

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

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

by Leo Tolstoy

[Podcast 9 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 12 (Continues)]

Part 4 But, strange to say, those very men, who in our time assert more than any one else that they care for the amelioration of human life, and who are regarded as the leaders in public opinion, affirm that it is not necessary to do that, and that for the amelioration of the condition of men there exist other, more efficacious means. These men assert that the amelioration of human life does not take

place in consequence of the internal efforts of the consciousness of individual men and the elucidation and profession of the truth, but in consequence of the gradual change of the common external conditions of life, and that the profession by every individual man of the truth which is not in conformity with the existing order is not only useless, but even harmful, because on the part of the power it provokes oppressions, which keep these individuals from continuing their useful activity in the service of society. According to this doctrine, all the changes in human life take place under the same laws under which they take place in the life of the animals. Thus, according to this doctrine, all the founders of religions, such as Moses and the prophets, Confucius, Lao-tse, Buddha, Christ, and others preached their teachings, and their followers accepted them, not because they loved truth, elucidated it to themselves, and professed it, but because the political, social, and, above all, economic conditions of the nations among whom these teachings appeared and were disseminated were favorable for their manifestation and diffusion. And so the chief activity of a man wishing to serve society and ameliorate the condition of humanity must according to this doctrine be directed, not to the elucidation of the truth and its profession, but to the amelioration of the external political, social, and, above all else, economic conditions. Now the change of these political, social, and economic conditions is accomplished partly by means of serving the government and of introducing into it liberal and progressive principles, partly by contributing to the development of industry and the dissemination of socialistic ideas, and chiefly by the diffusion of scientific education. According to this teaching it is not important for a man to profess in life the truth that has been revealed to him, and so inevitably be compelled to realize it in life, or at least not to do acts which are contrary to the professed truth; not to serve the

government and not to increase its power, if he considers this power to be deleterious; not to make use of the capitalistic structure, if he considers this structure to be irregular; not to show any respect for various ceremonies, if he considers them to be a dangerous superstition; not to take part in the courts, if he considers their establishment to be false; not to serve as a soldier; not to swear; in general, not to lie, not to act as a scoundrel, but, without changing the existing forms of life, and submitting to them, contrary to his opinion, he should introduce liberalism into the existing institutions; cooperate with industry, the propaganda of socialism, the advancement of what is called the sciences, and the diffusion of culture. According to this theory is it possible, though remaining a landed proprietor, a merchant, a manufacturer, a judge, an official, receiving a salary from the government, a soldier, an officer, to be, withal, not only a humane man, but even a socialist and revolutionist. Hypocrisy, which formerly used to have a religious foundation in the doctrine about the fall of the human race, about redemption, and about the church, in this teaching received in our time a new scientific foundation, and so has caught in its net all those men who from the degree of their development can no longer fall back on the religious hypocrisy. Thus, if formerly only a man who professed the ecclesiastic religious doctrine could, considering himself with it pure from every sin, take part in all kinds of crimes committed by the government, and make use of them, so long as he at the same time fulfilled the external demands of his profession, now all men, who do not believe in the church Christianity, have the same kind of a worldly scientific basis for recognizing themselves as pure, and even highly moral men, in spite of their participation in the evil deeds of the state and of their making use of them. There lives — not in Russia alone, but anywhere you please, in France, England, Germany, America — a rich landed proprietor, and for the right which

he gives to certain people living on his land, to draw their sustenance from it, he fleeces these for the most part hungry people to their fullest extent. This man's right to the possession of the land is based on this, that at every attempt of the oppressed people at making use of the lands which he considers his own, without his consent, there arrive some troops which subject the men who have seized the lands to tortures and extermination. One would think that it is evident that a man who lives in this manner is an egotistical being and in no way can call himself a Christian or a liberal. It would seem to be obvious that the first thing such a man ought to do, if he only wants in some way to come near to Christianity or to liberalism, would be to stop plundering and ruining men by means of his right to the land, which is supported by murders and tortures practised by the government. Thus it would be if there did not exist the metaphysics of hypocrisy, which says that from a religious point of view the possession or non-possession of the land is a matter of indifference as regards salvation, and that from the scientific point of view the renunciation of the ownership of land would be a useless personal effort, and that the cooperation with the good of men is not accomplished in this manner, but through the gradual change of external forms. And so this man, without the least compunction, and without any misgivings as to his being believed, arranges an agricultural exhibition, or a temperance society, or through his wife and children sends jackets and soup to three old women, and in his family, in drawing-rooms, committees, the press, boldly preaches the Gospel or humane love of one's neighbor in general, and of that working agricultural class in particular which he constantly torments and oppresses. And the men who are in the same condition with him believe him, praise him, and with him solemnly discuss the questions as to what measures should be used for the amelioration of the condition of the working masses, on the spoliation of whom

their life is based, inventing for the purpose all kinds of means, except the one without which no amelioration of the people's condition is possible, of ceasing to take away from these people the land, which is necessary for their maintenance. A most striking example of such hypocrisy is to be found in the measures taken last year by the Russian landed proprietors in the struggle with the famine, which they themselves had produced, and which they immediately set out to exploit, when they not only sold the corn at the highest possible price, but even sold to the freezing peasants as fuel the potato-tops at five roubles per desyatína. Or there lives a merchant, whose whole commerce, like any commerce, is based on a series of rascalities, by means of which, exploiting the ignorance and need of men, articles are bought of them below their value, and, again exploiting the ignorance, need, and temptation of men, are sold back at prices above their value. It would seem to be obvious that a man whose activity is based on what in his own language is called rascality, so long as these same acts are performed under different conditions, ought to be ashamed of his position, and is by no means able, continuing to be a merchant, to represent himself as a Christian or a liberal. But the metaphysics of hypocrisy says to him that he may pass for a virtuous man, even though continuing his harmful activity: a religious man need only be believed, but a liberal has only to cooperate with the change of external conditions — the progress of industry. And so this merchant, who frequently, in addition, performs a whole series of direct rascalities, by selling bad wares for good ones, cheating in weights and measures, or trading exclusively in articles which are pernicious to the people's health (such as wine or opium), boldly considers himself, and is considered by others, so long as he in business does not directly cheat his fellows in deception, that is, his fellow merchants, to be a model of honesty and conscientiousness. If he spends one-thousandth of the

money stolen by him on some public institution, a hospital, a museum, an institution of learning, he is also regarded as a benefactor of those very people on the deception and corruption of whom all his fortune is based; but if he contributes part of his stolen money to a church and for the poor, he is regarded even as a model Christian. Or there lives a manufacturer, whose whole income consists of the pay which is taken away from the workmen, and whose whole activity is based on compulsory, unnatural labor, which ruins whole generations of men; it would seem to be obvious that first of all, if this man professes any Christian or liberal principles, he must stop ruining human lives for the sake of his profit. But according to the existing theory, he is contributing to industry, and he must not — it would even be injurious to men and to society — stop his activity. And here this man, the cruel slaveholder of thousands of men, building for those who have been crippled while working for him little houses with little gardens five feet square, and a savings-bank, and a poorhouse, and a hospital, is fully convinced that in this way he has more than paid for all those physically and mentally ruined lives of men, for which he is responsible, and quietly continues his activity, of which he is proud. Or there lives a head of a department, or some civil, clerical, military servant of the state, who serves for the purpose of satisfying his ambition or love of power, or, what is most common, for the purpose of receiving a salary, which is collected from the masses that are emaciated and exhausted with labor (taxes, no matter from whom they come, always originate in labor, that is, in the laboring people), and if he, which is extremely rare, does not directly steal the government's money in some unusual manner, he considers himself and is considered by others like him to be a most useful and virtuous member of society. There lives some judge, prosecutor, head of a department, and he knows that as the result of his sentence or decree hundreds and thousands of

unfortunate people, torn away from their families, are lingering in solitary confinement, at hard labor, going mad and killing themselves with shards of glass, or starving to death; he knows that these thousands of people have thousands of mothers, wives, children, who are suffering from the separation, are deprived of the possibility of meeting them, are disgraced, vainly implore forgiveness or even alleviation of the fates of their fathers, sons, husbands, brothers — and the judge or head of a department is so hardened in his hypocrisy that he himself and his like and their wives and relatives are firmly convinced that he can with all this be a very good and sensitive man. According to the metaphysics of hypocrisy, it turns out that he is doing useful public work. And this man, having ruined hundreds, thousands of men, who curse him, and who are in despair, thanks to his activity, believing in the good and in God, with a beaming, benevolent smile on his smooth face, goes to mass, hears the Gospel, makes liberal speeches, pets his children, preaches to them morality, and feels meek of spirit in the presence of imaginary sufferings. All these men and those who live on them, their wives, teachers, children, cooks, actors, jockeys, and so forth, live by the blood which in one way or another, by one class of leeches or by another, is sucked out of the working people; thus they live, devouring each day for their pleasures hundreds and thousands of work-days of the exhausted laborers, who are driven to work by the threat of being killed; they see the privations and sufferings of these laborers, of their children, old men, women, sick people; they know of the penalties to which the violators of this established spoliation are subjected, and they not only do not diminish their luxury, do not conceal it, but impudently display before these oppressed laborers, who for the most part hate them, as though on purpose to provoke them, their parks, castles, theatres, chases, races, and at the same time assure themselves and

one another that they are all very much concerned about the good of the masses, whom they never stop treading underfoot; and on Sundays they dress themselves in costly attire and drive in expensive carriages into houses especially built for the purpose of making fun of Christianity, and there listen to men especially trained in this lie, who in every manner possible, in vestments and without vestments, in white neckties, preach to one another the love of men, which they all deny with their whole lives. And, while doing all this, these men so enter into their parts that they seriously believe that they actually are what they pretend to be. The universal hypocrisy, which has entered into the flesh and blood of all the classes of our time, has reached such limits that nothing of this kind ever fills any one with indignation. Hypocrisy with good reason means the same as acting, and anybody can pretend — act a part. Nobody is amazed at such phenomena as that the successors of Christ bless the murderers who are lined up and hold the guns which are loaded for their brothers; that the priests, the pastors of all kinds of Christian confessions, always, as inevitably as the executioners, take part in executions, with their presence recognizing the murder as compatible with Christianity (at an electrocution in America, a preacher was present). Lately there was an international prison exhibition in St. Petersburg, where implements of torture were exhibited, such as manacles, models of solitary cells, that is, worse implements of torture than knouts and rods, and sensitive gentlemen and ladies went to look at all this, and they enjoyed the sight. Nor is any one surprised at the way the liberal science proves, by the side of the assumption of equality, fraternity, liberty, the necessity of an army, of executions, custom-houses, the censorship, the regulation of prostitution, the expulsion of cheap labor, and the prohibition of immigration, and the necessity and justice of colonization, which is based on the poisoning, plundering, and

destruction of whole tribes of men who are called savage, and so forth. People talk of what will happen when all men shall profess what is called Christianity (that is, various mutually hostile professions); when all shall be well fed and well clothed; when all shall be united with one another from one end of the world to the other by means of telegraphs and telephones, and shall communicate with one another by means of balloons; when all the laborers shall be permeated with social teachings, and the labor-unions shall have collected so many millions of members and of roubles; when all men shall be cultured, and all shall read the papers and know the sciences. But of what use or good can all these improvements be, if people shall not at the same time speak and do what they consider to be the truth? The calamities of men are certainly due to their disunion, and the disunion is due to this, that men do not follow the truth, which is one, but the lies, of which there are many. The only means for the union of men into one is the union in truth; and so, the more sincerely men strive toward the truth, the nearer they are to this union. But how can men be united in truth, or even approach it, if they not only do not express the truth which they know, but even think that it is unnecessary to do so, and pretend that they consider to be the truth what they do not regard as the truth. And so no amelioration of the condition of men is possible, so long as men will pretend, that is, conceal the truth from themselves, so long as they do not recognize that their union, and so their good, is possible only in the truth, and so will not place the recognition and profession of the truth, the one which has been revealed to them, higher than anything else. Let all those external improvements, of which religious and scientific men may dream, be accomplished; let all men accept Christianity, and let all those ameliorations, which all kinds of Bellamys and Richets wish for, take place, with every imaginable addition and correction — but let with all that the same hypocrisy

remain as before; let men not profess the truth which they know, but continue to pretend that they believe in what they really, do not believe, and respect what they really do not respect, and the condition of men will not only remain the same, but will even grow worse and worse. The more people shall have to eat, the more there shall be of telegraphs, telephones, books, newspapers, journals, the more means will there be for the dissemination of discordant lies and of hypocrisy, and the more will men be disunited and, therefore, wretched, as is indeed the case at present. Let all these external changes take place, and the condition of humanity will not improve. But let each man at once in his life, according to his strength, profess the truth, as he knows it, or let him at least not defend the untruth, which he does, giving it out as the truth, and there would at once, in this present year 1893, take place such changes in the direction of the emancipation of men and the establishment of truth upon earth as we do not dare even to dream of for centuries to come. For good reason Christ's only speech which is not meek, but reproachful and cruel, was directed to the hypocrites and against hypocrisy. What corrupts, angers, bestializes, and, therefore, disunites men, is not thieving, nor spoliation, nor murder, nor fornication, nor forgery, but the lie, that special lie of hypocrisy which in the consciousness of men destroys the distinction between good and evil, deprives them of the possibility of avoiding the evil and seeking the good, deprives them of what forms the essence of the true human life, and so stands in the way of every perfection of men. Men who do not know the truth and who do evil, awakening in others a sympathetic feeling for their victims and a contempt for their acts, do evil only to those whom they injure; but the men who know the truth and do the evil, which is concealed under hypocrisy, do evil to themselves and to those whom they injure, and to thousands of others who are offended by the lie, with which they attempt to conceal the evil done by

them. Thieves, plunderers, murderers, cheats, who commit acts that are recognized as evil by themselves and by all men, serve as an example of what ought not to be done, and deter men from evil. But the men who commit the same act of thieving, plundering, torturing, killing, mantling themselves with religious and scientific liberal justifications, as is done by all landed proprietors, merchants, manufacturers, and all kinds of servants of the government of our time, invite others to emulate their acts, and do evil, not only to those who suffer from it, but also to thousands and millions of men, whom they corrupt, by destroying for these men the difference between good and evil. One fortune acquired by the trade in articles necessary for the masses or by corrupting the people, or by financial speculation, or by the acquisition of cheap land, which later grows more expensive on account of the popular want, or by the establishment of plants ruining the health and the life of men, or by civil or military service to the state, or by any means which pamper to the vices of men — a fortune gained by such means, not only with the consent, but even with the approval of the leaders of society, corrupts people incomparably more than millions of thefts, rascalities, plunderings, which are committed outside the forms recognized by law and subject to criminal prosecution. One execution, which is performed by well-to-do, cultured men, not under the influence of passion, but with the approval and cooperation of Christian pastors, and presented as something necessary, corrupts and bestializes men more than hundreds and thousands of murders, committed by uncultured laboring men, especially under the incitement of passion. An execution, such as Zhukóvski proposed to arrange, when men, as Zhukóvski assumed, would even experience a religious feeling of meekness of spirit, would be the most corrupting action that can be imagined. (See Volume 6 of Zhukóvski's Complete Works.) Every war, however short its duration, with its usual

accompanying losses, destruction of the crops, thieving, admissible debauchery, looting, murders, with the invented justifications of its necessity and its justice, with the exaltation and eulogizing of military exploits, of love of flag and country, with the hypocritical cares for the wounded, and so forth, corrupts in one year more than do millions of robberies, arsons, murders, committed in the course of hundreds of years by individual men under the influence of the passions. One luxurious life, running temperately within the limits of decency, on the part of one respectable, so-called virtuous, family, which, none the less, spends on itself the products of as many laboring days as would suffice for the support of thousands of people living in misery side by side with this family, corrupts people more than do thousands of monstrous orgies of coarse merchants, officers, laboring men, who abandon themselves to drunkenness and debauchery, who for fun break mirrors, dishes, and so forth. One solemn procession, Te Deum, or sermon from the ambo or pulpit, dealing with a lie in which the preachers themselves do not believe, produces incomparably more evil than do thousands of forgeries and adulterations of food, and so forth. We talk of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But the hypocrisy of the men of our time far surpasses the comparatively innocent hypocrisy of the Pharisees. They had at least an external religious law, in the fulfilment of which they could overlook their obligations in relation to their neighbors, and, besides, these obligations were at that time not yet clearly pointed out; in our time, in the first place, there is no such religious law which frees men from their obligations to their neighbors, to all their neighbors without exception (I do not count those coarse and stupid men who even now think that sacraments or the decision of the Pope can absolve one from sins): on the contrary, that Gospel law, which we all profess in one way or another, directly points out these obligations, and besides these obligations, which

at that time were expressed in dim words by only a few prophets, are now expressed so clearly that they have become truisms, which are repeated by gymnasiasts and writers of feuilletons. And so the men of our time, it would seem, cannot possibly pretend that they do not know these their obligations. The men of our time, who exploit the order of things which is supported by violence, and who at the same time assert that they are very fond of their neighbors, and entirely fail to observe that they are with their whole lives doing evil to these their neighbors, are like a man who has incessantly robbed people, and who, being finally caught with his knife raised over his victim, who is calling for aid in a desperate voice, should assert that he did not know that what he was doing was unpleasant for him whom he was robbing and getting ready to kill. Just as this robber and murderer cannot deny what is obvious to all men, so, it would seem, it is impossible for the men of our time, who live at the expense of the sufferings of oppressed men, to assure themselves and others that they wish for the good of those men whom they rob incessantly, and that they did not know in what manner they acquire what they use as their own. It is impossible for us to believe that we do not know of those one hundred thousand men in Russia alone, who are always locked up in prisons and at hard labor, for the purpose of securing our property and our peace; and that we do not know of those courts, in which we ourselves take part, and which in consequence of our petitions sentence the men who assault our property or endanger our security to imprisonment, deportation, and hard labor, where the men, who are in no way worse than those who sentence them, perish and are corrupted; that we do not know that everything we have we have only because it is acquired and secured for us by means of murders and tortures. We cannot pretend that we do not see the policeman who walks in front of the windows with a loaded revolver, defending us, while we eat our

savory dinner or view a new performance, or those soldiers who will immediately go with their guns and loaded cartridges to where our property will be violated. We certainly know that if we shall finish eating our dinner, or seeing the latest drama, or having our fun at a ball, at the Christmas tree, at the skating, at the races, or at the chase, we do so only thanks to the bullet in the policeman's revolver and in the soldier's gun, which will at once bore a hole through the hungry stomach of the dispossessed man who, with watering mouth, is staying around the corner and watching our amusements, and is prepared to violate them the moment the policeman with the revolver shall go away, or as soon as there shall be no soldier in the barracks ready to appear at our first call. And so, just as a man caught in broad daylight in a robbery can in no way assure all men that he did not raise his hand over the man about to be robbed by him, in order to take his purse from him, and did not threaten to cut his throat, so we, it would seem, cannot assure ourselves and others that the soldiers and policemen with the revolvers are all about us, not in order to protect us, but to defend us against external enemies, for the sake of order, for ornament, amusement, and parades; and that we did not know that men do not like to starve, having no right to make a living off the land on which they live, do not like to work underground, in the water, in hellish heat, from ten to fourteen hours a day, and in the night, in all kinds of factories and plants, for the purpose of manufacturing articles for our enjoyment. It would seem to be impossible to deny that which is so obvious. And yet it is precisely what is being done. Though there are among the rich some honest people — fortunately I meet more and more of them, especially among the young and among women — who, at the mention of how and with what their pleasures are bought, do not try to conceal the truth, and grasp their heads and say, "Oh, do not speak of it. If it is so, it is impossible to go on living;" though there are such

sincere people, who, unable to free themselves from their sin, none the less see it, the vast majority of the men of our time have so entered into their role of hypocrisy, that they boldly deny what is so startlingly obvious to every seeing person. "All this is unjust," they say; "nobody compels the people to work for the proprietors and in factories. This is a question of free agreement. Large possessions and capital are indispensable, because they organize labor and give work to the laboring classes; and the work in the factories and plants is not at all as terrible as you imagine it to be. If there are some abuses in the factories, the government and society will see to it that they be removed and that the work be made still more easy and even more agreeable for the laborers. The working people are used to physical labor, and so far are not good for anything else. The poverty of the masses is not at all due to the ownership of land, nor to the oppression of capital, but to other causes: it is due to the ignorance, the coarseness, the drunkenness of the masses. We, the men of state, who are counteracting this impoverishment by wise enactments, and we, the capitalists, who are counteracting it by the dissemination of useful inventions, we, the clergy, by religious instruction, and we, the liberals, by the establishment of labor-unions, the increase and diffusion of knowledge, in this manner, without changing our position, increase the welfare of the masses. We do not want all men to be poor, like the poor, but want them to be rich, like the rich. The statement that men are tortured and killed to compel them to work for the rich is nothing but sophistry; troops are sent out against the masses only when they, misunderstanding their advantages, become riotous and disturb the peace, which is necessary for the common good. Just as much do we need the curbing of malefactors, for whom are intended the prisons, gallows, and hard labor. We should ourselves like to do away with them, and we are working in this direction." The hypocrisy of our time, which is supported

from two sides, by the quasi-religion and the quasi-science, has reached such a point that, if we did not live in the midst of it, we should not be able to believe that men could reach such a degree of self-deception. The people have in our time reached the remarkable state when their hearts are so hardened that they look and do not see, that they listen and do not hear or understand. Men have long been living a life which is contrary to their consciousness. If it were not for hypocrisy, they would not be able to live this life. This order of life, which is contrary to their consciousness, is continued only because it is hidden under hypocrisy. The more the distance is growing between reality and the consciousness of men, the more does hypocrisy expand, but there are limits even to hypocrisy, and it seems to me that in our time we have reached that limit. Every man of our time, with the Christian consciousness, which is involuntarily acquired by him, finds himself in a situation which is exactly like that of a sleeping man, who sees in his sleep that he must do what he knows even in his sleep is not right for him to do. He knows this in the very depth of his heart, and yet, as though unable to change his position, he cannot stop and cease doing what he knows he ought not to do. And, as happens in sleep, his condition, becoming more and more agonizing, finally reaches the utmost degree of tension, and then he begins to doubt the reality of what presents itself to him, and he makes an effort of consciousness, in order to break the spell that holds him fettered. In the same condition is the average man of our Christian world. He feels that everything which is done by himself and about him is something insipid, monstrous, impossible, and contrary to his consciousness, that this condition is becoming more and more agonizing, and has reached the utmost limit of tension. It cannot be: it cannot be that the men of our time, with our Christian consciousness of the dignity of man, the equality of men, which has permeated our flesh and blood, with our need for

a peaceful intercourse and union among the nations, should actually be living in such a way that every joy of ours, every comfort, should be paid for by the sufferings, the lives of our brothers, and that we, besides, should every moment be within a hair's breadth of throwing ourselves, like wild beasts, upon one another, nation upon nation, mercilessly destroying labor and life, for no other reason than that some deluded diplomat or ruler has said or written something stupid to another deluded diplomat or ruler like himself. It cannot be. And yet every man of our time sees that it is precisely what is being done, and that the same thing awaits him. The state of affairs is getting more and more agonizing. As the man in his sleep does not believe that what presents itself to him as reality is actually real, and wants to awaken to the other, the actual reality, so also the average man of our time cannot in the depth of his heart believe that the terrible state in which he is, and which is getting worse and worse, is the reality, and he wants to awaken to the actual reality, the reality of the consciousness which already abides in him. And as the man asleep needs but make an effort of his consciousness and ask himself whether it is not a dream, in order that what to him appeared as such a hopeless state may be at once destroyed, and he may awaken to a calm and joyous reality, even so the modern man needs only make an effort of his consciousness, needs only doubt in the reality of what his own and the surrounding hypocrisy presents to him, and ask himself whether it is not all a deception, in order that he may immediately feel himself at once passing over, like the awakened man, from the imaginary, terrible world to the real, to the calm and joyous reality. This man need not perform any acts or exploits, but has only to make an internal effort of consciousness. Cannot man make this effort?

Part 5 According to the existing theory, indispensable for hypocrisy, man is not free and cannot change his life. "Man cannot change his life, because he is not free; he is not free, because all of his acts are conditioned by previous causes. No matter what a man may do, there always exist these or those causes, from which the man has committed these or those acts, and so man cannot be free and himself change his life," say the defenders of the metaphysics of hypocrisy. They would be absolutely right, if man were an unconscious being, immovable in relation to truth; that is, if, having once come to know the truth, he always remained on the selfsame stage of his cognition. But man is a conscious being, recognizing a higher and still higher degree of the truth, and so, if a man is not free in the commission of this or that act, because for every act there exists a cause, the very causes of these acts, which for conscious man consist in his recognizing this or that truth as an adequate cause for his action, are within man's power. Thus man, who is not free in the commission of these or those acts, is free as regards the basis for his acts, something as the engineer of a locomotive, who is not free as regards the change of an accomplished or actual motion of the locomotive, is none the less free in determining beforehand its future motions. No matter what a conscious man may do, he acts in this way or that, and not otherwise, only because he either now recognizes that the truth is that he ought to act as he does, or because he formerly recognized it, and now from inertia, from habit, acts in a manner which now he recognizes to be false. In either case the cause of his act was not a given phenomenon, but the recognition of a given condition as the truth and, consequently, the recognition of this or that phenomenon as an adequate cause of his act. Whether a man eats or abstains from food, whether he works or rests, runs from danger or is subject to it, if he is a conscious man, he acts as he does only because he now considers this to be proper

and rational: he considers the truth to consist in his acting this way, and not otherwise, or he has considered it so for a long time. The recognition of a certain truth or the non-recognition of it does not depend on external causes, but on some others, which are in man himself. Thus with all the external, apparently advantageous conditions for the recognition of truth, one man at times does not recognize it, and, on the contrary, another, under all the most unfavorable conditions, without any apparent cause, does recognize it. As it says in the Gospel: "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him" (John vi. 44), that is, the recognition of the truth, which forms the cause of all the phenomena of human life, does not depend on external phenomena, but on some internal qualities of man, which are not subject to his observation. And so a man, who is not free in his acts, always feels himself free in what serves as the cause of his actions — in the recognition or non-recognition of the truth, and feels himself free, not only independently of external conditions taking place outside him, but even of his own acts. Thus a man, having under the influence of passion committed an act which is contrary to the cognized truth, none the less remains free in its recognition or non-recognition, that is, he can, without recognizing the truth, regard his act as necessary and justify himself in its commission, and can, by recognizing the truth, consider his act bad and condemn it in himself. Thus a gambler or a drunkard, who has not withstood temptation and has succumbed to his passion, remains none the less free to recognize his gambling or his intoxication either as an evil or as an indifferent amusement. In the first case, he, though not at once, frees himself from his passion, the more, as he the more sincerely recognizes the truth; in the second, he strengthens his passion and deprives himself of every possibility of liberation. Even so a man, who could not stand the heat and ran out of a burning house without

having saved his companion, remains free (by recognizing the truth that a man must serve the lives of others at the risk of his own life) to consider his act bad, and so to condemn himself for it, or (by not recognizing this truth) to consider his act natural, and necessary, and to justify himself in it. In the first case, in recognizing the truth, he, in spite of his departure from it, prepares for himself a whole series of self-sacrificing acts, which inevitably must result from such a recognition; in the second case, he prepares a whole series of egotistical acts, which are opposed to the first. Not that a man is always free to recognize every truth, or not. There are truths which have long ago been recognized by a man himself or have been transmitted to him by education and tradition, and have been taken by him on faith, the execution of which has become to him a habit, a second nature; and there are truths which present themselves to him indistinctly, in the distance. A man is equally unfree in the non-recognition of the first and the recognition of the second. But there is a third class of truths, which have not yet become for man an unconscious motive for his activity, but which at the same time have already revealed themselves to him with such lucidity that he cannot evade them, and must inevitably take up this or that relation to them, by recognizing or not recognizing them. It is in relation to these same truths that man's freedom is manifested. Every man finds himself in his life in relation to truth in the position of a wanderer who walks in the dark by the light of a lantern moving in front of him: he does not see what is not yet illuminated by the lantern, nor what he has passed over and what is again enveloped in darkness, and it is not in his power to change his relation to either; but he sees, no matter on what part of the path he may stand, what is illuminated by the lantern, and it is always in his power to select one side of the road on which he is moving, or the other. For every man there always are truths, invisible to him, which have not yet been

revealed to his mental vision; there are other truths, already outlived, forgotten, and made his own; and there are certain truths which have arisen before him in the light of his reason and which demand his recognition. It is in the recognition or nonrecognition of these truths that there is manifested what we cognize as our freedom. The whole difficulty and seeming insolubility of the question about man's freedom is due to this, that the men who decide this question present man to themselves as immovable in relation to truth. Man is unquestionably not free, if we represent him to ourselves as immovable, if we forget that the life of man and of humanity is only a constant motion from darkness to the light, from the lower stage of the truth to the higher, from a truth which is mixed with errors to a truth which is more free from them. Man would not be free, if he did not know any truth, and he would not be free and would not even have any idea about freedom, if the whole truth, which is to guide him in his life, were revealed to him in all its purity, without any admixture of errors. But man is not immovable in relation to truth, and every individual man, as also all humanity, in proportion to its movement in life, constantly cognizes a greater and ever greater degree of the truth, and is more and more freed from error. Therefore men always are in a threefold relation to truth: one set of truths has been so acquired by them that these truths have become unconscious causes of their actions, others have only begun to be revealed to them, and the third, though not yet made their own, are revealed to them with such a degree of lucidity that inevitably, in one way or another, they must take up some stand in relation to them, must recognize them, or not. It is in the recognition or non-recognition of these truths that man is free. Man's freedom does not consist in this, that he can, independently of the course of his life and of causes already existing and acting upon him, commit arbitrary acts, but in this, that he can, by recognizing the truth

revealed to him and by professing it, become a free and joyous performer of the eternal and infinite act performed by God or the life of the world, and can, by not recognizing the truth, become its slave and be forcibly and painfully drawn in a direction which he does not wish to take. Truth not only indicates the path of human life, but also reveals that one path, on which human life can proceed. And so all men will inevitably, freely or not freely, walk on the path of life: some, by naturally doing the work of life destined for them, others, by involuntarily submitting to the law of life. Man's freedom is in this choice. Such a freedom, within such narrow limits, seems to men to be so insignificant that they do not notice it: some (the determinists) consider this portion of freedom to be so small that they do not recognize it at all; others, the defenders of complete freedom, having in view their imaginary freedom, neglect this seemingly insignificant degree of freedom. The freedom which is contained between the limits of the ignorance of the truth and of the recognition of a certain degree of it does not seem to men to be any freedom, the more so since, whether a man wants to recognize the truth which is revealed to him or not, he inevitably will be compelled to fulfil it in life. A horse that is hitched with others to a wagon is not free not to walk in front of the wagon; and if it will not draw, the wagon will strike its legs, and it will go whither the wagon goes, and will pull it involuntarily. But, in spite of this limited freedom, it is free itself to pull the wagon or be dragged along by it. The same is true of man. Whether this freedom is great or not, in comparison with that fantastic freedom which we should like to have, this freedom unquestionably exists, and this freedom is freedom, and in this freedom is contained the good which is accessible to man. Not only does this freedom give the good to men, but it is also the one means for the accomplishment of the work which is done by the life of the world. According to Christ's teaching, the man who sees the meaning of life in the

sphere in which it is not free, in the sphere of consequences, that is, of acts, has not the true life. According to the Christian teaching, only he has the true life who has transferred his life into that sphere in which it is free, into the sphere of causes, that is, of the cognition and the recognition of the truth which is revealing itself, of its profession, and so inevitably of its consequent fulfilment as the wagon's following the horse. In placing his life in carnal things, a man does that work which is always in dependence on spatial and temporal causes, which are outside of him. He himself really does nothing — it only seems to him that he is doing something, but in reality all those things which it seems to him he is doing are done through him by a higher power, and he is not the creator of life, but its slave; but in placing his life in the recognition and profession of the truth that is revealed to him, he, by uniting with the source of the universal life, does not do personal, private works, which depend on conditions of space and time, but works which have no causes and themselves form causes of everything else, and have an endless, unlimited significance. By neglecting the essence of the true life, which consists in the recognition and profession of the truth, and by straining their efforts for the amelioration of their lives upon external acts, the men of the pagan life-conception are like men on a boat, who, in order to reach their goal, should extinguish the boiler, which keeps them from distributing the oarsmen, and, instead of proceeding under steam and propeller, should try in a storm to row with oars that do not reach to the water. The kingdom of God is taken by force and only those who make an effort get hold of it — and it is this effort of the renunciation of the change of the external conditions for the recognition and profession of truth which is the effort by means of which the kingdom of God is taken and which must and can be made in our time. Men need but understand this: they need but stop troubling themselves

about external and general matters, in which they are not free, and use but one hundredth part of the energy, which they employ on external matters, on what they are free in, on the recognition and profession of the truth which stands before them, on the emancipation of themselves and of men from the lie and hypocrisy which conceal the truth, in order that without effort and struggle there should at once be destroyed that false structure of life which torments people and threatens them with still worse calamities, and that there should be realized that kingdom of God or at least that first step of it, for which men are already prepared according to their consciousness. Just as one jolt is sufficient for a liquid that is saturated with salt suddenly to become crystallized, thus, perhaps, the smallest effort will suffice for the truth, which is already revealed to men, to take hold of hundreds, thousands, millions of men — for a public opinion to be established to correspond to the consciousness, and, in consequence of its establishment, for the whole structure of the existing life to be changed. And it depends on us to make this effort. If every one of us would only try to understand and recognize the Christian truth which surrounds us on all sides in the most varied forms, and begs for admission into our souls; if we only stopped lying and pretending that we do not see that truth, or that we wish to carry it out, only not in what it first of all demands of us; if we only recognized the truth which calls us and boldly professed it, we should immediately see that hundreds, thousands, millions of men are in the same condition that we are in, that they see the truth, just as we do, and that, like us, they are only waiting for others to recognize it. If men only stopped being hypocritical, they would see at once that the cruel structure of life, which alone binds them and which presents itself to them as something firm, indispensable, and sacred, as something established by God, is shaking already and is holding only by that lie of hypocrisy by means of which we and our like

support it. But if this is so, if it is true that it depends on us to destroy the existing order of life, have we the right to destroy it, without knowing clearly what we shall put in its place? What will become of the world, if the existing order of things shall be destroyed? "What will be there, beyond the walls of the world which we leave behind?" (Herzen's words.) Terror seizes us — the void, expanse, freedom.... How can we go, without knowing whither? How can we lose, without seeing any acquisition? If Columbus had reflected thus, he would never have weighed anchor. It is madness to sail the sea without knowing the way, to sail the sea no one has traversed before, to make for a country, the existence of which is a question. With this madness he discovered a new world. Of course, if the nations could move from one hôtel garni into another, a better one, it would be easier, but unfortunately there is no one to arrange the new quarters. In the future it is worse than on the sea — there is nothing — it will be what circumstances and men make it. If you are satisfied with the old world, try to preserve it — it is very decrepit and will not last long; but if it is unbearable for you to live in an eternal discord between convictions and life, to think one thing and do another, come out from under the whited medieval vaults at your risk. I know full well that this is not easy. It is not a trifling matter to part from everything a man is accustomed to from the day of his birth, with what he has grown up with from childhood. Men are prepared for terrible sacrifices, but not for those which the new life demands of them. Are they prepared to sacrifice modern civilization, their manner of life, their religion, the accepted conventional morality? Are they prepared to be deprived of all the fruits which have been worked out with such efforts, of the fruits we have been boasting of for three centuries, to be deprived of all the comforts and charms of our existence, to prefer wild youth to cultured debility, to break up their inherited palace from the mere pleasure of taking

part in laying the foundation for the new house, which will, no doubt, be built after us? [Herzen, Volume 5, page 55.] Thus spoke almost half a century ago a Russian author, who with his penetrating mind even at that time saw very clearly what now is seen by the least reflecting man of our time — the impossibility of continuing life on its former foundations, and the necessity for establishing some new forms of life. From the simplest, lowest, worldly point of view it is already clear that it is madness to remain under the vault of a building, which does not sustain its weight, and that it is necessary to leave it. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a state which is more wretched than the one in which is now the Christian world, with its nations armed against each other, with the ever growing taxes for the support of these ever growing armaments, with the hatred of the laboring class against the rich, which is being fanned more and more, with Damocles's sword of war hanging over all, and ready at any moment to drop down, and inevitably certain to do so sooner or later. Hardly any revolution can be more wretched for the great mass of the people than the constantly existing order, or rather disorder, of our life, with its habitual sacrifices of unnatural labor, poverty, drunkenness, debauchery, and with all the horrors of an imminent war, which is in one year to swallow up more victims than all the revolutions of the present century. What will happen with us, with all humanity, when each one of us shall perform what is demanded of him by God through the conscience which is implanted in him? Will there be no calamity, because, finding myself entirely in the power of the Master, I in the establishment built up and guided by Him shall do what He commands me to do, but what seems strange to me, who do not know the final ends of the Master? But it is not even this question as to what will happen that troubles men, when they hesitate to do the Master's will: they are troubled by the question as to how they could live without those conditions of their life which

they have become accustomed to, and which we call science, art, civilization, culture. We feel for ourselves personally the whole burden of the present life, we even see that the order of this life, if continued, will inevitably cause our ruin; but, at the same time, we want the conditions of this our life, which have grown out of it, our arts, sciences, civilizations, cultures, to remain unharmed in the change of our life. It is as though a man living in an old house, suffering from the cold and the inconveniences of this house, and knowing, besides, that this house is about to fall in, should consent to its rebuilding only on condition that he should not come out of it: a condition which is equal to a refusal to rebuild the house. "What if I leave the house, for a time am deprived of all comforts, and the new house will not be built at all or will be built in such a way that it will lack what I am used to?" But, if the material is on hand and the builders are there, all the probabilities are in favor of the new house being better than the old one, and at the same time there is not only a probability, but even a certainty, that the old house will fall in and will crush those who are left in it. Whether the former, habitual conditions of life will be retained, whether they will be destroyed, or whether entirely new ones, better ones, will arise, it is inevitably necessary to leave the old conditions of our life, which have become impossible and pernicious, and to go ahead and meet the future conditions. "The sciences, arts, civilizations, and cultures will disappear!" All these are only different manifestations of the truth, and the imminent change is to take place only in the name of an approximation to truth and its realization. How, then, can the manifestations of the truth disappear in consequence of its realization? They will be different, better, and higher, but they will by no means be destroyed. What will be destroyed in them is what is false; but what there was of truth in them will only blossom out and be strengthened.

