

from that which is legally in possession of private parties. When the survey is completed, and a report made, it will form a base of operations for the practical establishment of a reservoir. There will be no disturbance of existing titles.

The subject is one of much importance. If the project carries, a large amount of land now without water will be rendered arable. Of course it will require years to perfect the enterprise.

A NEW LIGHT.

THERE has lately arisen in Russia one of the most remarkable religious teachers of any age or race, and the fact that he lays no claim to any authority or commission of an extraordinary or supernatural character, is not the least striking feature of his propaganda.

His name is Leo Tolstoi, and he inherited from his father the title of Count, and extensive estates. His family was an ancient and wealthy one, and he received a finished education. While still a youth he took to letters, and a little later became an artillery officer. After a few years he left the army and devoted himself to literature and such dissipation as was common among wealthy young noblemen of Russia. According to his own statement his sins included lying, duelling, gambling, "adultery of all kinds," wasting his substance wrung from the sweat of serfs in riotous living, and even murder. By the latter term he evidently means the killing of men in war, or in duels. Such, he declares was his life for ten years.

He is now a little past sixty years of age. He had obtained great fame as a novelist and *litterateur* when, a few years ago, he began writing theological works. Some of these have been translated into English and within the last year or two have been circulated quite extensively in cultured circles in the United States. The result has been the creation of a remarkable interest in the ideas and teaching which he advances.

In reading his writings it is easy to see that his mind, though gigantic in its ability and capacity, and marvelously gifted in its reasoning and analyzing powers, is strongly inclined in the direction of metaphysics, and that his methods of thought have been much affected by the study of the writings of Teutonic and Slavonic philosophers, whose vague, dreamy and hypothetical

teachings and mystical conclusions are strongly in contrast with the robust, matter of fact methods of thinking which characterize Anglo-Saxon writers on metaphysical topics.

After feeding on the husks of dissipation, and learning by experience that the pleasures of such an existence were utterly unreal, Tolstoi set about solving the great problem of life. He asked: "Why do men live? What is the object, the purpose of life? What is the result?" In his work entitled "My Confession," he depicts the mental sufferings he underwent in the effort to find an answer to these questions, and describes the processes of investigation which he pursued. To persons who are fond of philosophical and theological studies, this book is one of fascinating interest, as well as of a highly instructive character.

Tolstoi begins his investigations from the standpoint of an intellectual nihilist, a believer in nothing. The fact that he is a conscious being, who lives, suffers, experiences and reasons, forms the foundation on which he bases the superstructure of logic by which he seeks to reach a solution of the great problem of life. His description of the mental processes he went through, and his elucidation of the inductive reasoning he pursued in his search for the meaning of life, are intensely interesting, and display the rarest powers of a logician.

Every effort to find a meaning to life, or an object for it, is fruitless. The conclusion which is reached is always the same—life has no meaning, no object, and he who suffers himself to continue to live is a fool. The wackiest a man can perform is suicide. Tolstoi is constantly urging himself to resort to the cord or revolver, but is restrained by an influence he is unable to distinctly define. All his reasoning tells him he is a fool for living, yet he continues to live.

He sweeps the entire field of worldly knowledge; he reads the works of the most learned philosophers; he seeks interviews with the profoundest living thinkers of Europe; he strains to their utmost tension the powers and resources of his own mind, all in the effort to discover the object of life. But all he can learn from the intellectual and the educated, from the thinker and philosopher, only serves to confirm him in the conclusion that life is a cruel joke, stupid and meaningless,

save in the suffering which forms the greater part of it.

He quotes from philosophers having master minds, from the Buddhist scriptures, and even from Solomon, to show that life is but vanity. The use he makes of the book of Ecclesiastes in this connection is truly remarkable. He shows that thinkers and reasoners, the wise men of all ages and races, who have inquired why men live, have reached the same conclusion, namely, there is no reason.

In unspeakable despair he contemplates self-destruction as the only relief from his sufferings, the only consistent, sensible act he can perform.

But while in this frame of mind it occurs to him that, though the wise and learned see no meaning in life, the ignorant masses do, and he determines to ascertain how the illiterate peasantry answer the question, "What is the object of life?"

He studies their lives and modes of thought. He observes that they toil, endure poverty and hardship, and sicken and die, all without a murmur, and without a question of the wisdom of that overruling economy which causes them to pass through all these things. His investigations into the lives of the peasantry at length lead to the disclosure that the secret of their lives is faith. They endure here because they have faith in a hereafter, and in a Power which doeth all things well.

Tolstoi finds the key to life which he has sought so long. He has discovered the wonderful principle of faith. He investigates this principle, and brings to bear upon it the marvelous reasoning and analytical powers of his mind. The result is a demonstration that men live by faith, that it is the secret, the principle, the power of life and action, and that without faith it would be impossible for men to live. His explications of the principle of faith are strikingly similar to the teachings of the latter-day Saints respecting it, as far as he goes.

A belief that life has an object and a goal is a solace to Tolstoi, and he tells how this belief snatched him from the depths of despair; how that he was taught this high wisdom by babes in intellect, which he had failed to obtain from the wise and learned. He describes what he calls two kinds of knowledge; one kind which is acquired by experience and the senses, and another kind which is compassed only by faith.