

LETTERS ON AND TO THE DUKHOBORS

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PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA IN 1895

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF AN ENGLISH NEWSPAPER Dear Sir: – I send you for publication in your newspaper a memorandum about the persecutions to which the Dukhobors, sectarians of the Caucasus, were subjected this summer. There is only one way of helping the persecuted, but especially the persecutors, who do not know what they do, and that is, publicity, the presentation of the matter to the judgment of public opinion, which, by expressing its disapproval of the persecutors and its sympathy with the persecuted, will keep the first from committing acts of cruelty, which frequently are only the result of their crass ignorance, and will sustain courage in the second and will give them consolations in their sufferings.

In Russia this article will not be passed by the censor, and so I turn to you, asking you to publish it in your paper. This memorandum was composed by a friend of mine, who travelled to the spot, to collect exact information in regard to the occurrences, and so the information given may be depended upon.

The fact that the information given in this article was received only from one side, the persecuted, while the other side, that of the persecutors, was not asked, does not diminish the reliability of the information. The persecuted had no reason to conceal what they were doing : they proclaimed it to the whole world ; but the persecutors cannot help but be ashamed of the measures which they employed against the persecuted, and so they will do everything in their power to conceal their acts. But if in the accounts of the Dukhobors there might have been any exaggerations, we have carefully excluded everything which appeared so to us.

What is reliable and undoubted in this memorandum is the essential part, namely, that the Dukhobors have in various places been subjected to repeated tortures, that the majority of them are shut up in prisons, and that more than 450 families are completely ruined and driven out of their homes, only because they would not act contrary to their religious convictions.

All this is unquestionably reliable, because it was printed in many Russian newspapers and did not provoke any denial on the part of the government.

The ideas evoked in me by these events I have expressed separately,

and, if you want them, I will send them to you to be printed after this memorandum has appeared.

EPILOGUE TO THE MEMORANDUM In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world (John xvi. 33).

The Dukhobors settled in the Caucasus have been subjected to cruel persecutions by the Russian authorities, and these persecutions, as described in a note written by a man who went to the spot, have been continued until the present time.

The Dukhobors have been beaten, Hugged, and trampled underfoot by horses ; the Cossacks were quartered upon the Dukhobor settlements, and with permission of the authorities they permitted themselves all kinds of acts of violence against the inhabitants ; those who refused to do military service were tortured physically and morally, and prosperous settlers, who by the labour of decades had established their prosperity, were driven from their homes and settled without allotment of land and without means of subsistence in Georgian villages.

The cause of these persecutions is this, that through various causes three-fourths of all the Dukhobors, namely, about fifteen thousand men (there are twenty thousand of them), of late returned with new vigour and conscious effort to their former Christian beliefs and this summer decided to carry out Christ's law of not resisting evil with violence. This decision on the one hand caused them to destroy their weapons, which in the Caucasus are considered to be such a necessity, and thus, by renouncing every possibility of resisting by means of violence, to give themselves into the power of every violator ; on the other hand it led them under no condition to take part in any acts of violence, as demanded of them by the government, consequently also in no military or other service, which would demand the employment of violence. The government could not admit such a departure of tens of thousands from the demands established by law, and a struggle ensued. Their government demands the fulfilment of its demands. The Dukhobors do not submit.

The government cannot yield. Not only has such a refusal of the Dukhobors to fulfil the demands of the government no legal foundation, from the worldly point of view, and is contrary to all the existing and timehonoured order, but it is also impossible to admit these refusals, if for no other reason, because, if they be admitted in the case of ten, there will to-morrow be one thousand, one hundred thousand, who will similarly refuse to bear the burdens of taxes and service. Admit this, and, instead of order and protection of life, there will ensue arbitrary rule and chaos, and nobody's property and life will be protected. Thus the governmental persons must reason, and they cannot reason otherwise, and are not at all to blame for reasoning thus. Aside from any egotistical concern that such refusals must deprive him of his means of existence, which are collected from the masses by force, aside from every egotistical concern about himself, every man connected with the government, from the Tsar down to the rural chief, must to the

bottom of his heart be provoked by the refusal of some uncultured, semi-illiterate people to fulfil the demands of the government, which are obligatory for all men. " By what right," he thinks, " do these insignificant people allow themselves to deny what is recognized by all, is sanctified by law, and is done everywhere ? " And, indeed, the governmental persons cannot be blamed for acting as they do. They employ violence, rude violence, but they cannot do otherwise. Indeed, is it possible by means of rational, humane means to compel people who profess the Christian faith to enter into the class of men who teach murder and prepare themselves for it ? It is possible to sustain the deceived people in the deception by means of every kind of stultification, oaths, theological, philosophical, and juridical sophisms, but the moment the deception is in some way destroyed, and people, like the Dukhobors, calling things by their name, say, " We are Christians and so cannot kill," the lie is revealed, and it becomes impossible to convince such people by means of rational proofs. The only possibility of compelling such people to obey consists in blows, executions, confiscation of the home, and hunger and cold for the members of their families. And this they do. So long as the men of the government have not come to see their delusion, they can do nothing else and so are not to blame. Still less are to blame the Christians who refuse to take part in the study of murder and to enter into a class of men who are educated to kill all those whom the government commands them to kill. They, too, cannot act otherwise. A so-called Christian, who is baptized and brought up in Orthodoxy, Catholicism, or Protestantism, can continue to serve violence and murder, so long as he does not understand the deception to which he was subjected. But the moment he comes to understand that every man is responsible to God for his acts, and that this responsibility cannot be shifted, nor be removed from him by an oath, and that he must not kill nor prepare himself for murder, his participation in the army becomes morally as impossible as it is physically impossible for him to lift a weight of one hundred puds.

In this does the terrible tragedy of the relation of Christianity to the government consist. The tragedy is this, that the governments have to rule over Christian nations, which are not yet entirely enlightened, but are becoming from day to day more enlightened by Christ's teaching. All the governments since the time of Constantine have known and felt this, and have for their selfpreservation instinctively done everything they could, in order to shroud the true meaning of Christianity and crush its spirit. They have known that if this spirit is acquired by men, violence will come to an end and government will naturally destroy itself, and so the governments have done their work, building up the governmental establishments, heaping laws and institutions one upon another, and hoping to bury underneath it the undying spirit of Christ, which is implanted in the hearts of men.

The governments have done their work, but the Christian teaching has at the same time done its work, penetrating deeper and deeper into the hearts of men. And the time came when the Christian cause, as it ought, because the Christian cause is God's cause, while the

government's cause is man's cause, got ahead of the government's cause.

And as in the burning of a pyre there comes a time when the fire, after it has worked within for a long time and only by an occasional burst of fire and smoke has indicated its presence, finally bursts forth on all sides, and it becomes impossible to stop the burning, even so in the struggle of the Christian spirit with the pagan laws and institutions there comes a time when this Christian spirit bursts forth everywhere, can no longer be subdued, and every moment threatens destruction to those institutions which were heaped upon it.

Indeed, what can and must the government do in respect to these fifteen thousand Dukhobors, who refuse to do military service? What is to be done with them?

They cannot be left as they are. Even with the present state of affairs in the beginning of the motion, there have appeared Orthodox people who have followed the example set by the Dukhobors. What will happen later? What will happen later, if the same shall be done by the Milkers, Stundists, Lashers, Wanderers, who look upon the government and the military service in just the same way, but have not done like the Dukhobors, only because they could not make up their minds to be the first, and were afraid of suffering? And there are millions of such people, not in Russia alone, but in all Christian countries, and not only in Christian countries, but also in Mussulman countries, in Persia and Turkey and Arabia, people like the Harijites and Babists. It is necessary for the sake of others to make harmless tens of thousands of men who do not recognize governments and do not wish to take part in them. How is this to be done? It is impossible to kill them: there are too many of them.

It is awkward to put them all in prison. All that can be done is to ruin and torment them; and it is this that is done with them. But what if these torments shall not have the desired effect, and they shall continue to profess the truth and so shall attract a still greater number of men to follow their example?

The position of the governments is terrible, terrible for this very reason, that they have nothing to fall back upon. It is certainly impossible to recognize as bad the acts of men like Drozhzhin, who was tortured to death in a prison, or like Izyumchénko, who is even now pining away in Siberia, or like Doctor Shkarvan, who is sentenced to imprisonment in Austria, or like all those who are now in prison, prepared for suffering and for death, if only they do not have to depart from their very simple, allcomprehensible, universally approved religious convictions, which prohibit murder and participation in it. By no intricacy of thought is it possible to call the acts of these men bad or unchristian, and it is not only impossible not to approve of them, but even not to be delighted with them, because it is impossible not to recognize that the men who act in this manner act so in the name of the very highest qualities of the human soul, without the recognition of whose height human life falls down to the level of animal existence.

If the government shall not persecute men who, like the Dukhobors, Stundists, Nazarenes, and separate individuals, refuse to take part in the acts of the government, the advantage of the Christian peaceable manner of life will attract to itself not only sincerely convinced Christians, but also such as will put on the mask of Christianity for the sake of their advantage, and so the number of men who do not fulfil the demands of the government will grow larger and larger. But if the government is cruel, as it now is, to such men, this cruelty itself toward men who are guilty of nothing but leading a more moral and a better life than others, and want in practice to fulfil the law of the good, as professed by all men, will more and more repel people from the government. And very soon the governments will not find any people who are ready to support them by means of violence. The semisavage Cossacks, who beat the Dukhobors by order of the authorities, very soon " began to pine," as they expressed themselves, when they were quartered in the Dukhobor settlements, that is, their consciences began to trouble them, and the authorities, fearing the harmful influence of the Dukhobors upon them, hastened to take them away from there.

Not one persecution of innocent people ends otherwise than by men's passing over from among the persecutors to the convictions of the persecuted, as was the case with the warrior Simon, who destroyed the Paulicians and then passed over to their faith. The more lenient the government shall be to the people who profess Christianity, the more quickly will the number of the true Christians be increased. The more cruel the government shall be, the more quickly will the number of people who serve the government be diminished. Thus, whether the government treats people, who in their life profess Christianity, with leniency or cruelty, it will itself in every way contribute to its own destruction.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of the world be cast out"(John xii. 31). This judgment was achieved eighteen hundred years ago, that is, when in the place of the truth of external justice was put the truth of love. No matter how much brush is thrown on a burning pile, for the purpose of putting out the fire, - the undying fire, the tire of truth, will be choked for a little while only, but will be fanned more than before and will burn everything which is put on it.

Even if it should happen that a few champions of truth, as has always happened, should weaken in their struggle and fulfil the government's demands, this would not change the situation one hair's breadth. Let the Dukhobors of the Caucasus surrender, succumbing to the sufferings to which their grandparents, wives, and children are subjected, there will to-morrow arise new champions, who will be prepared on all sides and will more and more boldly put forth their demands and will less and less be able to surrender. The truth cannot stop being the truth, because under the pressure of sufferings people who bear testimony to it grow faint. The divine must vanquish the human.

" But what will happen if the government is destroyed ? " I hear the question, which is always put by the advocates of power, on the

assumption that if there shall not be what now is, there will be nothing, and everything will perish. The answer to this question is always one and the same. There will be what must be, what pleases God, what is in agreement with His law, as implanted in our hearts and revealed to our reason. If the government should be destroyed because we, as the revolutionists did, should destroy it, then it would be natural for the question as to what would happen after the government is destroyed to demand an answer from those who destroy the government. But the destruction of the government which is taking place now is not taking place because some one, some people, want deliberately to destroy it : it is being destroyed, because it is not in harmony with the will of God. which was revealed to our reason and implanted in our hearts. A man who refuses to put his brothers into prisons and to kill them has no intention of destroying the government ; he merely does not want to do what is contrary to the will of God, what not only he, but even all men who have come out of the beastly state, recognize as an unquestionable evil. If by this the government is destroyed, it means only that the government demands what is contrary to God's will, that is, evil, and that, therefore, the government is an evil and must be destroyed. The change which in our time is taking place in the social life of the nations, though we cannot entirely imagine the form which it will assume, cannot be bad, because this change takes place and will take place, not by the arbitrary will of men, but by an internal demand, common to all men, of the divine principle which is implanted in the hearts of men. When childbirth takes place, all our activity should be directed, not to counteracting it, but to aiding it. But this aid is not attained by a departure from the divine truth revealed to us, but, on the contrary, by a public and fearless profession of it. Such a profession of the truth gives, not only full satisfaction to those who profess the truth, but also the greatest good to men, both to the violated and the violators. Salvation is not behind, but before us.

The moment of the crisis in the change of the social form of life and of the substitution for the violence-using government of another force which shall bind men together has already come. And the way out of it is no longer in the arrest of the process or in the reverse motion, but only in the forward movement along the path which in the hearts of men is pointed out to them by Christ's law.

One more little effort, and the Galilean will conquer,— not in that terrible sense in which the pagan king ascribed victory to Him, but in the true sense, in which He said of Himself that He had overcome the world, “ In the world ye shall have tribulation : but be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world ” (John xvi. 33) ; for He has, indeed, overcome the world, not in the mystical sense of an invisible victory over sin, but in the simple, clear, and comprehensible sense that, if we shall only be of good cheer and shall boldly profess Him, there will very soon not only be an end to all those terrible persecutions which are committed against all the true disciples of Christ who profess His teaching in fact, but there will also be an end to prisons, gallows, wars, debauchery, luxury, idleness, poverty crushed by labour, under which Christian humanity

now groans.

September 19, 1895.

TWO LETTERS TO THE LEADER OF THE DUKHOBORS, P. V. VERIGIN

1

Dear Brother: – I. M. Tregubov sent me your letter to him, and I read it with pleasure; I was happy to learn something about you, and I, so to speak, heard your voice and understood what you are thinking about, how you think, and what you live by. I see from your letter that you live in a spiritual world and are busy with spiritual questions. For the good of men that is most important, because only in the spirit is man free, and only by means of the spirit is God's work done, and only in the spirit does man feel himself to be in union with God, since " God is spirit." The ideas expressed by you in the letter as to the superiority of a living communion to the dead book have pleased me very much, and I share them with you. I write books, and so I know all the harm which they produce ; I know how people, who do not wish to accept the truth, know how not to read or understand what goes against the grain and arraigns them, how they misinterpret and distort, how they have misinterpreted the Gospel. I know all that, but still I consider books to be inevitable in our time. I say " in our time," in distinction from the evangelical times when there was no printing, when there were no books, and there existed only an oral means for the diffusion of ideas.

It was then possible to get along without a book, because even the enemies of truth did not have any book ; but now it is not right to leave this powerful instrument for deception to the enemies alone, and not to make use of it for the sake of truth. Not to make use of books or of writing for the transmission of our thoughts or for the acquisition of other people's thoughts is the same as not to make use of the force of our voice for imparting at once to several people what we have to say, or not to make use of our hearing to understand what another person is saying aloud, and to recognize the possibility of the transmission and acquisition of thought only in private or in a whisper.

Writing and printing have only increased a thousand times, a hundred thousand times, the number of men who may hear him who expresses his thoughts, but the relation between the exponent and the recipient remains the same: it is with print as with an oral conversation, in which the hearer may grasp and understand what is being told him, or may just as well pay no heed to it; a hearer may do with his ears what a reader does with a book, when he misinterprets it completely ; just as we see them write in books much that is useless and trifling, so it is also with speaking. There is some difference, but the difference is sometimes in favour of oral, and sometimes of printed intercourse. The advantage of an oral transmission is this, that the hearer feels the soul of the speaker ; but there is also a disadvantage connected with it, which is, that very frequently empty talkers, such as lawyers, who are endowed with the gift of speech,

carry away people, not by the reasonableness of their argument, but by the mastery of their oratorical art, which is not the case with books; another advantage of the oral transmission is this, that he who does not understand may ask a question, but the disadvantage is this, that those who do not understand, who frequently do not understand on purpose, may ask something irrelevant and thus interrupt the train of thought, which also is not the case with books.

The disadvantages of books are these, that, in the first place, paper is very patient, and it is possible to express nonsense, which costs enormous labour on the part of those who make the paper and set up the type, which cannot be done in the oral transmission, because nobody is going to listen to nonsense ; in the second place, books grow in enormous numbers, while good ones are lost in a sea of stupid, empty, and harmful books. But the advantages of printing are also very great, consisting mainly in this, that the circle of hearers is increased a hundredfold and a thousandfold, as compared with the hearers of an oral discourse. And this increase in the number of hearers is important, not because there are many of them, but because amidst millions of people of various nations and positions, to whom the book is accessible, there will naturally be segregated some who share the same ideas, and, thanks to the book, though tens of thousands of versts apart and not acquainted with one another, they are united and live as one soul and receive spiritual joy and a lively consciousness that they are not alone. It is such communion that I now hold with you and with many, very many people of other nations, who have never seen me, but who are nearer to me than my own carnal sons and brothers.

But the chief consideration in favour of the book is this, that with a certain degree of the development of the external conditions of life, books, printing in general, have become a means for people's intercommunication, and so this means cannot be neglected. So many harmful books have been written and disseminated that this harm can be counteracted only by means of books. One wedge drives out another. Christ has said, " What ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." The printed word is this same proclamation from the housetops. The printed word is the same tongue, only it reaches very far, and so everything which is said of the tongue refers also to the printed word: with it we bless God, and with it we curse men, who are created in the image of God ; and so we cannot be sufficiently attentive to what we say and hear, as also to what we print and read. I write all this, not because I think that you think differently (I see from your letter that you understand it in the same way), but because these thoughts occurred to me and I wanted to share them with you. I read with especial pleasure what you say about this, that, " if we preserved everything already given us from above, we should be completely happy ; what is indispensable and legitimate must by all means be in every one and is received directly from above or from within." That is quite true, and I myself understand man in the same way. Every man would unquestionably know the whole divine truth, everything which he ought to know, in order to fulfil in this life what God wants of him, if only this truth, as revealed to man, were not dimmed by

false human interpretations.

And so, to learn the divine truth, a man must first of all reject all the false interpretations and all the worldly temptations, which lead him to the acceptance of these interpretations, and then there will be left the one truth, which is accessible to babes, because it is proper for the human soul. But the chief difficulty lies in this, that, in rejecting the lie, we are likely to reject with it a part of the truth, and that, in elucidating the truth, we are likely to introduce new errors.

I thank you, dear brother, for the greeting which you sent me. Write me to Moscow, if nothing interferes.

Can I not do something for you ? You will make me happy by giving me some commission.

I embrace you in brotherly love.

November 21, 1895.

2

Dear Friend: – I received your letter yesterday, and I hasten to answer you. It takes a long time for our letters to reach one another, and I have not much time left to live.

In your argument against books there is much justice and cleverness, – the comparison with the assistant and the surgeon, – but they are none of them well grounded, mainly because you compare books with the living intercourse, as though books excluded the living intercourse.

In reality one does not exclude the other, and one helps the other.

To tell you the truth, your stubborn opposition to books looks to me like an exclusive sectarian method of defence of an opinion, as once accepted and expressed. Such an exclusiveness does not harmonize with that idea which I have formed of your intellect and, above all, of your openness and sincerity. God leads men toward Himself and toward the fulfilment of His will by all kinds of paths, – by a conscious one, when men try to do His will, and by an unconscious one, when they do, as they think, their own will.

To do God's will, to fulfil His kingdom upon earth, we need the union of men among themselves, we need that all men should be one, as Christ recognized Himself one with the Father. For this union there are needed an internal means, – the cognition and clear expression of the truth, such as was given by Christ and as unites all men, and an external means, – the dissemination of this expression of the truth, which is accomplished in the most varied ways : by commerce, by conquests, by travel, by books, by railways, by telegraphs, and by many other means, some of which, like conquest, I must reject, but others, like books and rapid means of communication, I have no reason to reject and cannot help using, if I do not wish to deprive myself of a convenient instrument for serving God. But as to the retort, that for books and for the

railways it is necessary to crawl underground for the ore and into a smelting furnace, that is also true in the case of the ploughshare, the spade, the scythe.

And then, there is nothing wrong in having to crawl underground for the ore or to work in a smelting furnace, and when I was a young man I, like any good young man, would have gladly crawled underground to work in iron, just for the sake of bravado, so long as that would not have been compulsory and would not have lasted a whole life, and would have been surrounded by all kinds of conveniences, which men will certainly invent some day, when all shall work, and not merely some hired people.

Well, we will not speak any more of it ; but believe me, that, if I write to you what I do, I do not do so because I have written a lot of books and still continue to write them, – I with my whole heart agree with you that the simplest, best life is more precious than the most beautiful books, – and not even because thanks to books I enter into communion with people: this autumn I entered into communion with a Hindoo, who fully shares our Christian views and who sent me an English book by a countryman of his, in which there is an exposition of the teaching of the Brahmins that coincides with the essence of Christ's teaching, and I entered into communion with some Japanese, two of whom visited me the other day, and who profess and preach a purely Christian morality. It is not this that urges me to disagree with you and not to reject printing, any more than railways, telephones, and similar things, but this, that, when I see an ant-hill in the meadow, I cannot admit that the ants must be in error, when they raise that hill and do everything they do in it. Similarly, as I look at everything which men have done in a material way, I cannot admit that they have done it all by mistake. As a man (and not an ant), I see defects in the human hill and cannot help wishing to correct them, – in this does my share in the common work consist, – I do not wish to destroy the whole hill of human labour, but only more correctly to distribute what is placed irregularly in it. There is very much that is irregularly distributed in the human hill, and it is about this that I have written and write, have suffered and suffer, and try to change to the best of my strength.

What is irregular in our life is, in the first place and above all else, this, that the means is taken for the end, that what ought to be the end – the good of our neighbour – is made a means, that is, that man's good, his very life, is sacrificed for the production of an instrument, which is at times needed for all men, and at times only for the whim of one person, as is the case when human lives are ruined in the production of articles which are needed only by a few and which often are not needed by any one and are even harmful. What is irregular is this, that men forget or do not know that not only for the production of a mirror, but even of the most important and necessary articles, – as of a ploughshare, a scythe, – there should not only no life be ruined, but even the happiness of ever so insignificant a man should not be impaired, because the meaning of human life is only in the good of all men. To violate the life and the good of any one man for the good of men is the same as

to cut off an animal's limb for its good.

In this does the terrible mistake of our time consist ; not in this, that we have printing, railways, and such things, but in this, that men consider it allowable to sacrifice the good of even one man for the performance of any work. As soon as men lost the meaning and the purpose of what they are doing (there is but one end, – the good of our neighbour), the moment they decided that we could sacrifice the life and the good of an old man or even an idiot, who is living as a burden to all people, it became possible to sacrifice even a less old and stupid person, and there is no limit, – we may sacrifice everybody for a cause. That is irregular, and against that we must struggle.

Men must come to understand that, no matter how useful and important the printing of books, the railways, a plough, a scythe, may seem to us, we do not need them, and must let them go to perdition, until we have learned to make them without ruining the happiness and lives of men. In this does the whole question consist, and people blunder in this question, going about it now from one side, and now from another. Some say : " You want to destroy everything that humanity has acquired with so much labour, – you want to return to barbarism, in the name of some moral demands. The moral demands are irregular, if they are contrary to the well-being which humanity attains by its progress." Others say: "I am afraid that you are of that opinion and ascribe that opinion to me, – that, since all the material perfections of life are contrary to the moral demands, all these perfections are false in themselves and must be abandoned." To the first objectors I reply that there is nothing to destroy, and that we must only not forget that the aim of the life of humanity is the good of all men, and that, therefore, the moment any improvement deprives even one person of the good, this improvement must be given up and must not be used, until a means is found for producing and using it in such a way that the good of not even one man is impaired. I think that with such a view of life many aimless and harmful productions will be discontinued, and for the useful ones very soon means will be found for producing them, without impairing the good of men. To the second class of objectors I reply that humanity, in passing from the stone age to the bronze and iron age, and then reaching the present material condition, could by no means have erred, but followed the invariable law of perfection, and that it is not only not desirable to turn back, but that it is even impossible to do so, as it is impossible again to become an ape, and that, indeed, the problem of the man of our time does not at all consist in dreaming of what men used to be and how they could again become such as they were, but in serving the good of the men now living. But for the good of the men now living it is necessary for people not to torment or oppress others, not to deprive them of the products of their labour, not to compel them to work at things that are useless for them or that they cannot make use of, and, above all, not to consider it possible or lawful, in the name of any cause or material success, to impair the life and the good of a neighbour or, what is the same from another side, – not to violate love.

If men only knew that the end of humanity is not material progress, that this progress is an inevitable growth, while the one end is the good of all men, that this end is higher than any material purpose which men may set for themselves, everything would occupy its proper place. It is to this that the men of our time must direct all their efforts.

To lament the fact that men cannot now live without implements, like the beasts of the forest, living on nothing but fruits, is the same as though I, an old man, should lament because I have no teeth, nor black hairs, nor that strength which I had in my youth. What I must do is not to put in false teeth nor dye my hair nor take gymnastic exercises, but to try to live as becomes an old man, putting in the first place, not worldly matters, but God's work, – union and love, and admitting worldly matters only to the extent to which they do not interfere with God's work. It is this that humanity, too, ought to do at the present period of life.

But to say that the railways, gas, electricity, the printing of books, are injurious, because through them human lives are lost, is the same as though we should say that it is injurious to plough and sow, only because I did not plough the field in time and allowed it to be overgrown and then sowed it in and ploughed it up, that is, because I did first what ought to have been done last.

I was very glad to hear what you write about your life and how you apply to life what you preach and under these hard conditions, in which you are, earn a livelihood by labour. In nothing else is the sincerity of man recognized so much as in this. I have become very bad in this respect: I am very much surrounded by all kinds of luxury, which I despise and from which I have not the strength to get away. Therefore your example supports me and I continue to try.

Thank you for the excerpts from the diary. In respect to your ideas, as expressed there, I should like to exchange with you my views in the same direction. I will do so another time.

Meanwhile good-bye. Please, do not allow an unkind feeling to rise against me for my objections to your ideas, which you express not only in your letter to me, but also in your letter to Ev. Iv. You are very dear to me, and I try to be as open, as brotherly, to you as I can.

Your loving Lev Tolstoy.

October 74, 1896.

NOBEL'S BEQUEST I read in some Swedish papers that by Nobel's will a certain sum of money is bequeathed to him who shall most serve the cause of peace.

I assume that the men who served the cause of peace did so only because they served God ; and every monetary reward can only be disagreeable to them, in that it gives a selfish character to their

service of God. For this reason it would seem that this condition of Nobel's will can hardly be executed correctly. Indeed, it cannot be correctly executed in relation to the men themselves who have all the time served the cause of peace ; but, I presume, it will be quite correctly executed, if the money shall be distributed among the families of those men who have served the cause of peace and in consequence of this service are in a most difficult and wretched condition. 1

I am speaking of the families of the Dukhobors of the Caucasus, who, to the number of four thousand people, have been suffering these three years from the Russian government's severe treatment of them, because their husbands, sons, and fathers refuse to do active or reserve military service.

Thirty-two of those who have refused have, after having stayed in the disciplinary battalion, where two of them died, been sent to the worst parts of Siberia, and about three hundred men are pining away in the prisons of the Caucasus and of Russia.

The incompatibility of military service with the profession of Christianity has always been clear for all true Christians, and has many times been expressed by them ; but the church sophists, who are in the service of the authorities, have always known how to drown these voices, so that simple people have not seen this incompatibility and, continuing to call themselves Christians, have entered military service and have obeyed the authorities, which practised them in acts of murder, but the contradiction between the profession of Christianity and the participation in military matters has become more obvious with every day, and finally, in our day, when, on the one hand, the amicable communion and unity of the Christian nations is growing more and more intimate and, on the other, these same nations are more and more burdened with terrible armaments for mutually hostile purposes, it has reached the utmost degree of tension. Everybody speaks of peace, and peace is preached by the preachers and pastors in their churches, by the peace societies in their gatherings, by writers in newspapers and books, by representatives of the government – in their speeches, toasts, and all kinds of demonstrations. Everybody speaks and writes about peace, but nobody believes in it and nobody can believe in it, because these same preachers and pastors, who to-day preach against war, to-morrow bless the flags and cannon and, extolling the commanders, welcome their armies ; the members of the peace societies, their orators and writers against war, as soon as their turns come, calmly enter the military caste and prepare themselves for murder; the emperors and kings, who yesterday solemnly assured all men that they are concerned only about peace, the next day exercise their troops for murder and boast to one another of their well-prepared multitudes armed for murder, and so the voices, raised amidst this universal lie, by men who actually want peace, and show not only in words, but also in their acts, that they really want it, cannot help but be heard. These people say :

<< We are Christians, and so we cannot agree to being murderers. You may kill and torture us, but we will still refuse to be murderers, because that is contrary to that same Christianity which you

profess." These words are very simple and so little new that it seems strange to repeat them, and yet these words, enunciated in our time and under those conditions in which the Dukhobors are, have a great significance. These words again point out to the world that simple, indubitable, and only means for the establishment of actual peace which was long ago pointed out by Christ, but which has been so forgotten by men that they on all sides search for means for the establishment of peace, and have no recourse to the one, long familiar method, which is so simple that for its application nothing new has to be undertaken, but we need only stop doing what we always and for everybody consider to be bad and disgraceful,— if we stop being submissive slaves of those who prepare men for murder. Not only is this method simple, — it is also indubitable. Any other method for the establishment of peace may be doubtful, but not this one, with which men who profess Christianity recognize, what no one has ever doubted, that a Christian cannot be a murderer. And Christians need only recognize what they cannot help recognizing, and there will be eternal inviolable peace among all Christians. Not only is the method simple and indubitable, — it is also the only method for the establishment of peace among Christians. It is the only one, because, so long as Christians will recognize the possibility of their taking part in military service, so long will the armies be in the power of the governments ; and so long as they shall be in the power of the governments, there will be wars. I know that this method was employed long ago: it was employed by the ancient Christians, who were for this executed by the Romans, and by the Paulicians, Bogomils, Quakers, Mennonites, and Nazarenes ; but never before was this method employed so frequently, and, above all else, so consciously, as now in Austria, in Prussia, in Switzerland, in Holland, where even the pastors preach in the churches the refusal to do military service, and in Russia, where, for the period of three years, in spite of all its cunning, trickery, and cruelty, the government has been unable to break the determination of a small number of men who are living a Christian life.

To say that this method is ineffective, because, in spite of its having been long in use, the wars have existed at the same time, is the same as saying that in the spring the action of the sun is ineffective, because not all the earth has thawed and the flowers have not yet bloomed.

It is true that in Austria Nazarenes sit in prisons, that separate individuals who have refused to do military service are being tortured to death in disciplinary battalions, and that these same Dukhobors are locked up in jails, while their families die from want in places of deportation, and that the triumph seems to be on the side of violence. But just as in the spring, when the earth has not yet thawed out and the flowers have not yet bloomed, it is possible to see on whose side the victory is, so it is here.

The Dukhobors look upon their ruin, their want, imprisonment, and deportations as the work of serving (rod, and do this service with pride and joy, concealing nothing and fearing nothing, because

nothing worse can be done to them unless they be put to death, which they do not fear.

But not such is the condition of the Russian government. If we, who are deceived by the government, do not see the whole significance of what the Dukhobors are doing, the government does see it; it not only sees the danger, but also the hopelessness of its position. It sees that as soon as people shall be freed from that spell under which they are now, and shall understand that a Christian cannot be a soldier, – and this they cannot help but understand, – and as soon as they hear what the Dukhobors did, the government will have inevitably to renounce, either Christianity, – and the governments rule in the name of Christianity, – or its power. The government is in relation to the Dukhobors in a desperate state. They cannot be left alone, for all the rest will do likewise ; nor is it possible to destroy them, to lock them up for ever, as is done with individuals who interfere with the government – there are too many of them : the old men, wives, children, not only do not dissuade their fathers and husbands, but encourage them in their determination.

AVhat is to be done ?

And so the government tries secretly, murderously, to destroy these men and to make them harmless, by keeping the men in solitary confinement, with the greatest secrecy, forbidding outsiders to commune with them, and by sending them to the most remote regions of Siberia, among the Yakuts ; their families it deports among the Tartars and Georgians : it does not admit any one to them and forbids the printing of any information about the Dukhobors, and commands its accomplices to print all kinds of calumnies against them. But all these methods are inefficient. The light shineth in the dark.

It is impossible at once to wipe off from the face of the earth a population of four thousand people who command the respect of all men; if they shall die out under the conditions in which they are placed, this extinction is slow, and extinction for the profession of the truth amidst other people is a most powerful sermon, and this sermon is being carried farther and farther. The government knows this and yet cannot help doing what it is doing ; but we can already see on whose side is the victory.

It is this pointing out of the weakness of violence and of the power of truth which is in our time the great desert of the Dukhobors in the matter of the establishment of peace. For this reason I think that no one has more than they served the cause of peace, and the unfortunate conditions under which their families are living (the details of which may be learned from an article printed in Humanitas) are the reason why the money which Nobel wished should be given to those who more than any one else served the cause of peace could not be adjudged to any one with greater justice than to these very Dukhobor families.

This ought to be done, and be done as quickly as possible, because the wait of the Dukhobor families is growing and growing, and in

winter will have reached its utmost limits. If this money should be adjudged to the Dukhobors, it can be sent directly to Tillis or to those persons who will be named by me.

Ydsnaya Polyana, August 29, 1897.

AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF THE DUKHOBORS A population of twelve thousand men, the Christians of the Universal Brotherhood, as the Dukhobors now living in the Caucasus call themselves, are at the present time in a terrible plight.

Without entering into discussions as to who is right, whether the governments, which recognize the compatibility of Christianity with prisons, executions, and, above all, wars and preparations for them, or the Dukhobors, who recognize the obligatoriness for themselves of the Christian law, which denies every violence, and, moreover, every murder, and so refuse to do military service,— we cannot help but see that this contradiction is very hard to solve : no government can permit people to shirk duties which are fulfilled by everybody and thus to undermine the foundations of the state, while the Dukhobors, on their side, cannot reject a law which they consider divine and, therefore, obligatory in their lives.

So far the governments have found a way out from this contradiction, either by making those who from religious conviction refuse to do military service do harder duties than those of military service, but such as are not opposed to their religious convictions, as has been done in Russia in relation to the Mennonites (they are made to pass the time of military service in some work for the Crown) ; or, not recognizing the legality of the religious refusal, by punishing those who do not fulfil the common law of the state with imprisonment for the period of their service, as is being done with the Nazarenes in Austria. But the present Russian government has used against the Dukhobors a third way out from this contradiction, which, it would seem, is no longer used in our time. It not only subjects the refusers to the most painful sufferings, but systematically causes also pain to the fathers, mothers, and children of those who refuse, in all probability intending with the tortures of these innocent families to shake the determination of their recalcitrant members. To say nothing of the Hoggings, incarcerations, and all kinds of tortures, to which the Dukhobors have been subjected in the disciplinary battalions, from which many have died, and of their deportation to the worst places in Siberia ; to say nothing of two hundred reservists, who for the period of two years pined away in prisons and now are separated from their families and are sent away in pairs to the wildest parts of the Caucasus, where, earning no livelihood, they literally starve to death, — to say nothing of these punishments meted out to those who are directly guilty of refusals to do military service, the families of the I hikhobors are systematically ruined and destroyed. They are all deprived of the right to absent themselves from their places of abode, and are specially fined and locked up in prisons for the non-fulfilment of the strangest demands of the authorities, — for not calling themselves by the names they are commanded to give

themselves, for going to the mill, for visiting one's own mother, for going from the village to the wood, to collect fuel, – so that the last means of the once wealthy inhabitants are soon exhausted ; and the four hundred families, who were deported from their homes and were settled in Tartar and in Georgian villages, where they have to hire themselves houses and support themselves by their own money, having no land and no income, are in such hard straits that in the course of the three years of their deportation one-fourth of them, especially their old men and children, have died from want and from diseases.

It is hard to believe that such a systematic annihilation of a whole population of twelve thousand people should enter into the plans of the Russian government. It is very likely that the higher authorities do not know what is going on in reality, or, if they guess it, do not wish to know the details, feeling that they cannot admit the continuation of such acts, while that is being done which they want to be done.

But it is incontestable that in the course of the last three years the authorities in the Caucasus have not only tormented those who refused, but also their families, and just as systematically have ruined all the Dukhobors and have starved to death those who have been deported.

All the interest in the Dukhobors and every aid sent to them have only brought about the expulsion from Russia of those who have attempted to help the Dukhobors. The government of the Caucasus has surrounded the whole recalcitrant population with a magic circle, and this population is slowly dying out. Three or four years more, and nothing will be left of these Dukhobors.

Thus it would be, if there had not happened an event which evidently was not foreseen by the authorities in the Caucasus. This event was this, that last year the dowager empress visited her son in the Caucasus, when the Dukhobors succeeded in handing her a petition, in which they asked to be permitted to emigrate in a body to some distant places, and if that could not be, to emigrate abroad. The empress transmitted the petition to the highest authorities, and the highest authorities found it possible to permit the Dukhobors to leave Russia.

It would seem that the question was solved and that a way out was found from a situation which was oppressive for both sides. But that only seemed so.

In the situation in which the Dukhobors now are, emigration is impossible for them: they have no means for this, and, being shut up in their places of deportation, they are unable to attend to this matter. They were wealthy, but in the last years the greater part of their means has been taken from them by the courts and penalties and has been used up in the support of their deported brothers, and they have no way of discussing matters in common and settling upon the conditions of their emigration, since they are not allowed to leave

their places of abode and no one is allowed to visit them.

The people are allowed to leave, but they have been previously ruined, so that they have no means for their journey, and the conditions under which they live are such that they are unable to find out anything about places to emigrate to, and how and under what conditions they can do so, and they are even unable to make use of outside help, since the men who want to help them are immediately expelled, while they are for every absence put in prison.

Thus, if these men shall receive no aid from without, they will be completely ruined and will all die out, in spite of the permission to emigrate.

I accidentally know the details of the persecutions and sufferings of these people and am in communication with them, and they ask me to help them, and so I consider it my duty to address all good people, both of Russian and of European society, asking them to help the Dukhobors to get out of that painful situation in which they now are. I have addressed an appeal to Russian society through a Russian newspaper,— I do not know yet whether my appeal will be printed or not, and I now address all the good people of the English and American nations, asking their aid, in the first place, in money, of which a great deal is needed for the transportation of ten thousand people for a long distance, and, in the second, by a direct guidance in the difficulties of the present emigration of people who do not know any languages and have never been outside of Russia.

I assume that the highest Russian authorities will not interfere with such aid and will temper the zeal of the government in the Caucasus, which now allows no communication with the Dukhobors.

Until then I offer my mediation between the people who wish to aid the Dukhobors and enter into relations with them, since my relations with them have so far never been interrupted.

My address: 21 Khamovnicheski Lane, Moscow.

March 19, 1898.

LETTERS TO THE DUKHOBORS I. TO THE DUKHOBORS OF THE CAUCASUS Dear Brothers, who suffer for Christ's teaching: —

Our brother, I. P. N., called on me, on his way home, and I wanted to write to you that not I alone, but many, very many people in Russia and abroad know and think of you and are concerned about you. God willing, we will send you, your children, women, old men, and patients, such help as we can ; but as to spiritual help, we and many others, both here and abroad, receive that from you, and we beg you not to forsake us with that help. This help consists in this, that you were the first to show an example of walking on Christ's road: it is easier for those in the rear than for those in the van. Christ said, " They have persecuted me, and they will persecute you," and so it is. I am sorry for the young and the old, and still

more sorry for the persecutors: they know by this time that they are not persecuting you, but Christ, the one who came to save them. They see their sin, but are so deeply mired in it that they cannot get away from it. They do their evil work : God help them to come to their senses and to join us. 1. P. told me how your brothers who suffer for their refusal to take part in the deeds of the devil, in murder, have acted toward those who have not withstood the persecutions and have consented to serve.

If those who themselves suffer for Christ's sake begged forgiveness of those who did not withstand the persecutions for those sufferings which they bore at the instigation and instruction of their brothers, how must I, who

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have not been made worthy to suffer for Christ's sake, ask the forgiveness of those to whom my words and writings have caused any suffering !

He who suffers for Christ's sake, not at the instigation of men, but because he cannot act differently before God, is in no need of human consolations and encouragements ; but he who acts, not for God's sake, but for the sake of human glory, has a hard time and needs consolation and support, and his forgiveness has to be asked, if he suffers through us. And so, brothers, do not persist in your refusal to do service for the state, if you do so in order not to be accused of weakness. If you can do what is demanded of you, do it, – save thus your feeble, your wives and children, your sick, your old men, from sufferings. If Christ's spirit has not taken His abode in man, keeping him from doing what is contrary to God's will, every one of you ought, for the sake of the love of his own people, to renounce what he did before and submit: no one will condemn you for it. Thus you ought to act, if you can. But if Christ's spirit has taken His abode in a man, and he does not live for himself, but for the fulfilment of God's will, he would gladly do all he can for his suffering relatives, but he cannot do so, just as one man cannot lift forty hundredweights ; and if this is so, Christ's spirit, which is opposed to the works of the devil, will teach him how to act, and will console him in his own sufferings and in those of his relatives.

I should like to tell you much and to find out much from you. If God wills it, we shall see each other. Meanwhile good-bye, brothers. I kiss you.

Your weak, but loving brother.

1897.

JI. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA Dear Brothers : – I send you the money collected. I think that it would be well for you to regard this money, like all the other means which you receive from good people and working brothers, as your common possession, and not to divide it up among yourselves : give most to him who needs most.

Your old people, together with your friends, will help you distribute it.

I have heard that you have suffered much want. God grant that you may bear your trials in the same Christian spirit of submission to God's will, in meekness and brotherly love, in which you lived in the Caucasus, showing people an example of Christian life. All worldly affairs

– joys, and sorrows, and wealth, and poverty – pass, without leaving any trace; but our deeds – the good or the bad – leave an eternal trace both in the world, aiding in the establishment of God's kingdom, or interfering with it, and in our souls, bringing it nearer to God, or removing it from Him.

God save you for your good.

Your loving brother.

November 6, 1899.

III. TO THE DUKHOBORS IN CANADA Dear Brothers and Sisters: – Those of us who profess the Christian teaching and want our life to harmonize with this teaching must help one another. The most necessary help is to point out to one another our sins, those sins and offences into which we fall without noticing them. For this reason I, too, asking my brothers to help me in my sins and offences, which I do not see, regard it as my duty to point out to you, dear brothers and sisters, the offence into which I hear some of you are falling.

You suffered and were exiled and even now suffer want, because you wished to lead a Christian life, not only in words, but also in acts, – because you refused to commit any violence against your neighbour, to swear to do police or military duty, – you even burned your weapons, that you might not be tempted to defend yourselves with them, and, in spite of all the persecutions, you remained true to the Christian teaching. Your acts became known to men, and the enemies of the Christian teaching were confused when they heard of your acts, and either locked you up and deported you, or exiled you from Russia, trying in every way to conceal your acts from men. But the followers of the Christian teaching rejoiced, triumphed, loved and praised you, and tried to emulate you. Your acts have done much toward the destruction of the kingdom of evil and the confirmation of men in the Christian truth.

Now I learn from the letters of our friends that the life of many of you in Canada is such that the very followers of the Christian teaching are confused, and its enemies rejoice and triumph. "Here are your Dukhobors," now say the enemies of Christianity, "the moment they settled in Canada, a free country, they began to live like all other people, hoarding property for themselves, and they not only do not share with their brothers, but even try to get as much as possible for themselves individually. Thus, whatever they did before, they did by command of their head men, without understanding well why they were doing so." Dear brothers and

sisters,— I know and understand the whole difficulty of your position in a strange country, amidst strange people, who do not give anything away for nothing, and I know how terrible it is to think that our friends, feeble people with families, will remain without means and without help. I know how hard it is to live in a commune, and how provoking it is to work for others, who are careless and waste what has been acquired by the labour of others. I know all that, but I know also this, that if you want to continue to live a Christian life and do not wish to renounce everything for which you suffered and were exiled from your country, you cannot live in a worldly way and collect property each for himself and for his family, ami maiu χ

rest. It only seems to us that it is possible to be a Christian and have property and retain it separately from the rest, but that is impossible. People need only recognize this, and very soon there will be nothing left of Christianity but words, and, unfortunately, nothing but insincere and hypocritical words. Christ said that it is impossible to serve God and mammon ; one or the other: either you hoard property for yourselves, or you live for God. At first it seems that there is no connection between the rejection of violence, the refusal to do military service, and the recognition of property. " We, the Christians, do not worship external gods, do not swear, do not go to court, do not kill," say many of us, " but our acquiring property through labour, not for our enrichment, but as a provision for our near ones, not only does not violate Christ's teaching, but even helps us to fulfil it, if from the surplus we help the needy." But that is not so. Property means that that which I consider to be my own I will not only refuse to give to any one who may wish to take what is mine, but will also defend against him. But to defend what is mine from another, I must use violence, that is, in case of necessity, defend it by means of a struggle, a fight, even murder. If it were not for these acts of violence and of murder, no one would be able to retain property.

But if we retain property, without using violence, it is only so because our property is defended by the threat of using violence and by violence and murder itself, which are committed against people about us.

Our property is not taken from us, even if we do not defend it, only because it is assumed that we would defend it like any one else.

And so the recognition of property is the recognition of violence and murder, and you had no reason to refuse to do military and police service, if you recognize property, which is maintained only by means of military and police service. Those who do military and police service and enjoy property do better than those who refuse to do military service and do not do it, and yet wish to enjoy property : such people do not serve themselves and want for their own advantage to make use of somebody else's service. The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits : either all or nothing. It is all inseparably connected into one whole. If a man recognizes himself as the son of God, from this recognition follows love of his

neighbour, and from the love of his neighbour follows at once the rejection of violence, and of the oath, and of service, and of property.

Besides, the bias for property is in itself a deception, and Christ discloses it to us. He says that a man should not trouble himself for the morrow, not because there is any merit in it, or because God commands it, but because such a care leads to nothing, because it is impossible, and because he who will do so will be doing something foolish, since he will try to do the impossible. A man cannot make himself secure, in the first place, because he is mortal, as is shown in the Gospel parable about the rich man who built barns, and, in the second, because it is never possible to find the limit of the necessary security.

For how long a time must we make ourselves secure ?

For a month ? for a year ? for ten years ? for thirty ?

and shall we make ourselves alone secure, or also our children and grandchildren ? and how ? in food, or also in our apparel and habitation, and what apparel, and what habitation? He who will begin to provide for himself will never come to the end of his providing, and will only lose his life in vain, as it says : he that shall wish to keep his life shall lose it. Do we not see rich men who live in misery, and poor men who live joyously ? Men do not need to provide for themselves, even as Christ has said that He is provided for by God for all times, just as the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field are provided for.

" Yes, but if that is so, and people shall all stop working, ploughing, sowing, everybody will starve to death," is generally said by those who do not understand Christ's teaching in all its true significance. But that is only an excuse. Christ does not forbid a man to work, and not only does not advise us to be idle, but, on the contrary, commands us to work all the time ; but we are not to work for ourselves, but for others. It says, The son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and, He that laboureth is worthy of his meat. A man must work as much as possible; but he must retain nothing for himself, – he must not regard as his own what he has earned, but give it to others.

To provide for himself most securely, man needs one means, and this means is that which Christ teaches : to work as much as possible and to be satisfied with the least. A man who will act thus will everywhere and always be provided for.

The Christian teaching cannot be taken in small bits, – a part to be taken and the rest discarded. If men, accepting Christ's teaching, have renounced violence and war, they must also renounce property, because violence and courts are needed only for the purpose of maintaining property. But if people retain property, they must have violence and courts and the whole worldly structure.

The offence of property is the most grievous offence, the harm of which is very cunningly concealed from men, and thus very many Christians have stumbled over this rock.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, in establishing your life in a strange country, after you have been expelled from your country for faithfulness to the Christian teaching, I see clearly that it is in every way more advantageous for you to continue to live a Christian life than to change it and begin to live a worldly life. It is more advantageous for you to live and work in common with all those who shall wish to live the life you lead than for each of you to live separately, hoarding only for yourselves and your families, without sharing with the others. It is more advantageous to live so, in the first place, because, by not laying by for the future, you will not waste your strength in vain in providing for yourselves and your families, which is an impossibility for mortal man ; in the second place, you will not waste your strength in a struggle with others, in order that each of you may retain his property distinct from his neighbours ; thirdly, because you will work and earn incomparably more by working in common than if you worked in severalty ; fourthly, because living in a commune, you will spend less on yourselves than living separately ; fifthly, because living a Christian life, you will evoke in the people surrounding you love and respect, instead of envy and hostility, and they may even try to emulate you ; sixthly, because you will not ruin the cause which you have begun and with which you confounded your enemies and pleased the friends of Christ. Above all else, it is more advantageous for you to live a Christian life, because, living such a life, you will know that you are doing the will of Him who sent you into the world.

I know, it is hard not to have anything of our own ; it is hard to be prepared to give up what we have and need for the family to any one who may ask for it ; it is hard to submit to the chosen leaders, when it seems that they are making an unjust distribution ; it is hard to bear one another's faults ; it is hard to abstain from the habits of luxury, meat, tobacco, wine. I know that all that seems hard. But, dear brothers and sisters, we live to-day and to-morrow we shall go to Him who sent us into this world, in order that we may do His work. Is it worth while, for the sake of calling things our own and being able to manage matters, for the sake of a few puuo flour, a few dollars, fur coats, a pair of oxen, for the sake of not giving to those who do not work the things which we have earned, for the sake of a word of insult, for the sake of pride, for the sake of a dainty morsel, to go against the will of Him who sent us into the world, and not to do what He clearly wants us to do, and what we can fulfil only in this life? It is but very little that He wants of us, – that we should do unto others what we want for ourselves. And He wants this not for His own sake, but for our sake, because, if we all agreed to do so, we should all live as well as possible upon earth. Hut if even the whole world lived contrary to His will, no individual who understands why he is sent into this world has any cause to do anything else but that for which he is sent into this world.

To me, an old man on the brink of life and standing aside, this is clear; but even you, dear brothers and sisters, if you shall consider it calmly, casting aside for a time the temptations of the

world, will see clearly that no man will lose anything, but each will only gain on all sides, if he shall live not for himself, but in order to do the will of God. It says, "Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Any man may verify the truth of it. But you have already verified it, and you know that it is the truth. As it is, we are seeking all these things, property, worldly pleasures, and we do not receive them, and we lose the kingdom of God.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, hold firmly to the life which you have begun, or you will uselessly lose what you had, and will not find what you seek. He who sent us into the world knows better than we what we need, and He has arranged the world in advance in such a way that we receive the highest good both in this and in the future life, not by doing our own will, but His.

I do not dare to give you any advice as to the way you have arranged your communal life, since I know that you, especially your old men, are experienced and wise in such matters. All I know is, that everything will be well, so long as each of you will remember that he did not come into this world by his own will, but by the will of God, who sent him into this short life for the fulfilment of His will. But His will is all expressed in the commandment of love. But to collect property individually and to retain it separately from the rest means to act contrary to the will of God and His commandment.

Good-bye. Your loving brother.

February 15, 1900.

LETTER TO NICHOLAS IL Your Imperial Majesty : - The enclosed letter, which was received by me from Canada, is so brief, so touching, so eloquent in its simplicity, and at the same time deals with such an important subject, that I beg you very much to read it yourself and alone, and to surrender yourself to those good sentiments which this letter will no doubt evoke in your good heart.

Nine young women, who are living at liberty and in good circumstances, and two old mothers ask you as a special favour to be permitted to abandon their free and secure condition and to emigrate to the most terrible place of exile and under the most oppressive conditions. What moral and strong people these men and women must be, if, after all those sufferings to which they have been subjected, they are not thinking of themselves, but of one another, of being true to the marital law. How much these people must have suffered for one another in these six years of their separation !

And it is not these people alone who are suffering: tens, if not hundreds of thousands of the best Russian people are suffering as much, if not more, from religious persecutions, which, by some strange misunderstanding, continue to exist and of late have even been intensified in Russia, when all enlightened men and governments have long ago recognized the silliness, the cruel injustice, and,

above all, the aimlessness of such persecutions.

I long ago wished to tell you about those terrible and stupid cruelties which, under the guise of defending the

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State religion, are perpetrated in your name. My advanced years and the nearness of my death urge me not to delay any longer. Thousands and thousands of truly religious, and so of the best, men, who form the strength of any nation, have already perished or are now perishing in prisons, in hard exile, or are sent out of Russia. The flower of the population, not only of the Caucasus, but also of Russia, eight thousand Dukhobors, have for ever left their country, and not only have no regrets about it, but even think of it with disgust and terror, thanks to those cruelties to which they have been subjected in it.

A few thousand Milkers from the Kara Territory and Erivàn Government (whose petitions to be permitted to emigrate from Russia I have sent you), the Milkers from Tashkent, tens of thousands in the Governments of Kharkov, Kiev, Poltava, Ekaterinoslav, who are oppressed on account of their religion, ask for nothing but that they be permitted to leave their country and go where they may without molestation profess God as they understand Him, and not as is demanded by the authorities, who for the most part do not recognize any God. Knowing that all this is being done in your name (and you cannot help but know this ; if you do not know it, let a truthful man investigate it, and he will confirm my words to you), and knowing that you are able to put a stop to it, you will not find any peace of mind, until you do so.

Your advisers, those same men who have started these persecutions and guide them, will tell you that it is impossible to stop this, that I am a Utopian, an anarchist, an atheist, and that no attention ought to be paid to me. But do not believe them.

What I say, I do not say from my standpoint, but from the standpoint of a rational and enlightened government. And from this standpoint it has long ago been proved that all religious persecutions not only lower the prestige of the government, deprive the government of the people's love, and do not attain the aim for which it is founded, but even produce the opposite effect.

And so it has long been time, in the first place, to review and destroy the existing laws about persecution for religion's sake ; in the second place, to stop all persecutions for departing from the profession of faith adopted by the state ; in the third place, to free all men who on the basis of previous laws were deported and exiled for crimes against religion, and, in the fourth place, not to punish as a crime the disagreement of the religious consciousness with the demands of the government, but to try to harmonize this contradiction, as it is harmonized in court in case of a refusal to take the oath by promising to tell the truth, or as it has been

harmonized in the case of the Mennonites in their refusal to do military service, by substituting for it obligatory, non-military labour.

By doing so you will not only relieve yourself of a heavy responsibility, which is resting upon you, but you will also feel the joy of the consciousness of having done a good deed.

May God help you to do what pleases Him.

Your loving Lev Tolstoy.

December 7, 1900.