

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 3 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]

CHAPTER SEVEN The cultured people of the higher classes try to drown the consciousness of the necessity of changing the present order of things, which is becoming all the time clearer and clearer; but life, continuing to develop and to become more complex in the former direction and intensifying the contradictions and sufferings of men, brings them to that last limit, beyond which it is impossible to go. Such a last limit, beyond which it is impossible to go, is the universal military service. People generally think that

universal military service and the ever increased arming, which is connected with it, and the consequent increase of taxation and of state debts among all the nations, are an accidental phenomenon, due to some political condition of Europe, and may also be removed by some political considerations, without an internal change of life. This is quite erroneous. Universal military service is nothing but an inner contradiction which, having been carried to its utmost limits and having at a certain stage of material development become obvious, has stolen its way into the social concept of life. The social concept of life consists in this very fact, that the meaning of life is transferred from the individual to the aggregate, and its consequence is transferred to the tribe, the family, the race, or the state. From the social concept of life it follows that, in so far as the meaning of life is contained in the aggregate of individuals, the individuals themselves voluntarily sacrifice their interests for the interests of the aggregate. Thus it has always been in reality in the case of certain forms of the aggregate, in the family or the tribe, independently of which preceded, or in the race, or even in the patriarchal state. In consequence of the habit, which is transmitted by education and confirmed by religious influences, the individuals have without compulsion blended their interests with the interests of the aggregate and have sacrificed their own interests for the common interest. But the more societies became complex, the greater they grew, especially the more frequently conquests were the causes why men united into societies, the more frequently did individuals strive after attaining their ends to the disadvantage of the common good, and the more frequently was there felt the need of the exercise of power, that is, of violence, for the sake of curbing these unsubmissive individuals. The defenders of the social concept of life generally try to mix up the concept of power, that is, of violence, with that of spiritual influence, but this admixture

is quite impossible. A spiritual influence is an action upon a man, such that in consequence of it the very desires of a man are changed and coincide with what is demanded of him. A man who submits to a spiritual influence acts in accordance with his desires. But power, as this word is generally understood, is a means for compelling a man to act contrary to his wishes. A man who submits to power does not act as he would wish, but as the power compels him to act. Now what can compel a man to do, not what he wishes, but what he does not wish, is physical violence, or a threat of using such, that is, the deprivation of liberty, beating, maiming, or executable menaces that such actions will be carried out. In this has power always consisted. In spite of the unceasing efforts made by men in power to conceal this and to ascribe a different meaning to power, power is the application of a rope, a chain, by which a man will be bound and dragged along, or of a whip, with which he will be flogged, or of a knife, an axe, with which they will cut off his hands, feet, ears, head — an application of these means, or a threat that they will be used. Thus it was in the time of Nero and of Genghis-Khan, and thus it is even now, in the most liberal of governments, in the republic of America and in that of France. If men submit to power, they do so only because they are afraid that in case they do not submit these actions will be applied to them. All governmental demands, the payment of taxes, the execution of public works, the submission to punishments imposed upon one, exile, penalties, and so forth, to which men seem voluntarily to submit, have always had bodily violence, or a threat that such will be used, for their base. The basis of power is bodily violence. The possibility of exerting bodily violence against people is first of all given by an organization of armed men in which all the armed men act in agreement, submitting to one will. Such assemblies of armed men, who submit to one will, are formed by the army. The army has always stood at the base

of power. Power is always found in the hands of those who command an army, and all potentates — from the Roman Cæsars to the Russian and German emperors — are more than anything else concerned about the army, knowing that if the army is with them, the power will remain in their hands. It is this formation and increase of the army, which is necessary for the support of power, that has introduced a decomposing principle into the social concept of life. The end of power and its justification consists in the limitation of those men who might wish to attain their interests to the disadvantage of the interests of the aggregate. But whether the power has been acquired by the formation of a new power, by inheritance, or by election, men who possess power by means of an army have in no way differed from other men, and so have, like other men, been prone not to subordinate their interests to those of the aggregate, but, on the contrary, having in their hands the possibility of doing so, have been more prone than any one else to subordinate the common interests to their own. No matter how much men have devised means for depriving men in power of the possibility of subordinating the common interests to their own, or for entrusting the power only into the hands of infallible men, there have so far been discovered no means for doing either. All methods employed, either of divine sanction, or of election, or of heredity, or of suffrage, or of assemblies, or of parliaments, or of senates, have proved ineffective. All men know that not one of these methods attains the aim of entrusting the power into none but infallible hands, or of preventing its being misused. All know that, on the contrary, men in power, be they emperors, ministers, chiefs of police, policemen, become, by the very fact of having power, more prone to commit immoralities, that is, to subordinate the common interests to their own, than men who have no power, as indeed it could not be otherwise. The social concept of life justified itself only so long as all men

voluntarily sacrificed their interests to the common interests; but the moment there appeared men who did not voluntarily sacrifice their interests, and power was needed, that is, violence, for the purpose of limiting these individuals, the decomposing principle of power, that is, violence exerted by one set of people against another, entered into the social concept of life and the structure which is based upon it. For the power of one set of men over another to attain its end of limiting men who strove after their individual interests to the disadvantage of those of the aggregate, it was necessary to have the power vested in the hands of infallible men, as is assumed to be the case by the Chinese, and as has been assumed in the Middle Ages and at the present time by men who believe in the sanctity of anointment. It was only under this condition that the social structure received its justification. But since this does not exist, and men in power, on the contrary, by the very fact of their possession of power, are never saintly, the social structure, which is based on power, should not have any justification. Even if there was a time when, with a certain low level of morality and with the universal tendency of men to exert violence against each other, the existence of the power which limited this violence was advantageous, that is, when the violence of the state was not so great as that exerted by individuals against each other, it is impossible to overlook the fact that such a superiority of the state over its absence could not be permanent. The more the tendency of individuals to exert violence was diminished, the more the manners were softened, and the more the power was corrupted in consequence of its unrestraint, the more did this superiority grow less and less. In this change of the relation between the moral development of the masses and the corruption of the governments does the whole history of the last two thousand years consist. In the simplest form the case was like this: men lived by tribes, families, races,

and waged war, committed acts of violence, and destroyed and killed one another. These cases of violence took place on a small and on a large scale: individual struggled with individual, tribe with tribe, family with family, race with race, nation with nation. Larger, more powerful aggregates conquered the weaker, and the larger and the more powerful the aggregate of people became, the less internal violence took place in it, and the more secure did the continuance of the life of the aggregate seem to be. The members of the tribe or of the family, uniting into one aggregate, war less among themselves, and the tribe and the family do not die, like one man, but continue their existence; between the members of one state, who are subject to one power, the struggle seems even weaker, and the life of the state seems even more secure. These unions into greater and ever greater aggregates did not take place because men consciously recognized such unions as more advantageous to themselves, as is described in the story about the calling of the Varangians, but in consequence, on the one hand, of natural growth, and on the other, of struggle and conquests. When the conquest is accomplished, the power of the conqueror actually puts an end to internecine strife, and the social concept of life receives its justification. But this confirmation is only temporary. Internal strifes cease only in proportion as the pressure of the power is exerted upon individuals who heretofore have been warring against one another. The violence of internal struggle, which is destroyed by the power, is conceived in the power itself. The power is in the hands of just such people as all men are, that is, of such as are always or frequently prepared to sacrifice the common good for the sake of their personal good, with this one difference, that these men do not have the tempering force of the counteraction of the violated, and are subjected to the full corrupting influence of power. Thus the evil of violence, passing over into the hands of power, keeps

growing more and more, and in time comes to be greater than the one which it is supposed to destroy, whereas in the members of society the proneness to violence keeps weakening more and more, and the violence of power grows less and less necessary. The governmental power, even if it destroys inner violence, invariably introduces new forms of violence into the lives of men, and this grows greater and greater in proportion with its continuance and intensification. Thus, although the violence is less perceptible in the state than the violence of the members of society against one another, since it is not expressed by struggle, but by submission, the violence none the less exists and for the most part in a much more powerful degree than before. This cannot be otherwise, because the possession of power not only corrupts men, but the purpose or even unconscious tendency of the violators will consist in bringing the violated to the greatest degree of weakening, since, the weaker the violated man is, the less effort will it take to suppress him. For this reason the violence which is exerted against him who is violated keeps growing to the farthest limit which it can attain without killing the hen that is laying the golden eggs. But if this hen does not lay, as in the case of the American Indians, the Fijians, the Negroes, it is killed, in spite of the sincere protestations of the philanthropists against such a mode of action. The best confirmation of this is found in the condition of the laboring classes of our time, who in reality are nothing but subjugated people. In spite of all the hypocritical endeavors of the higher classes to alleviate the condition of the working people, all the working people of our world are subject to an invariable iron law, according to which they have only as much as they need to be always incited by necessity to work and to have the strength for working for their masters, that is, for the conquerors. Thus it has always been. In proportion with the duration and increase of power, its advantages have always been lost for

those who subjected themselves to it, and its disadvantages have been increased. Thus it has been independently of those forms of government under which the nations have lived. The only difference is this, that in a despotic form of government the power is concentrated in a small number of violators, and the form of the violence is more pronounced; in the constitutional monarchies and republics, as in France and in America, the power is distributed among a larger number of violators, and its forms are less pronounced; but the matter of violence, with which the disadvantages of the power are greater than its advantages, and its process, which brings the violated to the extreme limit of weakening to which they can be brought for the advantage of the violators, are always one and the same. Such has been the condition of all the violated, but before this they did not know it, and in the majority of cases they believed naively that governments existed for their good; that without government they would perish; that the thought that men could live without governments was a blasphemy which ought not even be uttered; that this was for some reason a terrible doctrine of anarchism, with which is connected the conception of everything terrible. Men believed, as in something absolutely proved and so needing no further proofs, that, since until now all the nations have developed in a governmental form, this form was for ever an indispensable condition of the development of humanity. Thus it went on for hundreds and for thousands of years, and the governments, that is, men in power, have tried, and now try more and more, to keep the nations in this error. Thus it was in the time of the Roman emperors, and thus it is at present. In spite of the fact that the idea of the uselessness and even harm of the governmental violence more and more enters into the consciousness of men, this would last for ever, if the governments were not obliged to increase the armies for the purpose of maintaining their power. People generally think that the armies are increased

by the governments for the purpose of defending the states against other states, forgetting the fact that armies are needed by the governments for the purpose of protecting themselves against their own crushed and enslaved subjects. This has always been indispensable, and has become more and more necessary in proportion as culture has been developed among the nations, in proportion as the intercourse among the men of the same and of different nations has been increased, and it has become particularly indispensable now in connection with the communistic, socialistic, anarchistic, and universal movements among the laboring classes. The governments feel this, and so increase their main force of the disciplined army.

AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE: The fact that in America there exist abuses of power, in spite of the small number of troops, not only does not contradict, but even supports this proposition. In America there is a smaller army than in other countries, and so there is nowhere a lesser oppression of the oppressed classes, and nowhere can we foresee so soon the abolition of the abuses of power and of the power itself. But in America itself there have of late, in proportion as the laboring classes become more unified, been heard voices asking more and more frequently for an increase of the army, although America is not threatened by any external attack. The higher ruling classes know that fifty thousand soldiers will soon be insufficient, and, no longer depending on Pinkerton's army, they feel that the security of their position lies only in an increase of the army. [End of Footnote.] Answering lately to a question why money was needed for the increase of the wages of under-officers, the German chancellor declared frankly in the German Reichstag that there was a need of reliable under-officers, in order to fight against socialism. Caprivi only said in the hearing of all what everybody knows, though it is carefully concealed from the nations; he explained why guards of Swiss and Scotchmen were hired

out to French kings and Popes, and why in Russia they carefully shuffle up the recruits in such a way that the regiments which are located in the centre are made up of recruits from the outlying districts, while the regiments in the outlying districts are completed by soldiers from the centre of Russia. The meaning of Caprivi's speech, translated into simple language, is this, that money was not needed for counteracting the foreign enemies, but for bribing the under-officers, so as to make them willing to act against the oppressed laboring masses. Caprivi accidentally gave utterance to what everybody knows, or feels, if he does not know, namely, that the existing structure of life is such as it is, not because it naturally must be such, because the nation wants it to be such, but because it is maintained as such by the violence of the governments, by the army with its bribed underofficers, officers, and generals. If a laboring man has no land, no chance of making use of the right, so natural for every man, to obtain from the land his own means of support and those of his family, this is not so because the nation wants it to be so, but because certain men, the owners of land, are granted the right to admit, or not to admit, the laboring people to it. And this unnatural order of things is maintained by means of the army. If the immense wealth, accumulated by the laboring people, is not considered as belonging to all men, but to an exclusive number of men; if the power to collect taxes from labor and to use the money for anything they may see fit is entrusted to a few men; if a few men are permitted to select the method of the religious and civil instruction and education of the children; if strikes of the laborers are opposed and strikes of the capitalists are encouraged; if a few men are granted the right to compose laws, which all must obey, and to dispose of men's property and life — all this does not take place because the nation wants it so, but because the governments and the ruling classes want it so, and by means of bodily violence establish it so. Every person who

does not know this will find it out in every attempt at not conforming or at changing this order of things. Therefore armies are first of all indispensable to the governments and the ruling classes, in order to maintain the order of things which not only does not result from the necessity of the nation, but is frequently opposed to it and is advantageous only to the government and to the ruling classes. Every government needs armies, first of all, in order to keep its subjects in submission, and to exploit their labors. But the government is not alone; side by side with it there is another government, which exploits its subjects by means of the same violence, and which is always ready to take away from another government the labors of its already enslaved subjects. And so every government needs an army, not only for internal use, but also for the protection of its booty against neighboring ravishers. Every government is in consequence of this involuntarily led to the necessity of increasing its army in emulation with the other governments; but the increasing of armies is contagious, as Montesquieu remarked 150 years ago. Every increase of an army in a state, directed against its subjects, becomes dangerous even for its neighbors, and evokes an increase in the neighboring states. The armies have reached their present millions not merely because the neighbors threatened the states; this resulted above all from the necessity of crushing all attempts at revolt on the part of the subjects. The increase of armies arises simultaneously from two causes, which provoke one another: armies are needed against domestic enemies and for the purpose of defending one's position against one's neighbors. One conditions the other. The despotism of a government always increases with the increase and strengthening of armies and external successes, and the aggressiveness of governments is increased with the intensification of the internal despotism. In consequence of this, the European governments, in emulating one another

in the greater and ever greater increase of the army, arrived at the inevitable necessity of the universal military service, since the universal military service was a means for obtaining in time of war the greatest quantity of soldiers at the least expense. Germany was the first to hit upon this plan, and the moment one government did it, all the others were obliged to do the same. The moment this happened, it happened that all the citizens were put under arms for the purpose of maintaining all that injustice which was committed against them; what happened was that all the citizens became oppressors of themselves. The universal military service was an inevitable logical necessity, at which it was impossible not to arrive; at the same time it is the last expression of the inner contradiction of the social concept of life, which arose at a time when violence was needed in order to maintain it. In the universal military service this contradiction became obvious. Indeed, the meaning of the social concept of life consists in this, that a man, recognizing the cruelty of the struggle of individuals among themselves and the perishableness of the individual himself, transfers the meaning of his life to the aggregate of individuals; but in the universal military service it turns out that men, having brought all the sacrifices demanded of them, in order to free themselves from the cruelty of the struggle and the insecurity of life, are, after all the sacrifices which they have made, again called to bear all those dangers from which they thought they had freed themselves, and, besides, that aggregate, the state, in the name of which the individuals renounced their advantages, is again subjected to the same danger of destruction to which the individual himself was subjected before. The governments were to have freed men from the cruelty of the struggle of individuals and to have given them the assurance of the inviolability of the order of the state life; but, instead, they impose upon the individuals the necessity of the same

struggle, except that the struggle with the nearest individuals is transferred to the struggle with the individuals of other states and they leave the same danger of the destruction of the individual and of the state. The establishment of the universal military service is like what would happen if a man were to brace up a dilapidated house: the walls bend inwards — supports are put up; the ceiling is sagging down — other supports are put up; boards hang down between the supports — some more supports are put up. A point is finally reached when the supports indeed hold the house together, but it is impossible to live in the house because there are so many supports. The same is true of the universal military service. It destroys all those advantages of the social life which it is called to preserve. The advantages of the social life consist in the security of property and labor and in the cooperation in the aggregate perfection of life — the universal military service destroys all that. The taxes which are collected from the masses for war preparations swallow the greater share of the production of labor which the army is supposed to protect. The tearing away of the men from the habitual course of life impairs the possibility of the work itself. The menaces of a war that is likely to break out at any time make all the perfections of the social life useless and in vain. If a man was formerly told that if he did not submit to the power of the state he would be subjected to the attacks of evil men, of external and internal enemies; that he would be compelled himself to struggle with them and to subject himself to being killed; that therefore it would be advantageous for him to bear certain privations, in order to free himself from these calamities — he was able to believe it all, because the sacrifices which he made for the state were only private sacrifices and gave him the hope for a peaceful life in an imperishable state, in the name of which he made these sacrifices. But now, when these sacrifices have not only increased tenfold, but the

advantages promised to him are absent, it is natural for any one to imagine that his submission to power is quite useless. But not in this alone lies the fatal significance of the universal military service, as a manifestation of that contradiction which is contained in the social concept of life. The main manifestation of this contradiction consists in the fact that with the universal military service every citizen, upon becoming a soldier, becomes a supporter of the state structure, and a participant in everything which the government does and the legality of which he does not recognize. The governments assert that the armies are needed mainly for the purpose of external defence; but that is not true. They are needed first of all against their subjects, and every man who does military service involuntarily becomes a participant in all the violence which the state exerts over its own subjects. To convince himself that every man who does his military service becomes a participant in such deeds of the government as he does not acknowledge and cannot acknowledge, let a man only remember what is being done in every state in the name of order and of the good of the nation, things which the army appears as the executor of. All the struggles of dynasties and of the various parties, all the executions, which are connected with these disturbances, all the suppressions of revolts, all the employment of military force for the dispersion of popular crowds, the suppression of strikes, all the extortions of taxes, all the injustice of the distribution of the ownership of land, all the oppressions of labor — all this is produced, if not directly by the armies, at least by the police, which is supported by the armies. He who does military service becomes a participant in all these matters, which in some cases are doubtful to him and in many cases are directly opposed to his conscience. Some people do not wish to leave the land which they have been working for generations; people do not wish to disperse, as they are commanded to do by the

government; people do not want to pay the taxes which are exacted of them; people do not wish to recognize the obligatoriness for them of laws which they have not made; people do not wish to be deprived of their nationality — and I, by doing military service, am obliged to come and beat these people. Being a participant in these deeds, I cannot help but ask myself whether these deeds are good, and whether I ought to contribute to their execution. Universal military service is for the government the last degree of violence, which is necessary for the support of the whole structure; and for the subjects it is the extreme limit of the possibility of their obedience. It is that keystone which holds the walls and the extraction of which causes the building to cave in. The time came when the growing abuses of the governments and their strifes among themselves had this effect, that from every subject there were demanded, not only material, but also moral sacrifices, when every man had to stop and ask himself, “Can I make these sacrifices? And in the name of what must I make these sacrifices? These sacrifices are demanded in the name of the state. In the name of the state they demand of me the renunciation of everything which may be dear to man, of peace, of family, of security, of human dignity. What is that state in the name of which such terrible sacrifices are demanded of me? And why is it so indispensably necessary?” “The state,” we are told, “is indispensably necessary, in the first place, because without the state, I and all of us would not be protected against violence and the attack of evil men; in the second place, without the state all of us would be savages, and would have no religious, nor educational, nor mercantile institutions, nor roads of communication, nor any other public establishments; and, in the third place, because without the state we should be subject to enslavement by neighboring nations.” “Without the state,” we are told, “we should be subject to violence and to the attacks of evil men

in our own country." But who among us are these evil men, from the violence and attacks of whom the state and its army save us? If three, four centuries ago, when men boasted of their military art and their accoutrements, when it was considered a virtue to kill men, there existed such men, there are none now, for no men of the present time use or carry weapons, and all, professing the rules of philanthropy and of compassion for their neighbors, wish the same as we — the possibility of a calm and peaceful life. There now are no longer those particular violators against whom the state should defend us. But if, by the people, from whose attack the state saves us, we are to understand those men who commit crimes, we know that they are not some special beings, like rapacious animals among the sheep, but just such people as we are, who are just as disinclined to commit crimes as those against whom they commit them. We know now that threats and punishments cannot diminish the number of such men, and that it is only the change of surroundings and the moral influence upon people that diminish it. Thus the explanation of the necessity of governmental violence for the purpose of defending men against violators may have had a basis three or four centuries ago, but has none at the present time. Now the contrary would be more correct, namely, that the activity of the governments, with their morality which has fallen behind the common level, with their cruel methods of punishments, of prisons, of hard labor, of gallows, of guillotines, rather contributes to the brutalization of the masses than to the softening of their manners, and so rather to the increase than to the diminution of the number of violators. "Without the state," they also say, "there would not be all those institutions of education, of learning, of religion, of roads of communication, and others. Without the state men would not be able to establish the public things which are indispensable for all men." But this argument, too, could have a basis only several centuries

ago. If there was a time when men were so disunited among themselves and the means for a closer union and for the transmission of thought were so little worked out that they could not come to any understanding nor agree upon any common mercantile, or economical, or cultural matter without the medium of the state, there now no longer exists such a disunion. The widely developed means for communion and for the transmission of thought have had this effect, that, for the formation of societies, assemblies, corporations, congresses, learned, economic, or political institutions, the men of our time can get along without any government, and the governments in the majority of cases are more likely to interfere with the attainment of these ends than to cooperate with it. Beginning with the end of the last century, almost every forward step of humanity has not only not been encouraged by the government, but has always been retarded by it. Thus it was with the abolition of corporal punishment, of torture, of slavery, and with the establishment of the freedom of the press and of assemblies. In our time the power of the state and the governments not only fail to cooperate with, but are distinctly opposed to, all that activity by means of which men work out new forms of life. The solutions of laboring, agronomic, political, religious questions are not only not encouraged, but directly interfered with by the power of the state. "Without the state and the government, the nations would be enslaved by their neighbors." It is hardly necessary to retort to this last argument. The retort is found in itself. The governments, so we are told, are necessary with their armies for the purpose of defending us against our neighbors, who might enslave us. But this is what all the governments say of one another, and at the same time we know that all the European nations profess the same principles of freedom and of brotherhood, and so are in no need of defending themselves against one another. But if protection against barbarians is meant, then

one-thousandth of all the armies now under arms would suffice. Thus the contrary to what is asserted is what actually happens: the power of the state, far from saving us from the attacks of our neighbors, on the contrary causes the danger of the attacks. Thus a man, who by means of his military service is placed under the necessity of thinking about the significance of the state, in the name of which the sacrifice of his peace, his security, and his life is demanded of him, cannot help but see clearly that for these sacrifices there no longer exists any basis in our time. But it is not only by theoretical reflections that any man may see that the sacrifices demanded of him by the state have no foundation whatever; even by reflecting practically, that is, by weighing all those hard conditions in which a man is placed by the state, no one can fail to see that for him personally the fulfilment of the demands of the state and his submission to military service is in the majority of cases more disadvantageous than a refusal to do military service. If the majority of men prefer submission to insubmission, this is not due to any sober weighing of the advantages and disadvantages, but because the men are attracted to submission by means of the hypnotization to which they are subjected in the matter. In submitting, men only surrender themselves to those demands which are made upon them, without reflection, and without making any effort of the will; for in submission there is a need of independent reflection and of effort, of which not every man is capable. But if, excluding the moral significance of submission and insubmission, we should consider nothing but the advantages, insubmission would in general always be more advantageous to us than submission. No matter who I may be, whether I belong to the well-to-do, oppressing classes, or to the oppressed laboring classes, the disadvantages of insubmission are less than the disadvantages of submission, and the advantages of insubmission are greater than the advantages of submission. If I belong to the

minority of oppressors, the disadvantages of insubmission to the demands of the government will consist in this, that I, refusing to comply with the demands of the government, shall be tried and at best shall be discharged or, as they do with the Mennonites, shall be compelled to serve out my time at some unmilitary work; in the worst case I shall be condemned to deportation or imprisonment for two or three years (I speak from examples that have happened in Russia), or, perhaps, to a longer term of incarceration, or to death, though the probability of such a penalty is very small. Such are the disadvantages of insubmission; but the disadvantages of submission will consist in this: at best I shall not be sent out to kill men, and I myself shall not be subjected to any great probability of crippling or death, but shall only be enlisted as a military slave — I shall be dressed up in a fool's garments; I shall be at the mercy of every man above me in rank, from a corporal to a field-marshal; I shall be compelled to contort my body according to their desire, and, after being kept from one to five years, I shall be left for ten years in a condition of readiness to appear at any moment for the purpose of going through all these things again. In the worst case I shall, in addition to all those previous conditions of slavery, be sent to war, where I shall be compelled to kill men of other nations, who have done me no harm, where I may be crippled and killed, and where I may get into a place, as happened at Sevastopol and as happens in every war, where men are sent to certain death; and, what is most agonizing, I may be sent out against my own countrymen, when I shall be compelled to kill my brothers for dynastic or other reasons, which are entirely alien to me. Such are the comparative disadvantages. The comparative advantages of submission and of insubmission are these: For him who has not refused, the advantages will consist in this, that, having submitted to all the humiliations and having executed all the cruelties demanded of him, he may, if he is not killed,

receive red, golden, tin-foil decorations over his fool's garments, and he may at best command hundreds of thousands of just such bestialized men as himself, and be called a field-marshal, and receive a lot of money. But the advantages of him who refuses will consist in this, that he will retain his human dignity, will earn the respect of good men, and, above all else, will know without fail that he is doing God's work, and so an incontestable good to men. Such are the advantages and the disadvantages on both sides for a man from the wealthy classes, for an oppressor; for a man of the poor, working classes the advantages and disadvantages will be the same, but with an important addition of disadvantages. The disadvantages for a man of the laboring classes, who has not refused to do military service, will also consist in this, that, by entering upon military service, he by his participation and seeming consent confirms the very oppression under which he is suffering. But it is not the reflections as to how much the state which men are called upon to support by their participation in the military service is necessary and useful to men, much less the reflections as to the advantages or disadvantages accruing to each man from his submission or insubmission to the demands of the government, that decide the question as to the necessity of the existence or the abolition of the state. What irrevocably and without appeal decides this question is the religious consciousness or conscience of every individual man, before whom, in connection with the universal military service, involuntarily rises the question as to the existence or non-existence of the state.

