

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 6 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 TEN Christianity in its true meaning destroys the state. Thus it was understood from the very beginning, and Christ was crucified for this very reason, and thus it has always been understood by men who are not fettered by the necessity of proving the justification of the Christian state. Only when the heads of the states accepted the external nominal Christianity did they begin to invent all those impossible finely spun theories, according to which Christianity was compatible with the state. But for every

sincere and serious man of our time it is quite obvious that true Christianity — the teaching of humility, of forgiveness of offences, of love — is incompatible with the state, with its magnificence, its violence, its executions, and its wars. The profession of true Christianity not only excludes the possibility of recognizing the state, but even destroys its very foundations. But if this is so, and it is true that Christianity is incompatible with the state, there naturally arises the question: “What is more necessary for the good of humanity, what more permanently secures the good of men, the political form of life, or its destruction and the substitution of Christianity in its place?” Some men say that the state is most necessary for humanity, that the destruction of the political form would lead to the destruction of everything worked out by humanity, that the state has been and continues to be the only form of the development of humanity, and that all that evil which we see among the nations who live in the political form is not due to this form, but to the abuses, which can be mended without destruction, and that humanity, without impairing the political form, can develop and reach a high degree of well-being. And the men who think so adduce in confirmation of their opinion philosophic, historic, and even religious arguments, which to them seem incontrovertible. But there are men who assume the opposite, namely, that, as there was a time when humanity lived without a political form, this form is only temporary, and the time must arrive when men shall need a new form, and that this time has arrived even now. And the men who think so also adduce in confirmation of their opinion philosophic, and historic, and religious arguments, which also seem incontrovertible to them. It is possible to write volumes in the defence of the first opinion (they have been written long ago, and there is still no end to them), and there can be written much against it (though but lately begun, many a brilliant thing has been written against it). It is impossible to prove, as

the defenders of the state claim, that the destruction of the state will lead to a social chaos, mutual rapine, murder, and the destruction of all public institutions, and the return of humanity to barbarism; nor can it be proved, as the opponents of the state claim, that men have already become so wise and good that they do not rob or kill one another, that they prefer peace to hostility, that they will themselves without the aid of the state arrange everything they need, and that therefore the state not only does not contribute to all this, but, on the contrary, under the guise of defending men, exerts a harmful and bestializing influence upon them. It is impossible to prove either the one or the other by means of abstract reflections. Still less can it be proved by experience, since the question consists in this, whether the experiment is to be made or not. The question as to whether the time has come for abolishing the state, or not, would be insoluble, if there did not exist another vital method for an incontestable solution of the same. Quite independently of anybody's reflections as to whether the chicks are sufficiently matured for him to drive the hen away from the nest and let the chicks out of their eggs, or whether they are not yet sufficiently matured, the incontestable judges of the case will be the chicks themselves, when, unable to find enough room in their eggs, they will begin to pick them with their bills, and will themselves come out of them. The same is true of the question whether the time for destroying the political form and for substituting another form has come, or not. If a man, in consequence of the higher consciousness matured in him, is no longer able to comply with the demands of the state, no longer finds room in it, and at the same time no longer is in need of the preservation of the political form, the question as to whether men have matured for the change of the political form, or not, is decided from an entirely different side, and just as incontestably as for the chick that has picked its shell, into which no power in the

world can again return it, by the men themselves who have outgrown the state and who cannot be returned to it by any power in the world. "It is very likely that the state was necessary and even now is necessary for all those purposes which you ascribe to it," says the man who has made the Christian life-conception his own, "but all I know is that, on the one hand, I no longer need the state, and, on the other, I can no longer perform those acts which are necessary for the existence of the state. Arrange for yourselves what you need for your lives: I cannot prove either the common necessity, or the common harm of the state; all I know is what I need and what not, what I may do and what not. I know for myself that I do not need any separation from the other nations, and so I cannot recognize my exclusive belonging to some one nation or state, and my subjection to any government; I know in my own case that I do not need all those government offices and courts, which are the product of violence, and so I cannot take part in any of them; I know in my own case that I do not need to attack other nations and kill them, nor defend myself by taking up arms, and so I cannot take part in wars and in preparations for them. It is very likely that there are some people who cannot regard all that as necessary and indispensable. I cannot dispute with them — all I know concerning myself, but that I know incontestably, is that I do not need it all and am not able to do it. I do not need it, and I cannot do it, not because I, my personality, do not want it, but because He who has sent me into life, and has given me the incontestable law for guidance in my life, does not want it." No matter what arguments men may adduce in proof of the danger of abolishing the power of the state and that this abolition may beget calamities, the men who have outgrown the political form can no longer find their place in it. And, no matter what arguments may be adduced to a man who has outgrown the political form, about its indispensableness, he cannot return to it, cannot take part

in the affairs which are denied by his consciousness, just as the full-grown chicks can no longer return into the shell which they have outgrown. "But even if this is so," say the defenders of the existing order, "the abolition of the violence of state would be possible and desirable only if all men became Christians. So long as this is not the case, so long as among men who only call themselves Christians there are men who are no Christians, evil men, who for the sake of their personal lust are prepared to do harm to others, the abolition of the power of state would not only fail to be a good for all the rest, but would even increase their wretchedness. The abolition of the political form of life is undesirable, not only when there is a small proportion of true Christians, but even when all shall be Christians, while in their midst or all about them, among other nations, there shall remain non-Christians, because the non-Christians will with impunity rob, violate, kill the Christians and make their life miserable. What will happen will be that the evil men will with impunity rule the good and do violence to them. And so the power of state must not be abolished until all the bad, rapacious men in the world are destroyed. And as this will not happen for a long time to come, if at all, this power, in spite of the attempts of individual Christians at emancipating themselves from the power of state, must be maintained for the sake of the majority of men." Thus speak the defenders of the state. "Without the state the evil men do violence to the good and rule over them, but the power of state makes it possible for the good to keep the evil in check," they say. But, in asserting this, the defenders of the existing order of things decide in advance the justice of the position which it is for them to prove. In saying that without the power of state the evil men would rule over the good, they take it for granted that the good are precisely those who at the present time have power, and the bad the same who are now subjugated. But it is precisely this that has to be proved. This would be

true only if in our world took place what really does not take place, but is supposed to take place, in China, namely, that the good are always in power, and that, as soon as at the helm of the government stand men who are not better than those over whom they rule, the citizens are obliged to depose them. Thus it is supposed to be in China, but in reality this is not so, and cannot be so, because, in order to overthrow the power of the violating government, it is not enough to have the right to do so — one must also have the force. Consequently this is only assumed to be so even in China; but in our Christian world this has never even been assumed. In our world there is not even any foundation for assuming that better men or the best should rule, and not those who have seized the power and retain it for themselves and for their descendants. Better men are absolutely unable to seize the power and to retain it. In order to get the power and retain it, it is necessary to love power; but love of power is not connected with goodness, but with qualities which are the opposite of goodness, such as pride, cunning, cruelty. Without self-aggrandizement and debasement of others, without hypocrisy, deceit, prisons, fortresses, executions, murders, a power can neither arise nor maintain itself. “If the power of state be abolished, the more evil men will rule over the less evil ones,” say the defenders of the state. But if the Egyptians subjugated the Jews, the Persians the Egyptians, the Macedonians the Persians, the Romans the Greeks, the barbarians the Romans, is it possible that all those who have subjugated were better than those whom they subjugated? And similarly, in the transference of the power in one state from one set of persons to another, has the power always passed into the hands of those who were better? When Louis the Sixteenth. was deposed, and Robespierre and later Napoleon ruled, who did rule? Better or worse men? And when did better men rule, when men from Versailles or from the Commune were in power? or

when Charles the First or Cromwell was at the head of the government? or when Peter the Third was Tsar or when he was killed, and the sovereign was Catherine for one part of Russia and Pugachév for the other? Who was then evil and who good? All men in power assert that their power is necessary in order that the evil men may not do violence to the good, meaning by this that they are those same good men, who protect others against the evil men. But to rule means to do violence, and to do violence means to do what the other man, on whom the violence is exerted, does not wish to have done to him, and what, no doubt, he who exerts the violence would not wish to have done to himself; consequently, to rule means to do to another what we do not wish to have done to ourselves, that is, to do evil. To submit means to prefer suffering to violence. But to prefer suffering to violence means to be good, or at least less evil than those who do to another what they do not wish to have done to themselves. And so all the probabilities are in favor of the fact that not those who are better than those over whom they rule, but, on the contrary, those who are worse, have always been and even now are in power. There may also be worse men among those who submit to the power, but it cannot be that better men should rule over worse men. This was impossible to assume in case of the pagan inexact definition of goodness; but with the Christian lucid and exact definition of goodness and evil, it is impossible to think so. If more or less good men, more or less bad men, cannot be distinguished in the pagan world, the Christian conception of good and evil has so clearly defined the symptoms of the good and the evil, that they can no longer be mistaken. According to Christ's teaching the good are those who humble themselves, suffer, do not resist evil with force, forgive offences, love their enemies; the evil are those who exalt themselves, rule, struggle, and do violence to people, and so, according to Christ's teaching, there is no doubt as to where the good are among the ruling and

the subjugated. It even sounds ridiculous to speak of ruling Christians. The non-Christians, that is, those who base their lives on the worldly good, must always rule over Christians, over those who assume that their lives consist in the renunciation of this good. Thus it has always been and it has become more and more definite, in proportion as the Christian teaching has been disseminated and elucidated. The more the true Christianity spread and entered into the consciousness of men, the less it was possible for Christians to be among the rulers, and the easier it grew for non-Christians to rule over Christians. "The abolition of the violence of state at a time when not all men in society have become true Christians would have this effect, that the bad would rule over the good and would with impunity do violence to them," say the defenders of the existing order of life. "The bad will rule over the good and will do violence to them." But it has never been different, and it never can be. Thus it has always been since the beginning of the world, and thus it is now. The bad always rule over the good and always do violence to them. Cain did violence to Abel, cunning Jacob to trustful Esau, deceitful Laban to Jacob; Caiaphas and Pilate ruled over Christ, the Roman emperors ruled over a Seneca, an Epictetus, and good Romans who lived in their time. Ivan the Fourth, with his opríchniks, the drunken syphilitic Peter with his fools, the harlot Catherine with her lovers, ruled over the industrious religious Russians of their time and did violence to them. William rules over the Germans, Stambulov over the Bulgarians, Russian officials over the Russian people. The Germans ruled over the Italians, now they rule over Hungarians and Slavs; the Turks have ruled over Greeks and Slavs; the English rule over Hindus; the Mongolians rule over the Chinese. Thus, whether the political violence be abolished or not, the condition of the good men who are violated by the bad will not be changed thereby. It is absolutely impossible to frighten men with this, that the



bad will rule over the good, because what they are frightened with is precisely what has always been and cannot be otherwise. The whole pagan history of humanity consists of only those cases when the worse seized the power over the less bad, and, having seized it, maintained it by cruelties and cunning, and, proclaiming themselves as guardians of justice and defenders of the good against the bad, ruled over the good. As to the rulers' saying that, if it were not for their power, the worse would do violence to the good, it means only this, that the violators in power do not wish to cede this power to other violators, who may wish to take it from them. But, in saying this, the rulers only give themselves away. They say that their power, that is, violence, is necessary for the defence of men against some other violators, or such as may still appear.

AUTHOR'S FOOTNOTE: Comically striking in this respect is the naive assertion of the Russian authorities in doing violence to other nationalities, the Poles, Baltic Germans, Jews. The Russian government practises extortion on its subjects, for centuries has not troubled itself about the Little Russians in Poland, nor about the Letts in the Baltic provinces, nor about the Russian peasants who have been exploited by all manner of men, and suddenly it becomes a defender of the oppressed against the oppressors, those very oppressors whom it oppresses. [End of Footnote.] The exercise of violence is dangerous for the very reason that, as soon as it is exercised, all the arguments adduced by the violators can, not only with the same, but even with greater force, be applied against them. They speak of the past, and more frequently of the imaginary future of violence, but themselves without cessation commit acts of violence. "You say that men used to rob and kill others, and you are afraid that men will rob and kill one another, if your power does not exist. That may be so or not, but your ruining thousands of men in prisons, at hard labor, in fortresses, in exile; your ruining millions of families with your militarism, and

destroying millions of people physically and morally, is not imaginary, but real violence, against which, according to your own statement, people ought to fight by exercising violence. Consequently, those evil men, against whom, according to your own reflection, it is absolutely necessary to exercise violence, are you yourselves," is what the violated ought to say to the violators, and the non-Christians have always spoken and thought and acted in this manner. If the violated are worse than those who exercise violence, they attack them and try to overthrow them, and, under favorable conditions, do overthrow them, or, what is most usual, enter the ranks of the violators and take part in their acts of violence. Thus the very thing with which the defenders of the state frighten men, that, if there did not exist a violating power, the bad would be ruling over the good, is what without cessation has been accomplished in the life of humanity, and so the abolition of political violence can in no case be the cause of the increase of the violence of the bad over the good. When the violence of the government is destroyed, acts of violence will, probably, be committed by other men than before; but the sum of the violence will in no case be increased, simply because the power will pass from the hands of one set of men into those of another. "The violence of state will be stopped only when the bad men in society shall be destroyed," say the defenders of the existing order, meaning by this that, since there will always be bad men, violence will never come to a stop. That would be true only if what they assume actually existed, namely, that the violators are better, and that the only means for the emancipation of men from evil is violence. In that case violence could, indeed, never be stopped. But as this is not the case, and the very opposite is true, namely, that it is not the better men who exercise violence against the bad, but the bad who do violence to the good, and that outside of violence, which never puts a stop to evil, there is another

means for the abolition of violence, the assertion that violence will never stop is not correct. Violence grows less and less, and must evidently stop, but not, as the defenders of the existing order imagine, because men who are subject to violence will in consequence of the influence exerted upon them by the governments become better and better (in consequence of this they will, on the contrary, always become worse), but because, since all men are constantly growing better and better, even the worst men in power, growing less and less evil, will become sufficiently good to be incapable of exercising violence. The forward movement of humanity takes place, not in this way, that the best elements of society, seizing the power and using violence against those men who are in their power, make them better, as the conservatives and revolutionists think, but, in the first and chief place, in that all men in general unswervingly and without cessation more and more consciously acquire the Christian life-conception, and in the second place, in that, even independently of the conscious spiritual activity of men, men unconsciously, in consequence of the very process of seizure of power by one set of men and transference to another set, and involuntarily are brought to a more Christian relation to life. This process takes place in the following manner: the worst elements of society, having seized the power and being in possession of it, under the influence of the sobering quality which always accompanies it, become less and less cruel and less able to make use of the cruel forms of violence, and, in consequence of this, give place to others, in whom again goes on the process of softening and, so to speak, unconscious Christianization. What takes place in men is something like the process of boiling. All the men of the majority of the non-Christian life-conception strive after power and struggle to obtain it. In this struggle the most cruel and coarse, and the least Christian elements of society, by doing violence to the meeker, more Christian

people, who are more sensible to the good, rise to the higher strata of society. And here with the men in this condition there takes place what Christ predicted, saying: "Woe unto you that are rich, that are full now, and when all are glorified." What happens is that men in power, who are in possession of the consequences of power — of glory and wealth — having reached certain different aims, which they have set to themselves in their desires, recognize their vanity and return to the position which they left. Charles the Fifth, Ivan the Fourth, Alexander the First, having recognized all the vanity and evil of power, renounced it, because they saw all its evil and were no longer able calmly to make use of violence as of a good deed, as they had done before. But it is not only a Charles and an Alexander who travel on this road and recognize the vanity and evil of power: through this unconscious process of softening of manners passes every man who has acquired the power toward which he has been striving, not only every minister, general, millionaire, merchant, but also every head of an office, who has obtained the place he has been ten years waiting for, every well-to-do peasant, who has laid by a hundred or two hundred roubles. Through this process pass not only separate individuals, but also aggregates of men, whole nations. The temptations of power and of everything which it gives, of wealth, honors, luxurious life, present themselves as a worthy aim for the activity of men only so long as the power is not attained; but the moment a man attains it, they reveal their emptiness and slowly lose their force of attraction, like clouds, which have form and beauty only from a distance: one needs but enter them, in order that that which seemed beautiful in them should disappear. Men who have attained power and wealth, frequently the very men who have gained them, more frequently their descendants, stop being so anxious for power and so cruel in attaining it. Having through experience, under the influence of Christianity, learned the vanity of the fruits of

violence, men, at times in one, at others in a few generations, lose those vices which are evoked by the passion for power and wealth, and, becoming less cruel, do not hold their position, and are pushed out of power by other, less Christian, more evil men, and return to strata of society lower in position, but higher in morality, increasing the average of the Christian consciousness of all men. But immediately after them other, worse, coarser, less Christian elements of society rise to the top, again are subjected to the same process as their predecessors, and again in one or a few generations, having experienced the vanity of the fruits of violence and being permeated by Christianity, descend to the level of the violated, and again make place for new, less coarse violators than the preceding ones, but coarser than those whom they oppress. Thus, despite the fact that the power remains externally the same that it was, there is with every change of men in power a greater increase in the number of men who by experience are brought to the necessity of accepting the Christian life-conception, and with every change the coarsest, most cruel, and least Christian of all enter into the possession of the power, but they are such as are constantly less coarse and cruel and more Christian than their predecessors. Violence selects and attracts the worst elements of society, works them over, and, improving and softening them, returns them to society. Such is the process by means of which Christianity, in spite of the violence which is exercised by the power of the state and which impedes the forward movement of humanity, takes possession of men more and more. Christianity is penetrating into the consciousness of men, not only despite the violence exerted by the power, but even by means of it. And thus the assertion of the defenders of the political structure that, if the violence of the state be abolished, the evil men will rule over the good, not only does not prove that this (the ruling of the bad over the good) is dangerous,

for it is precisely what is taking place now, but, on the contrary, proves that the violence of the state, which gives the bad a chance to rule over the good, is the very evil which it is desirable to destroy, and which is continuously destroyed by life itself. "But even if it were true that the violence of the state will come to an end when those who are in power shall become Christian enough to renounce the power of their own choice, and there shall no longer be found any men who are prepared to take their places, and if it is true that this process is taking place," say the defenders of the existing order, "when will that be? If eighteen hundred years have passed and there are still so many volunteers who are ready to rule, and so few who are ready to submit, there is no probability that this will happen very soon, or ever at all. "If there are, as there have been among all men, such as prefer to refuse power rather than to use it, the supply of men who prefer ruling to submitting is so great that it is hard to imagine the time when it shall be exhausted. "For this process of the Christianization of all men to take place, for all men one after another to pass over from the pagan concept of life to the Christian, and voluntarily renounce power and wealth, and for no one to desire to make use of them, it is necessary that not only all those rude, semisavage men, who are entirely incapable of adopting Christianity and following it, and of whom there are always such a great number amidst every Christian society, but also all savage and non-Christian nations in general, of whom there are so many outside the Christian society, should be made Christian. And so, even if we admit that the process of Christianization will some day be accomplished in the case of all men, we must assume, judging from how much the matter has advanced in eighteen hundred years, that this will happen in several times eighteen hundred years — and so it is impossible and useless to think now of the impossible abolition of power, and all we should think of is

that the power should be vested in the best of hands." Thus retort the defenders of the existing order. And this reflection would be quite correct if the transition of men from one concept of life to another took place only by force of the one process where every man learns individually and one after another by experience the vanity of power, and by an inner way reaches the Christian truths. This process takes place without cessation, and by this way men one after another pass over to the side of Christianity. But men pass over to the side of Christianity not by this inner path alone; there is also an external method, with which the gradualness of this transition is destroyed. The transition of men from one structure of life to another does not always take place in the manner in which the sand is poured out from an hour-glass — one kernel of sand after another, from the first to the last — but rather like water pouring into a vessel that is immersed in the water, when it at first admits the water evenly and slowly at one side, and then, from the weight of the water already taken in, suddenly dips down fast and almost all at once receives all the water which it can hold. The same occurs with societies of men at the transition from one concept, and so from one structure of life, to another. It is only at first that one after another slowly and gradually receives the new truth by an inner way and follows it through life; but after a certain diffusion it is no longer received in an internal manner, nor gradually, but all at once, almost involuntarily. And so there is no truth in the reflection of the defenders of the existing order that, if in the course of eighteen hundred years only a small part of mankind has passed over to the side of Christianity, it will take several times eighteen hundred years before the rest of humanity will pass over to its side; there is no truth in it, because with this reflection no attention is paid to any other than the internal attainment of the truth, and the transition from one form of life to another. This other method of attaining a newly revealed

truth and transition to a new structure of life consists in this, that men do not attain the truth simply because they perceive it with a prophetic feeling or experience of life, but also because at a certain stage of the dissemination of the truth all men who stand on a lower stage of development accept it all at once, out of confidence in those who have accepted it in an internal way, and apply it to life. Every new truth, which changes the composition of human life and moves humanity forward, is at first accepted by only a very small number of men, who understand it in an internal way. The rest, who out of confidence had accepted the previous truth, on which the existing order is based, always oppose the dissemination of the new truth. But since, in the first place, men do not stand still, but incessantly move forward, comprehending the truth more and more, and approaching it with their lives, and, in the second place, all of them, through their age, education, and race, are predisposed to a gradation of men, from those who are most capable to comprehend newly revealed truths in an internal way to those who are least capable to do so, the men who stand nearest to those who have attained the truth in an internal way one after another, at first after long periods of time, and then more and more frequently, pass over to the side of the new truth, and the number of men who recognize the new truth grows larger and larger, and the truth grows all the time more and more comprehensible. The greater the number of men who attain the truth and the more the truth is comprehensible, the more confidence is evoked in the rest of the men, who in their ability to comprehend stand on a lower stage, and the easier does the attainment of the truth grow for them, and the greater is the number who make the truth their own. Thus the movement keeps accelerating and accelerating, expanding and expanding, like a snowball, until there germinates a public opinion which is in accord with the new truth, and the remaining mass of



men no longer singly, but in a body, under the pressure of this force, passes over to the side of the new truth, and a new structure of life is established, which is in agreement with this truth. Men who pass over to the side of a new truth which has reached a certain degree of dissemination always do so all at once, in a mass, and they are like that ballast with which every vessel is laden all at once for its stable equilibrium and regular course. If there were no ballast, the vessel would not stay in the water, and would be changing its course with the least change in conditions. This ballast, though at first it seems to be superfluous and even to retard the ship's motion, is a necessary condition of its regular motion. The same is true of that mass of men who, not one by one, but always all together, under the influence of a new public opinion, pass over from one concept of life to another. By its inertia this mass always retards the rapid, frequent transitions, unverified by human wisdom, from one structure of life to another, and for a long time retains every truth which, verified by a long experience of a struggle, has entered into the consciousness of humanity. And so there is no truth in the reflection that, if only a small, a very small, part of humanity has attained the Christian truth in the course of eighteen centuries, the whole of humanity will attain it only in many, many times eighteen hundred years, that is, that it is so far away that we of the present time need not even think of it. It is untrue, because the men who stand on a lower stage of development, those very nations and people whom the defenders of the existing order represent as a hindrance for the realization of the Christian structure of life, are the same people who always at once, in a mass, pass over to the side of a truth which is accepted by public opinion. Therefore the change in the life of humanity, the one in consequence of which men in power will renounce the power and among the men who submit to power there will not be found such as are desirous of seizing it, will not

arrive when all men one after another to the very last shall have consciously attained the Christian life-conception, but when there arises a definite, easily comprehensible Christian public opinion which will conquer all that inert mass that is unable by an internal way to attain the truths and so is always subject to the effect of public opinion. But public opinion to arise and be diffused does not need hundreds and thousands of years, and has the property of acting infectiously upon people and with great rapidity embracing large numbers of men. "But if it is even true," the defenders of the existing order will say, "that public opinion, at a certain stage of its definiteness and lucidity, is able to make the inert mass of men outside the Christian societies — the non-Christian nations — and corrupt and coarse men, who live within the societies, submit to it, what are the symptoms that this Christian public opinion has arisen and may take the place of violence? "It is not right for us to take the risk and reject violence, by which the existing order is maintained, and to depend on the impalpable and indefinite force of public opinion, leaving it to the savage men outside and inside the societies with impunity to rob, kill, and in every way violate the Christians. "If with the aid of the power we with difficulty eddy away from the non-Christian elements, which are ever ready to inundate us and destroy all the progress of the Christian civilization, is there, in the first place, a probability that public opinion can take the part of this force and make us secure, and, in the second, how are we to find that moment when public opinion has become so strong that it can take the place of the power? To remove the power and to depend for our self-defence on nothing but public opinion means to act as senselessly as would a man who in a menagerie would throw away his weapons and let out all the lions and tigers from their cages, depending on the fact that the animals in the cages and in the presence of heated rods appeared tame. "And so the

men who have the power, who by fate or by God are placed in the position of the ruling, have no right to risk the ruin of all the progress of civilization, only because they would like to make an experiment as to whether public opinion can take the place of the protection of power, and so must not give up their power." The French writer, Alphonse Karr, now forgotten, has said somewhere, when speaking of the impossibility of abolishing capital punishment, "Que Messieurs les assassins commencent par nous donner l'exemple" [let the murderers show us the way to abolition by their example] and many times after that have I heard the repetition of this joke by men who thought that with these words they gave a conclusive and clever argument against the abolition of capital punishment. And yet it is impossible more lucidly to express all that falseness of the argument of those who think that the governments cannot give up their power so long as men are capable of it, than by this very joke. "Let the assassins," say the defenders of the violence of state, "set us the example, by abolishing murder, and then we shall abolish it." But the assassins say the same, only with greater right. The assassins say, "Let those who have undertaken to teach and guide us set us the example of abolishing murder, and then we will, follow them." And they do not say so for a joke, but in all seriousness, because such indeed is the state of affairs. "We cannot desist from violence, because we are on all sides surrounded by violators." Nothing in our day interferes more than this false consideration with the forward motion of humanity and the establishment among it of that structure of life which is already proper for its present consciousness. The men in power are convinced that it is only violence that moves and guides men, and so they boldly use violence for the maintenance of the present order of things. But the existing order is not maintained through violence, but through public opinion, the effect of which is impaired by violence. Thus the activity of violence

weakens and impairs precisely what it intends to maintain. Violence, in the best case, if it does not pursue only the personal ends of men in power, always denies and condemns by the one immovable form of the law what for the most part has been denied and condemned before by public opinion, but with this difference, that, while public opinion denies and condemns all acts which are contrary to the moral law, embracing in its condemnation the most varied propositions, the law which is supported by violence condemns and persecutes only a certain, very narrow order of acts, thus, as it were, justifying all the acts of the same order which have not entered into its definition. Public opinion has ever since the time of Moses considered avarice, debauchery, and cruelty to be evil, and has condemned them; and this public opinion denies and condemns every kind of a manifestation of avarice — not only the acquisition of another man's property by means of violence, deceit, and cunning, but also a cruel usufruct of the same; it condemns every kind of debauchery, be it fornication with a concubine, or a slave, a divorced wife, or even one's own wife; it condemns every cruelty which is expressed in assaults, in bad treatment, in the murder, not only of men, but also of animals. But the law, which is based on violence, prosecutes only certain forms of avarice, such as theft, rascality, and certain forms of debauchery and cruelty, such as the violation of marital fidelity, murders, crippling — therefore, as it were, permitting all those phases of avarice, debauchery, and cruelty which do not fit in with the narrow definition, which is subject to misinterpretations. But not only does violence distort public opinion — it also produces in men that pernicious conviction that men are not moved by spiritual force, which is the source of every forward movement of humanity, but by violence — that very action which not only does not bring people nearer to truth, but always removes them from it. This delusion is pernicious in that it compels men

to neglect the fundamental force of their life — their spiritual activity — and to transfer all their attention and energy to the superficial, idle, and for the most part harmful, activity of violence. This delusion is like the one men would be in if they wished to make a locomotive move by turning its wheels with their hands, forgetting entirely that the prime cause of its motion is the expansion of steam and not the motion of the wheels. Men who would turn the wheels with their hands and with levers would produce nothing but a semblance of motion, in the meantime bending the wheels and interfering with the possibility of the locomotive's real motion. It is this that men do when they want to move men by means of external violence. Men say that a Christian life without violence cannot be established, because there are savage nations outside of Christian society — in Africa, in Asia (some people represent the Chinese as such a peril for our civilization) — and there are such savage, corrupt, and, according to the new theory of heredity, confirmed criminals amidst Christian societies; and that violence is needed for the purpose of keeping either from destroying our civilization. But those savage men, outside and within the societies, with whom we frighten ourselves and others, have never submitted to violence, and are not even now conquered by it. Nations have never subjugated other nations by violence alone. If a nation which subjugated another stood on a lower stage of development, there was always repeated the phenomenon that it did not introduce its structure of life by means of violence, but, on the contrary, always submitted to the structure of life which existed in the conquered nation. If a nation, crushed by force, is subjugated or close to subjugation, it is so only through public opinion, and by no means through violence, which, on the contrary, provokes the nation more and more. If men have ever been subjugated by whole nations to a new religious confession, and by whole nations have been baptized or have passed

over to Mohammedanism, these transformations did not take place because men in power compelled them to do so (violence has, on the contrary, more frequently encouraged the movements in the opposite direction), but because public opinion compelled them to do so; but the nations that were compelled by force to accept the faiths of their conquerors have never accepted them. The same is true in respect to those savage elements which exist within the societies: it is not the increase nor the decrease of the severity of punishments, nor the change of prisons, nor the increase of the police, that diminish or increase the number of crimes — it is changed only in consequence of the change in public opinion. No severities have eradicated duels and vendettas in some countries. No matter how much the Circassians may be punished for theft, they continue to steal out of bravado, because not one maiden will marry a man who has not shown his daring, by stealing a horse, or at least a sheep. If men shall stop fighting duels and Circassians shall stop stealing, this will not be so because they are afraid of punishment (the fear of being punished only increases the charm of the daring), but because public opinion will be changed. The same is true in all other crimes. Violence can never destroy what is accepted by public opinion. On the contrary, public opinion need only be diametrically opposed to violence to destroy its every action, as has always been the case with every martyrdom. We do not know what would happen if no violence were exerted against hostile nations and criminal elements of society. But that the employment of violence at the present time does not subjugate either of them, that we know from protracted experience. Indeed, how can we subjugate by force the nations whose whole education, all whose traditions, even religious teaching, leads them to see the highest virtue in a struggle with their enslavers and in striving after liberty? And how are we forcibly to eradicate crimes in the midst of our societies, when what by the

governments are considered to be crimes are considered to be virtues by public opinion. It is possible by means of violence to destroy such nations and such men, as is indeed done, but it is impossible to subjugate them. The judge of everything, the fundamental force which moves men and nations, has always been the one invisible, impalpable force — the resultant of all the spiritual forces of a certain aggregate of men and of all humanity, which is expressed in public opinion. Violence only weakens this force, retards, and distorts it, and puts in its place another activity, which is not only not useful, but even harmful for the forward movement of humanity. To subjugate to Christianity all the wild people outside the Christian world — all the Zulus, Manchurians, and Chinese, whom many consider to be wild — and the savages within the Christian world, there is one, only one means — the dissemination among these nations of a Christian public opinion, which is established only through a Christian life, Christian acts, Christian examples. And so in order to conquer the nations which have remained unconquered by Christianity, the men of our time, who possess one, and only one, means for this purpose, do precisely the opposite of what might attain their end. To conquer to Christianity the wild nations, who do not touch us and who do not in any way provoke us to oppress them, we — instead of leaving them first of all alone, and, in case of necessity or of a wish to get in closer relations with them, acting upon them only through a Christian relation to them, through the Christian teaching as proved by truly Christian acts of suffering, humility, abstinence, purity, brotherhood, love — begin by this, that we open among them new markets for our commerce, with nothing but our advantage in view, seize their land, that is, rob them, sell them wine, tobacco, opium, that is, corrupt them, and establish among them our order, teach them violence and all its methods, that is, the following of nothing but the animal law of struggle, below which no

man can descend, and we do everything which can be done in order to conceal from them whatever of Christianity there is in us. And after that we send to them about two dozen missionaries, who prattle some hypocritical ecclesiastic absurdities and, in the shape of incontrovertible proofs of the impossibility of applying the Christian truths to life, adduce these our experiments at the Christianization of the savages. The same is true of the so-called criminals, who live within our societies. To subjugate these men to Christianity, there is but one, the only way — the Christian public opinion, which can be established among these men only by means of the true Christian teaching, confirmed by a true, Christian example of life. And so, to preach this Christian teaching and confirm it by a Christian example, we establish among these people agonizing prisons, guillotines, gallows, capital punishments, preparations for murder, for which we use all our strength; we establish for the common people idolatrous doctrines, which are to stupefy them; we establish the governmental sale of intoxicants — wine, tobacco, opium; we establish even prostitution; we give the land to those who do not need it; we establish spectacles of senseless luxury amidst wretchedness; we destroy every possibility of every semblance of a Christian public opinion; we cautiously destroy the established Christian public opinion — and then we quote these very men, who have carefully been corrupted by ourselves, and whom we lock up, like wild beasts, in places from which they cannot get away, and in which they grow more bestial still, or whom we kill, as examples of the impossibility of acting upon them otherwise than through violence. What takes place is like what happens when conscientious ignorant physicians place a patient who has been cured by the force of Nature under most unhygienic conditions and stuff him full of poisonous medicines, and then claim that it was only thanks to their hygiene and care that the patient did not die,



whereas the sick man would have been well long ago, if they had left him alone. Violence, which is put forth as the instrument for maintaining the Christian structure of life, not only does not produce this effect, but, on the contrary, prevents the social structure from being what it could and should be. The social structure is such as it is, not thanks to violence, but in spite of it. And so there is no truth in the assertion of the defenders of the existing order, that, if violence barely keeps the evil non-Christian elements of humanity from attacking us, the abolition of violence and the substitution of public opinion for it will not protect humanity. It is not true, because violence does not protect humanity, but, on the contrary, deprives humanity of the one possibility of a true protection through the establishment and diffusion of the Christian public opinion as regards the existing order of life. Only with the abolition of violence will Christian public opinion cease to be corrupt, and receive the possibility of an unimpeded diffusion, and men will not direct their strength toward what they do not need, but toward the one spiritual force which moves them. "But how can we reject the visible, palpable protection of the policeman with his revolver, and depend on something invisible, impalpable — the public opinion? Does it still exist, or not? Above all else, we know the order of things in which we live. Be it good or bad, we know its defects and are used to it; we know how to act, what to do under present conditions; but what will happen when we reject them and depend on something invisible, impalpable, and entirely unknown?" And the uncertainty upon which men enter, when rejecting the known order of things, seems terrible to them. It is all very well to be afraid of the uncertainty, when our position is firm and secure; but our position is not only not secure — we know for certain that we are standing on the brink of perdition. If we have to be afraid of something, let us be afraid of what is really terrible, and not of what we only imagine to be

terrible. In our fear to make an effort to tear ourselves away from the conditions which ruin us, only because the future is not quite certain to us, we resemble the passengers of a sinking ship, who, for fear of stepping into a boat which is to take them to the shore, retreat to their cabins and refuse to come out from them; or those sheep which, out of fear of the fire which has enveloped the whole yard, press close under the penthouses and do not walk through the open gates. How can we, who are standing on the threshold of a war of inner revolutions, which is terrifying by its wretchedness and destructiveness, and in comparison with which, as those who are preparing it say, the terrors of the year '93 will be play, speak of a danger which is threatened us by the Dahomeans, the Zulus, etcetera, who live far, far away, and do not think of attacking us, and by those few thousands of robbers, thieves, and murderers, whom we ourselves have stupefied and corrupted, and whose number is not at all diminishing as the result of all our courts, prisons, and capital punishments? Besides, this fear of the abolition of the visible protection of the policeman is preeminently a fear of city people, that is, of people who live under abnormal and artificial conditions. Men who live under normal conditions of life, not amidst cities, but amidst Nature, struggling with it, live without this protection and know how little violence can protect them against the actual dangers with which they are surrounded. In this fear there is something morbid, which depends mainly on those false conditions under which many of us live and have grown up. An alienist told me how one summer day he was accompanied by his insane patients as far as the gate of the hospital which he was leaving. "Come with me to the city," the doctor proposed to them. The patients agreed to it, and a small crowd followed the doctor. But the farther they proceeded along the street, where took place the free motion of sound men, the more did they feel timid, and the more did they

press close to the doctor, retarding his walk. Finally, they all began to ask him to take them back to the hospital, to their senseless, but habitual mode of life, to their guards, their blows, their long sleeves, their solitary cells. Even thus men press close and hanker after their senseless structure of life, their factories, courts, prisons, capital punishments, wars, though Christianity calls them to freedom, to the free, rational life of the future, the imminent age. Men say, "By what shall we be made secure, when the existing order is destroyed? What will the new orders be which will take the place of those of the present time, and in what will they consist? So long as we do not know how our life will be composed, we shall not move on or budge from our place." This demand is what the explorer of new countries might put forth, in demanding a detailed description of the country into which he is entering. If the life of the individual man, in passing from one age to another, were fully known to him, he would have no reason for living. The same is true of the life of humanity: if it had a programme of the life which awaits it as it enters upon its new age, this would be the surest symptom that it is not living, does not move on, but is whirling about in one spot. The conditions of the new structure of life cannot be known to us, because they have to be worked out by ourselves. In this alone does life consist, namely, in recognizing the unknown and conforming our activity to this new cognition. In this does the life of every individual and the life of human societies and of humanity consist.

CHAPTER ELEVEN The condition of Christian humanity, with its prisons, hard labor, gallows, with its factories, accumulations of capital, with its taxes, churches, saloons, houses of ill fame, ever growing armaments, and millions of stupefied men, who are ready, like chained dogs, to thrust themselves upon those the masters may set them on, would be terrible if it were the product of violence, whereas it is

above all the product of public opinion. But what is established by public opinion not only can be, but actually is, destroyed by it. Hundreds of millions in money, tens of millions of disciplined men, implements of destruction of wonderful power, with an organization which of late has been carried to the highest degree of perfection, with a whole army of men whose calling it is to deceive and hypnotize the masses, and all this, by means of electricity, which annihilates space, subjected to men, who not only consider such a structure of society to be advantageous for them, but even such that without it they would inevitably perish, and who, therefore, use every effort of their minds in order to maintain it — what an invincible force, one would think! And yet, one needs but get a conception of what it all tends to and what no one can keep back — that among men there will be established a Christian public opinion, with the same force and universality as the pagan public opinion, and that it will take the place of the pagan one, that the majority of men will be just as ashamed of all participation in violence and its exploitation as men are now ashamed of rascality, stealing, beggary, cowardice, and immediately this complex and apparently powerful structure of life falls of its own accord, without any struggle. It is not necessary for anything new to enter into the consciousness of men, but only for the mist to disappear, which conceals from men the true meaning of some acts of violence, in order that this may happen and the growing Christian public opinion should get the better of the obsolescent pagan public opinion, which admitted and justified acts of violence. All that is needed is that men should feel as much ashamed of doing acts of violence, of taking part in them, and exploiting them, as it is now a disgrace to pass for a rascal, a thief, a coward, a beggar. And it is precisely this that is beginning to happen. We do not notice it, just as men do not notice any motion, when they move together with everything surrounding them. It is

true, the structure of life in its main features remains as violent in nature as it was one hundred years ago, and not only the same, but in some relations, especially in the preparations for war and in the wars themselves, it appears to be even more cruel; but the germinating Christian public opinion, which at a certain stage of its development is to change the whole pagan structure of life, is beginning to be active. The dried-up tree stands apparently as firm as before — it even looks firmer, because it is rougher — but it is already weakened at the pith and is getting ready to fall. The same is true of the present structure of life, which is based on violence. The external condition of men is the same: some are the violators, as before, and others are the violated; but the view of the violators and the violated upon the meaning and worth of the position of either has changed. The violating people, that is, those who take part in the government, and those who make use of the violence, that is, the rich, no longer represent, as formerly, the flower of society and the ideal of human well-being and grandeur, toward which all the violated used to strive. Now very frequently it is not so much the violated who strive after the position of the violators and try to imitate them, as the violators, who frequently of their own free will renounce the advantages of their position, choose the condition of the violated, and try in simplicity of life to emulate the violated. To say nothing of the now openly despised occupations and offices, such as those of spies, agents of secret police, usurers, saloon-keepers, a large number of occupations of violators, which formerly used to be considered respectable, such as those of policemen, courtiers, members of courts, the administration, the clergy, the military, monopolists, bankers, not only are not considered by all to be desirable, but are even condemned by a certain most respectable circle of men. There are now men who voluntarily renounce these positions, which heretofore were considered to be above reproach, and who

prefer less advantageous positions, which are not connected with violence. It is not only men of the state, but also rich men, who, not from a religious feeling, as used to be the case, but only from a peculiar sensitiveness for the germinating public opinion, refuse to receive their inherited fortunes, considering it just to use only so much as they earn by their own labor. The conditions of the participant in the government and of the rich man no longer present themselves, as they presented themselves formerly and even now present themselves among the non-Christian nations, as unquestionably honorable and worthy of respect and as divine blessings. Very sensitive, moral men (they are for the most part the most highly cultured) avoid these conditions and prefer more modest ones, which are independent of violence. The best young men, at an age when they are not yet corrupted by life and when they choose a career, prefer the activities of physicians, technologists, teachers, artists, writers, even simply of agriculturists, who live by their own labor, to positions in courts, in the administration, in the church, and in the army, which are paid by the government, or the positions of men who live on their own incomes. The majority of monuments which are now erected are no longer in commemoration of men of state, of generals, and less certainly not of the rich, but of the learned, of artists, of inventors, of men who have not only had nothing in common with the governments, or with the authorities, but who frequently have struggled against them. It is not so much men of state and rich men, as learned men and artists, who are extolled in poetry, represented in plastic art, and honored with festive jubilees. The best men of our time tend toward these most honored positions, and so the circle from which the men of state and the rich come is growing smaller and smaller, so that in intellect, culture, and especially in moral qualities, the men who now stand at the head of governments, and the rich no longer represent,

as in olden times, the flower of society, but, on the contrary, stand below the average. As in Russia and in Turkey, so in America and in France, no matter how much the governments may change their officials, the majority of them are selfish and venal men, who stand on so low a level of morality that they do not satisfy even those low demands of simple integrity which the governments make upon them. We now frequently get to hear the naive regrets of men of state, because the best men by some strange accident, as they think, are always in the hostile camp. It is as though men should complain that by a strange accident it is always men with little refinement, who are not particularly good, that become hangmen. The majority of rich men, similarly, in our time are no longer composed of the most refined and cultured men of society, as used to be the case, but of coarse accumulators of wealth, who are interested only in their enrichment, for the most part by dishonest means, or of degenerating descendants of these accumulators, who not only do not play any prominent part in society, but in the majority of cases are subject to universal contempt. Not only is the circle of men, from which the servants of the government and the rich men are chosen, growing all the time smaller and smaller, and more and more debased, but these men themselves no longer ascribe to the positions which they hold their former significance, and frequently, being ashamed of them, to the disadvantage of the cause which they serve, neglect to carry out what by their position they are called upon to do. Kings and emperors have the management of hardly anything, hardly ever have the courage to make internal changes and to enter into new external political conditions, but for the most part leave the solution of these questions to state institutions or to public opinion. All their duties reduce themselves to being the representatives of state unity and supremacy. But even this duty they are performing worse and worse. The majority of them not only

do not keep themselves in their former inaccessible grandeur, but, on the contrary, are becoming more and more democratized, and even keep low company, throwing off their last external prestige, that is, violating precisely what they are called upon to maintain. The same takes place among the military. The military men of the higher ranks, instead of encouraging the coarseness and cruelty of the soldiers, which are necessary for their business, themselves disseminate culture among the military, preach humanitarianism, and frequently themselves share the socialistic convictions of the masses, and reject war. In the late plots against the Russian government, many of those mixed up with them were army men. The number of these military plotters is growing larger and larger. Very frequently it happens, as was the case lately, that the soldiers, who are called upon to pacify the inhabitants, refuse to shoot at them. Military bravado is directly condemned by army men themselves, and frequently serves as a subject for ridicule. The same is true of judges and prosecuting attorneys: judges, whose duty it is to judge and sentence criminals, manage the proceedings in such a way as to discharge them, so that the Russian government, to have men sentenced that it wants to have sentenced, never subjects them to common courts, but turns them over to so-called military courts, which represent but a semblance of courts. The same is true of prosecuting attorneys, who frequently refuse to prosecute, and, instead of prosecuting, circumvent the law, defending those whom they should prosecute. Learned jurists, who are obliged to justify the violence of power, more and more deny the right to punish, and in its place introduce theories of irresponsibility, and even not of the correction, but of the cure of those whom they call criminals. Jailers and superintendents of hard-labor convicts for the most part become defenders of those whom they are supposed to torture. Gendarmes and spies constantly save those whom they are supposed to ruin.



Clerical persons preach toleration, often also the negation of violence, and the more cultured among them try in their sermons to avoid the lie which forms the whole meaning of their position and which they are called upon to preach. Executioners refuse to carry out their duties, so that in Russia capital punishment can frequently not be carried out for want of executioners, since, in spite of the advantages held out to make hard-labor convicts become executioners, there is an ever decreasing number of such as are willing to take up the duty. Governors, rural judges and officers, collectors of taxes, publicans, pitying the people, frequently try to find excuses for not collecting the taxes from them. Rich men cannot make up their minds to use their wealth for themselves alone, but distribute it for public purposes. Landowners erect on their lands hospitals and schools, and some of them even renounce the ownership of land and transfer it to the agriculturists, or establish communes on it. Manufacturers build hospitals, schools, houses for their workmen, and establish savings-banks and pensions; some establish companies, in which they take an equal share with other shareholders. Capitalists give part of their capital for public, educational, artistic, philanthropic institutions. Unable to part from their wealth during their lifetime, many of them will it away after their death in favor of public institutions. All these phenomena might appear accidental, if they did not all reduce themselves to one common cause, just as it might seem accidental that the buds should swell on some of the trees in spring, if we did not know that the cause of it is the common spring, and that, if the buds have begun to swell on some of the trees, the same no doubt will happen with all of the trees. The same is true in the manifestation of the Christian public opinion as regards the significance of violence and of what is based upon it. If this public opinion is already influencing some very sensitive men, and causes them, each in his own business, to renounce the privileges which violence grants,

or not to use them, it will continue to act on others, and will act until it will change the whole activity of men and will bring them in agreement with that Christian consciousness which is already living among the leading men of humanity. And if there now are rulers who do not have the courage to undertake anything in the name of their own power, and who try as much as possible to resemble, not monarchs, but the simplest mortals, and who show their readiness to renounce their prerogatives and to become the first citizens of their republics; and if there are now army men who understand all the evil and sinfulness of war and do not wish to shoot at men belonging to another nation, or to their own; and judges and prosecuting attorneys, who do not wish to prosecute and condemn criminals; and clergymen, who renounce their lie; and publicans, who try as little as possible to perform what they are called upon to perform; and rich men, who give up their wealth — the same will inevitably happen with other governments, other army men, other members of the court, clergymen, publicans, and rich men. And when there shall be no men to hold these positions, there will be none of these positions and no violence. But it is not by this road alone that public opinion leads men to the abolition of the existing order and the substitution of another for it. In proportion as the positions of violence become less and less attractive, and there are fewer and fewer men willing to occupy them, their uselessness becomes more and more apparent. In the Christian world there are the same rulers and governments, the same courts, the same publicans, the same clergy, the same rich men, landowners, manufacturers, and capitalists, as before, but there is an entirely different relation of men toward men and of the men themselves toward their positions. It is still the same rulers, the same meetings, and chases, and feasts, and balls, and uniforms, and the same diplomats, and talks about alliances and wars; the same parliaments, in which

they still discuss Eastern and African questions, and alliances, and breaches of relations, and Home Rule, and an eight-hour day. And the ministries give way to one another in the same way, and there are the same speeches, the same incidents. But men who see how one article in a newspaper changes the state of affairs more than dozens of meetings of monarchs and sessions of parliaments, see more and more clearly that it is not the meetings and rendezvous and the discussions in the parliaments that guide the affairs of men, but something independent of all this, which is not centred anywhere. There are the same generals, and officers, and soldiers, and guns, and fortresses, and parades, and manoeuvres, but there has been no war for a year, ten, twenty years, and, besides, one can depend less on the military for the suppression of riots, and it is getting clearer and clearer that, therefore, generals, and officers, and soldiers are only members of festive processions — objects of amusement for rulers, large, rather expensive corps-de-ballet. There are the same prosecutors and judges, and the same proceedings, but it is getting clearer and clearer that, since civil cases are decided on the basis of all kinds of considerations except that of justice, and since criminal cases have no sense, because punishments attain no purpose admitted even by the judges, these institutions have no other significance than that of serving as a means for supporting men who are not fit for anything more useful. There are the same clergymen, and bishops, and churches, and synods, but it is becoming clearer and clearer to all men that these men have long ago ceased to believe in what they preach, and that, therefore, they cannot convince any one of the necessity of believing in what they themselves do not believe. There are the same collectors of taxes, but they are becoming less and less capable of taking away by force people's property, and it is becoming clearer and clearer that people can without collectors of taxes collect all that is

necessary by subscribing it voluntarily. There are the same rich men, but it is becoming clearer and clearer that they can be useful only in proportion as they cease to be personal managers of their wealth and give to society all, or at least a part, of their fortunes. When all this shall become completely clear to all, it will be natural for men to ask themselves, "But why should we feed and maintain all these kings, emperors, presidents, and members of all kinds of Chambers and ministries, if nothing results from all their meetings and discussions? Would it not be better, as some jester said, to make a queen out of rubber?" "And what good to us are the armies, with their generals, and music, and cavalry, and drums? What good are they when there is no war and no one wants to conquer any one, and when, even if there is a war, the other nations do not let us profit from it, and the troops refuse to shoot at their own people?" "And what good are judges and prosecutors who in civil cases do not decide according to justice and in criminal cases know themselves that all punishments are useless?" "And of what use are collectors of taxes who unwillingly collect the taxes, while what is needed is collected without them?" "And of what use is the clergy, which has long ago ceased to believe in what it preaches?" "And of what use is capital in private hands, when it can be of use only by becoming the common possession?" And having once asked themselves this, people cannot help but come to the conclusion that they ought not to support all these useless institutions. But not only will the men who support these institutions arrive at the necessity of abolishing them — the men themselves who occupy these positions will simultaneously or even earlier be brought to the necessity of giving up their positions. Public opinion more and more condemns violence, and so men, more and more submitting to public opinion, are less and less desirous of holding their positions, which are maintained by violence, and those who hold these positions are less and

less able to make use of violence. But by not using violence, and yet remaining in positions which are conditioned by violence, the men who occupy these positions become more and more useless. And this uselessness, which is more and more felt by those who maintain these positions and by those who hold them, will finally be such that there will be found no men to maintain them and none who would be willing to hold them. Once I was present in Moscow at some discussions about faith, which, as usual, took place during Quasimodo week near a church in Okhotny Ryad. About twenty men were gathered on the sidewalk, and a serious discussion on religion was going on. At the same time there was some kind of a concert in the adjoining building of the Assembly of Noblemen, and an officer of police, noticing a crowd of people gathered near the church, sent a mounted gendarme to order them to disperse. The officer had personally no desire that they should disperse. The crowd of twenty men were in nobody's way, but the officer had been standing there the whole morning, and he had to do something. The gendarme, a young lad, with his right arm jauntily akimbo and clattering sword, rode up to us and shouted commandingly, "Scatter! What are you doing there?" Everybody looked at the gendarme, and one of the speakers, a modest man in a long coat, said calmly and kindly: "We are talking about something important, and there is no reason why we should scatter. Young man, you had better get down and listen to what we are talking about — it will do you good," and turning away, he continued his discourse. The gendarme made no reply, wheeled his horse around, and rode off. The same thing must happen in all matters of violence. The officer feels ennui, he has nothing to do; the poor fellow is placed in a position where he must command. He is deprived of all human life, and all he can do is to look and command, to command and look, though his commands and his watching are of no earthly use. In such a condition all

those unfortunate rulers, ministers, members of parliaments, governors, generals, officers, bishops, clergymen, even rich men are now partly and soon will be completely. They can do nothing else but command, and they command and send their messengers, as the officer sends his gendarme, to be in people's way, and since the people whom they trouble turn to them with the request that they be left alone, they imagine that they are indispensable. But the time is coming, and will soon be here, when it shall be quite clear for all men that they are not any good and are only in the way of people, and the people whom they bother will say to them kindly and meekly, as that man in the long overcoat, "Please, do not bother us." And all the messengers and senders will have to follow that good advice, that is, stop riding with arms akimbo among the people, bothering them, and get down from their hobbies, take off their attire, listen to what people have to say, and, joining them, take hold with them of the true human work. The time is coming, and will inevitably come, when all the institutions of violence of our time will be destroyed in consequence of their too obvious uselessness, silliness, and even indecency. The time must come, when with the men of our world, who hold positions that are given by violence, will happen what happened with the king in Andersen's fable, "The Emperor's New Clothes," when a small child, seeing the naked king, naively called out, "Behold, he is naked!" and all those who had seen it before, but had not expressed it, could no longer conceal it. The point of the fable is this, that to the king, a lover of new garments, there come some tailors who promise to make him an extraordinary garment. The king hires the tailors, and they begin to sew, having informed him that the peculiarity of their garment is this, that he who is useless in his office cannot see the garments. The courtiers come to see the work of the tailors, but they see nothing, as the tailors stick their needles into empty space. But, mindful of

the condition, all the courtiers say that they see the garment, and they praise it. The king does the same. The time arrives for the procession, when the king is to appear in his new garment. The king undresses himself and puts on his new garments, that is, he remains naked, and goes naked through the city. But, mindful of the condition, no one dares to say that there are no garments, until a small child calls out, "Behold, he is naked!" The same thing must happen with all those who from inertia hold offices which have long ago become useless, when the first man who is not interested (as the proverb has it, "One hand washes the other"), in concealing the uselessness of these institutions, will point out their uselessness and will naively call out, "But, good people, they have long ago ceased to be good for anything." The condition of Christian humanity, with its fortresses, guns, dynamite, cannon, torpedoes, prisons, gallows, churches, factories, custom-houses, palaces, is indeed terrible; but neither fortresses, nor cannon, nor guns shoot themselves at any one, prisons do not themselves lock any one up, the gallows does not hang any one, the churches do not of themselves deceive any one, the customhouses hold no one back, palaces and factories do not erect and maintain themselves, but everything is done by men. But when men understand that this ought not to be done, there will be none of these things. Men are already beginning to understand this. If not all men understand it as yet, the leaders among men do, those after whom follow all other men. And what the leaders have once come to understand, they can never stop understanding, and what the leaders have come to understand, all other men not only can, but inevitably must understand. Thus the prediction that the time will come when all men shall be instructed by God, shall stop warring, shall forge the swords into plowshares and the spears into pruning-hooks, that is, translating into our language, when all the prisons, fortresses, barracks, palaces, churches, shall remain

empty, and all the gallows, guns, cannon, shall remain unused, is no longer a dream, but a definite, new form of life, toward which humanity is moving with ever increasing rapidity. But when shall this be? Eighteen hundred years ago Christ answered this question by saying that the end of the present world, that is, of the pagan structure of the world, would come when the calamities of men should be increased to their farthest limit and at the same time the gospel of the kingdom of God, that is, the possibility of a new, violenceless structure of the world, should be preached in all the world (Matthew 24: 3 — 28). “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, but my Father only” (Matthew 24: 36), is what Christ says, for it may come any time, at any moment, even when we do not expect it. In reply to the question when this hour shall arrive, Christ says that we cannot know it; but for the very reason that we do not know the time of its coming, we should not only be at all times prepared to meet it, as must be the goodman watching the house, and the virgins with their lamps going forth to meet the bridegroom, but also we should work with all our strength for the coming of that hour, as the servants had to work for the talents given to them (Matthew 24: 43; 25: 1 — 30). In reply to the question when this hour should come, Christ admonished all men to work with all their strength for its quicker coming. There can be no other answer. People can nowise know when the day and the hour of the kingdom of God shall arrive, because the coming of that hour depends on no one but the men themselves. The answer is the same as that of the sage, who in reply to the question of a passer-by, how far it was to the city, answered, “Go.” How can we know how far it is to the goal toward which humanity is moving, since we do not know how humanity, on whom it depends whether to go or not, to stop, to temper the motion, or to accelerate it, will move toward that goal? All we can know is, what we, who compose humanity, must do, and what not, in order



that the kingdom of God may come. That we all know. And every one need but begin to do what we must do, and stop doing what we must not do; every one of us need only live by all that light which is within us, in order that the promised kingdom of God, toward which the heart of every man is drawn, may come at once.

