

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

Christianity Not As A Mystical Teaching But As A New
Concept of Life

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 1 of 13]

[Dear Soul, This book has been edited to begin with Chapter Five instead of the Author's original Preface and Chapters One through Four. Chapters One through Four are essentially a defense of Tolstoy's previous book on Christianity, entitled My Religion, a fascinating book which emphasizes the importance of adhering to the teachings of Jesus Christ. For one who is already familiar with that previous book, the Author's original order is not — in the view of the editor — most effective. Tolstoy's opening chapters, which are still good to read, are included after Chapter Twelve.

Peace be with you, Alan Lewis Silva, editor]

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” John 8: 32

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” Matthew 10: 28

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men”
1 Corinthians 7: 23

CHAPTER FIVE There are many causes for the failure to comprehend Christ's teaching. One cause lies in this, that men assume that they understand the teaching, when they decide, as the churchmen do, that it was transmitted to us in a supernatural manner; or, as the scientific men do, that they understand it, when they have studied a part of those external phenomena in which it is expressed. Another cause of a failure to comprehend lies in the misconceptions as to the impracticability of the teaching and as to this, that it ought to give way to the teaching about the love of humanity; but the chief cause which has engendered all these misconceptions is this, that Christ's teaching is considered to be such as can be accepted, or not, without changing one's life. The men who are accustomed to the existing order of things, who love it and are afraid to change it, try to comprehend the teaching as a collection of revelations and rules, which may be accepted, without changing their lives, whereas Christ's teaching is not merely a teaching about rules which a man may follow, but the elucidation of a new meaning of life, which determines the whole, entirely new activity of humanity for the period upon which it is entering. Human life moves, passes, like the life of the individual, and every age has its corresponding life-conception, and this life-conception is inevitably accepted by men. Those men who do not consciously accept the life-conception proper for their age are brought to it unconsciously. What takes place with the change of views on life in the case of individuals, takes place also with the change of the views on life in the case of nations and of all humanity. If a man with a family continues to be guided in his activity by a childish comprehension of life, his life will become so hard for him that he will involuntarily seek another comprehension of life, and will gladly accept the one which is proper for his age. The same is now taking place in our humanity in the transition from the pagan conception of life to the

Christian, which is now going on. The social man of our time is brought by life itself to the necessity of renouncing the pagan conception of life, which is no longer proper for the present age of humanity, and of submitting to the demands of the Christian teaching, the truths of which, no matter how distorted and misinterpreted they may be, are still known to him and alone furnish a solution to those contradictions in which he is losing himself. If the demands of the Christian teaching seem strange and even perilous to the man of the social life-conception, the demands of the social teaching anciently seemed just as incomprehensible and perilous to a savage, when he did not yet fully comprehend them and was unable to foresee their consequences. "It is irrational for me to sacrifice my peace or even my life," says the savage, "in order to defend something incomprehensible, intangible, conventional — the family, the race, the country, and, above all else, it is dangerous to give myself over to the disposition of a foreign power." But the time came when the savage, on the one hand, comprehended, however dimly, the significance of the social life, the significance of its prime mover — the public approval or condemnation — glory; on the other hand, when the sufferings of his personal life became so great that he no longer continued to believe in the truth of his former conception of life, and accepted the social, the political teaching and submitted to it. The same now takes place with the social, the political man. "It is irrational for me," says the social man, "to sacrifice my good, the good of my family, my country, for the fulfilment of the conditions of some higher law, which demands from me the renunciation of the most natural and the best sentiments of love for myself, my family, my country, and, above all, it is dangerous to reject the security of life, which is given by the political structure." But the time comes when, on the one hand, the dim consciousness in his soul of a higher law of love for God and for his neighbor, and, on the other, the

sufferings which arise from the contradictions of life, compel him to reject the social life-conception and to accept the new, Christian conception of life, which is offered to him, and which solves all the contradictions and removes the sufferings of his life. And this time has now come. To us, who thousands of years ago experienced the transition from the animal, personal life-conception to the social one, it seems that that transition was necessary and natural, and this, the one through which we have been passing these eighteen hundred years, is arbitrary, unnatural, and terrible. But that only seems so to us, because the other transition is already accomplished, and its activity has already passed into the subconscious, while the present transition is not yet accomplished, and we have to accomplish it consciously. The social life-conception entered into the consciousness of men through centuries and millenniums, passed through several forms, and has now passed for humanity into the sphere of the subconscious, which is transmitted through heredity, education, and habit, and so it seems natural to us. But five thousand years ago it seemed to men just as unnatural and terrible as now the Christian teaching seems to us in its true meaning. It now seems to us that the demands of the Christian teaching for a universal brotherhood, abolition of nationalities, absence of property, the apparently so strange nonresistance to evil, are impossible demands. But just so strange, thousands of years ago, seemed the demands, not only of the state, but also of the family, as, for example, the demand that the parents should support their children, and the young — the old, and that husband and wife should be true to one another. Still more strange, even senseless, seemed the political demands — that the citizens should submit to the powers that be, pay taxes, go to war in the defence of their country, and so forth. It now seems to us that all such demands are simple, intelligible, natural, and have nothing mystical or even strange about them; but

five or three thousand years ago, these demands seemed impossible. The social life-conception served as a basis for religions for the very reason that, when it manifested itself to men, it seemed to them quite unintelligible, mystical, and supernatural. Now, since we have outlived this phase of the life of humanity, we understand the rational causes of the union of men in families, communes, states; but in antiquity the demands for such a union were manifested in the name of the supernatural, and were confirmed by it. The patriarchal religion deified the families, races, nations: the political religions deified kings and states. Even now the majority of the men of little culture, such as our peasants, who call the Tsar an earthly God, submit to the social laws, not from a rational consciousness of their necessity, not because they have a conception of the idea of the state, but from a religious sentiment. Even so now the Christian teaching represents itself to the men of the social, or pagan, world-conception in the form of a supernatural religion, whereas in reality there is in it nothing mysterious, or mystical, or supernatural; it is nothing but the teaching about life, which corresponds to that stage of the material development, to that age, in which humanity is, and which must therefore inevitably be accepted by it. The time will come, and is already at hand, when the Christian foundations of life, equality, brotherhood of men, community of possession, non-resistance to evil, will become as natural and as simple as the foundations of the family, the social, and the political life now appear to us. Neither man nor humanity can in their motion turn back. The social, family, and political life-conceptions have been outlived by men, and it is necessary to go ahead and accept the higher life-conception, which indeed is being done now. This motion takes place from two sides, consciously, in consequence of spiritual causes, and unconsciously, in consequence of material causes. Just as the individual seldom changes his life merely in accordance

with the indications of reason, but as a rule, in spite of the new meaning and the new aims indicated by reason, continues to live his former life and changes it only when his life becomes entirely contradictory to his consciousness, and, therefore, agonizing, so also humanity, having come through its religious guides to know the new meaning of life, the new aims, toward which it must tend, even after this knowledge continues for a long time, in the case of the majority of men, to live the previous life, and is guided to the acceptance of a new life-conception only through the impossibility of continuing the former life. In spite of the demands for the change of life, as cognized and expressed by the religious guides and accepted by the wisest men, the majority of men, in spite of the religious relation to these guides, that is, the faith in their teaching, continue in the more complex life to be guided by the previous teaching, just as a man of a family would act, if, knowing how he ought to live at his age, he should from habit and frivolity continue to live a child's life. It is this that takes place in the matter of the transition of humanity from one age to another, such as is now going on. Humanity has outgrown its social, political age, and has entered upon a new one. It knows the teaching which ought to be put at the foundation of the life of this new age, but from inertia continues to hold on to the previous forms of life. From this lack of correspondence between the life-conception and the practice of life there arises a series of contradictions and sufferings, which poison our life and demand its change. We need only to compare the practice of life with its theory, in order that we may be frightened at the crying contradiction of the conditions of life and of our consciousness, in which we live. Our whole life is one solid contradiction to everything we know and consider necessary and right. This contradiction is in everything — in the economic, the political, the international life. As though forgetting what we know, and for a time putting

aside what we believe in (we cannot help but believe, because this constitutes our only foundations of life), we do everything contrary to what our conscience and our common sense demand of us. In economic, political, and international relations we are guided by those foundations which were useful to men three and five thousand years ago, and which directly contradict our present consciousness and those conditions of life in which we now are. It was well enough for a man of antiquity to live amidst a division of men into slaves and masters, when he believed that this division was from God, and that it could not be otherwise. But is a similar division possible in our day? A man of the ancient world could consider himself in the right to use the benefits of this world to the disadvantage of other men, causing them to suffer for generations, because he believed that men are born of various breeds, noble and base, of the generation of Japheth and of Ham. Not only the greatest sages of the world, the teachers of humanity, Plato, Aristotle, justified the existence of slaves and proved the legality of it, but even three centuries ago men who wrote of the imaginary society of the future, of Utopia, could not imagine it without slaves. The men of antiquity, and even of the Middle Ages, believed, believed firmly, that men are not equal, that only the Persians, only the Greeks, only the Romans, only the French were real men. But those men who in our time champion aristocratism and patriotism do not believe, cannot believe, in what they say. We all know, and we cannot help but know, even if we have never heard or read this thought clearly expressed and have never expressed it ourselves, we, having imbibed this consciousness, which is borne in the Christian atmosphere, know with our whole heart, and we cannot help but know, that fundamental truth of the Christian teaching, that we all are the sons of one Father, all of us, no matter where we may live or what language we may speak — that we are all brothers and are subject only to the law of love, which by

our common Father is implanted in our hearts. No matter what the manner of thought and degree of culture of a man of our time may be, be he a cultured liberal of any shade whatever, be he a philosopher of any camp, be he a scientific man, an economist, of any school, be he an uncultured, even a religious man of any confession of faith — every man of our time knows that all men have the same right to life and to the benefits of this world, that no man is better or worse than any one else, that all men are equal. Everybody knows this with absolute certainty and with his whole being, and at the same time not only sees all about him the division of men into two castes: one, which is working, is oppressed, in need, in suffering, and the other, idle, oppressing, and living in luxury and pleasure — he not only sees this, but involuntarily from one side or another takes part in this division of men, which his reason rejects, and he cannot help but suffer from the consciousness of such a contradiction and from participation in it. Be he master or slave, a man of our time cannot help but experience a constant agonizing contradiction between his consciousness and reality, and sufferings which arise from it. The working masses, the great majority of people, suffering from the constant, all-absorbing, senseless, dawnless labor and sufferings, suffer most of all from the consciousness of the crying contradiction between what exists and what ought to be, as the result of everything which is professed by them and by those who have placed them in this position and maintain them in it. They know that they are in slavery, and are perishing in want and darkness, in order to serve the lust of the minority, which keeps them in slavery. They know this and give expression to it. And this consciousness not only increases their sufferings, but even forms the essence of their sufferings. The ancient slave knew that he was a slave by nature, but our workman, feeling himself to be a slave, knows that he should not be a slave, and so experiences the torments of

Tantalus, eternally wishing for and not receiving what not only could, but even should be. The sufferings of the working classes which result from the contradiction between what is and what ought to be, are increased tenfold by the envy and hatred which result from them. A workman of our time, even though his work may be lighter than that of an ancient slave and he may have attained an eight-hour work-day and a wage of three dollars per day, will not cease suffering, because, in manufacturing articles which he will not make use of, and working, not for himself and at his pleasure, but from necessity, for whims of luxurious and idle people in general and for the enrichment of one man, the rich owner of the factory or plant, in particular, he knows that all this is taking place in a world in which not only they have accepted the scientific proposition that only work is wealth, that the exploitation of other men's labor is unjust, illegal, amenable to punishment by law, but also they profess Christ's teaching, according to which all are brothers, and a man's worth and merit consists only in serving his neighbor, and not in making use of him. He knows all this, and he cannot help but suffer torments from this crying contradiction between what ought to be and what actually exists. "From all the data and from everything which I know all men profess," the laboring man says to himself, "I ought to be free, equal to all other men, and loved; but I am a slave — I am humiliated and hated." And he himself hates and seeks for means to save himself from this position, to throw off his foe, who is pressing down on him, and himself to get on top of him. They say, "The working men are not right in their desire to take the place of the capitalists, nor the poor in their desire to take the place of the rich." This is not true: the working men and the poor would be in the wrong, if they wished for it in a world in which slaves and masters, the rich and the poor, are established by God; but they wish for it in a world in which is professed the Gospel teaching,

the first proposition of which is the filial relation of men to God, and so the brotherhood and equality of all men. And no matter how much men may try, it is impossible to conceal the fact that one of the first conditions of a Christian life is love, not in words, but in work. In a still greater contradiction and in still greater sufferings lives the man of the so-called cultured class. Every such man, if he believes in anything, believes, if not in the brotherhood of men, at least in humanitarianism; if not in humanitarianism, at least in justice; if not in justice, at least in science — and with all that knows that his whole life is built on conditions which are quite the reverse of all that, of all the tenets of Christianity, and humanity, and justice, and science. He knows that all the habits in which he is brought up, and the deprivation of which would be a torment for him, can be gratified only by the painful, often perilous labor of oppressed working men, that is, by the most palpable, coarse violation of those principles of Christianity, humanitarianism, justice, and even science (I mean the demands of political economy), which he professes. He professes the principles of brotherhood, humanitarianism, justice, science, and yet lives in such a way that he needs that oppression of the laboring men which he denies, and even in such a way that his whole life is an exploitation of this oppression, and not only does he live in this way, but also he directs his activity to the maintenance of this order of things, which is directly opposed to everything in which he believes. We are all brothers, and yet every morning my brother or my sister carries out my chamberpot. We are all brothers, and I need every morning my cigar, sugar, a mirror, and so forth, objects in the manufacture of which my brothers and my sisters, who are my equals, have been losing their health, and I employ these articles and even demand them. We are all brothers, and I live by working in a bank, or in a business house, or a shop, in order to make all the wares

which my brothers need more expensive for them. We are all brothers, and yet I live by receiving a salary for arraigning, judging, and punishing a thief or a prostitute, whose existence is conditioned by the whole composition of my life, and who, I know myself, ought not to be punished, but corrected. We are all brothers, and I live by receiving a salary for collecting the taxes from poor working men, to be used for the luxury of the idle and the rich. We are all brothers, and I receive a salary for preaching to people what is supposed to be the Christian religion, in which I do not believe myself, and which deprives them of the possibility of finding out the real faith. I receive a salary as a priest, a bishop, for deceiving people in what is the most important matter for them. We are all brothers, but I give to the poor my pedagogical, medical, literary labors for money only. We are all brothers, but I receive a salary for preparing myself to commit murder, studying how to kill, or making a gun, powder, fortresses. The whole life of our higher classes is one solid contradiction, which is the more agonizing, the more sensitive man's conscience is. The man with a sensitive conscience cannot help but suffer, if he lives this life. There is one means by which he can free himself from this suffering — it consists in drowning his conscience; but even if such men succeed in drowning their conscience, they cannot drown their terror. Insensitive people of the higher, the oppressing classes, and those who have drowned their consciences, if they do not suffer from their consciences, suffer from fear and hatred. Nor can they help but suffer. They know of that hatred against them which exists, and cannot help but exist, among the laboring classes; and they know that the working men know that they are deceived and outraged, and they are beginning to organize for the purpose of throwing off the oppression and retaliating upon the oppressors. The higher classes see the unions, strikes, the First of May, and they feel the calamity which is threatening them, and this terror poisons their life.

They feel the calamity which is threatening them, and the terror which they experience passes into a feeling of self-defence and hatred. They know that if they weaken for a moment in their struggle with the slaves oppressed by them, they will themselves perish, because the slaves are enraged, and this rage is growing with every day of the oppression. The oppressors cannot stop oppressing, even if they should wish to do so. They know that they themselves will perish, the moment they stop or even weaken in their oppressions. And they do oppress, in spite of their seeming concern for the welfare of the laboring people, for an eight-hour day, for the prohibition on employing children and women, for pensions and rewards. All this is a deception or a provision for eliciting work from the slave; but the slave remains a slave, and the master, who could not live without the slave, is less than ever prepared to free him. The ruling classes are, in relation to the workingmen, in the position of a man who is astride a man whom he holds down and does not let go of, not so much because he does not want to let go of him, as because he knows that he need but for a moment let go of the subdued man, and the subdued man will cut his throat, because the subdued man is enraged and has a knife in his hand. And so, whether they be sensitive or not, our wealthy classes cannot enjoy the good things which they have taken from the poor, as the ancients did, who believed in their right. Their whole life and all their pleasures are poisoned by rebukes of conscience or by terror. Such is the economical contradiction. More striking still is the political contradiction. All men are above all else educated in the habits of obedience to the laws of the state. The whole life of the men of our time is determined by the law of the state. A man marries or gets a divorce, educates his children, even professes a faith (in many states) in accordance with the law. What is this law, which determines the whole life of men? Do the men believe in this law? Do they consider it to be true? Not in the least. In

the majority of cases, the men of our time do not believe in the justice of this law, despise it, and yet obey it. It was all very well for the men of antiquity to carry out their laws. They believed firmly that their law (which for the most part was also religious) was the one true law which all men must obey. But we? We know, and we cannot help but know, that the law of our state is not only not the one eternal law, but that it is only one of many laws of various countries, equally imperfect, and frequently and palpably false and unjust, and widely discussed in the newspapers. It was all very well for a Jew to submit to his laws, when he had no doubt but that they were written by God's finger; or, for a Roman, when he thought that the nymph Egeria had written his laws; or even when they believed that the kings who gave the laws were the anointed of the Lord, or even that the legislative bodies had a desire to find the best laws, and were able to do so. But we know how laws are made; we have all been behind the scenes; we all know that laws are the results of greed, deception, the struggle of parties — that in them there is and there can be no true justice. And so the men of our time cannot believe that obedience to civil or political laws would satisfy the demands of the rationality of human nature. Men have known for a long time that it is not sensible to obey a law of the correctness of which there can be any doubt, and so they cannot help but suffer, if they obey a law the rationality and obligatoriness of which they do not acknowledge. A man cannot help but suffer, when his whole life is determined in advance by laws which he must obey under the menace of punishment, and in the rationality and justice of which he does not believe, and the unnaturalness, cruelty, injustice of which he clearly recognizes. We recognize the uselessness of custom-houses and import duties, and we must pay the duties; we recognize the uselessness of the expenses for the support of royal courts and many governmental offices; we

recognize the harmfulness of the church propaganda, and we must contribute to the support of these institutions; we recognize the cruelty and unscrupulousness of the penalties imposed by courts of justice, and we must take part in them; we recognize the irregularity and harmfulness of the distribution of land-ownership, and we must submit to it; we do not recognize the indispensableness of armies and of war, and must bear terrible burdens for the maintenance of armies and the waging of wars, and so forth. But these contradictions are as nothing in comparison with the contradiction which has now arisen among men in their international relations, and which, under threat of ruining both human reason and human life, demands a solution. This is the contradiction between the Christian conscience and war. We are all Christian nations, who live the same spiritual life, so that every good, fruitful thought, which springs up in one corner of the earth, is at once communicated to the whole Christian world, evoking similar sensations of joy and pride, independently of nationality; we, who not only love the thinkers, benefactors, poets, scholars of other nations, but also pride ourselves on the exploit of a Damien, as though it were our own; we, who just love the men of other nationalities — the French, the Germans, the Americans, the English; we, who not only respect their qualities, but rejoice when we meet them, who give them a smile of recognition, who not only could not regard a war with them as something to be proud of, but who could not even think without horror that any disagreement may arise between these men and us — we are all called to take part in murder, which must inevitably take place, tomorrow, if not today. It was all very well for a Jew, a Greek, a Roman not only to defend the independence of his nation by means of murder, but by the means of murder also to cause other nations to submit to him, for he believed firmly that his nation was the one true, good, kind nation, which was loved by God, and that all the other

nations were Philistines, barbarians. Even the men of the Middle Ages and the men of the end of the last and the beginning of this century could have believed so. But we, no matter how much we may be teased to do so, can no longer believe in this, and this contradiction is so terrible for the men of our time that it is impossible to live, if we do not destroy it. "We live in a time which is full of contradictions," Count Komárovski, professor of international law, writes in his learned treatise. In the press of all countries there is constantly shown a universal tendency toward peace, toward its necessity for all nations. In the same sense express themselves the representatives of governments, as private individuals and as official organs, in parliamentary debates, in diplomatic exchanges of opinion, and even in international treaties. At the same time, however, the governments annually increase the military forces of their countries, impose new taxes, make loans, and leave to future generations, as a legacy, the obligation to bear the blunders of the present senseless politics. What a crying contradiction between words and deeds! Of course, the governments, to justify these measures, point to the exclusively defensive character of all these expenditures and armaments, but none the less it remains a puzzle for every unbiased man, whence we are to expect attacks, since all the great powers unanimously in their politics pursue the one aim of defence. In reality this looks as though each of these powers waited every moment to be attacked by another, and these are the consequences — universal distrust and a preternatural endeavor of one power to surpass the force of the others. Such an emulation in itself increases the danger of war: the nations cannot for any length of time stand the intensified arming, and sooner or later will prefer war to all the disadvantages of the present condition and constant menace. Thus the most insignificant cause will be sufficient to make the fire of a universal war flame up in the whole of Europe. It is

incorrect to think that such a crisis can cure us of the political and economical calamities which oppress us. Experience from the wars which have been waged in recent years teaches us that every war has only sharpened the hostility of the nations, increased the burden and the unendurability of the pressure of militarism, and made the politico-economic condition of Europe more hopeless and complex. "Modern Europe keeps under arms an active army of nine millions of men," writes Enrico Ferri, "and fifteen millions of reserves, expending on them four milliards of francs per year. By arming itself more and more, it paralyzes the sources of the social and the individual welfare, and may easily be compared to a man who, to provide himself with a gun, condemns himself to anaemia, at the same time wasting all his strength for the purpose of making use of the very gun with which he is providing himself, and under the burden of which he will finally fall." The same was said by Charles Butt [sic], in his speech which he delivered in London before the Association for the Reform and Codification of the Law of Nations, July 26, 1887. After pointing out the same nine millions and over of the active armies and seventeen millions of reserves, and the enormous expenses of the governments for the support of these armies and equipments, he says: "But this forms only a small part of the actual cost, for besides the figures mentioned which constitute merely the war budgets of the nations, we have to take into account the enormous loss to society by the withdrawal of so many able-bodied men... from the occupations of productive industry, together with the prodigious capital invested in all warlike preparations and appliances, and which is absolutely unproductive.... One necessary result of the expenditure on wars and preparations for war is the steady growth of national debts.... The aggregate national debts of Europe, by far the larger proportion of which has been contracted for war purposes, amount at the present time to

£4,680,000,000....” The same Komárovski says in another place: We are living in a hard time. Everywhere do we hear complaints as to the slackness of business and industry and in general as to the bad economic conditions: people point out the hard conditions of the life of the laboring classes and the universal impoverishment of the masses. But, in spite of it, the governments, in their endeavor to maintain their independence, reach the extreme limits of madness. Everywhere they invent new taxes and imposts, and the financial oppression of the nations knows no limits. If we look at the budgets of the European states for the last one hundred years, we shall first of all be struck by their constantly progressive and rapid growth. How can we explain this extraordinary phenomenon, which sooner or later threatens us with inevitable bankruptcy? This is incontestably due to the expenditures caused by the maintenance of an army, which swallow one-third and even one-half of the budgets of the European states. What is most lamentable in connection with it is this, that no end can be foreseen to this increase of the budgets and impoverishment of the masses. What is socialism, if not a protest against this abnormal condition, in which the greater part of the population of our part of the world finds itself? “We ruin ourselves,” says Frédéric Passy, in a note read at the last Universal Peace Congress (1890), at London, “in preparing the means for taking part in the mad butcheries of the future, or in paying the interests of debts bequeathed to us by the mad and culpable butcheries of the past. We die of starvation, in order to be able to kill one another off.” Farther on, speaking of how France looks upon this subject, he says: “We believe that one hundred years after the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen it is time to recognize the rights of nations and to renounce for ever all these enterprises of force and violence, which, under the name of conquests, are real crimes against humanity, and which, whatever the ambition

of the sovereigns or the pride of the races... weaken even those who seem to profit from them." "I am always very much surprised at the way religion is carried on in this country," says Sir Wilfrid Lawson, at the same Congress. "You send a boy to the Sunday-school, and you tell him, 'My dear boy, you must love your enemies; if any boy strikes you, don't strike him again; try to reform him by loving him.' Well, the boy stays in the Sunday-school till he is fourteen or fifteen years of age, and then his friends say, 'Put him in the Army.' What has he to do in the army? Why, not to love his enemies, but whenever he sees an enemy to run him through the body with a bayonet. That is the nature of all religious teaching in this country. I do not think that that is a very good way of carrying out the precepts of religion. I think if it is a good thing for the boy to love his enemy, it is a good thing for the man to love his enemy." And farther: "The nations of Europe... keep... somewhere about 28,000,000 of armed men to settle quarrels by killing one another, instead of by arguing. That is what the Christian nations of the world are doing at this moment. It is a very expensive way also; for this publication which I saw... made out that since the year 1872 these nations had spent the almost incredible amount of £1,500,000,000 of money in preparing, and settling their quarrels by killing one another. Now it seems to me that with that state of things one of two positions must be accepted, either that Christianity is a failure, or that those who profess to expound Christianity have failed in expounding it properly." "Until our ironclads are withdrawn, and our Army disbanded, we are not entitled to call ourselves a Christian nation," says Mr. J. Jowett Wilson. In a discussion which arose in connection with the question of the obligatoriness of Christian pastors to preach against war, Rev. G.D. Bartlett said, among other things: "If I understand the Scriptures I say that men are only playing with Christianity when they ignore this question," that is,

say nothing about war. "I have lived a longish life, I have heard many sermons, and I can say without any exaggeration that I never heard universal peace recommended from the pulpit half a dozen times in my life.... Some twenty years ago I happened to stand in a drawing-room where there were forty or fifty people, and I dared to moot the proposition that war was incompatible with Christianity. They looked upon me as an arrant fanatic. The idea that we could get on without war was regarded as unmitigated weakness and folly." In the same sense spoke the Catholic Abbé Defourny: One of the first precepts of this eternal law which burns in the consciences of men is the one which forbids taking the life of one's like, shedding human blood without just cause, and without being constrained by necessity. It is one of those laws which are most indelibly engraved in the human heart.... But if it is a question of war, that is, of the shedding of human blood in torrents, the men of the present do not trouble themselves about a just cause. Those who take part in it do not think of asking themselves whether these innumerable murders are justified or not, that is, if the wars, or what goes by that name, are just or iniquitous, legal or illegal, permissible or criminal... whether they violate, or not, the primordial law which prohibits homicide and murder... without just cause. But their conscience is mute in this matter. War has ceased for them to be an act which has anything to do with morality. They have no other joy, in the fatigue and perils of the camp, than that of being victorious, and no other sadness than that of being vanquished.... Do not tell me that they serve their country. A long time ago a great genius told you these words, which have become proverbial, "Reject justice, and what are the empires but great societies of brigands?" And are not a band of brigands themselves small empires? Brigands themselves have certain laws or conventions by which they are ruled. There, too, they fight for the conquest of booty

and for the honor of the band.... The principle of the institution is this, that the European nations should stop being a nation of thieves, and the armies gangs of brigands and of pirates, and, I must add, of slaves. Yes, the armies are gangs of slaves, slaves of one or two rulers, or one or two ministers, who dispose of them tyrannically, without any other guarantee, we know, than a nominal one. What characterizes the slave is this, that he is in the hands of his master like a chattel, a tool, and no longer a man. Just so it is with a soldier, an officer, a general, who march to murder and to death without any care as to justice, by the arbitrary will of ministers.... Thus military slavery exists, and it is the worst of slaveries, particularly now, when by means of enforced military service it puts the chain about the necks of all free and strong men of the nations, in order to make of them tools of murder, killers by profession, butchers of human flesh, for this is the only opus servile for which they are chained up and trained.... Rulers, to the number of two or three... united into a secret cabinet, deliberate without control and without minutes which are intended for publicity... consequently without any guarantee for the conscience of those whom they send out to be killed. "The protests against the heavy arming do not date from our day," says Signor E.T. Moneta. Listen to what Montesquieu wrote in his time: France [Europe] will be ruined by the military. A new malady has spread through Europe; it has infected our princes and has made them keep a disproportionate number of troops. It has its exacerbations, and it necessarily becomes contagious, because, as soon as one state increases what it calls its troops, the others suddenly increase theirs, so that nothing is gained by it but the common ruin. Every monarch keeps on a war footing all the troops which he might need in case his people were in danger of being exterminated, and this state of tension, of all against all, is called peace. As a result, Europe is so ruined that if private individuals were

in the condition in which the powers are in this part of the world, the richest of them would not have anything to live on. We are poor with the riches and the commerce of the whole universe. This was written almost 150 years ago; the picture seems to be made for today. One single thing has changed — the system of government. In the time of Montesquieu, and also afterward, they used to say that the cause for the maintenance of great armies lay in the absolute kings, who waged war in the hope of finding in the conquests the means for enriching their private budgets and passing down to history in the aureole of glory. Then they said, “Oh, if the peoples could choose themselves those who have the right to refuse the governments soldiers and money, for then the politics of war would come to an end.” We have today representative governments in nearly all of Europe, and none the less the expenditures for war and for its preparation are increased in a frightful proportion. Evidently the folly of the princes has passed down to the governing classes. At the present time they no longer make war because a prince was disrespectful to a courtesan, as such things happened in the time of Louis the Fourteenth, but by exaggerating the respectable sentiments, like that of the national dignity and of patriotism, by exciting public opinion against a neighboring nation, there will come a day when it will be sufficient to say, though the information may not be true, that the ambassador of your government was not received by the chief of a state, in order to make break forth the most terrible and disastrous of wars ever seen. At the present time Europe keeps under arms more soldiers than there were in the time of Napoleon’s great wars. All citizens, with few exceptions, are obliged on our continent to pass several years in the barracks. They build fortresses, construct arsenals and ships, constantly manufacture arms, which after awhile have to be replaced by others, because science, which ought always to be directed toward the well-

being of men, unfortunately lends its aid to works of destruction, invents at every instant new engines for killing great masses of men as rapidly as possible. And in order to maintain so many soldiers and to make such vast preparations for murder, they spend yearly hundreds of millions, that is, what would be sufficient for the education of the people, for the execution of the greatest works of public utility, and would furnish the means for solving pacifically the social question. Europe, therefore, finds itself, in spite of the scientific conquests, in a condition as though it were still living in the worst times of the ferocious Middle Ages. All men complain of this situation, which is not yet war, but which is not peace either, and everybody would like to get out of it. The chiefs of governments protest that they want peace, and it is a matter of emulation between them as to who will make the most solemn pacific declarations. But on the same day, or the day following, they present to the legislative chambers propositions for increasing the standing army, and they say that it is for the purpose of maintaining and assuring peace that they take so many precautions. But it is not the kind of peace we like; nor are the nations deceived. True peace has reciprocal confidence for its basis, while these enormous preparations betray a profound distrust, if not a concealed hostility, between the states. What would we say of a man who, wishing to prove his sentiments of friendship for his neighbor, should invite him to discuss some question with him, while he himself is holding a revolver in his hand? It is this flagrant contradiction between the pacific declarations and the warlike policy of the governments that all good citizens want to see stopped at any price and as quickly as possible. They marvel why annually sixty thousand suicides are committed in Europe, and those only the ones that are recorded, which excludes Russia and Turkey; but what we ought to marvel at is not that there are so many suicides, but so few. Every man of our time, if he grasps the

contradiction between his consciousness and his life, is in a very desperate condition. To say nothing of all the other contradictions between life and consciousness, which fill the life of a man of our time, the contradiction between this last military condition, in which Europe is, and the Christian profession of Europe is enough to make a man despair, doubt the rationality of human nature, and put an end to his life in this mad and beastly world. This contradiction, the military contradiction, which is the quintessence of all others, is so terrible that a man can live and take part in it only by not thinking of it, by being able to forget it. How is this? We are all Christians — we not only profess love of one another, but actually live one common life, the pulse of our life beats with the same beats, we aid one another, learn from one another, more and more approach one another, for a common joy! In this closer union lies the meaning of the whole of life — and tomorrow some maddened head of a government will say something foolish, another man like him will answer him, and I shall go, making myself liable to be killed, to kill men who not only have done me no harm, but whom I love. And this is not a distant accident, but what we are preparing ourselves for, and it is not only a possible, but even an inevitable event. It is enough to understand this clearly, in order to lose our mind and shoot ourselves. And it is precisely what happens with special frequency among the military. We need but think for a moment, in order that we may come to the necessity of such an ending. It is only thus that we can explain that terrible tension with which the men of our time incline to intoxicate themselves with wine, tobacco, opium, cards, the reading of newspapers, travelling, all kinds of spectacles, and amusements. All these things are done like serious, important affairs. They are indeed important affairs. If there existed no external means for dimming their consciences, on-half of the men would at once shoot themselves, because to live contrary to

one's reason is a most intolerable state, and all men of our time are in such a state. All men of our time live in a constant crying contradiction between consciousness and life. These contradictions are expressed in the economic and political relations, but most startling is this contradiction between the recognition of the law of the brotherhood of men, as professed by Christians, and the necessity, in which all men are placed by the universal military service, of being prepared for hostility, for murder — of being at the same time a Christian and a gladiator.

