

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 4 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 EIGHT People frequently say that if Christianity is a truth, it ought to have been accepted by all men at its very appearance, and ought at that very moment to have changed the lives of men and made them better. But to say this is the same as saying that if the seed is fertile, it must immediately produce a sprout, a flower, and a fruit. The Christian teaching is no legislation which, being introduced by violence, can at once change the lives of men. Christianity is another, newer, higher concept of life, which

is different from the previous one. But the new concept of life cannot be prescribed; it can only be freely adopted. Now the new life-conception can be acquired only in two ways: in a spiritual (internal) and an experimental (external) way. Some people — the minority — immediately, at once, by a prophetic feeling divine the truth of the teaching, abandon themselves to it, and execute it. Others — the majority — are led only through a long path of errors, experiences, and sufferings to the recognition of the truth of the teaching and the necessity of acquiring it. It is to this necessity of acquiring the teaching in an experimental external way that the whole mass of the men of the Christian world have now been brought. Sometimes we think: what need was there for that corruption of Christianity which even now more than anything else interferes with its adoption in its real sense? And yet this corruption of Christianity, having brought men to the condition in which they now are, was a necessary condition for the majority of men to be able to receive it in its real significance. If Christianity had been offered to men in its real, and not its corrupted, form, it would not have been accepted by the majority of men, and the majority of men would have remained alien to it, as the nations of Asia are alien to it at the present time. But, having received it in its corrupted form, the nations who received it were subjected to its certain, though slow, action, and by a long experimental road of errors and of sufferings resulting therefrom are now brought to the necessity of acquiring it in its true sense. The corruption of Christianity and its acceptance in its corrupted form by the majority of men was as indispensable as that a seed, to sprout, should be for a time concealed by the earth. The Christian teaching is a teaching of the truth and at the same time a prophecy. Eighteen hundred years ago the Christian teaching revealed to men the truth of how they should live, and at the same time predicted what human life would be if men

would not live thus, but would continue to live by those principles by which they had lived heretofore, and what it would be if they should accept the Christian teaching and should carry it out in life. In imparting in the Sermon on the Mount the teaching which was to guide the lives of men, Christ said: Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matthew 7: 24 — 27) Now, after eighteen hundred years, the prophecy has been fulfilled. By not following Christ's teaching in general and its manifestation in public life as non-resistance to evil, men involuntarily came to that position of inevitable ruin which was promised by Christ to those who would not follow His teaching. People frequently think that the question of non-resistance to evil is an invented question, a question which it is possible to circumvent. It is, however, a question which life itself puts before all men and before every thinking man, and which invariably demands a solution. For men in their public life this question has, ever since the Christian teaching has been preached, been the same as the question for a traveller which road to take, when he comes to a fork on the highway on which he has been walking. He must go on, and he cannot say, "I will not think, and I will continue to walk as before." Before this there was one road, and now there are two of them, and it is impossible to walk as before, and one of the two roads must inevitably be chosen. Even so it has been impossible to say, ever since Christ's teaching was made known to men, "I will continue to live as

I lived before, without solving the question as to resisting or not resisting evil by means of violence." It is inevitably necessary at the appearance of every struggle to solve the question, "Shall I with violence resist that which I consider to be an evil and violence, or not?" The question as to resisting or not resisting evil by means of violence appeared when there arose the first struggle among men, since every struggle is nothing but a resistance by means of violence to what each of the contending parties considers to be an evil. But the men before Christ did not see that the resistance by means of violence to what each considers to be an evil, only because he regards as an evil what another regards as a good, is only one of the means of solving the struggle, and that another means consists in not at all resisting evil by means of violence. Previous to Christ's teaching it appeared to men that there was but one way of solving a struggle, and that was by resisting evil with violence, and so they did, each of the contending parties trying to convince himself and others that what each of them considered to be an evil was a real, absolute evil. And so since most remote times men have endeavored to discover such definitions of evil as would be obligatory for all men, and as such were given out the statutes of law which, it was assumed, were received in a supernatural manner, or the injunctions of men or of assemblies of men, to whom is ascribed the quality of infallibility. Men have employed violence against other men and have assured themselves and others that they have employed this violence against the evil which was acknowledged by all men. This means has been employed since remote antiquity, especially by those men who usurped the power, and men for a long time did not see the irrationality of this means. But the longer men lived, the more complex their relations became, the more obvious did it become that it was irrational by means of violence to resist that which is by every one regarded as an evil, that the struggle was not

diminished by doing so, and that no human definitions could succeed in making that which was considered to be evil by one set of men considered such by others. Even at the time of the appearance of Christianity, in the place where it made its appearance, in the Roman Empire, it was clear for the majority of men that what by Nero and Caligula was considered to be an evil which ought to be resisted with violence could not be considered an evil by other men. Even then men began to understand that human laws which were given out as being divine had been written by men, that men could not be infallible, no matter with what external grandeur they might be vested, and that erring men could not become infallible simply because they came together and called themselves a senate or some such name. This was even then felt and understood by many, and it was then that Christ preached His teaching, which did not consist simply in this, that evil ought not to be resisted by means of violence, but in the teaching of the new comprehension of life, a part, or rather an application of which to public life was the teaching about the means for abolishing the struggle among all men, not by obliging only one part of men without a struggle to submit to what would be prescribed to them by certain authorities, but by having no one, consequently even not those (and preeminently not those) who rule, employ violence against any one, and under no consideration. The teaching was at that time accepted by but a small number of disciples; but the majority of men, especially all those who ruled over men, continued after the nominal acceptance of Christianity to hold to the rule of violently resisting that which they considered to be evil. Thus it was in the time of the Roman and the Byzantine emperors, and so it continued even afterward. The inadequacy of the principle of defining with authority what is evil and resisting it with violence, which was already obvious in the first centuries of Christianity, became even more obvious during the decomposition of the

Roman Empire into many states of equal right, with their mutual hostilities and the inner struggles which took place in the separate states. But men were not prepared to receive the solution which was given by Christ, and the former means for the definition of the evil, which had to be resisted by establishing laws which, being obligatory for all, were carried out by the use of force, continued to be applied. The arbiter of what was to be considered an evil and what was to be resisted by means of force was now the Pope, now the emperor, now the king, now an assembly of the elect, now the whole nation. But both inside and outside the state there always existed some men who did not recognize the obligatoriness for themselves either of the injunctions which were given out to be the commands of the divinity, or of the decrees of men who were vested with sanctity, or of the institutions which purported to represent the will of the people, and these men, who considered to be good what the existing powers regarded as evil, fought against the powers, using the same violence which was directed against themselves. Men who were vested with sanctity regarded as evil what men and institutions that were vested with civil power considered to be good, and vice versa, and the struggle became ever more acute. And the more such people held to this method for solving their struggle, the more obvious did it become that this method was useless, because there is and there can be no such external authority for the definition of evil as would be recognized by all men. Thus it lasted for eighteen hundred years, and it reached the present point — the complete obviousness of the fact that there is and there can be no external definition of evil which would be obligatory for all men. It reached such a point that men ceased to believe in the possibility of finding this common definition which would be obligatory for all men, and even in the necessity of putting forward such a definition. It came to such a pass that the men in power stopped proving

that that which they considered to be an evil was an evil, and said outright that they considered that an evil which did not please them; and the men who obeyed the power began to obey it, not because they believed that the definitions of evil given by this power were correct, but only because they could not help but obey. Nice is added to France, Lorraine to Germany, Bohemia to Austria; Poland is divided; Ireland and India are subjected to English rule; war is waged against China and the Africans; the Americans expel the Chinese, and the Russians oppress the Jews; the landowners use the land which they do not work, and the capitalists make use of the labors of others, not because this is good, useful, and needful to men and because the contrary is evil, but because those who are in power want it to be so. What has happened is what happens now: one set of men commit acts of violence, no longer in the name of resisting evil, but in the name of their advantage or whim, while another set submit to violence, not because they assume, as was the case formerly, that violence is exerted against them in the name of freeing them from evil and for their good, but only because they cannot free themselves from this violence. If a Roman, a man of the Middle Ages, a Russian, as I remember him to have been fifty years ago, was incontestably convinced that the existing violence of the power was necessary in order to free him from evil, that taxes, levies, serf law, prisons, whips, knouts, hard labor, capital punishment, militarism, wars, must exist — it will be hard now to find a man who either believes that all acts of violence free any one from anything, or even does not see clearly that the majority of all those cases of violence to which he is subject and in which he partly shares are in themselves a great and useless evil. There is now no such a man who does not see, not only the uselessness, but even the insipidity, of collecting taxes from the laboring classes for the purpose of enriching idle officials; or the senselessness of imposing

punishments upon corrupt and weak people in the shape of deportation from one place to another, or in the form of imprisonment in jails, where they live in security and idleness and become more corrupted and weakened; or, not the uselessness and insipidity, but simply the madness and cruelty of military preparations and wars, which ruin and destroy the masses and have no explanation and justification — and yet these cases of violence are continued and even maintained by the very men who see their uselessness, insipidity, and cruelty, and suffer from them. If fifty years ago a rich idle man and an ignorant laboring man were both equally convinced that their condition of an eternal holiday for the one and of eternal labor for the other was ordained by God Himself, it is now, not only in Europe, but even in Russia, thanks to the migration of the populace, and the dissemination of culture and printing, hard to find either a rich or a poor man who, from one side or another, has not been assailed by doubts of the justice of such an order of things. Not only do the rich know that they are guilty even because they are rich, and try to redeem their guilt by offering contributions to art and science, as formerly they redeemed their sins by means of contributions to the churches, but even the greater half of the working people recognize the present order as being false and subject to destruction or change. One set of religious people, of whom there are millions in Russia, the so-called sectarians, recognize this order as false and subject to destruction on the basis of the Gospel teaching as taken in its real meaning; others consider it to be false on the basis of socialistic, communistic, anarchistic theories, which now have penetrated into the lower strata of the working people. Violence is now no longer maintained on the ground that it is necessary, but only that it has existed for a long time, and has been so organized by men to whom it is advantageous, that is, by governments and the ruling classes, that the men who are in their power

cannot tear themselves away from it. The governments in our time — all governments, the most despotic and the most liberal — have become what Herzen so aptly called Genghis-Khans with telegraphs, that is, organizations of violence, which have nothing at their base but the coarsest arbitrary will, and yet use all those means which science has worked out for the aggregate social peaceful activity of free and equal men, and which they now employ for the enslavement and oppression of men. The governments and the ruling classes do not now lean on the right, not even on the semblance of justice, but on an artificial organization which, with the aid of the perfections of science, encloses all men in the circle of violence, from which there is no possibility of tearing themselves away. This circle is now composed of four means of influencing men. All those means are connected and sustain one another, as the links in the ring of a united chain. The first, the oldest, means is the means of intimidation. This means consists in representing the existing state structure (no matter what it may be — whether a free republic or the wildest despotism) as something sacred and invariable, and so in inflicting the severest penalties for any attempt at changing it. This means, having been used before, is even now used in an unchanged form wherever there are governments: in Russia — against the so-called nihilists; in America — against the anarchists; in France — against the imperialists, monarchists, communists, and anarchists. The railways, telegraphs, photographs, and the perfected method of removing people, without killing them, into eternal solitary confinement, where, hidden from men, they perish and are forgotten, and many other modern inventions, which governments employ more freely than any one else, give them such strength that as soon as the power has fallen into certain hands, and the visible and the secret police, and the administration, and all kinds of prosecutors, and jailers, and executioners are earnestly at

work, there is no possibility of overthrowing the government, no matter how senseless or cruel it may be. The second means is that of bribery. It consists in taking the wealth away from the laboring classes in the shape of monetary taxes, and distributing this wealth among the officials, who for this remuneration are obliged to maintain and strengthen the enslavement of the masses. These bribed officials, from the highest ministers to the lowest scribes, who, forming one continuous chain of men, are united by the same interest of supporting themselves by the labors of the masses, and grow wealthier in proportion as they more humbly do the will of their governments, always and everywhere, stopping short before no means, in all branches of activity, in word and deed, defend the governmental violence, upon which their very well-being is based. The third means is what I cannot call by any other name than the hypnotization of the people. This means consists in retarding the spiritual development of men and maintaining them with all kinds of suggestions in a concept of life which humanity has already outlived, and on which the power of the governments is based. This hypnotization is at the present time organized in the most complex manner, and, beginning its action in childhood, continues over men to their death. This hypnotization begins at early youth in compulsory schools which are established for the purpose, and in which the children are instilled with world-conceptions which were peculiar to their ancestors and are directly opposed to the modern consciousness of humanity. In countries in which there is a state religion, the children are taught the senseless blasphemies of ecclesiastical catechisms, in which the necessity of obeying the powers is pointed out; in republican governments they are taught the savage superstition of patriotism, and the same imaginary obligation of obeying the authorities. At a more advanced age, this hypnotization is continued by encouraging the religious and the patriotic superstitions. The religious

superstition is encouraged by means of the institution of churches, processions, monuments, festivities, from the money collected from the masses, and these, with the aid of painting, architecture, music, incense, but chiefly by the maintenance of the so-called clergy, stupefy the masses: their duty consists in this, that with their representations, the pathos of the services, their sermons, their interference in the private lives of the people — at births, marriages, deaths — they bedim the people and keep them in an eternal condition of stupefaction. The patriotic superstition is encouraged by means of public celebrations, spectacles, monuments, festivities, which are arranged by the governments and the ruling classes on the money collected from the masses, and which make people prone to recognize the exclusive importance of their own nation and the grandeur of their own state and rulers, and to be ill inclined toward all other nations and even hate them. In connection with this, the despotic governments directly prohibit the printing and dissemination of books and the utterance of speeches which enlighten the masses, and deport or incarcerate all men who are likely to rouse the masses from their lethargy; besides, all governments without exception conceal from the masses everything which could free them, and encourage everything which could corrupt them, such as the authorship of books which maintain the masses in the savagery of their religious and patriotic superstitions, all kinds of sensuous amusements, spectacles, circuses, theatres, and even all kinds of physical intoxications, such as tobacco, and brandy, which furnish the chief income of states; they even encourage prostitution, which is not only acknowledged, but even organized by the majority of governments. Such is the third means. The fourth means consists in this, that with the aid of the three preceding means there is segregated, from the men so fettered and stupefied, a certain small number of men, who are subjected to intensified methods of

stupefaction and brutalization, and are turned into involuntary tools of all those cruelties and bestialities which the governments may need. This stupefaction and brutalization is accomplished by taking the men at that youthful age when they have not yet had time to form any firm convictions in regard to morality, and, having removed them from all natural conditions of human life, from home, family, native district, rational labor, locking them all up together in narrow barracks, dressing them up in peculiar garments, and making them, under the influence of shouts, drums, music, glittering objects, perform daily exercises specially invented for the purpose, and thus inducing such a state of hypnosis in them that they cease to be men, and become unthinking machines, which are obedient to the command of the hypnotizer. These hypnotized, physically strong young men (all young men, on account of the present universal military service), who are provided with instruments of murder, and who are always obedient to the power of the governments and are prepared to commit any act of violence at their command, form the fourth and chief means for the enslavement of men. With this means the circle of violence is closed. Intimidation, bribery, hypnotization, make men desirous to become soldiers; but it is the soldiers who give the power and the possibility for punishing people, and picking them clean (and bribing the officials with the money thus obtained), and for hypnotizing and enlisting them again as soldiers, who in turn afford the possibility for doing all this. The circle is closed, and there is no way of tearing oneself away from it by means of force. If some men affirm that the liberation from violence, or even its weakening, may be effected, should the oppressed people overthrow the oppressing government by force and substitute a new one for it, a government in which such violence and enslavement would not be necessary, and if some men actually try to do so, they only deceive themselves and others by it, and thus fail to improve men's

condition, and even make it worse. The activity of these men only intensifies the despotism of the governments. The attempts of these men at freeing themselves only give the governments a convenient excuse for strengthening their power, and actually provoke its strengthening. Even if we admit that, in consequence of an unfortunate concurrence of events in the government, as, for example, in France in the year 1870, some governments may be overthrown by force and the power pass into other hands, this power would in no case be less oppressive than the former one, and, defending itself against the infuriated deposed enemies, would always be more despotic and cruel than the former, as indeed has been the case in every revolution. If the socialists and communists consider the individualistic, capitalistic structure of society to be an evil, and the anarchists consider the government itself to be an evil, there are also monarchists, conservatives, capitalists, who consider the socialistic, communistic, and anarchistic order to be evil; and all these parties have no other means than force for the purpose of uniting men. No matter which of these parties may triumph, it will be compelled, for the materialization of its tenets, as well as for the maintenance of its power, not only to make use of all the existing means of violence, but also to invent new ones. Other men will be enslaved, and men will be compelled to do something else; but there will be, not only the same, but even a more cruel form of violence and enslavement, because, in consequence of the struggle, the hatred of men toward one another will be intensified, and at the same time new means of enslavement will be worked out and confirmed. Thus it has always been after every revolution, every attempt at a revolution, every plot, every violent change of government. Every struggle only strengthens the means of the enslavement of those who at a given time are in power. The condition of the men of our Christian world, and especially the current ideals themselves prove this in a striking

manner. There is left but one sphere of human activity which is not usurped by the governmental power — the domestic, economic sphere, the sphere of the private life and of labor. But even this sphere, thanks to the struggle of the communists and socialists, is slowly being usurped by the governments, so that labor and rest, the domicile, the attire, the food of men will by degrees be determined and directed by the governments, if the wishes of the reformers are to be fulfilled. The whole long, eighteen-centuries-old course of the life of the Christian nations has inevitably brought them back to the necessity of solving the question, so long evaded by them, as to the acceptance or non-acceptance of Christ's teaching, and the solution of the question resulting from it as regards the social life, whether to resist or not to resist evil with violence, but with this difference, that formerly men could accept the solution which Christianity offered, or not accept it, while now the solution has become imperative, because it alone frees them from that condition of slavery in which they have become entangled as in a snare. But it is not merely the wretchedness of men's condition that brings them to this necessity. Side by side with the negative proof of the falseness of the pagan structure, there went the positive proof of the truth of the Christian teaching. There was a good reason why, in the course of eighteen centuries, the best men of the whole Christian world, having recognized the truths of the teaching by means of an inner, spiritual method, should have borne witness to them before men, in spite of all threats, privations, calamities, and torments. With this their martyrdom these best men have put the stamp of truthfulness upon the teaching and have transmitted it to the masses. Christianity penetrated into the consciousness of humanity, not merely by the one negative way of proving the impossibility of continuing the pagan life, but also by its simplification, elucidation, liberation from the dross of superstitions, and

dissemination among all the classes of people. Eighteen hundred years of the profession of Christianity did not pass in vain for the men who accepted it, even though only in an external manner. These eighteen centuries have had this effect that, continuing to live a pagan life, which does not correspond to the age of humanity, men have not only come to see clearly the whole wretchedness of the condition in which they are, but believe in the depth of their hearts (they live only because they believe) in this, that the salvation from this condition is only in the fulfilment of the Christian teaching in its true significance. As to when and how this salvation will take place, all men think differently, in accordance with their mental development and the current prejudices of their circle; but every man of our world recognizes the fact that our salvation lies in the fulfilment of the Christian teaching. Some believers, recognizing the Christian teaching as divine, think that the salvation will come when all men shall believe in Christ, and the second advent shall approach; others, who also recognize the divinity of Christ's teaching, think that this salvation will come through the church, which, subjecting all men to itself, will educate in them Christian virtues and will change their lives. Others again, who do not recognize Christ as God, think that the salvation of men will come through a slow, gradual progress, when the foundations of the pagan life will slowly give way to the foundations of liberty, equality, fraternity, that is, to Christian principles; others again, who preach a social transformation, think that the salvation will come when men by a violent revolution shall be compelled to adopt community of possession, absence of government, and collective, not individual, labor, that is, the materialization of one of the sides of the Christian teaching. In one way or another, all men of our time in their consciousness not only reject the present obsolete pagan order of life, but recognize, frequently not knowing it themselves and regarding

themselves as enemies of Christianity, that our salvation lies only in the application of the Christian teaching, or of a part of it, in its true meaning, to life. For the majority of men, as its teacher has said, Christianity could not be realized at once, but had to grow, like an immense tree, from a small seed. And so it grew and has spread, if not in reality, at least in the consciousness of the men of our time. Now it is not merely the minority of men, who always comprehended Christianity internally, that recognizes it in its true meaning, but also that vast majority of men which on account of its social life seems to be so far removed from Christianity. Look at the private life of separate individuals; listen to those valuations of acts, which men make in judging one another; listen, not only to the public sermons and lectures, but also to those instructions which parents and educators give to their charges, and you will see that, no matter how far the political, social life of men, which is united through violence, is from the realization of Christian truths in private life, it is only the Christian virtues that are by all and for all, without exception and indubitably, considered to be good, and that the anti-Christian vices are by all and for all, without exception and indubitably, considered to be bad. Those are considered to be the best of men who renounce and sacrifice their lives in the service of humanity and who sacrifice themselves for others; those are considered to be the worst who are selfish, who exploit the misery of their neighbors for their own personal advantage. If by some, who have not yet been touched by Christianity, are recognized the non-Christian ideals, force, valor, wealth, these are ideals which are not experienced and shared by all men, and certainly not by men who are considered to be the best. The condition of our Christian humanity, if viewed from without, with its cruelty and its slavery, is really terrible. But if we look upon it from the side of its consciousness, an entirely different spectacle is presented to us. The whole evil of our life seems to exist for

no other reason than that it was done long ago, and the men who have done it have not yet had time to learn how not to do it, though none of them wish to do it. All this evil seems to exist for some other reason, which is independent of the consciousness of men. No matter how strange and contradictory this may seem, all the men of our time despise the very order of things which they help to maintain. I think it is Max Müller who tells of the surprise of an Indian converted to Christianity, who, having grasped the essence of the Christian teaching, arrived in Europe and saw the life of the Christians. He could not recover from his astonishment in the presence of the reality, which was the very opposite of what he had expected to find among the Christian nations. If we are not surprised at the contradiction between our beliefs, convictions, and acts, this is due only to the fact that the influences which conceal this contradiction from men act also upon us. We need only look upon our life from the standpoint of the Indian, who understood Christianity in its real significance, without any compromises and adaptations, and upon those savage bestialities, with which our life is filled, in order that we may be frightened at the contradictions amidst which we live, frequently without noticing them. We need but think of warlike preparations, mitrailleuses, silver-plated bullets, torpedoes — and the Red Cross; of the construction of prisons with solitary cells, of the experiments at electrocution — and of the benevolent cares for the imprisoned; of the philanthropic activity of rich men — and of their lives, which are productive of those very poor whom they benefit. And these contradictions do not result, as may appear, because people pretend to be Christians, when in reality they are pagans, but, on the contrary, because people lack something, or because there is some force which keeps them from being what they already feel themselves to be in their consciousness and what they actually wish to be. The men of our time do not pretend to

hate oppression, inequality, the division of men, and all kinds of cruelty, not only toward men, but also toward animals — they actually do hate all this, but they do not know how to destroy it all, and they have not the courage to part with what maintains all this and seems to them to be indispensable. Indeed, ask any man of our time privately, whether he considers it laudable or even worthy of a man of our time to busy himself with collecting taxes from the masses, who frequently are poverty-stricken, receiving for this work a salary which is entirely out of proportion with his labor, this money to be used for the construction of cannon, torpedoes, and implements for murdering men, with whom we wish to be at peace, and who wish to be at peace with us; or for a salary to devote all his life to the construction of these implements of murder; or to prepare himself and others to commit murder. And ask him whether it is laudable and worthy of a man, and proper for a Christian, to busy himself, again for money, with catching unfortunate, erring, frequently ignorant, drunken men for appropriating to themselves other people's possessions in much smaller quantities than we appropriate things to ourselves, and for killing men differently from what we are accustomed to kill men, and for this to put them in prisons, and torment, and kill them, and whether it is laudable and worthy of a man and a Christian, again for money, to preach to the masses, instead of Christianity, what is well known to be insipid and harmful superstitions; and whether it is laudable and worthy of a man to take from his neighbor, for the sake of his own lust, what his neighbor needs for the gratification of his prime necessities, as is done by the large landowners; or to compel him to perform labor above his strength, which ruins his life, in order to increase his own wealth, as is done by manufacturers, by owners of factories; or to exploit men's want for the purpose of increasing his wealth, as is done by merchants. And each of

them taken privately, especially in speaking of another, will tell you that it is not. And yet this same man, who sees all the execrableness of these acts, who is himself not urged by any one, will himself voluntarily, and frequently without the monetary advantage of a salary, for the sake of childish vanity, for the sake of a porcelain trinket, a ribbon, a piece of lace, which he is permitted to put on, go into military service, become an examining magistrate, a justice of the peace, a minister, a rural officer, a bishop, a sexton, that is, he will take an office in which he is obliged to do things the disgrace and execrableness of which he cannot help but know. I know many of these men will self-conceitedly prove that they consider their positions not only legitimate, but even indispensable; they will say in their defence that the power is from God, that political offices are necessary for the good of humanity, that wealth is not contrary to Christianity, that the rich young man was told to give up his wealth only if he wished to be perfect, that the now existing distribution of wealth and commerce must be so and is advantageous for everybody, and so forth. But, no matter how they may try to deceive themselves and others, all these men know that what they do is contrary to everything they believe in, and in the name of which they live, and in the depth of their hearts, when they are left alone with their consciences, they think with shame and pain of what they are doing, especially if the execrableness of their activity has been pointed out to them. A man of our time, whether he professes the divinity of Christ or not, cannot help but know that to take part, whether as a king, a minister, a governor, or a rural officer, in the sale of a poor family's last cow for taxes, with which to pay for cannon or the salaries and pensions of luxuriating, idle, and harmful officials; or to have a share in putting the provider of a family into prison, because we ourselves have corrupted him, and let his family go a-begging; or to take part in the plunders and murders of war; or to help substitute savage

and idolatrous superstitions for Christ's law; or to detain a trespassing cow of a man who has no land of his own; or to deduct a sum from the wages of a factory hand for an article which he accidentally ruined; or to extort a double price from a poor fellow, only because he is in need — a man of our time cannot help but know that all these things are disgraceful and execrable, and that they should not be done. They all know it: they know that what they do is bad, and they would not be doing it under any consideration, if they were able to withstand those forces which, closing their eyes to the criminality of their acts, draw them on to committing them. In nothing is the degree of the contradiction which the lives of the men of our time have reached so striking, as in that phenomenon which forms the last means and expression of violence — in the universal military service. Only because this condition of universal arming and military service has come step by step and imperceptibly, and because for its maintenance the governments employ all means in their power for intimidating, bribing, stupefying, and ravishing men, we do not see the crying contradiction between this condition and those Christian feelings and thoughts, with which all the men of our time are really permeated. This contradiction has become so habitual to us that we do not even see all the terrifying senselessness and immorality of the acts, not only of the men who voluntarily choose the profession of killing as something honorable, but even of those unfortunate men who agree to perform military duty, or even of those who in countries where military service is not introduced, voluntarily give up their labors to hire soldiers and prepare them to commit murder. All these men, be they Christians or men who profess humanity and liberalism, certainly know that, in committing these crimes, they become the participants, and, in personal military service, the actors, in the most senseless, aimless, cruel of murders, and yet they commit them. But more than this: in

Germany, whence comes the universal military service, Caprivi said openly, what before was carefully concealed, that the men who had to be killed were not merely the foreigners, but the working people, from whom come the majority of the soldiers. And this confession did not open men's eyes, did not frighten them. Even after this, as before, they continue to go like sheep to the enlistment and to submit to everything demanded of them. And this is not enough: lately the German Emperor stated more definitely the significance and the calling of a soldier, when distinguishing, thanking, and rewarding a soldier for having shot a defenceless prisoner, who had attempted to run away. In thanking and rewarding the man for an act which has always been regarded as the lowest and basest by men who stand on the lowest stage of morality, William showed that the chief duty of a soldier, the one most valued by the authorities, consisted in being an executioner, not one like the professional executioners, who kill only condemned criminals, but one who kills all those innocent men whom he is ordered by his superiors to kill. But more than this: in 1891 this same William, the enfant terrible of the political power, who expresses what others think, in speaking with some soldiers, said the following in public, and the next day thousands of newspapers reprinted these words: Recruits! In the sight of the altar and the servant of God you swore allegiance to me. You are still too young to understand the true meaning of everything which is said here, but see to this, that you first of all follow the commands and instructions given you. You have sworn allegiance to me; this, children of my guard, means that you are now my soldiers, that you have surrendered your souls and bodies to me. For you there now exists but one enemy, namely, the one who is my enemy. With the present socialistic propaganda it may happen that I will command you to shoot at your own relatives, your brothers, even parents — which God forbend — and then you are obliged

without murmuring to do my commands. This man expresses what all wise men know, but carefully conceal. He says frankly that men who serve in the army serve him and his advantage, and must be prepared for his advantage to kill their brothers and fathers. He expresses frankly and with the coarsest of words all the horror of the crime for which the men who enter into military service are prepared, all that abyss of degradation which they reach, when they promise obedience. Like a bold hypnotizer, he tests the degree of the hypnotized man's sleep: he puts the glowing iron to his body, the body sizzles and smokes, but the hypnotized man does not wake. This miserable, ill man, who has lost his mind from the exercise of power, with these words offends everything which can be holy for a man of our time, and men — Christians, liberals, cultured men of our time — all of them, are not only not provoked by this insult, but even do not notice it. The last, extreme trial, in its coarsest, most glaring form, is offered to men, and men do not even seem to notice that this is a trial, that they have a choice. It looks as though it seemed to them that there was not even any choice, and that there was but the one path of slavish obedience. One would think that these senseless words, which offend everything which a man of our time considers to be sacred, ought to have provoked people, but nothing of the kind took place. All the young men of all Europe are year after year subjected to this trial, and with the rarest exceptions they all renounce everything which is and can be sacred to a man, they all express their readiness to kill their brothers, even their fathers, at the command of the first erring man who is clad in a red livery embroidered with gold, and all they ask is when and whom to kill. And they are ready. Every savage has something sacred for which he is prepared to suffer and for which he will make no concessions. But where is this sacredness for a man of our time? He is told, "Go into slavery to me, into a slavery in which you have to kill your own father," and he,

who very frequently is a learned man, who has studied all the sciences in a university, submissively puts his neck into the yoke. He is dressed up in a fool's attire, is commanded to jump, to contort his body, to bow, to kill — and he does everything submissively. And when he is let out, he returns briskly to his former life and continues to talk of man's dignity, liberty, equality, and fraternity. "Yes, but what is to be done?" people frequently ask, in sincere perplexity. "If all should refuse, it would be well; otherwise I alone shall suffer, and no one will be helped by it." And, indeed, a man of the social concept of life cannot refuse. The meaning of his life is the good of his personality. For the sake of his personality it is better for him to submit, and he submits. No matter what may be done to him, no matter how he may be tortured and degraded, he will submit, because he can do nothing himself, because he has not that foundation in the name of which he could by himself withstand the violence; but those who govern men will never give them a chance to unite. It is frequently said that the invention of terrible implements of murder will abolish war and that war will abolish itself. That is not true. As it is possible to increase the means for the slaughter of men, so it is possible to increase the means for subjugating the men of the social concept of life. Let them be killed by the thousand, by the million, and be torn to pieces — they will none the less go to the slaughter like senseless cattle, because they are driven with a goad; others will go, because for this they will be permitted to put on ribbons and galloons, and they will even be proud of it. And it is in connection with such a contingent of men, who are so stupefied that they promise to kill their parents, that the public leaders — the conservatives, liberals, socialists, anarchists — talk of building up a rational and moral society. What rational and moral society can be built up with such men? Just as it is impossible to build a house with rotten and crooked logs, no matter how one may transpose

them, so it is impossible with such people to construct a rational and moral society. Such people can only form a herd of animals which is directed by the shouts and goads of the shepherds. And so it is. And so, on the one hand, Christians by name, who profess liberty, equality, and fraternity, are side by side with that prepared in the name of liberty for the most slavish and degraded submission, in the name of equality for the most glaring and senseless divisions of men by external signs alone into superiors and inferiors, their allies and their enemies, and in the name of fraternity for the murder of these brothers. AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE: The fact that some nations, the English and the Americans, have not yet any universal military service (though voices in its favor are already heard), but only the enlistment and hire of soldiers, does in no way change the condition of slavery in which the citizens stand relative to the governments. Here everybody has to go himself to kill and be killed; there everybody has to give his labors for the hire and preparation of murderers. [End of Footnote.] The contradictions of consciousness and the resulting wretchedness of life have reached the extremest point, beyond which it is impossible to go. The life which is built up on the principles of violence has reached the negation of those very principles in the name of which it was built up. The establishment of society on the principles of violence, which had for its aim the security of the personal, domestic, and social good, has led men to a complete negation and destruction of this good. The first part of the prophecy has been fulfilled in respect to men and their generations, who did not accept the teaching, and their descendants have now been brought to the necessity of experiencing the justice of its second part.

