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(Peter V. Verigin's Разсказъ) A Story. ⁶⁷⁵

Beloved brother in the Lord, Jesus Christ, I wish to converse with you, dear brother! In what does your faith consist?

I confess the law of my Lord Jesus Christ and understand it not externally, but internally. When we live in the will of the Father, our Lord God, then the Lord also lives in us, giving us life, sifting our reason with His radiant light. | Those who wish to fulfill the will of the Heavenly Father must subjugate their hearts under the authority of the Lord. The Lord says to us: "you were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings ⁶⁷⁶." "Know the truth, and the truth will set you free ⁶⁷⁷." Undertaking this great task, we must fully realize that our sincerity may be subjected to cruel trials; this task of ours may bring upon us insults, offenses, sufferings, even death. We face: misunderstanding, false interpretations, slander; against us a storm of pride, pharisaism, ambition, cruel rulers, authorities must rise—all this may unite to destroy us; thus they dealt with our Lord God, Jesus Christ, whom we strive to imitate to the best of our ability. But we must not be frightened by these horrors, we place our hope not in people, but in the almighty Lord. If we renounce human intercession, what can support us, if not faith alone, which conquers the whole world? We will not be surprised by the trials to which we are subjected, but will rejoice that we have been deemed worthy to share in the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of all this, we commend our souls to God and believe what is said, that he who

Footnotes for Page 285:

⁶⁷⁵ This "story" was composed by the Doukhobor leader Peter Vasilyevich Verigin. The Canadian Doukhobors, although they did not include it in their psalms, extremely value it as a teaching. They have told me more than once that they consider this story, together with the psalm "From the General Views of Christians of the Universal Brotherhood"—(see psalm 144, "The Book of Life" p. 153), to be the main foundations of their current worldview. Note by V. V. B. [Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich]

⁶⁷⁶ See "The First Epistle to the Corinthians," chapter 7, verse 23. Note by V. B. B.

⁶⁷⁷ Cf. "The Gospel** of John, chapter 8, verse 32. Note by V. B. B.

These two texts stand as an epigraph on Leo N. Tolstoy's work "The Kingdom of God Is Within You." Note by V. B. B.

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leaves his house, brothers and sisters, father, or mother, or children, or his possessions for the sake of the Lord, will receive a hundred times more, and in the kingdom of heaven will inherit eternal life. And so, firmly believing, despite all that may arm itself against us, in the undoubted triumph of truth, we place our hope in the reason and conscience of humanity, and most of all in the power of God, to which we must entrust ourselves ⁶⁷⁸. For a Christian to promise obedience to men or human laws is the same as a worker hired by a master also promising to do everything that other, strange people order him to do. One cannot serve two masters. A Christian is freed from human power by recognizing over himself only one authority—God and the law which was revealed to him by the Lord, Jesus Christ. He is conscious of it within himself and submits only to it ⁶⁷⁹ *). Human life consists of doing not one's own will, but the will of God. A Christian may be subjected to external violence and may be deprived of bodily freedom, and may be free from his passions. He who commits sin is a slave to sin ⁶⁸⁰. A Christian is humble and meek, argues with no one, attacks no one, uses violence against no one, but on the contrary, himself unquestioningly endures violence ⁶⁸¹ and thereby conquers evil ⁶⁸².

Footnotes for Page 286:

⁶⁷⁸ Starting from the words: "Undertaking this great task, we must fully realize etc." — up to the footnote is an almost literal excerpt from the book by L. N. Tolstoy "The Kingdom of God Is Within You" (see p. 3 of this book, edition by Vladimir Chertkov. Purleigh, 1898). This entire excerpt belongs to the famous declaration by [William Lloyd] Garrison, published in 1838 in Boston (America) and titled: "Declaration of Sentiments adopted by the Peace Convention, held in Boston, September 18, 19 and 20, 1838". This "declaration" is quoted in full by L. N. Tolstoy in his aforementioned book. Note by V. B. B.

⁶⁷⁹ Starting from the words: "For a Christian to promise obedience to men etc." up to this point — is a literal excerpt from L. N. Tolstoy's book "The Kingdom of God Is Within You" (see p. 79, first column, of the aforementioned edition). Note by V. B. B.

⁶⁸⁰ Starting from the words "A Christian may be subjected to external violence etc." — up to this place, — is a literal excerpt from the same booklet by L. N. Tolstoy (see "The Kingdom of God Is Within You" p. 78, second column of the same edition). Note by V. B. B.

⁶⁸¹ From the words: "A Christian is humble and meek etc." to the words "endures violence" — is a literal excerpt from the same work by L. N. Tolstoy. (See "The Kingdom of God Is Within You" p. 78, second column of the same edition). Note by V. B. B.

⁶⁸² This "story" was previously published by us in "Materials for the History and Study of Russian Sectarianism". **Issue I (Christadelphians), Hants, England, published by "Free Word"**, p. 12), and later reprinted in our article "On the History of Russian Doukhoborism" (See "Obrazovanie" [Education]**, No. 10, October, 1905, p. 170). Note by V. B. B.

PSALM 144.

From the General Views of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood ³³⁰

1. The members of the community respect and love God as the origin of all that exists.
2. They respect the dignity and honor of a person, both in themselves and in their fellow beings.
3. The members of the community look upon all that exists with love and admiration. They strive to educate children in this direction.
4. By the word God, the members of the community understand: the force of love, the force of life, which gave beginning to all that exists.
5. The world consists of movements; all things strive toward perfection and through this process try to unite with their origin, as if to return the ripened fruit to the seed.
6. In all that exists in our world, we see transitional stages to perfection, for example, it begins with the stone, moves to plants, then to animals, the ultimate of which can be considered man in the sense of life, in the sense of a thinking creation.
7. To destroy, to demolish anything whatsoever, the members of the Community consider reprehensible. In every single object there is life, and consequently God, especially in man. To deprive a human of life is in no case permissible.
8. The members of the community, in their conviction, allow the fullest freedom to all that exists, including human existence. Any organization established by violence is considered unlawful.
9. The main basis of human existence is the energy of thought, reason. Material nourishment consists of: air, water, fruits, and vegetables.
10. A communal life in humanity is permitted, one based on the law of moral force, the rule of which is: what I do not wish for myself, that I should not wish for another. ⁸³

Glory to our God.

FOOTNOTES & PUBLICATION INFORMATION:

³³⁰ This psalm was printed by us in "Free Thought", No. 8, 1900. Publication of the Swiss department of "Free Word", edited by P. I. Biryukov. Monthly Review. Geneva. Furthermore, this psalm was included in the first issue of "Materials for the History and Study of Sectarianism" — "Letters of the Doukhobor Leader Petr Vasilyevich Verigin". Edited by Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich. (See pp. 93–94). (Publ. "Free Word". England). In the article by Vl. Olkhovsky "On the History of Russian Doukhoborism" ("Obrazovanie", issues 10, 11, 12, 1905), it is also given in full. Note by V. B. B.

⁸³ When I asked the Canadian Doukhobors which psalms from the entire "Book of Life" they consider the most important, clearly expressing their worldview, they more than once answered

me: "From the General Views of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood" and "Beloved brother in the Lord Jesus Christ..." (see psalm 384 of the "Book of Life"). Both belong to the pen of the leader of the large party of Doukhobors, Petr Vasilyevich Verigin. These works should be dated to 1895–96. The Doukhobor I. E. Konkin in his letter of December 12, 1896, writes: "we consider these ten points as the basic rule of Christian life, or the ten commandments of the 'New Testament'." Note by V. B. B.