

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 7 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 TWELVE: CONCLUSION Part 1 I had ended this two years' labor, when, on the ninth of September, I happened to travel on a train to a locality in the Governments of Túla and Ryazán, where the peasants had been starving the year before, and were starving still more in the present year. At one of the stations the train in which I was travelling met a special train which, under the leadership of the governor, was transporting troops with guns, cartridges, and rods for the torture and killing of

those very famine-stricken peasants. The torturing of the peasants with rods for the purpose of enforcing the decision of the authorities, although corporal punishment was abolished by law thirty years ago, has of late been applied more and more freely in Russia. I had heard of it, had even read in newspapers of the terrible tortures of which the Governor of Nízhni-Nóvgorod, [Nikolai Mikhailovich] Baránov, is said to have boasted, of the tortures which had taken place in Chernígov, Tambóv, Sarátov, Astrakhán, Orél, but not once had I had a chance to see men in the process of executing these deeds. Here I saw with my own eyes good Russians, men who are permeated with the Christian spirit, travelling with guns and rods, to kill and torture their starving brothers. The cause that brought them out was the following: In one of the estates of a wealthy landowner the peasants had raised a forest on a pasture which they owned in common with the proprietor (had raised, that is, had watched it during its growth), and had always made use of it, and so regarded this forest as their own, at least as a common possession; but the proprietor, appropriating to himself this forest, began to cut it down. The peasants handed in a complaint. The judge of the first instance irregularly (I say "irregularly," using the word employed by the prosecuting attorney and the governor, men who ought to know the case) decided the case in favor of the proprietor. All the higher courts, among them the senate, though they could see that the case had been decided irregularly, confirmed the decision, and the forest was adjudged to the proprietor. The proprietor began to cut down the forest, but the peasants, unable to believe that such an obvious injustice could be done them by a higher court, did not submit to the decree, and drove away the workmen who were sent to cut down the forest, declaring that the forest belonged to them, and that they would petition the Tsar, but would not allow the proprietor to cut down the forest. The case was

reported to St. Petersburg, whence the governor was ordered to enforce the decree of the court. The governor asked for troops, and now the soldiers, armed with bayonets, ball-cartridges, and, besides, a supply of rods, purposely prepared for this occasion and carried in a separate car, were travelling to enforce this decree of the higher authorities. The enforcement of the decree of the higher authorities is accomplished by means of killing, of torturing men, or by means of a threat of doing one or the other, according as to whether any opposition is shown or not. In the first case, if the peasants show any opposition, the following takes place in Russia (the same things happen wherever there are a state structure and property rights): the chief makes a speech and demands submission. The excited crowd, generally deceived by its leaders, does not understand a word that the representative of the power says in official book language, and continues to be agitated. Then the chief declares that if they do not submit and disperse, he will be compelled to have recourse to arms. If the crowd does not submit even then, the chief commands his men to load their guns and shoot above the heads of the crowd. If the crowd does not disperse even then, he commands the soldiers to shoot straight into the crowd, at haphazard, and the soldiers shoot, and in the street fall wounded and killed men, and then the crowd generally runs away, and the troops at the command of the chiefs seize those who present themselves to them as the main rioters, and lead them away under guard. After that they pick up the blood-stained, dying, maimed, killed, and wounded men, frequently also women and children; the dead are buried, and the maimed are sent to the hospital. But those who are considered to be the plotters are taken to the city and tried by a special military court. If on their part there was any violence, they are sentenced to be hanged. Then they put up a gallows and with the help of ropes choke to death a few defenceless people, as has many

times been done in Russia and as is being done, and must be done where the public structure is based on violence. Thus they do in case of opposition. In the second case, when the peasants submit, there takes place something special and peculiarly Russian. What happens is this: the governor arrives at the place of action, makes a speech to the people, rebuking them for their disobedience, and either stations troops in the farms of the village, where the soldiers, quartering at times as much as a month at a time, ruin the peasants, or, satisfied with threatening them, graciously pardons the people and returns home, or, which happens more frequently than anything else, announces to them that the instigators ought to be punished, and arbitrarily, without trial, selects a certain number of men, who are declared to be the instigators and in his presence are subjected to tortures. In order to give an idea as to how these things are done, I will describe an affair which took place at Orél and received the approval of the higher authorities. What happened in Orél was this: just as here, in the Government of Túla, a proprietor wanted to take away some property from certain peasants, and the peasants opposed him, just as they did here. The point was that the landed proprietor wanted without the consent of the peasants to keep the water in his mill-pond at so high a level that their fields were inundated. The peasants objected. The proprietor entered a complaint before the County Council chief. The County Council chief illegally (as was later declared by the court) decided the case in favor of the proprietor, by permitting him to raise the water. The proprietor sent his workmen to raise the ditch through which the water ran down. The peasants were provoked by this irregular decision, and called out their wives, to prevent the proprietor's workmen from raising the ditch. The women went to the dam, overturned the carts, and drove off the workmen. The proprietor entered a complaint against the women for taking the law into their hands. The

County Council chief ordered one woman from each peasant farm in the whole village to be locked up (“in the cold room”). The decision could not well be carried out; since there were several women on each farm, it was impossible to determine which of them was liable to arrest, and so the police did not carry out the decree. The proprietor complained to the governor of the inactivity of the police, and the governor, without looking into the matter, gave the rural chief the strict order immediately to enforce the decision of the County Council chief. Obeying the higher authorities, the rural chief arrived in the village and, with a disrespect for men which is characteristic of the Russian authorities, commanded the policemen to seize one woman from each house. But since there were more than one woman in each house, and it was impossible to tell which one of them was subject to incarceration, there began quarrels, and opposition was shown. In spite of these quarrels and this opposition, the rural chief commanded that one woman, no matter who she be, be seized in each house and led to a place of confinement. The peasants began to defend their wives and mothers, did not give them up, and upon this occasion beat the police and the rural chief. There appeared the first terrible crime — an assault on the authorities — and this new crime was reported to the city. And so the governor, like the Governor of Túla, arrived on a special train with a battalion of soldiers, with guns and rods, having made use of the telegraph, of telephones, and of the railway, and brought with him a learned doctor, who was to watch the hygienic conditions of the flogging, thus fully personifying Genghis Khan with the telegraphs, as predicted by Herzen. Near the township office stood the troops, a squad of policemen with red cords, to which is attached the revolver, official persons from among the peasants, and the accused. Round about stood a crowd of one thousand people or more. Upon driving up to the township office, the governor alighted

from his carriage, delivered a speech previously prepared, and called for the guilty and for a bench. This command was not understood at first. But a policeman, whom the governor always took with him, and who attended to the preparation of the tortures, which had more than once been employed in the Government, explained that what was meant was a bench for flogging. A bench was brought, the rods, which had been carried on the train, were piled up, and the executioners were called for. These had been previously chosen from among the horse-thieves of the village, because the soldiers refused to perform this duty. When everything was ready, the governor commanded the first of the twelve men pointed out by the proprietor as the most guilty to step forward. The one that came out was the father of a family, a respected member of society of about forty years of age, who had bravely defended the rights of society and so enjoyed the respect of the inhabitants. He was led up to the bench, his body was bared, and he was ordered to lie down. The peasant tried to beg for mercy, but when he saw that this was useless, he made the sign of the cross and lay down. Two policemen rushed forward to hold him down. The learned doctor stood near by, ready to offer learned medical aid. The prisoners, spitting into their hands, swished the rods and began to strike. However, it turned out that the bench was too narrow and that it was too difficult to keep the writhing, tortured man upon it. Then the governor ordered another bench to be brought and to be cleated to the first. Putting their hands to their visors and muttering: "Yes, your Excellency," some men hurriedly and humbly fulfilled the commands; meanwhile the half-naked, pale, tortured man, frowning and looking earthward, waited with trembling jaws and bared legs. When the second bench was attached, he was again put down, and the horse-thieves began to beat him again. The back, hips, and thighs, and even the sides of the tortured man began more and more to be covered with wales and

bloody streaks, and with every blow there were heard dull sounds, which the tortured man was unable to repress. In the surrounding crowd were heard the sobs of the wives, mothers, children, relatives of the tortured man and of all those who were selected for the punishment. The unfortunate governor, intoxicated by his power, thought that he could not do otherwise, and, bending his fingers, counted the blows, and without stopping smoked cigarettes, to light which several officious persons hastened every time to hand him a lighted match. When fifty blows had been dealt, the peasant stopped crying and stirring, and the doctor, who had been educated in a Crown institution for the purpose of serving his Tsar and country with his scientific knowledge, walked over to the tortured man, felt his pulse, listened to the beating of his heart, and announced to the representative of power that the punished man had lost consciousness and that according to the data of science it might be dangerous to his life to continue the punishment. But the unfortunate governor, who was now completely intoxicated by the sight of blood, commanded the men to go on, and the torture lasted until they had dealt seventy blows, to which number it for some reason seemed to him necessary to carry the number of the blows. When the seventieth blow was dealt, the governor said, "Enough! The next!" And the disfigured man, with his swollen back, was lifted up and carried away in a swoon, and another was taken up. The sobs and groans of the crowd became louder; but the representative of the governmental power continued the torture. Thus they flogged the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth man — each man receiving seventy blows. All of them begged for mercy, groaned, cried. The sobs and groans of the mass of women grew louder and more heartrending, and the faces of the men grew gloomier and gloomier; but the troops stood all about them, and the torture did not stop until the work was

accomplished in the measure which for some reason appeared indispensable to the caprice of the unfortunate, half-drunken, deluded man, called a governor. Not only were officials, officers, soldiers present, but with their presence they took part in this matter and kept this order of the fulfilment of the state act from being impaired on the part of the crowd. When I asked one of the governors why these tortures are committed on men, when they have already submitted and troops are stationed in the village, he replied to me, with the significant look of a man who has come to know all the intricacies of state wisdom, that this is done because experience has shown that if the peasants are not subjected to torture they will again counteract the decrees of the power, while the performance of the torture in the case of a few men for ever confirms the decrees of the authorities. And so now the Governor of Túla was travelling with his officials, officers, and soldiers, in order to perform just such a work. In just the same manner, that is, by means of murder or torture, were to be carried out the decree of the higher authorities, which consisted in this, that a young fellow, a landed proprietor, who had an income of one hundred thousand roubles per year, was to receive another three thousand roubles, for a forest which he had in a rascally manner taken away from a whole society of hungry and cold peasants, and be able to spend this money in two or three weeks in the restaurants of Moscow, St. Petersburg, or Paris. It was to do such a deed that the men whom I met were travelling. Fate, as though on purpose, after my two years' tension of thought in one and the same direction, for the first time in my life brought me in contact with this phenomenon, which showed me with absolute obviousness in practice what had become clear to me in theory, namely, that the whole structure of our life is not based, as men who enjoy an advantageous position in the existing order of things are fond of imagining, on any juridical principles, but on the simplest,

coarsest violence, on the murder and torture of men. Men who own large tracts of land or have large capitals, or who receive large salaries, which are collected from the working people, who are in need of the simplest necessities, as also those who, as merchants, doctors, artists, clerks, savants, coachmen, cooks, authors, lackeys, lawyers, live parasitically about these rich people, are fond of believing that those prerogatives which they enjoy are not due to violence, but to an absolutely free and regular exchange of services, and that these prerogatives are not only not the result of assault upon people, and the murder of them, like what took place this year in Orél and in many other places in Russia, and continually takes place in all of Europe and of America, but has even no connection whatsoever with these cases of violence. They are fond of believing that the privileges which they enjoy exist in themselves and take place and are due to a voluntary agreement among people, while the violence exerted against people also exists in itself and is due to some universal and higher juridical, political, and economical laws. These men try not to see that they enjoy the privileges which they enjoy only by dint of the same thing which now would force the peasants, who raised the forest and who were very much in need of it, to give it up to the rich proprietor, who took no part in the preservation of the forest and had no need of it, that is, that they would be flogged or killed if they did not give up this forest. And yet, if it is quite clear that the Orél mill began to bring greater returns to the proprietor, and that the forest, which the peasants raised, is turned over to the proprietor, only in consequence of assaults or murders, or the threat of them, it must be just as clear that all the other exclusive rights of the rich, which deprive the poor of their prime necessities, are based on the same thing. If the peasants, who are in need of the land for the support of their families, do not plow the land which adjoins their very farms, while this

land, which is capable of supporting something like one thousand families, is in the hands of one man — a Russian, Englishman, Austrian, or some large landed proprietor — who does not work on this land, and if the merchant, buying up the corn from the needy agriculturists, can securely keep this corn in his granaries, amidst starving people, and sell it at three times its price to the same agriculturists from whom he bought it at one-third its present worth, it is evident that this takes place from the same causes. And if one man cannot buy cheap goods, which are sold to him from beyond a conventional line called a border, without paying customs dues to people who had no share whatsoever in the production of the goods; and if people cannot help but give up their last cow for taxes, which are distributed by the government to officials and are used for the maintenance of soldiers who will kill these very taxpayers, it would seem to be obvious that even this does not take place in consequence of some abstract rights, but in consequence of the same that happened in Orél and that now may happen in the Government of Túla, and periodically in one form or another takes place in the whole world, wherever there is a state structure and there are the rich and the poor. Because not all human relations of violence are accompanied by tortures and murders, the men who enjoy the exclusive prerogatives of the ruling classes assure themselves and others that the privileges which they enjoy are not due to any tortures or murders, but to other mysterious common causes, abstract rights, and so forth. And yet, it would seem, it is clear that, if people, though they consider this to be an injustice (all working people now do), give the main portion of their work to the capitalist, the landed proprietor, and pay taxes, though they know that bad use is made of them, they do so first of all, not because they recognize any abstract rights, of which they have never heard, but only because they know

that they will be flogged and killed, if they do not do so. But if there is no occasion to imprison, flog, and kill men, every time the rent for the land is collected by the landed proprietor, and the man in need of corn pays to the merchant who has cheated him a threefold price, and the factory hand is satisfied with a wage which represents proportionately half the master's income, and if a poor man gives up his last rouble for customs dues and taxes, this is due to the fact that so many men have been beaten and killed for their attempts to avoid doing what is demanded of them, that they keep this well in mind. As the trained tiger in the cage does not take the meat which is placed under his mouth, and does not lie quiet, but jumps over a stick, whenever he is ordered to do so, not because he wants to do so, but because he remembers the heated iron rod or the hunger to which he was subjected every time he did not obey — even so men who submit to what is not advantageous for them, what even is ruinous to them, do so because they remember what happened to them for their disobedience. But the men who enjoy prerogatives which are the result of old violence, frequently forget, and like to forget, how these prerogatives were obtained. We need, however, only think of history, not the history of the successes of various dynasties of rulers, but real history, the history of the oppression of the majority by a small number of men, to see that the bases of all the prerogatives of the rich over the poor have originated from nothing but switches, prisons, hard labor, murders. We need but think of that constant, stubborn tendency of men to increase their well-being, which guides the men of our time, to become convinced that the prerogatives of the rich over the poor could not and cannot be maintained in any other way. There may be oppressions, assaults, prisons, executions, which have not for their purpose the preservation of the prerogatives of the wealthy classes (though this is very rare), but we may boldly say that in our society, for each

well-to-do, comfortably living man, there are ten who are exhausted by labor, who are envious and greedy, and who frequently suffer with their whole families — all the prerogatives of the rich, all their luxury, all that superfluity which the rich enjoy above the average laborer, all that is acquired and supported only by tortures, incarcerations, and executions.

Part 2 The train which I came across the ninth of September, and which carried soldiers, with their guns, cartridges, and rods, to the starving peasants, in order to secure to the rich proprietor the small forest, which he had taken from the peasants and which the peasants were in dire need of, showed me with striking obviousness to what extent men have worked out the ability of committing acts which are most revolting to their convictions and to their conscience, without seeing that they are doing so. The special train with which I fell in consisted of one car of the first class for the governor, the officials, and the officers, and of several freight-cars, which were crammed full of soldiers. The dashing young soldiers, in their clean new uniforms, stood crowding or sat with dangling legs in the wide-open doors of the freight-cars. Some smoked, others jostled one another, jested, laughed, displaying their teeth; others again cracked pumpkin seeds, spitting out the shells with an air of self-confidence. Some of them were running up and down the platform, toward the waterbarrel, in order to get a drink, and, upon meeting an officer, tempered their gait, went through the stupid gesture of putting their hands to their brows, and with serious faces, as though they were doing not only something sensible, but even important, walked past them, seeing them off with their eyes, and then raced more merrily, thumping with their feet on the planks of the platform, laughing, and chattering, as is characteristic of healthy, good lads, who in good company travel from one place to another. They were travelling to

slay their hungry fathers and grandfathers, as though going to some very jolly, or at least very usual, piece of work. The same impression was conveyed by the officials and officers, in gala-uniform, who were scattered on the platform and in the hall of the first class. At the table, which was covered with bottles, dressed in his semi-military uniform, sat the governor, the chief of the expedition, eating something, and speaking calmly about the weather with an acquaintance whom he had met, as though the matter which he was about to attend to were so simple and so common that it could not impair his calm and his interest in the change of the weather. At some distance away from the table, not partaking of any food, sat a general of gendarmes, with an impenetrable, but gloomy look, as though annoyed by the tedious formality. On all sides moved and chattered officers, in their beautiful, gold-bedecked uniforms: one, sitting at the table, was finishing a bottle of beer; another, standing at the buffet, munched at an appetizing patty, shaking off the crumbs which had lodged on the breast of his uniform, and throwing the money on the table with a self-confident gesture; a third, vibrating both legs, was walking past the cars of our train, ogling the feminine faces. All these men, who were on their way to torture or kill hungry, defenceless men, the same that fed them, had the appearance of men who know conclusively that they are doing what is right, and even are proud, "stuck up," about what they are doing. What is this? All these men are one half-hour's ride away from the place where, to secure to a rich fellow some three thousand useless roubles, which he has taken away from a whole community of starving peasants, they may be compelled to perform the most terrible acts that one can imagine, may begin, just as in Orél, to kill or to torture innocent men, their brothers, and they calmly approach the place and time where and when this may happen. It is impossible to say that these men, all these officials, officers, and soldiers, do not know what

awaits them, because they prepared themselves for it. The governor had to give his orders concerning the rods, the officials had to purchase birch switches, to haggle for them, and to enter this item as an expense. The military gave and received and executed commands concerning the ball-cartridges. All of them know that they are on the way to torture and, perhaps, to kill their famished brothers, and that they will begin to do this, perhaps, within an hour. It would be incorrect to say that they do this from conviction — as is frequently said and as they themselves repeat — from the conviction that they do this because it is necessary to maintain the state structure, in the first place, because all these men have hardly ever even thought of the state structure and of its necessity; in the second place, they can in no way be convinced that the business in which they take part maintains the state, instead of destroying it, and, in the third place, in reality the majority of these men, if not all, will not only never sacrifice their peace and pleasure for the purpose of supporting the state, but will even never miss a chance of making use, for their peace and pleasure, of everything they can, even though it be to the disadvantage of the state. Consequently they do not do so for the sake of the abstract principle of the state. What is it, then? I know all these men. If I do not know them personally, I know approximately their characters, their past, their manner of thought. All of them have mothers, and some have wives and children. They are, for the most part, good-hearted, meek, frequently tender men, who despise every cruelty, to say nothing of the murder of men, and many of them would be incapable of killing or torturing animals; besides, they are all people who profess Christianity and consider violence exerted against defenceless men a low and disgraceful matter. Not one of these men would be able for the sake of his smallest advantage to do even one-hundredth part of what the Governor of Orél did to those people; and any of them

would even be offended, if it were assumed that in his private life he would be capable of doing anything like it. And yet, here they are, within half an hour's ride from the place, where they may be led inevitably to the necessity of doing it. What is it, then? But, besides these people who are travelling on the train, and who are ready to commit murder and tortures, how could those people with whom the whole matter began — the proprietor, the superintendent, the judges, and those who from St. Petersburg prescribed this matter and by their commands are taking part in it — how could these men, the minister, the emperor, also good men, who are professing the Christian religion, have undertaken and ordered such a thing, knowing its consequences? How can even those who do not take part in this matter, the spectators, who are provoked at every special case of violence or at the torture of a horse, admit the performance of so terrible a deed? How can they help being provoked at it, standing on the road, and shouting, "No, we shall not allow hungry people to be killed and flogged for not giving up their property, which has been seized from them by force"? But not only does no one do so — the majority of men, even those who were the instigators of the whole thing, like the superintendent, the proprietor, the judges, and those who were the participants in it and who gave the orders, like the governor, the minister, the emperor, are calm, and do not even feel any pangs of conscience. Just as calm are apparently all those men who are travelling to commit this evil deed. The spectators, too, it seemed, who were not in any way interested in the matter, for the most part looked with sympathy, rather than with disapproval, upon the men who were getting ready for this execrable deed. In the same car with me there was travelling a merchant, a lumber dealer from the peasant class, and he loudly proclaimed his sympathy for those tortures to which the peasants were about to be subjected: "It is not right not to

obey the authorities," he said; "that's what the authorities are for. Just wait, they will have their fleas driven out of them — they won't think of rioting after that. Serves them right." What is it, then? It is equally impossible to say that all these men — the instigators, participants, abettors of this matter — are such rascals that, knowing all the baseness of what they are doing, they, either for a salary, or for an advantage, or out of fear of being punished, do a thing which is contrary to their convictions. All these men know how, in certain situations, to defend their convictions. Not one of these officials would steal a purse, or read another person's letter, or bear an insult without demanding satisfaction from the insulter. Not one of these officers would have the courage to cheat at cards, not to pay his card debts, to betray a friend, to run away from the field of battle, or to abandon his flag. Not one of these soldiers would have the courage to spit out the sacrament or to eat meat on Good Friday. All these men are prepared to bear all kinds of privations, sufferings, and dangers, rather than do something which they consider to be bad. Consequently, there is in these men a counteracting force, whenever they have to do something which is contrary to their convictions. Still less is it possible to say that all these men are such beasts that it is proper and not at all painful for them to do such things. We need but have a talk with these men, to see that all of them, the proprietor, the judges, the minister, the Tsar, the governor, the officers, and the soldiers not only in the depth of their hearts do not approve of such deeds, but even suffer from the consciousness of their part in them, when they are reminded of the significance of this matter. They simply try not to think of it. We need but have a talk with them, with all the participants in this matter, from the proprietor to the last policeman and soldier, to see that all of them in the depth of their hearts know that this is a bad thing and that it would be better not to take part in it, and that they suffer

from it. A lady of liberal tendencies, who was travelling on the same train with us, upon noticing the governor and the officers in the hall of the first class, and learning of the purpose of their journey, began on purpose in a loud voice, so as to be heard, to curse the orders of our time and to put to shame the men who were taking part in this matter. All persons present felt ill at ease. Nobody knew whither to look, but no one dared to answer her. The passengers looked as though it were not worth while to reply to such empty talk. But it was evident from the faces and fugitive eyes that all felt ashamed. This also I noticed in the case of the soldiers. They, too, knew that the business for which they were travelling was a bad one, but they did not wish to think of what awaited them. When the lumber dealer began insincerely, as I thought, merely to show his culture, to speak of how necessary such measures were, the soldiers who heard it turned away from him, as though they did not hear him, and frowned. All these men, both those who, like the proprietor, the superintendent, the minister, the Tsar, participated in the performance of this act, and those who are just now travelling on the train, and even those who, without taking part in this matter, look on at the accomplishment of it, know every one of them that this is a bad business, and are ashamed of the part which they are taking in it and even of their presence during its execution. Why, then, have they been doing and tolerating it? Ask those who, like the proprietor, started this matter, and those who, like the judges, handed down a formally legal, but obviously unjust decision, and those who ordered the enforcement of the decree, and those who, like the soldiers, the policemen, and the peasants, will with their own hands carry it into execution — who will beat and kill their brothers — all of them, the instigators, and the accomplices, and the executors, and the abettors of these crimes, and all will give you essentially the same answer. The men in authority, who provoked the matter and

cooperated in it and directed it, will say that they are doing what they are doing because such matters are necessary for the maintenance of the existing order; and the maintenance of the existing order is necessary for the good of the country and of humanity, for the possibility of a social life and a forward movement of progress. The men from the lower spheres, the peasants and the soldiers, those who will be compelled with their own hands to exercise the violence, will say that they are doing what they are doing because this is prescribed by the higher authorities, and that the higher authorities know what they are doing. That the authorities consist of the very men who ought to be the authorities and that they know what they are doing, presents itself to them as an incontestable truth. If these lower executors even admit the possibility of an error or delusion, they admit it only in the case of the lower authorities; but the highest power, from whom all this proceeds, seems to them to be unquestionably infallible. Though explaining the motives for their activities in a different manner, both the rulers and the ruled agree in this, that they do what they do because the existing order is precisely the one which is indispensable and which must exist at the present time, and which, therefore, it is the sacred duty of every person to maintain. On this recognition of the necessity, and so of the unchangeableness of the existing order, is based the reflection, which has always been adduced by all the participants in state violence in their justification, that, since the present order is unchangeable, the refusal of a single individual to perform the duties imposed upon him will not change the essence of the matter, and will have no other effect than that in place of the person refusing there will be another man, who may perform the duty less well, that is, more cruelly, more harmfully for those men against whom the violence is practised. This conviction that the existing order is indispensable, and so unchangeable, and

that it is the sacred duty of every man to maintain it, is what gives to good people and, in private life, to moral people the possibility of participating with a more or less calm conscience in such affairs as the one which took place in Orél and the one which the people who were travelling in the Túla train were getting ready to act in. But on what is this conviction based? It is naturally agreeable and desirable for the proprietor to believe that the existing order is indispensable and unchangeable, because it is this very existing order which secures for him the income from his hundreds and thousands of desyatínas, thanks to which he leads his habitual idle and luxurious life. Naturally enough, the judge, too, readily believes in the necessity of the order in consequence of which he receives fifty times as much as the most industrious laborer. This is just as comprehensible in the case of the supreme judge, who receives a salary of six or more thousand, and in the case of all the higher officials. Only with the present order can he, as a governor, prosecutor, senator, member of various councils, receive his salary of several thousands, without which he would at once perish with all his family, because, except by the position which he holds, he would not be able, with his ability, industry, and knowledge, to earn one hundredth part of what he is getting. In the same situation are the minister, the emperor, and every higher authority, but with this difference, that, the higher they are and the more exclusive their position is, the more indispensable it is for them to believe that the existing order is the only possible order, because outside of it they not only cannot get an equal position, but will have to stand much lower than the rest of mankind. A man who voluntarily hires himself out as a policeman at a salary of ten roubles, which he can easily get in any other position, has little need of the preservation of the existing order, and so can get along without believing in its unchangeableness. But a king or an emperor, who in his position receives millions; who knows

that all around him there are thousands of men who are willing to depose him and take his place; who knows that in no other position will he get such an income and such honors; who in the majority of cases, with a more or less despotic rule, knows even this, that, if he should be deposed, he would be tried for everything he did while in possession of his power, cannot help but believe in the unchangeableness and sacredness of the existing order. The higher the position which a man occupies, the more advantageous and, therefore, the more unstable it is, and the more terrible and dangerous a fall from it is, the more does a man who holds that position believe in the unchangeableness of the existing order, and with so much greater peace of mind can such a man, as though not for himself, but for the support of the existing order, do bad and cruel deeds. Thus it is in the case of all the men of the ruling classes who hold positions that are more advantageous than those which they could hold without the existing order — beginning with the lowest police officials and ending with the highest authorities. All these men more or less believe in the unchangeableness of the existing order, because, above all else, it is advantageous for them. But what is it that compels the peasants, the soldiers, who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder, who have no profit from the existing order, who are in a condition of the most abject submission and humiliation, to believe that the existing order, in consequence of which they are in a most disadvantageous and humble state, is the very order which must be, and which, therefore, must be maintained, even by performing the basest and most unconscionable acts for it. What is it that compels these men to make the false reflection that the existing order is invariable and, therefore, must be maintained, whereas it is evident that, on the contrary, it is unchangeable only because it is maintained as such? What is it that compels the men who were but yesterday taken from the plow, and

who are dressed up in these monstrous, indecent garments with blue collars and gilt buttons, to travel with guns and swords, in order to kill their hungry fathers and brothers? They certainly have no advantages, and are in no danger of losing the position which they hold, because their condition is worse than the one from which they are taken. The men of the higher ruling classes, the proprietors, ministers, kings, officers, take part in these matters, thus supporting the existing order, because it is advantageous for them. Besides, these frequently good, meek men feel themselves able to take part in these things for this other reason, that their participation is limited to instigations, decrees, and commands. None of these men in authority do themselves those things which they instigate, determine upon, and order to be done. For the most part they do not even see how all those terrible things which they provoke and prescribe are carried out. But the unfortunate people of the lower classes, who derive no advantage from the existing order, who, on the contrary, in consequence of this order are held in the greatest contempt, why do they, who, for the maintenance of this order, with their own hands tear people away from their families, who bind them, who lock them up in prisons and at hard labor, who watch and shoot them, do all these things? What is it that compels these men to believe that the existing order is unchangeable and that it is necessary to maintain it? All violence is based only on them, on those men who with their own hands beat, bind, lock up, kill. If these men did not exist — these soldiers and policemen — the armed men in general, who are prepared on command to commit violence and to kill all those whom they are commanded to kill, not one of the men who sign the decrees for executions, life imprisonment, hard labor, would ever have the courage himself to hang, lock up, torture to death one thousandth part of those whom now, sitting quietly in their studies, they order to be hung and to be tortured in every way, only because they do

not see it and it is not done by them, but somewhere far away by obedient executors. All those injustices and cruelties which have entered into the curriculum of the existing life, have entered there only because there exist these people, who are always prepared to maintain these injustices and cruelties. If these men did not exist, there would not be any one to offer violence to all these enormous masses of violated people, and those who give orders would never even dare either to command or even to dream of what they now command with so much self-assurance. If there were no people who would be ready at the command of those whom they obey to torture or to kill him who is pointed out to them, no one would ever dare to affirm, what is with so much self-confidence asserted by the non-working landowners, that the land which surrounds the peasants, who are dying for lack of land, is the property of a man who does not work on it, and that the supply of corn, which has been garnered in a rascally manner, ought to be kept intact amidst a starving population, because the merchant needs some profit, and so forth. If there were no men who would be ready at the will of the authorities to torture and kill every person pointed out to them, it could never occur to a landed proprietor to take away from the peasants a forest which had been raised by them, nor to the officials to consider legal the payment to them of salaries, which are collected from the hungry masses, for oppressing them, to say nothing of executing men, or locking them up, or exiling them, because they overthrow the lie and preach the truth. All this is demanded and done only because these ruling people are firmly convinced that they have always at hand submissive people, who will be ready to carry any of their demands into execution by means of tortures and murders. The only reason why they commit deeds like those committed by all the tyrants from Napoleon down to the last commander of a company, who shoots into a crowd, is because they are stupefied by the power behind them,

consisting of subservient men who are ready to do anything they are commanded. The whole strength, therefore, lies in the men who with their hands do acts of violence, in the men who serve with the police, among the soldiers, more especially among the soldiers, because the police do their work only when they have an army behind them. What is it, then, that has led these good men, who derive no advantage from it, who are compelled with their hands to do all these terrible things, men on whom the whole matter depends, into that remarkable delusion that assures them that the existing disadvantageous, pernicious, and for them painful order is the one which must be? Who has led them into this remarkable delusion? They have certainly not assured themselves that they must do what is not only painful, disadvantageous, and pernicious to them and their whole class, which forms nine-tenths of the whole population, and what is even contrary to their conscience. "How are you going to kill men, when in God's law it says, 'Thou shalt not kill'?" I frequently asked soldiers, and, by reminding them of what they did not like to think about, I always made them feel awkward and embarrassed. Such a soldier knew that there was an obligatory law of God, "Thou shalt not kill," and he knew that there was an obligatory military service, but it had never occurred to him that there was any contradiction there. The sense of the timid answers that I always received to this question consisted approximately in this, that murder in war and the execution of criminals at the command of the government were not included in the common prohibition of murders. But when I told them that no such limitation was made in God's law, and reminded them of the doctrine of brotherhood, of the forgiveness of offences, of love, which are obligatory for all Christians and which could in no way be harmonized with murder, the men of the people generally agreed with me, and on their side put the question to me as to how it happened that the government,

which, according to their ideas, could not err, commanded the armies, when necessary, to go to war, and ordered the execution of prisoners. When I answered them that the government acted incorrectly when it commanded these things to be done, my interlocutors became even more embarrassed, and either broke off the conversation or grew provoked at me. "There must be such a law. I guess the bishops know better than we," I was told by a Russian soldier. And, having said this, the soldier apparently felt his conscience eased, being fully convinced that his guides had found a law, the same under which his ancestors had served, and the kings and the kings' heirs, and millions of people, and he himself served, and that what I was telling him was some piece of cunning or cleverness, like a riddle. All the men of our Christian world know, know firmly, from tradition, and from revelation, and from the irrefutable voice of conscience, that murder is one of the most terrible crimes which a man can commit, as the Gospel says, and that this sin cannot be limited to certain men, that is, that it is a sin to kill some men, but not a sin to kill others. All know that if the sin of murder is a sin, it is always a sin, independently of what men are the victims of it, just like the sin of adultery and thieving and any other; at the same time men have seen, since childhood, since youth, that murder is not only admitted, but even blessed by all those whom they are accustomed to respect as their spiritual guides, ordained by God; they see that their worldly guides with calm assurance institute murders, bear arms of murder, of which they are proud, and demand of all, in the name of the civil and even the divine law, that they shall take part in murder. Men see that there is here some contradiction, and, being unable to solve it, they involuntarily assume that this contradiction is due only to their ignorance. The very coarseness and obviousness of the contradiction sustains them in this conviction. They cannot imagine that their enlighteners, learned men,

should be able with such confidence to preach two such seemingly contradictory propositions — the obligatoriness for every one of the law and of murder. A simple, innocent child, and later a youth, cannot imagine that men who stand so high in his opinion, whom he considers to be either holy or learned, should for any reason be deceiving him so unscrupulously. But it is precisely this that has been done to him all the time. This is accomplished, in the first place, by impressing all the laboring people, who have not themselves any time to solve moral and religious questions, from childhood, and up to old age, by example and direct teaching, with the idea that tortures and murders are compatible with Christianity, and that, for certain purposes of state, tortures and murders are not only admissible, but even peremptory; in the second place, by impressing some of them, who are chosen by enlistment or levy, with the idea that the performance of tortures and murders with their own hands forms a sacred duty and even an act which is valorous and worthy of praise and of reward. The common deception, which is disseminated among all men, consists in this, that in all the catechisms, or the books which have taken their place and which are now the subject of obligatory instruction for the children, it says that violence, that is, tortures, imprisonments, and executions, as also murders in civil or external wars for the purpose of maintaining and defending the existing order of the state (whatever it be, autocratic, monarchical, a convention, a consulship, an empire of either Napoleon or of Boulanger, a constitutional monarchy, a commune, or a republic), is quite legitimate, and does not contradict either morality or Christianity. This it says in all the catechisms or books used in the schools. And men are so convinced of it that they grow up, live, and die in this conviction, without doubting it even once. This is one deception, a common deception, which is practised on all men; there is another, a private deception, which is practised on soldiers or policemen, who

are chosen in one way or another and who perform the tortures and the murders which are needed for the support and the defence of the existing order. In all the military codes it says in so many words what in the Russian military code is expressed as follows: "(Art. 87) Precisely and without discussion to carry out the commands of the authorities means to carry out precisely the command given by the authorities, without discussing whether it is good or bad, and whether it is possible to carry it out. The chief himself answers for the consequences of a command given out by him. (Art. 88) The subject may refuse to carry out the commands of his superior only when he sees clearly that by carrying out his superior's command he" — one involuntarily imagines that what will follow is "when he sees clearly that by carrying out his superior's command he violates the law of God;" but that is not at all the case: "when he sees clearly that he is violating the oath of allegiance and fidelity, and his service to the emperor." It says that a man, being a soldier, must carry out all the commands of his chief without any exception whatever, which for a soldier mainly means murder, and so must violate all divine and human laws, except his fidelity and service to him who at the given moment happens to be in power. Thus it says in the Russian military code, and precisely the same, though in different words, is said in all the military codes, as indeed it cannot be otherwise, because in reality upon this deception of emancipating men from their obedience to God or to their conscience, and of substituting for this obedience the obedience to the accidental superior, is all the power of the army and the state based. So it is this on which is founded that strange conviction of the lower classes that the existing order, which is pernicious for them, is as it ought to be, and that they are, therefore, obliged to support it with tortures and murders. This conviction is based on a conscious deception, which is practised upon them by the upper classes. Nor can

it be otherwise. To compel the lower, most numerous classes of men to oppress and torment themselves, committing with this such acts as are contrary to their conscience, it was necessary to deceive these lower, most numerous classes. And so it was done. The other day I again saw an open practice of this shameless deceit, and I was again surprised to see with what boldness and freedom it was practised. In the beginning of November, as I was passing through Tula, I again saw at the gate of the County Council Office the familiar dense crowd of people, from which proceeded drunken shouts and the pitiful wail of mothers and of wives. This was a levy of recruits. As upon other occasions, I was unable to drive past this spectacle: it attracts me as by some evil charm. I again entered among the crowd, stood, looked, asked questions, and marvelled at the freedom with which this most terrible crime is perpetrated in broad daylight and in a populous city. As in former years, the elders in all the villages of Russia, with its one hundred millions of inhabitants, on the first of November selected from lists a given number of lads, frequently their own sons, and took them to the city. On the way the recruits went on an uninterrupted spree, in which they were not interfered with by their elders, who felt that going to such a mad business as the one to which the recruits were going, abandoning their wives and mothers and renouncing everything holy to them, in order to become somebody's senseless instruments of murder, was too painful a matter, if they did not intoxicate themselves with liquor. And so they travelled, drinking, cursing, singing, fighting, and maiming themselves. The nights they passed in inns. In the morning they again became drunk and gathered in front of the County Council Office. One part of them, in new short fur coats, with knitted shawls about their necks, with moist drunken eyes or with savage self-encouraging shouts, or quiet and dejected, crowd at the gate amidst weeping mothers and wives, waiting for

their turns (I fell in with them on the very day of the levy, that is, when those who were sent up were to be examined); another part at this time crowds in the waiting-room of the Office. In the Office they are busy working. The door is opened, and the janitor calls Peter Sidorov. Peter Sidorov is startled, makes the sign of the cross, and enters into a small room with a glass door. Here the prospective recruits undress themselves. A naked recruit, a companion of Peter Sidorov, just accepted, comes in from the Office, with trembling jaws, and puts on his clothes. Peter Sidorov has heard and sees by his face that he is accepted. Peter Sidorov wants to ask him something, but he is told to hurry and undress himself as quickly as possible. He throws off his fur coat, pulls off his boots with his feet, takes off his vest, draws his shirt over his head, and with protruding ribs, naked, with shivering body, and emitting an odor of liquor, tobacco, and perspiration, with bare feet, enters into the Office, without knowing what to do with his bared muscular arms. In the Office there hangs in full sight and in a large gilt frame the portrait of the emperor in a uniform with a sash, and in the corner a small portrait of Christ in a shirt and a crown of thorns. In the middle of the room there stands a table covered with green cloth, upon which lie papers and stands a triangular thing with an eagle, which is called the Mirror of Laws. Around the table sit the chiefs, with confident, calm looks. One of them smokes, another examines some papers. The moment Sidorov has entered, a janitor comes up to him, and he is put on the measuring-scale, receives a knock under his chin, and has his legs straightened out. There walks up a man with a cigarette. It is the doctor, and he, without looking into the recruit's face, but somewhere past him, loathingly touches his body, and measures and feels, and tells the janitor to open the recruit's mouth wide, and commands him to breathe and to say something. Somebody makes some notes. Finally, without looking once into his eyes, the doctor says, "Able-

bodied! Next!" and with a fatigued expression again seats himself at the table. Again soldiers push the lad and hurry him off. He somehow manages in his hurry to pull the shirt over him, after missing the sleeves, somehow puts on his trousers, and leg-rags, draws on his boots, looks for his shawl and cap, grasps his fur coat, and is led into the hall, where he is placed behind a bench. Beyond this bench wait all the accepted recruits. A village lad, like him, but from a distant Government, a full-fledged soldier with a gun, with a sharp bayonet attached to it, keeps watch on him, ready to run the bayonet through him, if he should think of running away. Meanwhile the crowd of fathers, mothers, wives, pushed by the policemen, press close to the gate, to find out who is accepted, and who not. There appears one of the rejected, and he announces that Peter has been accepted, and there is heard the wail of Peter's wife, for whom the word "accepted" means a separation of four or five years, and the life of a soldier's wife as a cook, in debauchery. But just then a long-haired man in a special attire, which distinguishes him from all other men, drives up and, getting down from the carriage, walks up to the house of the County Council Office. The policemen clear a path for him through the crowd. "The father has come to administer the oath." And this father, who has been assured that he is a special, exclusive servant of Christ, who for the most part does not himself see the deception under which he is, enters into the room where the accepted recruits are waiting, puts on a gold-embroidered apron, draws his hair out from underneath it, opens the very Gospel in which taking an oath is prohibited, lifts up a cross, the very cross on which Christ was crucified for not doing what this His imaginary servant orders to be done, and puts it on the pulpit, and all these defenceless and deceived lads repeat after him the lie which he pronounces boldly and by habit. He reads, and they repeat after him: "I promise and swear by the Almighty God, before His holy

Gospel... etcetera., to defend, that is, to kill all those whom I am commanded to kill, and to do everything I am ordered to do by those people whom I do not know, and who need me for nothing else but that I should commit the evil deeds by which they are kept in their positions, and by which they oppress my brothers." All the accepted recruits senselessly repeat these wild words, and the so-called "father" drives away with the consciousness of having correctly and scrupulously done his duty, and all these deceived lads think that all those insipid, incomprehensible words, which they have just pronounced, have now, for the whole time of their military service, freed them from their human obligations and have bound them to new, more obligatory military obligations. And this is done publicly, and no one will shout to the deceivers and to the deceived: "Bethink yourselves and scatter, for this is the basest and meanest lie, which ruins not only our bodies, but also our souls." No one does so; on the contrary, when all are accepted, and it becomes necessary to let them out, the military chief, as though to scorn them, enters with self-confident, majestic mien into the hall where the deceived, drunken lads are locked up, and boldly exclaims to them in military fashion, "Your health, boys! I congratulate you on your Tsar's service." And the poor fellows (somebody has instructed them what to do) babble something with an unaccustomed, half-intoxicated tongue to the effect that they are glad of it. In the meantime, the crowd of fathers, mothers, and wives stand at the door and wait. The women look with tearful, arrested eyes through the door. And the door opens, and out come, staggering, and with a look of bravado, the accepted recruits — Petrúkha, and Vanyúkha, and Makár — trying not to look at their relatives. The wail of the mothers and wives is heard. Some embrace one another and weep; others try to look brave; others again console their people. Mothers and wives, knowing that now they will be orphaned for three, four, or five years, without a supporter,

wail and lament at the top of their voices. The fathers do not speak much, and only pitifully smack their tongues and sigh, knowing that now they will no longer see their helpers, whom they have raised and instructed, and that there will return to them, not those peaceful, industrious agriculturists that they have been, but generally debauched, dandyish soldiers, who are no longer used to a simple life. And now the whole crowd take up seats in their sleighs and start down the street, in the direction of inns and restaurants, and still louder are heard, interfering with one another, songs, sobs, drunken shouts, the laments of the mothers and wives, the sounds of the accordion, and curses. All make for saloons and restaurants, the revenue from which goes to the government, and they abandon themselves to intoxication, which drowns in them the perceived consciousness of the illegality of what is being done to them. For two or three weeks they live at home, and for the most part are having a good time, that is, are out on a spree. On a set day they are collected, and driven like cattle to one place, and are taught military methods and exercises. They are instructed by just such deceived and bestialized men as they, who entered the service two or three years ago. The means of instruction are deception, stupefaction, kicks, vodka. And not a year passes but that spiritually sound, bright, good fellows are turned into just such wild beings as their teachers. "Well, and if the prisoner, your father, runs away?" I asked a young soldier. "I can run the bayonet through him," he replied, in the peculiar, senseless voice of a soldier. "And if he 'removes himself,' I must shoot," he added, apparently proud of his knowledge of what to do when his father "removes himself." When he, the good young man, is brought to a condition lower than an animal, he is such as those who use him as an instrument of violence want him to be. He is all ready: the man is lost, and a new instrument of violence has been created. And all this takes place every year, every

autumn, everywhere, in the whole of Russia, in broad daylight, in a populous city, in the sight of all men, and the deception is so clever, so cunning, that all see it and in the depth of their hearts know all its baseness, all its terrible consequences, and are unable to free themselves from it.

