

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 5 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 NINE The condition of the Christian nations in our time has remained as cruel as it was in the times of paganism. In many relations, especially in the enslavement of men, it has become even more cruel than in the times of paganism. But between the condition of the men of that time and of our time there is the same difference that there is for the plants between the last days of autumn and the first days of spring. There, in the autumnal Nature, the external lifelessness corresponds to the internal condition

of decay; but here, in the spring, the external lifelessness is in the sharpest contradiction to the condition of the internal restoration and the change to a new form of life. The same is true of the external resemblance between the previous pagan life and the present one: the external condition of men in the times of paganism and in our time is quite different. There the external condition of cruelty and slavery was in full agreement with the internal consciousness of men, and every forward movement increased this agreement; but here the external condition of cruelty and slavery is in complete disagreement with the Christian consciousness of men, and every forward step only increases this disagreement. What is taking place is, as it were, useless sufferings — something resembling childbirth. Everything is prepared for the new life, but the life itself has not made its appearance. The situation seems to be without an issue, and it would be so, if the individual man, and so all men, were not given the possibility of another, higher conception of life, which at once frees him from all those fetters which, it seemed, bound him indissolubly. Such is the Christian concept of life, which was pointed out to humanity eighteen hundred years ago. A man need only make this life-concept his own, in order that the chains which seemed to have fettered him so indissolubly may fall off of themselves, and that he may feel himself quite free, something the way a bird would feel free when it expanded its wings in a place which is fenced in all around. People speak of the liberation of the Christian church from the state, of granting or not granting liberty to Christians. In these thoughts and expressions there is some terrible misconception. Liberty cannot be granted to a Christian or to Christians, or taken from them. Liberty is a Christian's inalienable property. When people speak of granting liberty to Christians, or taking it from them, it is evident that they are not speaking of real Christians, but of men who call themselves Christians. A Christian cannot be

anything else but free, because the attainment of the end which he has set before himself cannot be retarded or detained by any one or anything. A man need but understand his life as Christianity teaches him to understand it, that is, understand that life does not belong to him, his personality, or the family, or the state, but to Him who sent him into this life; that, therefore, he must not fulfil the law of his personality, his family, or the state, but the unlimited law of Him from whom he has come, in order that he may feel himself quite free from every human power and may even stop seeing this power as something which may be oppressive for any one. A man need but understand that the aim of his life is the fulfilment of God's law, in order that this law, taking for him the place of all other laws and subjugating him to itself, by this very subjugation may deprive all the human laws in his eyes of all their obligatoriness and oppression. A Christian is freed from every human power in that he considers for his life and for the lives of others the divine law of love, which is implanted in the soul of every man and is brought into consciousness by Christ, as the only guide of his life and of that of other men. A Christian may submit to external violence, may be deprived of his bodily freedom, may not be free from his passions (he who commits a sin is a slave of sin), but he cannot help but be free, in the sense of not being compelled by some danger or external threat to commit an act which is contrary to his consciousness. He cannot be compelled to do this, because the privations and sufferings which are produced by violence, and which form a mighty tool against the men of the social concept of life, have no compulsory force with him. The privations and sufferings which take from the men of the social concept of life the good for which they live, cannot impair the Christian's good, which consists in the fulfilment of God's will; they can only strengthen him, when they assail him in the performance of this will. And so a Christian, in

submitting to the internal, divine law, cannot only not perform the prescription of the external law, when it is not in accord with the divine law of love as recognized by him, as is the case in the demands set forth by the government, but cannot even recognize the obligation of obeying any one or anything — he cannot recognize what is called the subject's allegiance. For a Christian the promise of allegiance to any government — that very act which is regarded as the foundation of the political life — is a direct renunciation of Christianity, because a man who unconditionally promises in advance to submit to laws which are made and will be made by men, by this very promise in a very definite manner renounces Christianity, which consists in this, that in all problems of life he is to submit only to the divine law of love, of which he is conscious in himself. It was possible with the pagan world-conception to promise to do the will of the civil authorities, without violating the will of God, which consisted in circumcision, the Sabbath, praying at set times, abstaining from a certain kind of food, and so forth. One did not contradict the other. But the Christian profession differs in this very thing from the pagan, in that it does not demand of a man certain external negative acts, but places him in another relation to man from what he was in before, a relation from which may result the most varied acts, which cannot be ascertained in advance, and so a Christian cannot promise to do another person's will, without knowing in what the demands of this will may consist, and cannot obey the variable human laws; he cannot even promise to do anything definite at a certain time or to abstain from anything at a certain time, because he cannot know what at any time that Christian law of love, the submission to which forms the meaning of his life, may demand of him. In promising in advance unconditionally to fulfil the laws of men, a Christian would by this very promise indicate that the inner law of God does not form

for him the only law of his life. For a Christian to promise that he will obey men or human laws is the same as for a laborer who has hired out to a master to promise at the same time that he will do everything which other men may command him to do. It is impossible to serve two masters. A Christian frees himself from human power by recognizing over himself nothing but God's power, the law of which, revealed to him by Christ, he recognizes in himself, and to which alone he submits. And this liberation is not accomplished by means of a struggle, not by the destruction of existing forms of life, but only by means of the changed comprehension of life. The liberation takes place in consequence of this, in the first place, that a Christian recognizes the law of love, which was revealed to him by his teacher, as quite sufficient for human relations, and so regards all violence as superfluous and illegal, and, in the second place, that those privations, sufferings, threats of sufferings and privations, with which the public man is brought to the necessity of obeying, present themselves to a Christian, with his different concept of life, only as inevitable conditions of existence, which he, without struggling against them by exercising violence, bears patiently, like diseases, hunger, and all other calamities, but which by no means can serve as a guide for his acts. What serves as a guide for a Christian's acts is only the divine principle that lives within him and that cannot be oppressed or directed by anything. A Christian acts according to the word of the prophecy applied to his teacher, "he shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory" (Matthew 12: 19 — 20). A Christian does not quarrel with any one, does not attack any one, nor use violence against one; on the contrary, he himself without murmuring bears violence; but by this very relation to violence he not only frees himself, but also the

world from external power. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8: 32). If there were any doubt as to Christianity being truth, that complete freedom, which cannot be oppressed by anything, and which a man experiences the moment he makes the Christian life-conception his own, would be an undoubted proof of its truth. In their present condition men are like bees which have just swarmed and are hanging down a limb in a cluster. The position of the bees on the limb is temporary, and must inevitably be changed. They must rise and find a new home for themselves. Every one of the bees knows that and wishes to change its position and that of the others, but not one is able to do so before the others are going to do so. They cannot rise all at once, because one hangs down from the other, keeping it from separating itself from the swarm, and so all continue to hang. It would seem that the bees could not get out of this state, just as it seems to worldly men who are entangled in the snare of the social world-conception. But there would be no way out for the bees, if each of the bees were not separately a living being, endowed with wings. So there would also be no way out for men, if each of them were not a separate living being, endowed with the ability of acquiring the Christian concept of life. If every bee which can fly did not fly, the rest, too, would not move, and the swarm would never change its position. And as one bee need but open its wings, rise up, and fly away, and after it a second, third, tenth, hundredth, in order that the immovable cluster may become a freely flying swarm of bees, so one man need but understand life as Christianity teaches him to understand it, and begin to live accordingly, and a second, third, hundredth, to do so after him, in order that the magic circle of the social life, from which there seemed to be no way out, be destroyed. But people think that the liberation of all men in this manner is too slow, and that it is necessary to find and use another such a means, so as to free all at once;

something like what the bees would do, if, wishing to rise and fly away, they should find that it was too long for them to wait for the whole swarm to rise one after another, and should try to find a way where every individual bee would not have to unfold its wings and fly away, but the whole swarm could fly at once wherever it wanted. But that is impossible: so long as the first, second, third, hundredth bee does not unfold its wings and fly, the swarm, too, will not fly away or find the new life. So long as every individual man does not make the Christian life-conception his own, and does not live in accordance with it, the contradiction of the human life will not be solved and the new form of life will not be established. One of the striking phenomena of our time is that preaching of slavery which is disseminated among the masses, not only by the governments, which need it, but also by those men who, preaching socialistic theories, imagine that they are the champions of liberty. These people preach that the improvement of life, the bringing of reality in agreement with consciousness, will not take place in consequence of personal efforts of separate men, but of itself, in consequence of a certain violent transformation of society, which will be inaugurated by somebody. What is preached is that men do not have to go with their own feet whither they want and have to go, but that some kind of a floor will be put under their feet, so that, without walking, they will get whither they have to go. And so all their efforts must not be directed toward going according to one's strength whither one has to go, but toward constructing this imaginary floor while standing in one spot. In the economic relation they preach a theory, the essence of which consists in this, that the worse it is, the better it is, that the more there shall be an accumulation of capital, and so an oppression of the laborer, the nearer will the liberation be, and so every personal effort of a man to free himself from the oppression of capital is useless; in the relation of the state, they preach that the greater the power

of the state, which according to this theory has to take in the still unoccupied field of the private life, the better it will be, and that, therefore, the interference of the governments in the private life has to be invoked; in the political and international relations they preach that the increase of the means of destruction, the increase of the armies, will lead to the necessity of disarmament by means of congresses, arbitrations, and so forth. And, strange to say, the obstinacy of men is so great that they believe in these theories, although the whole course of life, every step in advance, betrays its incorrectness. Men suffer from oppression, and to save themselves from this oppression, they are advised to invent common means for the improvement of their situation, to be applied by the authorities, while they themselves continue to submit to them. Obviously, nothing results from it but a strengthening of the power, and consequently the intensification of the oppression. Not one of the errors of men removes them so much from the end which they have set for themselves as this one. In order to attain the end which they have set before themselves, men do all kinds of things, only not the one, simple thing which all have to do. They invent the most cunning of ways for changing the situation which oppresses them, except the one, simple one that none of them should do that which produces this situation. I was told of an incident which happened with a brave rural judge who, upon arriving at a village where the peasants had been riotous and whither the army had been called out, undertook to settle the riot in the spirit of Nicholas I., all by himself, through his personal influence. He sent for several wagon-loads of switches, and, collecting all the peasants in the corn-kiln, locked himself up with them, and so intimidated the peasants with his shouts, that they, obeying him, began at his command to flog one another. They continued flogging one another until there was found a little fool who did not submit and shouted to



his companions to stop flogging one another. It was only then that the flogging stopped, and the rural judge ran away from the kiln. It is this advice of the fool that the men of the social order do not know how to follow, for they flog one another without cessation, and men teach this mutual flogging as the last word of human wisdom. Indeed, can we imagine a more striking example of how men flog themselves than the humbleness with which the men of our time carry out the very obligations which are imposed upon them and which lead them into servitude, especially the military service? Men obviously enslave themselves, suffer from this slavery, and believe that it must be so, that it is all right and does not interfere with the liberation of men, which is being prepared somewhere and somehow, in spite of the ever increasing and increasing slavery. Indeed, let us take a man of our time, whoever he be (I am not speaking of a true Christian, but of a man of the rank and file of our time), cultured or uncultured, a believer or unbeliever, rich or poor, a man of a family or a single man. Such a man of our time lives, doing his work or enjoying himself, employing the fruits of his own labor or those of others for his own sake or for the sake of those who are near to him, like any other man, despising all kinds of oppressions and privations, hostility, and sufferings. The man lives peacefully; suddenly people come to him, who say: "In the first place, promise and swear to us that you will slavishly obey us in everything which we shall prescribe to you, and that everything we shall invent, determine, and call a law you will consider an indubitable truth and will submit to; in the second place, give part of your earnings into our keeping: we shall use this money for keeping you in slavery and preventing you from forcibly opposing our decrees; in the third place, choose yourself and others as imaginary participants in the government, knowing full well that the government will take place entirely independently of those stupid speeches which you will utter to your like, and that it

will take place according to our will, in whose hands is the army; in the fourth place, appear at a set time in court and take part in all those senseless cruelties which we commit against the erring men, whom we ourselves have corrupted, in the shape of imprisonments, exiles, solitary confinements, and capital punishments. And finally, in the fifth place, besides all this, though you may be in the most friendly relations with people belonging to other nations, be prepared at once, when we command you, to consider such of these men as we shall point out to you your enemies, and to cooperate personally or by hiring others in the ruin, pillage, and murder of their men, women, children, old people, and, perhaps, your own countrymen, even your parents, if we want it." What could any man of our time who is not stupefied answer to such demands? "Why should I do all this?" every spiritually healthy man, we should think, ought to say. "Why should I promise to do all that which I am commanded to do, today by Salisbury, tomorrow by Gladstone, today by Boulanger, tomorrow by a Chamber of just such Boulangers, today by Peter the Third, tomorrow by Catherine, day after tomorrow by Pugachév, today by the crazy King of Bavaria, tomorrow by William? Why should I promise to obey them, since I know them to be bad or trifling men, or do not know them at all? Why should I in the shape of taxes give them the fruits of my labors, knowing that the money will be used for bribing the officials, for prisons, churches, armies, for bad things and my own enslavement? Why should I flog myself? Why should I go, losing my time and pulling the wool over my eyes, and ascribing to the violators a semblance of legality, and take part in the government, when I know full well that the government of the state is in the hands of those in whose hands is the army? Why should I go into courts and take part in the torture and punishments of men for having erred, since I know, if I am a Christian, that the law of revenge has given way to the law of love, and, if I am a

cultured man, that punishments do not make men who are subjected to them better, but worse? And why should I, above all, simply because the keys of the temple at Jerusalem will be in the hands of this bishop and not of that, because in Bulgaria this and not that German will be prince, and because English and not American merchants will catch seals, recognize as enemies the men of a neighboring nation, with whom I have heretofore lived at peace and wish to live in love and concord, and why should I hire soldiers or myself go and kill and destroy them, and myself be subjected to their attack? And why, above all else, should I cooperate personally or by the hiring of a military force in the enslavement and murder of my own brothers and fathers? Why should I flog myself? All this I do not need, and all this is harmful for me, and all this on all sides of me is immoral, abominable. So why should I do it all? If you tell me that without it I shall fare ill at somebody's hands, I, in the first place, do not foresee anything so bad as that which you cause me if I listen to you; in the second place, it is quite clear to me that, if you do not flog yourself, nobody is going to flog us. The government is the kings, the ministers, the officials with their pens, who cannot compel me to do anything like what the rural judge compelled the peasants to do: those who will take me forcibly to court, to prison, to the execution are not the kings and the officials with their pens, but those very people who are in the same condition in which I am. It is just as useless and harmful and disagreeable for them to be flogged as it is for me, and so in all probability, if I open their eyes, they not only must do me no violence, but must even do as I do. "In the third place, even if it should happen that. I must suffer for it, it still is more advantageous for me to be exiled or shut up in a prison, while defending common sense and the good, which shall triumph, if not today, certainly tomorrow, or in a very short time, than to suffer for a foolish thing and an evil, which sooner or later

must come to an end. And so it is even in this case more advantageous for me to risk being deported, locked up in a prison, or even executed, than through my own fault to pass my whole life as a slave to other bad men, than to be ruined by an enemy making an incursion and stupidly to be maimed or killed by him, while defending a cannon, or a useless piece of land, or a stupid rag which they call a flag. "I do not want to flog myself, and I won't. There is no reason why I should. Do it yourselves, if you are so minded, but I won't." It would seem that not only the religious or moral feeling, but the simplest reflection and calculation would make a man of our time answer and act in this manner. But no: the men of the social life-conception find that it is not right to act in this manner, and that it is even harmful to act thus if we wish to obtain the end of the liberation of men from slavery, and that it is necessary for us, as in the case of the rural judge and the peasants, to continue to flog one another, consoling ourselves with the thought that the fact that we prattle in Chambers and assemblies, form labor-unions, parade the streets on the first of May, form plots, and secretly tease the government which flogs us — that all this will have the effect of freeing us very soon, though we are enslaving ourselves more and more. Nothing so much impedes the liberation of men. as this remarkable delusion. Instead of directing all his forces to the liberation of himself, to the change of his world-conception, every man seeks for an external aggregate means for freeing himself, and thus fetters himself more and more. It is as though men should affirm that, in order to fan a fire, it is not necessary to make every coal catch fire, but to place the coals in a certain order. In the meantime it has been getting more and more obvious of late that the liberation of all men will take place only through the liberation of the individual men. The liberation of individual persons in the name of the Christian life-conception from the enslavement of the state, which used

to be an exclusive and imperceptible phenomenon, has of late received a significance which is menacing to the power of state. If formerly, in the days of Rome, in the Middle Ages, it happened that a Christian, professing his teaching, refused to take part in sacrifices, to worship the emperors and gods, or in the Middle Ages refused to worship the icons, to recognize the papal power, these refusals were, in the first place, accidental; a man might have been put to the necessity of professing his faith, and he might have lived a life without being placed in this necessity. But now all men without exception are subject to these trials. Every man of our time is put to the necessity of recognizing his participation in the cruelties of the pagan life, or rejecting it. And, in the second place, in those days the refusals to worship the gods, the icons, the Pope, did not present any essential phenomena for the state: no matter how many men worshipped the gods, the icons, or the Pope, the state remained as strong as ever. But now the refusal to comply with the non-Christian demands of governments undermines the power of state to the root, because all the power of the state is based on these non-Christian demands. The worldly powers were led by the course of life to the proposition that for their own preservation they had to demand from all men such acts as could not be performed by those who professed true Christianity. And so in our time every profession of true Christianity by a separate individual most materially undermines the power of the government and inevitably leads to the emancipation of all men. What importance can there be in such phenomena as the refusals of a few dozens of madmen, as they are called, who do not wish to swear to the government, or pay taxes, or take part in courts and military service? These men are punished and removed, and life continues as of old. It would seem that there is nothing important in these phenomena, and yet it is these very phenomena that more than anything else undermine

the power of the state and prepare the emancipation of men. They are those individual bees which begin to separate from the swarm and fly about, awaiting what cannot be delayed — the rising of the whole swarm after them. The governments know this, and are afraid of these phenomena more than of all socialists, communists, anarchists, and their plots with their dynamite bombs. A new reign begins: according to the general rule and customary order all the subjects are ordered to swear allegiance to the new government. A general order is sent out, and everybody is called to the cathedral to swear. Suddenly one man in Perm, another in Túla, a third in Moscow, a fourth in Kalúga declare that they will not swear, and they base their refusal, every one of them, without having plotted together, on one and the same reason, which is, that the oath is prohibited by the Christian law, and that, even if it were not prohibited, they could not, according to the spirit of the Christian law, promise to commit the evil acts which are demanded of them in the oath, such as denouncing all those who will violate the interests of the government, defending their government with weapons in their hands, or attacking its enemies. They are summoned before the rural judges or chiefs, priests, or governors, are admonished, implored, threatened, and punished, but they stick to their determination and do not swear. Among millions of those who swear, there are a few dozens who do not. And they are asked: "So you have not sworn?" "We have not." "Well, nothing happened?" "Nothing." All the subjects of a state are obliged to pay taxes. And all pay; but one man in Khárkov, another in Tver, a third in Samára, refuse to pay their taxes, all of them repeating, as though by agreement, one and the same thing. One says that he will pay only when he is told what the money taken from him will be used for: if for good things, he says, he will himself give more than is asked of him; but if for bad things, he will not

give anything voluntarily, because, according to Christ's teaching, which he follows, he cannot contribute to evil deeds. The same, though with different words, is said by the others, who do not voluntarily pay their taxes. From those who possess anything, the property is taken by force, but those who have nothing to give are left alone. "Well, you did not pay the taxes?" "I did not." "Well, and nothing happened to you?" "Nothing." Passports are established. All who remove themselves from their place of abode are obliged to take them and pay a revenue for them. Suddenly on all sides appear men who say that it is not necessary to take passports and that it is not right to recognize one's dependence on a government which lives by violence, and they take no passports and pay no revenue. Again it is impossible to make these people carry out what is demanded of them. They are locked up in prisons and let out again, and they continue to live without passports. All the peasants are obliged to serve as hundred-men, ten-men, and so forth. Suddenly a peasant refuses in Khárkov to perform this office, explaining his refusal by this, that, according to the Christian law which he professes, he cannot bind, lock up, and lead a man from one place to another. The same is asserted by a peasant in Tver, in Támbov. The peasants are cursed, beaten, locked up, but they stick to their determination and do not do what is contrary to their faith. And they are no longer chosen as hundred-men, and that is the end of it. All the citizens must take part in court proceedings in the capacity of jurymen. Suddenly the greatest variety of men, wheelwrights, professors, merchants, peasants, gentlemen, as though by agreement, all refuse to serve, not for causes which are recognized by the law, but because the court itself, according to their conviction, is an illegal, non-Christian thing, which ought not to exist. These men are fined, without being allowed publicly to express the motives of their refusal, and others are put in their places. The same is

done to those who on the same grounds refuse to be witnesses at court. And nothing more happens. All men of twenty-one years of age are obliged to draw lots. Suddenly one young man in Moscow, another in Tver, a third in Khárkov, a fourth in Kiev, appear, as though by previous agreement, in court, and declare that they will neither swear nor serve, because they are Christians. Here are the details of one of the first cases (since then these refusals have become more and more frequent), with which I am acquainted. [All the details of this and the preceding cases are authentic.] In all the other cases approximately the same was done. A young man of medium culture refuses in the Moscow Council to serve. No attention is paid to his words, and he is ordered to pronounce the words of the oath, just like the rest. He refuses, pointing out the definite place in the Gospel where taking an oath is prohibited. No attention is paid to his arguments, and they demand that he fulfil their command, but he does not do so. Then it is assumed that he is a sectarian and so understands Christianity incorrectly, that is, not in the way the clergy in the government pay understand it, and so the young man is sent under convoy to the priests, to be admonished. The priests begin to admonish the young man, but their admonitions in the name of Christ to renounce Christ have apparently no effect upon the young man, and he is sent back to the army, having been declared incorrigible. The young man still refuses to take the oath and openly declines to fulfil his military duties. This case is not provided for in the laws. It is impossible to admit a refusal to do the will of the authorities, and it is equally impossible to rate this as a case of simple disobedience. In a consultation the military authorities determine to get rid of the troublesome young man by declaring him to be a revolutionist, and send him under guard into the office of the secret police. The police and the gendarmes examine the young man, but nothing of what he says fits in with the crimes dealt with in their



departments, and there is absolutely no way of accusing him of revolutionary acts, or of plotting, since he declares that he does not wish to destroy anything, but, on the contrary, rejects all violence, and conceals nothing, but seeks an opportunity for saying and doing in a most open manner what he says and does. And the gendarmes, though no laws are binding on them, like the clergy, find no cause for an accusation and return the young man to the army. Again the chiefs confer and decide to enlist the young man in the army, though he refuses to take the oath. He is dressed up, entered on the lists, and sent under guard to the place where the troops are distributed. Here the chief of the section into which he enters again demands of the young man the fulfilment of military duties, and he again refuses to obey, and in the presence of other soldiers gives the cause for his refusal, saying that, as a Christian, he cannot voluntarily prepare himself to commit murder, which was prohibited even by the laws of Moses. The case takes place in a provincial city. It evokes interest and even sympathy, not only among outsiders, but also among officers, and so the superiors do not dare to apply the usual disciplinary measures for a refusal to serve. However, for decency's sake the young man is locked up in prison, and an inquiry is sent to the higher military authority, requesting it to say what is to be done. From the official point of view a refusal to take part in military service, in which the Tsar himself serves and which is blessed by the church, presents itself as madness, and so they write from St. Petersburg that, since the young man is, no doubt, out of his mind, no severe measures are to be used against him, but he is to be sent to an insane asylum, where his mental health is to be investigated and he is to be cured. He is sent there in the hope that he will stay there, just as happened ten years before with another young man, who in Tver refused to do military service and who was tortured in an insane asylum until he gave in. But even this measure does

not save the military authorities from the inconvenient young man. The doctors examine him, are very much interested in him, and, finding in him no symptoms whatever of any mental trouble, naturally return him to the army. He is received, and, pretending that his refusal and motives are forgotten, they again propose to him that he go to the exercises; but he again, in the presence of other soldiers, refuses, and gives the cause for his refusal. This case more and more attracts the attention of the soldiers and the inhabitants of the town. Again they write to St. Petersburg, and from there comes the decision that the young man be transferred to the army at the frontier, where it is in a state of siege, and where he may be shot for refusing to serve, and where the matter may pass unnoticed, since in that distant country there are few Russians and Christians, and mostly natives and Mohammedans. And so they do. The young man is attached to the troops located in the Transcaspian Territory, and with criminals he is despatched to a chief who is known for his determination and severity. During all this time, with all these transportations from one place to another, the young man is treated rudely: he is kept cold, hungry, and dirty, and his life in general is made a burden for him. But all these tortures do not make him change his determination. In the Transcaspian Territory, when told to stand sentry with his gun, he again refuses to obey. He does not refuse to go and stand near some haystacks, whither he is sent, but he refuses to take his gun, declaring that under no condition would he use violence against any one. All this takes place in the presence of other soldiers. It is impossible to let such a case go unpunished, and the young man is tried for violation of discipline. The trial takes place, and the young man is sentenced to incarceration in a military prison for two years. He is again sent by étapes with other criminals to the Caucasus and is shut up in a prison, where he falls a prey to the uncontrolled power of

the jailer. There he is tormented for one year and six months, but he still refuses to change his decision about taking up arms, and he explains to all those with whom he comes in contact why he does not do so, and at the end of his second year he is discharged before the expiration of his term, by counting, contrary to the law, his time in prison as part of his service, only to get rid of him as quickly as possible. Just like this man, as though having plotted together, act other men in various parts of Russia, and in all those cases the mode of the government's action is as timid, indefinite, and secretive. Some of these men are sent to insane asylums, others are enlisted as scribes and are transferred to service in Siberia, others are made to serve in the forestry department, others are locked up in prisons, and others are fined. Even now a few such men who have refused are sitting in prisons, not for the essential point in the case, the rejection of the legality of the government's action, but for the non-fulfilment of the private demands of the government. Thus an officer of the reserve, who did not keep the authorities informed of his residence and who declared that he would not again serve as a military man, was lately, for not fulfilling the commands of the authorities, fined thirty roubles, which, too, he refused to pay voluntarily. Thus several peasants and soldiers, who lately refused to take part in military exercises and take up arms, were locked up for disobedience and contempt. And such cases of refusing to comply with the government demands which are contrary to Christianity, especially refusals to do military service, have of late occurred not in Russia alone, but even elsewhere. Thus, I know that in Servia men of the so-called sect of Nazarenes constantly refuse to do military service, and the Austrian government has for several years been vainly struggling with them, subjecting them to imprisonment. In the year 1885 there were 130 such refusals. In Switzerland, I know men were incarcerated in

the Chillon Fortress in the year 1890 for refusing to do military service, and they did not change their determination in consequence of their imprisonment. Such refusals have also happened in Prussia. I know of an under-officer of the Guard, who in 1891 declared to the authorities in Berlin that as a Christian he would not continue to serve, and, in spite of all admonitions, threats, and punishments, he stuck to his decision. In France there has of late arisen in the south a community of men, who bear the name of Henschists (this information is received from the Peace Herald, July, 1891), the members of which on the basis of the Christian profession refuse to do military service, and at first were inscribed in hospitals, but now, having increased in numbers, are subjected to punishments for disobedience, but still refuse to take up arms. The socialists, communists, anarchists, with their bombs, riots, and revolutions, are by no means so terrible to the governments as these scattered people, who from various sides refuse to do military service — all of them on the basis of the same well-known teaching. Every government knows how and why to defend itself against revolutionists, and they have means for it, and so are not afraid of these external enemies. But what are the governments to do against those men who point out the uselessness, superfluity, and harmfulness of all governments, and do not struggle with them, but only have no use for them, get along without them, and do not wish to take part in them? The revolutionists say, "The governmental structure is bad for this and that reason — it is necessary to put this or that in its place." But a Christian says, "I know nothing of the governmental structure, about its being good or bad, and do not wish to destroy it for the very reason that I do not know whether it is good or bad, but for the same reason I do not wish to sustain it. I not only do not wish to, but even cannot do so, because what is demanded of me is contrary to my conscience." What is

contrary to a Christian's conscience is all obligations of state — the oath, the taxes, the courts, the army. But on all these obligations the state is founded. The revolutionary enemies struggle with the state from without; but Christianity does not struggle at all — it inwardly destroys all the foundations of government. Among the Russian people, where, especially since the time of Peter I., the protest of Christianity against the government has never ceased, where the structure of life is such that men have gone away by whole communities to Turkey, to China, to uninhabitable lands, and not only are in no need of the government, but always look upon it as an unnecessary burden, and only bear it as a calamity, be it Turkish, Russian, or Chinese — among the Russian people there have of late been occurring more and more frequently cases of the Christian conscious emancipation of separate individuals from submission to the government. And now especially these manifestations are very terrible to the government, because those who refuse frequently do not belong to the so-called lower uncultured classes, but to the people with a medium or higher education, and because these men no longer base their refusals on some mystical exclusive beliefs, as was the case formerly, nor connect them with some superstition or savage practices, as is the case with the Self-Immolators and Runners, but put forth the simplest and clearest truths, which are accessible to all men and recognized by them all. Thus they refuse to pay their taxes voluntarily, because the taxes are used for acts of violence, for salaries to violators and military men, for the construction of prisons, fortresses, cannon, while they, as Christians, consider it sinful and immoral to take part in these things. Those who refuse to take the common oath do so because to promise to obey the authorities, that is, men who are given to acts of violence, is contrary to the Christian teaching; they refuse to take their oath in courts, because the oath is directly forbidden in the Gospel. They

decline to serve in the police, because in connection with these duties they have to use force against their own brothers and torment them, whereas a Christian may not do so. They decline to take part in court proceedings, because they consider every court proceeding a fulfilment of the law of revenge, which is incompatible with the Christian law of forgiveness and love. They decline to take part in all military preparations and in the army, because they do not wish to be and cannot be executioners, and do not want to prepare themselves for the office of executioner. All the motives of these refusals are such that, no matter how despotic a government may be, it cannot punish them openly. To punish them for such refusals, a government must itself irretrievably renounce reason and the good; whereas it assures men that it serves only in the name of reason and of the good. What are the governments to do against these men? Indeed, the governments can kill off, for ever shut up in prisons and at hard labor their enemies, who wish by the exercise of violence to overthrow them; they can bury in gold half of the men, such as they may need, and bribe them; they can subject to themselves millions of armed men, who will be ready to destroy all the enemies of the governments. But what can they do with men who, not wishing to destroy anything, nor to establish anything, wish only for their own sakes, for the sake of their lives, to do nothing which is contrary to the Christian law, and so refuse to fulfil the most common obligations, which are most indispensable to the governments? If they were revolutionists, who preach violence and murder, and who practise all these things, it would be easy to oppose them: part of them would be bribed, part deceived, part frightened into subjection; and those who could not be bribed, or deceived, or frightened, would be declared malefactors and enemies of society, would be executed or locked up, and the crowd would applaud the action of the government. If they were some horrible sectarians who

preached a peculiar faith, it would be possible, thanks to those superstitions of falsehood, which by them are mixed in with their doctrine, to overthrow whatever truth there is in their faith. But what is to be done with men who preach neither revolution, nor any special religious dogmas, but only, because they do not wish to harm any one, refuse to take the oath of allegiance, to pay taxes, to take part in court proceedings, in military service, and in duties on which the whole structure of the government is based? What is to be done with such men? It is impossible to bribe them: the very risk which they take shows their unselfishness. Nor can they be deceived by claiming that God wants it so, because their refusal is based on the explicit, undoubted law of God, which is professed by the very men who wish to make them act contrary to it. Still less is it possible to intimidate them with threats, because the privations and sufferings to which they are subjected for their faith only strengthen their desire, and because it says distinctly in their law that God must be obeyed more than men, and that they should not fear those who may ruin their bodies, but that which may ruin both their bodies and their souls. Nor can they be executed or locked up for ever. These men have a past, and friends, and their manner of thinking and acting is known; all know them as meek, good, peaceful men, and it is impossible to declare them to be malefactors who ought to be removed for the safety of society. The execution of men who by all men are recognized to be good will only call forth defenders of the refusal and commentators on it; and the causes of the refusal need but be made clear, in order that it may become clear to all men that the causes which make these Christians refuse to comply with the demands of the state are the same for all other men, and that all men ought to have done so long ago. In the presence of the refusals of the Christians the governments are in a desperate plight. They see that the prophecy of Christianity is being fulfilled

— it tears asunder the fetters of the fettered and sets free the men who lived in slavery, and they see that this liberation will inevitably destroy those who keep others in slavery. The governments see this; they know that their hours are numbered, and are unable to do anything. All they can do for their salvation is to defer the hour of their ruin. This they do, but their situation is none the less desperate. The situation of the governments is like the situation of a conqueror who wants to save the city that is fired by its own inhabitants. He no sooner puts out the fire in one place than it begins to burn in two other places; he no sooner gives way to the fire and breaks off what is burning in a large building, than even this building begins to burn from two sides. These individual fires are still rare, but having started with a spark, they will not stop until everything is consumed. And just as the governments find themselves in such unprotected straits in the presence of men who profess Christianity, and when but very little is wanting for this force, which seems so powerful and which was reared through so many centuries, to fall to pieces, the public leaders preach that it is not only unnecessary, but even harmful and immoral, for every individual to try and free himself from slavery. It is as though some people, to free a dammed up river, should have all but cut through a ditch, when nothing but an opening is necessary for the water to flow into this ditch and do the rest, and there should appear some people who would persuade them that, rather than let off the water, they should construct above the river a machine with buckets, which, drawing the water up on one side, would drop it into the same river from the other side. But the matter has gone too far: the governments feel their indefensibleness and weakness, and the men of the Christian consciousness are awakening from their lethargy and are beginning to feel their strength. “I brought the fire upon earth,” said Christ, “and how I long for it to burn up!” And this fire is beginning to burn up.



