

MISCELLANEOUS.

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY'S ARTICLE.

Count Leo Tolstoy's article "The Overthrow of Hell and Its Restoration" in the present number is a vigorous attack on the Church. It constitutes the first part of a pamphlet which may be regarded as Tolstoy's confession of faith, or rather the programme of his social and religious convictions. He is severe on both the Church and the established government, and while in many respects he denounces the Russian government in particular, his comments strike home to government in any form. When speaking of the Church, he thinks first of all of the Greek Catholic Church; but he hits the Episcopalians as well, saying:

"The Church is produced thus: Some people assure themselves and others that their teacher, God, has chosen special men who, with those to whom they transfer this power, can alone correctly interpret His teaching. Those men who call themselves the Church regard themselves as holding the truth, not because what they preach is truth, but because they regard themselves as the only true successors of the disciples of the disciples of the disciples, and at last of the disciples of the teacher Himself, God. . . .

"Having recognised themselves as the only expositors of God's law, and having persuaded others of this, these men became the highest arbiters of man's fate, and therefore were entrusted with the highest power over men. Having received this power, they naturally became infatuated and, for the most part, depraved, thus exciting against themselves the anger and enmity of men. In order to overcome their enemies they, having no other arms but violence, began to persecute, to kill, to burn all those who would not recognise their power. Thus by their very position they were forced to misrepresent the teaching so that it should justify both their wicked lives and their cruelties to their enemies."

Tolstoy claims that Christ's teaching was so simple that no one could possibly misinterpret it. It is expressed in the saying: "Do unto others what thou desirest that others should do unto thee." But Satan's helpers succeeded in obscuring the Golden Rule.

Concerning government, Beelzebub says, according to Tolstoy's description:

"He who destroyed Hell taught mankind to live like the birds of Heaven, commanding men to give to him that asks and to surrender one's coat to him who wishes to take one's shirt, saying that to be saved one must give away one's property. How then dost thou induce men who have heard this to go on plundering?"

"We do this," said the moustached devil haughtily, throwing back his head, "exactly as did our father and ruler when Saul was elected King. Even as then, we instil into men the idea that instead of ceasing to plunder each other it is more

convenient to allow one man to plunder them all, giving him full authority over all. What is new in our methods is only this,—that for confirming this one man's right of plundering we lead him into a church, put a special cap on his head, seat him in an elevated armchair, give him a little stick and a ball, rub him with some oil, and in the name of God and His Son proclaim the person of this man, rubbed with oil, to be sacred. Thus the plunder performed by this personage, regarded as sacred, can in no way be restricted. So these sacred personages and their assistants and the assistants of their assistants, all without ceasing, quietly and safely plunder the people. Generally, laws and regulations are instituted by which the idle minority, even without anointing, may plunder with impunity the laboring majority. In some States of late the plunder goes on without anointed men, even as much as where they exist. As our father and ruler sees, the method we use is in substance the old one. What is new in it is that we have made this method more general, more insidious, more widespread in extent and time, and more stable."

As to international politics, the devil of murder proposed the following scheme:

"We manage thus: We persuade each nation that it—this nation—is the very best of all nations on earth. '*Deutschland über alles*;' France, England, Russia '*über alles*,' and that this nation, whichever it be, ought to rule over all the others. As we inculcate the same idea into all nations, they continually feel themselves in danger from their neighbors,—are always preparing to defend themselves, and become exasperated against each other. The more one side prepares for defence, and, in consequence, becomes exasperated against its neighbors, the more all the others prepare for defence and hate each other. So, now all those who have accepted the teaching of him who called us murderers, are continually and chiefly occupied in preparation for murder and in murder itself."

As to marriage, Beelzebub explained his mode of procedure as follows:

"We do this both according to the old method used by thee, our father and ruler, when yet in the garden of Eden, and which gave over all the human race into our power, but we do it also in a new ecclesiastical way. According to the new ecclesiastical method we proceed thus: We persuade men that true marriage consists not in what it really consists, the union of man and woman, but in dressing oneself up in one's best clothes, going into a big building arranged for the purpose, and there putting on one's head caps specially prepared for the occasion, walking round a little table three times to the sound of various songs. We teach men that this only is true marriage. Being persuaded of this, they naturally regard all unions between man and woman formed outside of these conditions as mere frolics binding one to nothing, or as the satisfaction of a hygienic necessity, and therefore they unrestrainedly give themselves up to this pleasure. . . .

"In this way, while not abandoning the former method of forbidden fruit and inquisitiveness practised in Eden, we attain the very best results, men imagining that they can arrange for themselves an honest ecclesiastical marriage even after a dissolute life; men change hundreds of wives and thus become so accustomed to vice that they go on doing the same after the Church marriage. If for any reason, any of the demands connected with their Church marriage appear to them cumbersome, then they arrange another walk round the little table, whilst the first is regarded as of no effect."

In order to prevent people from investigating the real cause of all unhappiness on earth, Satan invented science and makes people investigate all kinds of physical

laws, the descent of man, etc. He thus succeeds in covering up the important religious truth of the Golden Rule. For the sake of increasing the toil of man, machinery was introduced. The devil of the labor question says: "I persuade men that as articles can be produced better by machines than by men, it is therefore necessary to turn men into machines, and they do this, and the men turned into machines hate those who have done so unto them."

Tolstoy winds up his statements as follows: "The devils encircled Beelzebub. At one end was the devil in the cape,—the inventor of the Church; at the other end the devil in the mantle,—the inventor of Science. These devils clasped each other's paws, and the ring was complete.

All the devils chuckling, yelping, whistling, cracking their heels and twisting their tails, spun and danced around Beelzebub. Beelzebub, himself flapping his unfolded wings, danced in the middle, kicking up high his legs.

"Above were heard cries, weeping, groans, and the gnashing of teeth."

THE GÂTHAS OF ZARATHUSHTRA.¹

Among the sacred books of Mazdaism the Gâthas are probably the most important. Zoroaster, or as he is called in the original Zend, Zarathushtra, is represented in the Vendidad and in the Avesta as a demi-god, a prophet full of the spirit of Ahura, that is, the Lord; and his miraculous powers are never doubted. The Gâthas, or hymns, unquestionably constitute the oldest documents of Zoroaster's religion. Here the prophet of dualism, far from being a demi-god, is a struggling man confronted with dangers, passing through tribulations, full of hope and fear, cursing his enemies, and promising the peace of God to his friends and supporters. They afford the strongest proof that Zoroaster was really a concrete living personality, that his work was historical, and that the later myths that surround his name as a halo are mere accretions which naturally grow around the memory of a great man.

Zoroaster was born in Iran, probably in the northwestern part, in Adarbajjan, near the Caspian Sea. He impresses his countrymen with the truth that there is but one God, and that the evil principle which contends with God the Lord omniscient (Ahura Mazda) for the government of the world is the source of all evil. We, all living creatures, are confronted with the great question whether we will serve God or the Evil One, the latter being represented by the Dævas, presumably the degraded old deities of the Iranian tribes.

Professor Mills has translated the Gâthas first into Latin and then transliterated them into the *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. XXX., pp. 1-393; but his aspiration to present them to the public in a readable form suggested to him the idea of publishing a new English metrical version, in which he endeavors to introduce the English public into the spirit of the Zarathushtrian Gâthas. The book was first published by Henry Frowde, but The Open Court Publishing Company has now acquired the ownership, and we take pleasure in offering the second edition to the American and English public.

Even in the metrical form the Gâthas are by no means easy reading. We have to bear in mind a number of terms which frequently occur, and it is difficult to translate them into English. Although Ahura Mazda, the Lord omniscient, is

¹ *The Gâthas of Zarathushtra (Zoroaster) in metre and rhythm*, being a second edition of the metrical versions in the author's edition of 1892-1894. By Lawrence H. Mills, D. D., Hon. M. A., Professor of Zend Philology in the University of Oxford. Chicago: The Open Court Pub. Co. Pages, xix, 240. Price, \$2.00.