

TOLSTOI AND INGERSOLL.

COLONEL INGERSOLL, in the current number of the *North American Review*, is profuse in eulogies of Count Tolstoi. The count, says the colonel, "is a Christian, a real believer in the Old and New Testaments, an honest follower of the Peasant in Palestine." And further: "He is not only a Christian, but has the courage of his convictions, and goes without hesitation to the logical conclusion. He opposes the doctors of divinity, because they darken and deform the teachings of the Master. He denounces the doctors of medicine, because he depends on Providence and the promises of Jesus Christ."

There is, however, a peculiarity about the colonel's admiration of the Russian count. It is not meant to be complimentary. It is only introduced for the purpose of furnishing an excuse for one of the periodically occurring assaults upon the Savior, for which the colonel has earned lamentable notoriety.

Count Tolstoi appears to have been led astray on one of the vital questions of our time: The proper mutual relation of the sexes. His philosophy seems to have plunged him headlong down into the dark abyss of misanthropy. And from this point of view, it appears to him that there is no remedy against the current evils, short of the total extinction of the human race. In order to reach this end, one of the noblest feelings with which man has been endowed, love, must, so to speak, be crucified. The love of man for woman, and of woman for man, is nothing but degradation. For two human beings to love each other as man and wife is to be partners in the same crime. There neither is nor can be any purity in love. It is at best a delusion that after a short time must end in jealousy and hatred.

Ingersoll has sense enough to perceive that these views are the illogical reasonings of a diseased imagination. "All this," he says, "is to my mind a kind of insanity; nature soured or withered—deformed so that celibacy is mistaken for virtue." But although he denounces Tolstoi's philosophy in so strong terms, he thinks himself justified in ascribing the whole matter to Jesus Christ and His doctrines, since he represents Tolstoi as a devoted follower of the Savior, a valiant expounder of His doctrines as laid down in the Bible. In other words, he does not hesitate, in this manner

to designate Christianity as the philosophy of a madman and our blessed Redeemer as insane, striving to deform human nature into a kind of mental monstrosity.

This, as is usual with Ingersoll when he pours out his bitter gall against religion, is without the slightest cause. That "Peasant of Palestine," who, by the way, is the highest type of individual being known to earth, never taught one syllable from which Tolstoi could reasonably deduct his dark theories on the question of wedded love. On the contrary, all that Christ ever said on this question, direct or indirect, and all that God ever revealed on the subject, whether in ancient times or in our own age, is directly opposed to such philosophy. The Russian count is in this particular point no more a follower of Jesus than is the leading American infidel. Both are radically wrong.

The teachings of Christ with regard to this question are clear enough. Being asked by the Pharisees if it were lawful (as was maintained by the disciples of Rabbi Hillel) to sever the sacred bonds of marriage "for every cause," he unhesitatingly answers in the negative. God made his children, male and female and united them. "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." He further teaches the great truth which was never before accepted by the sages of the world, that woman is by the Creator intended to be one with her husband, not the inferior. "For (being united together according to the laws of God) they are no more two, but one flesh." (Math. 19, 3—6). Our Savior, then, so far from teaching that marriage is a degrading relation of the sexes to each other announces the doctrine that their union is the only way in which the children of God can fulfill the measure of their creation, can accomplish the purpose of their existence on the earth.

Paul has understood his Master correctly when he, in his letter to the branch of the Church at Corinth says: "Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man in the Lord" (1 Cor. 11, 11); that is, the separate existence of the two is not, from the Lord's point of view, the intended condition; it takes the sacred union to make their existence complete.

The Apostle illustrates this point most beautifully; when he (Eph. 5, 22—31) compares the relationship of man and wife to that of Christ

and the Church. Human language cannot in clearer terms describe the sanctity of that divine institution—marriage—nor can a more exalted ideal of the true relation of man and wife to each other be formed. Man and woman according to this, are no more intended to lead each a separate existence than are Christ and the Church. Both are, as it were, existing for and through each other. And while the wives are expected to "submit" themselves to their husbands, yet this submission is not that of a slave, nor that of a servant to a master, but it is a submission similar to that of the Church to the Lord, the voluntary submission prompted and made sweet by pure affection. In the same way husbands are expected to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. And they are to show this love as Christ did. He "gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it." This is given as the reason why the husband has been made the "head of the wife," that he, Christlike, may sacrifice himself for his wife and by his sacrifice obtain the honor of being the "savior of the body" as Christ is the Savior of the Church. (Eph. 5: 23.)

Thus in strong terms do the ancient Scriptures show us the necessity of marriage and the noble nature of that institution. Nor are the revelations given in this last dispensation upon the subject less clear. Through Joseph, the Prophet, God says: "I say unto you, that who-so forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and the twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation. (Doc. and Cov., Sec. 49: 15, 16.) Those who, like Tolstoi, would forbid marriage, are not of God, are on this point not followers of Christ, even if Ingersoll ventures the assertion that they are. For Christ never taught anybody to dishonor what His Father has instituted.

Having shown that Christianity never favored celibacy, we will now merely state that Tolstoi's ideas upon this subject are neither original nor very modern in their origin. Before Christ, a Jewish sect existed which held Tolstoi's doctrine as one of their most prominent features. We refer to the Essenes. Lightfoot in describing the tenets of this sect says:

"The honorable, and even exaggerated estimate of marriage, which was characteristic of the Jew, and of the