

EXTRACTS From Unpublished Diaries, Undated Letters, Etc.

by Leo Tolstoy

Translated from the Original Russian and edited by Leo Wiener
Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages at Harvard University

Of late I have been shocked, not by physical disfigurements and sores, but by spiritual ones, of which the most obvious disfigurements are the words of one who uses all methods for concealing the truth and advancing the lie.
in place of the truth.

The sophism of Pobyedondstsev's retort is this : we have complete religious toleration ; we allow the erection of churches of all religions and the celebration of divine services in them, - of christening, marrying, burying, taking the oath, and so forth, according to the custom of each : but we prohibit every religion from preaching its doctrine, that is, from converting from Orthodoxy, as they call it. It is assumed that religion consists only in the fulfilment of certain external acts of life,- in divine service, burials, christening, marriage, swearing, and nothing else, - and that every religion is permitted to perform these acts according to its own rites, that is, a Mohammedan is not compelled to have his children baptized, and so forth. This is not religious toleration, but the absence of violence, such as would not cause any men of a strange faith to go to Russia. We have not here as yet anything to do with religion. This is dead form, while religion is something living. It is something living, if for no other reason, because new men are born all the time, and for them exists the question, " Of what religion ? " This question is again decided in a dead way, that is, the children are of their parents' religion. Consequently it is not a religious, but a civil question ; now the civil question is not decided on the basis of what ought to guide every civil act, - justice: (1) Children one of whose parents is Orthodox must be Orthodox ; (2) one may orally and in writing preach Orthodoxy, but no other religion ; (3) it is permissible to convert to Orthodoxy, that is called missionary work, but not to any other religion.

These three points do not exist in other countries, and so there is there religious toleration, but we have it not.

I explained a factory to Stepan. Calico is cheap, because they do not take into consideration the people that are ruined and do not live long. If they did not take into consideration the horses that are ruined at post-stations, driving, too, would be cheap. But let people have the value of horses at least, and you will see what an ell of calico will be worth. The trouble is, people give their lives cheaply, not according to their values. They work for fifteen hours and leave the loom, with troubled eyes, like dazed men, - and so every day.

Three thousand women, getting up at four and leaving work at eight o'clock, and becoming corrupt, and shortening their lives, and distorting their generation, live wretchedly (amidst temptations) in this establishment, in order that the useless calico be cheap and N. N. may have money, whereas he is troubled what to do with the money which he already has. They establish a management, improve it. For what? In order that this ruin of men and ruin in different forms may be successfully and uninterruptedly continued. Wonderful.

Here are seven counts of an indictment of the government: (1) The church – deceit, superstition, waste; (2) the army – debauchery, cruelty, waste; (3) punishments – corruption, cruelty, infection; (4) large ownership of land – hatred, poverty, cities; (5) factory – murder of life; (6) drunkenness; (7) prostitution.

Read Slyeptsov's Hard Times. Yes, there were different demands in the sixties. And because with these demands was connected the murder of the first of March, people have imagined that these demands were irregular.

Indeed not. They will exist until they are fulfilled.

The positivists, liberals, revolutionists, and all so-called non-Christian sects believe in the same truth of Christ in which we believe, only not in the whole truth, and under a different name; and so we must not dispute and quarrel with them, but make friends with them.

What a terrible suffering to know that I am suffering and losing my life, not from an avalanche, not from bacteria, but through people, through brothers, who ought to love and who, behold, hate me, if they cause me suffering.

That was when they led the Decembrists to execution, that is the unfortunate prisoners in Kara, and so forth. Terrible.

One of the most impudent cases of disobedience to Christ is divine service, common prayer in temples, and calling the clergy fathers, whereas, "And when thou prayest," etc. (Matt. vi. 5-8; xxiii. 8).

The anarchists are right in everything, – in their negation of the existing order and in their assertion that it will not be worse without the power than, with the existing customs, it is with the violence of the power. But they are mistaken in thinking that anarchy can be established by means of revolution, – that anarchy can be instituted. Anarchy will establish itself; but this will happen because a greater and ever greater number of people will not need the defence of the governmental power, and a greater and ever greater number of people will be ashamed to apply this power.

When N. was a baby, he used to go to bed playing and ask the nurse to continue playing while he was sleeping.

Just so the Orthodox people ask their popes to pray for them while they are asleep.

The good doctrine which gets into the church, as in the case of Tikhon Zadonski, is due to this, that in the net of the bad doctrine, which is intended for concealing Christ's teaching from people, there are found good men, Christians in spirit, and they, without rending the net, introduce as much good as they can into it.

Thanks to the censorship, our whole literary activity is an idle occupation. The one necessary thing, which justifies the occupation with it (literature), is put aside by literature. It is as though a carpenter were permitted to plane, provided he made no shavings. In vain do the writers imagine that they are deceiving the governmental censorship. They cannot deceive it, as you could not deceive a man if you wanted softly, without his knowledge, to put a mustard plaster on him. Let it begin to act, and he will tear it off.

The governmental form is now a survival of methods which were necessary before, but now are superfluous ; just as goats climb walls and poles, an act which used to be useful to them, but now is of no use to them.

All life is irrational : irrational is a man's useless blind gut, the survival of the horse's fifth toe, and all the superfluities and atavisms of everything living ; irrational, above all else, is the struggle for existence, – a useless waste of energy.

Man introduces reason into the world of Nature, destroying irrational struggle and waste. But this activity is outside of self, distant, only reflected. Man sees this irrationality only with his intellect.

But the irrationality of his own life he not only sees with his intellect, but also feels with his heart, as contrary to love, and with his whole being. And in this rationalization of what is irrational in his life does his life consist.

What is very important here is this, that the irrationality in Nature is cognized with the intellect, while the irrationality in human life itself is cognized with the heart (through love) and the intellect.

Man's life consists in rationalizing what is irrational in his life. And so two things are necessary for it :

- (1) To see the irrationality of life in all its significance and not to turn one's attention away from it.
- (2) To recognize in all purity the rationality of the possible life.

In recognizing the whole irrationality of life and the wretchedness, which always results from it, a man involuntarily turns away from it ; and, on the other hand, in clearly recognizing the rationality

of a possible life, a man involuntarily strives toward it. Therefore, not to conceal the evil of the irrationality and to point out in all its clearness the good of the rational life will form the problem of all the teachers of humanity.

But here Moses' judgment-seat is always occupied by those who do not go toward the light, because their deeds are evil ; and so the people who pose as teachers not only do not try to elucidate the irrationality of life and the rationality of the ideal, but, on the contrary, conceal the irrationality of life and undermine the confidence in the rationality of the ideal.

This takes place in our life. The whole activity of the men of the world consists in the concealment of the irrationality of life ; for this purpose there exist and act :

(1) The police, (2) the army, (3) criminal laws, prisons, (4) philanthropic establishments : homes for children and for old people, (5) educational homes, (6) houses of prostitution, (7) insane asylums, (8) hospitals, especially for syphilitics and consumptives, (9) insurance companies, (10) fire brigades, (11) all compulsory educational institutions, which are established on money collected by force, (12) institutions for minor criminals, agronomic institutions, exhibitions, and many other institutions.

If one-thousandth part of the energy employed in the establishment of all this, which has for its aim the concealment of the evil and which only increases it (it is interesting to follow out how, in a fatal manner, each of these institutions, besides concealing the evil, begets a new evil and irrepressibly, like a snowball, increases that evil which it proposes to destroy, - examine the educational and orphan homes, insane asylums, prisons, army), were used for counteracting all that for which these institutions exist, the evil, which now is obvious to us and which torments us, would be quickly destroyed.

At fairs they have poles to be climbed for prizes. Such a method of entertainment - at times to entice men (to let a man ruin his health), or a walking match in sacks, with us looking on - could have arisen only with a division of men into masters and slaves.

All the forms of our life have arranged themselves as they have, only because there existed this division : acrobats, waiters, privies, the production of mirrors, visitingcards, all the factories, - everything could have arisen as it is, only because there was that division into masters and slaves.

And we want brotherly love, having retained the slavish forms of life.

Twelve-year-old ones have been commanded to swear.
Do they really imagine they are binding these children ?
Does not this very demand show obviously their guilt and their

consciousness of it ?

They want to retain and save the drowning autocracy, and they send Orthodoxy out to its aid. But the autocracy will drown Orthodoxy and then will itself go down so much the more quickly.

A man is considered disgraced, if he has been beaten, if he is accused of stealing, of fighting, of not paying his card debts, and so forth ; but how if he has signed a sentence of death, has taken part in an execution, has read somebody else's letters, has put people in prison ?

That is certainly worse.

People, in their struggle with lies and superstitions, frequently find consolation in the number of superstitions which they have destroyed. That is not correct. It is impossible to find consolation until everything is destroyed which contradicts reason and demands faith.

Superstition is like cancer, – everything must be cleaned out, if an operation is to be undertaken. Leave a small particle, and everything will grow out again.

When you chop a rough block, the first stroke rebounds as from steel, and you think that you are not doing anything, and that it is in vain to strike. And woe, if you lose courage. But strike again, and soon you will hear dull sounds. That means, that it has moved. A few strokes more, and the block will be chopped.

In such a situation the world is in relation to the Christian truth. How I remember the time when the strokes rebounded and I thought that it was hopeless.

The same is true of people. We must do like the man who began to draw the water out of the ocean. If a man gives his life for any work, no matter what this work may be, it will be done, and much more so God's work.

They say that one swallow does not make a spring ; but is a swallow, because one does not make a spring, to wait, though it already feels the spring ? If so, then every bud and grass blade ought to wait, and there will be no spring.

There came to me a series of thoughts about the blindness of the men who are struggling against the anarchists by means of destroying the anarchists, and not by means of the correction of that order of life, because of the monstrousness of which the anarchists are lighting.

By a vast and all-round labour of thought and speech the comprehension is diffused among men, is acquired by them in the most varied forms, and, making use of the strangest of means, takes possession of men, – one from fashion, one from boasting, under the guise of the liberalism of science, philosophy, religion, – and

becomes proper to men. Men believe that they are brothers, that it is impossible to impress brothers, that it is necessary to help progress and culture, and struggle with superstitions ; it becomes public opinion, and suddenly – the terror of the French Revolution, the First of March, the assassination of Carnot, – and all the labour is lost for nothing. The water which is carefully collected drop by drop by means of a dam goes off by one stroke and uselessly washes away fields and meadows.

I how can the anarchist help seeing the harmfulness of violence ? How I should like to write to them about it ! Everything is so, everything is correct which they discuss and do, in spreading the ideas about the uselessness and harmfulness of the governmental violence. (>nly one thing must be changed by them, – violence and murder by a non-participation in violence and murder.

I have received an Italian book on teaching Christianity in school.

A beautiful idea about teaching religion being violence, that offence against the children of which Christ spoke. What right have we to teach what is disputed by the vast majority, – the Trinity, the miracles of Buddha, Mohammed, Christ ? The only thing we can and must teach is the moral teaching.

A charming expression I heard from N.

We were speaking of the impression produced on peasants by books. It is hard to please them, because their life is very serious.

That is a superb sentence. If only a large number of men of our world could understand it !

We were looking at an exquisite sundown. In the towering clouds a rent, and there, like a red, irregular piece of coal, the sun. All that near the forest. A joy.

And I thought : no, this world is no jest, not merely a dale of trials and a transition to a better, an eternal world ; this is one of the eternal worlds, which is beautiful and joyous, and which we not only can, but must make more beautiful and more joyous for those who live with us and for all those who will live in it after us.

There are two ways for cognizing the external world : One is the grossest and most inevitable method of cognizing by means of the five senses. From this method of cognition we should not have formed that idea of the world which we know, but there would be chaos, which gives us various sensations.

The other method consists in this, that, having recognized ourselves through the love of ourselves, we then recognize the other beings through our love of them : we transfer ourselves in thought into another man, animal, plant, even stone. In this manner you cognize externally, form the whole world, as we know it.

This method is what is called the poetic gift ; and this, too, is love. It is, so to speak, the reestablishment of the violated union between the beings. You go out of yourself and enter into another. And you can enter into everything. All-unite with God, with everything.

In every moral, practical prescription there is a possibility of a contradiction between this prescription and other prescriptions, which result from the same foundation.

Abstemiousness, – well, shall we not eat, and shall we become incapable of serving men ? Not to kill animals, – shall we let them eat us up? Not to drink wine, – shall we not go to communion, not be cured with wine? Not to resist evil with evil, – well, shall we allow a man to kill himself and others ?

The discovery of these contradictions shows only that a man who is busy with it wants not to follow the moral rule.

It is all the same story : for the sake of one man, who has to take wine as a cure, we are not to oppose drunkenness. For the sake of one fictitious violator we are to kill, execute, and put in prison.

The death of children from the common point of view : Nature tries to give better ones, and, seeing that the world is not yet ready for them, takes them back. But she must try, in order to be able to go ahead. So the swallows who return too early freeze to death ; but they must none the less return.

But this is a common, bad reflection. A rational reflection is this, that he (the dead child) has done God's work, – the establishment of the kingdom of God through the increase of love, – more than many who have lived half a century, and more.

Love, love him who has hurt you, whom you have condemned, have not loved, – and everything which concealed his soul from you will disappear, and you will, as through fresh water, see at the bottom the divine essence of his love, and you will not have to forgive him, and it will be impossible for you to do so, – you will have to forgive yourself only for not having loved God in him in whom He was, and for not having seen Him on account of your lack of love.

People who have not risen to life are always busy with preparations for life, but there is no life : they are busy with eating, sleeping, studying, resting, the continuation of the race, education. One thing is lacking, – life, the growth of their life.

Yes, our business is like that of a nurse, – to bring up what is entrusted to us, – our life.

And let no one repeat the favourite trite remark that to bring up our life is egoism.

To bring up our life is to serve God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.

When you see the advantage of your neighbour and do not see the advantage for any one from your growth, and you have to choose, always choose the growth of your life, because the advantage of your neighbour is always doubtful, while the good of the growth of your life is always indubitable.

Just as aimless and unknown sufferings seem incomprehensible and receive an explanation only outside of conditions of life visible to us, so also the aimless, to our view useless good and the unknown, but indubitable growth of our growth prove to us that our life is not limited to visible conditions. In this, it seems to me, lies the solution of that impassioned, insuperable egoism which forms our life. I can love only myself, but, in order not to suffer from the love of self I must find and secrete in myself what is worthy of love, – God. Is it not for that reason that it says: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind ?

This, people will say, is egoism. And the good of men, they will say, is utilitarianism. Either is incorrect ; either is true ; and one proves the other. Inside himself a man will find a meaning only in the growth of life.

Outside of himself he will find only what establishes the kingdom of God upon earth. One inevitably coincides with the other. Men, according to their strength, are given the guidance of one or the other : both lead to the same goal.

He who has not attained the consciousness of life in growth is guided by what contributes to the good of men.

Just as it is precisely the same whether a figure is painted black on white, or whether the white is left on the black, – the contours will be the same.

It is not a metaphor to say that a man who does not bring up his life has no life. Such a man indeed has no life as there is no life in a tree which drops its old bark, but does not produce a new one, as there is none in the animal which is decomposing, and not assimilating food.

The whole carnal life of the organism, with its food, growth, continuation of race, is in relation to the true (growing) life nothing but a destructive process.

You write that, having followed my advice and having, as you write, busied yourself with self-perfection, you felt that you were subjecting yourself to a great danger of living your life egoistically and, therefore, vainly, and that you escaped this danger by having ceased to care for your moral perfection, for the elucidation of your consciousness of the truth, and for the establishment of your life in conformity with this consciousness,

and busied yourself with the improvement, enlightenment, and correction of others.

I think that the danger which frightened you was merely an imaginary one, and that, by continuing to elucidate this consciousness and arranging your life in conformity with this consciousness, you did not at all run the risk of leading an idle life, which would be useless to others.

I think the very reverse: there is no possibility of enlightening and correcting others, without having enlightened and corrected ourselves to the utmost limits; indeed, it is impossible to enlighten and correct ourselves individually, for every true enlightenment and correction of ourselves inevitably enlightens and corrects others, and it is this means alone which actually enlightens and corrects others, just as the burning fire cannot light up and warm only the object which is consumed in it, but inevitably lights up and warms objects about itself, but only when it burns itself.

You write : " Will my becoming better do any good to my brother?" This is as though a digger should say, "Will my sharpening the spade advance my work?" Nothing but the sharpening will advance it. But here the comparison is not complete: the enlightenment and correction of others, as I said before, takes place only through the enlightenment and correction of oneself.

I do not say that what you are doing, staying in military service, and teaching the soldiers the rudiments, etc., is bad. This is unquestionably better than to teach soldiers cruelty and lying, and to beat them. But what is bad for you is this, that, knowing the evil and falseness of military service, with its deceptions, oath, and discipline, you continue to serve. And what is bad is not so much the fact itself that you are serving, as your reflections that, though continuing to serve, you are doing what is right.

I understand that there may be conditions of your relations with your relatives, of your past, of your foibles, which deprive you of your strength to do what you consider to be right, – to leave military service ; from weakness we all more or less depart from that ideal, that truth, which we know; but what is important is not to distort truth, to know that I have departed from it, that I am sinful, bad, and without cessation to strive for it and to be ready at any moment, as soon as the obstacles have weakened, to walk upon its path.

A man moves forward, lives, and serves men, only when he knows how much he has departed from truth, and so considers himself to be bad. But if he seeks a justification for his sin and is satisfied with himself, he is dead. But one must not be satisfied with oneself, while doing military service, knowing that its aim is execution and murder, its means servile obedience to every man higher in rank, who to-morrow may command me to kill innocent people, and its conditions

– not only idleness, but also a useless waste of the nation's best forces and the deception and corruption of the nation.

How often have I been surprised and pained to see that what is so clear to me (and not simply clear, but what I live by), namely, what God's will consists in and its fulfilment, seems to others obscure and doubtful. I cannot help but think, as I look at the workmen in the iron foundry on the Tula road, that each of these workmen is given a definite work, which he must do. I see the same in the whole of Nature : every plant, every animal, is predestined for some work, and for this purpose each of them is given corresponding organs, – roots, leaves, feelers, smelling, and so forth. I see, besides, man to whom, in addition to the organs which are given to an animal, there is given reason, which demands of him that he invest all his acts with a meaning. This reason has to be satisfied and must show man what he should do in conformity with this reason. Thus men have always lived, being guided by their reason. To live while being guided by our reason means to live while doing God's will, – just as for an animal to live while being guided by its organs and instincts means to live while doing God's will.

They retort to me that one regards as God's will the flying at each other's throats, another – the eating of Christ's body in the shape of little bits of bread, another – the certainty that he was saved by Christ's blood, – and this difference in the comprehension of God's will seems to trouble men, as though they have to be guided by somebody else's reason, and not by their own. The question is not as to what Dragomirov considers God's will to consist in (besides, it is uncertain whether Dragomirov considers God's will to consist in flying at each other's throats. ... It is possible to say one thing, and in reality to believe in something else, – words do not prove anything), but as to this, what I, making use of my reason, regard as God's will, that is, what meaning I ascribe to my existence in this world ?

There must be a meaning, just as there must be a meaning in those motions which a workman makes in a foundry. The whole forward motion of human life consists in passing from a lower to a higher comprehension of life, – from flying at the throat to the bits of bread, from the bits of bread to redemption, from redemption to the comprehension of the Christian moral and social teaching.

In this do I understand the meaning of life to consist : in the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth, that is, in substituting a loving and fraternal cohabitation of men for one of violence, cruelty, and hatred. The means for attaining this is personal perfection, that is, the substitution of a loving ministration to others for our egoistical tendencies, as, indeed, it says in the Gospel, that this is the whole law and the prophets : to do to others as we would that others should do to us. In this do I see the meaning of life, than which I see nothing higher, and I do not always live in the name of this meaning, but frequently, and the older I grow the more frequently, I accustom myself to live in the

name of it, and, the more I get used to it, the more joyous, free, independent of everything external my life is, and the less terrible is life to me. . . .

Every man arrives at the truth in his own way ; but I can say this much : what I write is not words, but I live by it, am happy in it, and shall die with it.

OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE

- (1) Life is the consciousness of the invariable spiritual principle as manifested within the limits which demarcate this principle from everything else.
- (2) The limits of this principle as demarcated from everything else present themselves to man as his moving body and as that of other beings.
- (3) Separateness, non-confluence, impermeability of one being by another can present itself only as matter moving independently of the motion of other beings.
- (4) And as corporeality and space, so also motion and time are only conditions of the possibility of representing the separateness of our spiritual being from all the rest, that is, from the unlimited, non-corporeal, non-spatial and non-moving, non-temporal spiritual being.
- (5) And so our life presents itself to us as the life of the spatial body moving in time.
- (6) It appears to us that our body, forming one part of the corporeal world, unlimited in space, originating from parents, ancestors, who lived before us in infinite time, receives its beginning in the mother's womb, is born, grows, develops, then weakens, dries up, and dies, that is, loses its former corporeality, passing into another, stops moving, and - dies.
- (7) In reality our true life is formed only by the consciousness of that spiritual being which is separated from all the rest and is included within the limits of body and motion.
- (8) This spiritual being is always equal to itself and is subject to no changes ; but to us it seems that it grows and expands in time, that is, moves. But what moves is the limits in which the spiritual beings are. This seems so to us, just as it seems to us that the moon is moving, when the clouds pass over it.
- (9) Life is life, only when consciousness is manifested, - when consciousness comes out from its limits. It always exists. Those intervals of the apparent absence of consciousness seem to us so only when we look at the motion of the limits of consciousness in other beings. But when we look within ourselves, we know that consciousness is one

and unchangeable, that it does not begin nor end.

(10) Life at first appears to man as materially spatial and moving, temporal. Man recognizes at first as his life those limits which to him appear as moving matter, which separate him from everything, and assumes that his life is materially spatial and automatically temporal, and in the motion of this matter in time he sees life. In the interruption of the motion of this matter he sees the cessation of his life.

(11) In this conviction man is supported by his observation of other men, who constantly present themselves to him as material in space and moving in time. The observation of the continuity of the motion of matter in other beings causes a man to think that his life, too, is uninterruptedly moving in time, though inwardly he not only does not experience this uninterruptedness of motion, but, on the contrary, experiences a motionless consciousness, always equal to itself, which only for external observation is divided by intervals of sleep, insanity, passions, – but in reality is all one.

(12) Thus people ascribe two different meanings to "life." One meaning is the concept of matter in motion, separate from everything else, which by man is cognized as self, and the second, – a motionless spiritual being, always equal to itself, which man recognizes as self.

(13) These concepts seem to be different, but in reality they are not two concepts, but one: the concept of cognizing oneself as a spiritual being enclosed within limits. The recognition of the spatial and temporal existence of the separate being as life is only the result of insufficient thinking. The recognition of oneself as a being separate from everything else is possible only for a spiritual being. And so life is always the life of the spiritual being. But the spiritual being can be neither spatial nor temporal.

(14) And so the recognition of the material temporal existence as all life is an error of thought, a recognition of the part for the whole, of the consequences for the cause, – is just such an error of thought as the recognition of the falling stream of water, and not of the river, as the force which moves the mill-wheel.

(1.») The distinction between the recognition of the spiritual unchangeable principle, and not its manifestation within those limits in which it is manifested, as life has always been made by all the religious teachers. On this elucidation of the difference between the two concepts of life is based the Gospel teaching about the true life, – the life of the spirit and the false life, – the carnal, the temporal life.

(16) This elucidation is very important, because from the consciousness that the true life is contained only in the spiritual being results all that which is called virtue and which gives the

highest good to men. From this consciousness results that which forms the foundation of all the virtues, – results love, that is, the recognition of the life of all the beings of the world through oneself.

(17) From this same cognition, which is nothing but what we call conscience, results continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, because only with continence, fearlessness, self-renunciation, is possible the fulfilment of the fundamental demand of consciousness, – the recognition of other beings through oneself, that is, love.

(18) A man who has recognized his life is (I believe Pascal said so) like a slave who suddenly discovers that he is a king.

The strength of the governments is in this, that in their hands is the self-feeding circle of power: the false doctrine produces power, and power gives the possibility of disseminating nothing but the false teaching, removing everything which is contrary to it, which arraigns it.

No matter how the guard and the army may be bribed and stultified, they now none the less consist of the same men whom this very guard oppresses and compels to do evil. Besides, there are not many in this guard. They form a hundredth, at the most a fiftieth, of the whole nation ; but it is also the nation now. And so the power of the governments is now no longer based on force, as was the case formerly, but on deceit.

Men with a calm conscience, as it were, not only at the request of the authorities become policemen, collectors of taxes, and soldiers, but of their own free will become policemen, examining magistrates, prosecutors, soldiers, generals, ministers, kings, and, as it were, with a calm conscience, – at least with external complete self-confidence, – busy themselves with taking away from people their last cow for taxes, which will be used for luxury and murder; or they put men into prisons, and torment and execute them ; or invent and prepare means of murder ; and amidst poor people own property and lands taken from them, and seem to be proud of this.

The so-called educated people, – those who ought to give an example of that relation to violence which is proper to a rational being, – the learned, liberal, revolutionary men even, discuss, condemn, preach liberty, the dignity of man. But that is so only so long as these educated people are not whistled for to go under the yoke; and then all discussions and all liberalism and all talks about liberty come to an end ; and he is dressed up in a gaudy livery, is given a gun or a sword in his hands, and a sergeant commands him to run, and jump, and stand still, and whirl around, and put on his cap, and bow, and shout hurrah at the sight of the Tsar, and, above all, be prepared, at the command of this sergeant, to kill his own father, and he, – a liberal, a learned man, – according to the law of evolution, – jumps and bows to whom he is commanded to bow, and shouts hurrah, and is prepared to kill whomever he is commanded to kill.

Thus the same people, the cultured, for whom it would be most natural to strive to bring life into harmony with their consciousness, are mainly busy confusing and contorting this consciousness.

It is obvious to them that it is absolutely unnecessary to discuss the question of resisting evil and of how it is decided by Christianity. All that is invsticisin. It is necessary to do all this, that is, to be a submissive slave of slaves.

For an unawakened man the governmental power is certain sacred institutions forming the organs of a live body, an indispensable condition of the life of men.

For an awakened man it is badly erring men, who ascribe to themselves a certain fantastic significance, which has no rational justification whatever, and who, by means of violence, execute their wishes. Senates, synods, courts, the administration, – all that is for an awakened man erring and for the most part bribed men, who do violence to other men, just such men as those robbers who seize men on the highways and do violence to them. The antiquity of this violence, the dimensions of the violence, its organization, cannot alter the essence of the thing.

For an awakened man there is not what is called government : and so there are no justifications for all the acts of violence committed in the name of the government; and so there can be for him no participation in them.

Governmental violence will not be destroyed by external means, but only by the consciousness of men awakened to the truth.

Suffering from sickness and interference with occupations, which we experience from sickness, are not due to sickness, but to our relation to death.

If we recognize that death is a necessary end of our carnal existence, and that in this imminent end, as also in the continuation of this life, there is nothing, either bad or good, the sufferings will cease being painful and will not interfere with life.

If a man did not in the least doubt the indestructibility of his life after death, all diseases would present themselves to him only as conditions of a transition from one form of life to another, – a form rather desirable than otherwise, – and then he would bear the pain caused by disease in the same way as we bear pain caused by tense labour, which we know will end in something good. And there would be no suffering and no consciousness of an interruption of activity, for during the pain we should have a definite activity – that of preparing ourselves for the new state.

We are all able, though only in part, to experience that this is so.

But how can it help but be terrible for people to suffer, when their whole life consists in attempts at realizing their wishes in this world in the future, in the constant desire that the future may come as quickly as possible, and when they none the less know that at the end of this future stands that of which they are so afraid that they dare not even think of it, – death ? How can they help but suffer, since they are constantly in this inner contradiction, when a disease comes which, like all diseases, brings death with it ?

From this arises the pain fulness of the sufferings.
From this also comes what we call the cessation of all life from disease.

Oh, if we did not for a moment forget death, into which we may slip any minute ' If we only remembered that we are not standing on a level plane (if we think that we are, then it only appears that he who has gone has disappeared suddenly, and we are afraid that we, too, shall disappear suddenly), but are sliding, constantly colliding, overtaking, and being overtaken, down there, behind the curtain, which conceals from us those who go away from us and will conceal us from the rest !

If we always remember this, it is so easy and so joyous to live and slide together down that incline, in the power of that God, in whose power we have been and will be later and for ever.

Frequently I think well, but I think without death, – and this is a frivolous and empty thought. Frequently I live well, but I live without the expectation of death, – and this is a frivolous and empty life.

Life is the talent given me for increase. It is possible to think and live with death only when we remember that our one business is not to write something, to aid some one, to do something outside of ourselves, but only to increase our life, in order to give it back to the Master, when He takes it, better, larger, than when it was given to me.

This is strange only when the increase of life may be imagined outside of love of men and, therefore, outside of serving them. But increase and serving are one and the same, except that they are viewed from different sides.

I know that you have that which supports you in your grievous moments of life, – faith in eternal life, a tiny part of which is formed by this life, which is of importance only, in order that we may not be false to what we recognize to be God's will. I know this, but I know also that it is impossible for us always to maintain ourselves in the spirit in which we see and remember only God and His law; I know that after a spiritual exaltation there are falls. In these minutes of spiritual fall I would like to be with you, to suffer together with you and rise with you and help one another.

In grievous moments I am always mindful of Christ's words, "Have I

not come for this hour?" And these words always support me, if I happen to think of them in time. Grievous minutes must be dear to us, because, to live through them properly, we have lived and gathered strength during all our preceding life. "He that suffereth unto the end shall be saved." What has always helped me very much is the thought that what is hard for me is the very step which I have reached and on which I have put my foot, in order to rise higher.

Thank God, I live well, that is, better than before : there is more concord and love of men and more obedience to God's will. Lack of love is due to nothing but disobedience.

I carefully read both your letters twice and understand everything separately, but fail to comprehend the general spirit of the whole, – I do not understand the motive of your dissatisfaction. You say : " Union, but union is possible only in the truth." To find union with men, it is not necessary to go to meet men, but for all to go toward God or truth. Only there is union, and not with those with whom I want or propose to have a union, but with those who arrived there whither I myself went.

I represent to myself the world as an enormous temple, in which the light falls from above, in the very middle. For us to meet, we must all go toward this light, and, arriving from all sides, we shall meet there with entirely unexpected people. And this is joy.

It is this union that we ought to search for, and we ought to search for it with these means, and it is impossible for us to help one another. What you say about the necessity of the form of life is quite true, but it is not enough to say " necessity," – it is necessary to say " the inevitableness " of the form. If one lives separately, or people live together materially, or only spiritually (as I understand that I am living with all and you with the rest), there certainly is a form of this life. And it is very inconvenient and even harmful to look at this form, to define it. Let others look at the form and define the form in which I live, but I have to live.

Again you do not say well that, when a beggar comes, there is no time to inquire whether his misery is increased, and so forth. You know that I did not say so for that purpose, but in order, if there is any doubt in one's activity, to apply this measure to such an activity. And so I will say, taking your own example, that if a pail is filled with annoyance, or he whose pail is being filled does not expect a pail, but a small measure, and receives it with annoyance, such an activity is not correct.

I cannot understand why you are dissatisfied with yourself and with others, and what you want. It seems to me that there ought to be dissatisfaction with oneself, – not with others, and I frequently console myself with the fact that I am constantly dissatisfied with myself, – since I am not yet entirely lost ; but I know what I am dissatisfied

with, – with my definite abominations, from which I cannot be liberated by anybody's aid, and the work over which forms my life. I do not trouble myself, however, about the circle in which I live, about my external conditions of life, because I know by experience that this or that circle, these or those conditions, result from my greater or lesser nearness to Christ, to truth. I live as I do, not because a ray of light reached me under grievous circumstances (as I used to think), but because I am bad. In proportion as I shall be and am better, the circle, too, and the external conditions are better. If I were a saint, and the circle and the external conditions were ideal, I should be living as I present to myself the life of a disciple of Christ, – a beggar, a vagabond, a servant of all men, – and I still do not despair to attain this, because it is all in my power. It is also impossible to become better, to stand nearer to truth in consequence of external conditions, just as it is impossible to sit astride a stick and raise oneself by grasping the stick. The external conditions, the form of life, union, – all that is the result of an inner perfection, – an approach to Christ :
" Seek ye the kingdom of God which is within you, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Maybe I am mistaken and reply to what you did not ask. If so, forgive me. I wrote loving, thinking of you, and wishing, if possible, to be useful to you.

. . . The difficulty, which you met with in the answer of the young man who would like to follow the dictates of his conscience and at the same time feels the impossibility of forsaking and grieving his mother, is one I know, and I have several times had occasion to reply to it.

Christ's teaching is not a doctrine which demands certain acts, – it does not demand anything of those who want to follow it. It consists, as the word " Gospel " (the announcement of the good) indicates, in the knowledge of man's true good. The moment a man has come to understand and is permeated with the consciousness that his true good, the good of his eternal, that is, his true, life, the one which is not limited to this world, consists in the doing of God's will, and that to commit murder and prepare oneself for murder – as do those who become military men – is contrary to this will, no consideration can compel this man to act contrary to his true good. If there is an internal struggle, and if, as in the case of which you speak, family considerations are uppermost, this serves as a proof that Christ's true teaching is not understood by him who is unable to follow it. This only proves that he would like to appear a Christian, but is not such in reality. And so I find it useless and frequently even harmful to preach certain acts or abstinence from acts, like the refusal to do military service, and so forth. All the acts should arise, not from a desire to follow certain rules, but from a complete impossibility of acting differently. And so, when I find myself in a situation such as the one is in which you found yourself before this young man, I always advise people to do everything that is demanded of them, – to enter military service, serve, swear, and so forth, – if only this is

morally possible for them to do; not to abstain from anything, unless this becomes morally as impossible as it is impossible for a man to lift up a mountain or rise in the air.

I always tell them: "If you want to refuse to do military service and to bear all the consequences of this refusal, try to attain that degree of certainty and lucidity when it shall be as impossible for you to take an oath and go through the manual of arms as it is now for you to strangle a child or do something like it. But if that is possible for you to do, do it, because it is better that there should be one more soldier than one more hypocrite or apostate from the teaching, as happens with those who undertake things that are above their strength. This is why I am convinced that the Christian truth cannot be disseminated by the preaching of certain external acts, as is done in the pseudo-Christian religions, but only through the destruction and dethronement of the offences, and especially through the conviction that man's one true good is contained in the doing of God's will, in which lies man's law and destiny.

At the moment of my writing two young men of my friends are locked up – one in prison, the other in an insane asylum – for having refused to do military service. One of these is a young Moscow artist. I am trying to influence him as little as possible in his refusal, because I know that, to bear all the trials which await him, he needs strength, which cannot come from without; he needs the firm conviction that his life has no other meaning than that which consists in doing the will of Him who sent him here, but this conviction is formed within. I can help its formation, but I cannot give it: more than anything else I am afraid of making him believe that he has this conviction, when he does not have it. . . .

. . . The idea of a military strike has already been announced at the last socialistic congress but one, by one of your countrymen, whom I respect very much, though I have forgotten his name (Domela, I think). When you write again, let me have the pleasure of hearing something about this socialist, who is so remarkable for his activity. . . .

. . . The most remarkable thing about this movement is this, that the masses are on the side of the students, or, rather, on the side of the expression of dissatisfaction.

Working people and students come to me and write to me, and I tell them all: For the good of men we need first their union among themselves, and so, the more communion, the more mutual sympathy there is, the better. But we must unite not in the name of hostility, but in the name of mutual love; if this union seems dangerous and harmful to some people, so much the worse for them. We invite them to this communion. . . .

. . . There is one thing I may say in my name, and that is, that making Russian people – policemen, Cossacks, and soldiers – so bestial that they commit acts which are contrary even to their nature and their religious beliefs, is very important, and we cannot look too seriously upon it: we must try to investigate, promulgate,

and understand its causes.

THE DEMANDS OF LOVE

(From a diary)

Imagine some people, for completeness' sake, a man and a woman – husband and wife, brother and sister, father and daughter, mother and son – of the wealthy classes, who have come to a vivid realization of the sinfulness of their life of luxury and idleness amidst the poverty of the masses that are crushed by labour, and who have left the city, have given away their surplus, or in one way or another have rid themselves of it, have left for themselves, say, 150 paper roubles per year, or have even not left anything for themselves, but earn the amount by some labour, – let us say, by painting on china, translating good books, – and live in the country, in the centre of a Russian village, having rented or bought a hut, working their garden with their own hands, attending to bees, and at the same time giving aid to the villagers, – medical, as much as they know of it, and educational, by teaching the children, writing letters and petitions, and so forth.

It would seem there cannot be anything better than such a life. But this life will be or become a hell, if these people are not going to dissemble and lie, if they are going to be sincere. If these people have renounced all advantages and joys, all the adornments of life, which city and money gave them, they did so only because they recognize men to be their equal brothers in the sight of God, – not equal in abilities and worth, if you so wish, but equal in their rights to life and to everything which it can give them.

If there can be any doubt as to the equality of men, when we view them as adults with a separate past for every one, there can be no such doubt when we see them as children. Why will this child have all the care, all the aid of knowledge for his physical and mental development, while that charming boy with the same or even better promise will become a rachitic, degenerate halfcripple, for the want of milk, and will remain an ignorant, savage man, fettered by superstitions, – nothing but a coarse labouring force ?

If these people have left the city and have settled in the country, as they have, they have done so only because they believe in the brotherhood of men, not only in words, but also in fact, and wish, if not to realize it in their lives, at least to work for its realization. And this attempt at its realization must, if it is sincere, lead them to a terrible, hopeless situation.

With their habits of order, comfort, and chiefly cleanliness, acquired in childhood, they came to the country, where they hired or bought a hut, cleaned it of vermin, perhaps themselves papered it, brought a remnant of their furniture, not luxurious, but necessary

furniture, – an iron bed, a safe, a small writing-desk. And there they are living. At first the peasants feel shy in their presence : they expect that they, like all rich people, will by means of violence defend their property, and so do not approach them with requests and demands. But slowly the mood of the new inhabitants is becoming clear : they themselves offer their services gratis, and the boldest and most forward of the peasants find out through experience that these new people do not refuse anything and that it is possible to get things out of them.

And they begin to put forth all kinds of demands, and these demands keep growing and growing.

There begins something like the pouring out and levelling of a heaping mass of grain, until no heap is left.

There begin not only exactions, but even natural demands that that which is superfluous, as compared with what others have, be distributed among them ; and not only are there demands, but those who have settled in the country and who are all the time in close relations with the masses feel an inevitable necessity of giving their surplus to those who are in dire need. Not only do they feel the necessity of giving up their surplus, until they have left what all have, that is, what the average has, – but there does not exist a definition of this average, of what all ought to have; and they cannot stop, because there is always a crying want all about them, and they have a surplus, as compared with this want: it would seem that they ought to retain for themselves a glass of milk, but Matrena has two children, one, at the breast, who does not find any milk in the mother's breast, and the other, of two years of age, who is beginning to grow feeble. It would seem right to retain a pillow and a coverlet, in order to fall asleep under habitual conditions after a day of labour, but a sick man is lying on a lousy caftan and is freezing at night, covering himself with a gunny-bag. It would seem right to retain the tea, the food, but it becomes necessary to give all that to some feeble and old pilgrims. It would seem right at least to retain cleanliness in the house, but there come some beggar boys, and they are allowed to stay overnight, and fill the room with lice, which the people had just rid themselves of, when they returned from a patient.

It is impossible to stop, and where should one stop?

Only those who do not know at all that feeling of the consciousness of the brotherhood of men, in consequence of which these people went to the country, or who are so accustomed to lying that they do not notice the difference between the lie and the truth, will say that there is a limit, at which it is possible and necessary to stop. The point is, that there is no such limit, that the feeling in the name of which this thing is being done is such that it has no limit, – that if it has a limit, it only means that this feeling never existed, but there was only hypocrisy.

I continue to present these people to myself. They have worked a

whole day ; they return home ; they have no longer a bed or a pillow ; they sleep on straw, which they have fetched for themselves ; and now, having eaten a piece of bread, they lie down to sleep. It is autumn, -

it is raining and snowing. There is a knock at the door.

Can they refuse to open it ? A man who is drenched and in a fever enters. AVhat is to be done ? Shall he be allowed to lie down on the dry straw ? There is no more dry straw. And they have either to drive the sick man away, or let him lie down on the floor, wet as he is, or give him their straw, and themselves lie down with him, since it is necessary to sleep somewhere. More than that : there comes a man whom you know as a drunkard and a dissipated man, whom you have helped several times, and who every time spent in drinks everything you gave him ; he comes now, with trembling jaws, asking you to give him three roubles, which he stole and spent in drinks, and which, if he does not return them, will cause him to be put in prison. You say that you have only four roubles and that you need that sum for a payment which you have to make to-morrow. Then the visitor says : " Yes, it is all nothing but talk ; when it comes to acts, you are like the rest : let him whom we call our brother perish, so long as we remain whole." How is one to act in this case ? What is to be done ?

To put the feverish man on the damp ground, and themselves to lie down on dry straw, is only worse, - you will not fall asleep. To put him on your bed and lie down with him, - you will only be infected with lice and with typhus. To give the beggar the last three roubles, means to be left without bread for to-morrow. Not to give it to him, means, as he says, to renounce everything in the name of which one lives. If it is possible to stop here, why not have stopped earlier ? What sense was there in helping people at all ? Why give away one's property, why leave the city I Where is the limit ? If there is a limit to the work you are doing, the whole work has no sense, or has only one terrible sense of hypocrisy.

What is to be done here? Not to stop, means to ruin one's life, be covered with lice, grow sick, and die, and, apparently, without any use. To stop, means to renounce everything in the name of which all this was done, in the name of which all the good was done. And it is impossible to renounce it, because it was not invented by me or by Christ that we are brothers and must serve one another; that is all so, and it is impossible to tear this consciousness out of the heart of man, when it has entered it. What is to be done ? Is there no other way out ?

And so let us suppose that these people, without getting frightened at the situation in which they are placed by the necessity of sacrifice, which leads to inevitable death, have decided that their condition is due to the fact that the means with which they have come to the aid of the people are too small, and that this would not have happened, that they would do more good, if they had more money. And let us suppose that these men have found the sources of aid, have collected enormous sums of money, and have begun to bear aid. Not a week would pass but what the same thing would have to be repeated. Very soon all the means, no matter how great they were,

would be poured into those hollows which are formed by poverty, and the situation would remain the same.

But maybe there is still a third way out. There are some people who say that it exists and consists in contributing to the enlightenment of people, when this inequality will be destroyed.

But this way out is too obviously hypocritical : it is impossible to enlighten a populace that is any minute on the brink of death from starvation. The insincerity of the men who preach this is, above all else, to be seen from the mere fact that a man who is striving to establish this equality, even by means of science, cannot help but maintain this inequality with his whole life.

But there is a fourth way out : it consists in contributing to the destruction of all those causes which produce the inequality, – in contributing to the destruction of the violence which produces it.

And this way out cannot help but occur to those sincere people who in their life will try to realize their consciousness of the brotherhood of men.

“If we cannot live here, among these people, in the country,” those people whom I have imagined will be obliged to say to themselves, “ if we are placed in such a terrible situation that we must inevitably grow sick, be covered with lice, and die a slow death, or renounce the one moral foundation of our life, this is due to the fact that wealth is collected in the hands of some, while others are in distress ; this inequality is due to violence ; and since the basis of everything is violence, we must fight against it.” Only the destruction of this violence and of the slavery resulting from it can make possible such a ministrations to men that the sacrifice of one’s life shall not be inevitable.

But how is this violence to be destroyed ? Where is it ? It is in the soldier, in the policeman, in the elder, in the lock, which locks my door. How can I struggle against them ? Where, in what ?

Here are people who all live by violence, and who struggle against violence and with violence struggle against violence.

But for a sincere man this is impossible. To oppose violence to violence means to put new violence in the place of the old. To help by means of enlightenment, which is based on violence, means the same. To collect money, which is acquired through violence, and to use it in aiding men who are deprived of their share through violence, means with violence to cure wounds which are produced by violence.

Even in the case which I represent to myself, – not to let the sick man in, not to let him lie down on my bed, and not to give the three roubles, because I can by force retain the money, there is also violence. And so the struggle with violence does not for a man of our society, who wishes to live fraternally, exclude the necessity

of giving up his life, of becoming covered with lice, and of dying, – but withal, fighting violence, not with the sermon of violence, but with the arraignment of violence, and, above all, with the example, not of violence, but of sacrifice. No matter how terrible and difficult may be the position of a man who is living a Christian life amidst a life of violence, he has no other way out but struggle and sacrifice, – and sacrifice until the end.

We must see the abyss which separates the verminridden, starved millions of people from the overfed, lacewearing other people; and to till it up we need sacrifices, and not that hypocrisy with which we now try to conceal from ourselves the depth of this abyss. A man may not find sufficient strength in himself to throw himself into this abyss, but not one man who seeks life can avoid it. We may not want to go into it; but let us know and say "S", and not deceive ourselves, not dissemble.

Yes and no, this abyss is not at all so terrible. And if it is, the terrors awaiting us on the path of worldly life are more terrible.

There are fewer chances of dying from lice, the plague, or want, in helping people and giving everything we have to them, than of dying in manœuvres, in war.

These lice and the black bread and want seem so terrible to us. The bottom of want is not deep, and frequently – like the boy who in terror passed a night hanging down from a projection in the well, into which he had fallen – we are afraid of the imaginary depth and the water: one foot below the boy there was a dry bottom.

But we must not depend on this bottom, – we must march on toward death. Only that love is love for which there is no end to sacrifices, – until death itself.

TOLSTOYISM

(From his diary of the year 1897)

I was glad to have had an opportunity of expressing myself and making it clear to myself that it is a great and gross mistake to talk of Tolstoyism, to seek my guidance, to ask for my solution of questions.

There never has been such a thing as my teaching; there is the one eternal, universal teaching of the truth, which for me, for us, is expressed in the Gospels with particular clearness. This teaching calls man to the recognition of his filial relation to God, and so of his freedom, or his slavery (call it as you will), – the freedom from the influence of the world, and the slavery to God, – to His will; and as soon as a man has come to understand this teaching, he freely enters into an immediate communion with God, and he has

nothing to ask any one about.

It is like rowing on a river which spreads beyond the current. So long as a man is not in the middle current, but in the calm, he has to row himself, and here he may be guided by the direction of other men's rowing. There I, too, myself rowing toward the current, was able to guide

people ; but the moment we have entered the current, there is no guide, and there can be none. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all of us in one direction, and those who were behind us may be ahead of us.

If a man asks whither he should row, this proves that he has not yet entered the current, and that he whom he asks is a poor guide, if he was not able to bring him to the current, that is, to that condition where it is impossible to ask, because there is no sense in asking. How can

I ask whither I should row, when the current bears me with irresistible force in the direction which gives me joy ?

People who submit to one guide, and believe and obey him, are certainly wandering in the dark, together with their guide.