

neo-Christianity—"My Religion." Strange is it, that a society imbued with anti-religious ideas and positive science, read the books of the converted author with the same curiosity and ardour with which they read his romances.

In "My Confession," the novelist, who had become a moralist and theosophist, tells in five or six memorable lines the whole story of his soul: "I have lived in this world fifty-five years; for nearly forty of those years I have been a Nihilist in the true sense of that word: not Socialist and revolutionary, according to the perverted meaning attached to it; but really Nihilist, that is, *lacking in all faith, believing in nothing.*" Here is another passage of the "Confession": "Early in my life I lost my faith; I have lived, like all other people, among the various varieties of life. I have done something in literature, undertaking to teach others things of which I knew nothing. Then the Sphinx began to persecute me, saying as to Œdipus of old: 'Guess my riddle or I will devour thee.' Human science explained to me nothing. To my incessant questions, the only ones that concerned me: 'Why do I live? What am I?' Science answered by teaching me a hundred other things which were of no consequence to me."

The whole Tolstōinian doctrine can be summed up in these few words: the law of Christ and its practice is the sacrifice of one's own existence for the good of one's neighbour; the law of the world, on the other hand, is a cruel and murderous struggle for one's own existence. The fundamental points of the religion of Tolstōi are these: Regulate your own life by the evangelical precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Shun all violence. Resist not Evil. Divide the proceeds of your labour with the poor. Reverence the family—have no divorce, no libertinage.

Tolstōi is not a fool, as some think him, nor a mystic, as all call him. Mysticism is a transcendental

doctrine which sacrifices the present life to the future life. The doctrine of Tolstōi is not a dream or an ecstasy; but action, the knowledge and practice of life on this earth; just the opposite of mysticism.

The evolution in him has been complete, and also logical and rational. Perhaps there has never been a more noteworthy evolution since that of Blaise Pascal. The moral conversion that Tolstōi has narrated and described, was working in him for thirty years; and in his most famous and popular romances is found the germ of his last writings.

In his latest volume, "Salvation Is in Yourselves," Tolstōi answers the criticisms of the doctrines he expounded in his preceding works, and accepts, confirms, and eloquently sustains the full consequences of his theories. The spirit of this new book has been, with some reason, defined as *Evangelical Nihilism*. In the opinion of revolutionary nihilism, all governments, all political organizations, all laws, all administrations are evils—we should destroy the present social arrangement. So, for Tolstōi, every government is oppressive and anti-Christian, and our social order is essentially iniquitous. He, however, opposes violence, declares that *non-resistance* is the fundamental doctrine of Christ, and does not sanction armed resistance, even in the case of legitimate defence.

Notwithstanding Tolstōi's defects and exaggerations, how colossal appears the figure of this man, always sincere, always a lover of humanity, a hero of true and active charity, who lives with the poor and for the poor; a true leader, a true reality among so many phantoms; a word, a real word, amid so much falsity and emptiness of the parliamentary, journalistic, and literary babblers who infest Europe. Even those who dissent most from his theories, if there beats in their bosom the heart of a man, ought to bend reverently before the genius and the soul of Leo Tolstōi.—*Nuova Antologia, Rome, in Literary Digest.*