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happy life, outside industrial, factory, or capitalistic coercion and slavery—that in this lies their great historical calling.

I would like to think that we Russian parasites, reared by and having received leisure for mental work through the people's labor, will understand our sin, and, independently of our personal advantage, in the name of the truth that condemns us, will endeavor to undo it.

Yasnaya Poliana, July, 1905.

George to such a degree of perfection that, *under the existing State organization and compulsory taxation*[13] it is impossible to invent any other better, more just, practical, and peaceful solution.

"To beat down and cover up the truth that I have tried to-night to make clear to you," said Henry George, "selfishness will call on ignorance. But it has in it the germinative force of truth, and the times are ripe for it.

. . .

"The ground is plowed; the seed is set; the good tree will grow. So little now; only the eye of faith can see it."[14]

And I think that Henry George is right, that the removal of the sin of landed property is near, that the movement called forth by Henry George was the last birth-throe, and that the birth is on the point of taking place; the liberation of men from the sufferings they have so long borne must now be realized. Besides this I think (and I would like to contribute to this, in however small a measure) that the removal of this great universal sin—a removal which will form an epoch in the history of mankind—is to be effected precisely by the Russian Slavonian people, who are, by their spiritual and economic character, predestined for this great universal task—that the Russian people should not become proletarians in imitation of the peoples of Europe and America, but, on the contrary, that they should solve the land question at home by the abolition of landed property, and show other nations the way to a rational, free, and

[13] In view of a seeming contradiction in the eyes of some readers of Tolstoy between his support of Henry George's scheme and his simultaneous denial of all coercive State power, it is important to pay particular attention to these words italicized by the author himself. Tolstoy here emphasizes a reservation, that he recommends Henry George's scheme only under conditions of State organization and compulsory taxation. It goes without saying, that if the Christian teaching as Tolstoy understands it were to be thoroughly applied to life, then there would be neither coercive government nor compulsory taxation, and in the distribution of the land there would be practiced among men a voluntary agreement of a yet freer and more just kind than the single tax system of Henry George. (Trans).

[14] The Works of Henry George, Vol. X., p. 296.

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rules about three days' labor, and so forth. Even as now the owners of land talk about the injustice of putting a stop to their criminal ownership, so then people talked about the unlawfulness of depriving owners of their serfs. As then the Church justified the serf right, so now that which occupies the place of the Church—Science—justifies landed property. Just as then slave-owners, realizing their sin, more or less endeavored in various ways without undoing it to mitigate it, and substituting the payment of a ransom by the serfs for direct compulsory work for their masters, moderated their exactions from the peasants, so also now the more sensitive landowners, feeling their guilt, endeavor to redeem it by renting their land to the peasants on more lenient conditions, by selling it through the peasant banks, by arranging schools for the people, ridiculous houses of recreation, magic lantern lectures, and theaters.

Exactly the same also is the indifferent attitude of the Government to the question. And as then the question was solved, not by those who invented artful devices for the alleviation and improvement of the condition of peasant life, but by those who, recognizing the urgent necessity of the right solution, did not postpone it indefinitely, did not foresee special difficulties in it, but immediately, straight off, endeavored to arrest the evil and did not admit the idea that there could be conditions in which evil once recognized must continue, but took that course which under the existing conditions appeared the best—the same now also with the land question.

The question will be solved, not by those who will endeavor to mitigate the evil or to invent alleviations for the people or to postpone the task of the future, but by those who will understand that, however one may mitigate a wrong, it remains a wrong, and that it is senseless to invent alleviations for a man we are torturing and that one cannot postpone when people are suffering, but should immediately take the best way of solving the difficulty and immediately apply it in practice. And the more should it be so that the method of solving the land problem has been elaborated by Henry

essary, not to invent cunning devices for the improvement of men deprived of their lawful right to the land, but to understand one's own sin in relation to them, and before all else to cease to participate in it, whatever this may cost. Only such moral activity of every man can and will contribute to the solution of the question now standing before humanity.

The emancipation of the serfs in Russia was effected not by Alexander II., but by those men who understood the sin of serfdom, and independently of their own advantages endeavored to free themselves from it, and it was chiefly effected by such men as Novikoff, Radischeff, the Decembrists,[12] those men who were ready to suffer and did themselves suffer (without making any one else suffer) in the name of loyalty to that which they recognized as the truth.

The same must take place in relation to the land.

I believe that there do now exist such men, and that they will fulfill that great work not only Russian, but universal, which is before the Russian people.

The land question has at the present time reached such a state of ripeness as fifty years ago was reached by the question of serfdom. Exactly the same is being repeated. As at that time men searched for the means of remedying the general uneasiness and dissatisfaction which were felt in society, and applied all kinds of external governmental means, but nothing helped nor could help whilst there remained the ripening and unsolved question of personal slavery, so also now no external measures will help or can help until the ripe question of landed property be solved. As now measures are proposed for adding slices to the peasants' land, for the purchase of land by the aid of banks, etc., so then also palliative measures were proposed and enacted, material improvements,

[12] Russian Radical reformers at the end of 18th and commencement of the 19th centuries, who opposed the Government and suffered persecution at its hands. (Trans).

Russia is living through an important time destined to have enormous results.

The proximity and inevitableness of the approaching change is, as indeed is always the case, especially keenly felt by those classes of society who, by their position, are free from the necessity of physical labor absorbing all their time and power, and therefore have the possibility of occupying themselves with political questions. These men—the nobles, merchants, Government officials, doctors, engineers, professors, teachers, artists, students, advocates, chiefly townspeople, the so-called "intellectuals"—are now in Russia directing the movement which is taking place, and they devote all their powers to the alteration of the existing political order, and to replacing it by another regarded by this or that party as the most expedient and likely to ensure the liberty and welfare of the Russian people. These men, continually suffering from every kind of restriction and coercion on the part of the Government, from arbitrary exile, incarcerations, prohibition of meetings, prohibition of books, newspapers, strikes, unions—from the limitation of the rights of various nationalities, and at the same time living a life completely estranged from the majority of the Russian agricultural people, naturally see in these restrictions the chief evil, and in the liberation from them the chief welfare, of the Russian people.

Thus think the Liberals. So also think the Social Democrats, who hope, through popular representation, by the aid of State power to realize a new social order in accordance with their theory. So also think the revolutionaries, hoping, by substituting a new Government for the existing one, to establish laws ensuring the greatest freedom and welfare of the whole people.

Yet one need only for a time free oneself from the idea which has taken root among our intellectuals, that the work now before Russia is the introduction into our country of those same forms of political life which have been introduced into Europe and America, and are supposed to ensure the liberty and welfare of all the

citizens—and to simply think of what is morally wrong in our life, in order to see quite clearly that the chief evil from which the whole of the Russian people are unceasingly and cruelly suffering an evil of which they are keenly conscious and to which they continually point—cannot be removed by any political reforms, just as it is not up to the present time removed by any of the political reforms of Europe and America. This evil—the fundamental evil from which the Russian people, as well as the peoples of Europe and America, are suffering—is the fact that the majority of the people are deprived of the indisputable natural right of every man to use a portion of the land on which he was born. It is sufficient to understand all the criminality, the sinfulness of the situation in this respect, in order to understand that until this atrocity, continually being committed by the owners of the land, shall cease, no political reforms will give freedom and welfare to the people, but that, on the contrary, only the emancipation of the majority of the people from that land slavery in which they are now held can render political reforms—not a plaything and a tool for personal aims in the hands of politicians—but the real expression of the will of the people.

It is this thought which I wish to communicate in this article to those who, at the present important moment for Russia, desire to serve not, their personal aims, but the true welfare of the Russian people.

I.

The other day I was walking along the high road to Tula. It was on the Saturday of Holy Week; the people were driving to market in lines of carts, with calves, hens, horses, cows (some of the cows were being conveyed in the carts, so starved were they). A wrinkled old woman was leading a lean, sickly cow. I knew the old woman, and asked her why she was leading the cow.

there cannot be right action, and when there is correct thought right action will follow.

. . .

The great work of the present for every man and every organization of men who would improve social conditions is the work of education, the propagation of ideas. It is only as it aids this that anything else can avail. And in this work every one who can think may aid, first by forming clear ideas himself and then by endeavoring to arouse the thought of those with whom he comes in contact.[11]

This is quite true; but, in order to serve this great cause, besides thought there must also be something more a religious feeling that feeling owing to which in the last century the owners of serfs recognized themselves culpable, and, notwithstanding personal loss and even ruin, sought the means of freeing themselves from the sin which weighed upon them.

It is this feeling in regard to landed property which must awaken in the well-to-do classes in order that the great work of the liberation of the land should be accomplished; this feeling should awaken in such a degree that people should be ready to sacrifice everything if only they can free themselves from the sin in which they have lived and are living.

Possessing hundreds, thousands, scores of thousands of acres, trading in land, profiting one way or the other by landed property, and living luxuriously, thanks to the oppression of the people, possible through this cruel and obvious injustice—to argue in various committees and assemblies about the improvement of the conditions of the peasant's life without surrendering one's own exclusively advantageous position growing from this injustice, is not only an unkind but a detestable and evil thing, equally condemnable by common sense, honesty, and Christianity. It is nec-

[11] "Social Problems," by Henry George (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.), pp. 229-230.

No artificial sacrifices are necessary, no concern about the people there is only necessary the consciousness of this sin by all those who commit or participate in it, and the desire to free themselves from it.

It is only necessary that the undeniable truth which the best men of the people always knew and know—that the land cannot be the exclusive property of some, and that the non-admission to the land of those who are in need of it is a sin—that this truth should become generally recognized by all men; that people should become ashamed of retaining the land from those who want to feed themselves from it; that it should become a shame in any way to participate in this retention of the land from those who need it, a shame to possess land, a shame to profit by the labor of men compelled to work only because they have been deprived of their legitimate right to the land.

It is necessary that there should occur that which took place with the law of serfdom when nobles and landowners became ashamed to possess serfs, the Government became ashamed of maintaining these unjust and cruel laws, when it became evident to the peasants themselves that an utterly unjustifiable iniquity was being committed upon them. The same must take place also with landed property. And this is necessary, not for any one class, however numerous it may be, but it is necessary for all classes, and not only for all classes and all men of any one country, but for the whole of mankind.

IX.

Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting, by complaints and denunciation, by the formation of parties or the making of revolutions (wrote Henry George), but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought

"She's without milk," said the woman. "I ought to sell her and buy one with milk. Likely I'll have to add ten rubles, but I have only five. Where shall I take it? During the winter we have had to spend eighteen rubles on flour, and we've only got one bread-winner. I live alone with my daughter-in-law and four grandchildren; my son is house-porter in town."

"Why doesn't your son live at home?" I asked.

"He's nothing to work on. What's our land? Just enough for Kvas.[1]

A peasant went tramping along, thin and pale, his trousers bespattered with mine clay.

"What business in town?" I asked.

"To buy a horse; it's time to plow and I haven't got one. But they say horses are dear."

"What price do you want to give?"

"Well, according to what I have."

"How much have you?"

"I've scraped together fifteen rubles.[2] But what can you buy at the present time for fifteen rubles?

"A knacker's beast," put in another peasant.

"In whose mine do you work?" I asked, glancing at his trousers stretched at the knee and colored with red clay.

"In Komaroff's, Ivan Komaroffs."

"Why have you made so little?"

"Oh, I was working for half profit."

"How much did you earn?" I asked.

"Two rubles a week or even less. What can one do? Bread didn't last till Christmas. We can't buy enough."

A little further, a young peasant was leading a sleek, well fed horse to sell.

"Nice horse," said I.

[1] Kvas, a common Russian beverage prepared from black rye bread. (Trans).

[2] A ruble is about two shillings. (Trans).

"Couldn't be better," said he, thinking me a buyer. "Good for plowing and driving."

"Then why do you sell it?"

"I can't use it. I've only two allotments. I can manage them with one horse. I've kept them both over the winter, and I'm sorry enough for it. The cattle have eaten up everything, and we want money to pay the rent."

"From whom do you rent?"

"From Maria Ivanovna; thanks be to her, she let us have it. Otherwise it would have been the end of us."

"What are the terms?"

"She fleeces us of fourteen rubles. But where else can we go? So we take it."

A woman passed driving along with a boy wearing a little cap. She knew me, clambered out, and offered me her boy for service. The boy is quite a tiny fellow with quick, intelligent eyes.

He looks small, but he can do everything," she says.

"But why do you hire out such a little one?"

"Well, sir, at least it'll be one mouth less to feed. I have four besides myself, and only one allotment. God knows, we've nothing to eat. They ask for bread and I've none to give them."

With whomsoever one talks, all complain of their want and all similarly from one side or another come back to the sole reason. There is insufficient bread, and bread is insufficient because there is no land.

These may be mere casual meetings on the road; but cross all Russia, all its peasant world, and one may observe all the dreadful calamities and sufferings which proceed from the obvious cause that the agricultural masses are deprived of land. Half the Russian peasantry live so that for them the question is not how to improve their position, but only how not to die of hunger, they and their families, and this only because they have no land.

Traverse all Russia and ask all the working people why their life is hard, what they want, and all of them with one voice will say one

one movement of this man's hand there is more meaning and content than in all the prattle which now fills the columns of the papers. This man understands, as does the whole of the people, that the seizure of the land by those who do not cultivate it is a great sin, under which his ancestors physically suffered and perished, and under which he himself and his neighbors also physically suffer, while all the time those who have committed this sin and who are now committing it, spiritually suffer—and that this sin, like every sin—like, in his memory, the sin of serfdom—must inevitably come to an end. He knows and feels this, and therefore he cannot but turn to God at the thought of the approach of the solution.

VIII.

"Great social reforms," says Mazzini, "always have been and will be the result of great religious movements."

Such is the religious movement which is now pending for the Russian people, for all the Russian people, for the working classes deprived of land as well as, and especially for, the big, medium, and small landowners, and for all those hundreds of thousands of men who, although they do not directly possess land, yet occupy an advantageous position, thanks to the compulsory labor of the people who are deprived of land.

The religious movement now due among the Russian people consists in undoing the great sin which for a long time has been hurting and is dividing men, not only in Russia, but in all the world.

This sin can be undone, not by political reform, nor Socialistic schemes for the future, not by revolutions in the present, and still less by philanthropic assistance or governmental organization for the purchase and distribution of land among the peasants.

Such palliative measures only distract attention from the essence of the problem and thus retard its solution.

or Liberals—but by religious people—that is, by people who are serious, simple, laborious, and who live not for their own profit, vanity, or ambition, and not for the attainment of external results, but for the fulfillment before God of their human vocation.

Such men, and only such, by their noiseless but resolute activity, move mankind forward. Such men will not, desiring to distinguish themselves in the eyes of others, invent this or that improvement in the condition of the people (there can be an endless number of such improvements, and they are all insignificant if the chief thing is not done), but will endeavor to live in accordance with the law of God, with conscience, and in endeavoring to live so they will naturally come across the most obvious transgression of this law, and for themselves and for others will search for the means of freeing themselves from it.

The other day a doctor of my acquaintance whilst waiting for a train in the third class waiting-room of a big railway station was reading a paper. A peasant sitting by him inquired about the news. In the copy of the paper there was an article about the "agrarian" convention. The doctor translated into Russian this funny word "agrarian," and when it was understood that the question concerned the land, the peasant requested him to read the article. The doctor began to read, other peasants came up. A small crowd collected; they were pressing on each other's backs, some sitting on the floor; the faces of all were solemnly concentrated. When the reading was over, one of the hindmost, an old man, sighed deeply and crossed himself. This man, for certain, did not understand anything of the confused jargon in which the article was written, and which it is difficult to understand even for those who know how to talk this jargon themselves. He understood nothing of what was written in the article, but he understood that the matter concerned the great, the old sin from which all his ancestors had suffered and from which he also suffers; he understood that those who are committing this sin are becoming conscious of it. And having understood this, he mentally turned to God and crossed himself. In this

and the same thing, that which they unceasingly desire and expect, and for which they unceasingly hope, of which they unceasingly think.

They cannot help thinking and feeling this, for, apart from the chief thing, the insufficiency of land for the maintenance of most of them, they cannot but feel themselves the slaves of the landed gentry, and merchants, and landowners, whose estates have surrounded their small insufficient allotments, and they cannot but think and feel this—for every minute, for a bag of grass, for a handful of fuel, without which they cannot live, for a horse gone astray from their land on to the landlord's, they perpetually suffer fines, blows, humiliation.

Once, as I was going along the road. I entered into conversation with a blind peasant beggar. Recognizing in me from my conversation a literate man who read the papers, but not taking me for a gentleman, he suddenly stopped and gravely asked: "Well, and is there any rumor?"

I asked, "About what?"

"Why, about the gentry's land."

I said I had heard nothing. The blind man shook his head and didn't ask me anything more.

"Well, what do they say about the land?" I asked a short time ago of a former pupil of mine, a rich, steady, and intelligent literate peasant.

"It is true the people prattle."

"And you yourself, what do you think?"

"Well, it'll probably come over to us," he said.

Of all events which are taking place, this alone is important and interesting to the whole people. And they believe, and cannot but believe, that it will "come over."

They cannot but believe this, because it is clear to them that a multiplying people living by agriculture cannot continue to exist when only a small portion of the land is left them from which they

must feed themselves and all the parasites who have fastened on to them and are crawling about them.

II.

"What is man?" says Henry George in one of his speeches.

"In the first place, he is an animal, a land animal who cannot live without land. All that man produces comes from the land; all productive labor, in the final analysis, consists in working up land, or materials drawn from land, into such forms as fit them for the satisfaction of human wants and desires. Why, man's very body is drawn from the land. Children of the soil, we come from the land, and to the land we must return. Take away from man all that belongs to the land, and what have you but a disembodied spirit? Therefore he who holds the land on which and from which another man must live is that man's master, and the man is his slave. The man who holds the land on which I must live can command me to life or to death just as absolutely as though I were his chattel. Talk about abolishing slavery—we have not abolished slavery; we have only abolished one rude form of it, chattel slavery. There is a deeper and more insidious form, a more cursed form yet before us, to abolish, in this industrial slavery that makes a man a virtual slave, while taunting him and mocking him in the name of freedom."[3]

Did you ever think," says Henry George in another part of the same speech, "of the utter absurdity and strangeness of the fact that all over the civilized world the working classes are the poor classes? Think for a moment how it would strike a rational being who had never been on the earth before if such an intelligence could come down, and you were to explain to him how we live on earth, how houses and food and clothing and all the many things we need were all produced by work, would he not think that the working people

[3] The Works of Henry George, Vol. IX., p. 199.

Why is this?

The answer to this question is the same as to all questions as to why people of our time, who might live well and happily, are living badly and miserably.

It comes from the circumstance that these men, both governmental and anti-governmental, who are organizing the welfare of the people, have no religion—for without religion man cannot himself lead a rational life, and still less can he know what is good and what is bad, what is necessary and what unnecessary, for other people. For this reason alone do people of our time in general, and the Russian educated people in particular—altogether bereft of religious consciousness and openly announcing this with pride—so perversely misunderstand life and the demands of the people they wish to serve, demanding for them everything save the one thing which they require.

Without religion one cannot really love men, and without loving men one cannot know what they require, and what is more, and what is less, necessary for them. Only those who are not religious, and therefore do not truly love, can invent trifling, unimportant improvements in the condition of the people without seeing that chief evil from which others are suffering, and which they themselves are partly producing. Only such people can preach more or less cleverly-constructed abstract theories supposed to render the people happy in the future and not see the sufferings the people are bearing in the present and which demand immediate and practical alleviation. As it were, a man who has deprived a hungry man of his food is giving him his counsel (and that of a very doubtful character) as to how he should get food in the future, without deeming it necessary immediately to share with him that part of his own abundance consisting of the food he has actually taken away from the man.

Fortunately, great beneficial movements in humanity are accomplished not by parasites feeding on the life-blood of the people, whatever they may call themselves—Governments, Revolutionists,

and clearly ask for, and they choose to serve them through that which the people not only do not ask from them, and of which they have not the slightest idea, but which these servants of the people have invented for them; and not by that alone for which the people unceasingly look, and for which they unceasingly ask.

VII.

Of all indispensable alterations of the forms of social life, there is in the life of the world one which is most ripe, one without which not a single step forward in improvement in the life of men can be accomplished. The necessity of this alteration is obvious to every man who is free from preconceived theories. This alteration is not the work of Russia alone, but of the whole world. All the calamities of mankind in our time are connected with this condition. We, in Russia, are in the fortunate position that the great majority of our people, living by agricultural labor, do not recognize private property in land and desire and demand the abolition of this old abuse, and do not cease to express this desire.

But no one sees this, no one wants to see it!

Whence this dreadful perversity? Why do kind, good, intelligent men, of which there are many among the Liberals, Socialists, and Revolutionists, not excluding even Government officials—why do these men, desiring the people's welfare, not see the one thing they are in need of, that towards which they unceasingly strive, and without which they ceaselessly suffer? Why are they concerned instead with the most various things, the realization of which, without the realization of that which the people desire, can in no case contribute to their welfare? The whole of the activity of governmental as well as of anti-governmental servants of the people resembles that of a man who, whilst trying to help a horse stuck in a bog, sits in the cart and transfers from one place to another the load which is in the cart, imagining that he can thus help matters.

would be the people who lived in the finest houses and had most of everything that work produces? Yet, whether you took him to London or Paris or New York, or even to Burlington, he would find that those called the working people

were the people who lived in the poorest houses."[4]

(The same thing, I would add, takes place in a yet greater degree in the country. Idle people live in luxurious palaces, in spacious and fine abodes. The workers live in dark and dirty hovels.)

"All this is strange—just think of it. We naturally

despise poverty, and it is reasonable that we should. . . . Nature gives to labor, and to labor alone; there must be human work before any article of wealth can be produced; and in the natural state of things the man who toiled honestly and well would be the rich man, and he who did not work would be poor. We have so reversed the order of Nature that we are accustomed to think of the working man as a poor man.

. . . The primary cause of this is that we compel those who work to pay others for permission to do so. You may buy a coat, a horse, a house; there you are paying the seller for labor exerted, for something that he has produced, or that he has got from the man who did produce it; but when you pay a man for land, what are you paying him for? You are paying for something that no man has produced; you pay him for something that was here before man was, or for a value that was created, not by him individually, but by the community of which you are a part."[5]

(It is for this reason that the one who has seized the land and possesses it is rich, whereas he who cultivates it or works on its products is poor.)

"We talk about over-production. How can there be such a thing as over-production while people want? All these things that are said to be over-produced are desired by many people. Why do

[4] Ibid., Vol. IX., p. 202.

[5] Ibid., Vol. IX., pp. 202-203.

they not get them? They do not get them because they have not the means to buy them; not that they do not want them. Why have not they the means to buy them? They earn too little. When the great mass of men have to work for an average of $1.40 a day, it is no wonder that great quantities of goods cannot be sold.

"Now, why is it that men have to work for such low wages? Because if they were to demand higher wages there are plenty of unemployed men ready to step into their places. It is this mass of unemployed men who compel that fierce competition that drives wages down to the point of bare subsistence. Why is it that there are men who cannot get employment? Did you ever think what a strange thing it is that men cannot find employment? Adam had no difficulty in finding employment, neither had Robinson Crusoe; the finding of employment was the last thing that troubled them.

"If men cannot find an employer, why cannot they employ themselves? Simply because they are shut out from the element on which human labor can alone be exerted. Men are compelled to compete with each other for the wages of an employer, because they have been robbed of the natural opportunities of employing themselves; because they cannot find a piece of God's world on which to work without paying some other human creature for the privilege."[6]

"Men pray to the Almighty to relieve poverty. But poverty comes not from God's laws—it is blasphemy of the worst kind to say that; it comes from man's injustice to his fellows. Supposing the Almighty were to hear the prayer, how could He carry out the request so long as His laws are what they are? Consider, the Almighty gives us nothing of the things that constitute wealth; He merely gives us the raw material, which must be utilized by men to produce wealth. Does He not give us enough of that now? How could He relieve poverty even if He were to give us more? Supposing in answer to these prayers He were to increase the

[6] Ibid., Vol. IX., p. 204.

The features of both these activities are the same.

First, there is the dissolute bad life of the majority of these "servants," both of God and of the people. (Their calling themselves servants of God or of the people, according to their ideas, frees them from restricting themselves in their conduct.)

The second feature is the utter absence of interest, attention, or love towards that which they desire to serve. God, with these servants of His, has been and is only a banner, whilst in reality these servants of His did not seek communion with Him, did not know, or desire to know, Him. So also with many of the servants of the people—the people are only a banner and they, far from loving them, do not seek communion with them and do not know them, but in the depth of their souls look down upon them with contempt, disgust, and fear.

The third feature is that while they are concerned, the former with the service of one and the same God, the latter with the service of one and the same people, they not only disagree among themselves concerning the methods of their service, but pronounce the activity of all who do not agree with them as false and pernicious, and demand its compulsory suspension. Hence stakes, inquisitions, slaughters in the former case, and executions, imprisonments, revolutions, and manslaughters in the latter.

Finally, the chief and the most characteristic feature of the one and the other is their complete indifference, their absolute ignoring of that which the One they profess to serve has stated and is stating that He desires and demands. God, Whom they have served and are serving so zealously, has directly and clearly expressed, in that which they recognize as Divine revelation, that it is necessary to serve Him only by loving one's neighbor, by acting towards each other as one desires others to act towards himself. But they did not recognize this as the means of serving God; they demanded something quite different, that which they themselves invented and gave out for the demands of God. So likewise act the servants of the people—they do not at all recognize what the people desire

Astounding is the poverty of thought of these men, who do not think with their own minds, but only servilely repeat whatever is given forth bytheir European models; but still more astounding is the hardness of their hearts, their cruelty.

VI.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but inwardly ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt, xxiii. 27, 28).

There was a time when in the name of God and of true faith in Him, men were destroyed, tortured, executed, beaten in scores and hundreds of thousands. We, from the height of our attainments, now look down upon the men who did these things.

But we are wrong. Among us there are many such people; the difference lies only here—that those men of old did these things then in the name of God, and of His true service, whilst now those who commit the same evil among us do so in the name of "the people," "for the true service of the people." And as among the former there were men insanely self-convinced that they knew the truth, and there were others hypocrites taking up their position under the pretext of serving God, and there was a crowd without consideration following the more dexterous and bold, so also now those who do evil in the name of serving the people consist of men insanely self-convinced that they alone know the truth, of hypocrites and of the crowd. Much evil have the self-proclaimed servants of God done in their time, thanks to the teaching which they called Theology, but the servants of the people, thanks to the teaching which they call Science, if they have done less evil it is only because they have not yet had time to do it, but already on their conscience there lie rivers of blood and great divisions and exasperation among men.

power of the sun, or the virtue of the soil? Supposing He were to make plants more prolific, or animals to produce after their kind more abundantly? Who would get the benefit of it? Take a country where land is completely monopolized, as it is in most of the civilized countries, who would get the benefit of it? Simply the landowners. And even if God in answer to prayer were to send down out of the heavens those things that men require, who would get the benefit?

"In the Old Testament we are told that when the Israelites journeyed through the desert they were hungered, and that God sent manna down out of the heavens. There was enough for all of them, and they all took it and were relieved. But supposing that the desert had been held as private property, as the soil of Great Britain is held, as the soil even of our new States is being held; suppose that one of the Israelites had a square mile and another one had twenty square miles, and another one had a hundred square miles, and the great majority of the Israelites did not have enough to set the soles of their feet upon which they could call their own—what would become of the manna? What good would it have done to the majority? Not a whit. Though God had sent down manna enough for all, that manna would have been the property of the landholders, they would have employed some of the others perhaps to gather it up into heaps for them, and would have sold it to their hungry brethren. Consider it; this purchase and sale of manna might have gone on until the majority of Israelites had given all they had, even to the clothes off their backs. What then? Then they would not have had anything to buy manna with, and the consequences would have been that while they went hungry the manna would have lain in great heaps, and the landowners would have been complaining of the over-production of manna. There would have been a great harvest of manna and hungry people, just precisely the phenomenon that we see today."[7]

[7] Ibid., Vol. IX., pp. 205-206.

"I do not mean to say that even after you had set right this fundamental injustice there would not be many things to do; but this I do mean to say, that our treatment of land lies at the bottom of all social questions. This I do mean to say, that, do what you please, reform as you may, you never can get rid of widespread poverty so long as the element on which and from which all men must live is made the private property of some men. It is utterly impossible. Reform government; get taxes down to the *minimum*; build railroads, institute cooperative stores; divide profits, if you choose, between employers and employed—and what will be the result? The result will be that the land will increase in value—that will be the result—that and nothing else. Experience shows this. Do not all improvements simply increase the value of land the—price that some must pay others for the privilege of living?"[8]

The same, I shall add, do we unceasingly see in Russia. All landowners complain of the unprofitableness and expense of their estates whilst the price of the land is continually rising. It cannot but rise since the population is increasing, and land is a question of life and death for this population.

And therefore the people surrender everything they can, not only their labor, but even their lives, for the land which is being withheld from them.

III.

There used to be cannibalism and human sacrifices; there used to be religious prostitution and the murder of weak children and of girls; there used to be bloody revenge and the slaughter of whole populations, judicial tortures, quarterings, burnings at the stake, the lash; and there have been, within our memory, spitzruthens[9]

[8] Ibid., Vol. IX., pp. 204-205.

[9] Spitzruthens—sticks used by soldiers when one of them is condemned to run the gantlet, a punishment which the victim often did not survive. (Trans.)

One need only enter into the unceasing sufferings of millions of the people; the dying out from want of the aged, women, and children, and of the workers from excessive work and insufficient food—one need only enter into the servitude, the humiliations, all the useless expenditures of strength, into the deprivations, into all the horror of the needless calamities of the Russian rural population which all proceed from insufficiency of land—in order that it should become quite clear that all such measures as the abolition of censorship, of arbitrary banishment, etc., which are being striven after by the pseudo-defenders of the people, even were they to be realized, would form only the most insignificant drop in the ocean of that want from which the people are suffering.

But not only do those concerned with the welfare of the people, while inventing alterations, trifling, unimportant, both in quality and quantity, leave a hundred millions of the people in unceasing slavery owing to the seizure of the land—more than this, many of these people, of the most progressive among them, desire that the suffering of this people should, by its continual increase, drive them to the necessity after leaving on their way millions of victims, perished from want and depravity of exchanging their customary and happy, favorite and reasonable agricultural life for that improved factory life which they have invented for them.

The Russian people—owing to their agricultural environment, their love for this form of life, their Christian trend of character, owing to the circumstance that they, almost alone of all European nations, continue to be an agricultural nation and desire to remain such—are, as it were, providentially placed by historic conditions for the solution of what is called the labor question, in such a position as to stand in the front of the true progressive movement of all mankind. Yet this Russian people are invited by its fancied representatives and leaders to follow in the wake of the dying-out and entangled European and American nations, to become depraved, and to relinquish its own calling as quickly as possible in order to become like Europeans in general.

One can understand how European parasites living not directly by the labor of their own British, French or German working men, but by the labor of Colonial working men who produce the bread for which the others exchange their factory produce, may, without seeing the labor and sufferings of those working men who feed and support them, invent a future Socialistic organization for which they think they are educating mankind, and with unawakened conscience amuse themselves with electioneering campaigns, the strife of parties, parliamentary debates, the establishment and overthrow of ministeries, and every other kind of recreation which they call science and art.

The true bread supporters of these European parasites are the laborers they do not see, in India, Africa, Australia, and partly in Russia. But it is not so for us Russians ; we have no colonies where slaves invisible to ourselves feed us for our manufacturing produce. Our bread-winners, suffering, hungry, are always before our eyes, and we cannot transfer the burden of our iniquitous life to distant colonies that slaves invisible to us should feed us. Our sins are always before us.

And behold, instead of entering into the needs of those who support us, instead of hearing their cries and endeavoring to satisfy them, we, instead of this, under pretext of serving them, also prepare, according to the European sample, Socialistic organizations for the future, and in the present occupy ourselves with what amuses and distracts us, and appears to be directed to the welfare of the people out of whom we are squeezing their last strength in order to support us, their parasites.

For the welfare of the people we endeavor to abolish the censorship of books, arbitrary banishments, and to organize everywhere schools, common and agricultural, to increase the number of hospitals, to cancel passports and monopolies, to institute strict inspection in the factories, to reward maimed workers, to mark boundaries between properties, to contribute through banks to the purchase of land by peasants, and much else.

and slavery, which have also disappeared. But if we have outlived these dreadful customs and institutions, this does not prove that there do not exist institutions and customs among us which have become as abhorrent to enlightened reason and conscience as those which have in their time been abolished and have become for us only a dreadful remembrance. The way of human perfecting is endless, and at every moment of historical life there are superstitions, deceits, pernicious and evil institutions, already outlived by men and belonging to the past; there are others which appear to us in the far mists of the future; and there are some which we are now living through and whose overliving forms the object of our life. Such in our time is capital punishment and all punishment in general. Such is prostitution, such is flesh-eating, such is the work of militarism, war, and such is the nearest and most obvious evil, private property in land.

But as people never suddenly freed themselves from all the injustices which had become customary, nor even did so immediately after the more sensitive individual had recognized their iniquity, but advanced only by leaps, halts, resumings, and again new leaps towards freedom, similar to the struggles of childbirth, so has it been of late with the abolition of slavery, and so is it now with private property in land.

The evil and injustice of private property in land have been pointed out a thousand years ago by the prophets and sages of old. Later progressive thinkers of Europe have been oftener and oftener pointing it out. With special clearness did the workers of the French Revolution do so. In latter days, owing to the increase of the population and the seizing by the rich of a great quantity of previously free land, also owing to general enlightenment and the spread of humanitarianism, this injustice has become so obvious that not only the progressive, but even the most average people cannot help seeing and feeling it. But men, especially those who profit by the advantages of landed property—the owners themselves, as well as those whose interests are connected with

this institution are so accustomed to this order of things, they have for so long profited by it, have so much depended upon it, that often they themselves do not see its injustice, and they use all possible means to conceal from themselves and others the truth which is disclosing itself more and more clearly, and to crush, extinguish, and distort it, or, if these do not succeed, to hush it up.

Characteristically was this the fate of the activity of the remarkable man who appeared towards the end of last century—Henry George—who devoted his great mental powers to the elucidation of the injustice and cruelty of landed property and to the indication of the means of correcting this evil by the help of the state(?) organization now existing among all nations. He did this in his books, articles, and speeches with such extraordinary power and lucidity that no man without preconceived ideas could, after reading his books, fail to agree with his arguments, and to see that no reforms can improve the condition of the people until this fundamental injustice be destroyed, and that the means he proposes for its abolition are rational, just, and expedient.

But what has happened? Notwithstanding that at the time of their appearance the English writings of Henry George spread very quickly in the Anglo-Saxon world, and did not fail to be appreciated to the full extent of their great merit, it very soon appeared that in England, and even in Ireland, where the crying injustice of private landed property is particularly manifest, the majority of the most influential educated people, notwithstanding the conclusiveness of Henry George's arguments and the practicability of the remedy he proposes, opposed his teaching. Radical agitators like Parnell, who at first sympathized with George's scheme, very soon shrank from it, regarding political reforms as more important. In England almost all the aristocrats were against it, also, among others, the famous Toynbee, Gladstone, and Herbert Spencer—that Spencer who in his "Statics" at first most categorically asserted the injustice of landed property, and then, renouncing this view of his, bought up the old editions of his writings in order to eliminate

released from the enclosure and set free in the pastures. But the very men who feed themselves on the milk of these cows have set around the enclosure plantations of mint, of plants for dyeing purposes, and of tobacco; they have cultivated flowers, laid out a racecourse, a park, and a lawn tennis ground, and they do not let out the cows lest they spoil these arrangements. But the cows bellow, get thin, and the men begin to be afraid that the cows may cease to yield milk, and they invent various means of improving the condition of these cows. They erect sheds over them, they introduce wet brushes for rubbing the cows, they gild their horns, alter the hour of milking, concern themselves with the housing and treating of invalid and old cows, they invent new and improved methods of milking, they expect that some kind of wonderfully nutritious grass they have sown in the enclosure will grow up, they argue about these and many other varied matters, but they do not, cannot—without disturbing all they have arranged around the enclosure—do the only simple thing necessary for themselves as well as for the cows—to wit, the taking down of the fence and granting the cows their natural freedom of using in plenty the pastures surrounding them.

Acting thus, men act unreasonably, but there is an explanation of their action; they are sorry for the fate of all they have arranged around the enclosure. But what shall we call those people who have set nothing around the fence, but who, out of imitation of those who do not set free their cows, owing to what they had arranged around the enclosure, also keep their cows inside the fence, and assert that they do so for the welfare of the cows themselves?

Precisely thus act those Russians, both Governmental and anti-Governmental, who arrange for the Russian people, unceasingly suffering from the want of land, every kind of European institution, forgetting and denying the chief thing; that which alone the Russian people require—the liberation of the land from private property, the establishment of equal rights on the land for all men.

of the Church from the State, cooperative associations, future communalization of the implements of work, and, above all, with representative government—that same representative government which has long existed in European and American States, but whose existence has not in the slightest contributed, nor does now contribute, not only to the solution but even to the raising of that one land problem which solves all difficulties. If Russian political workers do speak about land abuse, which they for some reason call the *agrarian question*—possibly thinking that this silly word will conceal the substance of the matter—they speak of it, not in the sense that private landed property is an evil which should be abolished, but in the sense that it is necessary in some way or other, by various patchings and palliatives to plaster up, hush up, and pass over this essential, ancient, and cruel, this obvious and crying injustice, which is awaiting its turn for abolition not only in Russia, but in the whole world.

In Russia, where a hundred million of the masses unceasingly suffer from the seizure of the land by private owners, and unceasingly cry out about it, the position of those people who are vainly searching everywhere but where it really is, for the means of improving the condition of the people, reminds one exactly of that which takes place on the stage, when all the spectators see perfectly well the man who has hidden himself, and the actors themselves ought to see him, but pretend they do not, intentionally distracting each other's attention and seeing everything except that which it is necessary for them to see, but which they do not wish to see.

V.

People have driven a herd of cows, on the milk products of which they are fed, into an enclosure. The cows have eaten up and trampled the forage in the enclosure, they are hungry, they have chewed each other's tails, they low and moan, imploring to be

from them all that he had said concerning the injustice of landed property.

In Oxford during George's lectures the students organized hostile manifestations, while the Roman Catholic party regarded George's teaching as positively sinful and immoral, dangerous, and contrary to Christ's teaching. Also the orthodox science of political economy revolted against George's teaching. Learned professors from the height of their superiority refuted his teaching without understanding it, chiefly because it did not recognize the fundamental principles of their imaginary science. The Socialists were also inimical, recognizing as the most important problem of the day not the land problem, but the complete abolition of private property.

The chief weapon against the teaching of Henry George was that which is always used against irrefutable and self-evident truths. This method, which is still being applied in relation to George, was that of hushing up. This hushing up was effected so successfully that a member of the British Parliament, Labouchere, could publicly say, without meeting any refutation, that "he was not such a visionary as Henry George. He did not propose to take the land from the landlords and rent it out again. What he was in favor of was putting a tax on land values."[10] That is, whilst attributing to George what he could not possibly have said, Labouchere, by way of correcting these imaginary fantasies, suggested that which Henry George did indeed say.

Thanks to the collective efforts of all those interested in defending the institution of landed property, the teaching of George, irresistibly convincing in its simplicity and clearness, remains almost unknown, and of late years attracts less and less attention.

Here and there in Scotland, Portugal, or New Zealand he is recalled to mind, and among hundreds of scientists there appears one who knows and defends his teachings. But in England and the

[10] The Works of Henry George, Vol. X.. p. 516.

United States the number of his adherents dwindles smaller and smaller; in France his teaching is almost unknown; in Germany it is preached in a very small circle, and is everywhere stifled by the noisy teaching of Socialism.

IV.

People do not argue with the teaching of George, they simply do not know it. (And it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree.)

If people refer to this teaching they do so either in attributing to it that which it does not say, or in re-asserting that which has been refuted by George, or else, above all, they reject it simply because it does not conform with those pedantic, arbitrary, superficial principles of so-called political economy which are recognized as indisputable truths.

Yet, notwithstanding this, the truth that land cannot be an object of property has become so elucidated by the very life of contemporary mankind, that in order to continue to retain a way of life in which private landed property is recognized, there is only one means—not to think of it, to ignore the truth, and to occupy oneself with other absorbing business. So, indeed, do the men of our time.

Political workers of Europe and America occupy themselves for the welfare of their nations in various matters; tariffs, colonies, income taxes, military and naval budgets, socialistic assemblies, unions, syndicates, the election of presidents, diplomatic connections—by anything save the one thing without which there cannot be any true improvement in the condition of the people—the reestablishment of the infringed right of all men to use the land. Although in the depth of their souls political workers of the Christian world feel—cannot but feel—that all their activity,the commercial strife with which they are occupied, as well as the military strife in which they put all their energies—can lead to

nothing but a general exhaustion of the strength of nations; still they, without looking forward, give themselves up to the demand of the minute, and, as if with the one desire to forget themselves, continue to turn round and round in an enchanted circle out of which there is no issue.

However strange this temporary blindness of the political workers of Europe and America, it can be explained by the fact that in Europe and America people have already gone so far along a wrong road that the majority of their population is already torn from the land (in America it has never lived on the land), but lives either in factories or by hired agricultural labor, and desires and demands only one thing—the improvement of its position as hired laborers. It is therefore comprehensible that to the political workers of Europe and America—listening to the demands of the majority—it may seem that the chief means for the improvement of the position of the people consists in tariffs, trusts, and colonies, but to the Russian people in Russia, where the agricultural population composes 80 per cent. of the whole nation, where all this people request only one thing—that opportunity be given them to remain in this state—it would seem it should be clear that for the improvement of the position of the people something else is necessary.

The people of Europe and America are in the position of a man who has gone so far along a road which at first appeared the right one, but which the further he goes the more it removes him from his object, that he is afraid of confessing his mistake. But the Russians are yet standing before the turning of the path and can, according to the wise saying, "ask their way while yet on the road."

And what are those Russian people doing who desire, or, at all events, say they desire, to organize a good life for the people? In everything they slavishly imitate whatever is being done in Europe and America.

For the arrangement of a good life for the people they are concerned with the freedom of the Press, religious tolerance, liberty of union, tariffs, conditional punishment, the separation