



AUTHOR'S PREFACE



“They that take the sword shall perish with the sword.”

NEARLY fifteen years ago the census in Moscow evoked in me a series of thoughts and feelings which I expressed, as best I could, in a book called *What Must We Do Then?* Towards the end of last year (1899) I once more reconsidered the same questions, and the conclusions to which I came were the same as in that book. But, as I think that during these fifteen years I have reflected on the questions discussed in *What Must We Do Then?* more quietly and minutely, in relation to the teachings at present existing and diffused among us, I now offer the reader new considerations leading to the same replies as before. I think these considerations may be of use to people who are honestly trying to elucidate their position in society, and to clearly define the moral obligations flowing from that position. I therefore publish them.

The fundamental thought, both of that book

and of this, is the repudiation of violence. That repudiation I learnt, and understood, from the Gospels, where it is most clearly expressed in the words, "It was said to you, An eye for an eye," . . . *i.e.* you have been taught to oppose violence by violence, but I teach you: turn the other cheek when you are struck; *i.e.* suffer violence, but do not employ it. I know that the use of those great words—in consequence of the unreflectingly perverted interpretations alike of Liberals and of Churchmen, who on this matter agree—will be a reason for most so-called cultured people not to read this article, or to be biassed against it; but nevertheless I place those words as the epigraph of this work.

I cannot prevent people who consider themselves enlightened, from considering the gospel teaching to be an obsolete guide to life—a guide long outlived by humanity. But I can indicate the source from which I drew my consciousness of a truth which people are yet far from recognising, and which alone can save men from their sufferings. And this I do

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YE have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.—Matt. v. 38 ; Ex. xxi. 24.

But I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—Matt. v. 39.

And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.—Matt. v. 40.

Give to every one that asketh thee ; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.—Luke vi. 30.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.—Luke vi. 31.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common.—Acts ii. 44.

And Jesus said, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather : for the heaven is red.—Matt. xvi. 2.

And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day : for the heaven is red and lowring. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to discern the face of the heaven ; but ye cannot discern the signs of the times.—Matt. xvi. 3.

The system on which all the nations of the world are acting, is founded in gross deception, in the deepest ignorance, or a mixture of both : so that under no possible modification of the principles on which it is based can it ever produce good to man ; on the contrary, its practical results must ever be to produce evil continually.—ROBERT OWEN.

We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour ; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided, but the men :—Divided into mere segments of men—broken into small fragments and crumbs of life ; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough

to make a pin or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail. Now it is a good and desirable thing, truly, to make many pins a day; but if we could only see with what crystal sand their points were polished,—sand of human souls,—we should think there might be some loss in it also.

Men may be beaten, chained, tormented, yoked like cattle, slaughtered like summer flies, and yet remain in one sense, and the best sense, free. But to smother their souls within them, to blight and hew into rotting pollards the suckling branches of their human intelligence, to make the flesh and skin . . . into leathern thongs to yoke machinery with,—this is to be slave-masters indeed. . . . It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which is leading the mass of the nations into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. Their universal outcry against wealth, and against nobility, is not forced from them either by the pressure of famine or the sting of mortified pride. These do much and have done much in all ages; but the foundations of society were never yet shaken as they are at this day.

It is not that men are ill-fed, but that they have no pleasure in the work by which they make their bread, and therefore look to wealth as the only means of pleasure.

It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. Never had the upper classes so much sympathy with the lower, or charity for them, as they have at this day, and yet never were they so much hated by them.—From *The Stones of Venice*, by John Ruskin, vol. ii. chap. vi. § 13-16.