the discord and of the struggle among men and other beings, and the establishment among men of the greatest union, concord, and love; this work is the realization of what the Jewish prophets promised, saying that the time will come when all men shall be taught the truth, when the spears shall be forged into pruning-hooks, and the scythes and swords into ploughshares, and when the lion shall lie with the lamb."

Thus, the man of the Christian comprehension of life not only knows how he must act in life, but also what he must do. He must do what contributes to the establishment of the kingdom of God in the world. To do this, a man must fulfil the inner demands of God's will, that is, he must act amicably toward others, as he would like others to do to him. Thus the inner demands of a man's soul coincide with that external end of life which is placed before him.

And here though we have an indication which is so clear to a man of the Christian comprehension, and incontestable from two sides, as to what the meaning and end of human life consists in, and how a man must act, and what he must do, and what not, there appear certain people, who call themselves Christians, who decide that in such and such cases a man must depart from God's law and the common cause of life, which are given to him, and must act contrary to the law and the common cause of life, because, according to their ratiocination, the consequences of the acts committed according to God's law may be profitless and disadvantageous for men.

Man, according to the Christian teaching, is God's workman. The workman does not know his master's whole business, but the nearest aim to be attained by his work is revealed to him, and he is given definite indications as to what he should do; especially definite are the indications as to what he must not do, in order that he may not work against the aim for the attainment of which he was sent to work. In everything else he is given complete liberty. and so for a man who has grasped the Christian conception of life the meaning of his life is clear and rational, and he cannot have a moment of wavering as to how he should act in life and what he ought to do, in order to fulfil the destiny of his life.

According to the law given him in the tradition, in his reason, and in his heart, a man must always act toward another as he wishes to have done to him: he must contribute to the establishment of love and union among men; but according to the decision of these far-sighted people, a man must, while the fulfilment of the law, according to their opinion, is still premature, do violence, deprive of liberty, kill people, and with this contribute, not to union of love, but to the irritation and enragement of people. It is as though a mason, who is put to do certain definite work, who knows that he is taking part with others in the building of a house, and who has a clear and indubitable command from the master himself that is to lay a wall, should receive the command from other masons like him, who, like him, do not know the general plan of the structure and what is useful for the common work, to stop laying the wall, and to undo the work of the others.

Wonderful delusion! The being that breathes today and disappears tomorrow, that has one definite, incontestable law given to him, as to how he is to pass his short term of life, imagines that he knows what is necessary and useful and appropriate for all men, for the whole world, for that world which moves without cessation, and goes on developing, and in the name of this usefulness, which is

differently understood by each of them, he prescribes to himself and to others for a time to depart from the unquestionable law, which is given to him and to all men, and not to act toward all men as he wants others to act toward him, not to bring love into the world, but to practise violence, to deprive of freedom, to punish, to kill, to introduce malice into the world, when it is found that this is necessary. and he enjoins us to do so knowing that the most terrible cruelties, tortures, murders of men, from the Inquisitions and punishments and terrors of all the revolutions to the present bestialities of the anarchists and the massacres of them, have all proceeded from this, that men suppose that they know what people and the world need; knowing that at any given moment there are always two opposite parties, each of which asserts that it is necessary to use violence against the opposite party, -- the men of state against the anarchists, the anarchists against the men of state; the English against the Americans, the Americans against the English; the English against the Germans; and so forth, in all possible combinations and permutations.

Not only does a man of the Christian concept of life see clearly by reflection that there is no ground whatever for his departure from the law of his life, as clearly indicated to him by God, in order to follow the accidental, frail, frequently contradictory demands of men; but if he has been living the Christian life for some time, and has developed in himself the Christian moral sensitiveness, he can positively not act as people demand that he shall, not only as the result of reflection, but also of feeling.

As it is for many men of our world impossible to subject a child to torture and to kill it, though such a torture may save a hundred other people, so a whole series of acts becomes impossible for a man who has developed the Christian sensitiveness of his heart in himself. A Christian, for example, who is compelled to take part in court proceedings, where a man may be sentenced to capital



punishment, to take part in matters of forcible seizure of other people's property, in discussions about the declaration of war, or in preparations for the same, to say nothing of war itself, finds himself in the same position in which a good man would be, if he were compelled to torture or kill a child. It is not that he decides by reflection what he ought not to do, but that he cannot do what is demanded of him, because for a man there exists the moral impossibility, just as there is a physical impossibility, of committing certain acts. Just as it is impossible for a man to lift up a mountain, as it is impossible for a good man to kill a child, so it is impossible for a man who lives a Christian life to take part in violence. Of what significance for such a man can be the reflections that for some imaginary good he must do what has become morally impossible for him?

How, then, is a man to act when he sees the obvious harm of following the law of love and the law of non-resistance, which results from it? How is a man to act -- this example is always adduced -- when a robber in his sight kills or injures a child, and when the child cannot be saved otherwise than by killing the robber?

It is generally assumed that, when they adduce such an example, there can be no other answer to the question than that the robber ought to be killed, in order that the child be saved. But this answer is given so emphatically and so quickly only because we are not only in the habit of acting in this manner in the case of the defence of a child, but also in the case of the expansion of the borders of a neighbouring state to the detriment of our own, or in the case of the transportation of lace across the border, or even in the case of the defence of the fruits of our garden against depredations by passers-by.

It is assumed that it is necessary to kill the robber in order to save the child, but we need only stop and think on what ground a man should act thus, be he a Christian or a non-Christian, to convince ourselves that such an act can have no rational foundations, and is considered necessary

only because two thousand years ago such a mode of action was considered just and people were in the habit of acting thus. Why should a non-Christian, who does not recognize God and the meaning of life in the fulfilment of His will, kill the robber, in defending the child? To say nothing of this, that in killing the robber he is certainly killing, but does not know for certain until the very last moment whether the robber will kill the child or not, to say nothing of this irregularity: who has decided that the life of the child is more necessary and better than the life of the robber?

If a non-Christian does not recognize God, and does not consider the meaning of life to consist in the fulfilment of God's will, it is only calculation, that is, the consideration as to what is more profitable for him and for all men, the continuation of the robber's life or that of the child, which guides the choice of his acts. But to decide this, he must know what will become of the child which he saves, and what would become of the robber if he did not kill him. But that he cannot know. And so, if he is a non-Christian, he has not rational foundation for saving the child through the death of the robber.

But if the man is a Christian, and so recognizes God and sees the meaning of life in the fulfilment of His will, no matter what terrible robber may attack any innocent and beautiful child, he has still less cause to depart from the law given him by God and to do to the robber what the robber wants to do to the child; he may implore the robber, may place his body between the robber and his victim, but there is one thing he cannot do, -- he cannot consciously depart from the law of God, the fulfilment of which forms the meaning of his life. It is very likely that, as the result of his bad bringing up and of his animality, a man, being a pagan or a Christian, will kill the robber, not only in the defence of the child, but also in his own defence or in the defence of his purse, but that will by no means signify that it is right

to do so, that it is right to accustom ourselves and others to think that that ought to be done.

This will only mean that, in spite of the external education and Christianity, the habits of the stone age are still strong in man, that he is capable of committing acts which have long ago been disavowed by his consciousness. A robber in my sight is about to kill a child and I can save it by killing the robber; consequently it is necessary under certain conditions to resist evil with violence.

A man is in danger of his life and can be saved only through my lie; consequently it is necessary in certain cases to lie. A man is starving, and I cannot save him otherwise than by stealing; consequently it is necessary in certain cases to steal.

I lately read a story by Coppee, in which an orderly kills his officer, who has his life insured, and thus saves his honour and the life of his family. Consequently in certain cases it is right to kill.

Such imaginary cases and the conclusions drawn from them prove only this, that there are men who know that it is not right to steal, to lie, to kill, but who are so loath to stop doing this that they use all the efforts of their mind in order to justify their acts. There does not exist a moral rule for which it would be impossible to invent a situation when it would be hard to decide which is more moral, the departure from the rule or its fulfilment. The same is true of the question of non-resistance to evil: men know that it is bad, but they are so anxious to live by violence, that they use all the efforts of their mind, not for the elucidation of all the evil which is produced by man's recognition of the right to do violence to others, but for the defence of this right. But such invented cases in no way prove that the rules about not lying, stealing, killing are incorrect.

"\*Fais ce que doit, advienne que pourra\*, -- do what is right, and let come what may," -- is an expression of profound wisdom. Each of us knows unquestionably what

he ought to do, but none of us knows or can know what will happen. Thus we are brought to the same, not only by this, that we must do what is right, but also by this, that we know what is right, and do not know at all what will come and result from our acts. The Christian teaching is a teaching as to what a man must do for the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent him into the world. But the reflections as to what consequences we assume to result from such or such acts of men not only have nothing in common with Christianity, but are that very delusion which destroys Christianity.

No one has yet seen the imaginary robber with the imaginary child, and all the horrors, which fill history and contemporary events, have been produced only because men imagine that they can know the consequences of the possible acts.

How is this? Men used to live a beastly life, violating and killing all those whom it was advantageous for them to violate and kill, and even eating one another, thinking that that was right. Then there came a time, when, thousands of years ago, even in the time of Moses, there appeared the consciousness in men that it was bad to violate and kill one another. But there were some men for whom violence was advantageous, and they did not recognize the fact, and assured themselves and others that it was not always bad to violate and kill men, but that there were cases when this was necessary, useful, and even good. And acts of violence and murder, though not as frequent and cruel, were continued, but with this difference, that those who committed them justified them on the ground of usefulness to men. It was this false justification of violence that Christ arraigned. He showed that, since every act of violence could be justified as actually happens, when two enemies do violence to one another and both consider their violence justifiable, and there is no chance of verifying the justice of the determination of either, it is necessary not to believe in any justifications of violence, and under no condition, as at

first was thought right by humanity, is it necessary to make use of them.

It would seem that men who profess Christianity would have carefully to unveil this deception, because in the unveiling of this deception does one of the chief manifestations of Christianity consist. But the very opposite has happened: men to whom violence was advantageous, and who did not want to give up these advantages, took upon themselves the exclusive propaganda of Christianity, and, preaching it, asserted that, since there are cases in which the non-application of violence produces more evil than its application (the imaginary robber who kills the child), we must not fully accept Christ's teaching about non-resistance to evil, and that we may depart from this teaching in the defence of our lives and of those of other men, in the defense of our country, the protection of society from madmen and malefactors, and in many other cases. but the decision of the question as to when Christ's teaching ought to be set aside was left to those very men who made use of violence. Thus Christ's teaching about non-resistance to evil turned out to be absolutely set aside, and, what is worse than all that, those very men whom Christ arraigned began to consider themselves the exclusive preachers and expounders of His teaching. But the light shineth in the dark, and the false preachers of Christianity are again arraigned by His teaching.

We can think of the structure of the world as we please, we may do what is advantageous and agreeable for us to do, and use violence against people under the pretext of doing good to men, but it is absolutely impossible to assert that, in do so, we are professing Christ's teaching, because Christ arraigned that very deception. The truth will sooner or later be made manifest, and will arraign the deceivers, even as it does now.

Let only the question of the human life be put correctly, as it was put by Christ, and not as it was corrupted by the

churches, and all the deceptions which by the churches have been heaped on Christ's teaching will fall of their own accord.

The question is not whether it will be good or bad for human society to follow the law of love and the resulting law of non-resistance, but whether you -- a being that lives today and is dying by degrees tomorrow and every moment -- will now, this very minute, fully do the will of Him who sent you and clearly expressed it in tradition and in your reason and heart, or whether you want to act contrary to this will. As soon as the question is put in this form, there will be but one answer: I want at once, this very minute, without any delay, without waiting for anyone, and without considering the seeming consequences, with all my strength to fulfil what alone I am indubitably commanded to do by Him who sent me into the world, and in no case, under no condition, will I, can I, do what is contrary to it, because in this lies the only possibility of my rational, unwretched life.

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# PATRIOTISM AND GOVERNMENT

LEO TOLSTOY

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"The time is fast approaching when to call a man a patriot will be the deepest insult You can offer him. Patriotism now means advocating plunder in the interests of the privileged classes of the particular State system into which we have happened to be born." - E. BELFORT BAX.

## I.

I have already several times expressed the thought that in our day the feeling of patriotism is an unnatural, irrational, and harmful feeling, and a cause of a great part of the ills from which mankind is suffering, and that, consequently, this feeling--should not be cultivated, as is now being done, but should, on the contrary, be suppressed and eradicated by all means available to rational men. Yet, strange to say--though it is undeniable that the universal armaments and destructive wars which are ruining the peoples result from that one feeling--all my arguments showing the backwardness, anachronism, and harmfulness of patriotism have been met, and are still met, either by silence, by intentional misinterpretation, or by a strange unvarying reply to the effect that only bad patriotism (Jingoism or Chauvinism) is evil, but that real good patriotism is a very

elevated moral feeling, to condemn which is not only irrational but wicked.

What this real, good patriotism consists in, we are never told; or, if anything is said about it, instead of explanation we get declamatory, inflated phrases, or, finally, some other conception is substituted for patriotism-- something which has nothing in common with the patriotism we all know, and from the results of which we all suffer so severely.

It is generally said that the real, good patriotism consists in desiring for one's own people or State such real benefits as do not infringe the well-being of other nations

Talking recently to an Englishman about the present war, I said to him that the real cause of the war was not avarice, as people generally say, but patriotism, as is evident from the temper of the whole of English society. The Englishman did not agree with me, and said that even were the case so, it resulted from the fact that the patriotism at present inspiring Englishmen is a bad patriotism; but that good patriotism, such as he was imbued with, would cause Englishmen, his compatriots to act well.

'Then do you wish only Englishmen to act well?' I asked.

'I wish all men to do so,' said he; in dictating clearly by that reply the characteristic of true benefits whether moral scientific, or even material and practical -which is that they spread out to all men. But, evidently, to wish such benefits to everyone, not only is not patriotic, but is the reverse of patriotic.

Neither do the peculiarities of each people constitute patriotism, though these things are purposely substituted for the conception of patriotism by its defenders. They say that the peculiarities of each people are an essential condition of human progress, and that patriotism, which seeks to maintain those peculiarities, is, therefore, a good and useful feeling. But is it not quite evident that if, once upon a time, these peculiarities of each people--these customs, creeds, languages were conditions necessary for



the life of humanity, in our time these same peculiarities form the chief obstacle to what is already recognised as an ideal the brotherly union of the peoples ? And therefore the maintenance and defence of any nationality- Russian, German, French, or Anglo-Saxon, provoking the corresponding maintenance and defence not only of Hungarian, Polish, and Irish nationalities, but also of Basque, Provençal, Mordva, Tchouvash, and many other nationalities-serves not to harmonize and unite men, but to estrange and divide them more and more from one another. So that not the imaginary but the real patriotism, which we all know, by which most people to-day are swayed and from which humanity suffers so severely, is not the wish for spiritual benefits for one's own people (it is impossible to desire spiritual benefits for one's own people only), but is a very definite feeling of preference for one's own people or State above all other peoples and States, and a consequent wish to get for that people or State the greatest advantages and power that can be got- things which are obtainable only at the expense of the advantages and power of other peoples or States.

It would, therefore, seem obvious that patriotism as a feeling is bad and harmful, and as a doctrine is stupid. For it is clear that if each people and each State considers itself the best of peoples and States, they all live in a gross and harmful delusion.

## II.

One would expect the harmfulness and irrationality of patriotism to be evident to everybody. But the surprising fact is that cultured and learned men not only do not themselves notice the harm and stupidity of patriotism, but they resist every exposure of it with the greatest obstinacy and ardour (though without any rational grounds), and continue to belaud it as beneficent and elevating.

What does this mean?

Only one explanation of this amazing fact presents itself to me.

All human history, from the earliest times to our own day, may be considered as a movement of the consciousness, both of individuals and of homogeneous groups, from lower ideas to higher ones.

The whole path traveled both by individuals and by homogeneous groups may be represented as a consecutive flight of steps from the lowest, on the level of animal life, to the highest attained by the consciousness of man at a, given moment of history,

Each man, like each separate homogeneous group, nation, or State, always moved and moves up this ladder of ideas. Some portions of humanity are in front, others lag far behind, others, again - the majority- move somewhere between the most advanced and the most backward. But all, whatever stage they may have reached, are inevitably and irresistibly moving from lower to higher ideas. And always, at any given moment, both the individuals and the separate groups of people-advanced, middle, or backward- stand in three different relations to the three stages of ideas amid which they move.

Always, both for the individual and for the separate groups of people, there are the ideas of the past, which are worn out and have become strange to them, and to which they cannot revert: as, for instance, in our Christian world, the ideas of cannibalism, universal plunder, the rape of wives, and other customs of which only a record remains.

And there are the ideas of the present, instilled into men's minds by education, by example and by the general activity of all around them; ideas under the power of which they live at a given time: for instance, in our own day, the ideas of property, State organization, trade, utilization of domestic animal, etc.

And there are the ideas of the future, of which some are already approaching realization and are obliging people to change their way of life and to struggle against the former

ways: such ideas in our world as those of freeing the labourers, of giving equality to women, of disusing flesh food, etc.; while others, though already recognised, have not yet come into practical conflict with the old forms of life: such in our times are the ideas (which we call ideals) of the extermination of violence, the arrangement of a communal system of property, of a universal religion, and of a general brotherhood of men.

And, therefore, every man and every homogeneous group of men, on whatever level they may stand, having behind them the worn-out remembrances of the past, and before them the ideals of the future, are always in a state of struggle between the moribund ideas of the present and the ideas of the future that are coming to life. It usually happens that when an idea which has been useful and even necessary in the past becomes superfluous, that idea, after a more or less prolonged struggle, yields its place to a new idea which was till then an ideal, but which thus becomes a present idea.

But it does occur that an antiquated idea, already replaced in people's consciousness by a higher one, is of such a kind that its maintenance is profitable to those people who have the greatest influence in their society. And then it happens that this antiquated idea, though it is in sharp contradiction to the whole surrounding form of life, which has been altering in other respects, continues to influence people and to sway their actions. Such retention of antiquated ideas always has occurred, and still does occur, in the region of religion. The cause is, that the priests, whose profitable positions are bound up with the antiquated religious idea, purposely use their power to hold people to this antiquated idea.

The same thing occurs, and for similar reasons, in the political sphere, with reference to the patriotic idea, on which all arbitrary power is based. People to whom it is profitable to do so, maintain that idea by artificial means, though it now lacks both sense and utility. And as these

people possess the most powerful means of influencing others, they are able to achieve their object.

In this it seems to me, lies the explanation of the strange contrast 'between the antiquated patriotic idea, and that whole drift of ideas making in a contrary direction, which have already entered into the consciousness of the Christian world.

### III.

Patriotism , as a feeling of exclusive love for one's own people, and as a doctrine of tile virtue of sacrificing one's tranquillity, one's property, and ever, one's life, in defence of one's own people from slaughter and outrage by their enemies, was the highest idea of the period when each nation considered it feasible and just, for its own advantage, to subject to slaughter and outrage the people of other nations.

But, already some 2,000 years ago representatives of its in the person of the highest wisdom, began to recognise the higher idea of a brotherhood of man; and that idea, penetrating man's consciousness more and more, has in our time attained most varied forms of realization. Thanks to improved means of communication, and to the unity of industry, of trade, of the arts, and of science, men are to-day so bound one to another that the danger of conquest, massacre, or outrage by a neighbouring people, has quite disappeared, and all peoples (the peoples, but not the Governments) live together in peaceful 1, mutually advantageous, and friendly commercial, industrial, artistic, and scientific relations, which they have no need and no desire to disturb. One would think, therefore that the antiquated feeling of patriotism being superfluous and incompatible with the consciousness we have reached of the existence of brotherhood among men of different nationalities-should dwindle more and more until it completely disappears. Yet the very opposite of this occurs:

this harmful and antiquated feeling not only continues to exist, but burns more and more fiercely.

The peoples, without any reasonable ground, and contrary alike to their conception of right and to their own advantage, not only sympathize with Governments and their attacks on other nations, in their seizures of foreign possessions, and in defending by force what they have already stolen, but even themselves demand such attacks, seizures and defences: are glad of them, and take pride in them. The small oppressed nationalities which have fallen under the power of great States--the Poles, Irish, Bohemians, Finns, or Armenians-- resenting the patriotism of their conquerors, which is the cause of their oppression, catch from them the infection of this feeling of patriotism--which has ceased to be necessary, and is now obsolete, unmeaningful, and harmful--and to catch it to such a degree that all their activity is concentrated upon it, and they, themselves suffering from the patriotism of the stronger nations, are ready, for the sake of patriotism, to perpetrate on other peoples the very same deeds that their oppressors have perpetrated and are perpetrating on them.

This occurs because the ruling classes (including not only the actual rulers with their officials, but all the classes who enjoy an exceptionally advantageous position: the capitalists, journalists, and most of the artists and scientists) can retain their position--exceptionally advantageous in comparison with that of the labouring masses--thanks only to Government organization, which rests on patriotism. They have in their hands all the most powerful means of influencing the people, and always sedulously support patriotic feelings in themselves and others, more especially as those feelings which uphold the Government's power are those that are always best rewarded by that power.

Every official prospers the more in his career, the more patriotic he is; so also the army man gets promotion in time of war--the war id produced by patriotism.

Patriotism and its results--wars--give an enormous revenue to the newspaper trade, and profits to many other trades. Every writer, teacher, and professor is more secure in his place the more he preaches patriotism. Every Emperor and King obtains the more fame the more he is addicted to patriotism.

The ruling classes have in their hands the army, money, the schools, the churches, and the press. In the schools, they kindle patriotism in the children by means of histories describing their own people as the best of all peoples and always in the right. Among adults they kindle it by spectacles, jubilees, monuments, and by a lying patriotic press. Above all, they inflame patriotism in this way: perpetrating every kind of harshness and injustice against other nations, they provoke in them enmity towards their own people, and then in turn exploit that enmity to embitter their people against the foreigner.

The intensification of this terrible feeling of patriotism has gone on among the European people in a rapidly increasing progression, and in our time has reached the utmost limits, beyond which there is no room for it to extend.

#### IV.

Within the memory of the people not yet old, an occurrence took place showing most obviously the amazing intoxication caused by patriotism among the people of Christendom.

The ruling classes of Germany excited the patriotism of the masses of their people to such a degree that, in the second half of the nineteenth century, a law was proposed in accordance with which all the men had to become soldiers: all the sons, husbands, fathers, learned men, and godly men, had to learn to murder, to become submissive slaves of those above them in military rank, and be absolutely ready to kill whomsoever they were ordered to kill: to kill men of oppressed nationalities, and their own working-men standing up for their rights, and even their own fathers and

brothers--as was publicly proclaimed by that most impudent of potentates, William II.

That horrible measure, outraging all man's best feelings in the grossest manner, was, under tire influence of patriotism, acquiesced in without murmur by the people of Germany. It resulted in their victory over the French. That victory yet further excited the patriotism of Germany, and, by reaction, that of France, Russia, and the other Powers; and the men of the European countries unresistingly submitted to the introduction of general military service--i.e., to a state of slavery involving a degree of humiliation and submission incomparably worse than any slavery of the ancient world. After this servile submission of the masses to the calls of patriotism, the audacity, cruelty, and insanity of the Governments knew no bounds. A competition in the usurpation of other peoples' lands in Asia, Africa, and America began-evoked partly by whim, partly by vanity, and partly by covetousness and was accompanied by ever greater and greater distrust and enmity between the Governments.

The destruction of the inhabitants on the lands seized was accepted as a quite natural proceeding. The only question was, who should be first in seizing other peoples' land and destroying the inhabitants? All the Governments not only most evidently infringed, and are infringing, the elementary demands of justice in relation to the conquered peoples, and in relation to one another, but they were guilty, and continue to be guilty, of every kind of cheating, swindling, bribing, fraud, spying, robbery, and murder; and the peoples not only sympathized, and still sympathize, with them in all this, but they rejoice when it is their own Government and not another Government that commits such crimes.

The mutual enmity between the different peoples and States has reached latterly such amazing dimensions that, notwithstanding the fact that there is no reason why one State should attack another, everyone knows that all the

Governments stand with their claws out and showing their teeth, and only waiting for someone to be in trouble, or become weak, in order to tear him to pieces with as little risk as possible.

All the peoples of the so-called Christian world have been reduced by patriotism to such a state of brutality, that not only those who are obliged to kill or be killed desire slaughter and rejoice in murder, but all the people of Europe and America, living peaceably in their homes exposed to no danger, are, at each war thanks to easy means of communication and to the press--in the position of the spectators in a Roman circus, and, like them, delight in the slaughter, and raise the bloodthirsty cry, 'Pollice verso.'

Not adults only, but also children, pure, wise children, rejoice, according to their nationality, when they hear that the number killed and lacerated by lyddite or other shells on some particular day was not 700 but 1,000 Englishmen or Boers.

And parents (I know such cases) encourage their children in such brutality.

But that is not all. Every increase in the army of one nation (and each nation, being in danger, seeks to increase its army for patriotic reasons) obliges its neighbours to increase their armies, also from patriotism, and this evokes a fresh increase by the first nation.

And the same thing occurs with fortifications and navies: one State has built ten ironclads, a neighbour builds eleven; then the first builds twelve, and so on to infinity.

'I'll pinch you.' 'And I'll punch your head.' 'And I'll stab you with a dagger.' 'And I'll bludgeon you.' 'And I'll shoot you.'

. . . Only bad children, drunken men, or animals, quarrel or fight so, but yet it is just what is going on among the highest representatives of the most enlightened Governments, the very men who undertake to direct the education and the morality of their subjects.



V.

The position is becoming worse and worse, and there is no stopping this descent towards evident perdition.

The one way of escape believed in by credulous people has now been closed by recent events. I refer to the Hague Conference, and to the war between England and the Transvaal which immediately followed it.

If people who think too little, or but superficially, were able to comfort themselves with the idea that international courts of arbitration would supersede wars and ever-increasing armaments, the Hague Conference and the war that followed it demonstrated in the most palpable manner the impossibility of finding a solution of the difficulty in that way. After the Hague Conference, it became obvious that as long as Governments with armies exist, the termination of armaments and of wars is impossible. That an agreement should become possible, it is necessary that the parties to it should trust each other. And in order that the Powers should trust each other, they must lay down their arms, as is done by the bearers of a flag of truce when they meet for a conference.

So long as Governments, distrusting one another, not only do not disband or decrease their armies, but always increase them in correspondence with augmentations made by their neighbours, and by means of spies watch every Movement of troops, knowing that each of the Powers will attack its neighbour as soon as it sees its way to do so, no agreement is possible, and every conference is either a stupidity, or a pastime, or a fraud, or an impertinence, or all of these together.

It was particularly becoming for the Russian rather than any other Government to be the enfant terrible of the Hague Conference. No one at home being allowed to reply to all its evidently mendacious manifestations and rescripts, the Russian Government is so spoiled, that--having without the least scruple ruined its own people with armaments, strangled Poland, plundered Turkestan and China, and

being specially engaged in suffocating Finland--it proposed disarmament to the Governments, in full assurance that it would be trusted!

But strange, unexpected, and indecent as such a proposal was--especially at the very time when orders were being given to increase its army--the words publicly uttered in the hearing of the people were such, that for the sake of appearances the Governments of the other Powers could not decline the comical and evidently insincere consultation ; and so the delegates met--knowing in advance that nothing would come of it--and for several weeks (during which they drew good salaries) though they were laughing in their sleeves, they all conscientiously pretended to be much occupied in arranging peace among the nations.

The Hague Conference, followed up as it was by the terrible bloodshed of the Transvaal War, which no one attempted, or is now attempting, to stop, was, nevertheless, of some use, though not at all in the way expected of it--it was useful because it showed in the most obvious manner that the evils from which the peoples are suffering cannot be cured by Governments. That Governments, even if they wished to, can terminate neither armaments nor wars.

Governments, to have a reason for existing, must defend their people from other people's attack. But not one people wishes to attack, or does attack, another. And therefore Governments, far from wishing for peace, carefully excite the anger of other nations against themselves. And having excited other people's anger against themselves, and stirred up the patriotism of their own people, each Government then assures its people that it is in danger and must be defended.

And having the power in their hands, the Governments can both irritate other nations and excite patriotism at home, and they carefully do both the one and the other; nor can they act otherwise, for their existence depends on thus acting.

If, in former times, Governments were necessary to defend their people from other people's attacks, now, on the contrary, Governments artificially disturb the peace that exists between the nations, and provoke enmity among them.

When it was necessary to plough in order to sow ploughing was wise; but evidently it is absurd and' armful to go on ploughing after the seed has been sown. But this is just what the Governments are obliging their people to do: to infringe the unit which exists, and which nothing would infringe if it were not for the Governments.

## VI.

In reality what are these Governments, without which people think they could not exist ?

There may have been a time when such Governments were necessary, and when the evil of supporting a Government was less than that of being defenceless against organized neighbours; but now such Governments have become unnecessary, and are a far greater evil than all the dangers with which they frighten their subjects.

Not only military Governments, but Governments in general, could be, I will not say useful, but at least harmless, only if they consisted of immaculate, holy people, as is theoretically the case among the Chinese. But then Governments, by the nature of their activity, which consists in committing acts of violence are always composed of elements the most contrary to holiness-of the most audacious, unscrupulous, and perverted people.

A Government, therefore, and especially a Government entrusted with military power, is the most dangerous organization possible.

The Government, in the widest sense, including capitalists and the Press, is nothing else than an organization which places the greater part of the people in the power of a smaller part, who dominate them; that smaller part is subject to a yet smaller part I and that again to a yet

smaller, and so oil, reaching at last a few people, or one single man, who by means of military force has power over all the rest. So that all this organization resembles a cone, of which all the parts are completely in the power of those people, or of that one person, who happen to be at the apex. The apex of the cone is seized by those who are more cunning, audacious, and unscrupulous than the rest, or by someone who happens to be the heir of those who were audacious and unscrupulous.

Today it may be Boris Godunof, and tomorrow Gregory Otrepyef. Today the licentious Catherine, who with her paramours has murdered her husband; tomorrow Pougatchof ; then Paul the madman, Nicholas L, or Alexander.

Today it may be Napoleon, tomorrow a Bourbon or an Orleans, a Boulanger or a Panama Company; to day it may be Gladstone, tomorrow Salisbury, Chamberlain, or Rhodes.

And, to such Governments is allowed full power, not only over property and lives, but even over the spiritual and moral development, the education, and the religious guidance of everybody.

People construct such a terrible machine of power, they allow any one to seize it who can (and the chances always are that it will be seized by the most morally worthless)--they slavishly submit to him, and are then bed that evil comes of it. They are afraid of Anarchists' bombs, and are riot afraid of this terrible organization which is always threatening them with the greatest calamities.

People found it useful to tie themselves together in order to resist their enemies, as the Cireassians did when resisting attacks. But the danger is quite past, and yet people go oil tying themselves together.

They carefully tie themselves up so that one mail can have them all at his mercy; then they throw away the end of the rope that ties them, and leave it trailing for some rascal or fool to seize and to do them whatever harm he likes.

Really, what are people doing but just that--when they set up, submit to, and maintain an organized and military Government?

## VII.

To deliver men from the terrible and ever-increasing evils of armaments and wars, we want neither congresses nor conferences, nor treaties, nor courts of arbitration, but the destruction of those instruments of violence which are called Governments, and from which humanity's greatest evils flow.

To destroy Governmental violence, only one thing is needed: it is that people should understand that the feeling of patriotism, which alone supports that instrument of violence, is a rude, harmful, disgraceful, and bad feeling, and, above all, is immoral. It is a rude feeling, because it is one natural only to people standing on the lowest level of morality, and expecting from other nations such outrages as they themselves are ready to inflict; it is a harmful feeling, because it disturbs advantageous and joyous, peaceful relations with other peoples, and above all produces that Governmental organization under which power may fall, and does fall, into the hands of the worst men; it is a disgraceful feeling, because it turns man not merely into a slave, but into a fighting cock, a bull, or a gladiator, who wastes his strength and his life for objects which are not his own but his Governments'; and it is an immoral feeling, because, instead of confessing one's self a son of God (as Christianity teaches us) or even a free man guided by his own reason, each man under the influence of patriotism confesses himself the soil of his fatherland and the slave of his Government, and commits actions contrary to his reason and his conscience.

It is only necessary that people should understand this, and the terrible bond, called Government, by which we are chained together, will fall to pieces of itself without

struggle and with it will cease the terrible and useless evils it produces.

And people are already beginning to understand this. This, for instance, is what a citizen of the United States writes:

'We are farmers, mechanics, merchants, manufacturers, teachers, and all we ask is the privilege of attending to our own business. We own our homes.. love our friends, are devoted to our families, and do not interfere with our neighbours- we have work to do and wish to work.

'Leave us alone !

'But they will not-these politicians. They insist on governing us and living off our labour. They tax us, eat our substance, conscript us, draft our boys into their wars. All the myriads of men who live off the Government depend upon the Government to tax us, and, in order to tax us successfully, standing armies are maintained. The plea that the army is needed for the protection of the country is pure fraud and pretence. The French Government affrights the people by telling them that the Germans are ready and anxious to fall upon them; the Russians fear the British; the British fear everybody; and now in America we are told we must increase our navy and add to our army because Europe may at any moment combine against us.

'This is fraud and untruth. No plain people in France, Germany, England, and America are opposed to war. We only wish to be let alone. Men with wives, children, sweethearts, homes, aged parents, do not want to go off and fight someone. We are peaceable and we fear war; we bate it.

'We would like to obey the Golden Rule.

'War is the sure result of the existence of armed men. That country which maintains a large standing army will sooner or later have a war on hand. 'The man who prides himself on fisticuffs is going some day to meet a man who considers himself the better man, and they will fight. Germany and France have no issue save a desire to see which is the better mail. They have fought many times--and

they will fight again. Not that the people want to fight; but the Superior Class fan fright into fury, and make men think they must fight to protect their homes.

So the people who wish to follow the teachings of Christ are not allowed to do so, but are taxed, outraged, deceived by Governments.

'Christ taught humility, meekness, the forgiveness of one's enemies, and that to kill was wrong. The Bible teaches men not to swear; but the Superior Class swear us on the Bible in which they do not believe.

'The question is, how are we to relieve ourselves of these cormorants who toil not, but who are clothed in broadcloth and blue, with brass buttons and many costly accoutrements; who feed upon our substance, and for whom we delve and dig?

'Shall we fight them?

'No, we do not believe in bloodshed; and besides that, they have the guns and the money, and they can hold out longer than we.

'But who composes this army that they would order to fire upon us?

'Why, our neighbours and brothers-deceived into the idea that they are doing God's service by protecting their country from its enemies. When the fact is, our country has no enemies save the Superior Class, that pretends to look out for our interests if we will only obey and consent to be taxed.

'Thus do they siphon our resources and turn our true brothers upon us to subdue and humiliate us. You cannot send a telegram to your wife, nor an express package to your friend, nor draw a cheque for your grocer, until you first pay the tax to maintain armed men, who can quickly be used to kill you; and who surely will imprison you if you do not pay.

'The only relief lies in education. Educate men that it is wrong to kill. Teach them the Golden Rule, and yet again teach them the Golden Rule. Silently defy this Superior

Class by refusing to bow down to supporting the preachers their fetich of bullets. Cease supporting the preachers who cry for war and spout patriotism for a consideration. Let them go to work as we do. We believe in Christ--they do not. Christ spoke what lie thought; they speak what they think will please the men in power--the Superior Class.

'We will not enlist. We will not shoot on their order. We will not "charge bayonet" upon a mild and gentle people. We will not fire upon shepherds and farmers, fighting for their firesides, upon a suggestion of Cecil Rhodes. Your false cry of " Wolf! wolf!" shall not alarm us. We pay your taxes only because we have to, and we will pay no longer than we have to. We will pay no pew-rents, no tithes to your sham. charities, and we will speak our minds upon occasion.

'We will educate men.

And all the time our silent influence will be going out, and even the men who are conscripted will be halfhearted and refuse to fight. We will educate men into the thought that the Christ Life of Peace and Goodwill is better than the Life of Strife, Bloodshed, and War.

' "Peace on earth !"--it can only come when men do away with armies, and are willing to do unto other men as they would be done by.'

So writes a citizen of the United States; and from various sides, in various forms, such voices are sounding.

This is what a German soldier writes:

'I went through two campaigns with the Prussian Guards (in 1866 and 1870), and I hate war from the bottom of my soul, for it has made me inexpressibly unfortunate. We wounded soldiers generally receive such a miserable recompense that we have indeed to be ashamed of having once been patriots. I, for instance, get ninepence a day for my right arm, which was shot through at the attack on St. Privat, August 18, 1870. Some bunting dogs have more allowed for their keep, And I have suffered for years from my twice wounded arm. Already in 1866 I took part in the



war against Austria, and fought at Trautenau and Koniggratz, and saw horrors enough. In 1870, being in the reserve I was called out again; and, it's like I have already said, I was wounded in the attack at St. Privat: my right arm was twice shot through lengthwise. I had to leave a good place in a brewery, and was unable afterwards to regain it. Since then I have never been able to get on my feet again. The intoxication soon passed, and there was nothing left for the wounded invalid but to keep himself alive on a beggarly pittance eked out by charity. . . .

'In a world in which people run round like trained animals, and are not capable of any other idea than that of overreaching one another for the sake of mammon--such a world let people think me a crank; but, for all that, I feel in myself the divine idea of peace, which is so beautifully expressed in the Sermon on the Mount. My deepest conviction is that war is only trade on a larger scale-- the ambitious and powerful trade with the happiness of the peoples.

'And what horrors do we not suffer from it! Never shall I forget the pitiful groans that pierced one to the marrow!

'People who never did each other any harm begin to slaughter one another like wild animals, and petty, slavish souls--implicate the good God, making Him their confederate in such deeds.

'My neighbour in the ranks had his jaw broken by a bullet. The poor wretch went wild with pain. He ran like a madman, and in the scorching summer heat could not even get water to cool his horrible wound. Our commander, the Crown Prince (who was afterwards the noble Emperor Frederick), wrote in his diary War--is an irony of the Gospels." . . .'

People are beginning to understand the fraud of patriotism, in which all the Governments take such pains to keep them involved.

### VIII.

'But,' it is usually asked, 'what will there be instead of Governments?'

There will be nothing. Something that has long been useless, and therefore superfluous and bad, will be abolished. An organ that, being unnecessary, has become harmful, will be abolished.

'But,' people generally say, 'if there is no Government, people will violate and kill each other.'

Why? Why should the abolition of the organization which arose in consequence of violence, and which has been handed down from generation to generation to do violence--why should the abolition of such all organization, now devoid of use, cause people to outrage and kill one another? On the contrary, the presumption is that the abolition of the organ of violence would result in people ceasing to violate and kill one another.

Now, some men are specially educated and trained to kill and to do violence to other people--there are men who are supposed to have a right to use violence, and who make use of an organization which exists for that purpose. Such deeds of violence and such killing are considered good and worthy deeds.

But then people will not be so brought up, and no one will have a right to use violence to others, and there will be no organization to do violence, and, as is natural to people of our time--violence and murder will always be considered bad actions, no matter who commits them.

But should acts of violence continue to be committed even after the abolition of the Governments, such acts will certainly be fewer than are committed now, when ail organization exists specially devised to commit acts of violence, and a state of things exists in which acts of violence and murders are considered good and useful deeds.

The abolition of Governments will merely rid us of ail unnecessary organization which we have inherited from the

past, ail organization for the commission of violence and for its justification.

'But there will then be no laws, no property, no courts of justice, no police, no popular education,' say people who intentionally confuse the use of violence by Governments with various social activities.

The abolition of the organization of Government formed to do violence, does not at all involve the abolition of what is reasonable and good, and therefore not based on violence, in laws or law courts, or in property, or in police regulations, or in financial arrangements, or in popular education. On the contrary, the absence of the brutal power of Government, which is needed only for its own support, will facilitate a juster and more reasonable social organization, needing no violence. Courts of justice, and public affairs, and popular education, will all exist to file extent to which they are really needed by the people, but in a shape which will not involve the evils contained in the present form of Government. Only that will be destroyed which was evil and hindered the free expression of the people's will.

But even if we assume that with the absence of Governments there would be disturbances and civil strife, even then the position of the people would be better than it is at present. The position now is such that it is difficult to imagine anything worse. The people are ruined, and their ruin is becoming more and more complete. The men are all converted into warslaves, and have from day to day to expect orders to go to kill and to be killed. What more? Are the ruined peoples to die of hunger ? Even that is already beginning in Russia, in Italy, and in India. Or are the women as well as the men to go to be soldiers? In the Transvaal even that has begun.

So that even if the absence of Government really meant Anarchy in the negative, disorderly sense of that word-- which is far from being the case--even then no anarchical disorder could be worse than the position to which

Governments have already led their peoples, and to which they are leading them.

And therefore emancipation from patriotism, and the destruction of the despotism of Government that rests upon it, cannot but be beneficial to mankind.

### IX.

Men, recollect yourselves! For the sake of your well-being, physical and spiritual, for the sake of your brothers and sisters, pause, consider, and think of what you are doing!

Reflect, and you will understand that your foes are not the Boers, or the English, or the French, or the Germans, or the Finns, or the Russians, but that your foes--your only foes--are you yourselves, who by your patriotism maintain the Governments that oppress you and make you unhappy.

They have undertaken to protect you from danger, and they have brought that pseudo-protection to such a point that you have all become soldiers--slaves, and are all ruined, or are being ruined more and more, and at any moment may and should expect that the tight stretched cord will snap, and a horrible slaughter of you and your children will commence.

And however great that slaughter may be, and however that conflict may end, the same state of things will continue. In the same way, and with yet greater intensity, the Governments will arm, and ruin, and pervert you and your children, and no one will help you to stop it or to prevent it, if you do not help yourselves.

And there is only one kind of help possible--it lies in the abolition of that terrible linking up into a cone of violence, which enables the person or persons who succeed in seizing the apex to have power over all tire rest, and to hold that power the more firmly the more cruel and inhuman they are, as we see by the cases of the Napoleons, Nicholas I., Bismarck, Chamberlain, Rhodes, and our Russian Dictators who rule the people in the Tsar's name.

And there is only one way to destroy this binding together--it is by shaking off the hypnotism of patriotism.

Understand that all the evils from which you suffer, you yourselves cause by yielding to the suggestions by which Emperors, Kings, Members of Parliament, Governors, officers, capitalists, priests, authors, artists, and all who need this fraud of patriotism in order to live upon your labour, deceive you!

Whoever you may be--Frenchman, Russian, Pole, Englishman, Irishman, or Bohemian--understand that all your real human interests, whatever they may be agricultural, industrial, commercial, artistic, or scientific--as well as your pleasures and joys, in no way run counter to the interests of other peoples or States ; and that you are united, by mutual co-operation, by interchange of services, by the joy of wide brotherly intercourse, and by the interchange not merely of goods but also of thoughts and feelings, with the folk of other lands.

Understand that the question as to who manages to seize Wei-hai-wei, Port Arthur, or Cuba--your Government or another--does not affect you, or, rather, that every such seizure made by your Government injures you, by inevitably bringing in its train all sorts of pressure on you by your Government to force you to take part in the robbery and violence by which alone such seizures are made, or can be retained when made. Understand that your life can in no way be bettered by Alsace becoming German or French, and Ireland or Poland being free or enslaved--whoever holds them. you are free to live where you will, if even you be air Alsatian, an Irishman, or a Pole. Understand, too, that by stirring up patriotism you will only make the case worse, for the subjection in which your people are kept has resulted simply from the struggle between patriotisms, and every manifestation of patriotism in one nation provokes a corresponding reaction in another. Understand that salvation from your woes is only possible when you free yourself from the obsolete idea of patriotism

and from the obedience to Governments that is based upon it, and when you boldly enter into the region of that higher idea, the brotherly union of the peoples, which has long since come to life, and from all sides is calling you to itself. If people would but understand that they are not the sons of some fatherland or other, nor of Governments, but are sons of God, and can therefore neither be slaves nor enemies one to another- those insane, unnecessary, worn-out, pernicious organizations called Governments, and all the sufferings, violations, humiliations, and crimes which they occasion, would cease.

# THE SLAVERY OF OUR TIMES

LEO TOLSTOY

1900

From: Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
(<http://www.myspot.org/tolstoy/index.html>)



<http://www.jtrapp.com/>

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## PREFACE / INTRODUCTION

"They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

Nearly fifteen years ago the census in Moscow evoked in me a series of thoughts and feelings which I expressed as best I could in a book called 'What Must We Do Then.' Towards the end of last year (1899) I once more reconsidered the same questions, and the conclusions to which I came were the same as in that book. But as I think that during these ten years I have reflected on the questions discussed in What Must We Do Then more quietly and minutely in relation to the teachings at present existing and diffused among us, I now offer the reader new considerations, leading to the same replies as before. I think these considerations may be of use to people who are honestly trying to elucidate their position in society and clearly to define the moral obligations flowing from that position. I, therefore, publish them.

The fundamental thought both of that book and of this article is the repudiation of violence. That repudiation I learnt and understood from the Gospels, where it is most clearly expressed in the words: It was said to you, An Eye for an Eye, . . . -that is, you have been taught to oppose violence by violence, but I teach you: turn the other cheek when you are struck-that is, suffer violence, but do not employ it. I know that the use of those great words-in consequence of the unreflectingly perverted interpretations alike of Liberals and of Churchmen, who on this matter agree-will be a reason for most so-called cultured people not to read this article, or to be biased against it; but, nevertheless, I place those words as the epigraph of this work.

I cannot prevent people who consider themselves enlightened from considering the Gospel teaching to be an obsolete guide to life-a guide long outlived by humanity. But I can indicate the source from which I drew my consciousness of a truth which people are as yet far from

recognizing, and which alone can save men from their sufferings.

And this I do.  
11 July, 1900.

## THE SLAVERY OF OUR TIMES

"Ye have heard that it was said, An Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth" (Matt. v.38; Ex. xxi. 24). "But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v.39). "And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also" (Matt. v.40). "Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (Luke vi. 30). "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke vi. 31).

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common" (Acts ii. 44)." "And Jesus said, When it is evening, ye say, it will be fair weather, for the heaven is red" (Matt. xvi. 2). "And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the heaven is red and lowering. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to discern the face of the heaven; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times" (Matt. xvi. 3).

"The system on which all the nations of the world are acting is founded in gross deception, in the deepest ignorance, or a mixture of both; so that under no possible modification of the principles on which it is based can it ever produce good to man; on the contrary, its practical results must ever be to produce evil continually."

-Robert Owen.

"We have much studied and much perfected of late the great civilized invention of the division of labor, only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labor that is divided, but the men-divided into mere segments of men, broken into small fragments and crumbs of life; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. Now, it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points

were polished-sand of human souls- we should think there might be some loss in it also.

"Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin . . . into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with-this is to be slave-masters indeed. . It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine which is leading the mass of the nations into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth and against nobility is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine or the sting of mortified pride. These do much and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are at this day.

"It is not that men are ill-fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and, therefore, look to wealth as the only means of pleasure.

"It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labor to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. Never had the upper classes so much sympathy with the lower, or charity for them, as they have at this day, and yet never were they so much hated by them."-From "The Stones of Venice," by John Ruskin, Vol. II, Chap. VI., §§ 13-16.

CHAPTER I.  
GOODS-PORTERS WHO WORK THIRTY-SEVEN  
OURS

An acquaintance of mine who works on the Moscow-Kursk Railway as a weigher, in the course of conversation mentioned to me that the men who load the goods on to his scales work for thirty-seven hours on end.

Though I had full confidence in the speaker's truthfulness I was unable to believe him. I thought he was making a mistake, or exaggerating, or that I misunderstood something.

But the weigher narrated the conditions under which this work is done so exactly that there was no room left for doubt. He told me that there are two hundred and fifty such goods-porters at the Kursk station in Moscow. They were all divided into gangs of five men, and were on piece-work, receiving from one rouble to r. 15 (say two shillings to two and fourpence, or forty-eight cents to fifty-six cents) for one thousand poods (over sixteen tons) of goods received or dispatched.

They come in the morning, work for a day and a night at unloading the trucks, and in the morning, as soon as the night is ended, they begin to reload, and work on for another day. So that in two days they get one night's sleep.

Their work consists of unloading and moving bales of seven, eight, and up to ten poods (say 252, 280 and up to nearly 364 pounds). Two men place the bales on the backs of the other three who carry them. By such work they earn less than a rouble (two shillings, or forty-eight cents) a day. They work continually without holiday.

The account given by the weigher was so circumstantial that it was impossible to doubt it, but, nevertheless, I decided to verify it with my own eyes, and I went to the goods-station.

Finding my acquaintance at the goods-station, I told him that I had come to see what he had told me about. "No one I mention it to believes it," said I.

Without replying to me, the weigher called to some one in a shed. "Nikita, come here."

From the door appeared a tall, lean workman in a torn coat.

"When did you begin work?"

"When? Yesterday morning."

"And where were you last night?"

"I was unloading, of course."

"Did you work during the night?" asked I.

"Of course we worked."

"And when did you begin work to-day?"

"We began in the morning-when else should we begin?"

"And when will you finish working?"

"When they let us go; then we shall finish!"

The four other Workmen of his gang came up to us. They all wore torn coats and were without overcoats, though there were about -20 Reaumur of cold (13 below zero, Fahrenheit).

I began to ask them about the conditions of their work, and evidently surprised them by taking an interest in such a simple and natural thing (as it seemed to them) as their thirty-six hour work.

They were all villagers; for the most part fellow countrymen of my own-from Tula; some, however, were from

Arla', and some from Vorosnezh. They lived in Moscow in lodgings, some of them with their families, but most of them without. Those who have come here alone send their earnings home to the village.

They board with contractors. Their food costs them ten rubles (say £1 Is., or five dollars per month). They always eat meat, disregarding the fasts. Their work always keeps them occupied more than hours running, because it takes more than half an hour to get to their lodgings and from

their lodgings, and, besides, they are often kept at work beyond the time fixed.

Paying for their own food, they earn, by such thirty- seven-hour on-end work, about twenty-five rubles a month.

To my question, why they did such convict work, they replied:

"Where is one to go to?"

"But why work thirty-six hours on end? Cannot the work be arranged in shifts?"

"We do what we're told to."

"Yes; but why do you agree to it?"

"We agree because we have to feed ourselves. 'If you don't like it-be off!' If one's even an hour late, one has one's ticket shied at one, and is told to march; and there are ten men ready to take the place."

The men were all young, only one was somewhat older, perhaps about forty. All their faces were lean, and had exhausted, weary eyes, as if the men were drunk. The lean workman to whom I first spoke struck me especially by the strange weariness of his look. I asked him whether he had not been drinking today.

"I don't drink," answered he, in the decided way in which men who really do not drink always reply to that question.

"And I do not smoke," added he.

"Do the others drink?" asked I.

"Yes; it is brought here."

"The work is not light, and a drink always adds to one's strength," said the older workman.

This workman had been drinking that day, but it was not in the least noticeable.

After some more talk with the workmen I went to watch the work.

Passing long rows of all sorts of goods, I came to some workmen slowly pushing a loaded truck. I learned afterwards that the men have to shunt the trucks themselves and to keep the platform clear of snow, without being paid for the work. It is so stated in the "Conditions of Pay."

These workmen were just as tattered and emaciated as those with whom I had been talking. When they had moved the truck to its place I went up to them and asked when they had begun work, and when they had dined.

I was told that they had started work at seven o'clock, and had only just dined. The work had prevented their being let off sooner.

"And when do you get away?"

"As it happens; sometimes not till ten o'clock," replied the men, as if boasting of their endurance. Seeing my interest in their position, they surrounded me, and, probably taking me for an inspector, several of them speaking at once, informed me of what was evidently their chief subject of complaint—namely, that the apartment in which they could sometimes warm themselves and snatch an hour's sleep between the day-work and the night-work was crowded. All of them expressed great dissatisfaction at this crowding. "There may be one hundred men, and nowhere to lie down; even under the shelves it is crowded," said dissatisfied voices. "Have a look at it yourself. It is close here."

The room was certainly not large enough. In the thirty-six-foot room about forty men might find place to lie down on the shelves.

Some of the men entered the room with me, and they vied with each other in complaining of the scantiness of the accommodation.

"Even under the shelves there is nowhere to lie down," said they.

These men, who in twenty degrees of frost, without overcoats, carry on their backs 240 pound loads during thirty-six hours; who dine and sup not when they need food, but when their overseer allows them to eat; living altogether in conditions far worse than those of dray horses, it seemed strange that these people only complained of insufficient accommodation in the room where they warm themselves. But though this seemed to me strange at first, yet, entering further into their position, I understood what a



feeling of torture these men, who never get enough sleep, and who are half-frozen, must experience when, instead of resting and being warmed, they have to creep on the dirty floor under the shelves, and there, in the stuffy and vitiated air, become still weaker and more broken down.

Only, perhaps, in that miserable hour of vain attempt to get rest and sleep do they painfully realize all the horror of their life-destroying thirty-seven-hour work, and that is why they are specially agitated by such an apparently insignificant circumstance as the overcrowding of their room.

Having watched several gangs at work, and having talked with some more of the men and heard the same story from them all, I drove home, having convinced myself that what my acquaintance had told me was true.

It was true that for money, only enough to subsist on, people considering themselves free men thought it necessary to give themselves up to work such as, in the days of serfdom, not one slave-owner, however cruel, would have sent his slaves to. Let alone slave-owners, not one cab-proprietor would send his horses to such work, for horses cost money, and it would be wasteful, by excessive, thirty-seven-hour work, to shorten the life of an animal of value.

## CHAPTER II

### SOCIETY'S INDIFFERENCE WHILE MEN PERISH

To oblige men to work for thirty-seven hours continuously without sleep, besides being cruel is also uneconomical. And yet such uneconomical expenditure of human lives continually goes on around us.

Opposite the house in which I live is a factory of silk goods, built with the latest technical improvements. About three thousand women and seven hundred men work and live there. As I sit in my room now I hear the unceasing din of the machinery, and know-for I have been there-what that din means. Three thousand women stand, for twelve hours a day, at the looms amid a deafening roar; winding, unwinding, arranging the silk threads to make silk stuffs. All the women (except those who have just come from the villages) have an unhealthy appearance. Most of them lead a most intemperate and immoral life. Almost all, whether married or unmarried, as soon as a child is born to them send it off either to the village or to the Foundlings' Hospital, where eighty per cent of these children perish. For fear of losing their places the mothers resume work the next day, or on the third day after their confinement.

So that during twenty years, to my knowledge, tens of thousands of young, healthy women-mothers-have ruined and are now ruining their lives and the lives of their children in order to produce velvets and silk stuffs.

I met a beggar yesterday, a young man on crutches, sturdily built, but crippled. He used to work as a navvy, with a wheelbarrow, but slipped and injured himself internally. He spent all he had on peasant-women healers and on doctors, and has now for eight years been homeless, begging his bread, and complaining that God does not send him death.

How many such sacrifices of life there are that we either know nothing of, or know of, but hardly notice, considering them inevitable!

I know men working at the blast-furnaces of the Tula Iron Foundry who, to have one Sunday free each fortnight, will work for twenty-four hours—that is, after working all day they will go on working all night. I have seen these men. They all drink vodka to keep up their energy, and obviously, like those goods-porters on the railway, they quickly expend not the interest, but the capital of their lives.

And what of the waste of lives among those who are employed on admittedly harmful work, in looking-glass, cartridge, match, sugar, tobacco, and glass factories; in mines or as gilders?

There are English statistics showing that the average length of life among people of the upper classes is fifty-five years, and the average of life among working people in unhealthy occupations is twenty-nine years.

Knowing this (and we cannot help knowing it), we who take advantage of labor that costs human lives should, one would think (unless we are beasts), not be able to enjoy a moment's peace. But the fact is that we well-to-do people, liberals and humanitarians, very sensitive to the sufferings not of people only, but also of animals, unceasingly make use of such labor, and try to become more and more rich—that is, to take more and more advantage of such work. And we remain perfectly tranquil.

For instance, having learned of the thirty-seven-hour labor of the goods-porters, and of their bad room, we at once send there an inspector, who receives a good salary, and we forbid people to work more than twelve hours, leaving the workmen (who are thus deprived of one-third of their earnings) to feed themselves as best they can; and we compel the railway company to erect a large and convenient room for the workmen. Then with perfectly quiet consciences we continue to receive and dispatch goods by that railway, and we ourselves continue to receive salaries, dividends, rents from houses or from land, etc. Having learned that the women and girls at the silk factory,

living far from their families, ruin their own lives and those of their children, and that a large half of the washerwomen who iron our starched shirts, and of the typesetters who print the books and papers that while away our time, get consumption, we only shrug our shoulders and say that we are very sorry things should be so, but that we can do nothing to alter it, and we continue with tranquil consciences to buy silk stuffs, to wear starched shirts and to read our morning paper. We are much concerned about the hours of the shop assistants, and still more about the long hours of our own children at school; we strictly forbid carters to make their horses drag heavy loads, and we even organize the killing of cattle in slaughter-houses, so that the animals may feel it as little as possible. But how wonderfully blind we become as soon as the question concerns those millions of workers who perish slowly, and often painfully, all around us, at labors the fruits of which we use for our convenience and pleasure!

CHAPTER III  
JUSTIFICATION OF THE EXISTING POSITION BY  
SCIENCE

This wonderful blindness which befalls people of our circle can only be explained by the fact that when people behave badly they always invent a philosophy of life which represents their bad actions to be not bad actions at all, but merely results of unalterable laws beyond their control. In former times such a view of life was found in the theory that an inscrutable and unalterable will of God existed which foreordained to some men a humble position and hard work and to others an exalted position and the enjoyment of the good things of life.

On this theme an enormous quantity of books were written and an innumerable quantity of sermons preached. The theme was worked up from every possible side. It was demonstrated that God created different sorts of people--slaves and masters; and that both should be satisfied with their position. It was further demonstrated that it would be better for the slaves in the next world; and afterwards it was shown that although the slaves were slaves and ought to remain such, yet their condition would not be bad if the masters would be kind to them. Then the very last explanation, after the emancipation of the slaves, was that wealth is entrusted by God to some people in order that they may use part of it in good works, and so there is no harm in some people's being rich and others poor.

These explanations satisfied the rich and the poor (especially the rich) for a long time. But the day came when these explanations became unsatisfactory, especially to the poor, who began to understand their position. Then fresh explanations were needed. And just at the proper time they were produced. These new explanations came in the form of science--political economy: which declared that it had discovered the laws which regulate division of labor and of the distribution of the products of labor among men.

These laws, according to that science, are that the division of labor and the enjoyment of its products depend on supply and demand, and capital, rent, wages of labor, values, profits, etc.; in general, on unalterable laws governing man's economic activities.

Soon, on this theme as many books and pamphlets were written and lectures delivered as there had been treatises written and religious sermons preached on the former theme, and still unceasingly mountains of pamphlets and books are being written and lectures are being delivered; and all these books and lectures are as cloudy and unintelligible as the theological treatises and the sermons, and they, too, like the theological treatises, fully achieve their appointed purpose-that is, they give such an explanation of the existing order of things as justifies some people in tranquilly refraining from labor and in utilizing the labor of others.

The fact that, for the investigations of this pseudo- science, not the condition of the people in the whole world through all historic time was taken to show the general order of things, but only the condition of people in a small country, in most exceptional circumstances- England at the end of the Eighteenth and the beginning of the Nineteenth Centuries -this fact did not in the least hinder the acceptance as valid of the result to which the investigators arrived; any more than a similar acceptance is now hindered by the endless disputes and disagreements among those who study that science and are quite unable to agree as to the meaning of rent, surplus value, profits, etc. Only the one fundamental position of that science is acknowledged by all-namely, that the relations among men are conditioned, not by what people consider right or wrong, but by what is advantageous for those who occupy an advantageous position.

It is admitted as an undoubted truth that if in society many thieves and robbers have sprung up who take from the laborers the fruits of their labor, this happens not because

the thieves and robbers have acted badly, but because such are the inevitable economic laws, which can only be altered slowly by an evolutionary process indicated by science; and therefore, according to the guidance of science, people belonging to the class of robbers, thieves or receivers of stolen goods may quietly continue to utilize the things obtained by thefts and robbery.

Though the majority of people in our world do not know the details of these tranquilizing scientific explanations any more than they formerly knew the details of the theological explanations which justified their position, yet they all know that an explanation exists; that scientific men, wise men, have proved convincingly, and continue to prove, that the existing order of things is what it ought to be, and that, therefore, we may live quietly in this order of things without ourselves' trying to alter it.

Only in this way can I explain the amazing blindness of good people in our society who sincerely desire the welfare of animals, but yet with quiet consciences devour the lives of their brother men.

CHAPTER IV  
THE ASSERTION OF ECONOMIC SCIENCE THAT  
RURAL LABORERS MUST ENTER THE FACTORY  
SYSTEM

The theory that it is God's will that some people should own others satisfied people for a very long time. But that theory, by justifying cruelty, caused such cruelty as evoked resistance, and produced doubts as to the truth of the theory.

So now with the theory that an economic evolution is progressing, guided by inevitable laws, in consequence of which some people must collect capital, and others must labor all their lives to increase those capitals, preparing themselves meanwhile for the promised communalisation of the means of production; this theory, causing some people to be yet more cruel to others, also begins (especially among common people not stupefied by science) to evoke certain doubts.

For instance, you see goods-porters destroying their lives by thirty-seven hours' labor, or women in factories, or laundresses, or typesetters, or all those millions of people who live in hard, unnatural conditions of monotonous, stupefying, slavish toil, and you naturally ask, What has brought these people to such a state? And how are they to be delivered from it? And science replies that these people are in this condition because the railway belongs to this company, the silk factory to that gentleman, and all the foundries, factories, typographies, and laundries to capitalists, and that this state of things will come right by work-people forming unions, co-operative societies, strikes, and taking part in government, and more and more swaying the masters and the government till the workers first obtain shorter hours and increased wages, and finally all the means of production will pass into their hands, and



then all will be well. Meanwhile, all is going on as it should go, and there is no need to alter anything.

This answer must seem to an unlearned man, and particularly to our Russian folk, very surprising. In the first place, neither in relation to the goods-porters, nor the factory women, nor all the millions of other laborers suffering from heavy, unhealthy, stupefying labor does the possession of the means of production by capitalists explain anything. The agricultural means of production of those men who are now working at the railway have not been seized by capitalists: they have land, and horses, and plows, and harrows, and all that is necessary to till the ground; also these women working at the factory are not only not forced to it by being deprived of their implements of production, but, on the contrary, they have (for the most part against the wish of the elder members of their families) left the homes where their work was much wanted, and where they had implements of production.

Millions of workpeople in Russia and in other countries are in like case. So that the cause of the miserable position of the workers cannot be found in the seizure of the means of production by capitalists. The cause must lie in that which drives them from the villages. That, in the first place. Secondly, the emancipation of the workers from this state of things (even in that distant future in which science promises them liberty) can be accomplished neither by shortening the hours of labor, nor by increasing wages, nor by the promised communalisation of the means of production.

All that cannot improve their position, for the misery of the laborer's position-alike on the railway, in the silk factory and in every other factory or workshop consists not in the longer or shorter hours of work (agriculturists sometimes work eighteen hours a day, and as much as thirty-six hours on end, and consider their lives happy ones), nor does it consist in the low rate of wages, nor in the fact that the railway or the factory is not theirs, but it consists in the fact

that they are obliged to work in harmful, unnatural conditions often dangerous and destructive to life, and to live a barracks life in towns -a life full of temptations and immorality-and to do compulsory labor at another's bidding.

Latterly the hours of labor have diminished and the rate of wages has increased; but this diminution of the hours of labor and this increase in wages have not improved the position of the worker, if one takes into account not their more luxurious habits-watches with chains, silk kerchiefs, tobacco, vodka, beef, beer, etc.- but their true welfare-that is, their health and morality, and chiefly their freedom.

At the silk factory with which I am acquainted, twenty years ago the work was chiefly done by men, who worked fourteen hours a day, earned on an average fifteen rubles a month, and sent the money for the most part to their families in the villages. Now nearly all the work is done by women working eleven hours, some of whom earn as much as twenty-five rubles a month (over fifteen rubles on the average), and for the most part not sending it home, but spend all they earn here chiefly on dress, drunkenness and vice. The diminution of the hours of work merely increases the time they spend in the taverns.

The same thing is happening, to a greater or lesser extent, at all the factories and works. Everywhere, notwithstanding the diminution of the hours of labor and the increase of wages, the health of the operatives is worse than that of country workers, the average duration of life is shorter, and morality is sacrificed, as cannot but occur when people are torn from those conditions which most conduce to morality-family life, and free, healthy, varied and intelligible agricultural work.

It is very possibly true that, as some economists assert, with shorter hours of labor, more pay, and improved sanitary conditions in mills and factories, the health of the workers and their morality improve in comparison with the former condition of factory workers. It is possible also that latterly,

and in some places, the position of the factory hands is better in external conditions than the position of the country population. But this is so (and only in some places) because the government and society, influenced by the affirmation of science, do all that is possible to improve the position of the factory population at the expense of the country population.

If the condition of the factory-workers in some places is (though only in externals) better than that of country people, it only shows that one can, by all kinds of restrictions, render life miserable in what should be the best external conditions, and that there is no position so unnatural and bad that men may not adapt themselves to it if they remain in it for some generations.

The misery of the position of a factory hand, and in general of a town-worker, does not consist in his long hours and small pay, but in the fact that he is deprived of the natural conditions of life in touch with nature, is deprived of freedom, is compelled to compulsory and monotonous toil at another man's will.

And, therefore, the reply to the questions, why factory and town workers are in a miserable condition, and how to improve their condition, cannot be that this arises because capitalists have possessed themselves of the means of production, and that the workers' condition will be improved by diminishing their hours of work, increasing their wages, and communalising the means of production.

The reply to these questions must consist in indicating the causes which have deprived the workers of the natural conditions of life in touch with nature, and have driven them into factory bondage, and in indicating means to free the workers from the necessity of foregoing a free, country life, and going into slavery at the factories.

And, therefore, the question why town-workers are in a miserable condition includes, first of all, the question, What reasons have driven them from the villages, where they and their ancestors have lived and might live, where, in Russia,

people such as they do now live? and, What it is that drove and continues to drive them against their will to the factories and works?

If there are workmen, as in England, Belgium, or Germany, who for some generations have lived by factory work, even they live so not at their own free will, but because their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers were, in some way, compelled to exchange the agricultural life which they loved for life which seemed to them hard, in towns and in factories. First, the country people were deprived of their land by violence, says Karl Marx, were evicted and brought to vagabondage, and then, by cruel laws, they were tortured with pincers, with red-hot irons, and were whipped, to make them submit to the condition of being hired laborers. Therefore, the question how to free the workers from their miserable position should, one would think, naturally lead to the question how to remove those causes which have already driven some, and are now driving or threatening to drive, the rest of the peasants from the position which they considered and consider good, and have driven and are driving them to a position which they consider bad.

Economic science, although it indicates in passing the causes that drove the peasants from the villages, does not concern itself with the question how to remove these causes, but directs all its attention to the improvement of the worker's position in the existing factories and works, assuming, as it were, that the worker's position at these factories and workshops is something unalterable, something which must at all costs be maintained for those who are already in the factories, and must absorb those who have not yet left the villages or abandoned agricultural work.

Moreover, economic science is so sure that all the peasants have inevitably to become factory operatives in towns, that though all the sages and all the poets of the world have always placed the ideal of human happiness in the conditions of agricultural work; though all the workers

whose habits are unperverted have always preferred, and still prefer, agricultural labor to any other; though factory work is always unhealthy and monotonous, while agriculture is the most healthy and varied; though agricultural work is free - that is, the peasant alternates toil and rest at his own will-while factory work, even if the factory belongs to the workmen, is always enforced, in dependence on the machines; though factory work is derivative, while agricultural work is fundamental, and without it no factory could exist-yet economic science affirms that all the country people not only are not injured by the transition from the country to the town, but themselves desire it and strive towards it.

CHAPTER V  
WHY LEARNED ECONOMISTS ASSERT WHAT IS  
FALSE

However obviously unjust may be the assertion of the men of science that the welfare of humanity must consist in the very thing that is profoundly repulsive to human feelings-in monotonous, enforced factory labor-the men of science were inevitably led to the necessity of making this obviously unjust assertion, just as the theologians of old were inevitably led to make the equally evident unjust assertion that slaves and their masters were creatures differing in kind, and that the inequality of their position in this world would be compensated in the next.

The cause of this evidently unjust assertion is that those who have formulated, and who are formulating, the laws of science belong to the well-to-do classes, and are so accustomed to the conditions, advantageous for themselves, among which they live, that they do not admit the thought that society could exist under other conditions.

The condition of life to which people of the well-to-do classes are accustomed is that of an abundant production of various articles necessary for their comfort and pleasure, and these things are obtained only thanks to the existence of factories and works organized as at present. And, therefore, discussing the improvement of the workers' position, the men of science belonging to the well- to-do classes always have in view only such improvements as will not do away with the system of factory-production and those conveniences of which they avail themselves.

Even the most advanced economists-the Socialists, who demand the complete control of the means of production for the workers-expect production of the same or almost of the same articles as are produced now to continue in the present or in similar factories with the present division of labor.

The difference, as they imagine it, will only be that in the future not they alone, but all men, will make use of such conveniences as they alone now enjoy. They dimly picture to themselves that, with the communalisation of the means of production, they, too-men of science, and in general the ruling classes-will do some work, but chiefly as managers, designers, scientists or artists. To the questions, Who will have to wear a muzzle and make white lead? Who will be stokers, miners, and cesspool- cleaners? they are either silent, or foretell that all these things will be so improved that even work at cesspools and underground will afford pleasant occupation. That is how they represent to themselves future economic conditions, both in Utopias such as that of Bellamy and in scientific works.

According to their theories, the workers will all join unions and associations, and cultivate solidarity among themselves by unions, strikes, and participation in Parliament till they obtain possession of all the means of production, as well as the land, and then they will be so well fed, so well dressed, and enjoy such amusements on holidays that they will prefer life in town, amid brick buildings and smoking chimneys, to free village life amid plants and domestic animals; and monotonous, bell-regulated machine work to the varied, healthy, and free agricultural labor.

Though this anticipation is as improbable as the anticipation of the theologians about a heaven to be enjoyed hereafter by workmen in compensation for their hard labor here, yet learned and educated people of our society believe this strange teaching, just as formerly wise and learned people believed in a heaven for workmen in the next world.

And learned men and their disciples, people of the well-to-do classes, believe this because they must believe it. This dilemma stands before them: either they must see that all that they make use of in their lives, from railways to lucifer matches and cigarettes, represents labor which costs the lives of their brother men, and that they, not sharing in that

toil, but making use of it, are very dishonorable men; or they must believe that all that takes place takes place for the general advantage in accord with unalterable laws of economic science. Therein lies the inner psychological cause, compelling men of science, men wise and educated, but not enlightened, to affirm positively and tenaciously such an obvious untruth as that the laborers, for their own well-being, should leave their happy and healthy life in touch with nature, and go to ruin their bodies and souls in factories and workshops.



## CHAPTER VI

### BANKRUPTCY OF THE SOCIALIST IDEAL

But even allowing the assertion (evidently unfounded as it is, and contrary to the facts of human nature) that it is better for people to live in towns and to do compulsory machine work in factories rather than to live in villages and work freely at handicrafts, there remains, in the very ideal itself, to which the men of science tell us the economic revolution is leading, an insoluble contradiction. The ideal is that the workers, having become the masters of all the means of production, are to obtain all the comforts and pleasures now possessed by well-to-do people. They will all be well clothed, and housed, and well nourished, and will all walk on electrically lighted, asphalt streets, and frequent concerts and theaters, and read papers and books, and ride on motor cars, etc. But that everybody may have certain things, the production of those things must be apportioned, and consequently it must be decided how long each workman is to work.

How is that to be decided?

Statistics may show (though very imperfectly) what people require in a society fettered by capital, by competition, and by want. But no statistics can show how much is wanted and what articles are needed to satisfy the demand in a society where the means of production will belong to the society itself—that is, where the people will be free.

The demands in such a society cannot be defined, and they will always infinitely exceed the possibility of satisfying them. Everybody will wish to have all that the richest now possesses, and, therefore, it is quite impossible to define the quantity of goods that such a society will require.

Furthermore, how are people to be induced to work at articles which some consider necessary and others consider unnecessary or even harmful?

If it be found necessary for everybody to work, say six hours a day, in order to satisfy the requirements of the

society, who in a free society can compel a man work those six hours, if he knows that part of the time is spent in producing things he considers unnecessary or even harmful?

It is undeniable that under the present state of things most varied articles are produced with great economy of exertion, thanks to machinery, and thanks especially to the division of labor which has been brought to an extreme nicety and carried to the highest perfection, and that those articles are profitable to the manufacturers, and that we find them convenient and pleasant to use. But the fact that these articles are well made and are produced with little expenditure of strength, that they are profitable to the capitalists and convenient for us, does not prove that free men would, without compulsion, continue to produce them. There is no doubt that Krupp, with the present division of labor, makes admirable cannons very quickly and artfully; N. M. very quickly and artfully produces silk materials; X, Y, and Z. produce toilet-scents, powder to preserve the complexion, or glazed packs of cards, and K produces whiskey of choice flavor, etc.; and, no doubt, both for those who want these articles and for the owners of the factories in which they are made it is very advantageous. But cannons and scents and whiskey are wanted by those who wish to obtain control of the Chinese market, or who like to get drunk, or are concerned about their complexions; but there will be some who consider the production of these articles harmful. And there will always be people who consider that besides these articles, exhibitions, academies, beer and beef are unnecessary and even harmful. How are these people to be made to participate in the production of such articles?

But even if a means could be found to get all to agree to produce certain articles (though there is no such means, and can be none, except coercion), who, in a free society, without capitalistic production, competition, and its law of supply and demand, will decide which articles are to have

the preference? Which are to be made first, and which after? Are we first to build the Siberian Railway and fortify Port Arthur, and then macadamize the roads in our country districts, or vice-versa? Which is to come first, electric lighting or irrigation of the fields? And then comes another question, insoluble with free workmen, Which men are to do which work? Evidently all will prefer haymaking or drawing to stoking or cesspool cleaning. How, in apportioning the work, are people to be induced to agree? No statistics can answer these questions. The solution can be only theoretical; it may be said that there will be people to whom power will be given to regulate all these matters. Some people will decide these questions and others will obey them.

But besides the questions of apportioning and directing production and of selecting work, when the means of production are communalised, there will be another and most important question, as to the degree of division of labor that can be established in a socialistically organized society. The now existing division of labor is conditioned by the necessities of the workers. A worker only agrees to live all his life underground, or to make the one-hundredth part of one article all his life, or to move his hands up and down amid the roar of machinery all his life, because he will otherwise not have means to live. But it will only be by compulsion that a workman, owning the means of production and not suffering want, can be induced to accept such stupefying and soul-destroying conditions of labor as those in which people now work. Division of labor is undoubtedly very profitable and natural to people; but if people are free, division of labor is only possible up to a certain very limited extent, which has been far overstepped in our society.

If one peasant occupies himself chiefly with bootmaking, and his wife weaves, and another peasant plows, and a third is a blacksmith, and they all, having acquired special dexterity in their own work, afterwards exchange what they

have produced, such division of labor is advantageous to all, and free people will naturally divide their work in this way. But a division of labor by which a man makes one one-hundredth of an article, or a stoker works in 1500 of heat, or is choked with harmful gases, such divisions of labor is disadvantageous, because though it furthers the production of insignificant articles, it destroys that which is most precious—the life of man. And, therefore, such division of labor as now exists can only exist where there is compulsion. Rodbertus says that communal division of labor unites mankind. That is true, but it is only free division, such as people voluntarily adopt, that unites.

If people decide to make a road, and one digs, another brings stones, a third breaks them, etc., that sort of division of work unites people.

But if, independently of the wishes, and sometimes against the wishes, of the workers, a strategical railway is built, or an Eiffel tower, or stupidities such as fill the Paris Exhibition, and one workman is compelled to obtain iron, another to dig coal, a third to make castings, a fourth to cut down trees, and a fifth to saw them up, without even having the least idea what the things they are making are wanted for, then such division of labor not only does not unite men, but, on the contrary, it divides them.

And, therefore, with communalised implements of production, if people are free, they will only adopt division of labour in so far as the good resulting will outweigh the evils it occasions to the workers. And as each man naturally sees good in extending and diversifying his activities, such division of labor as now exists will evidently be impossible in a free society.

To suppose that with communalised means of production there will be such an abundance of things as is now produced by compulsory division of labor is like supposing that after the emancipation of the serfs the domestic orchestras and theaters, the home-made carpets and laces and the elaborate gardens which depended on serf-labor

would continue to exist as before. So that the supposition that when the Socialist ideal is realized every one will be free, and will at the same time have at his disposal everything, or almost everything, that is now made use of by the well-to-do classes, involves an obvious self-contradiction.

## CHAPTER VII. CULTURE OR FREEDOM

Just what happened when serfdom existed is now being repeated. Then the majority of the serf-owners and of people of the well-to-do classes, if they acknowledged the serf's position to be not quite satisfactory, yet recommended only such alterations as would not deprive the owners of what was essential to their profit; now, people of the well-to-do classes, admitting that the position of the workers is not altogether satisfactory, propose for its amendment only such measures as will not deprive the well-to-do classes of their advantages. As well-disposed owners then spoke of "paternal authority," and, like Gogol, advised owners to be kind to their serfs, and to take care of them, but would not tolerate the idea of emancipation, considering it harmful and dangerous, just so the majority of well-to-do people to-day advise employers to look after the well-being of their work-people, but do not admit the thought of any such alteration of the economic structure of life as would set the laborers quite free.

And just as advanced Liberals then, while considering serfdom to be an immutable arrangement, demanded that the government should limit the power of the owners, and sympathized with the serfs' agitation, so the Liberals of today, while considering the existing order immutable demand that government should limit the powers of capitalists and manufacturers, and they sympathize with unions, and strikes, and, in general, with the workers' agitation. And just as the most advanced men then demanded the emancipation of the serfs, but drew up a project which left the serfs dependent on private landowners, or fettered them with tributes and land-taxes, so now the most advanced people demand the emancipation of the workmen from the power of the capitalists, the communalisation of the means of production, but yet would leave the workers dependent on

the present apportionment and division of labor, which, in their opinion, must remain unaltered.

The teachings of economic science which are adopted, though without closely examining their details by all those of the well-to-do classes who consider themselves enlightened and advanced, seem on a superficial examination to be liberal and even radical, containing as they do attacks on the wealthy classes of society; but essentially that teaching is in the highest degree conservative, gross and cruel. One way or another the men of science, and in their train all the well-to-do classes, wish at all cost to maintain the present system of distribution and division of labor, which makes possible the production of that great quantity of goods which they make use of. The existing economic order is, by the men of science and, following them, by all the well-to-do classes, called culture; and in this culture-railways, telegraphs, telephones, photographs, Roentgen rays, clinical hospitals, exhibitions, and, chiefly, all the appliances of comfort- they see something so sacrosanct that they will not allow even a thought of alterations which might destroy it all, or but endanger a small part of these acquisitions. Everything may,

according to the teachings of that science, be changed except what it calls culture. But it becomes more and more evident that this culture can exist only while the workers are compelled to work. Yet men of science are so sure that this culture is the greatest of blessings that they boldly proclaim the contrary of what the lawyers once said, *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus!* They now say, *Fiat cultura, pereat justitia* And they not only say it, but act accordingly. Everything may be changed in practice and in theory, but not culture; not all that is going on in workshops and factories, and certainly not what is being sold in the shops. But I think that enlightened people, professing the Christian law of brotherhood and love to one's neighbor, should say just the contrary.

Electric lights and telephones and exhibitions are excellent, and so are all the pleasure-gardens, with concerts and performances, and all the cigars, and match-boxes, and braces, and motor cars, but they may all go to perdition, and not they alone, but the railways, and all the factory-made chintz stuffs and cloths in the world, if to produce them it is necessary that ninety-nine per cent. of the people should remain in slavery and perish by thousands in factories needed for the production of these articles. If, in order that London or Petersburg may be lighted by electricity, or in order to construct exhibition buildings, or in order that there may be beautiful paints, or in order to weave beautiful stuffs quickly and abundantly, it is necessary that even a very few lives should be destroyed, or ruined, or shortened-and statistics show us how many are destroyed-let London or Petersburg rather be lit by gas or oil; let there rather be no exhibition, no paints, or materials, only let there be no slavery, and no destruction of human lives resulting from it. Truly enlightened people will always agree rather to go back to riding on horses and using pack-horses, or even to tilling the earth with sticks or with one's hands, than to travel on railways which regularly every year crush so many people as is done in Chicago-merely because the proprietors of the railway find it more profitable to compensate the families of those killed than to build the line so that it should not kill people. The motto for truly enlightened people is not, *Fiat cultura, pereat justitia*, but *Fiat justitia, pereat cultura*. But culture, useful culture, will not be destroyed. Let justice be done, though the world perish. It will certainly not be necessary for people to revert to tillage of the land with sticks or to lighting up with torches. It is not for nothing that mankind, in their slavery, have achieved such great progress in technical matters. If only it is understood that we must not sacrifice the lives of our fellow-men for our pleasure, it will be possible to apply technical improvements without destroying men's lives, and to arrange life so as to profit by all such methods



giving us control of nature as have been devised and can be applied without keeping our brother men in slavery.

CHAPTER VIII.  
SLAVERY EXISTS AMONG US

Imagine a man from the country quite different from our own, with no idea of our history or of our laws, and suppose that, after showing him the various aspects of our life, we were to ask him what was the chief difference he noticed in the lives of people of our world? The chief difference which such a man would notice in the way people live is that some people—a small number—who have clean, white hands, and are well nourished and clothed and lodged, do very little and very light work, or even do not work at all, but only amuse themselves, spending on these amusements the results of millions of days devoted by other people to severe labor; but other people, always dirty, poorly clothed and lodged and fed, with dirty, horny hands, toil unceasingly from morning to night, and sometimes all night long, working for those who do not work, but who continually amuse themselves.

If between the slaves and slave-owners of to-day it is difficult to draw as sharp a dividing line as that which separated the former slaves from their masters, and if among the slaves of today there are some who are only temporarily slaves and then become slave-owners, or some who, at one and the same time, are slaves and slave-owners, this blending of the two classes at their points of contact does not upset the fact that the people of our time are divided into slaves and slave-owners as definitely as, in spite of the twilight, each twenty-four hours is divided into day and night.

If the slave-owner of our times has no slave, John, whom he can send to the cesspool, he has five shillings, of which hundreds of such Johns are in such need that the slave-owner of our times may choose any one out of hundreds of Johns and be a benefactor to him by giving him the preference, and allowing him, rather than another, to climb down into the cesspool.

The slaves of our times are not all those factory and workshop hands only who must sell themselves completely into the power of the factory and foundry-owners in order to exist, but nearly all the agricultural laborers are slaves, working, as they do, unceasingly to grow another's corn on another's field, and gathering it into another's barn; or tilling their own fields only in order to pay to bankers the interest on debts they cannot get rid of. And slaves also are all the innumerable footmen, cooks, porters, housemaids, coachmen, bathmen, waiters, etc., who all their life long perform duties most unnatural to a human being, and which they themselves dislike.

Slavery exists in full vigor, but we do not perceive it, just as in Europe at the end of the Eighteenth Century the slavery of serfdom was not perceived.

People of that day thought that the position of men obliged to till the land for their lords, and to obey them, was a natural, inevitable, economic condition of life, and they did not call it slavery.

It is the same among us: people of our day consider the position of the laborer to be a natural, inevitable economic condition, and they do not call it slavery. And as, at the end of the Eighteenth Century, the people of Europe began little by little to understand that what formerly seemed a natural and inevitable form of economic life—namely, the position of peasants who were completely in the power of their lords—was wrong, unjust and immoral, and demanded alteration, so now people today are beginning to understand that the position of hired workmen, and of the working classes in general, which formerly seemed quite right and quite normal, is not what it should be, and demands alteration.

The question of the slavery of our times is just in the same phase now in which the question of serfdom stood in Europe towards the end of the Eighteenth Century, and in which the questions of serfdom among us and of slavery in

America stood in the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century.

The slavery of the workers in our time is only beginning to be admitted by advanced people in our society; the majority as yet are convinced that among us no slavery exists.

A thing that helps people today to misunderstand their position in this matter is the fact that we have, in Russia and in America, only recently abolished slavery. But in reality the abolition of serfdom and of slavery was only the abolition of an obsolete form of slavery that had become unnecessary, and the substitution for it of a firmer form of slavery and one that holds a greater number of people in bondage. The abolition of serfdom and of slavery was like what the Tartars of the Crimea did with their prisoners. They invented the plan of slitting the soles of the slaves' feet and sprinkling chopped-up bristles into the wounds. Having performed that operation, they released them from their weights and chains. The abolition of serfdom in Russia and of slavery in America, though it abolished the former method of slavery, not only did not abolish what was essential in it, but was only accomplished when the bristles had formed sores in the soles, and one could be quite sure that without chains or weights the prisoners would not run away, but would have to work. (The Northerners in America boldly demanded the abolition of the former slavery because among them the new, monetary slavery had already shown its power to shackle the people. The Southerners did not perceive the plain signs of the new slavery, and, therefore, did not consent to abolish the old form.)

Among us in Russia serfdom was abolished only when all the land had been appropriated. When land was granted to the peasants it was burdened with payments, which took the place of the land-slavery. In Europe taxes that kept the people in bondage began to be abolished only when the people had lost their land, were unaccustomed to

agricultural work and, having acquired town tastes, were quite dependent on the capitalists.

Only then were the taxes on corn abolished in England. And they are now beginning, in Germany and in other countries, to abolish the taxes that fall on the workers and to shift them on to the rich, only because the majority of the people are already in the hands of the capitalists. One form of slavery is not abolished until another has already replaced it. There are several such forms. And if not one, then another (and sometimes several of these means together) keeps a people in slavery-that is, places it in such a position that one small part of the people has full power over the labor and the life of a larger number. In this enslavement of the larger part of the people by a smaller part lies the chief cause of the miserable condition of the people. And, therefore, the means of improving the position of the workers must consist in this: First, in admitting that among us slavery exists not in some figurative, metaphorical sense, but in the simplest and plainest sense; slavery which keeps some people – the majority-in the power of others-the minority; secondly, having admitted this, in finding the causes of the enslavement of some people by others; and thirdly, having found these causes, to destroy them.

## CHAPTER IX

### WHAT IS SLAVERY?

In what does the slavery of our time consist? What are the forces that make some people the slaves of others? If we ask all the workers in Russia and in Europe and in America alike in the factories and in various situations in which they work for hire, in towns and villages, what has made them choose the position in which they are living, they will all reply that they have been brought to it either because they had no land on which they could and wished to live and work (that will be the reply of all the Russian workmen and of very many of the Europeans), or that taxes, direct and indirect, were demanded of them, which they could only pay by selling their labor, or that they remain at factory work ensnared by the more luxurious habits they have adopted, and which they can gratify only by selling their labor and their liberty.

The first two conditions, the lack of land and the taxes, drive men to compulsory labor; while the third, his increased and unsatisfied needs, decoy him to it and keep him at it.

We can imagine that the land may be freed from the claims of private proprietors by Henry George's plan, and that, therefore, the first cause driving people into slavery—the lack of land—may be done away with. With reference to taxes (besides the single-tax plan) we may imagine the abolition of taxes, or that they should be transferred from the poor to the rich, as is being done now in some countries; but under the present economic organization one cannot even imagine a position of things under which more and more luxurious, and often harmful, habits of life should not, little by little, pass to those of the lower classes who are in contact with the rich as inevitably as water sinks into dry ground, and that those habits should not become so necessary to the workers that in order to be able to satisfy them they will be ready to sell their freedom.

So that this third condition, though it is a voluntary one—that is, it would seem that a man might resist the temptation—and though science does not acknowledge it to be a cause of the miserable condition of the workers, is the firmest and most irremovable cause of slavery.

Workmen living near rich people always are infected with new requirements, and obtain means to satisfy these requirements only to the extent to which they devote their most intense labor to this satisfaction. So that workmen in England and America, receiving sometimes ten times as much as is necessary for subsistence, continue to be just such slaves as they were before.

Three causes, as the workmen themselves explain, produce the slavery in which they live; and the history of their enslavement and the facts of their position confirm the correctness of this explanation.

All the workers are brought to their present state and are kept in it by these three causes. These causes, acting on people from different sides, are such that none can escape from their enslavement. The agriculturalist who has no land, or who has not enough, will always be obliged to go into perpetual or temporary slavery to the landowner, in order to have the possibility of feeding himself from the land. Should he in one way or other obtain land enough to be able to feed himself from it by his own labor, such taxes, direct and indirect, are demanded from him that in order to pay them he has again to go into slavery.

If to escape from slavery on the land he ceases to cultivate land, and, living on some one else's land, begins to occupy himself with a handicraft, or to exchange his produce for the things he needs, then, on the one hand, taxes, and on the other hand, the competition of capitalists producing similar articles to those he makes, but with better implements of production, compel him to go into temporary or perpetual slavery to a capitalist. If working for a capitalist he might set up free relations with him, and not be obliged to sell his liberty, yet the new requirements which he assimilates

deprive him of any such possibility. So that one way or another the laborer is always in slavery to those who control the taxes, the land, and the articles necessary to satisfy his requirements.



CHAPTER X.  
LAWS CONCERNING TAXES, LAND AND  
PROPERTY

The German Socialists have termed the combination of conditions which put the worker in subjection to the capitalists the iron law of wages, implying by the word "iron" that this law is immutable. But in these conditions there is nothing immutable. These conditions merely result from human laws concerning taxes, land, and, above all, concerning things which satisfy our requirements—that is, concerning property. Laws are framed and repealed by human beings. So that it is not some sociological "iron law," but ordinary, man-made law that produces slavery. In the case in hand the slavery of our times is very clearly and definitely produced not by some "iron" elemental law, but by human enactments about land, about taxes, and about property. There is one set of laws by which any quantity of land may belong to private people, and may pass from one to another by inheritance, or by will, or may be sold; there is another set of laws by which every one must pay the taxes demanded of him unquestioningly; and there is a third set of laws to the effect that any quantity of articles, by whatever means acquired, may become the absolute property of the people who hold them. And in consequence of these laws slavery exists.

We are so accustomed to all these laws that they seem to us just as necessary and natural to human life as the laws maintaining serfdom and slavery seemed in former times; no doubt about their necessity and justice seems possible, and no one notices anything wrong in them. But just as a time came when people, having seen the ruinous consequences of serfdom, questioned the justice and necessity of the laws which maintained it, so now, when the pernicious consequences of the present economic order have become evident, one involuntarily questions the

justice and inevitability of the legislation about land, taxes and property which produces these results.

As people formerly asked, Is it right that some people should belong to others, and that the former should have nothing of their own, but should give all the produce of their labor to their owners? so now we must ask ourselves, Is it right that people must not use land accounted the property of other people; is it right that people should hand over to others, in the form of taxes, whatever part of their labor is demanded of them? Is it right that people may not make use of articles considered to be the property of other people?

Is it right that people should not have the use of land when it is considered to belong to others who are not cultivating it?

It is said that this legislation is instituted because landed property is an essential condition if agriculture is to flourish, and if there were no private property passing by inheritance people would drive one another from the land they occupy, and no one would work or improve the land on which he is settled. Is this true? The answer is to be found in history and in the facts of today. History shows that property in land did not arise from any wish to make the cultivator's tenure more secure, but resulted from the seizure of communal lands by conquerors and its distribution to those who served the conqueror. So that property in land was not established with the object of stimulating the agriculturalists. Present-day facts show the fallacy of the assertion that landed property enables those who work the land to be sure that they will not be deprived of the land they cultivate. In reality, just the contrary has everywhere happened and is happening. The right of landed property, by which the great proprietors have profited and are profiting most, has produced the result that all, or most—that is, the immense majority of the agriculturalists—are now in the position of people who cultivate other people's land, from which they may be driven at the whim of men who do

not cultivate it. So that the existing right of landed property certainly does not defend the rights of the agriculturalists to enjoy the fruits of the labor he puts into the land, but, on the contrary, it is a way of depriving the agriculturalists of the land on which they work and handing it over to those who have not worked it; and, therefore, it is certainly not a means for the improvement of agriculture, but, on the contrary, a means of deteriorating it.

About taxes it is said that people ought to pay them because they are instituted with the general, even though silent, consent of all, and are used for public needs to the advantage of all. Is this true?

The answers to this question is given in history and in present-day facts. History shows that taxes never were instituted by common consent, but, on the contrary always only in consequence of the fact that some people having obtained power by conquest, or by other means over other people, imposed tribute not for public needs, but for themselves. And the same thing is still going on. Taxes are taken by those who have the power of taking them. If nowadays some portion of these tributes, called taxes and duties, are used for public purposes, for the most part it is for public purposes that are harmful rather than useful to most people.

For instance, in Russia one-third of the revenue is drawn from the peasants, but only One-Fiftieth of the revenue is spent on their greatest need, the education of the people; and even that amount is spent on a kind of education which, by stupefying the people, harms them more than it benefits them. The other Forty-nine Fiftieths are spent on unnecessary things harmful for the people, such as equipping the army, building strategical railways, forts and prisons, or supporting the priesthood and the Court, and on salaries for military and civil officials-that is, on salaries for those people who make it possible to take this money from the people. The same thing goes on not only in Persia, Turkey and India, but also in all the Christian and

constitutional states and democratic republics; money is taken from the majority of the people quite independently of the consent or non-consent of the payers, and the amount collected is not what is really needful, but as much as can be got (it is known how Parliaments are made up, and how little they represent the will of the people), and it is used not for the common advantage, but for what the governing classes consider necessary for themselves-on wars in Cuba or the Philippines, on taking and keeping the riches of the Transvaal, and so forth. So that the explanation that people must pay taxes because they are instituted with general consent, and are used for the common good, is as unjust as the other explanation that private property in land is established to encourage agriculture.

Is it true that people should not use articles needful to satisfy their requirements if these articles are the property of other people?

It is asserted that the rights of property in acquired articles is established in order to make the worker sure that no one will take from him the produce of his labor. Is this true?

It is only necessary to glance at what is done in our world, where property rights are defended with especial strictness, in order to be convinced how completely the facts of life run counter to this explanation.

In our society, in consequence of property rights in acquired articles, the very thing happens which that right is intended to prevent-namely, all articles which have been, and continually are being, produced by working people are possessed by, and as they are produced are continually taken by, those who have not produced them.

So that the assertion that the right of property secures to the workers the possibility of enjoying the products of their labor is evidently still more unjust than the assertion concerning property in land, and it is based on the same sophistry; first, the fruit of their toil is unjustly and violently taken from the workers, and then the law steps in,

and these very articles which have been taken from the workmen unjustly and by violence are declared to be the absolute property of those who have taken them.

Property, for instance, a factory acquired by a series of frauds and by taking advantage of the workmen, is considered a result of labor and is held sacred; but the lives of those workmen who perish at work in that factory and their labor are not considered their property, but are rather considered to be the property of the factory-owner, if he, taking advantage of the necessities of the workers, has bound them down in a manner considered legal. Hundreds of thousands of bushels of corn, collected from the peasants by usury and by a series of extortions, are considered to be the property of the merchant, while the growing corn raised by the peasants is considered to be the property of some one else if he has inherited the land from a grandfather or great-grandfather who took it from the people. It is said that the law defends equally the property of the mill-owner, of the capitalist, of the landowner, and of the factory or country laborer. The equality of the capitalist and of the worker is like the equality of two fighters when one has his arms tied and the other has weapons, but during the fight certain rules are applied to both with strict impartiality. So that all the explanations of the justice and necessity of the three sets of laws which produce slavery are as untrue as were the explanations formerly given of the justice and necessity of serfdom. All those three sets of laws are nothing but the establishment of that new form of slavery which has replaced the old form. As people formerly established laws enabling some people to buy and sell other people, and to own them, and to make them work, and slavery existed, so now people have established laws that men may not use land that is considered to belong to some one else, must pay the taxes demanded of them, and must not use articles considered to be the property of others-and we have the slavery of our times.

## CHAPTER XI

### LAW THE CAUSE OF SLAVERY

The slavery of our times results from three sets of laws—those about land, taxes, and property. And, therefore, all the attempts of those who wish to improve the position of the workers are inevitably, though unconsciously, directed against those three legislations.

One set of people repeal taxes weighing on the working classes and transfer them on to the rich; others propose to abolish the right of private property in land, and attempts are being made to put this in practice both in New Zealand and in one of the American States (the limitation of the landlord's rights in Ireland is a move in the same direction); a third set—the Socialists—propose to communalise the means of production, to tax incomes and inheritances, and to limit the rights of capitalist-employers. It would, therefore, seem as if the legislative enactments which cause slavery were being repealed, and that we may, therefore, expect slavery to be abolished in this way. But we need only look more closely at the conditions under which the abolition of those legislative enactments is accomplished or proposed to be convinced that not only the practical, but even the theoretical projects for the improvement of the workers' position are merely the substitution of one legislation producing slavery for another establishing a newer form of slavery. Thus, for instance, those who abolish taxes and duties on the poor, first abolishing direct dues and then transferring the burden of taxation from the poor to the rich, necessarily have to retain, and do retain, the laws making private property of landed property, means of production, and other articles, on to which the whole burden of the taxes is shifted. The retention of the laws concerning land and property keeps the workers in slavery to the landowners and the capitalists, even though the workers are freed from taxes. Those who, like Henry George and his partisans, would abolish the laws making

private property of land, propose new laws imposing an obligatory rent on the land. And this obligatory land- rent will necessarily create a new form of slavery, because a man compelled to pay rent, or the single tax, may at any failure of the crops or other misfortune have to borrow money from a man who has some to lend, and he will again lapse into slavery. Those who, like the Socialists, in theory, wish to abolish the legislation of property in land and in means of production, retain the legalization of taxes, and must, moreover, inevitably introduce laws of compulsory labor-that is, they must re-establish slavery in its primitive form.

So that, this way or that way, all the practical and theoretical repeals of certain laws maintaining slavery in one form have always and do always replace it by new legislation creating slavery in another and fresh form.

What happens is something like what a jailer might do who shifted a prisoner's chains from the neck to the arms, and from the arms to the legs, or took them off and substituted bolts and bars. All the improvements that have hitherto taken place in the position of the workers have been of this kind.

The laws giving a master the right to compel his slaves to do compulsory work were replaced by laws allowing the masters to own all the land. The laws allowing all the land to become the private property of the masters may be replaced by taxation-laws, the control of the taxes being in the hands of the masters. The taxation-laws are replaced by others defending the right of private property in articles of use and in the means of production. The laws of right of property in land and in articles of use and means of production it is proposed to replace by the enactment of compulsory labour.

So it is evident that the abolition of one form of legalization producing the slavery of our time, whether taxes, or landowning, or property in articles of use or in the means of production, will not destroy slavery, but will only repeal

one of its forms, which will immediately be replaced by a new one, as was the case with the abolition of chattel-slavery, of serfdom, and with the repeals of taxes. Even the repeal of all three groups of laws together will not abolish slavery, but evoke a new and as yet unknown form of it, which is now already beginning to show itself and to restrain the freedom of labor by legislation concerning the hours of work, the age and state of health of the workers, as well as by demanding obligatory attendance at schools, deductions for old-age insurance or accidents, by all the measures of factory- inspection, the restrictions on co-operative societies, etc.

All this is nothing but the transference of legalization-preparing a new and as yet untried form of slavery.

So that it becomes evident that the essence of slavery lies not in those three roots of legislation on which it now rests, and not even in such or such other legislative enactments, but in the fact that legislation exists; that there are people who have power to decree laws profitable for themselves, and that as long as people have that power there will be slavery.

Formerly it was profitable for people to have chattel-slaves, and they made laws about chattel-slavery. Afterwards it became profitable to own land, to take taxes, and to keep things one had acquired, and they made laws correspondingly. Now it is profitable for people to maintain the existing direction and division of labor; and they are devising such laws as will compel people to work under the present apportionment and division of labor. Thus the fundamental cause of slavery is legislation, the fact that there are people who have the power to make laws.

What is legislation? and what gives people the power to make laws?



CHAPTER XII  
THE ESSENCE OF LEGISLATION IS ORGANISED  
VIOLENCE

What is legislation? And what enables people to make laws?

There exists a whole science, more ancient and more mendacious and confused than political economy, the servants of which in the course of centuries have written millions of books (for the most part contradicting one another) to answer these questions. But as the aim of this science, as of political economy, is not to explain what now is and what ought to be, but rather to prove that what now exists, is what ought to be, it happens that in this Science (of jurisprudence) we find very many dissertations about rights, about object and subject, about the idea of a state and other such matters which are unintelligible both to the students and to the teachers of this science, but we get no clear reply to the question, What is legislation?

According to science, legislation is the expression of the will of the whole people; but as those who break the laws, or who wish to break them, and only refrain from fear of being punished, are always more numerous than those who wish to carry out the code, it is evident that legislation can certainly not be considered as the expression of the will of the whole people.

For instance, there are laws about not injuring telegraph posts, about showing respect to certain people, about each man performing military service or serving as a juryman, about not taking certain goods beyond a certain boundary, or about not using land considered the property of some one else, about not making money- tokens, not using articles which are considered to be the property of others, and about many other matters.

All these laws and many others are extremely complex, and may have been passed from the most diverse motives, but not one of them expresses the will of the whole people.

There is but one general characteristic of all these laws—namely, that if any man does not fulfil them, those who have made them will send armed men, and the armed men will beat, deprive of freedom, or even kill the man who does not fulfil the law.

If a man does not wish to give as taxes such part of the produce of his labor as is demanded of him, armed men will come and take from him what is demanded, and if he resists he will be beaten, deprived of freedom, and sometimes even killed. The same will happen to a man who begins to make use of land considered to be the property of another. The same will happen to a man who makes use of things he wants, to satisfy his requirements or to facilitate his work, if these things are considered to be the property of some one else. Armed men will come and will deprive him of what he has taken, and if he resists they will beat him, deprive him of liberty, or even kill him. The same thing will happen to any one who will not show respect to those whom it is decreed that we are to respect, and to him who will not obey the demand that he should go as a soldier, or who makes monetary tokens.

For every non-fulfillment of the established laws there is punishment: the offender is subjected by those who make the laws to blows, to confinement, or even to loss of life.

Many constitutions have been devised, beginning with the English and the American, and ending with the Japanese and the Turkish, according to which people are to believe that all laws established in their country are established at their desire. But every one knows that not in despotic countries only, but also in the countries nominally most free—England, America, France—the laws are made, not by the will of all, but by the will of those who have power; and, therefore, always and everywhere are only such as are profitable to those who have power, whether they are many, a few, or only one man. Everywhere and always the laws are enforced by the only means that has compelled, and still compels, some people to obey the will of others—

that is, by blows, by deprivation of liberty, or by murder. There can be no other way.

It cannot be otherwise; for laws are demands to execute certain rules; and to compel some people to obey certain rules (that is, to do what other people want of them) cannot be done except by blows, by deprivation of liberty, or by murder. If there are laws, there must be the force that can compel people to obey them, and there is only one force that can compel people to obey rules (that is, to obey the will of others), and that is violence; not the simple violence which people do to one another in moments of passion, but the organized violence used by people who have power, in order to compel others to obey the laws they (the powerful) have made; in other words, to do their will.

And so the essence of legislation does not lie in the subject or object, in rights or in the idea of the dominion of the collective will of the people, or in other such indefinite and confused conditions; but it lies in the fact that people who wield organized violence have the power to compel others to obey them and to do as they like.

So that the exact and irrefutable definition of legislation, intelligible to all, is that: Laws are rules made by people who govern by means of organized violence, for compliance with which the non-complier is subjected to blows, to loss of liberty, or even to being murdered.

This definition furnishes the reply to the question, What is it that renders it possible for people to make laws? The same thing makes it possible to establish laws as enforces obedience to them, organized violence.

## CHAPTER XIII

### WHAT ARE GOVERNMENTS? IS IT POSSIBLE TO EXIST WITHOUT GOVERNMENTS?

The cause of the miserable condition of the workers is slavery. The cause of slavery is legislation. Legislation rests on organized violence.

It follows that an improvement in the condition of the people is possible only through the abolition of organized violence.

"But organized violence is government, and how can we live without governments? Without governments there will be chaos, anarchy; all the achievements of civilization will perish, and people will revert to their primitive barbarism."

It is usual not only for those to whom the existing order is profitable, but even for those to whom it is evidently unprofitable, but who are so accustomed to it they cannot imagine life without governmental violence, to say we must not dare to touch the existing order of things. The destruction of government will, say they, produce the greatest misfortunes- riot, theft, and murder-till finally the worst men will again seize power and enslave all the good people. But not to mention the fact that all-that is, riots, thefts and murders, followed by the rule of the wicked and the enslavement of the good -all this is what has happened and is happening, the anticipation that the disturbance of the existing order will produce riots and disorder does not prove the present order to be good.

"Only touch the present order and the greatest evils will follow."

Only touch one brick of the thousand bricks piled into a narrow column several yards high and all the bricks will tumble down and smash! But the fact that any brick extracted or any push administered will destroy such a column and smash the bricks certainly does not prove it to be wise to keep the bricks in such an unnatural and inconvenient position. On the contrary, it shows that bricks

should not be piled in such a column, but that they should be rearranged so that they may lie firmly, and so that they can be made use of without destroying the whole erection.

It is the same with the present state organizations. The state organization is extremely artificial and unstable, and the fact that the least push may destroy it not only does not prove that it is necessary, but, on the contrary, shows that, if once upon a time it was necessary it is now absolutely unnecessary, and is, therefore, harmful and dangerous.

It is harmful and dangerous because the effect of this organization on all the evil that exists in society is not to lessen and correct, but rather to strengthen and confirm that evil. It is strengthened and confirmed by being either justified and put in attractive forms or secreted.

All that well being of the people which we see in so-called well-governed states, ruled by violence, is but an appearance- a fiction. Everything that would disturb the external appearance of well-being-all the hungry people, the sick, the revoltingly vicious - are all hidden away where they cannot be seen. But the fact that we do not see them does not show that they do not exist; on the contrary, the more they are hidden the more there will be of them, and the more cruel towards them will those be who are the cause of their condition. It is true that every interruption, and yet more, every stoppage of governmental action - that is, of organized violence-disturb this external appearance of well-being in our life, but such disturbance does not produce disorder, but merely displays what was hidden, and makes possible its amendment.

Until now, say till almost the end of the nineteenth century, people thought and believed that they could not live without governments. But life flows onward, and the conditions of life and people's views change. And notwithstanding the efforts of governments to keep people in that childish condition in which an injured man feels as if it were better for him to have some one to complain to, people, especially the laboring people, both in Europe and

in Russia, are more and more emerging from childhood and beginning to understand the true conditions of their life.

"You tell us but that for you we should be conquered by neighboring nations-by the Chinese or the Japanese-" men of the people now say, "but we read the papers, and know that no one is threatening to attack us, and that it is only you who govern us who, for some aims, unintelligible to us, exasperate each other, and then, under pretence of defending your own people, ruin us with taxes for the maintenance of the fleet, for armaments, or for strategical railways, which are only required to gratify your ambition and vanity; and then you arrange wars with one another, as you have now done against the peaceful Chinese. You say that you defend landed property for our advantage; but your defense has this effect-that all the land either has passed or is passing into the control of rich banking companies, which do not work, while we, the immense majority of the people, are being deprived of land and left in the power of those who do not labour. You with your laws of landed property do not defend

landed property, but take it from those who work it. You say you secure to each man the produce of his labour, but you do just the reverse; all those who produce articles of value are, thanks to your pseudo-protection, placed in such a position that they not only never receive the value of their labour, but are all their lives long in complete subjection to and in the power of non-workers."

Thus do people, at the end of the century, begin to understand and to speak. And this awakening from the lethargy in which governments have kept them is going on in some rapidly increasing ratio. Within the last five or six years the public opinion of the common folk, not only in the towns, but in the villages, and not only in Europe, but also among us in Russia, has altered amazingly.

It is said that without governments we should not have those institutions, enlightening, educational and public, that are needful for all.

But why should we suppose this? Why think that non-official people could not arrange their life themselves as well as government people arrange it, not for themselves, but for others?

We see, on the contrary, that in the most diverse matters people in our times arrange their own lives incomparably better than those who govern them arrange for them. Without the least help from government, and often in spite of the interference of government, people organize all sorts of social undertakings- workmen's unions, co-operative societies, railway companies, artels,\* and syndicates. If collections for public works are needed, why should we suppose that free people could not without violence voluntarily collect the necessary means, and carry out all that is carried out by means of taxes, if only the undertakings in question are really useful for everybody? Why suppose that there cannot be tribunals without violence? Trial by people trusted by the disputants has always existed and will exist, and needs no violence. We are so depraved by long-continued slavery that we can hardly imagine administration without violence. And yet, again, that is not true: Russian communes migrating to distant regions, where our government leaves them alone, arrange their own taxation, administration, tribunals, and police, and always prosper until government violence interferes with their administration. And in the same way, there is no reason to suppose that people could not, by common consent, decide how the land is to be apportioned for use.

I have known people-Cossacks of the Oural - who have lived without acknowledging private property in land. And there was such prosperity and order in their commune as does not exist in society, where landed property is defended by violence. And I now know communes that live without acknowledging the right of individuals to private property. Within my recollection the whole Russian peasantry did not accept the idea of landed property.\*\*

The defense of landed property by governmental violence not merely does not abolish the struggle for landed property, but, on the contrary, strengthens that struggle, and in many cases causes it.

Were it not for the defense of landed property, and its consequent rise in price, people would not be crowded into such narrow spaces, but would scatter over the free land, of which there is still so much in the world. But as it is, a continual struggle goes on for landed property; a struggle with the weapons government furnishes by means of its laws of landed property. And in this struggle it is not those who work on the land, but always those who take part in governmental violence, that have the advantage.

It is the same with reference to things produced by labour. Things really produced by a man's own labour, and that he needs, are always defended by custom, by public opinion, by feelings of justice and reciprocity, and they do not need to be protected by violence.

Tens of thousands of acres of forestlands belonging to one proprietor, while thousands of people close by have no fuel, need protection by violence. So, too, do factories and works where several generations of workmen have been defrauded, are still being defrauded. Yet more do hundreds of thousands of bushels of grain, belonging to one owner, who has held them back till a famine has come, to sell them at triple price. But no man, however depraved, except a rich man or a government official, would take from a countryman living by his own labour the harvest he has raised or the cow he has bred, and from which he gets milk for his children, or the sokha's,\*\*\* the scythes, and the spades he has made and uses. If even a man were found who did take from another articles the latter had made and required, such a man would rouse against himself such indignation from every one living in similar circumstances that he would hardly find his action profitable for himself. A man so unmoral as to do it under such circumstances



would be sure to do it under the strictest system of property defense by violence. It is generally said,

"Only attempt to abolish the rights of property in land and in the produce of labour, and no one will take the trouble to work, lacking the assurance that he will not be deprived of what he has produced."

We should say just the opposite: the defense by violence of the rights of property immorally obtained, which is now customary, if it has not quite destroyed, has considerably weakened people's natural consciousness of justice in the matter of using articles-that is, the natural and innate right of property-without which humanity could not exist, and which has always existed and still exists among all men.

And, therefore, there is no reason to anticipate that people will not be able to arrange their lives without organized violence.

Of course, it may be said that horses and bulls must be guided by the violence of rational beings-men; but why must men be guided, not by some higher beings, but by people such as themselves? Why ought people to be subject to the violence of just those people who are in power at a given time? What proves that these people are wiser than those on whom they inflict violence?

The fact that they allow themselves to use violence toward human beings indicates that they are not only not more wise, but are less wise than those who submit to them. The examinations in China for the office of mandarin do not, we know, ensure that the wisest and best people should be placed in power.

And just as little is this ensured by inheritance, or the whole machinery of promotions in rank, or the elections in constitutional countries. On the contrary, power is always seized by those who are less conscientious and less moral.

It is said, "How can people live without governments - that is, without violence?" But it should, on the contrary, be asked, "How can people who are rational live,

acknowledging that the vital bond of their social life is violence, and not reasonable agreement?"

One of two things-either people are rational or irrational beings. If they are irrational beings, then they are all irrational, and then everything among them is decided by violence; and there is no reason why certain people should and others should not have a right to use violence. And in that case governmental violence has no justification. But if men are rational beings, then their relations should be based on reason, and not on the violence of those who happen to have seized power; and, therefore, in that case, again, governmental violence has no justification.

\* The artel in its most usual form is an association of workmen, or employees, for each of whom the artel is collectively responsible.-Translator

\*\* Serfdom was legalized about 1597 by Boris Godunoff, who forbade the peasants to leave the land on which they were settled. The peasants' theory of the matter was that they belonged to the proprietor, but the land belonged to them. "We are yours, but the land is ours," was a common saying among them till their emancipation under Alexander II., when many of them felt themselves defrauded by the arrangement which gave half the land to the proprietors.-Trans.

\*\*\* The sokha is a light plough, such as the Russian peasants make and use.-Trans.

CHAPTER XIV  
HOW CAN GOVERNMENTS BE ABOLISHED?

Slavery results from laws, laws are made by governments, and, therefore, people can only be freed from slavery by the abolition of governments.

But how can governments be abolished?

All attempts to get rid of governments by violence have hitherto, always and everywhere, resulted only in this: that in place of the deposed governments new ones established themselves, often more cruel than those they replaced.

Not to mention past attempts to abolish governments by violence, according to the Socialist theory, the coming abolition of the rule of the capitalists-that is, the communalisation of the means of production and the new economic order of society-is also to be carried out by a fresh organization of violence, and will have to be maintained by the same means. So that attempts to abolish violence by violence neither have in the past nor, evidently, can in the future emancipate people from violence nor, consequently, from slavery.

It cannot be otherwise.

Apart from outbursts of revenge or anger, violence is used only in order to compel some people, against their own will, to do the will of others. But the necessity to do what other people wish against your own will is slavery. And, therefore, as long as any violence, designed to compel some people to do the will of others, exists there will be slavery.

All the attempts to abolish slavery by violence are like extinguishing fire with fire, stopping water with water, or filling up one hole by digging another.

Therefore, the means of escape from slavery, if such means exist, must be found, not in setting up fresh violence, but in abolishing whatever renders governmental violence possible. And the possibility of governmental violence, like every other violence perpetrated by a small number of

people upon a larger number, has always depended, and still depends, simply on the fact that the small number are armed while the large number are unarmed, or that the small number are better armed than the large number.

That has been the case in all the conquests: it was thus the Greeks, the Romans, the Knights, and Pizarros conquered nations, and it is thus that people are now conquered in Africa and Asia. And in this same way in times of peace all governments hold their subjects in subjection.

As of old, so now, people rule over other people only because some are armed and others are not.

In olden times the warriors, with their chiefs, fell upon the defenseless inhabitants, subdued them and robbed them, and all divided the spoils in proportion to their participation, courage and cruelty; and each warrior saw clearly that the violence he perpetrated was profitable to him. Now, armed men (taken chiefly from the working classes) attack defenseless people: men on strikes, rioters, or the inhabitants of other countries, and subdue them and rob them—that is, make them yield the fruits of their labour—not for themselves, but for people who do not even take a share in the subjugation.

The difference between the conquerors and the governments is only that the conquerors have themselves, with their soldiers, attacked the unarmed inhabitants and have, in cases of insubordination, carried their threats to torture and to kill into execution; while the governments, in cases of insubordination, do not themselves torture or execute the unarmed inhabitants, but oblige others to do it who have been deceived and specially brutalized for the purpose, and who are chosen from among the very people on whom the government inflicts violence.

Thus, violence was formerly inflicted by personal effort, by the courage, cruelty and agility of the conquerors themselves, but now violence is inflicted by means of fraud.

So that if formerly, in order to get rid of armed violence, it was necessary to arm one self and to oppose armed violence by armed violence, now when people are subdued, not by direct violence, but by fraud, in order to abolish violence it is only necessary to expose the deception which enables a small number of people to exercise violence upon a larger number.

The deception by means of which this is done consists in the fact that the small number who rule, on obtaining power from their predecessors, who were installed by conquest, say to the majority: "There are a lot of you, but you are stupid and uneducated, and cannot either govern yourselves or organize your public affairs, and, therefore, we will take those cares on ourselves; we will protect you from foreign foes, and arrange and maintain internal peace among you; we will set up courts of justice, arrange for you and take care of public institutions-schools, roads, and the postal service and in general we will take care of your well-being; and in return for all this you only have to fulfil those slight demands which we make, and, among other things, you must give into our complete control a small part of your incomes, and you must yourselves enter the armies which are needed for your own safety and government.

And most people agree to this, not because they have weighed the advantages and disadvantages of these conditions (they never have a chance to do that), but because from their very birth they have found themselves in conditions such as these.

If doubts suggest themselves to some people as to whether all this is necessary, each one thinks only about himself, and fears to suffer if he refuses to accept these conditions; each one hopes to take advantage of them for his own profit, and every one agrees, thinking that by paying a small part of his means to the government, and by consenting to military service, he cannot do himself very much harm. But, in reality, submission to the demands of

government deprives him of all that is valuable in human life.

And when the soldiers are enrolled, and hired, and armed, they are subjected to a special training called discipline, introduced in recent times, since soldiers have ceased to share the plunder.

Discipline consists in this, that by complex and artful methods, which have been perfected in the course of ages, people who are subjected to this training and remain under it for some time are completely deprived of man's chief attribute, rational freedom, and become submissive, machine-like instruments of murder in the hands of their organized hierarchical state-ocracy. And it is in this disciplined army that the essence of the fraud dwells which gives to modern governments dominion over the peoples.

As soon as the government has the money and the soldiers, instead of fulfilling their promises to defend their subjects from foreign enemies, and to arrange things for their benefit, they do all they can to provoke the neighboring nations and to produce war; and they not only do not promote the internal well-being of their people, but they ruin and corrupt them.

In the Arabian Nights there is a story of a traveler who, being cast upon an uninhabited island, found a little old man with withered legs sitting on the ground by the side of a stream. The old man asked the traveler to take him on his shoulder and to carry him over the stream. The traveler consented; but no sooner was the old man settled on the traveler's shoulders than the former twined his legs round the latter's neck and would not get off again. Having control of the traveler, the old man drove him about as he liked, plucked fruit from the trees and ate it himself, not giving any to his bearer, and abused him in every way.

This is just what happens with the people who give soldiers and money to the governments. With the money the governments buy guns and lure or train by education subservient, brutalized military commanders. And these

commanders, by means of an artful system of stupefaction, perfected in the course of ages and called discipline, make those who have been taken as soldiers into a disciplined army. When the governments have in their power this instrument of violence and murder, that possesses no will of its own, the whole people are in their hands, and they do not let them go again, and not only prey upon them, but also abuse them, instilling into the people, by means of a pseudo-religious and patriotic education, loyalty to and even adoration of themselves that is, of the very men who keep the whole people in slavery and torment them.

It is not for nothing that all the kings, emperors, and presidents esteem discipline so highly, are so afraid of any breach of discipline, and attach the highest importance to reviews, maneuvers, parades, ceremonial marches and other such nonsense. They know that it all maintains discipline, and that not only their power, but their very existence depends on discipline.

A disciplined army is not even required for a defensive war, as has often been shown in history and as was again demonstrated the other day in South Africa. A disciplined army is only needed for conquest--that is, for robbery, or for fratricide or parricide, as was expressed by that most stupid or insolent of crowned personages, William II., who made a speech to his recruits telling them they had sworn obedience to him, and ought to be ready to kill their own brothers and fathers should he desire it. Disciplined armies are the means by which they, without using their own hands, accomplish the greatest atrocities, the possibility of perpetrating which gives them power over the people.

And, therefore, the only means to destroy governments is not force, but it is the exposure of this fraud. It is necessary people should understand : First, that in Christendom there is no need to protect the peoples one from another; that all the enmity of the peoples, one to another, are produced by the governments themselves, and that armies are only needed by the small number of those who rule for the

people it is not only unnecessary, but it is in the highest degree harmful, serving as the instrument to enslave them. Secondly, it is necessary that people should understand that the discipline which is so highly esteemed by all the governments is the greatest of crimes that man can commit, and is a clear indication of the criminality of the aims of governments. Discipline is the suppression of reason and of freedom in man, and can have no other aim than preparation for the performance of crimes such as no man can commit while in a normal condition. It is not even needed for war, when the war is defensive and national, as the Boers have recently shown. It is wanted and wanted only for the purpose indicated by William II.-- for the committal of the greatest crimes, fratricide and parricide.

The terrible old man who sat on the traveler's shoulders behaved in the same way: he mocked him and insulted him, knowing that as long as he sat on the traveler's neck the latter was in his power.

And it is just this fraud, by means of which a small number of unworthy people, called the government, have power over the people, and not only impoverish them, but do what is the most harmful of all actions--pervert whole generations from childhood upwards--just this terrible fraud which should be exposed, in order that the abolition of government and of the slavery that results from it may become possible.

The German writer Eugene Schmitt, in the newspaper *Ohne Staat*, that he published in Budapest, wrote an article that was profoundly true and bold, not only in expression, but in thought. In it he showed that governments, justifying their existence on the ground that they ensure a certain kind of safety to their subjects, are like the Calabrian robber-chief who collected a regular tax from all who wished to travel in safety along the highways. Schmitt was committed for trial for that article, but was acquitted by the jury.

We are so hypnotized by the governments that such a comparison seems to us an exaggeration, a paradox, or a



joke; but in reality it is not a paradox or a joke; the only inaccuracy in the comparison is that the activity of all the governments is many times more inhuman and, above all, more harmful than the activity of the Calabrian robber.

The robber generally plundered the rich, the governments generally plunder the poor and protect those rich who assist in their crimes. The robber doing his work risked his life, while the governments risk nothing, but base their whole activity on lies and deception. The robber did not compel any one to join his band, the governments generally enroll their soldiers by force. All who paid the tax to the robber had equal security from danger. But in the state, the more any one takes part in the organized fraud the more he receives not merely of protection, but also of reward. Most of all, the emperors, kings and presidents are protected (with their perpetual body-guards), and they can spend the largest share of the money collected from the taxpaying subjects; next in the scale of participation in the governmental crimes come the commanders-in-chief, the ministers, the heads of police, governors, and so on, down to the policemen, who are least protected, and who receive the smallest salaries of all.

Those who do not take any part in the crimes of government, who refuse to serve, to pay taxes, or to go to law, are subjected to violence; as among the robbers. The robber does not intentionally vitiate people, but the governments, to accomplish their ends, vitiate whole generations from childhood to manhood with false religions and patriotic instruction. Above all, not even the most cruel robber, no Stenka Razin\* or Cartouche\*\* can be compared for cruelty, pitilessness and ingenuity in torturing, I will not say with the villain kings notorious for their cruelty—John the Terrible, Louis XI., the Elizabeths, etc.—but even with the present constitutional and liberal governments, with their solitary cells, disciplinary battalions, suppressions of revolts, and their massacres in war.

Towards governments, as towards churches, it is impossible to feel otherwise than with veneration or aversion.

Until a man has understood what a government is and until he has understood what a church is he cannot but feel veneration towards those institutions. As long as he is guided by them his vanity makes it necessary for him to think that what guides him is something primal, great and holy; but as soon as he understands that what guides him is not something primal and holy, but that it is a fraud carried out by unworthy people, who, under the pretence of guiding him, make use of him for their own personal ends, he cannot but at once feel aversion towards these people, and the more important the side of his life that has been guided the more aversion will he feel.

People cannot but feel this when they have understood what governments are.

People must feel that their participation in the criminal activity of governments, whether by giving part of their work in the form of money, or by direct participation in military service, is not, as is generally supposed, an indifferent action, but, besides being harmful to one's self and to one's brothers, is a participation in the crimes unceasingly committed by all governments and a preparation for new crimes, which governments are always preparing by maintaining disciplined armies.

The age of veneration for governments, notwithstanding all the hypnotic influence they employ to maintain their position, is more and more passing away. And it is time for people to understand that governments not only are not necessary, but are harmful and most highly immoral institutions, in which a self-respecting, honest man cannot and must not take part, and the advantages of which he cannot and should not enjoy.

And as soon as people clearly understand that, they will naturally cease to take part in such deeds—that is, cease to give the governments soldiers and money. And as soon as a

majority of people ceases to do this the fraud which enslaves people will be abolished. Only in this way can people be freed from slavery.

\* The Cossack leader of a formidable insurrection in the latter half of the seventeenth century.-Trans. \*\* The chief of a Paris band of robbers in the early years of the eighteenth century.-Trans.

CHAPTER XV  
WHAT SHOULD EACH MAN DO?

"But all these are general considerations, and whether they are correct or not, they are inapplicable to life," will be the remark made by people accustomed to their position, and who do not consider it possible, or who do not wish, to change it.

"Tell us what to do, and how to organize society," is what people of the well-to-do classes usually say.

People of the well-to-do classes are so accustomed to their role of slave owners that when there is talk of improving the workers' condition, they at once begin, like our serf owners before the emancipation, to devise all sorts of plans for their slaves; but it never occurs to them that they have no right to dispose of other people, and that if they really wish to do good to people, the one thing they can and should do is to cease to do the evil they are now doing. And the evil they do is very definite and clear. It is not merely that they employ compulsory slave labour, and do not wish to cease from employing it, but that they also take part in establishing and maintaining this compulsion of labour. That is what they should cease to do.

The working people are also so perverted by their compulsory slavery that it seems to most of them that if their position is a bad one, it is the fault of the masters, who pay them too little and who own the means of production. It does not enter their heads that their bad position depends entirely on themselves, and that if only they wish to improve their own and their brothers' positions, and not merely each to do the best he can for himself, the great thing for them to do is themselves to cease to do evil. And the evil that they do is that, desiring to improve their material position by the same means which have brought them into bondage, the workers (for the sake of satisfying the habits they have adopted), sacrificing their human dignity and freedom, accept humiliating and immoral

employment or produce unnecessary and harmful articles, and, above all, they maintain governments, taking part in them by paying taxes and by direct service, and thus they enslave themselves.

In order that the state of things may be improved, both the well-to-do classes and the workers must understand that improvement cannot be effected by safeguarding one's own interests. Service involves sacrifice, and, therefore, if people really wish to improve the position of their brother men, and not merely their own, they must be ready not only to alter the way of life to which they are accustomed, and to lose those advantages which they have held, but they must be ready for an intense struggle, not against governments, but against themselves and their families, and must be ready to suffer persecution for non-fulfillment of the demands of government.

And, therefore, the reply to the question, What is it we must do? is very simple, and not merely definite, but always in the highest degree applicable and practicable for each man, though it is not what is expected by those who, like people of the well-to-do classes, are fully convinced that they are appointed to correct not themselves (they are already good), but to teach and correct other people; and by those who, like the workmen, are sure that not they (but only the capitalists) are in fault for their present bad position, and think that things can only be put right by taking from the capitalists the things they use, and arranging so that all might make use of those conveniences of life which are now only used by the rich. The answer is very definite, applicable, and practicable, for it demands the activity of that one person over whom each of us has real, rightful, and unquestionable power -namely, one's self-and it consists in this, that if a man, whether slave or slave owner, really wishes to better not his position alone, but the position of people in general, he must not himself do those wrong things which enslave him and his brothers.

And in order not to do the evil which produces misery for himself and for his brothers, he should, first of all, neither willingly nor under compulsion take any part in governmental activity, and should, therefore, be neither a soldier, nor a field-marshal, nor a minister of state, nor a tax collector, nor a witness, nor an alderman, nor a juryman, nor a governor, nor a member of Parliament, nor, in fact, hold any office connected with violence. That is one thing.

Secondly, such a man should not voluntarily pay taxes to governments, either directly or indirectly; nor should he accept money collected by taxes, either as salary, or as pension, or as a reward; nor should he make use of governmental institutions, supported by taxes collected by violence from the people. That is the second thing.

Thirdly, a man who desires not to promote his own well-being alone, but to better the position of people in general, should not appeal to governmental violence for the protection of his own possessions in land or in other things, nor to defend him and his near ones; but should only possess land and all products of his own or other people's toil in so far as others do not claim them from him.

But such an activity is impossible; to refuse all participation in governmental affairs means to refuse to live, is what people will say. A man who refuses military service will be imprisoned; a man who does not pay taxes will be punished and the tax will be collected from his property; a man who, having no other means of livelihood, refuses government service, will perish of hunger with his family; the same will befall a man who rejects governmental protection for his property and his person; not to make use of things that are taxed or of government institutions, is quite impossible, as the most necessary articles are often taxed; and just in the same way it is impossible to do without government institutions, such as the post, the roads, etc.

It is quite true that it is difficult for a man of our times to stand aside from all participation in governmental violence. But the fact that not every one can so arrange his life as not to participate in some degree in governmental violence does not at all show that it is not possible to free one's self from it more and more. Not every man will have the strength to refuse conscription (though there are and will be such men), but each man can abstain from voluntarily entering the army, the police force, and the judicial or revenue service; and can give the preference to a worse paid private service rather than to a better paid public service. Not every man will have the strength to renounce his landed estates (though there are people who do that), but every man can, understanding the wrongfulness of such property, diminish its extent. Not every man can renounce the possession of capital (there are some who do) or the use of articles defended by violence, but each man can, by diminishing his own requirements, be less and less in need of articles which provoke other people to envy. Not every official can renounce his government salary (though there are men who prefer hunger to dishonest governmental employment), but every one can prefer a smaller salary to a larger one for the sake of having duties less bound up with violence; not every one can refuse to make use of government schools (although there are some who do), but every one can give the preference to private schools, and each can make less and less use of articles that are taxed, and of government institutions.

Between the existing order, based on brute force, and the ideal of a society based on reasonable agreement confirmed by custom, there are an infinite number of steps, which mankind are ascending, and the approach to the ideal is only accomplished to the extent to which people free themselves from participation in violence, from taking advantage of it, and from being accustomed to it.

We do not know and cannot see, still less, like the pseudo-scientific men, foretell, in what way this gradual weakening

of governments and emancipation of people will come about; nor do we know what new forms man's life will take as the gradual emancipation progresses, but we certainly do know that the life of people who, having understood the criminality and harmfulness of the activity of governments, strive not to make use of them, or to take part in them, will be quite different and more in accord with the law of life and our own consciences than the present life, in which people themselves participating in governmental violence and taking advantage of it, make a pretence of struggling against it, and try to destroy the old violence by new violence.

The chief thing is that the present arrangement of life is bad; about that all are agreed. The cause of the bad conditions and of the existing slavery lies in the violence used by governments. There is only one way to abolish governmental violence: that people should abstain from participating in violence. And, therefore, whether it be difficult or not, to abstain from participating in governmental violence, and whether the good results of such abstinence will or will not be soon apparent, are superfluous questions; because to liberate people from slavery there is only that one way, and no other!

To what extent and when voluntary agreement, confirmed by custom, will replace violence in each society and in the whole world will depend on the strength and clearness of people's consciousness and on the number of individuals who make this consciousness their own. Each of us is a separate person, and each can be a participator in the general movement of humanity by his greater or lesser clearness of recognition of the aim before us, or he can be an opponent of progress. Each will have to make his choice : to oppose the will of God, building upon the sands the unstable house of his brief, illusive life, or to join in the eternal, deathless movement of true life in accordance with God's will.



But perhaps I am mistaken, and the right conclusions to draw from human history are these, and the human race is not moving toward emancipation from slavery; perhaps it can be proved that violence is a needful factor of progress, and that the state, with its violence, is a necessary form of life, and that it will be worse for people if governments are abolished and if the defense of our persons and property is abolished.

Let us grant it to be so, and say that all the foregoing reasoning is wrong; but besides the general considerations about the life of humanity, each man has also to face the question of his own life; and notwithstanding any considerations about the general laws of life, a man cannot do what he admits to be not merely harmful, but wrong.

"Very possibly the reasoning showing the state to be a necessary form of the development of the individual, and governmental violence to be necessary for the good of Society, can all be deduced from history, and are all correct," each honest and sincere man of our times will reply; "but murder is an evil, that I know more certainly than any reasonings ; by demanding that I should enter the army or pay for hiring and equipping soldiers, or for buying cannons and building ironclads, you wish to make me an accomplice in murder, and that I cannot and will not be. Neither do I wish, nor can I, make use of money you have collected from hungry people with threats of murder; nor do I wish to make use of land or capital defended by you, because I know that your defense rests on murder.

"I could do these things when I did not understand all their criminality, but when I have once seen it, I cannot avoid seeing it, and can no longer take part in these things.

"I know that we are all so bound up by violence that it is difficult to avoid it altogether, but I will, nevertheless, do all I can not to take part in it; I will not be an accomplice to it, and will try not to make use of what is obtained and defended by murder.

"I have but one life, and why should I, in this brief life of mine, act contrary to the voice of conscience and become a partner in your abominable deeds?

"I cannot, and I will not.

"And what will come of this? I do not know. Only I think no harm can result from acting as my conscience demands."

So in our time should each honest and sincere man reply to all the arguments about the necessity of governments and of violence, and to every demand or invitation to take part in them.

So that the supreme and unimpeachable judge-the voice of conscience-confirms to each man the conclusion to which also general reasoning should bring us.

## AN AFTERWORD

But this is again the same old sermon: on the one hand, urging the destruction of the present order of things without putting anything in its place; on the other hand, exhorting to non-action, is what many will say on reading what I have written. "Governmental action is bad, so is the action of the landowner and of the man of business; equally bad is the activity of the Socialist and of the revolutionary Anarchists-that is to say, all real, practical activities are bad, and only some sort of moral, spiritual, indefinite activity which brings everything to utter chaos and inaction is good." Thus I know many serious and sincere people will think and speak!

What seems to people most disturbing in the idea of no violence is that property will not be protected, and that each man will, therefore, be able to take from another what he needs or merely likes, and to go unpunished. To people accustomed to the defense of property and person by violence it seems that without such defense there will be perpetual disorder, a constant struggle of every one against every one else.

I will not repeat what I have said elsewhere to show that the defense of property by violence does not lessen, but increases, this disorder. But allowing that in the absence of defense disorder may occur, what are people to do who have understood the cause of the calamities from which they are suffering?

If we have understood that we are ill from drunkenness, we must continue to drink, hoping to mend matters by drinking moderately, or continue drinking and take medicines that shortsighted doctors give us.

And it is the same with our social sickness. If we have understood that we are ill because some people use violence to others, it is impossible to improve the position of society either by continuing to support the governmental violence that exists, or by introducing a fresh kind of

revolutionary or socialist violence. That might have been done as long as the fundamental cause of people's misery was not clearly seen. But as soon as it has become indubitably clear that people suffer from the violence done by some to others, it is already impossible to improve the position by continuing the old violence or by introducing a new kind. The sick man suffering from alcoholism has but one way to be cured: by refraining from intoxicants which are the cause of his illness; so there is only one way to free men from the evil arrangement of society-that is, to refrain from violence-the cause of the suffering-from personal violence, from preaching violence, and from in any way justifying violence.

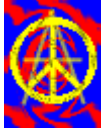
And not only is this the sole means to deliver people from their ills, but we must also adopt it because it coincides with the moral consciousness of each individual man of our times. If a man of our day has once understood that every defense of property or person by violence is obtained only by threatening to murder or by murdering, he can no longer with a quiet conscience make use of that which is obtained by murder or by threats of murder, and still less can he take part in the murders or in threatening to murder. So that what is wanted to free people from their misery is also needed for the satisfaction of the moral consciousness of every individual. And, therefore, for each individual there can be no doubt that both for the general good and to fulfil the law of his life he must take no part in violence, nor justify it, nor make use of it.

# 'THOU SHALT NOT KILL'

LEO TOLSTOY

1900

From: Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
<http://www.myspot.org/tolstoy/index.html>



<http://www.jtrapp.com/>

'Thou shalt not kill.' -EXOD. xx. 13.

'The disciple is not above his master: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his master.' -LUKE vi. 40

'For all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' -MATT xxvi. 52.

'Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' - MATT. vii. 12.

When Kings are executed after trial, as in the case of Charles L, Louis XVI., and Maximilian of Mexico; or when they are killed in Court conspiracies, like Peter III., Paul, and various Sultans, Shahs, and Khans-little is said about it; but when they are killed without a trial and without a Court conspiracy- as in the case of Henry IV. of France, Alexander II., the Empress of Austria, the late Shah of Persia, and, recently, Humbert- such murders excite the greatest surprise and indignation among Kings and Emperors and their adherents, just as if they themselves never took part in murders, nor profited by them, nor instigated them. But, in fact, the mildest of the murdered Kings (Alexander II. or Humbert, for instance), not to speak of executions in their own countries, were instigators of, and accomplices and partakers in, the murder of tens of

thousands of men who perished on the field of battle ; while more cruel Kings and Emperors have been guilty of hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of murders.

The teaching of Christ repeals the law, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'; but those who have always clung to that law, and still cling to it, and who apply it to a terrible degree-not only claiming 'an eye for an eye,' but without provocation decreeing the slaughter of thousands, as they do when they declare war- have no right to be indignant at the application of that same law to themselves in so small and insignificant a degree that hardly one King or Emperor is killed for each hundred thousand, or perhaps even for each million, who are killed by the order and with the consent of Kings and Emperors. Kings and Emperors not only should not be indignant at such murders as those of Alexander 11. and Humbert, but they should be surprised that such murders are so rare, considering the continual and universal example of murder that they give to mankind.

The crowd are so hypnotized that they see what is going on before their eyes, but do not understand its meaning. They see what constant care Kings, Emperors, and Presidents devote to their disciplined armies; they see the reviews, parades, and manœuvres the rulers hold, about which they boast to one another; and the people crowd to see their own brothers, brightly dressed up in fools' clothes, turned into machines to the sound of drum and trumpet, all, at the shout of one man, making one and the same movement at one and the same moment-but they do not understand what it all means. Yet the meaning of this drilling is very clear and simple: it is nothing but a preparation for killing.

It is stupefying men in order to make them fit instruments for murder. And those who do this, who chiefly direct this and are proud of it, are the Kings, Emperors and Presidents. And it is just these men- who are specially occupied in organizing murder and who have made murder

their profession, who wear military uniforms and carry murderous weapons (swords) at their sides-that are horrified and indignant when one of themselves is murdered.

The murder of Kings- the murder of Humbert- is terrible. but not on account of its cruelty. The things done by command of Kings and Emperors-not only past events such as the massacre of St.. Bartholomew religious butcheries, the terrible repressions of peasant' rebellions, and Paris coups d' etat, but the present-day Government executions, the doing-to-death of prisoners in solitary confinement, the Disciplinary Battallions, the hangings, the beheadings, the shootings and slaughter in wars-are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by Anarchists. Nor are these murders terrible because undeserved. If Alexander II. and Humbert did not deserve death, still less did the thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, or of Italians who perished in Abyssinia. Such murders are terrible, not because they are cruel or unmerited, but because of the unreasonableness of those who commit them.

If the regicides act under the influence of personal feelings of indignation evoked by the sufferings of an oppressed people, for which they hold Alexander or Carnot or Humbert responsible ; or if they act from personal feelings of revenge, then-however immoral their conduct may be-it is at least intelligible; but how is it that a body of men (Anarchists, we are told) such as those by whom Bresci was sent., and who are now threatening another Emperor-how is that they cannot devise any better means of improving the condition of humanity than by killing people whose destruction can no more be of use than the decapitation of that mythical monster on whose neck a new head appeared as soon as one was cut of? Kings and Emperors have long ago arranged for themselves a system like that of a magazine-rifle : as soon as one bullet has been

discharged another takes its place. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!* So what is the use of killing them?

Only on a most superficial view, can the killing of these men seem a means of saving the nations from oppression and from wars destructive of human life.

One only need remember that similar oppression and similar war went on, no matter who was at the head of the Government- Nicholas or Alexander, Frederick or Wilhelm, Napoleon or Louis, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or anyone else-in order to understand that it is not any particular person who causes these oppressions and these wars from which the nations suffer. The misery of nations is caused not by particular persons, but by the particular order of Society under which the people are so tied up together that they find themselves all in the power of a few men, or more often in the power of one single man: a man so perverted by his unnatural position as arbiter of the fate and lives of millions, that he is always in an unhealthy state, and always suffers more or less from a mania of self-aggrandizement. which only his exceptional position conceals from general notice.

Apart from the fact that such men are surrounded from earliest childhood to the grave by the most insensate luxury and an atmosphere of falsehood and flattery which always accompanies them, their whole education and all their occupations are centred on one object: learning about former murders, the best present-day ways of murdering, and the best preparations for future murder. From childhood they learn about killing in all its possible forms. They always carry about with them murderous weapons-swords or sabres; they dress themselves in various uniforms; they attend parades, reviews and manoeuvres ; they visit one another, presenting one another with Orders and nominating one another to the command of regiments-and not only does no one tell them plainly what they are doing or say that to busy one's self with preparations for killing is revolting and criminal, but from all sides they



hear nothing but approval and enthusiasm for all this activity of theirs. Every time they go out, and at each parade and review, crowds of people flock to greet them with enthusiasm, and it seems to them as if the whole nation approves of their conduct. The only part of the Press that reaches them, and that seems to them the expression of the feelings of the whole people, or at least of its best representatives, most slavishly extols their every word and action, however silly or wicked they may be. Those around them, men and women., clergy and laity- all people who do not prize human dignity- vying with one another in refined flattery, agree with them, about anything and deceive them about everything making it impossible for them to see life as it is. Such rulers might live a hundred years without ever seeing one single really independent man or ever hearing the truth spoken. One is sometimes appalled to hear of the words and deeds of these men ; but one need only consider their position in order to understand that anyone in their place would act as they do. If a reasonable man found himself in their place, there is only one reasonable action he could perform, and that would be to get away from such a position. Any one remaining in it would behave as they do.

What, indeed, must go on in the head of some Wilhelm of Germany- a narrow-minded, ill- educated, vain man, with the ideals of a German Junker- when there is nothing he can say so stupid or so horrid that it will not be met by an enthusiastic 'Hoch!' and be commented on by the Press of the entire world as though it were something highly important. When he says that, at his word, soldiers should be ready to kill their own fathers, people shout 'Hurrah !' When he says that the Gospel must be introduced with an iron fist- 'Hurrah!' When he says the army is to take no prisoners in China, but to slaughter everybody, he is not put into a lunatic asylum, but people shout 'Hurrah!' and set sail for China to execute his commands. Or Nicholas II. (a man naturally modest) begins his reign by announcing to

venerable old men who had expressed a wish to be allowed to discuss their own affairs, that such ideas of self-government were 'insensate dreams,'- and the organs of the Press he sees. and the people he meets, praise him for it. He proposes a childish, silly, and hypocritical project of universal peace, while at the same time ordering an increase in the army- and there are no limits to the laudations of his wisdom and virtue. Without any need, he foolishly and mercilessly insults and oppresses a whole nation, the Finns, and again he hears nothing but praise. Finally, he arranges the Chinese slaughter- terrible in its injustice, cruelty and incompatibility with his peace projects-and. from all sides, people applaud him, both as a victor and as a continuer of his father's peace policy.

What, indeed, must be going on in the heads and hearts of these men?

So it is not the Alexanders and Humberts, nor the Wilhelms, Nicholases, and Chamberlains- though they decree these oppressions of the nations and these wars- who are really the most guilty of these sins, but it is rather those who place and support them in the position of arbiters over the lives of their fellow-men. And, therefore, the thing to do is not to kill Alexanders, Nicholases, Wilhelms, and Humberts, but to cease to support the arrangement of society of which they are a result. And what supports the present order of society is the selfishness and stupefaction of the people, who sell their freedom and honour for insignificant material advantages.

People who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder- partly as a result of being stupefied by a patriotic and pseudo-religious education, and partly for the sake of personal advantages- cede their freedom and sense of human dignity at the bidding of these who stand above

In them and offer them material advantages. In the same way-in consequence of stupefaction, and chiefly for the sake of advantages-those who are a little higher up the ladder cede their freedom and manly dignity, and the same

thing repeats itself with those standing yet higher, and so on to the to most rung-to those who, or to him who, standing at the apex of the social cone have nothing more to obtain: for whom the only motives of action are love of power and vanity, and who are. generally so perverted and stupefied by the power of life and death which they hold over their fellow-men, and by the consequent servility and flattery of those who surround them, that, without ceasing to do evil, they feel quite assured that they are benefactors to the human race.

It is the people who sacrifice their dignity as men for material profit that produce these men who cannot act otherwise than as they do act, and with whom it is useless to be angry for their stupid and wicked actions. To kill such men is like whipping children whom one has first spoilt.

That nations should not be oppressed, and that there should be none of these useless wars, and that men may not be indignant with those who seem to cause these evils, and may not kill them- it seems that only a very small thing is necessary. It is necessary that men should understand things as they are, should call them by their right names, and should know that an army is an instrument for killing, and that the enrolment and management of an army-the very things which Kings, Emperors, and Presidents occupy themselves with so self-confidently- is a preparation for murder.

If only each King, Emperor, and President understood that his work of directing armies is not an honourable and important duty, as his flatterers persuade him it is, but a bad and shameful act of preparation for murder-and if each private individual understood that the payment of taxes wherewith to hire and equip soldiers, and, above all, army-service itself, are not matters of indifference, but are bad and shameful actions by which he not only permits but participates in murder-then this power of Emperors, Kings, and Presidents, which now arouses our indignation, and

which causes them to be murdered, would disappear of itself.

So that the Alexanders, Carnots, Humberts, and others should not be murdered, but it should be explained to them that they are themselves murderers, and, chiefly, they should not be allowed to kill people: men should refuse to murder at their command.

If people do not yet act in this way, it is only because Governments, to maintain themselves, diligently exercise a hypnotic influence upon the people. And, therefore, we may help to prevent people killing either Kings or one another, not by killing- murder only increases the hypnotism- but by arousing people from their hypnotic condition.

And it is this I have tried to do by these remarks.

# A LETTER TO A HINDU

## **THE SUBJECTION OF INDIA-ITS CAUSE AND CURE**

Leo Tolstoy  
*December 14th, 1908.*

*(With an Introduction by M. K. GANDHI)*

### INTRODUCTION

The letter printed below is a translation of Tolstoy's letter written in Russian in reply to one from the Editor of Free Hindustan. After having passed from hand to hand, this letter at last came into my possession through a friend who asked me, as one much interested in Tolstoy's writings, whether I thought it worth publishing. I at once replied in the affirmative, and told him I should translate it myself into Gujarati and induce others' to translate and publish it in various Indian vernaculars.

The letter as received by me was a type-written copy. It was therefore referred to the author, who confirmed it as his and kindly granted me permission to print it.

To me, as a humble follower of that great teacher whom I have long looked upon as one of my guides, it is a matter of honour to be connected with the publication of his letter, such especially as the one which is now being given to the world.

It is a mere statement of fact to say that every Indian, whether he owns up to it or not, has national aspirations. But there are as many opinions as there are Indian nationalists as to the exact meaning of that aspiration, and

more especially as to the methods to be used to attain the end.

One of the accepted and 'time-honoured' methods to attain the end is that of violence. The assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie was an illustration of that method in its worst and most detestable form. Tolstoy's life has been devoted to replacing the method of violence for removing tyranny or securing reform by the method of non-resistance to evil. He would meet hatred expressed in violence by love expressed in self-suffering. He admits of no exception to whittle down this great and divine law of love. He applies it to all the problems that trouble mankind.

When a man like Tolstoy, one of the clearest thinkers in the western world, one of the greatest writers, one who as a soldier has known what violence is and what it can do, condemns Japan for having blindly followed the law of modern science, falsely so-called, and fears for that country 'the greatest calamities', it is for us to pause and consider whether, in our impatience of English rule, we do not want to replace one evil by another and a worse. India, which is the nursery of the great faiths of the world, will cease to be nationalist India, whatever else she may become, when she goes through the process of civilization in the shape of reproduction on that sacred soil of gun factories and the hateful industrialism which has reduced the people of Europe to a state of slavery, and all but stifled among them the best instincts which are the heritage of the human family.

If we do not want the English in India we must pay the price. Tolstoy indicates it. 'Do not resist evil, but also do not yourselves participate in evil - in the violent deeds of the administration of the law courts, the collection of taxes and, what is more important, of the soldiers, and no one in the world will enslave you', passionately declares the sage of Yasnaya Polyana. Who can question the truth of what he says in the following: 'A commercial company enslaved a nation comprising two hundred millions. Tell this to a man

free from superstition and he will fail to grasp what these words mean. What does it mean that thirty thousand people, not athletes, but rather weak and ordinary people, have enslaved two hundred millions of vigorous, clever, capable, freedom-loving people? Do not the figures make it clear that not the English, but the Indians, have enslaved themselves ?'

One need not accept all that Tolstoy says-some of his facts are not accurately stated-to realize the central truth of his indictment of the present system, which is to understand and act upon the irresistible power of the soul over the body, of love, which is an attribute of the soul, over the brute or body force generated by the stirring in us of evil passions.

There is no doubt that there is nothing new in what Tolstoy preaches. But his presentation of the old truth is refreshingly forceful. His logic is unassailable. And above all he endeavours to practise what he preaches. He preaches to convince. He is sincere and in earnest. He commands attention.

[*19th November, 1909.*] M. K. GANDHI

A LETTER TO A HINDU  
By LEO TOLSTOY

*All that exists is One. People only call this One by different names.* THE VEDAS.

*God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.* I JOHN iv. 16.

*God is one whole; we are the parts.* EXPOSITION OF THE TEACHING OF THE VEDAS BY VIVEKANANDA.

I

Do not seek quiet and rest in those earthly realms where delusions and desires are engendered, for if thou dost, thou wilt be dragged through the rough wilderness of life, which is far from Me. Whenever thou feelest that thy feet are becoming entangled in the interlaced roots of life, know that thou has strayed from the path to which I beckon thee: for I have placed thee in broad, smooth paths, which are strewn with flowers. I have put a light before thee, which thou canst follow and thus run without stumbling. KRISHNA.

I have received your letter and two numbers of your periodical, both of which interest me extremely. The oppression of a majority by a minority, and the demoralization inevitably resulting from it, is a phenomenon that has always occupied me and has done so most particularly of late. I will try to explain to you what I think about that subject in general, and particularly about the cause from which the dreadful evils of which you write in your letter, and in the Hindu periodical you have sent me, have arisen and continue to arise.

The reason for the astonishing fact that a majority of working people submit to a handful of idlers who control their labour and their very lives is always and everywhere



the same-whether the oppressors and oppressed are of one race or whether, as in India and elsewhere, the oppressors are of a different nation.

This phenomenon seems particularly strange in India, for there more than two hundred million people, highly gifted both physically and mentally, find themselves in the power of a small group of people quite alien to them in thought, and immeasurably inferior to them in religious morality.

From your letter and the articles in *Free Hindustan* as well as from the very interesting writings of the Hindu Swami Vivekananda and others, it appears that, as is the case in our time with the ills of all nations, the reason lies in the lack of a reasonable religious teaching which by explaining the meaning of life would supply a supreme law for the guidance of conduct and would replace the more than dubious precepts of pseudo-religion and pseudo-science with the immoral conclusions deduced from them and commonly called 'civilization'.

Your letter, as well as the articles in *Free Hindustan* and Indian political literature generally, shows that most of the leaders of public opinion among your people no longer attach any significance to the religious teachings that were and are professed by the peoples of India, and recognize no possibility of freeing the people from the oppression they endure except by adopting the irreligious and profoundly immoral social arrangements under which the English and other pseudo-Christian nations live to-day.

And yet the chief if not the sole cause of the enslavement of the Indian peoples by the English lies in this very absence of a religious consciousness and of the guidance for conduct which should flow from it - a lack common in our day to all nations East and West, from Japan to England and America alike.

## II

*O ye, who see perplexities over your heads, beneath your feet, and to the right and left of you; you will be an eternal enigma unto yourselves until ye become humble and joyful as children. Then will ye find Me, and having found Me in yourselves, you will rule over worlds, and looking out from the great world within to the little world without, you will bless everything that is, and find all is well with time and with you.*

KRISHNA.

To make my thoughts clear to you I must go farther back. We do not, cannot, and I venture to say need not, know how men lived millions of years ago or even ten thousand years ago, but we do know positively that, as far back as we have any knowledge of mankind, it has always lived in special groups of families, tribes, and nations in which the majority, in the conviction that it must be so, submissively and willingly bowed to the rule of one or more persons—that is to a very small minority. Despite all varieties of circumstances and personalities these relations manifested themselves among the various peoples of whose origin we have any knowledge; and the farther back we go the more absolutely necessary did this arrangement appear, both to the rulers and the ruled, to make it possible for people to live peacefully together.

So it was everywhere. But though this external form of life existed for centuries and still exists, very early-thousands of years before our time—amid this life based on coercion, one and the same thought constantly emerged among different nations, namely, that in every individual a spiritual element is manifested that gives life to all that exists, and that this spiritual element strives to unite with everything of a like nature to itself, and attains this aim through love. This thought appeared in most various forms at different times and places, with varying completeness

and clarity. It found expression in Brahmanism, Judaism, Mazdaism (the teachings of Zoroaster), in Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and in the writings of the Greek and Roman sages, as well as in Christianity and Mohammedanism. The mere fact that this thought has sprung up among different nations and at different times indicates that it is inherent in human nature and contains the truth. But this truth was made known to people who considered that a community could only be kept together if some of them restrained others, and so it appeared quite irreconcilable with the existing order of society. Moreover it was at first expressed only fragmentarily, and so obscurely that though people admitted its theoretic truth they could not entirely accept it as guidance for their conduct. Then, too, the dissemination of the truth in a society based on coercion was always hindered in one and the same manner, namely, those in power, feeling that the recognition of this truth would undermine their position, consciously or sometimes unconsciously perverted it by explanations and additions quite foreign to it, and also opposed it by open violence. Thus the truth-that his life should be directed by the spiritual element which is its basis, which manifests itself as love, and which is so natural to man-this truth, in order to force a way to man's consciousness, had to struggle not merely against the obscurity with which it was expressed and the intentional and unintentional distortions surrounding it, but also against deliberate violence, which by means of persecutions and punishments sought to compel men to accept religious laws authorized by the rulers and conflicting with the truth. Such a hindrance and misrepresentation of the truth-which had not yet achieved complete clarity-occurred everywhere: in Confucianism and Taoism, in Buddhism and in Christianity, in Mohammedanism and in your Brahmanism.

### III

*My hand has sowed love everywhere, giving unto all that will receive. Blessings are offered unto all My children, but many times in their blindness they fail to see them. How few there are who gather the gifts which lie in profusion at their feet: how many there are, who, in wilful waywardness, turn their eyes away from them and complain with a wail that they have not that which I have given them; many of them defiantly repudiate not only My gifts, but Me also, Me, the Source of all blessings and the Author of their being. KRISHNA.*

*I tarry awhile from the turmoil and strife of the world. I will beautify and quicken thy life with love and with joy, for the light of the soul is Love. Where Love is, there is contentment and peace, and where there is contentment and peace, there am I, also, in their midst. KRISHNA.*

*The aim of the sinless One consists in acting without causing sorrow to others, although he could attain to great power by ignoring their feelings.*

*The aim of the sinless One lies in not doing evil unto those who have done evil unto him.*

*If a man causes suffering even to those who hate him without any reason, he will ultimately have grief not to be overcome.*

*The punishment of evil doers consists in making them feel ashamed of themselves by doing them a great kindness.*

*Of what use is superior knowledge in the one, if he does not endeavour to relieve his neighbour's want as much as his own?*

*If, in the morning, a man wishes to do evil unto another, in the evening the evil will return to him.*

**THE HINDU KURAL.**

Thus it went on everywhere. The recognition that love represents the highest morality was nowhere denied or

contradicted, but this truth was so interwoven everywhere with all kinds of falsehoods which distorted it, that finally nothing of it remained but words. It was taught that this highest morality was only applicable to private life—for home use, as it were—but that in public life all forms of violence—such as imprisonment, executions, and wars—might be used for the protection of the majority against a minority of evildoers, though such means were diametrically opposed to any vestige of love. And though common sense indicated that if some men claim to decide who is to be subjected to violence of all kinds for the benefit of others, these men to whom violence is applied may, in turn, arrive at a similar conclusion with regard to those who have employed violence to them, and though the great religious teachers of Brahmanism, Buddhism, and above all of Christianity, foreseeing such a perversion of the law of love, have constantly drawn attention to the one invariable condition of love (namely, the enduring of injuries, insults, and violence of all kinds without resisting evil by evil) people continued—regardless of all that leads man forward—to try to unite the incompatibles: the virtue of love, and what is opposed to love, namely, the restraining of evil by violence. And such a teaching, despite its inner contradiction, was so firmly established that the very people who recognize love as a virtue accept as lawful at the same time an order of life based on violence and allowing men not merely to torture but even to kill one another.

For a long time people lived in this obvious contradiction without noticing it. But a time arrived when this contradiction became more and more evident to thinkers of various nations. And the old and simple truth that it is natural for men to help and to love one another, but not to torture and to kill one another, became ever clearer, so that fewer and fewer people were able to believe the sophistries by which the distortion of the truth had been made so plausible.

In former times the chief method of justifying the use of violence and thereby infringing the law of love was by claiming a divine right for the rulers: the Tsars, Sultans, Rajahs, Shahs, and other heads of states. But the longer humanity lived the weaker grew the belief in this peculiar, God-given right of the ruler. That belief withered in the same way and almost simultaneously in the Christian and the Brahman world, as well as in Buddhist and Confucian spheres, and in recent times it has so faded away as to prevail no longer against man's reasonable understanding and the true religious feeling. People saw more and more clearly, and now the majority see quite clearly, the senselessness and immorality of subordinating their wills to those of other people just like themselves, when they are bidden to do what is contrary not only to their interests but also to their moral sense. And so one might suppose that having lost confidence in any religious authority for a belief in the divinity of potentates of various kinds, people would try to free themselves from subjection to it. But unfortunately not only were the rulers, who were considered supernatural beings, benefited by having the peoples in subjection, but as a result of the belief in, and during the rule of, these pseudodivine beings, ever larger and larger circles of people grouped and established themselves around them, and under an appearance of governing took advantage of the people. And when the old deception of a supernatural and God-appointed authority had dwindled away these men were only concerned to devise a new one which like its predecessor should make it possible to hold the people in bondage to a limited number of rulers.

#### IV

*Children, do you want to know by what your hearts should be guided? Throw aside your longings and strivings after*

*that which is null and void; get rid of your erroneous thoughts about happiness and wisdom, and your empty and insincere desires. Dispense with these and you will know Love.* KRISHNA.

*Be not the destroyers of yourselves. Arise to your true Being, and then you will have nothing to fear.*

KRISHNA.

New justifications have now appeared in place of the antiquated, obsolete, religious ones. These new justifications are just as inadequate as the old ones, but as they are new their futility cannot immediately be recognized by the majority of men. Besides this, those who enjoy power propagate these new sophistries and support them so skilfully that they seem irrefutable even to many of those who suffer from the oppression these theories seek to justify. These new justifications are termed 'scientific'. But by the term 'scientific' is understood just what was formerly understood by the term 'religious': just as formerly everything called 'religious' was held to be unquestionable simply because it was called religious, so now all that is called 'scientific' is held to be unquestionable. In the present case the obsolete religious justification of violence which consisted in the recognition of the supernatural personality of the God-ordained ruler ('there is no power but of God') has been superseded by the 'scientific' justification which puts forward, first, the assertion that because the coercion of man by man has existed in all ages, it follows that such coercion must continue to exist. This assertion that people should continue to live as they have done throughout past ages rather than as their reason and conscience indicate, is what 'science' calls 'the historic law'. A further 'scientific' justification lies in the statement that as among plants and wild beasts there is a constant struggle for existence which always results in the survival of the fittest, a similar struggle should be carried on among human beings-beings, that is, who are gifted with intelligence and love; faculties lacking in the creatures

subject to the struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Such is the second 'scientific' justification.

The third, most important, and unfortunately most widespread justification is, at bottom, the age- old religious one just a little altered: that in public life the suppression of some for the protection of the majority cannot be avoided- so that coercion is unavoidable however desirable reliance on love alone might be in human intercourse. The only difference in this justification by pseudo-science consists in the fact that, to the question why such and such people and not others have the right to decide against whom violence may and must be used, pseudo-science now gives a different reply to that given by religion-which declared that the right to decide was valid because it was pronounced by persons possessed of divine power. 'Science' says that these decisions represent the will of the people, which under a constitutional form of government is supposed to find expression in all the decisions and actions of those who are at the helm at the moment.

Such are the scientific justifications of the principle of coercion. They are not merely weak but absolutely invalid, yet they are so much needed by those who occupy privileged positions that they believe in them as blindly as they formerly believed in the immaculate conception, and propagate them just as confidently. And the unfortunate majority of men bound to toil is so dazzled by the pomp with which these 'scientific truths' are presented, that under this new influence it accepts these scientific stupidities for holy truth, just as it formerly accepted the pseudo-religious justifications; and it continues to submit to the present holders of power who are just as hard- hearted but rather more numerous than before.



*Who am I? I am that which thou hast searched for since thy baby eyes gazed wonderingly upon the world, whose horizon hides this real life from thee. I am that which in thy heart thou hast prayed for, demanded as thy birthright, although thou hast not known what it was. I am that which has lain in thy soul for hundreds and thousands of years. Sometimes I lay in thee grieving because thou didst not recognize me; sometimes I raised my head, opened my eyes, and extended my arms calling thee either tenderly and quietly, or strenuously, demanding that thou shouldst rebel against the iron chains which bound thee to the earth.*  
KRISHNA.

So matters went on, and still go on, in the Christian world. But we might have hope that in the immense Brahman, Buddhist, and Confucian worlds this new scientific superstition would not establish itself, and that the Chinese, Japanese, and Hindus, once their eyes were opened to the religious fraud justifying violence, would advance directly to a recognition of the law of love inherent in humanity, and which had been so forcibly enunciated by the great Eastern teachers. But what has happened is that the scientific superstition replacing the religious one has been accepted and secured a stronger and stronger hold in the East.

In your periodical you set out as the basic principle which should guide the actions of your people the maxim that: 'Resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative, nonresistance hurts both Altruism and Egotism.'

Love is the only way to rescue humanity from all ills, and in it you too have the only method of saving your people from enslavement. In very ancient times love was proclaimed with special strength and clearness among your people to be the religious basis of human life. Love, and forcible resistance to evil-doers, involve such a mutual contradiction as to destroy utterly the whole sense and meaning of the conception of love. And what follows?

With a light heart and in the twentieth century you, an adherent of a religious people, deny their law, feeling convinced of your scientific enlightenment and your right to do so, and you repeat (do not take this amiss) the amazing stupidity indoctrinated in you by the advocates of the use of violence—the enemies of truth, the servants first of theology and then of science—your European teachers.

You say that the English have enslaved your people and hold them in subjection because the latter have not resisted resolutely enough and have not met force by force.

But the case is just the opposite. If the English have enslaved the people of India it is just because the latter recognized, and still recognize, force as the fundamental principle of the social order. In accord with that principle they submitted to their little rajahs, and on their behalf struggled against one another, fought the Europeans, the English, and are now trying to fight with them again.

A commercial company enslaved a nation comprising two hundred millions. Tell this to a man free from superstition and he will fail to grasp what these words mean. What does it mean that thirty thousand men, not athletes but rather weak and ordinary people, have subdued two hundred million vigorous, clever, capable, and freedom-loving people? Do not the figures make it clear that it is not the English who have enslaved the Indians, but the Indians who have enslaved themselves?

When the Indians complain that the English have enslaved them it is as if drunkards complained that the spirit-dealers who have settled among them have enslaved them. You tell them that they might give up drinking, but they reply that they are so accustomed to it that they cannot abstain, and that they must have alcohol to keep up their energy. Is it not the same thing with the millions of people who submit to thousands' or even to hundreds, of others—of their own or other nations?

If the people of India are enslaved by violence it is only because they themselves live and have lived by violence,

and do not recognize the eternal law of love inherent in humanity.

*Pitiful and foolish is the man who seeks what he already has, and does not know that he has it. Yes, Pitiful and foolish is he who does not know the bliss of love which surrounds him and which I have given him.*

KRISHNA.

As soon as men live entirely in accord with the law of love natural to their hearts and now revealed to them, which excludes all resistance by violence, and therefore hold aloof from all participation in violence-as soon as this happens, not only will hundreds be unable to enslave millions, but not even millions will be able to enslave a single individual. Do not resist the evil-doer and take no part in doing so, either in the violent deeds of the administration, in the law courts, the collection of taxes, or above all in soldiering, and no one in the world will be able to enslave you.

## VI

*O ye who sit in bondage and continually seek and pant for freedom, seek only for love. Love is peace in itself and peace which gives complete satisfaction. I am the key that opens the portal to the rarely discovered land where contentment alone is found.* KRISHNA.

What is now happening to the people of the East as of the West is like what happens to every individual when he passes from childhood to adolescence and from youth to manhood. He loses what had hitherto guided his life and lives without direction, not having found a new standard suitable to his age, and so he invents all sorts of occupations, cares, distractions, and stupefactions to divert his attention from the misery and senselessness of his life. Such a condition may last a long time.

When an individual passes from one period of life to another a time comes when he cannot go on in senseless activity and excitement as before, but has to understand that although he has outgrown what before used to direct him, this does not mean that he must live without any reasonable guidance, but rather that he must formulate for himself an understanding of life corresponding to his age, and having elucidated it must be guided by it. And in the same way a similar time must come in the growth and development of humanity. I believe that such a time has now arrived-not in the sense that it has come in the year 1908, but that the inherent contradiction of human life has now reached an extreme degree of tension: on the one side there is the consciousness of the beneficence of the law of love, and on the other the existing order of life which has for centuries occasioned an empty, anxious, restless, and troubled mode of life, conflicting as it does with the law of love and built on the use of violence. This contradiction must be faced, and the solution will evidently not be favourable to the outlived law of violence, but to the truth which has dwelt in the hearts of men from remote antiquity: the truth that the law of love is in accord with the nature of man.

But men can only recognize this truth to its full extent when they have completely freed themselves from all religious and scientific superstitions and from all the consequent misrepresentations and sophistical distortions by which its recognition has been hindered for centuries.

To save a sinking ship it is necessary to throw overboard the ballast, which though it may once have been needed would now cause the ship to sink. And so it is with the scientific superstition which hides the truth of their welfare from mankind. In order that men should embrace the truth-not in the vague way they did in childhood, nor in the one-sided and perverted way presented to them by their religious and scientific teachers, but embrace it as their highest law-the complete liberation of this truth from all

and every superstition (both pseudo-religious and pseudo-scientific) by which it is still obscured is essential: not a partial, timid attempt, reckoning with traditions sanctified by age and with the habits of the people - not such as was effected in the religious sphere by Guru-Nanak, the founder of the sect of the Sikhs, and in the Christian world by Luther, and by similar reformers in other religions-but a fundamental cleansing of religious consciousness from all ancient religious and modern scientific superstitions.

If only people freed themselves from their beliefs in all kinds of Ormuzds, Brahmas, Sabbaoths, and their incarnation as Krishnas and Christs, from beliefs in Paradises and Hells, in reincarnations and resurrections, from belief in the interference of the Gods in the external affairs of the universe, and above all, if they freed themselves from belief in the infallibility of all the various Vedas, Bibles, Gospels, Tripitakas, Korans, and the like, and also freed themselves from blind belief in a variety of scientific teachings about infinitely small atoms and molecules and in all the infinitely great and infinitely remote worlds, their movements and origin, as well as from faith in the infallibility of the scientific law to which humanity is at present subjected: the historic law, the economic laws, the law of struggle and survival, and so on-if people only freed themselves from this terrible accumulation of futile exercises of our lower capacities of mind and memory called the 'Sciences', and from the innumerable divisions of all sorts of histories, anthropologies, homiletics, bacteriologics, jurisprudences, cosmographies, strategies-their name is legion-and freed themselves from all this harmful, stupifying ballast-the simple law of love, natural to man, accessible to all and solving all questions and perplexities, would of itself become clear and obligatory.

## VII

*Children, look at the flowers at your feet; do not trample upon them. Look at the love in your midst and do not repudiate it. KRISHNA.*

*There is a higher reason which transcends all human minds. It is far and near. It permeates all the worlds and at the same time is infinitely higher than they.*

*A man who sees that all things are contained in the higher spirit cannot treat any being with contempt.*

*For him to whom all spiritual beings are equal to the highest there can be no room for deception or grief.*

*Those who are ignorant and are devoted to the religious rites only, are in a deep gloom, but those who are given up to fruitless meditations are in a still greater darkness.*

UPANISHADS, FROM VEDAS.

Yes, in our time all these things must be cleared away in order that mankind may escape from self-inflicted calamities that have reached an extreme intensity. Whether an Indian seeks liberation from subjection to the English, or anyone else struggles with an oppressor either of his own nationality or of another-whether it be a Negro defending himself against the North Americans; or Persians, Russians, or Turks against the Persian, Russian, or Turkish governments, or any man seeking the greatest welfare for himself and for everybody else -they do not need explanations and justifications of old religious superstitions such as have been formulated by your Vivekanandas, Baba Bharatis, and others, or in the Christian world by a number of similar interpreters and exponents of things that nobody needs; nor the innumerable scientific theories about matters not only unnecessary but for the most part harmful. (In the spiritual realm nothing is indifferent: what is not useful is harmful.) What are wanted for the Indian as for the Englishman, the Frenchman, the German, and the Russian, are not Constitutions and Revolutions, nor all sorts of Conferences and Congresses, nor the many ingenious

devices for submarine navigation and aerial navigation, nor powerful explosives, nor all sorts of conveniences to add to the enjoyment of the rich, ruling classes; nor new schools and universities with innumerable faculties of science, nor an augmentation of papers and books, nor gramophones and cinematographs, nor those childish and for the most part corrupt stupidities termed art-but one thing only is needful: the knowledge of the simple and clear truth which finds place in every soul that is not stupefied by religious and scientific superstitions-the truth that for our life one law is valid-the law of love, which brings the highest happiness to every individual as well as to all mankind. Free your minds from those overgrown, mountainous imbecilities which hinder your recognition of it, and at once the truth will emerge from amid the pseudo-religious nonsense that has been smothering it: the indubitable, eternal truth inherent in man, which is one and the same in all the great religions of the world. It will in due time emerge and make its way to general recognition, and the nonsense that has obscured it will disappear of itself, and with it will go the evil from which humanity now suffers.

*Children, look upwards with your beclouded eyes, and a world full of joy and love will disclose itself to you, a rational world made by My wisdom, the only real world. Then you will know what love has done with you, what love has bestowed upon you, what love demands from you.*  
KRISHNA.

YASNAYA POLYANA.

*December 14th, 1908.*

## GANDHI LETTERS

FROM *RECOLLECTIONS & ESSAYS BY LEO TOLSTOY*.  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS: LONDON, NEW YORK,  
TORONTO, 1937. (PP. 433-439)

### *To Gandhi.*

I HAVE just received your very interesting letter, which gave me much pleasure. God help our dear brothers and co-workers in the Transvaal! Among us, too, this fight between gentleness and brutality, between humility and love and pride and violence, makes itself ever more strongly felt, especially in a sharp collision between religious duty and the State laws, expressed by refusals to perform military service. Such refusals occur more and more often.

I wrote the 'Letter to a Hindu', and am very pleased to have it translated. The Moscow people will let you know the title of the book on Krishna. As regards 're-birth' I for my part should not omit anything, for I think that faith in a re-birth will never restrain mankind as much as faith in the immortality of the soul and in divine truth and love. But I leave it to you to omit it if you wish to. I shall be very glad to assist your edition. The translation and diffusion of my writings in Indian dialects can only be a pleasure to me.

The question of monetary payment should, I think, not arise in connexion with a religious undertaking.

I greet you fraternally, and am glad to have come in touch with you.

LEO TOLSTOY.

*(Undated, but probably written in March 1910.)*

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*To Count Leo Tolstoy, Yasnaya Polyana, Russia.*

JOHANNESBURG, 4th April 1910.



Dear Sir,

You will remember that I wrote to you from London, where I stayed in passing. As your very devoted adherent I send you together with this letter, a little book I have compiled in which I have translated my own writings from Gujarati. It is worth noting that the Indian government confiscated the original. For that reason I hastened to publish the translation. I am afraid of burdening you, but if your health permits and you have time to look through the book I need not say how much I shall value your criticism of it. At the same time I am sending you a few copies of your 'Letter to a Hindu' which you allowed me to publish. It has also been translated into one of the Indian dialects.

Your humble servant, M. K. GANDHI.

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*To Mahatma Gandhi.*

YASNAYA POLYANA. *8th May 1910.*

Dear friend,

I have just received your letter and your book, *Indian Home Rule*.

I have read the book with great interest, for I consider the question there dealt with—Passive Resistance—to be of very great importance not only for Indians but for the whole of mankind.

I cannot find your first letter, but in looking for it have come upon Doke's biography, which much attracted me and enabled me to know you and understand you better.

I am not very well at present, and therefore refrain from writing all that is in my heart about your book and about your activity in general, which I value highly. I will however do so as soon as I am better.

Your friend and brother, LEO TOLSTOY.

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*To Gandhi, Johannesburg, Transvaal, South Africa.*

KOCHETY. *7th September 1910.*

I received your journal, *Indian Opinion*, and was glad to see what it says of those who renounce all resistance by force, and I immediately felt a wish to let you know what thoughts its perusal aroused in me.

The longer I live-especially now when I clearly feel the approach of death-the more I feel moved to express what I feel more strongly than anything else, and what in my opinion is of immense importance, namely, what we call the renunciation of all opposition by force, which really simply means the doctrine of the law of love unperverted by sophistries. Love, or in other words the striving of men's souls towards unity and the submissive behaviour to one another that results therefrom, represents the highest and indeed the only law of life, as every man knows and feels in the depths of his heart (and as we see most clearly in children), and knows until he becomes involved in the lying net of worldly thoughts. This law was announced by all the philosophies- Indian as well as Chinese, and Jewish, Greek and Roman. Most clearly, I think, was it announced by Christ, who said explicitly that on it hang all the Law and the Prophets. More than that, foreseeing the distortion that has hindered its recognition and may always hinder it, he specially indicated the danger of a misrepresentation that presents itself to men living by worldly interests-namely, that they may claim a right to defend their interests by force or, as he expressed it, to repay blow by blow and recover stolen property by force, etc., etc. He knew, as all reasonable men must do, that any employment of force is incompatible with love as the highest law of life, and that as soon as the use of force appears permissible even in a single case, the law itself is immediately negated. The whole of Christian civilization, outwardly so splendid, has grown up on this strange and flagrant- partly intentional but chiefly unconscious-misunderstanding and contradiction. At bottom, however, the law of love is, and can be, no longer valid if defence by force is set up beside it. And if once the law of love is not valid, then there remains no law

except the right of might. In that state Christendom has lived for 1,900 years. Certainly men have always let themselves be guided by force as the main principle of their social order. The difference between the Christian and all other nations is only this: that in Christianity the law of love had been more clearly and definitely given than in any other religion, and that its adherents solemnly recognized it. Yet despite this they deemed the use of force to be permissible, and based their lives on violence - so that the life of the Christian nations presents a greater contradiction between what they believe and the principle on which their lives are built: a contradiction between love which should pre scribe the law of conduct, and the employment of force, recognized under various forms-such as governments, courts of justice, and armies, which are accepted as necessary and esteemed. This contradiction increased with the development of the spiritual life of Christianity and in recent years has reached the utmost tension.

The question now is, that we must choose one of two things-either to admit that we recognize no religious ethics at all but let our conduct of life be decided by the right of might; or to demand that all compulsory levying of taxes be discontinued, and all our legal and police institutions, and above all, military institutions, be abolished.

This spring, at a scripture examination in a Moscow girls' school, first their religious teacher and then an archbishop who was also present, questioned the girls on the ten commandments, especially on the sixth. After the commandments had been correctly recited the archbishop sometimes put a question, usually: 'Is it always and in every case forbidden by the law of God to kill?' And the unfortunate girls, misled by their instructor, had to answer and did answer: 'Not always, for it is permissible in war and at executions.' When, however, this customary additional question-whether it is always a sin to kill-was put to one of these unfortunate creatures (what I am telling you is not an anecdote, but actually happened and was told

me by an eyewitness) the girl coloured up and answered decidedly and with emotion - 'Always!' And despite all the customary sophistries of the archbishop, she held steadfastly to it-that to kill is under all circumstances forbidden even in the Old Testament, and that Christ has not only forbidden us to kill, but in general to do any harm to our neighbour. The archbishop, for all his majesty and verbal dexterity, was silenced, and victory remained with the girl.

Yes, we may write in the papers of our progress in mastery of the air, of complicated diplomatic relation, of various clubs, of discoveries, of all sorts of alliances, and of so-called works of art, and we can pass lightly over what that girl said. But we cannot completely silence her, for every Christian feels the same, however vaguely he may do so. Socialism, Communism, Anarchism' Salvation Armies, the growth of crime, freedom from toil, the increasingly absurd luxury of the rich and increased misery of the poor, the fearfully rising number of suicides-are all indications of that inner contradiction which must and will be resolved. And, of course, resolved in such a manner that the law of love will be recognized and all reliance on force abandoned. Your work in the Transvaal, which to us seems to be at the end of the earth, is yet in the centre of our interest and supplies the most weighty practical proof, in which the world can now share, and not only the Christian but all the peoples of the world can participate.

I think it will please you to hear that here in Russia, too, a similar movement is rapidly attracting attention, and refusals of military service increase year by year. However small as yet is with you the number of those who renounce all resistance by force, and with us the number of men who refuse any military service-both the one and the other can say: God is with us, and God is mightier than man.

In the confession of Christianity-even a Christianity deformed as is that taught among us-and a simultaneous belief in the necessity of armies and preparations to

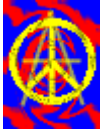
slaughter on an ever-increasing scale, there is an obvious contradiction that cries to heaven, and that sooner or later, but probably quite soon, must appear in the light of day in its complete nakedness. That, however, will either annihilate the Christian religion, which is indispensable for the maintenance of the State, or it will sweep away the military and all the use of force bound up with it-which the State needs no less. All governments are aware of this contradiction, your British as much as our Russian, and therefore its recognition will be more energetically opposed by the governments than any other activity inimical to the State, as we in Russia have experienced and as is shown by the articles in your magazine. The governments know from what direction the greatest danger threatens them, and are on guard with watchful eyes not merely to preserve their interests but actually to fight for their very existence.  
Yours etc., LEO TOLSTOY.

# LAST MESSAGE TO MANKIND

Leo Tolstoy

1909

From: Tolstoy: On Christianity and Morality  
(<http://www.myspot.org/tolstoy/index.html>)



<http://www.jtrapp.com/>

**Written for the 18th International Peace Congress held  
at Stockholm in 1909:**

Dear Brothers,

We have met here to fight against war. War, the thing for the sake of which all the nations of the earth - millions and millions of people - place at the uncontrolled disposal of a few men or sometimes only one man, not merely milliards of rubles, talers, francs or yen (representing a very large share of their labor), but also their very lives.

And now we, a score of private people gathered from the various ends of the earth, possessed of no special privileges and above all having no power over anyone, intend to fight - and as we wish to fight we also wish to conquer - this immense power not only of one government but of all governments, which have at their disposal these milliards of money and millions of soldiers and who are well aware that the exceptional position of those who for the governments rests on the army alone: the army which has a meaning and a purpose against which we wish to fight and which we wish to abolish.

For us to struggle, the forces being so unequal, must appear insane. But if we consider our opponent's means of strife and our own, it is not our intention to fight that will seem absurd, but that the thing we mean to fight will still exist. They have millions of money and millions of obedient soldiers; we have only one thing, but that is the most powerful thing in the world - Truth.

Therefore, insignificant as our forces may appear in comparison with those of our opponents, our victory is as sure as the victory of the light of the rising sun over the darkness of night.

Our victory is certain, but on one condition only - that when uttering the truth we utter it all, without compromise, concession, or modification. The truth so simple, so clear, so evident, so incumbent not only on Christians but on all reasonable men, that it is only necessary to speak it out in its full significance for it to be irresistible.

The truth in its full meaning lies in what was said thousands of years ago (in the law accepted among us as the Law of God) in four words: "Thou shalt not kill." The truth is that man may not and should not in any circumstances or under any pretext kill his fellow man.

The truth is so evident, so binding, and so generally acknowledged, that it is only necessary to put it clearly before men for the evil called war to become quite impossible.

And so I think that if we who are assembled here at this Peace Congress should, instead of clearly and definitely voicing this truth, address ourselves to the governments with various proposals for lessening the evils of war or gradually diminishing its frequency, we should be like men who having in their hand the key to a door, should try to break through walls they know to be too strong for them.

Before us are millions of armed men, ever more and more efficiently armed and trained for more and more rapid slaughter. We know that these millions of people have no wish to kill their fellows and for the most part do not even

know why they are forced to do that repulsive work, and that they are weary of their position of subjection and compulsion; we know that the murders committed from time to time by these men are committed by order of the governments; and we know that the existence of the governments depends on the armies.

Can we then who desire the abolition of war, find nothing more conducive to our aim than to propose to the governments which exist only by the aid of armies and consequently by war - measures which would destroy war? Are we to propose to the governments that they should destroy themselves?

The governments will listen willingly to any speeches of that kind, knowing that such discussions will neither destroy war nor undermine their own power, but will only conceal yet more effectively what must be concealed if wars and armies and themselves in control of armies are to continue to exist.

'But', I shall be told, 'this is anarchism; people never have lived without governments and States, and therefore governments and States and military forces defending them are necessary for the existence of nations.'

But leaving aside the question of whether the life of Christian and other nations is possible without armies and wars to defend their governments and States, or even supposing it to be necessary for their welfare that they should slavishly submit to institutions called governments (consisting of people they do not personally know), and that it is necessary to yield up the produce of their labor to these institutions and fulfill all their demands - including the murder of their neighbors - granting them all that, there yet remains in our world an unsolved difficulty.

This difficulty lies in the impossibility of making the Christian faith (which those who form the governments profess with particular emphasis) accord with armies composed of Christians trained to slay. However much you may pervert the Christian teaching, however much you may



hide its main principles, its fundamental teaching is the love of God and one's neighbor; of God - that is the highest perfection of virtue, and of one's neighbor - that is all men without distinction. And therefore it would seem inevitable that we must repudiate one of the two, either Christianity is love of God and one's neighbor, or the State with its armies and wars.

Perhaps Christianity may be obsolete, and when choosing between the two - Christianity and love of the State and murder - the people of our time will conclude that the existence of the State and murder is more important than Christianity, we must forgo Christianity and retain only what is important: the State and murder.

That may be so - at least people may think and feel so. But in that case they should say so! They should openly admit that people in our time have ceased to believe in what the collective wisdom of mankind has said, and what is said by the Law of God they profess: have ceased to believe in what is written indelibly on the heart of each man, and must now believe only in what is ordered by various people who by accident or birth have happened to become emperors and kings, or by various intrigues and elections have become presidents or members of senates and parliaments - even if those orders include murder. That is what they ought to say!

But it is impossible to say it; and yet one of these two things has to be said. If it is admitted that Christianity forbids murder, both armies and governments become impossible. And if it is admitted that government acknowledges the lawfulness of murder and denies Christianity, no one will wish to obey a government that exists merely by its power to kill. And besides, if murder is allowed in war it must be still more allowable when a people seek its rights in a revolution. And therefore the governments, being unable to say either one thing or the other, are anxious to hid from their subjects the necessity of solving the dilemma.

And for us who are assembled here to counteract the evil of war, if we really desire to attain our end, only one thing is necessary: namely to put that dilemma quite clearly and definitely both to those who form governments and to the masses of the people who compose the army.

To do that we must not only clearly and openly repeat the truth we all know and cannot help knowing - that man should not slay his fellow man - but we must also make it clear that no considerations can destroy the demand made by the truth on people in the Christian world.

Therefore I propose that our Meeting draw up and publish an appeal to all men, and especially to the Christian nations, in which we clearly and definitely express what everybody knows, but hardly anyone says: namely war is not - as most people assume - a good and laudable affair, but that like all murder, it is a vile and criminal business not only for those who voluntarily choose a military career but for those who submit to it from avarice, or fear of punishment.

With regard to those who voluntarily choose a military career, I would propose to state clearly and definitely that notwithstanding all the pomp, glitter, and general approval with which it is surrounded, it is a criminal and shameful activity; and that the higher the position a man holds in the military profession the more criminal and shameful his occupation.

In the same way with regard to men of the people who are drawn into military service by bribes or by threats of punishments, I propose to speak clearly about the gross mistake they make - contrary to their faith, morality and common sense - when they consent to enter the army; contrary to their faith because when they enter the ranks of murderers contrary to the Law of God which they acknowledge; contrary to morality, because for pay or from fear of punishment they agreed to what in their souls they know to be wrong; and contrary to common sense, because if they enter the army and war breaks out they risk

having to suffer any consequences, bad or worse than those they are threatened with if they refuse. Above all they act contrary to common sense in that they join that caste of people which deprives them of freedom and compels them to be soldiers.

With reference to both classes I propose in this appeal to express clearly the thought that for men of true enlightenment, who are therefore free from the superstition of military glory, (and their number is growing every day) the military profession and calling notwithstanding all the efforts to hide its real meaning, is as shameful a business as the executioner's and even more so. For the executioner only holds himself in readiness to kill those who have been adjudged to be harmful and criminal, while a soldier promises to kill all who he is told to kill, even though they may be the dearest to him or the best of men.

Humanity in general, and our Christian humanity in particular, has reached a stage of such acute contradiction between its moral demands and the existing social order, that a change has become inevitable, and a change not in society's moral demand which are immutable, but in the social order which can be altered. The demand for a different social order, evoked by that inner contradiction which is so clearly illustrated by our preparations for murder, becomes more and more insistent every year and every day.

The tension which demands that alteration has reached such a degree that, just as sometimes only a slight shock is required to change a liquid into a solid body, so perhaps with a slight effort or even a single word may be needed to change the cruel and irrational life of our time - with its divisions, armaments and armies - into a reasonable life in keeping with the consciousness of contemporary humanity. Every such effort, every such word, may be the shock which will instantly solidify the super cooled liquid. Why should not our gathering be the shock?

In Andersen's fairy tale, when the King went in triumphal procession through the streets of the town and all the people were delighted with his beautiful new clothes, a word from a child who said what everybody knew but had not said, changed everything. He said: 'He has nothing on!' and the spell was broken, and the king became ashamed and all those who had been assuring themselves that they saw him wearing beautiful new clothes perceived that he was naked!

We must say the same. We must say what everybody knows but does not venture to say.

We must say that by whatever name people may call murder - murder always remains murder and a criminal and shameful thing. And it is only necessary to say that clearly, definitely, and loudly, as we can say it here, and men will cease to see what they thought they saw, and will see what is really before their eyes.

They will cease to see the service for their country, the heroism of war, military glory, and patriotism, and will see what exists: the naked, criminal business of murder!

And if people see that, the same thing will happen as in the fairy tale: those who do the criminal thing will feel ashamed, and those who assure themselves that they do not see the criminality of murder will perceive it and cease to be murderers.

But how will nations defend themselves against their enemies, how will they maintain internal order, and how can nations live without an army?

What form of life men will take after they repudiate murder we do not and cannot know; but one thing is certain: that it is more natural for men to be guided by reason and conscience with which they are endowed, than to submit slavishly to people who arrange wholesale murders; and that therefrom the form of social order assumed by the lives of those who are guided in their actions not by violence based on threats of murder, but by reason and conscience,

will in any case be no worse than that under which they now live.

That is all I want to say. I shall be sorry if it offends or grieves anyone or evokes any ill feeling. But for me, a man eighty years old, expecting to die at any moment, it would be shameful and criminal not to speak out the whole truth as I understand it - the truth which, as I firmly believe, is alone capable of relieving mankind from the incalculable ills produced by war.

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