

ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN RUSSIA.

OPEN LETTER

TO

THE HEAD OF THE RUSSIAN SYNOD

PRIVY COUNCILLOR

CONSTANTINE POBIEDONOSIEFF

BY

HERMANN DALTON.

„Intolerance is a tyrant who depopulates
Countries, Tolerance a tender mother who
fosters them and renders them prosperous.“

Frederic the Great.



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Sir. I address this open letter to you later than I had originally intended. — Its object being to answer the several statements published by you, about the present attitude of the Russian Church towards the Lutheran Church in the Baltic Provinces, it seemed right to postpone its appearance until after the arrival of the expected reply from the Swiss Evangelical Alliance to whom your principal document was addressed. This has now been received, and from the nature of its contents, the burning interest of which could not fail to enlist the warm sympathy of united Christendom, it has speedily made its way throughout the Press of the whole world. In its tone the pain and indignation are perceptible of men who, fortified by the Word of God, praying rather than appealing to the Imperial Throne for liberty of conscience on behalf of their oppressed fellow believers, receive in reply a second academical dissertation, similar to that with which you favored them more than a year ago. — The reply further sets forth the gulf existing between their standpoint and yours, and then appeals, in the name of the eternal, sacred and unassailable rights of Divine Truth against that violation of liberty of conscience in the Baltic Provinces to which, antagonistic as it is to the express injunctions of Christ, the entire

world, in these days of publicity, is forced to bear astonished and indignant witness.

The situation which, more than a year ago, called forth this cry for help from the Evangelical Alliance, remains unchanged. With inexorable purpose and unflinching energy the work is being carried out. It becomes therefore more and more necessary to throw light upon the principles by which you profess to be actuated. — Protests, it is true, have not been wanting; but, in considering them, you were able to object with some show of justice that they came from strangers, foreigners, unfamiliar with the special relations between Church and State in your country, and exhibiting in their criticisms no kindly feelings towards Russia. When I first acquainted you with my intention of not withholding a personal criticism of your publication, you did not try to dissuade me from it; it would, you remarked, be that of an impartial mind. I gratefully acknowledge this, it being indeed my earnest wish to judge with impartiality. Yet, do not consider me presumptuous, if I lay claim to something more, on which I must insist most strongly, viz: a sincere and ardent affection for Russia. You know that that country is not my original home, but, having spent more than the half of my life there, in earnest and extensive work, I have come to consider it a second home. A German Protestant Christian, while preserving with fidelity the national characteristics given him by God, cannot live and work for many years in another country and among another people without feeling as one of them, and, in proportion to the modest measure

of power accorded to the individual, working with devotedness for the general welfare. There is a sacred joy in approaching by sympathy the heart and soul of the people, amongst whom God has bid us pitch our tent; favored is that man whose eye can see and whose heart can understand the characteristics of a sister Church and recognize and appreciate her legitimate position in God's kingdom. Such joy has ever been mine, and for such favor conferred upon me, I will praise the Lord, while I have my being. — The two circumstances of my being neither a son of the Baltic soil nor belonging to that section of the Protestant Church, against which your action is principally directed, may possibly lend greater weight to my utterances. You will rightly look upon them, not as the opinions of one attacked who tries to defend himself against violence, but of one, who, coming upon the scene, cannot see his brother ill-treated and quietly look on. — I have not forgotten that, after the terrible 1st of March (assassination of Emperor Alexander II), you complied with my wish of having a silver wreath removed from the grave of the murdered Emperor, although it had been dedicated to him by the inhabitants of an entire village, because the inscription on it was, to my mind, sacrilegious. You may remember at that time wishing for a continuation of our conversation on the subject of Faith, to which I agreed, on condition of the great difference in our respective stations being set aside, and the subject being treated with the evangelical frankness of brother Christians. — I now express a similar wish, with, as I trust, the same readiness on

your part to accede to it, for, should such not be the case, I would be unwilling to waste a word. — In your letter to the President of the Swiss Central Committee of the Evangelical Alliance you refer to your Correspondence, recently published, with three different clergymen of the Swiss Reformed Church. By so doing, you invest that correspondence with increased importance and its contents attain the same level of intention and responsibility as your words to the Evangelical Alliance, the latter being the answer from a high placed confidential adviser of the Emperor of Russia, to a document addressed to his Sovereign.

At your own explicit suggestion therefore, I am not only justified, but in duty bound to subject all these important documents to equal scrutiny.

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The Evangelical Alliance having in its address to the Czar petitioned for liberty of conscience on behalf of the entire realm it was only to be expected that natural divergence of opinions would produce controversy on principles. In the reply however, you hasten to remove the question from the region of Theory to that of historical fact. Be it so. I am willing to follow the path indicated, History is an excellent teacher to the attentive pupil. In your consideration of History you take a high and hallowed ground. You see in a Providence guiding the destinies of peoples that sunshine which illuminates all History. It is also my earnest endeavour in this my chosen field of study to occupy the same high ground.

With ardent patriotism you believe yourself privileged to recognise God's voice calling your beloved Russia to her post of sentinel, to enable Europe to carry out her work of civilisation by means of Christianity. According to your view Russia's mission was to hold this responsible post, keeping two hemispheres in check, giving way to neither until the finger of God should indicate the moment in which East and West could obtain peace by the fusion of their Christian cultures. In truth a noble mission, which as you do not fail to add with heartfelt satisfaction, Russia, having accepted without hesitation or swerving has virtually fulfilled. You propose to offer proofs of this. Let us examine the ground on which they stand. Your commencement takes the world by surprise with what must be regarded as an astounding announcement that Russia was the bulwark against which the elemental force of Chazalen, Petschenegen and Bulgarian hordes, Tartar and Mongol swarms and the whole Mahometan world was finally broken, although the West again and again assailed them in the vain endeavour to protect Europe against their inroads. Not a few seriously minded Russian historians have read this assertion with shame, their careful and conscientious studies seeming to them worthy of a better fate than to be challenged in so painful a manner before the whole world by the daring assertions of a leading statesman; and that in a document purporting to be an answer from the Emperor himself!

Your country's myths lend no countenance to such audacious language. The Russian people retain a far

different memory of the fearful Tartar yoke. Where of yore stood the tents of the Golden Horde, a tale, the counterpart to that told by the ravens of the Kyffhaeuser in the ear of the German people now floats amid the ruins and warrior tombs (Kurganes). On the far-off Volga where in Sarai the Dsinghis-Khans, the Batus set up the seat of their suzerainty, where Russian princes lay prostrate before these tyrants, the imagination of the present inhabitants still sees a powerful Tartar Khan, Mamai, once the fearful scourge of Russia, dwelling in the mysterious depths of his mountain tomb, tending his golden steed on which to return one day for war and pillage.

Your historians equally decline to bear out your bold assertion. In spite of the comparative tolerance shown by the Mongols to every foreign creed and the exceptional favour accorded by the Tartar Khans to the Russian Church, outcome of a policy both mature and far-seeing; in spite of all this I say, your Church retains a far different, because truthful, — remembrance of those times of distress and terror. You cannot be ignorant of Bishop Philaret's description of the „Desolating of Russia by the Mongols“. He recognises in it a two-fold visitation of God: on the princes, for, in their ambitious dissensions being unsparing of the people, and on the people for being unfaithful to their duties. He declares that the Russian Church was entirely subjugated by the enemies of the name of Christ. Philaret cites two martyrs, St. Michael of Tschernigoff and Prince Roman of Raesan as preferring death to obeying a command of the Tartar

Khan to renounce their Lord. But that the Church accorded the crown of sanctity to these two heroes in the Faith is further proof that they were exceptional figures of light in those days of darkness, through which the Russian Church was doomed to pass.

Perhaps Legend may accord you what tradition and history refuse! But as on a former occasion, so I now declare that it is out of my power to accompany you on this path. Accustomed as I am to serious study of history, I do not even wish to do so.

Or is it possible that your surprising historical revelations came to you in the manner which Count Benkendorff in his day stamped as the correct method of creating Russian history? You know perhaps the answer given by that omnipotent Head of the secret Police to the noble Orloff when the latter ventured to justify the somewhat free remarks of Tschadaayeff on their beloved Russia. Benkendorf reproved him with the words: *Le passé de la Russie était admirable, son présent est plus que magnifique: quant à son avenir, il est au delà de tout ce que l'imagination la plus hardie se peut figurer; voilà, mon cher, le point de vue, dans lequel l'histoire de la Russie doit être conçue et écrite.*

According to your conviction, Russia has unhesitatingly and faithfully fulfilled the mission entrusted to her by God, and stood on the frontier of the East, protecting the West that the latter might peacefully develop its Christian culture. The Lighthouse casting its rays athwart the raging breakers of the Universe is in your eyes — and who would not consider it natural — the Ortho-

dox Church with its sacred flame. It is beyond the province of this paper to discuss this belief of yours. But the light in darkest night is apt to blind the eyes of the watchman. After having turned it for a time on the Tartar waves of war and tumult, you turn it quickly to the West and see here also storm and tempest clashing their waves against your watch tower. You see no longer a West carrying on the work of Christian culture under the ægis of Russia, but a world undermined by religious differences, a dark zone, now illumined by the flames of the Inquisition, now plunged in blackest night, as you recall the night of „St. Bartholomew“ and „Sicilian Vespers“ to our remembrance. And athwart the horror and conflicts of those centuries but one point of repose! Russia, in the unbroken independence of her natural strength, in the immutability and energy of her national feeling, nurtured in the faith, sanctified, nourished and strengthened at the Orthodox Church; Russia, whom alone Europe has to thank for her present assured existence. And you proceed to enquire of those among the thinking classes who are struck dumb by such assertions: *que serait devenue l'Europe elle-même, si la Russie avait servi d'arène aux passions, aux rivalités de toutes ces nationalités, de toutes ces confessions (of the West)?*

But let us leave the past. Although disputing your treatment of history, the sheer monstrosity of your deductions precludes all possibility of an understanding; while the subject itself does not immediately call for it. The spokesman of the Evangelical Alliance addressed the reigning Emperor of Russia, with an appeal for help in

pressing need. The Emperor, having entrusted you as Head of the Synod, with the answer, you were bound, first of all, to make a statement as to the actual situation. Although past experience has taught us to approach such statements of yours warily, yet we will once again make the attempt. It is just possible that your present exalted position as statesman, removing as it should, all obstacles to impartiality, may lend to your eye a keenness in considering the Present, which is wanting in the case of the receding Past.

We will not even allow ourselves to be discouraged by that astounding sentence at the commencement of your remarks on contemporaneous history, in which, with frank ingenuousness you declare the appearance in Russia of the two Western confessions, the Roman and the Protestant to have been simultaneous! This entirely original view must be put in the same category with your studies of the Past. I am now however about to consider your description of the present state of the Baltic Provinces, called forth by the petition of the Evangelical Alliance. And what an outrageously false picture do you draw of this very prominent part of the Russian Empire, and that, in a document purporting to answer before the expectant eyes of all Europe an appeal addressed to your Imperial Master. But more than this, in the very name of that Monarch of whom it is your just pride and boast that the well-being of His subjects, irrespective of nationality or faith, is the sole thought and care of His Majesty, whose interest extends to all and who regards religion as the highest good accorded

to man. Such Imperial confidence should have inspired you with awe resulting in reticence, lest a single ill-considered word should cast a shadow on the august figure, whose confidence in entrusting you with the answer to the document, demanded that in that answer the noble qualities you recognise in your Emperor should shine in unimpaired beauty. But now you make it difficult for the mildest to subdue indignation at being forced to witness a statesman of position heaping outrage upon outrage upon an entire class and upon the united Clergy of a prominent portion of the Realm, accompanied by proofs the worthlessness of which is self-evident. This statement I shall now proceed to prove. And you allow yourself to attack, from the security of an exalted position, while those attacked, who are your brethren in Christ, lie prostrate; condemned to silence, for you know full well, that the censure has for years permitted the Press of that portion of the Empire to publish attacks and insinuations, but not been chivalrous enough to allow them to defend themselves in the same arena.

In studying seven centuries of the history of an influential and favoured class and of the clergy of an established Church, there is naturally room for just criticism and censure all round. The classes you attack in the Provinces have given and still give cause for both, and there is no lack of either self-judgment or self-blame to be found among them. I possess numerous and touching proofs of the sincerity with which devout minds recognise in the present trying times, the chastening hand of their heavenly Father who in love corrects, and in

the rulings of His mysterious Providence visits the sins of the forefathers upon the children. Everywhere — however — those chastened by God are entitled to protection and pity. This universal and deeply rooted feeling which has its origin in Christian love and the acknowledgment that each and all of us are sinners, is regarded by the true Russian as a privilege and acted upon both heartily and freely. A man of the people cannot imagine himself treating those punished by the law otherwise than tenderly — with softened heart the peasant shares his last crust with the prisoner, however criminal, thus turning the dark path by which the felon is to reach the far off land of exile, into a highway illumined by the rays of loving pity.

In your document you give a deeply painful and depressing proof that you repudiate distinctly in the face of the world, this noble characteristic of your countrymen. Indeed you have the unenviable courage of hurling accusations from the secure vantage-ground of your exalted station upon the afflicted. In the fanaticism which dictates these accusations you do not shrink from reproaching in terms of disdain those unfortunate men who are condemned to silence, with filling Europe with lamentations. Do you not know that one deeply wounded is silent, the gaping wound speaks sufficiently? The repeated, both irritating and false foreign newspaper reports which wound us, who having found a second home in Russia love and gratefully acknowledge our debt to that country, are not to be traced to the instigation of the Baltic nobility nor the Lutheran Clergy. The cause of

the ill-feeling and objectionable articles alluded to is, according to the papers themselves, the measures adopted which are published, and reflected upon by the Russian press. The latter is also responsible for any disturbances of the peace of Protestant communities of the Interior, where sympathy cannot fail to go with the sufferings of the Lutheran Church in the Provinces, accounts of which penetrate to the most distant parts of Russia.

There is a report that you were called to account for the calumnies against the Baltic nobility and Lutheran Clergy, at the time that the parties so attacked and rendered objects of suspicion, had appealed to the Emperor and the highest courts. You are said to have replied that you had not meant so much as your words implied and that you spoke more with reference to the Past than the Present. In a country of restricted publicity there is wide room for rumours which find only too ready credence. I should therefore attach but small weight to this report, had not the fact of the complaint being formulated and your manner of meeting it become known to me from reliable sources. If your answer had any foundation, it casts a curious light on the Head of the Synod, as being familiar with Talleyrand's art of considering language accorded to man, only to enable him to hide his real meaning: while, even admitting this, a Christian is bound both by honour and duty, to give to the excuse, which contains a partial withdrawal of the words which caused so deep a wound, the same publicity accorded to the accusation. If the report is correct, the mischievous attack appeared in the organ of the Government. Act

as a Christian by according a place in the same paper to the extenuating explanation of your words. So long as this is not done you are held responsible by the tribunal of the public conscience for the words your accusation states so clearly.

You further state what I shall subjoin in the original; for fear of a translation incurring the charge of obscuring its tone and meaning: „Hélas, c'est à peu près sous des auspices semblables* que la Russie fut mise en présence du Luthéranisme dans la personne des anciens chevaliers de l'ordre teutonique qui lui avaient barré l'accès de la mer Baltique. Détruisant tout ce qui pouvait rappeler le Catholicisme, ces nouveaux convertis du Luthéranisme, barons et pasteurs ne se départirent pourtant d'aucun des avantages temporels qui leur en revenaient. Avec toute l'énergie propre à leur race, ils suivirent les traces de leurs devanciers, exerçant dans le pays un pouvoir arbitraire, excitant les populations lette

* The expression has reference to the action of the Romish Church in her relations with Russia. The latter is described as follows: „introduit par le Polonisme avec lequel il s'est identifié par malheur, le Catholicisme déclara une guerre implacable à l'orthodoxie, se mit à exterminer partout les éléments russes au nom de la domination polonaise, et sous l'égide de son drapeau, conduisit plus d'une fois les légions polonaises jusqu'au coeur de la Russie..... History has repeatedly confirmed isolated features of this account. The mistake in it which creates a current of party feeling dangerous alike to Russia and the Baltic Provinces is the false assumption that Germanism and Lutheranism in those provinces are as closely connected as once were Catholicism and Polonization, with the same aspirations and employing the same means to realize them. —

et finnoise contre la Russie, poursuivant l'orthodoxie comme le symbole de l'unité avec la Russie. Depuis lors, cette lutte traditionnelle continue, lutte pour la domination exclusive dans le pays, conduite par les descendants des chevaliers le Luthéranisme, comme avant lui le Catholicisme se sert dans ces provinces du drapeau de la foi pour masquer toute sorte d'entraves à la moindre tentative de rapprochement spirituel avec la Mère-Patrie de la part des indigènes, violant de son côté, la liberté de leur conscience, il jette en même temps des hauts cris sur la violence faite à la liberté (de la propagande) luthérienne, fait retentir l'Europe de ses lamentations, répand le trouble dans les plus paisibles communes luthériennes des autres parties de l'Empire, jette partout l'alarme dans l'esprit de ses coréligionnaires. . . .

To the amazement of all Europe, your words flow in a perfect torrent of denunciation against fellow subjects. The matter is so grave, that we do not care to dwell upon your historical inaccuracy in depicting Russia as: „barred in her access to the Baltic by Lutheranism in the persons of the ancient Knights.“ — But, in the name of our Common Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who and what gives you the right to accuse the Baltic Nobility and Protestant Clergy of treason such as exciting Letts and Finns against Russia, persecuting the State Church and desecrating the sanctity of their own faith by using it as a blind to mask ambitious and treasonable designs? — Once before, false witnesses appeared before Pilate to accuse our Lord of turning the People from their rulers. History repeats itself. Do now what your conscience

must dictate, and your accusations bind upon you as a Christian and man of honor; point out to the Provinces and the world at large, to whom the denunciations of an Imperial confidant have been made known, any one single instance since the annexation of Livonia and Esthonia by Peter the Great, or that of Courland by Catherine II. in which the nobility or clergy have failed in their ready allegiance to their Sovereign. Point out a single instance in which the two classes, treated with such opprobrium by you, have „illegally withstood the powers that be“. Their best and bravest sons have ever served both in the Russian army and civil Service, one and all with self-sacrificing patriotism heartily and cheerfully using their gifts or shedding their blood on hundreds of battlefields for the glory of Russia and her Sovereign. True it is that the men of the Provinces do not take much account of self-sacrifice. From their earliest childhood they are taught to regard duty towards Sovereign and Country as a matter of course. Each Emperor, from the time of Peter the Great to the present day has turned the loyalty of his Baltic subjects to good account and acknowledged it warmly. You alone and the clique surrounding you, possessing such immense influence, dare to cast suspicion upon the loyalty and to soil the untarnished shield of the men of the Baltic. You do not fear — with in truth no enviable courage, nor one which any gentleman would share with you — to accuse of high treason these trusty workers in Church and State. And this — as I am forced to repeat — in a public document answering an appeal addressed to the Emperor direct.

What the nobility and clergy have kept for decades — or we can now say, for almost 200 years, they have earnestly striven to impress upon the minds of the Letts and Esthonians. In a Protestant Community there are two means towards this, viz: preaching the Word of God, and school instruction. — Well then; mention any pulpit in the Provinces, in which the Protestant preacher has wrested the teachings of the Gospel; has not — rather — proclaimed distinctly the duty of a Christian to consist in giving to Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are God's; in submitting to the powers that be because they are of God, and that, not from fear of punishment, but for conscience's sake. — Accustomed as in Protestant Countries we are, to hear the word of God expounded with fervour and sobriety, all who receive that word obediently, resent bitterly the touching this most sacred point of conscience with so rude a hand.

The Protestant Church has ever regarded School teaching as appointed by God to be a trusty helper in their common task, and in the Baltic Provinces has been true to this conviction from the Reformation up to the present day. The local schools bear witness to the zeal, which both nobility and clergy bring to the duty of developing them. — Allow me to remind you of the words used by Katkoff — whom you so greatly respect — in speaking of them: „Russia will indubitably always support German habits and customs, as well as German Culture in these Provinces to the utmost. God forbid that we should destroy the system of instruction and education which

they share in common with the whole civilised world by any invasion of Vandalism, such — for instance — as reducing their public schools to the deplorably low level of our own institutions. What if the instruction at public Schools and Universities is conducted in German? A protest on our part would be false patriotism from which, thank God, we are free!”

Thanks to the thoroughly sound system of training, the Baltic Provinces can boast a set of students, not one of whom has been tainted by Nihilism. Of all Russian University towns, Dorpat alone, during the worst of the late agitations had no need of the repressive measures, resorted to in the case of the others. — This noble result of Protestant training is the crowning glory of the Provinces; it is further — in our eyes — a precious proof of that right-mindedness and thorough love of country, of which a people may be justly proud; a love not displayed by boastful protestations, but by seeking to reproduce itself in the whole rising generation. The schools of to-day in the Baltic Provinces are still in an admirable state of prosperity. In 1849 the Emperor Nicholas expressly placed them under the supervision of that nobility and clergy whom you attack so unfairly. — As long as this Imperial Command had weight, the schools were left undisturbed by intrigues „from which every school, if it is to prove a blessing should be carefully guarded. — The results were eminently satisfactory and you must allow me to dwell for a moment on them, and thus, to a certain extent find relief in the pleasing retrospection, from the pain caused by your insinuations

against men who for scores of years have been working so self-sacrificingly for a noble object. — With sincere pleasure we turn over the leaves of the statistical reports — the latest that of 1884 — which the members of the county council publish with painstaking care and precision. The accompanying Charts show many parishes, in which 90/100 % of the children attend school. The small province of Livonia from 1862 to 1880 built from its own resources 651 village school-houses and 43 parish school-houses. The former at a mean cost of 2178 roubles, the latter 3063 roubles. The work once begun was carried on with ever increasing vigour and pecuniary sacrifice. In 1868 the province voted 124,538 roubles towards the subvention of its schools, fifteen years later 409,980 roubles for the same object and this, note well, voluntarily. The sister province of Esthonia does not lag behind Livonia in zeal for the public welfare. In that province 81/83 % of children from 10 to 17 years of age frequent the schools.

The funds devoted to purposes of education in Esthonia are at the rate of 32 kopeks per head of the population, old and young inclusive. In the rest of Russia only 7 kopeks. In Esthonia there is one village school for every 546 inhabitants: In Livonia for every 711; as compared with 734 in Germany and 3210 in Russia proper (exclusive of the Baltic Provinces, Finland and the Caucasus).

It might seem invidious were I to draw further comparisons between the state of the schools in the Baltic provinces and the rest of Russia, or dwell upon the diffe-

rence in the respective influences of the Protestant Church and that of the Russian on the people committed to their charge. As a sincere friend of Russia I content myself with expressing heartfelt joy that, thanks to the sound educational system in the B. P. Russia, on this ground, ranks among those nations whose public schools are on the highest level. This offering laid upon the altar of a common fatherland is a blessing highly prized and appreciated at its real value by all who have the true interests of Russia at heart. Try whether it be possible to succeed in casting the faintest shadow of reproach in this sphere on either nobility or clergy, as endeavouring to excite the loyal well trained population against their Sovereign and his realm!

Among the further accusations which you bring against the nobility and clergy of the B. P. you include persecution of the Orthodox Church, as being the symbol of unity with Russia. It is a question whether you would suggest that the *nobility* and *clergy* consider the Orthodox Church as such or whether it is *you* who do so, and as a Russian feel yourself bound to treat as an enemy of your country those who are supposed to attack the Orthodox Church. The first supposition would force you to bring *proofs* of such imputed intrigues. Nobility and clergy must indeed have freed themselves from all German lines of thought and from the principles of their Protestant Mother Church could they entertain the illusion that the power and unity of a country are based upon the unity of its Church! What has it availed Spain to have tenaciously held to such unity from the

time of the Reformation? What benefit accrued to France from the sacrifice of the Huguenots to the Jesuits? Italy has under our own eyes attained unity solely through breaking with such unstatesmanlike traditions. Should it however be *you* who consider the Orthodox Church as the symbol of unity with Russia, you must have the courage to brand as equally severed from unity with her those millions of Raskolniki (old believers) who, in the past as in the present, are subjected to such cruel persecution in their native country, through their severance from the Orthodox Church. Do you seriously consider the millions of Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews, Mahometans and all the peoples of other faiths who in their incorporation with the Russian Empire have been promised tolerance for their respective confessions, as excluded from unity with Russia, a unity sealed by their blood on innumerable battle fields? By such a theory, more than a third of Russian subjects would be cast out, as was Hagar from the tents of Abraham. And, were this theory in truth valid, such a severance of nationality through diversity of creeds should find a counterpoise in a manner through which, hitherto, it has not made itself evident. Then should the inhabitants of the Caucasian mountains have been peacefully united to Russia, at a time, when in point of fact, they were sacrificing their life's blood in the effort to preserve their independence, then should the Greeks, Roumanians, Bulgarians and many other nationalities of to-day, be already united to Russia through community of faith.

In one part of your letter to three Swiss clergymen, you confess yourself conscious of the duty of not bringing accusations, which virtually point to high treason, against two classes of fellow subjects unless supported by proofs. You affirm that the intrigues of nobility and clergy in the B. P. are attested by public documents, convicting them of nothing less than turning the Lettish and Esthonian peasants from Russianism to Germanism. You cite, in proof of this, a passage from a sermon preached on the occasion of the opening of the Livonian Parliament more than twenty five years ago by General Superintendent Walther, a man held in the highest esteem by two successive Emperors as by all his fellow believers. You guarantee the accuracy of the following: „On Livonian soil there dare not, neither can there exist other elements than the German; here, there is neither Esthonian, Lett, Livonian, nor Russian, but solely German. The dominant faith must be the Lutheran, the dominant nationality the German.“ This is your textual reproduction.

The sermon lies before me; on the strength of which, I tell you to your face: neither in words or in sense is the passage you quote to be found in it! This astounding discovery at first paralysed me. Even now, after weeks and months, I cannot overcome the inexpressible pain produced by finding you, the confidant of the Emperor, the Head of the Synod pursuing so false a path in so serious a matter. I must openly confess, that I should have felt less pain had the incriminating sentence really been in the sermon, than to behold the

head of the Synod thus unmasked. The one would have been — in my eyes as in yours — an assertion in the highest degree criminal made by a man, who, however had in him the courage to bear the just punishment of his opinion. Whereas, as the facts stand, you by your falsehood give shameful proof to every Russian, as to the astonished eyes of the whole world, of how, in this country, official statements are fabricated and how facts which concern his realm are misrepresented to the Emperor by persons in whom he places unbounded confidence. Such a discovery would in most cases break off intercourse, for what man of honour would care to continue it? But the seriousness of the subject forces me to overcome my disinclination to continue my criticisms, levelled against the means employed to incriminate a loyal province in the eyes of the Emperor, by attacking her noblest sons and the fatal consequences such false witness must bring upon the Province and the whole Empire. I have great difficulty in refraining from branding the transparent inaccuracy of your quotation as a deliberate lie, I trust however to have found in the indirect source from which you draw it some slight extenuation of guilt. Still that very source should from the first have been suspected by a man of science and knowledge like yourself; whereas you have done your best to trouble it still further. You accept the incriminating sentence second-hand, though it would have been as easy for you then, as it is for me now, to get it at first-hand. The impure channel of your information was a journalistic notice on the subject of the sermon and that notice clearly intended to serve a

purely denunciatory purpose. You repeat, and that not even correctly, the journalist's invidious quotation and add the data by which you try to confirm the tendency of the sermon to outsiders. Such shameless disfigurement of a sentence and the consequent criminality require me to dwell upon it. I was at that time living in St. Petersburg in personal relations to some and in correspondence with others, of those whose names are mentioned below.

The General Superintendent who was so greatly respected by all, and to whom the Emperor was so well disposed, that he accorded him the exceptional dignity of a Protestant Bishop, preached the sermon you attack in the Church of St. Jacob, Riga on the 9th March 1864, before the assembled nobility and landed proprietors on the opening of Parliament. As to the form and contents of the sermon, I shall have several observations to make, but that is beside the question. Eight days later it appeared, sanctioned by the censure, without raising any remarks about its having been published in the ordinary manner. Two months later however, when it appeared at Moscow it produced a far different effect. The star of Katkoff was in the ascendant. That talented journalist had achieved his first and most splendid success. At the outbreak of the Polish insurrection, he, the fearless leader in the battle, had, through his paper revived the fainting spirits of his countrymen by exhorting to unconditional measures against the insurrectionists, thereby contributing in no small measure to the suppression of the rising. From that moment his words obtained in the eyes of those highest in authority a weight and import-

ance, such as had those of no previous journalist either in Russia or elsewhere, and this power became a determining and for Russian policy frequently a baneful one. This audacious Muscovite journalist resembled, to a certain extent, the powerful Corsican on the French Imperial throne, in that his victories did not end warfare, but only laid the foundation and furnished the instrumentality for fresh combats, fresh victories, in which patriotism was blended with insatiable ambition. Katkoff's words, which in that day determined the balance of public opinion, turned the combat this time against the Baltic Provinces, the password being given that those provinces, which from the time of their incorporation with Russia had neither withstood nor swerved from their allegiance to their Sovereign, were as guilty as Poland, and deserved like treatment. With whom this idea of desolating a whole country originated, must be reserved for further consideration; Katkoff adopted it and held to it with a tenacity born of purpose. For the carrying out of this new campaign this talented leader found a facile following among the men who, during the disastrous so called „Golowine“ period, having assisted in the attempt to carry out his policy, when this was fortunately and most timely over-ruled, had retired, sullen and disappointed to Moscow. With keenly attentive eyes, they now were watching the effect of the fresh tide of opinion. The decisive events, at that moment being enacted at St. Petersburg and their probable effects, could not pass unperceived by them. Count Bobrinsky was despatched in the character of a confidential Imperial dele-

gate to Livonia to enquire into the state of affairs in that province. Prince Paul Lieven had laid before the Emperor a petition from the Parliament, together with a memorial carefully drawn up, on the religious question in his native province Livonia and, after an exhaustive conversation with his Majesty, assured me that he felt convinced of its being the firm intention of the Sovereign to give a satisfactory solution to the urgent question. Now, the party men at Moscow knew to a certainty, that this impending solution would prove contrary to their views. A blow must be struck and that without delay. The sermon published two months previously and hitherto unnoticed, might, for want of a better arm, be made the instrument of attack. Intrepid both as warrior and journalist, the telling power of Katkoff's eloquence was successfully enlisted to solve the question he had set himself. The most gifted counsel for a prosecution could not have massed the points of impeachment more adroitly, cast lights and shadows more tellingly, by scarcely perceptible alterations and turnings, giving to the preacher's utterances a significance wholly foreign to them, than did Katkoff in the thrilling report on which to the Russian people he justified his attack. You, by quoting, in the sentence referred to above, this journalist's concocted statement have stamped it with the weight of a public document, and you have increased the deception by guaranteeing Katkoff's words as being those really used by the General Superintendent, while, as if this were not enough, you have overtrumped the journalist's misquotations by adding words of your own, which you

equally guarantee as being those of the preacher. Katkoff's words told and his attack was successful. From Moscow to St. Petersburg his bold speech, burning with patriotism, found an echo in all classes from lowest to highest. It demanded a sacrifice. That sacrifice was offered to the innumerable elements so adroitly irritated into a state of rancorous agitation. Such an offering is however always a dangerous one for the sacrificer, indicating perilous homage to the powers demanding it. Bishop Walther was requested to send in his resignation without delay. It is remarkable and a proof of how unwillingly the sacrifice was wrought, that in the Minister of the Interior's letter to the Governor General of the Provinces, confiding the execution of this order to him, altho' a confidential letter — its contents must have become known to *you* if they have become known to me — the point is twice insisted upon, that it is „*not the sermon itself*,“ but the „*unfavourable impression produced by it*“ which necessitates the government's action! The „impression“ produced by Katkoff's misrepresentations had, by the Minister's own admission been productive of serious inconvenience in connection with questions of more or less importance at that time occupying the government with regard to the Baltic Provinces. And yet more than this, the Minister in his letter bears testimony to the Bishop's personal high qualities and former services, to be acknowledged by the Emperor in an annuity equal in amount to his actual stipend: Even you must acknowledge that no Russian Emperor would have accorded so high a recognition of personal merit to a Lutheran

clergyman who had uttered from the pulpit a sentence so criminal as that you still dare to attribute to a man no longer alive to refute it.

The witness whom you, unasked, bring forward to justify your attack upon the nobility and clergy in the Baltic Provinces has brought you neither gain nor honour. Instead of exculpating, they have incriminated you. In spite of all your efforts you cannot elude the second witness with whom the Swiss Clergy confront you. The manly and outspoken testimony of the Russian nobleman enjoying the confidence of his Sovereign irritates you to the present moment, as is perceptible in your excited language. And indeed there is a sharp and glaring contradiction to your misrepresentations, conveyed in Count Bobrinsky's report to His Majesty as the result of the investigation conducted in his Emperor's name; the Count's ardent love both for Russia and her Orthodox Church being unquestioned even by you. The report is as follows: „Your Majesty, it has been painful to me as a member of the Orthodox Church as well as a Russian to witness the abasement of the Russian orthodoxy by the open revelation of this official fraud.* Not the sincere words of these unfortunate families who address your Majesty with the humble but fervent prayer to accord to them the right to confess the religion which is according

* The Count had previously in this report to the Emperor expressed his confirmed conviction that of the 140 000 „orthodox believers“ the number given by the official statistics of Livonia, probably hardly one tenth could be counted upon, as true believers.

to the conviction of their conscience; not these touchingly sincere expressions of feeling on their part have made so painful an impression upon me, as the fact, that this violence to the conscience and this official fraud known to everybody, should in the minds of all be indissolubly connected with Russia and orthodoxy."

Any one loving Russia must feel pain as well as shame at witnessing the manner in which you, the confidential servant of the Emperor, endeavours to weaken the above weighty testimony borne by another confidential servant of the same master and that in an open letter to foreign clergy disclosing to them and with them to the world at large, the humiliating fact that in this country the honour and word of high officials can be called in question by men of your station. It is, I assure you, no pleasant task to follow you along the zigzag path of insinuation, but it must be done to make known your manner of attacking even a Russian nobleman who does not share your views, dangerous as they are to your common country. To the Swiss clergy who, far off and unfamiliar with the circumstances and the persons believe your assertions, you represent Bobrinsky as a young and inexperienced man, unacquainted with the situation in the Baltic Provinces. In so doing, you entirely overlook the reflection that you cast upon the Emperor as lacking knowledge of character, at the very moment too when he was entrusting you with the all-important duty of training and educating the heir to the throne. Now, if I mistake not, Count Bobrinsky is the same age as yourself, if not a few years your senior. I know for certain, that at the time of his mis-

sion to the B. P. he was a man of 38 years of age. Neither was he inexperienced when the choice of the Emperor fell on him for this post. Two years later the Count's experience was acknowledged by his being raised to the high position of Minister of the Crown. As for his knowledge of the affairs of the Baltic Provinces, the report to the Emperor on the state of the Orthodox Church in Livonia bears brilliant witness to the result of a serious study of History, free from all party bias, such as *your* reports on the situation of the B. P. will never lay claim to.

You somewhat maliciously represent this „young inexperienced Count ignorant of the situation in the Provinces“ as a complaisant instrument in the hands of the nobility and clergy, seeing only what they shew him, hearing only what they tell him. Claiming an apparent intimacy with the subject, you proceed to show „what means had to be resorted to, to convince this delegate of the Emperor of the peasant's ardent desire to become Protestant again“. You add „it was not difficult to accomplish this“. Certainly not. It was only necessary to possess an eye to see and a heart to understand and honour this people's cry for liberty of conscience, their sigh for permission to confess our Lord before men in that form of faith in which they had been accustomed from childhood to recognise the revelation of Himself to His people, in short to listen to that voice of the soul which is from God. But the phrase as implied above by you had no such purity of intention. Rather you would suggest by it, the ease with which op-

posite facts can be wrested to bolster up previous assertion. Gifts are unequally distributed, on the measure of their distribution depends the ease or difficulty of a task. But, both friends and enemies of the nobility and clergy of the Provinces agree on one point, viz: that both accused classes possess a minimum degree of talent and capacity for a task, in the execution of which no small amount of cunning and craft, neither scrupulous nor choice in the means they employ must be taken for granted. Enemies, whose opinion would be most likely to meet with your approval, base their view upon the want of dexterity and proud obstinacy of the inhabitants, such as is frequently found in privileged classes who take a pride in their ancient rights, the more so where national characteristics foster such feelings. It is interesting although saddening to notice how you insist on the ease of the task supposed to be undertaken by the Baltic nobility in working on the credulity of the Russian Count. He is conducted to two of the most disaffected districts; there he beholds masses of people weeping, lamenting and praying for permission to return to the Lutheran *Faith* („*Church* would be the most appropriate term“ you add, as they had not been robbed of their *Faith* two years previously when they left the Lutheran for the Russian Church) Count Bobrinsky however fails to perceive that the masses of persons brought before him are under constant supervision of a District superintendent (chosen from the ranks of the nobility) who alone knows how far the petitions of the people correspond to their real wishes and necessities, and in how far the scene is artificially put on the stage. This is your version of

how the Count allowed himself, and through him his sovereign, to be deceived. This is the light in which you expose your native country to an astonished Europe, as if, in 1864 a repetition were possible, while it would be infinitely more discreditable, of the deceit used by Potemkin towards the Empress of that day, in the matter of the so-called „shifting villages“ moved from station to station during her progress through the Crimea. — Did the report of Count Bobrinsky lend the least countenance to such an exposure.? —

It is in print and as easy to procure, as your version of the events. In words frank, unreserved, truthful and therefore noble the Russian Count reports to his Imperial master — and there must be overwhelming proofs of duplicity before the words of a Russian to his Emperor can be doubted — that he had visited those two districts in Livonia from which most petitions from professed orthodox believers had previously been proffered and where, in particular, a „disinclination for baptism and the reception of Holy Communion according to the orthodox ritual had been shown“. Count Bobrinsky therefore did not let himself be led about blindfold, but as a man of ripened experience set on the faithful execution of the Emperor's commission, chose of his own free will those districts most interested in the question. Neither did he interview „masses of the people“, held in hand by the nobility, which latter „alone knew how the scene was put on the stage“. As if he had foreseen and intended to contradict such insinuations he insists in his report upon the circumstance of having summoned a limited number of persons from each parish and district,

of his having nowhere treated with the mass of the people, but of his having admitted them to his presence by sixes at a time, and in each instance conferred with them in presence of the Russian priest and the Superintendent of the District. How easy it would have been for the Russian priest of each locality to warn this „young, inexperienced envoy of the Emperor who had no knowledge of Baltic affairs“ against falling into the artfully laid trap set for him by the treacherous Baltic nobility and their equally treacherous accomplices the Lutheran clergy. You must be astonished that from some inexplicable cause no such warning should have escaped these sole witnesses of the interview.

As a former student of law and as one who in the position of senator at Moscow made jurisprudence his favourite study you seem to have felt that in spite of your disparaging judgment on the Imperial envoy you had failed to sufficiently weaken or shake his weighty testimony. You therefore look around for a counter witness and discover one in the former Archbishop of Riga, Platon. The latter has indelibly impressed his memory on the inhabitants of the Provinces. The way in which he discharged his pastoral duties may be best revealed to strangers by extracts from a pamphlet written by him and published in Esthonian and Lettish and carefully circulated among the Lutherans. In this little tract is stated: „Cursed is he who does not accept and hold fast, nor believe and preach the doctrines of the Greek Church, but who contradicts them, as do the Lutherans.“ It is both interesting and instructive to follow the lawyer-

like dexterity with which you confront the two witnesses making each speak or keep silence as it suits your purpose. We must not however allow ourselves to be led astray by your ingenuity, but at the risk of dwelling too much on one point of the subject must follow you carefully along the tortuous path you have chosen. You give no extracts from Count Bobrinsky's report, not even where you think them capable of refutation. But you quote your own witness all the more freely, he being therein more fortunate than the man of the Emperor's choice. You represent the peasantry converted to orthodoxy as being too timid in presence of the Count to be able to express in words the desire of their heart. Although the only witness present at their interview with the Count was, with the exception of the District Superintendent, their own Russian pastor, you assert that these „poor peasants“ simply repeat a lesson learned by heart from the Lutheran nobility and clergy — who, remember, have no further interest in them — the Count failing to detect or the Greek priest to warn him of any fraud. And by what means do you represent this lesson as enforced upon the peasantry! „By threats of imprisonment, corporeal punishment, confiscation of their land and in short terrorism of every description“. How simple-minded you must think the Swiss clergy, to imagine them capable of believing such statements. What these „poor peasants“ were too intimidated by threats to express to the delegate of their Emperor, they poured out in eloquent language a few weeks later to the very Archbishop from whose pastoral authority they were so

anxious to escape. You fail to show that in the interim any thing could have occurred to shield them from the supposititious threats of the nobility and clergy. You seem however to look upon assertions so absolutely contrary to facts as belonging to the official archives, through which the Government received disclosures on the infamous „Intrigues of the Nobility and Clergy of the B. P.“ Without such an explanation it would be inconceivable how you could give credence to them. Among the proofs of guilt collected by the Archbishop we find the following. „The landed proprietors, authorities and fanatics persecute us on account of our faith the law courts judge us contrary to law, the clergy pronounce from the pulpit the Orthodox faith as idolatry in its worst form“! You would have us believe that the Government of that day sat still and connived at such behaviour made known to them by official documents! or if not, with what punishments — which you are bound to state, having published reports of the offences supposed to be found in the State archives — with what punishments did the Government visit these godless judges who dared to act contrary to the law and these preachers who profaned God's house and the pulpit by such words? The Russian law inflicts severe penalties for such crimes; in my eyes the utmost rigour of the law would be lenient in such cases as the Archbishop reports and you repeat. But, if as in this case, the Government could not take prisoner or punish any one, for the simple reason that the sole crime of the peasants was the pouring out of their heart and soul to the Archbishop, *you*

are the one who by believing and circulating false reports are sinning against the commandment „Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour“.

In another passage we find a second instance of the lawyerlike ability with which you allow witnesses to speak or remain silent, as may be best for the furthering of your object. You do not omit to tell us that in consequence of the above reports, the Government felt called upon to „support the Orthodox Greek Church in the Provinces by building churches and schools, by publishing religious tracts and works (samples of which we have given above) and by improving the pecuniary position of the clergy.

At the first glance it would seem from this remark that the Bishop's „disclosures as to the real facts of the situation“ which we must suppose to come from the same source from which you drew your official report, had been acknowledged by the Government and had caused their adoption of the measures taken lately. But on closer inspection, we discover that these measures have no connection with „the real facts etc“. For those facts, as you yourself ingenuously confess, disclose a sad condition of the Greek Church in the Provinces. „The Government felt bound to build churches and schools for the converts“. So the Church herself or her members in all the breadth of Russia proper felt so little joy at the increase of their co-religionists that *they* neglected to bring so small a sacrifice; while as to the converts themselves, who, in cases where conversion is a thing of the heart are usually in every country most anxious to bring

a sacrifice to the church of their adoption, even *they* failed in this respect! If the Government felt further called upon to improve the pecuniary condition of the clergy, *that* again must have been because their position through the omission of the Synod to provide them the means of holding their ground in this advanced outpost with increased calls on them was itself the cause of the state of things which the Bishop „discloses“. Well then, the above you communicate as having a certain bearing on the „situation“: but you keep profound silence on one important point, viz: that the Emperor, after an exhaustive enquiry, saw the necessity for removing your confidant, the adversary of Count Bobrinsky from the Provinces he had so calumniated, to the far off Interior, the land of the Cossacks. I remember perfectly well the surprise and joyful excitement this Imperial measure called forth not among Protestants in the capital alone, but in those wider circles of Russian society in which I have for many years recognised with joy, the encouragement given to that noble attribute of your Church which enjoins the widest tolerance to other Christian confessions.

The significant action of the Emperor in removing the Archbishop from the Provinces is satisfactory, as proving that, while you are perfectly justified in claiming for the present Emperor a persistent study of the interests of his subjects irrespective of race or religion he, in the exercise of this solemn duty, is simply faithfully and conscientiously guarding a precious heritage of his forefathers for the good of his country. An equally

pleasurable excitement was produced in 1865 by a further result of the inquiry, viz: a confidential communication through the Governor General Count Schouvaloff, to the Protestant Consistory of the Provinces, reversing a decree that in cases of mixed marriages a Protestant was bound to baptise and bring up his children in the Greek faith. This was a partial return to the terms assured to the Provinces by former rulers under solemn treaties, but it was yet more as inspiring the hope that it was the first step towards liberty of conscience to *all* Russia — that sacred goal to which the truest members both of Church and State are still looking with a longing inspired by patriotism and true piety.

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There is one remarkable point of resemblance in your reply to the Evangelical Alliance with that to the Swiss clergy! The proofs you bring forward are liberally sprinkled with opinions on historical events past and present. In spite of this implied taste for drawing your own arguments from history, you pass over in silence one drawn by your antagonist from the same source. You find no word of reassurance for the fear he expresses that in the present persecution of the Lutherans may be traced the germ of that fatal course of action which is so clearly shown in the fate of the Huguenots under Louis XIV and indissolubly connected with the fate of France down to the sanguinary days of the Revolution and that to the end of all time utters a cry of warning

to all who have ears to hear. Disagreeable as it may be to be reminded a second time of this warning cry of history, for the sake of Russia I cannot refrain from taking note of the subject avoided by you. I am driven to it by the alarming resemblance between the two cases. Permit me to enumerate a few instances taken from the score of years preceding the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, that melancholy lowest point on the inclined plane down which the black ball of France's destiny rolled without possibility of stopping.

In 1656 the Council of the Empire (in Paris) ordained that all Consuls and political agents („officiers politiques“) in Montpellier must be exclusively Roman Catholics. Shortly afterwards the same order, incompatible as it was with existing laws, was extended to other towns, and at last to the whole of France. In 1661 in the same town, with an exclusively Protestant population, no new lawyer was admitted to practise until the half of all actually in practice should be Roman Catholics. This order was shortly afterwards extended to other exclusively Protestant districts, and still later on to other professions. In 1663 an order was promulgated that the children of Roman Catholic fathers should be christened only by the Roman Catholic Church; later on this was extended to the cases of mixed marriages where the father alone was Protestant. In 1664 a law was passed making over the half of the communal property to the Roman Catholics, even in cases where the Protestant population formed a large majority. In 1670 it was decided that no Protestant might hold a deanery in the

Rouen College of medicine, as also that the number of Protestants on the staff should be limited to two; the same law shortly after was extended to all medical colleges in France. Four years later the number of Protestant lawyers licensed to practise was restricted, they being at last suppressed altogether. In 1681 — we are now nearing that dark climax, the revocation of the Edict — the Royal council under the severest penalties forbade Protestant clergy and elders of the Church to put difficulties in the way of their flocks being perverted. From that moment, Protestant public worship was interdicted in one place after another and the Churches destroyed. Protestant colleges were closed and in 1684, the property of the Protestant consistories given to the hospitals. This was followed by a law forbidding Protestant medical men to practise, Roman Catholic lawyers happening to have Protestant wives, being forbidden to lead cases in which priests were concerned. And when misrule had risen to this height, came as climax that day staining with blackest dye the whole of the history of beautiful and prosperous France, that day on which Louis XIV by one stroke of the pen erased the sacred promise given for all time by his father Henri IV to his Protestant subjects. The royal manifesto did away in one moment with the Edict of Nantes, which had insured liberty of conscience to Protestants. Unscrupulous advisers, chosen from among the Jesuits, had well understood by what means to persuade the King that such an action was justifiable in an autocratic monarch, that the Roman Church, being that of the State, could be allowed

any course of action towards a Church simply tolerated, God's favour resting on him who was obedient to and guided by the voice of the Church. From accounts of the martyrdom of the Protestant Church in France, I have above only recalled to your remembrance a few examples of the violences, committed step by step, on one Church by another. But these few examples suffice to legitimise the fear of all friends of Russia, that the first step, or rather with pain be it spoken, *far more* than the first step on the same fatal incline has been taken here. Whoever has carefully traced the course of History, as proving the inexorable working of God's laws, knows that events, given a certain direction, must by the force of an internal necessity, continue in that same direction; the most powerful ruler or statesman being powerless to arrest the inevitable consequences which in history as with a voice from heaven repeat the Mene Mene Tekel. Well for the individual as for the nation, who, listening betimes to this voice of warning, abjures such fatal „first steps“.

Russia need not look as far off as France, to read the words of warning; they are written in ineffaceable letters on her own walls. The ill-fated Jesuits have taken care to bring them immediately under notice. Crafty and cunning as are these pretorians of the Pope, they fight everywhere with the same weapons of deceit and fraud. As in France, so in Poland; they have neither a large nor a varied choice of arms. Doubtless you know from history, how Possevin, the most gifted and influential of Jesuits, was more than 200 years ago the

primary cause of the loss of Livonia to Poland. Now, what pains and alarms me even more than the similarity between the late course of events here, and those in France, is a comparison between the violences done by Possevin and the present situation in the same territory. Permit me to justify my anxiety by drawing an historical parallel between the two. After Poland, in contradiction to the treaty previously made with Livonia had in the latter quarter of the 16th century established a Jesuit missionary station at Dorpat, a Roman bishopric at Wenden, and a Jesuit college at Riga, Possevin describes the work of conversion among the Lutherans to Pope Gregory XIII as a blessed and encouraging work „bringing true salvation to souls by Christ's blood“.

In your report to the Emperor 1884 you describe a movement made by the Lutherans of the Province, with regard to the Orthodox Church, as a „*yearning for Orthodoxy* on the part of the local population“. That this yearning was not generally expressed, you attribute to the intrigues of the Baltic nobility and clergy. Last year even in a conversation with me you still endeavoured to uphold this view, so astonishing to any one even superficially acquainted with the real facts of the case. The „yearning“ you said was as spontaneous as the religious „revivals“ of the last few years. You acknowledged, it is true, the 1886 „revival“ on the Island of Worms to have been a mistake. The Conservatist Swedish peasants of those parts — Lutherans from the time of their forefathers — had never even seen a Russian service, understood not one word of Russian, while

Bishop Platon's Lettish and Esthonian books of edification were unintelligible to them, so that they remained deaf to every „awakening voice“.

In the year 1582 the publication entitled „Restitution“ which purposes to establish the law of the land, stigmatises the Lutherans of Livonia as dissenters in flagrant contradiction to the treaties signed at the time of the incorporation with Poland. In 1885 the proxy of the Minister of the Interior speaks of the Lutheran Church in the Provinces as a „simply tolerated one“ and the Orthodox Greek Church as a State one for those Provinces. Since 1586 Polish Jesuits proselytise among the Baltic Lutheran population principally through the agency of the „Brotherhoods or associations of Laymen of the Holy Virgin“ „in honour of the body of Christ“. You are well aware of the rights and privileges conceded to the Baltic „Brotherhood“, another body of laymen for purposes of propagandism among the country people. Nor were there in those days wanting as additional causes of agitation the visitations of Cardinal Radziwill and Bishop Schenking, the latter of whom purchased his pastoral staff by going over to the Roman Church and whose reports of his journey, contrary to every fact, still excite indignation in the remembrance. Criminals even then purchased freedom from imprisonment by attending Mass. Proofs are not wanting of the advantages offered and promises held out by the all powerful Jesuits, to perverts. None but Roman Catholics could consider these Jesuits, wanderers without home or country, and their misguided accomplices as patriots and yet Lutherans

in the midst of their own country and solely on account of their faith were and are suspected of a want of patriotism. Spare me the pain of recording in each detail the resemblance between present circumstances and the intrigues of Jesuits, by which Poland was eventually ruined, a resemblance so striking that it explains the fear expressed the other day by a sincere and ardent member of your Church belonging to the highest grade of Russian society. „The worst reproach“, such were his words, „which can be made to the Head of the Synod and is made from the very heart of his Church, is that he introduced the spirit of Jesuitism into that Church, which until then had been uncontaminated by intrigue, dangerous alike to Church and State“. In following with attention and sympathy the course of events of the past few years, it is impossible not to acquiesce in the justice of this complaint. A phase of thought unfamiliar and prejudicial to her, is creeping into the Greek Church, influencing her attitude and action. Were I one of her members I should not fail with the courage born of love, to protest loudly against the powerful current which is carrying the Church along paths both foreign and disastrous. Being however a Protestant I can only express astonishment that no warning voice is raised by either Bishop or clergy against the adoption of such disastrous tendencies. Neither Church nor State is ever benefited by protests only raised in private. They can be useful to Church or State (and both are surely worth the sacrifice) solely when, if necessary, life itself, not to speak of *position* is staked by an openly expressed pro-

test. The complaint above cited is not a solitary one. Slight as they are, yet signs are not wanting of indignant and ever increasing disquietude in the minds of the most sincere and fervent members of the Church, denoting a sort of demand for the suppression of a system so unnatural and so antagonistic to the genius of the Greek Church. This movement must excite deep interest, for the Greek Church stands too high, her mission is too sacred, for any one to wish her to tread in the footsteps of the Jesuits and by proving their docile pupil in the treatment of Protestants, to fall to the same depths as they. From the glorious dawn of her existence, the Eastern Church received an elevated and most pure inheritance of tolerance which she knew so well how to preserve in the days of her strength and spiritual supremacy, that it is grievous and saddening to be forced to witness her spotless shield soiled, not from within the Church, as if she had adopted another form of confession, but from the attacks of powers without, from which she has not known how to defend herself. More saddening still is the conviction of the deep injury thus done to the Church herself, for unquestionably that Church must suffer most, in whose name and in whose supposed interest illegalities are committed, than the one against which they are directed. Your Church will not escape this experience; it would be wanting in Christian charity to wish your life might be prolonged to witness it.

I cannot lay my pen aside and remain satisfied with the above elucidation of those points, on which you seek to justify the attitude of the Government towards the

Protestant Church in the Provinces. It is true that the method of your justification took away all desire to continue the subject. Still, as the statements are those of an official high in authority with unlimited powers (I consider most unhappily for his Church and country) to carry out his views without scruple I am forced, however unwillingly, to throw light upon one or two remarks of perilous import contained in your published report. You, as chief of the Synod being deputed to answer a document interesting the whole Protestant Church, as addressed to the Emperor of Russia on behalf of fellow believers, it is but natural that the whole civilised world should follow intently the arguments contained in your reply. You are not in the least embarrassed by so immense an audience and apparently are quite at ease in so exceptional a position. Your words sound almost reproachful to the unlimited numbers to whom you complain that „Europe persists in questioning your conviction that in no part of that same Europe do those professing other creeds enjoy such perfect liberty as in Russia („Hélas! l'Europe persiste à ne pas le reconnaître“). You do not suppress the reasons by which you believe Europe to be actuated in her refusal, which according to you lies solely („uniquement“) in the fact that, in Europe, liberty of conscience according to existing law, is inseparable from the absolute right of propagandism. You go on to inform Europe that in Russia this is not so. There salutary laws fix the limits of propaganda at least in respect to its action against members of the Greek Church; which restraining laws have however, ac-

according to the information you offer, the sole object of doubly protecting the State religion, firstly against those who seek to pervert members of the Orthodox Church, secondly against those members who wish to forsake that form of faith.

Do you really imagine that by such assertions you can convert Europe to your opinion, while she has the best founded reasons for recognising the fact of Russia's want of tolerance towards non-orthodox confessions? Still less those men who are familiar with Russian law on the subject, and, what is more to the point, with the present abuse of that law. It argues great ignorance of the intellectual life of the present day, to imagine Europe so credulous!

I have above willingly acknowledged that there is a strongly developed trait of tolerance towards other creeds in the Russian character. What heightens the value of this noble attribute is the fact, that it does not spring from indifference, but from heartfelt piety. This will ever endear the Russian people to foreigners. Peter the Great gave eloquent proof of his being in this respect a true son of his nation when, at the incorporation of the Provinces with the Russian Empire, he promised them liberty of conscience, confirmed by his Imperial oath. With equally generous tolerance innate in her people, Catharine II, in her manifesto of the 22nd July 1763 — which manifesto must be well known to you, little as your actions would lead one to suppose so, — forbids the members of the State Church, „under threats of the extreme penalty of the law“ from endeavouring to draw

over any one, be he whom he may, into communion with that faith. Equally at one with the mind of his people on this point, Alexander I in his ukas of the 20th July 1819 does not speak of the Protestant Church in the Provinces as merely *tolerated*, but with filial piety upholds what his great ancestor had 100 years before promised her in the name of himself and all his descendants, viz: equality of rights with the Orthodox Church, rights conferring the highest powers of authority in the state, the maintenance of which the Emperor considered a sacred duty towards God and the Protestant Church.

All is now changed, alas! how sadly changed! as you know only too well. Not that the Russian people have been untrue to their spirit of tolerance and asked that its image so nobly reflected on laws and Imperial edicts should be effaced! No! nor yet that the Church cannot stand the test of such tolerance. I credit her with a nobler, a more Christian spirit than that. No, she has simply failed in *one* particular, that she has silently permitted the change to be effected, without remonstrance against a system for the fatal consequences of which, *she* will have to suffer. For in such a case silence means consent. The first and apparently casual mention as to the difference to be in future made between a *tolerated* Church as opposed to a dominant one (and this in the Baltic Provinces in spite of existing treaties to the contrary) occurs in the eleventh volume of the Imperial Code of laws 1856. In the 4th paragraph the deductions from this change of situation are drawn in such a manner as absolutely to be contrary to the above quoted

manifesto of the Empress Catharine, and that in so coarse a tone as to wound to the quick and to exclude the document from any title to the dignity of an Imperial decree. I am bound to justify this sharp criticism. In this article, the right of propaganda for the whole Empire is exclusively reserved to the dominant Church. The exercise of the right being more clearly defined as „the right of persuading all members of other branches of the Christian faith and of other faiths, to accept the orthodox belief“. In the same article this right is forbidden clergy and laity of other faiths under pain of punishment, while such attempts, termed „persuasive“ in the former case, in the latter are termed „tampering“ with the convictions of those belonging to another religion! As if it were admissible to mete out different measure in one and the same sentence. Such an anomaly as a dominant and tolerated Church in one and the same Christian country is not to be found in the Gospels. Our Lord forbids his disciples discussion as to superiority of station. This accords dignity and importance alone to him who would be „servant of all“. Offensive distinctions such as these are borrowed from the world's vocabulary and in the carrying out, can only be upheld by worldly force, from which our Lord sought so earnestly to guard His Church; He armed His disciples with a double-edged sword of far different temper. The Protestant Church herself had to pass through heavy trials before she consented to restore the dangerous weapons of worldly power, worldly dominion and worldly intolerance to the armoury from which they were origi-

nally taken. Remembering the wounds, even now barely scarred over, inflicted with these weapons by her and her former system, she is all the more sensitive when she sees them used to damage her by a sister Church. Russian law and, subservient to it, the Russian Church fosters this difference between a dominant and a simply tolerated one, the members of which latter are found guilty of high treason, for doing that which in the members of the former is not only permitted but pressed upon them by the highest authority in the State. We will not dwell upon this, let us look upon it as a lamentable fact. No one can however forbid enquiry into the legal basis on which the 4th Article of the Law justifies its application in the Provinces. I have searched through all sources in the complete code of laws — and it was a very tedious work — without finding the least grounds for legitimising the introduction of the vexed distinctions in the Baltic Provinces opposed as they are to all Imperial decrees. Yet admitting that those oppressive measures have passed into law, which all are bound to obey, how about the manner in which they are being actually administered?

As a matter of course the law does not grant men in power, and the dominant State Church unlimited privilege and complete freedom of action. In the „law for prevention and repression of crime“ in the paragraph on this subject occur the words (§ 78). The „dominant Church alone is justified in converting such as are not her members within the boundaries of the Empire. Their faith is quickened by the grace of God, by in-

struction, by gentleness and by good example. This is why the Church makes use of *no force* in conversion to Orthodoxy and does not threaten those who do not wish to join her; seeking in this to follow the example of the Apostles“.

I have here again not shunned the trouble of searching through the varied sources in the Code of Laws from which this Article is drawn. I have come on one or two remarkable points. Firstly: that down to even the middle of this century the term „dominant Church“ seems to be unknown. The State Church is simply spoken of as „the Greek“ or „Eastern“. Secondly that in the description of the attitude of the Eastern Church towards „others“, mention is only made of Duchoborryen, Uniaten, Kirgies, Kalmucks, Subbotniki (a sect mingled with Judaism) never of Protestants. By the application of this law to the Lutherans of the Baltic Provinces, the latter now suddenly see themselves put into the same category as the above sects. The form of the above article is remarkable and distinctly deviates from that usually employed. In it we receive, to a certain extent, a personal utterance of the Church, not the voice of the law using her as a mouthpiece to impose rules of conduct under threats of punishment, and we are glad to accept this humane form. It makes the task easier of pointing out the difference between the openly professed well known character of the Greek Church as a Christian one and the present course of action by which she is brought into complete contradiction with herself. By being forced

into taking this inconsistent attitude the Church groans as though wounded to the quick. This it is which strengthens my already expressed firm conviction that by the present exclusively worldly tactics and with their external violence ostensibly used in her service the Russian sister Church is being deeply injured and is bound to suffer more bitterly, more fatally and more permanently than the Church against which her action is aimed.

Every Christian Church whose members young or old are ardently convinced of the truth of their faith possesses inextinguishable zeal which becomes a divine power both to bless herself and to convert her neighbours. In the words „we cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard“, St. Peter and St. John justify their Apostolic attitude before the Sanhedrina who wished to impose silence on them. In the above article the Russian Church expresses herself in a just and Christian spirit as to the means and manner of evidencing this zeal common to all: „Not the semblance of violence, not even whispered threats, simply instruction, mildness and a good example, after the manner of the Apostles“. And now, in the face of these professions what is the actual situation? The Baltic Provinces handed over to the license of propagandism working under State pressure and by State support. We will not repeat the damning testimony of Count Bobrinsky nor the Emperor Alexander's virtual confirmation of it by the measures he passed in consequence of the report of his delegate. Since you were nominated to the high

post of Head of the Synod, thereby incurring before God and the Empire all responsibility for propaganda carried on in the name of the Russian Church, there are daily increasing masses of fresh testimony to the crass difference between the line of demarcation drawn by your own Church between a justifiable and consequently universally accepted system of propaganda and the action of those who are daily inflicting violence on the Baltic Provinces. We will only cite a few instances and those such as we presume not even you will venture to deny. In consequence of the disclosures of Count Bobrinsky the Emperor Alexander II in the case of mixed marriages restored to his subjects in the Baltic Provinces a right taken from them some time before of christening their children according to their conscience. Further with a view to removing from his church the possible reproach of wishing to retain by force members who might have been unwillingly persuaded into joining her, he exercises the humane and truly Evangelical virtue of allowing such to return without opposition to their former belief. Hard times had to be passed through before the Protestant clergy felt themselves really free to open the doors of their forsaken Churches to the returning flock. They most certainly did nothing to facilitate their return. Even the oldest men being obliged to go to school to relearn the Catechism and to become familiar again with God's Word to which they had become strangers. Besides which they were forced to give distinct proofs that they repented their former unreflected change of religion and

felt a hearty and sincere longing for the Church of their forefathers.

Not on the basis of Church law but by your advice this right in cases of mixed marriages was again done away with. Had there existed such a Church law, of course a reversal of it must have been unjustifiable. So the mild and beneficent concession to those wishing to worship the Lord according to the rites of their Protestant Church has been arrested or rather destroyed with retrospective force. This again by your advice, for in not making public your dissent to it you, as head of the Synod, become responsible for a law which wounds consciences to the quick. Because as it nows stands, should the name of any former member of the Lutheran Church still believing that he can only take the Sacrament in her community be found to be inscribed on the register of an Orthodox Church, the unfortunate individual finds himself bound to a Church to which he is a complete stranger. While these poor people are thus tied to a Church which they do not know and therefore cannot recognise, the Lutheran Clergy, who have the spiritual welfare of their community at heart and who will at the Last Day have to give an account of the flock committed to their charge, see these members of it torn from them, themselves being severely punished if they do not look on with indifference. If you could look for one instant into the rending of conscience and anguish of soul of such a Protestant Pastor! if you could for one instant take account of the ruin to the mind and soul of a simple minded Christian suddenly torn

from the Church in which his belief is rooted and transplanted into one which is perfectly foreign to him and of which he only feels the rudeness of the hand which so roughly transplanted him.

What unequal measure you mete out in the Baltic Provinces! what unsparing punishment every Protestant clergyman incurs who does not voluntarily bow to these unjust measures, who hesitates before he leaves his hold of those members of his flock whom he has confirmed, to whom he has for years administered the Holy Sacrament! At least the half of the clergy of a whole province are brought up as criminals, *all* will soon be so, and with them suffers the whole community for, what an injury is inflicted on public morality by a law which places the spiritual guide of a community at its bar? While this is taking place in the Baltic Provinces the Russian Church stands with folded arms, looking on; while on the Volga, the home of the Tartars, hundreds and thousands do not exchange one Christian Church for another, ah no! but leave the Russian Church for Mahometanism.

This frightful fact cannot be unknown to you. When in obedience to an Imperial command the Protestant mission which was exceedingly blessed among the Mahometans in the Caucasus, on the Volga and in other parts was brought to a standstill, because the Russian Church herself wished to undertake this sacred duty, the latter took upon herself before the Lord and united Christendom the responsibility of carrying out loyally the command of our Lord Jesus Christ to evan-

gelise these unbelievers and to bring them by baptism to the Triune God and to instruct them in all which Christ inculcated upon His disciples. It would carry us too far to examine in what manner your Church has fulfilled this self-imposed duty, during the last half century. To some extent you give an account of this work to the Emperor in your annual report of 1884 in which you mention the visible success of the Mahometan Tartars in educating Christian children in the Tartar schools and thereby perverting them. There has been an unrestricted falling away to Mahometanism for several decades by these agencies. You attribute this fact which so deeply shames the missionary effort of your Church while your open acknowledgment of it must excite surprise — to Christian Tartar territories having one school for every 2800 souls, but the Mahometan Tartar territories one for every 780 souls. As a further reason you allege the dearth of Churches while Mosques abound. As an instance you cite that in the Kasan diocese there is only one Christian Church for 3000 souls but a Mahometan house of prayer for 785. You consider that want of money is the cause of Missionary failure, and of the falling away to Mahometanism which you do not seek to deny. But how is it that these Mahometans find money to build houses of prayer and schools? Do you really believe that State support alone can excite the zeal needed „to preach Christ crucified“ and to preserve Christians from lapsing into Mahometism. Since 1884 when you laid bare the wound in the body of Russian Missionary zeal nothing has been

done to heal it. The malignant evil spreads. Men of standing and repute coming from those countries assure me that the lapse to Mahometism is taking place among myriads without interruption. In a very short space of time the last traces of the once so blessed Protestant Mission in the Volga territories will be blotted out. How can it be otherwise with such inconceivable indifference on the part of the State Church and Government! an apathy in striking contradiction to the intolerant treatment of the Baltic Provinces. As if the decadence from the Cross to the crescent were of less importance than the propaganda between Christian brethren.

Travellers in the East who pay any attention during their wanderings in the Bazaars to the contents of the bookstalls are more than surprised at discovering in the most distant shops of Asia Minor and Constantinople Mahometan tracts preaching with fanatic zeal the duty of quitting the Christian Church, printed in Russia and legitimised by the Imperial censure. There are a number of these tracts at this moment before me and I cannot resist quoting a few passages which may serve to prove the different measure accorded to Protestants and Mahometans in the Empire, to prove also that your excuse of want of money is not the real cause of the lapse to Mahometism. In spite of all my efforts I have found no works in which the Russian Church in the interest of her members in those parts, defends these sharp attacks against Christian truth with zeal or capacity.

In the publication "Tibjanul metalib" authorised by the Petersburg censure in 1883 and issued from the

printing office of the Kasan University the pupils including the numerous Christian ones who frequent the Tartar Medressen are taught the difference between indispensable and dispensable learning. Indispensable knowledge is likened to daily bread, dispensable to a medicine which is only needed in exceptional cases. By following this precept the Mussulman warriors would destroy all the enemies of the (Mahometan) religion: by gaining this indispensable knowledge and teaching it to others all heretics in the midst of Mahometans would be vanquished and Christians be brought in hosts to Islam — This pamphlet calls the Sultan „our Padishah“ and calls all those unbelievers, who doubt the infallibility of the Islam Padishah. Those, whoever they may be who take no part in the propagation of Islamism, are called unbelievers.

Another pamphlet (agidei menzume) printed in Russia with a similar authorisation and distributed in enormous numbers, teaches that two things are necessary to true religion of which one is war for the faith against the enemies. „If you ask who the enemies are I will tell you although it is dangerous to do so: 1) The Kafir (the non Islamite) 2) the flesh and 3) the devil“.

Four years ago the Petersburg censure allowed the printing of a small book called „The Gift of the Kings“. One chapter treats of djihad, the holy war. There are a few characteristic extracts; „Djihad is the war undertaken against the antagonists of Islam to root them out and to glorify the true faith . . . in the case of unbelievers gaining an advantage over and attacking Mussul-

mans every adult Mussulman hearing thereof is bound to join the war to strengthen the hands of the Mussulman. Before the commencement of a battle the enemy must be invited to go over to Islamism. Should he not consent he must be bound to pay tribute. Should he neither accept Islamism nor pay tribute he must be fought against and annihilated and his gardens and fields destroyed . . Should Kafirs (who include all Christians, therefore members of the Russian Church in the midst of which the readers of the little book live) not accept Islamism the Padishah (who is the Sultan in Constantinople) can at his discretion either have them killed or make slaves of them: in the latter case they are slaves for ever, even should they subsequently embrace Islamism“.

This „Gift of the Kings“ was originally printed in Arabic and distributed throughout the whole Islam world. A Russian subject, Shihab-ed-din, one of the most learned of Mollahs far or near translated it into the Kasan Tartar dialect and published it without hindrance because as he noticed in the preface it contained the subjects most necessary and important to every Mussulman and is thought very highly of in Kasan and its neighbourhood and therefore through translation into the local dialect ought to become familiar to each member of the community.

This a Mollah is permitted to do in the Russian Empire. In what glaring contrast to the law emitted last year of which you can not be ignorant, in which Esthonian publications of a religious character were ob-

liged to be printed by permission of a Greek clergyman. On this priest's forbidding the printing of hymns taken from the hymn book and in consequence of his action the Esthonian and Reval consistory together with the nobility made a public protest. Then only came the order that this law which had been carried out for a long time against Protestant literature in general was to be confined to orthodox works alone. In the above mentioned paragraph from the „Law for prevention and repression of crime“ it is announced that the dominant Church is bound to imitate the Apostles in employing gentleness and instruction as the sole agencies for making converts. Bishop Donat of Riga in a pastoral letter circulated among the Esthonians and Letts has given us examples of this „gentle instruction according to the example of the Apostles“. In it he depicts how the joy of the angels over the one sinner that repents is enhanced by the conversion of thousands „through God's grace to the true faith and correct ritual“. In it he teaches the peasants how through the sprinkling of myrrh they receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost to strengthen their souls and through this sprinkling alone „can they become true Christians“. What would the apostle Paul have said to such teaching? The priest Pospaloff follows worthily in the footsteps of his bishop. The „Baltic Brotherhood“ circulates with fiery zeal a book of instruction compiled in the language of the country. Permit me to recall to your memory a few passages from it as a proof as to how a population which has been firm in the Protestant faith for three .

centuries can be excited and brought to doubt. In this book the simple pious country people are told that in the Russian Church is the sole means of salvation. The peasants who have been loyal Lutherans from the time of their ancestors have been further told that Luther has falsely and wilfully misinterpreted the Word of God, imagining himself superior to the communion of the whole world, arrogating that he and his followers alone could understand the Word of God. Luther is placed in the same category with Nestorius „who damned the communions of the world“ and is held up to the Esthonians and Letts as „a German who could not be a reformer sent from God 1) because he did no miracles 2) because his followers have since split into innumerable sects“. Further: „Where wilt thou find such care, such prayers as in Orthodox communities — believe me nowhere. Thou dost not yet understand the composition of thy holy mother, the Holy Orthodox Church, but when thou art intimate with her thou wilt recognise that in her the spouse of Christ alone is full of grace and truth; although you do not yet know the right belief, do not let that prevent your accepting it. According to God's Word he is lost who has not the true form of faith in Christ Are those alone breakers of the 1st commandment who worship false gods? No, those break it also who 1) add to their dogmas tenets which are contrary to the Word of God, for example who believe that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son although our Saviour distinctly says that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone (St. John XV 26);

he who rejects one of the seven Sacraments which are inculcated in God's Word; he who teaches that children cannot be admitted to the Holy Sacrament although our Lord commanded *all* to come (St. Matt XXVI 27) &c; 2) he who quits or *would* quit the orthodox faith, the only true faith of Christ. Such an one refuses to obey the teaching of Our Lord, following human teachings whereby he esteems man's wisdom higher than God's."

And all these doctrines are disseminated among communities who have hitherto been undisturbed in their Protestant belief, and that supported by State pressure, while Lutheran pastors are forbidden to endeavour to protect their flocks from representations and expositions of the Word of God which, according to their knowledge and conscience, they are bound to reject as contrary to its real spirit. In not doing so they would fail in their ordination vows, the law of the Protestant Lutheran Church in Russia (§ 314) binding them to be faithful to their important charge. Without this their congregations would be no true members of the Lutheran Church who believe that they are fed by the Word in all its truth and power received from God. It is an exhausting battle with conscience which these clergy have to fight, since you came to power. What it implies and costs to engage in this conflict for conscience' sake and not to be found in the sight of God and Our Lord Jesus Christ's sight „as dumb dogs“ &c (Isa 56—10), the pastor of Dondangen has experienced exhaustively during the last five years, being dragged from one law court to another and finally before the Senate to justify himself

against unworthy suspicions for daring in the immediate circle of his parishioners to warn and protect them against the above attacks on their Church. What fate awaits him if finally the Senate, thanks to the writ of accusation overflowing with misrepresentations brought against him by a fanatic in whom not even one of his own fellow believers has the slightest trust, believes, where all previous law-courts have refused to believe. Should the Senate see itself also obliged to reject the infamous inventions as untenable, what amends and reparation is possible to the Protestant clergyman and through him to his whole parish, for having for five years laboured under such accusations and been obliged to perform his duty underhand. This priest's pamphlet so actively circulated among the Protestants, must engage our attention for a moment. With astounding frankness and, which is still more astounding, with the approbation of the Synod, he incites people to accept the doctrine of the Russian Church and enter her fold without knowledge of it. This is in distinct contradiction to the rights monopolised by the dominant Church "because conviction can only proceed from knowledge acquired" and consequent adhesion. But, in following the above counsel, which, although supported by the Senate is so manifestly illegal, of thus *first* joining the Church and then learning her doctrines, what if later on the convert to his horror finds that he cannot acquiesce in them? Poor deluded one! for you must know very well that such with all his posterity is for ever joined to a Church to which by conviction and belief he does not

belong. How many a one who has thus followed the perfidious counsel, is now wandering along the path of life brokenhearted and despairing, far more unhappy than those, who in former days fell into hands of the pressgang and were forced by them into what was only a temporary bondage. But these dupes of so infamous a system see themselves forced to become hypocrites. In their hearts that offence being raised, against the authors of which our Lord fulminated one of His greatest „woes“.

Instead of forbidding your clergy such action or what would obviate any possible grounds of complaint, warning those exposed to such propagandism, there is much painful action on your part calculated to give powerful support to your recruiters in their illegal and objectionable course, of allowing conversion to the Russian Church to precede conviction. You have repeatedly displayed the rewards which await those among your clergy who proselytise. Who dare say anything against your giving this one or that one the Order of St. Anne? But why must the organ of the government specially notify that the cause of the distinction was the merit of having converted more than 100 members of other Christian faiths to the Russian Church. Why give the distressed Lutherans in the Baltic Provinces this additional drop of wormwood in their cup of suffering and prove to them the measure of your estimate of the Protestant form of belief with such refinement of cruelty? For the statute (§ 560) says expressly: „those have a right to the order of St. Anne 3rd class, who convert to the dominant Church not less than one hundred non Chris-

tians, or adherents of some pernicious sect“. As you neither can nor would reckon the Lutherans as non Christians you place them side by side with the Skopzen, the most disgraceful of all sects. Do you forget that three of your Grand Duchesses belong to this Church, and that therefore they amongst others, are most painfully affected by this insult to their faith! Do not forget either that through this public malicious disdain of the religion of four millions of Russian subjects you strongly contradict that boasted care of the Emperor for all his subjects without distinction of race or religion, which he bases on his conviction that in religion is to be found the highest good of man.

We have endeavoured to show by a few examples how the privileges accorded some years ago to the dominant Church have in actual practice been realised in the Baltic Provinces. These examples suffice to explain how among that distressed population, in palace and hut, in Church and school, the cry is heard which echoed throughout the Empire as a sigh; „if only the Emperor knew of it!“ For in all classes of the immeasurably great Empire; most of all in the Baltic Provinces, so loyal to their sovereign, there reigns a conviction of the sympathy of the Emperor towards all his subjects, as of his earnest desire to see justice and right exercised everywhere. This sincere and well grounded belief in their Emperor has its root in piety. The most contrary experiences to this belief due to designing officials and unscrupulous and arbitrary subordinates, cannot shake it. Not even that of the Baltic nobility and clergy whom

you calumniate nor that of the Esthonians and Letts trained by them in Protestant principles. One and all have heart and soul inherited the precious gift of immutable loyalty to their Emperor in all troubles and persecutions for God and conscience' sake. It is some consolation to these Russian subjects to persuade themselves that their Emperor is kept in ignorance of the action of officials in their victimised provinces. It is a comfort to them to give utterance to their grief in the longing cry: „if the Emperor knew it he would find means of putting a stop to our sufferings“.

Do not try to deprive them of this comfort by retorting that whatever happens there is with the knowledge and by the desire of the Emperor and that you and the other officials are only the docile executors of the Imperial will. That would throw all the responsibility of what has taken place on the Emperor! While you give us above a painful proof of how men enjoying his limited confidence misrepresent and report facts in open defiance of truth. I can in hundreds of cases assert with confidence: „No the Emperor knows nothing of it“. He cannot know that now things have arrived at such a point, that children who have been confirmed, are inveigled into bearing witness against their clergyman and his teaching, young people being thus taught to despise the fifth commandment and thereby being destroyed that piety which is the moral health of the population. The Emperor can not know that in a single examination of a number of the Lutheran clergy, hundreds of Lettish peasants bore written testimony to the fact, not that the

clergyman had enticed them to return to the old Church, but that they had left him no peace until he had for God's sake readmitted them to the Church from which they had allowed themselves to be enticed by deceitful arguments. The Emperor cannot know what class of criminals are promised freedom from punishment and in numbers receive it with the price of their going over to the Russian Church. The Emperor is deeply and ardently attached to his Church and would ward off from her the disgrace of these measures and such recruits to her forces. But for the well being of the country itself, his honest mind would be filled with deepest abhorrence and he would chastise the action which destroys all feeling of justice on which its whole life is based.

The Emperor learns nothing of one course of action of the propagandists who, when a lawsuit is going on, secretly ensure each client success on the understanding that he shall enter the State Church and on the day the suit is decided and the parties written down as members of the Russian Church, deride the loser. The Emperor's true and honest mind and ardent love for his Church would condemn a propaganda, which, while it ruins a country, rejoices in the protection and approbation of the „Brotherhood“.

The very soul of the Evangelical Alliance's petition to the Emperor of Russia is a prayer for that liberty of conscience throughout his whole dominion, which it is the noble object of this society of Christians from all countries to ensure to all as an undeniable privilege demanded by Christendom. The Alliance has never swerved

from this noble effort and can honestly boast that it has not been in vain. In Italy, in Spain, Sweden, Turkey she is able to point to the evident traces of her indefatigable activity and even at the gates of Russia, the sole country debarred from liberty of conscience, she has claimed admittance and will continue to do so in the name of the Lord until she is heard. For „the earth is the Lord's“ and the Holy Spirit's who opens men's minds and consciences to the truth which alone can unite them in God. In your answer you make curious windings to avoid touching on this principal point; first by far fetched references and contemplations you seek to account for the isolation of Russia by the peculiar mission entrusted to her by God for the salvation of Europe. We did not spare ourselves the trouble of accompanying you on this path which is, to say the least, a circuitous one, but it did not prove satisfactory as a solution even in your own eyes of the task imposed upon you by the answer. You begin by astounding Europe with the news that nowhere is such liberty of conscience for those of other creeds as in Russia. You were obliged to accompany this statement with the somewhat humiliating complaint that Europe would not believe it. Well, she has her reasons for this doubt, although different from those you ascribe to her. We have followed you on this path also and have tested the laws and their actual carrying out.

You yourself seem to feel, that your astonishing discovery of the enormous freedom of conscience in Russia has yet failed to touch the chief point in the letter of the Evangelical Alliance in so telling a manner as your

responsibility required. You notice that you cannot avoid touching on freedom of both Ritual and conscience. I use both terms advisedly. They are so interwoven that the one cannot exist without the other, even although the ideas are not synonymous. It did not escape my notice and in fact has been a matter of rejoicing that you give preference to the former while you absolutely avoid the latter, for I trust that in this I trace a certain pious hesitation in bringing force to bear on liberty of conscience, which is not so painful in regard to liberty of Ritual. The *right* of feeling that one's conscience is responsible only to God and His Holy Gospel, freed from all worldly pressure, the *duty* of confessing this conviction in fulness of heart and firmness of belief, these constitute an inalienable right and duty which are so indispensable for a Christian life that whoso dares to limit this freedom of conscience, sins against the Divine truths of the Gospel. Surely you do not intentionally wish to become guilty of such a sin! Of that I am certain, but we cannot escape a subject by ignoring its name; tampering with liberty of ritual necessarily involves that of conscience. To the undeniable claim of the Gospels for liberty of conscience in Russia as elsewhere you reply with a decided „jamais“ which stops all expostulation. Would that we did not continually stumble upon principles in your speech and in your actions, which are neither those of the Russian people or of the Russian Church but are inspired by foreign influence. Leave their „non possumus“ to Rome and the Jesuits! You talk with a temerity of assurance claiming past, Present and Future as witnesses to the

belief that the Protestant Church who only yearns to obey the Divine call for liberty of conscience is, on the contrary full of masterful ambition, capable at any moment of attacking not only the power but the unity of Russia. You fancy that with your boastful „jamais“ you will protect your Church from such efforts to rob her of her children. How is it possible that a clear-minded statesman in open daylight can be immersed in such a world of dreams and seek, by so inadequate a subterfuge to conceal the fact that he is not disposed to concede such a sacred privilege as liberty of conscience? You would justify this unwillingness by alleging such thoroughly ungrounded, or (let us say to be more forcible) such unscrupulous accusations against a Protestant Church and her servants who for God's sake have taken up the battle for freedom. This is a spectacle deeply painful and highly compromising to you because it is contained in a document which the recipients have to take as an answer from the Emperor to a formal petition. This latter circumstance compels us to linger on it. To the Christian there is naturally only one justifiable „never“ based on God's Word, which will remain when „Heaven and earth shall pass away“. You are too clever to even attempt proving from Holy Scripture a double wrong which time must strengthen; that of denying to other Christian Churches a right claimed unrestrictedly for your own and that of denying to the members of your own community a sacred right bequeathed by the Lord of the Church and deprived of which the sincerity of a Christian's faith must be mortally wounded.

You will find it difficult to gain the consent even of your own Church to this „never“ of yours. I think too highly of her to believe her capable of supporting an assertion so contrary to our Lord's teaching. I remember with grateful respect those noble figures in the history of the early dawn of the Church in Syria, in Alexandria and in Constantinople, the Fathers of the Church so firmly rooted in the Word of God, with so generous and open handed an appreciation of the intellectual activity of that day and the people's Greek culture, those men of the faith who with iron will spent their life, though harassed by two most powerful currents of feeling, in bringing about a reconciliation between the two, very different from the present. Not that the culture of the day should overpower God's Word, on the contrary whatsoever is powerful in the world should be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit who „will lead us into all truth“. Of all these heroes of the Faith belonging to your Church I could not mention one who would agree to your dictum. Nor has the Church in her Councils done so, for if you had taken your words from the Articles of your Church's creed we should find the same force used towards the consciences of her members wherever branches of that Church are to be found, in Greece, in Bulgaria, in Roumania and elsewhere. But your sister Churches in those countries have long ago freed themselves from the yoke without becoming in the least unfaithful to their Church.

Your offensive words and implied violence are drawn from a different source and introduced into that

Church of which Our Lord says, My Kingdom is not of this world. They are words adopted from the vocabulary of the State available to the Church only so long as the power of the State exists; and to every Church a power for evil, which she discovers to her own detriment. A Church supported by the power of God against the world does not require Police or State protection to retain the fidelity of her members. Such extraneous help only injures her spiritual life. The sturdier ones among your people and your Church have given hearty expression to this conviction. Their number is on the increase, and it seems to me as if the day were not far distant when the burning words of an Aksakoff, a Tschaadajeff, a Solovieff and others of their calibre, must kindle a fire within the soul of the Russian people in the flames of which violence, so alien to the spirit of the Russian Church must be consumed. On that day — my love for Russia inspires me with the hope that it may not be far distant — your „never“ will be also consumed in the flame, and, your Church awakening as from a dream will rise to new and independent life, untrammelled by State protection so alien to her spiritual life. — In your combat against liberty of conscience you do not shrink from the assertion that in Europe those only benefit by religious freedom, who lapse from faith to unbelief. Do you fancy that your „never“, imposed on the Russian Church to prevent her members from ever going over to another Church whose tenets he acknowledges in sincerity and truth, do you think that such unsparing violence will shield her members

from unbelief? Violence in matters of faith engenders hypocrisy, there is only a step from hypocrisy to unbelief. How frequently that step is taken, cannot to your sorrow be unknown to you. And how tragically violence in respect of religion can influence individual life will be best illustrated by my recalling a few instances to your remembrance. They are taken from the diary of a Lutheran clergyman of the capital, with whom you are acquainted, to whom you know that motives and aspirations such as are attributed by you to the defenders of liberty of conscience have been ever strangers and that he sincerely loves Russia, her sovereign and her people. Years ago this clergyman had held lectures on christianity attended by as numerous an attendance of members of the Russian as of the Protestant Church. On their termination a Russian Prince who — as events proved — was a true and loyal member of his Church, called upon him. He expressed deep sorrow at his only son, a most gifted youth, being a follower of the modern line of thought and thereby having become an unbeliever; although unhappy in the remembrance of what he had once possessed and lost. The father had recommended him to attend the above course of lectures, and to confide his doubts to the young preacher. His son returned the following characteristic answer. „I know the sort of lecture and once listened to a sermon from the same preacher. — But I will not do so again, for fear of his converting me. I have not the stuff for a martyr, but, as an honest man, I should be obliged to quit my Church and bear the consequences. I have not the ne-

cessary courage, so it is better to avoid temptation. I manage quite well to reconcile the Church to my present unbelief; she gives me a Sacramental ticket whenever I need it, she will bless my marriage, christen my children and bury me. What more do I want? So I will remain in my unbelief, undisturbed by the Church, however much I may long to be freed from my burden of despair, however surely I should open my heart to the Protestant preacher had I the opportunity of being allowed to live quietly and openly according to the belief I should then profess. But I will not become a martyr. The young man died an unbeliever. — Again — as I gather from the same source — a daughter of one of the highest statesmen came to the preacher begging him to admit her to the Holy Sacrament and thereby to the Communion of his Church, she being moved thereto by having for years attended his services and become imbued by them more and more with the knowledge and love of Christ through the Gospel. — Repeated interviews proved how deeply and earnestly she had searched both the Scriptures and the works of our Protestant fathers in the faith and with what depth of belief she had embraced the revealed truth. Bitter was her disappointment when the preacher, remembering his vows, refused to grant her prayers which would have entailed on her the horrors of conventual incarceration until such time as her mind, weakened by suffering, would have renounced her conversion and she done penance for it. Only one way lay open to her, to quit home and friends and reside in some country where one is permitted to follow

the religion of one's choice. After a long and painful struggle — for she clung with her whole being to her Russian fatherland — she declared herself willing to make this sacrifice. But on her communicating her intention and its cause to her father, who, advanced in years had devoted his whole life, as had his father and grandfather before him, to his sovereign in the discharge of some of the highest duties of the State, and on her asking his blessing, he refused it and implored his daughter to abstain from a step which would rob him in his old age of a beloved child, and excite the anger of the Sovereign whom he and his fathers had ever loyally served. As a Russian she was willing to sacrifice even her beloved country, but with filial love she could not bring herself to go without her father's blessing and breaking his heart. — In the ensuing desperate mental combat her physical strength gave way. She was removed from St. Petersburg to the Interior. The shadow of despair fell upon her mind and in a couple of years Death released her wearied soul from complete mental collapse. — Now, according to all human probabilities this young life so prematurely brought to a close, might have developed into richness and beatitude in the fellowship of those whose belief she shared, but to whom her Church forbade her open adhesion.

Into what difficult, inexpressively difficult combat with conscience a Lutheran Clergyman, who is conscious of being totally innocent of illicit propagandism which you so justly repudiate, is brought by the above cited violence offered to conviction, can only be known to

those whom God permits to be so tried. On the one side his sworn vow, on the other a soul hungering and thirsting after the peace of God and arrived at the conviction that the Lord has in the Protestant Church offered the means of satisfying such hunger and thirst, begging and praying that this consolation may not be refused. You yourself have witnessed a short time ago a Protestant clergyman of the capital whom such a mental combat reduced to the verge of insanity. The veil temporarily shrouding his soul, was moved by the hand of God to shield him from the full penalty of his imprudent action. — But what befell him is terrible both for one who loves his sacred calling and would fain follow it in his own Russian home; terrible too for that wide circle of friends, both of the Russian and Protestant Churches who witness so precious and blessed an instrument for the furtherance of power and good in Russia laid prostrate. —

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I have not nearly come to the end of my answers taken from the very heart of Protestantism, to all the points in your dispatch in which you attack one of her branches in so unchristian and acrimonious a manner. And yet I must close, to avoid taking up too much of your time. Excuse my prolixity — less time is necessary to make an audacious assertion, than to refute it on just grounds, as it is easier to cause a wound than to heal it. These are sad, sad times for the Baltic Pro-

vinces and their Lutheran Church, and warm sympathy comes to them from the whole Christian world and from some portions of your own Church. The men of these provinces, nobility and clergy have now to prove whether German blood yet runs in their veins. An Englishman lately bore the following noble testimony to German mind and worth of character: „amidst thick fog and darkness there is one shining star in the German Church which has lately not been visible; because it is only to be seen during periods of national defeat and humiliation. The star is German courage and constancy in the midst of misfortune, it is one of the noblest and most ideal points of the national character. History praises it everywhere; the nation can be honestly proud of it“. I entertain the hope, that those whom you so pitilessly attack may have retained this precious heritage of their old home, and may remain faithful to Sovereign and country in unbroken courage of unwavering loyalty throughout all these days of humiliation and sorrow.

In your letter you predict one and the same fate for nobility and clergy in the Baltic Provinces. Both parties are determined to stand or fall together in the matter of courage and constancy to their Protestant Church, a strong and sacred bond of union which you even are able to appreciate in spite of the insults you heap on both classes. One of the Protestant Churches which in the course of centuries has passed through inexpressibly severe trials has chosen for her motto „Lux lucet in tenebris“, light shines in the darkness; she has on her seal a burning torch, the motto and sign suit the

whole Protestant Church and so the daughter of the Baltic Provinces has to prove whether she carries in her face the features of her mother, like the burning bush which was not consumed because the fire in it was God's Spirit and God's power. A day of persecution has been for a Church the day of grace. In the furnace of tribulation the dross which is in her is consumed and the precious metal, which God has entrusted to her refined. This it is which, in spite of our hearty sympathy accompanying the Lutheran Church in her present passage through the dark valley of tribulation prevents our feeling fear on her account. The Lord can bless her in and through such tribulation, but I fear for those who have exercised such persecution towards Christian brethren because I love Russia and know from my serious historical studies the force of the truth that in such cases the harm done is deeper and more permanent to the assailant than to the assailed. It is a fearful loss for a Christian Church to have her name made nominally her good to justify worldly violence against a sister Church who dares not retort. It is a fatal loss for a country to have one of the vital elements of its people wounded in the source of its loyalty and holiest capacity for usefulness and that by measures which can only be justified against enemies. A great, perhaps, the greatest responsibility for this injury to Russia lies with you before God and the tribunal of history! For the Emperor feels entire confidence in you which up to this moment has not been once shaken. By his placing you in so high a position you are enabled to use your powerful

influence for harm against a sister Church and that only with too great effect. I speak frankly as one Christian to another without allowing difference of social position to prevent, in the name of our common Lord and Saviour, my reproving you and warning you before it is too late. Do not mistake my frankness for presumption, do not despise my warning. With real grief I have, in a careful study of your career, noticed that from year to year you diverge more and more from the path on which I was privileged to meet you. The experiences of history confirm the saying that a continuance of Imperial favour and distinction exercises an intoxicating and deteriorating influence on one in whom strength of character is wanting, as also that in such a one the ability to see oneself is apt to suffer, and that the habit of contemplating immense distances and heights impairs capacity for observing matters close at hand. However that may be, at the time of our first meeting you were in friendly relation to the Protestant Church; it seemed as if you could never become capable of ascribing to her any dangerous political aspirations. Those were the days in which you translated the works of Thiersch for your people; with clear insight you then praised as a kindred spirit the humble „Chorherr“ on the Agnetenberg, whose touching words have found an echo in all Christian Churches. Did you not also make Thomas à Kempis known to your people in their mother tongue? In your „heartfelt words to youth“ which you addressed immediately after the murder of the Emperor to the pupils in the seminaries and academies I seem to hear a soft echo of the

wisdom and humility of that pious monk whose voice was raised in the early dawn of the Reformation. Therefore it was that I willingly prefaced your address on its introduction to Germany. The exalted station in which the Emperor has placed you has long since torn you away, with or without your will, from the peaceful quiet which led you to community of soul with a Thomas à Kempis and a Thiersch. Allow me yet to remind you of a saying which even at that time I thought it necessary to draw your attention to. You were describing in noble language your fervent love to Russia and her people. In the course of the conversation you declared as an article of belief your earnest effort and desire to retain entire unity of belief, affection and aspiration with her people. I oppose to this saying the command of our Lord (St. Mark X 29) to „forsake for the Gospel house, field, brother and sister, wife,“ and therefore, which as I by experience know to be the greatest sacrifice, „people and country“. Our Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of such a sacrifice, nor does he leave it unrewarded for He promises even in this world a hundredfold more than we have given up for Him.

The immensity of the sacrifice made it seem impossible to you. Especially in the necessary consequences, with regard to people and fatherland, you considered the promise impossible of realisation. This even when I proved to you from my very own experience how wonderfully the Lord fulfils His promises, even in respect of love of a new fatherland and people, in fullest measure when hallowed and strengthened by

Divine Aid we imitate Abraham in sacrificing his very son Isaac whom he loved, at the Lord's word. Such action on the part of a disciple, such an experience of the truth of the Master's word belongs to the secrets which are unseen and not understood by the world. A closed book of which the Lord opens the seals for them who obey Him and permits those so blessed to see and experience what before appeared to them inexplicable.

Those who persist in resisting the word must sooner or later take the consequences. What they refuse to bring the Lord a willing sacrifice, becomes an occasion of stumbling. We fancy we can manage to be Christians if we make people, fatherland and Church the sole object of our effort by which to stand or fall but the Lord is a jealous God who will not see Himself put second to people, fatherland and Church. In His omnipotent designs He turns our most earnest work into harm and injury to those whom we frowardly placed above Him and refused to forsake at His command. We who stand aside, already recognise the working of this law consequent on your action. We have been far from denying you a fervent love of your country, a warm attachment to your Church which has shown itself in your indefatigable activity. We do not even suspect other more selfish reasons which might as a sharp goad drive you on and on, but just on that account and because we love Russia we have in the course of this analysis pointed out the traces which with ever increasing distinctness prove the present direction of your action to be one disastrous both to Russia and your Church. It must be followed by a day of reckoning

which no one will be able to avoid who calls himself a follower of Christ and yet resists His call. Proofs have been heaped up that you have neither found the weapons of your combat against liberty of conscience and the Lutheran Church of the Baltic Provinces, in the armoury of your Church nor in the heart of the Russian people. Both contain better arms. We have recognised in your instruments of warfare the mark of Rome and the Jesuits. Thank God, the Russian people with their patience and piety are clumsy in the use of such weapons, and in time will certainly rebel against their chiefs carrying on a war with a sister Church in their name. For they see that the blows dealt by such weapons must inflict disaster on State and Church.

Whether you will live to see this revulsion of feeling is in God's hand. It would bring you increased suffering, but, however that may be, the Apostle points to a time beyond the fleeting life of each human being, and the day on which every work shall be made manifest. It shall be made manifest by fire, in the sacred glow of which all wood, hay and stubble shall be consumed if we have built on that foundation; the foundation laid by God being neither State nor Church, but our Lord Jesus Christ.

St. Petersburg, Easter 1889.

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