

Pittsfield, Mass. Sept.13 '08.

Subject ,---Some religious and social ideas of Tolstoo

In our individual lives and in our common social life we are constantly goign through processes of readjustment , changing and modefying our institutions customs and cojventionalities to suit the changing conceptions of life . In spite of our inherent conservatism we are constantly in the process change because change and growth is also intimately a part of our life process. When an institution becomes established we are rather inclined to hold onto it simply because it is established. There is a natural tendency for us to become

Pharisees, and estimate the worth of an institution or a custom by its origin, its history, and the human effort expended in its establishment. But just as we are beginning to congratulate ourselves upon the perfection of what we have done, and the smoothness with which it works, and to straighten up our shoulders and proclaim far and wide how wonderful is our machine, and with what effort and sacrifice we have builded it, along comes ~~one of these stock takers of life~~ *some far seeing prophet* and asks us whether or not the institution or the custom is actually meeting the conditions of life, and fulfilling its function of ministering unto men. No sooner had Pharoah perfected the institution of Egyptian ~~is~~ bondage, than along came Moses with his cool and discerning insight, and condemns the whole thing, frees

the ~~Egyptians~~ ~~XXXXXX~~ children of Israeal from the bondage of Egypt, and leads them up across the wilderness into the promised land. He did not ask how old this system was, whether it was of divine origin or not, or how much it cost Pharoah to establish it. He simply asked, -" Does it make forthe fulfillment of human life.?" The answer was ,-"No." Then it must be left behind.

So also did Amos ask, and I saiah and NehemiaH. No sooner had the Jerusalem cult upon its return from the exile builded up its system of worship/of fasting and prayers and its intricate network of ~~XXXX~~ laws and ceremonies, than Jesus came along declaring them to be negligable quantities. It did not disturb him that they claimed the origin of supernatural revelat-

ion, nor did it occur to him to ask how much they had cost in the way of human effort, or indeed how old ~~XX~~ they might be . He goes immediately beneath all these questions down to the essential one, Do they minister unto the moral and the spiritual life of man. If they do not , so much the worse for them. Read with care the sermon on the mount, and the invectives against the scribes and the Pharisees. You cannot fail to see how little regard Jesus had for any institution as ~~X~~ such. The institution and the custom was a machine to be made use of in serving the moral and the spiritual wellbeing of man. If ~~XXXXX~~ it no longer served that end , then let it pass into the oblivion of the past. He was interested in the moral and the spiritual life in the inner workings of the personality, in that et-

ernal force and purpose in man which is forever making
 creating and destroying customs and institutions. He
 was one who sees beneath the form in to the heart and
 the spirit of things. He was a prophet, ~~a taker of~~ *a seer*
~~stock of the things of life,~~ *a measurer of values in life.*

Of much the same order also is Count Leo Tol-
 stoi, who is often spoken of as the grand old man of
 Russia, the 80th. anniversary of whose birth was cel-
 ebrated on thursday of this weekSept.10 according to
 our calendar, and August 28, according to the calendar
 of Russia. It would be folly for me to say that I ~~KN~~
 know much about the man who for so many years has been
 a litersry and revolutionary not alone in Russia , but
 throughtout the civilized world. I have not even made
 what may be called a study of his writings, or his X

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life, but he interests me me very deeply for the very same reason that the personality of Jesus appeals to me. He is not conventional, he is not formal, he is interested in the soul of things. He goes beneath the surface with an inquiring spirit, deep and reverential so far as the eternal forces of life are concerned, but merciless and probing so far as the forms customs and institutions are concerned, and lays bear for your inspection and contemplation the essential and the abiding forces. Sometimes he shocks, and startles and almost makes one cringe as he dissects and ~~XXX~~ places his valuation for human life on many of the ~~XXXXXX~~ cherished and most firmly established of our institutions. But even that is healthy for it shakes our complacency, and compels us to consider, and to disting -

uish between the passing and the permanent, between the machinery and the spiritual power of human life.

Born of the nobility, trained and educated for the conventional life of the Russian Noble, he entered the army, and was active in its gurilla expeditions. The literary instinct lead him into writing of the army life. True to his prophetic nature, he ~~h~~ must go beneath the surface of eventã in human life, and ferret out the deeper forces of passion and purpose that are behind the events. He became in short a romanticist, portraying in his stories the power of passion and ideals in the affairs of life.

Travels on the continent served but to ~~XXXXXX~~ stimulate this spirit, and to widen the horizen of his vision, and perhaps to leave in his mind a depos-

it of the heresies of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{modern} thought. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ⁻¹⁰⁻ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{Certainly} it

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

^{new}
Shaw Back again to his native Russia with the spirit of life pulsating through his veins into the atmosphere of a dead and stifling formalism which sacrificed upon the altar of ~~XXXXX~~ institutional authority every noblest instinct of man, into that atmosphere of Russian Autocracy, alive only with the fear and hatred of class feelings, on the one side supported by the power of the military life, and on the other by that horrible dread of the angry mob as it had revealed itself in the French revolution. To a man such as Tolstoi is, these conditions could have but no other effect than to produce the most violent reaction. The fermenting spirit of the free soul cannot be constrained

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within the old wineskins, any more than the power ~~of~~
of the internal boiling mass *f. woulth. sova* can be restrained by the
rock-ribbed strength of Vesuvius.

It is said that, returning from the wonderful
ceremonial attendant upon the accession of Alexander
the third, reeking with the whole atmosphere of the
ritual and ~~ceremony~~ *formalism* of the Greek catholic church, ~~the~~
Tolstoi, depressed by the sight, sickened by the odor
of insense, picked up the new testament and read the
sermon on the mount. Out of that world of ritual,
superstition, ignorance, grangiose splendor, devoid
of all life, hollow and damp ~~from~~ *from* the long darkness *subterranean*
out of ^{all} that, into the ~~natural~~ simple human uplifting *sophistic,*
natural religion and moral uplift of the the simple
carpenter of ~~XXXX~~ of Nazareth, how great is the con-

trast. ? We cannot even picture it to ourselves. There are no contrasts in our life that begin to reach it . unless it be the contrast of our own conventional ~~id~~ ideas of life and religion and those of Jesus. To ~~KN~~ say that it is like finding our way home to those ~~ZE~~ whom we know and love after being lost for years in a dismal forest, is but to play with words.

But the dismal night of uncertainty, and questioning doubt, of hesitation and inactivity had passed and Tolstoi awoke to a new world. Indeed he had been into the Garden of Gethsemene, and upon the mount of transfiguration. He had seen the splendor of human life, not in its forms, and conventionalities ceremonines and ritualism, but in its pulsating throbbing purposes and aspirations.

Out of this transformation comes the new Tolstoi, the Tolstoi, who is interesting, who is vital, who takes the measuring rod of his natural religion, of the simple way of life as he had seen that Jesus had taught it and lived it, and ~~takes the measurement of our~~ ^{measures} ~~machinely bred and~~ ~~machinely crammed~~ lives and discloses to us with almost a cruel bluntness the extent to which we come short of the fulness of the stature of manhood as it was conceived in the life of Jesus.

By way Tolstoi has been called insane in his conduct and thought since the time when his new ideas of life as he had found them interpreted in the sayings of Jesus, began to be known through his writings and also in his conduct. For many years the watchword of the liberal tendency in the churches has been back to

Jesus. But for the most part we have been like the ~~XX~~ man who wished to get away from the turmoil of life and get a rest in the heart of the forest. This poor man took with him quite all the truck and trumpery that he would escape from, and that carried with it a lot of people who seem to be identified only with truck and trumpery. After the poor man had settled himself, he found that he had brought with him all that he would ^{have} escaped, and he could not understand why he found nothing there in the forest but the distractions of the usual life. He did not know that only the naked soul can be still and know that God is God.

So we have gone back to Jesus, but in our journey we have carried whole trainloads of ^{the} baggage ^{of baggage of prejudice} that not only do not help but are a positive injury to the

prospects that we have of sitting down in the quite
of meditation and seeing ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ as Jesus saw the
simple naked beauty of human life. Tolstoi, I think,
did do what we have tried to do. He saw the vision of
life as Jesus saw it.

In the passages which I read for the scripture
lesson, Tolstoi found the heart of Jesus attitude to-
wards life. These strange sayings of Jesus which many
have tried to ~~xxxx~~ explain away by some dialectic of
logic, Tolstoi took in their simple and natural and
literal sense. They mean just what they. They worked
them selves out in his famous doctrine of non resist -
ance. Evil is in the nature of a trespass by one per -
sonality upon another. Such a trespass as a person
might commit against your personality, you are not

to resent by any law of retaliation, an eye for an
 eye , and a tooth for a tooth, but you are to entire-
 ly overlook the trespass, more than that you are to
 turn upon the tespasser with a right good will, and
 not only forgive and forget, but overcome the evil ~~X~~
 with good. As the subject of the book in which indi-
~~XXXX~~ he expresses ^{some of} these views indicates, his whole t
 thought is that the kingdom of God is within you. His
 philosophy of religion is seen in the thought that ~~X~~
 there are three stages in the developement of ~~XXXXXX~~
 religious ideas. The first is the childhood stage of
 the nations when man thinks of the whole universe as
 created for him and centering in him. In the second
 stage, which is the maturity of nations, each nation
 believes that all true religion centers in it. Fin -

ally in ~~the~~ perfected conception of nations, man has the idea of fulfilling the will of the supreme Being and considers himself an instrument for that purpose. Christianity was to Tolstoi a new life conception the beginning of the realization of the third stage in the developpement of the religious life, when man should regard himself only as the medium for revealing and realizing the divine will. In this new life conception ones own personal interests in ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ himself as an end ~~was~~ to be forgotten. Man lives only to minister unto others. That is to be the natural ~~is~~ and the spontaneous affection in the life of all men as it was in the disciples. ^{of Jesus} Man, the individual person has no demands to make only service to render. He is to lay up no treasure on earth, he is to take

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no thought of the morrow; he is ^{not} to resist not evil;
but is to give himself and all he has to the life of
man. All these teachings Tolstoi takes in their lit-
eral and obvious meaning, and if one is to live the
Christ life these teachings are to be obeyed implic-
ately. In this it seems to me that Tolstoi is right.
The more deeply one studies into the meaning and the
life conception as it appeared to Jesus, the more ~~EX~~
clear does it appear that these remarkable teachings
of Jesus which the Christian Church has succeeded in
disobeying and rendering void for 1900 years, were
intended as literal statements of plain facts *and principles.*

Starting from this point Tolstoi follows ~~XXXX~~
through the whole line of institutions and measures
them by the standard of Jesus teaching and finds them

deficient. He calls attention to the fact of the organized violation of the teaching of non-resistance as indicated in the standing army of the various ~~XXX~~ nations. This is maintained to prevent and to punish trespass against personal rights. In the first place to prevent trespass and injury to the church of ~~XXXX~~ Christ, and to punish such trespass. But what right has the church to resort to such means. Its mission is to serve, to give itself freely and completely to ~~gether~~ with all that it has to man. The mercilessness with which he probes into the very heart of all the religious conventionalities is refreshing and wholesome. The church has nothing to protect. If it has it holds it in ~~defiance~~ of the express ~~XXXXXX~~ *teachings* ~~ings~~ of its founder. Let it give them up.

In the same way the government and the nobility demand the protection of the standing army and the police force. But what have they to protect? It is their business to serve and not to be served. Let their pretensions cease.,

In Tolstoi we have no half heart ed critic. He goes the full length of the line. The family ~~XXXXX~~ receives its attention, and the conventional world ~~XX~~ has not yet recovered from mercilessness with which he exposed some of the conventional Phariseeism of our social life. *as connected with the family* The vicious influence of our practices of breaking a law of the divine life that we may conform to a conventional whim and a selfish pride, have not yet brought to us our full fruitage of suffering and shame. It is true that the official life of the

Russian court offered him most vicious conditions for the raw material of his treatment of this subject. But even this people of the United States is not free to cast the first stone. But to him the law of the married relation was still the law of giving, of giving ones whole ~~heart~~ soul to the one whom one loves. It is not a contract but a fusion of lives in the ~~KA~~ service of mankind.

Thus do the two great factors of ~~society~~ life, society, as seen in the Church and the state, and the family receive the sharp and by no means superficial criticism of his keen and searching mind. They have violated the first law of the teaching of christ. To maintain the false condition created by this violation, ~~the~~ maintain the system of army and polic

to protect them in their sin.

Last but by no means least important I shall try to speak of his attitude towards property. In this as in other things his point of view is only to be understood when one realizes that he regards the whole of life as a service to man kind. In this service there shall be no reservations, no hidden treasures to be used in the day of failure, no reserve for a day of want. the service demanded is just that whole-souled service that one sees rarely when under the pressure of a great inspiring motive a man gives all and risks all for his country, his ideal. In his devotion to his new conception of life man shall give in service himself and his all. Even more, those things that are required by him for the service he

shall not for one moment regard as his own. They are the property of the common life even as he is the servant of the common life. He uses them as they increase his efficiency in the common service. They are a part of the community wealth.

Now you see what a daring and indeed what a logical and revolutionary kind of a social life Tolstoi worked out from the thoroughing and fearless application of the fundamental idea of life as the service to the common good in obedience to the divine will. How strange it would seem to be living in a nation moddled after these lines! No Standing army, no police force, no prisons, no private property except those personal effects which are a part of the person

ality itself. Each one as he goes about will be seeking constantly to give whatever he has of worth in the way of labor, of thought of moral conduct. There would be a constant atmosphere like that which we try to infuse into the few holidays at Christmas time. There would be no fear of poverty, there would be no greed of luxury, because life would be measured in quite other terms. Not by what one has taken out of the commonwealth for his own personal ends, but what one has put into the common wealth in the way of free service will be the standard of measuring the excellence of human life. No idleness, no want and hunger.

~~Yes it is a strange and a fascinating picture of life~~

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Yes it is a strange and fascinating picture of life?

It is quite beyond the comprehension of our self-seeking mode of living to-day. But to many as it ~~was~~ is to Tolstoi, this is the ideal suggestion of the kingdom of God on earth towards which we move with a ~~halt-~~ halting hitching gate. Whether it is anything more ~~I~~ than the dream of the dreamer only the unrevealed mysteries of the future can say. But it is a dream of a world of the moral and the spiritual life, where things and conventionalities take their proper place in the life of man and where peace and good will reign. I think that it was some such dream as this that ~~xxx~~ fired the soul of Jesus as he ~~stood~~ stood by his carpenter bench, earning the support for his mother and his brothers and sisters, I think that it was some such

a vision as this that ravished his soul as he walked
 among the hills of palestine ~~and drew from the life~~
~~about him these teachings~~ and sat on the shore of the
 sea of galilee and drew from the life about him those
 noble thoughts , that struck deep into the minds of
 the common people of Palestine, that came to Tolstoi
 sickened and discouraged by the cruel institutions &
 and conventionalities of Russian life,

*and gave him the star
 to which he might hitch his wagon of hope
 and aspiration.*

But that is the far end of what Tolstoi has
 to say in his measurement of human life. Even as we
 dream and fly away on the wings of our imagination
 to the pictured ideal of a new heaven and anew earth
 we must not forget that we are living on the earth
 and that if we are to do the first thing towards the
 coming of the kingdom of God about which the church h

we must use our
has been talking for centuries, our opportunity our
that
raw-material/is right here in the life and the condi-
itions in which we live . Out of such as we are must
come forth the new heaven and the new earth.

First and before all else we must leave behind
us the habit of small minds which estimates ~~XX~~ man ~~b~~
by the kind of work that he does or just where he hap-
pens to live. I know of nothing that makes me so a-
shamed and disgusted with ~~myself~~ ^{men} as when I find those
~~I have~~ ^{who} even for the moment, slipped into a frame of
mind which in any way suggests, ^{superiority or inferiority,} such a standard of
~~measurement~~. Burns~~XX~~ struck a true note in life when
he penned his little poem "A mans a man for a' that"
To hold ones self above one or beneath another,-that
is ~~XX~~ at once the fawning servility of the coutier

and the slave. No man of self respect or dignity will for one moment permit himself to do that. We recognize differences in personality, in tastes, we cannot as we are men recognize any frame of mind that suggests that I am hollier than thou or better than thou. In each person is the ~~XXXXX~~ spirit of the living God. ~~XX -~~

This one discipline accomplished, and it will be ~~xxx~~ surprising how far that has taken us away from our pettiness, *and our small towards the large life.*

But still more pointed is the arrow of truth that comes to us from the quiver of Tolstoi wounding our pet whims about the permanence and value of form and conventionalities, in social life, in religion, and in civic life The forms are passing and changing

shapes and phantoms which serve us for the day, and are left behind even as the dying leaves that have X served as the organs of nourishment for the growth of the plant life are being left behind in the on-ward march of the season. The internal spirit and the eternal power are the permanent forces in life. When you feel that that ^{inner} ~~that~~ is waning, then comes the danger. That dependance upon forms has been and is X now the serious menace to our life. When people rely upon external stimulation, upon ritual in religion, upon exciting sport for their exercise and pleasure, upon drugs and stimulents for their relaxation, and upon wealth for their sense of personal worth, then rest assured that the true spirit of the glowing life is ebbing away. Over all these things we are ~~manman~~ t

masters. They are the working tools of the life of X
 the spirit. In every nook and corner of our social
 life to day we have come very closely to that reliance
 upon the passinf forms that Max Nordau says is the
 evidence of degeneration. Would that there might be o
 one breath of the spirit that would send our modern
 idols tottering to the ground. Then at least would
 we feel the thrill of being cast away from the ~~XXXXI~~ n
 moorings of a safe and sane conventionality out into X
 the open sea of a new and unconventionalized world. =

~~hear the gods a calling.~~ Let us cast behind
 us all conformity and acquaint our
 selves at first hand with the deity,
 Let us also cast behind us all con-
 formity and acquaint ourselves

at first bond with the aching
soul of man, as he goes about our
streets and lives his life. In
him is the spirit of the living
God. In him is truth, beauty
and Goodness. He is the
living Christ, and deep in
his soul is the spring from whence
flows the stream of the infinite
and from whence we may fill

that Holy Grail of the
infinite life. Have we
the faith,