

The Religious Spirit of the Slavs (1916) eBook

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St. Margaret's, Westminster

*Sermons on subjects suggested
by the war*

THIRD SERIES

THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OF THE SLAVS

THREE LECTURES GIVEN IN LENT, 1916

BY

The Rev. *Father Nicolai Velimirovic*

Priest of the Serbian Church, and Professor of Theology in the University of Belgrade

I. *Slav orthodoxy*

II. *Slav revolutionary catholicism*

III. *The religious spirit of the Slavs*

1916

I

SLAV ORTHODOXY

The Holy Synod and Tolstoi.

When Count Tolstoi was excommunicated by the Holy Synod of Russia because “he preached the teachings which are contrary to the Christian faith,” the world was divided in opinion and sympathy into two parts. The partisans of Tolstoi were in the majority in the Western world; those of the Holy Synod in Russia and the Orthodox East. Yet Holy Russia rejected Tolstoi with much more compassion than Western Europe approved of him. It was a human tragedy which is not often repeated in history and was understood only by Russia. The conflict was more stern than appeared on the surface. The problems in question meant not less than the dilemma: either the Christian world was to continue or it must return to the starting point of human history and begin all anew. A little blade of grass in the field said to its green neighbours: “Why do we grow up? It is nonsense and pain. In growing up we grow in complications, which enhance the darkness and pain of our lives. I propose, therefore, to go back into seeds, from which we have grown big and unhappy.”

So spoke one blade of grass to the field. And the field replied: “Although perhaps we are growing in nonsense and pain, still we cannot return, we must grow and go our way in the belief that we are not mistaken.”

That is the simile of Tolstoi and the Holy Synod.

A Circle or a Drama.

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Tolstoi perceived life as a circle, with the beginning everywhere and with the end everywhere. The Holy Synod, representing Slav Orthodoxy, perceived life as a drama with a beginning and an end in space and time. From his point of view, Tolstoi thought it possible for mankind to stop a mistaken course of things and to begin anew, to cast away all the burdens of culture, of State, Church, militarism, worldly ambitions, the vanities of towns, to draw the curtain on the past and to come back to the field and forest, to plough and sow, to listen to the life of Nature and to live with Nature and God in unison.

The Holy Synod, from their point of view, thought that the past is the very foundation of the present and future, and that in separating us from the past we were as an uprooted plant, condemned to inevitable death, while in continuing the world-drama we are going the only possible way. The beginning of sin in this drama is in Adam, the beginning of salvation is in Christ. We cannot live without taking notice even of the life of Adam and without connecting our life with Christ's. And all the other millions of human beings between those two milestones, between Adam and Christ, and Christ and us, are greater or smaller foundations, or conditions, or even disturbances of our own life.

"My understanding is against your traditions," said Tolstoi.

"Our traditions are against your understandings," replied the Holy Synod.

But that was not all.

The difference existed also in views on

HAPPINESS AND ATONEMENT.

Tolstoi was much troubled by the suffering of men. He himself saw, felt and described an immense amount of this suffering in various forms. The problem of happiness was his most cherished problem. He believed that men can be made happy in this life, and even more—that they are created in order to be happy. He refused quite definitely the idea of atonement as inconceivable and contrary to the idea of God. Human life has been normal and happy as long as men lived their simple life without towns and without all urban complications. Life can again be made a normal and happy one as God wills, if we only return to the primitive simplicity of the peasants.

The Holy Synod was not opposed to the happiness of men, but they did not believe either that happiness is attainable in this world or that it is the aim of our life on earth. Did it not occur quite in the beginning of the world's history that there lived on earth two brothers, Cain and Abel, two farmers, without any burden of culture, and with all the Tolstoian simplicity of life? Yet is it not reported that one killed the other?

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Life is a drama, a tragic drama even, and not at all a metaphysical immobility or a quasi-mobility, or even an eternal *circulus viciosus*. There are three stages of human life: the first stage before the sin, in God-like *naivete*, the second in sin, and the third after the atonement, life in perfection, when there will be “a new earth and a new heaven.” We are in the middle stage, where life means sin and atonement, therefore in the most tragic stage. Life in the first and third stages may consist entirely in contemplation, but the life which we are actually living consists of deeds, of sins and virtues, *i.e.*, of the struggle between good and evil, of suffering and purification, of a tragic heroism, of atonement.

DREAMS ABOUT THE REALITY.

It was not until the decline of the glorious Byzantine Empire that the Slavs embraced Christianity. For nine hundred years the Greeks were the principal representatives, protectors, elaborators and explorers of Christianity. When the Greeks visited the Slav country with their divine message, the Slavs were heathens. Their heathenism was like a confusing dream. Nature stood before them with its contradictory forces. The primitive Slavs regarded all the forces of Nature encircling a human creature as being alive and stronger than this creature. All the forces, whether friendly or unfriendly to man, are man like, anthropomorphic, and none of them are indifferent to human life and doings. The practical conclusion came to was: men must give sacrifices to both of them, to the good and to the evil; to the good in order to encourage them to be more good, to the evil in order to induce them to be less evil. It was necessary to pray equally to the good as to the evil gods. The best worship was the best balance between the good and bad spirits; not to offend any of them, but to be reconciled with all of them! Skilful diplomacy was indeed needed in worshipping all the terrible, invisible representatives of the forces of Nature seemingly fighting around man and because of man. And men are too weak to take their part decisively in one or other fighting camp. Everything useful or beautiful for men was regarded as being possessed by a good god or spirit. Everything dangerous and unfriendly was considered to be possessed by an evil god or spirit. The supreme god Perun, supreme because the strongest, was considered as acting equally for good and for evil. The curious fact is that the supreme divinity in every pagan theology was imagined to be acting equally strongly for good and for evil, as Zeus Jupiter, Wothan. You cannot call Zeus or Jupiter or Wothan or Perun a *good* god, but only a *mighty* god. With Christianity came into the world, including the Slav world, decisiveness, and every confusion disappeared. The Slavs learned to know that they could not serve two masters, but only one, and that they had not to balance between good and evil but to go straightway on the side of *good*.

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Reality as a Dream.

The Byzantine Emperors promised to the Serbs peace and land in their Empire in the Balkans if they accepted the Christian faith. And the Serbs accepted the Christian faith. The Emperors Basil and Constantine agreed to give their sister in marriage to Vladimir, King of Kieff, if he would embrace the Christian faith. And King Vladimir embraced the Christian faith. These may be considered very petty motives! Yet this was not the price to tie the mighty idol Perun on a horse's tail and to carry him into the water of Dnieper. The principal motive was the striking reality of the Christian foundation. The Christian message was like a dream ("We have been in Heaven," reported the Russian delegates, returning from Saint Sophia)—the Slavs loved dreams and poetry very much; but the Christian faith was stated to be a reality, and the Slavs, as men the world over, considered reality as more solid than any dream. Instead of a nightmare of youthful dreams, as the Slav pagan theology was, came now a bright poetry warranted both as a *past* and *present* reality.

It will remain as the greatest wonder in history how a poor Man, who preached in Palestine for about two years, who scarcely had a hundred followers at the end of His mission, who was crucified and died a shameful death, whose cause seemed a quite desperate episode, scornfully rejected or fearfully abandoned by all those who knew it—how this poor Man replaced successively the mightiest gods the human imagination ever invented: Zeus in Olympus, Jupiter in the Capitol, Wothan in the North, and at last also Perun in Kieff. The secret lies, I think, in the reality of His human life, in the mystery of His resurrection, and in the amazing enthusiasm with which thousands of His followers afterwards suffered death for Him and His cause.

However, Christ entered the Slav world in an epoch when, not only one man after another bowed before Him, but nation after nation. He came to our ancestors no more as a humble preacher, but as a Lord, under whose feet lay already conquered Zeus, Jupiter and Wothan. He came to us, not from a poor Bethlehem cottage, but from the most brilliant temple upon earth, from the Saint Sophia in Constantinople. He came with a wonderful three-fold mission, to serve, to fight, to reigning one word, to be "all in all." He entered the Roman world as a humble servant. I am afraid He remained in this world for ever only as a servant. But He entered the Slav world as a Lord, and until to-day He remains there as the Lord.

CHRISTUS MILITANS.

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With Christ's coming among the Slavs the balance between good and evil spirits was lost. Quite unlike Perun, Christ was a decisive fighter for good. He showed only one—exclusively one—way, the narrow way leading to the kingdom of good, which is the Kingdom of God, the Highest and the Best, *Deus Optimus*, not only as a dream of Pagan humanity, but as a provable reality. Although good seems very often to be a weak and losing party in this world, men must not waver but always take cheerfully the part of good. Evil spirits in men and around men are very powerful in this world. Christ Himself was overwhelmed for a time by the evil spirits of this world. But it was only for a time which is now over. It was at the new beginning of the world, so to say, when He came to break the power of Pagan men, hold the balance between the good and evil spirits and to stop the serving of “two masters.” The start was very unpromising; He was trodden down, but He got up and proved Himself the victor. He came now as a victor to the Slavs to make new armies of men, who would consent to undertake His burden, and to go His exclusive way of good, worshipping and serving only one God, His Father and the Father of all men. He came claiming everyone, telling each one “not to be ashamed”—as it is wonderfully expressed in the English Baptism formula—“manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue to be Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.”

Tolstoi exalted only Christ's Sermon on the Mount, *i.e.*, only Christ's teaching, or part of Christ's teaching. The Orthodox Church exalted Christ himself, as an exceptional, dramatic Person, suffering for good; as a divine hero, fighting against all the evil powers of the world. A teaching or a life drama—*i.e.*, Tolstoi or Orthodoxy! The Church thought: there is something greater than Christ's words, that is Christ Himself. His words are extraordinary, it is true, no man spoke as He, but His person and His life were more extraordinary still. Thousands of martyrs died for *Him*, not for the *Sermon on the Mount*. His words died with His death and came to life again only with His resurrection. The fate of His words was quite dependent on the fate of His person. Consequently His words have been only a shadow of His personal drama, only an inadequate expression of His individuality and His world mission, only the secondary fascination for the coming generation. He himself was the essence of the human drama; He himself—the essence of God and Man; He himself—the incarnated good and the standard of the good in the world's history. He is incomparably better than Zeus, Jupiter, Wothan or Perun, because He is a reality, a divine reality among men.

The “Petrified” Church.

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So Professor Harnack from Berlin called the Orthodox Church of the East. I know his reasons for that very well. Comparing the unchangeable image of Christ, fixed in the East once for all, with the confusing thousand *opinions* of Christ in Protestant Germany, he was quite justified in calling our Church by a striking name, so differentiating her from his own. I am glad that he invented the name “petrified.” With the proud spirit of a Protestant scientist, I wonder why He did not invent a worse name for Eastern Orthodoxy. I wonder much more that Professor Harnack, one of the chief representatives of German Christianity, omitted to see how every hollow that he and his colleagues made in traditional Christianity in Germany was at once filled with the all-conquering Nietzscheanism. And I wonder, lastly, whether he is now aware that in the nineteen hundred and fourteenth year of our Lord, when he and other destroyers of the Bible, who proclaimed Christ a dreamy maniac, clothed Christianity in rags, Nietzscheanism grew up the real religion of the German race.

What is the fact about the “petrified” Church? If “petrified” means intact, or whole, or undestroyed or living always in the same dress, but still living, then the famous Professor may be right. Yet this petrified Church has always come victorious out of any test to which she has been put. The Christian Church is always on trial, and I think she is never so much Christian as when she is being tested. She does not shine or develop or make progress otherwise than through hard tests. Christianity is founded upon a drama and not upon a science; therefore its growth and development are dramatic and not scientific. Let us take an example. Eastern Orthodoxy was put to the test for centuries to fight for its existence and its ideals against the ruling Islam. Roman Catholicism was put to a similar test in Spain. German Protestantism was put to the test of German science. What happened? Islam was defeated in Russia and in the Balkans, not only physically, but morally and intellectually. The epoch of the catacombs and the bloody days of Nero and Diocletian have been repeated once more in the Balkans, in Russia, and are still being experienced in Armenia and Asia Minor. The killed and martyred kings, princes, bishops, priests and laymen from these countries will not be ashamed before the martyrs from the Coliseum. Orthodox Christianity stood the test very well. It saved itself; it gave the inspiration for resistance; it showed itself superior even afterwards when the enslaved countries were liberated. Holy Russia counts her greatness from the time when she got rid of Islam. During the five years of their freedom Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria built more than the Turks built during 500 years of Turkish rule.

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Roman Catholicism in Spain came through its test very badly. Before the Islamic invasion, and after it for a long time, the Christian population showed itself inferior to the Moors, in work, in justice, in progress. But to the honour of Roman Catholicism I must say that it stood the test very well in Croatia and in Hungary in its struggle against Islam. German cathedral Protestantism failed in its test. It is destroyed as a religion, it exists only as an archival science. It ceased to be what Christianity really sought to be—a drama; it is transformed into an indifferent scientific medium for reading, exploring, classifying, comparing, criticising. It is no more a living, dramatic being—no more the serving, ruling and suffering Christ. There is very little heroic or divine in it!

Why not then worship Wothan again instead of Christ?

And Anglicanism? It had the worst enemy. That was wealth, comfort, quiet business, lack of big disturbances and of great sufferings. The English Church still succeeded in preventing all the misuses and abuses of life under such circumstances. This success can be appreciated only if the British Empire is compared with an antique Pagan Empire. Where in this Empire is there a Lucullus or a Caracalla? The astonishing luxury, the bestial, insatiable passions? Or the furious competitions in petty things with which the social life of Rome was daily intoxicated? Yet English Christianity is neither so dramatic and full of contrasts as Dante's Catholicism, nor so vibrating a lyric as Dostojevsky's Orthodoxy, but rather a quiet, smooth epic like Milton's poetry.

THE GREAT DOGMA OF SIN AND SUFFERING.

The Anglican Church has formulated this dogma much in the same words as that of the Orthodox Church. Yet it is not nearly so vivid in the daily faith of the English people as in that of the Slavs. The friends of the reunion of the Anglican and Orthodox Churches never mention this difference, which is, I think, the only really great difference between them. This life on earth for the English Christian conscience is a normal one with some few objections. Given some correction, and life here on earth would be quite normal and perfect. Slav Orthodoxy, on the contrary, emphasises very emphatically the abnormality of human life on earth from the beginning. Sin is the beginning of life, and sins are the continuation of it. The first man deviated in some way from God's will; the first brother killed his younger brother; the first-born nation made war with the second-born nation, and this bloody business of men, of which, in the greatest degree, we are the witnesses to-day, continued through many thousands of years. The development of human virtues is not so obvious as the development of human sins. Still, nobody has written a work on the development of sins. The Orthodox Church believes quite seriously in this fatal development; she believes more than seriously that

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“the whole world lies in evil.” Suffering is a consequence of sin. Even the righteous man suffers, not because of virtue, but because of sin. If he himself has no personal sins still he must suffer because of the sins of other men, no matter if near or far from him in space or time. For all men from the first to the last are made from the same piece of clay, therefore they all, from the first to the last, form one body and one life. Each is responsible for all, and each is influencing all. If one link of this body sins, the whole body must suffer. If Adam sinned, you and I must suffer for it. If St. Paul suffered, it is because his suffering is a consequence of the sins of other links of the same body. If Christ suffered and died because of Adam, it is also just. It is not good, but it is just. The suffering of nature around us is incomparably small compared with the suffering of men. The abnormality of the animal, plant or mineral world is not nearly so obvious as the abnormality of our life. God’s creatures, who were created on the sixth day and destined to be the most perfect among creatures, are abased by sin to an imperfection which is unknown among the creatures made before the sixth day.

THE REPETITIONS.

In no other Churches are there so many repetitions, in no other so many symbols, as in the Orthodox Church. The whole worship is a continual repetition for thousands of years. In Byzantium was fixed the image of Christ, His mission, His worship. The whole system of belief and worship came, fixed and accomplished, over to us Slavs. To keep that system intact for ever was the first duty taught us by those who brought it. Its tendency was to impress the image of Christ in the imagination and heart of the generations as much as possible and always in the same way. We are living in a world of evil; Christ is leader of the struggle against this evil. Men lived thousands of years wavering between good and evil, worshipping good and evil. Now they must be for good. They are educated and accustomed to weighing things for themselves. Therefore it has become necessary to ask them every day, every hour even, to confess that they are with Christ. They must *repeat* it again and again, in prayers, in signs, in symbols, until it becomes a new custom, a new education, a new blood and spirit, a new man, a new earth. They must be reminded in every place and at all times that they are soldiers of Christ and not of Perun. Churches, shrines, chapels, ikons, candles, processions, priests, bells, monasteries, travelling preachers, every day’s saints, fast seasons—everything is the repetition of the same idea, namely, that Christ is the ruler of life and we are His followers. Christ must be expressed everywhere, indoors and outdoors. Many Englishmen have remarked that the Bible is read very seldom in the home in Russia and Serbia. That is true. People read the Bible more in symbols,

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pictures and signs, in music and prayers, than in the Book, Our religion is not a book religion, not even a learned religion. *It is a dramatic mystery.* The Bible contains the words, but in this dramatic mystery there is something higher and deeper than words. Slav Christianity is something greater than the Bible. Looking at an ikon, a Russian *mujik* perceives the Bible incarnated in a saint's life-drama. Mystery of sin, mystery of atonement, mystery of heroic suffering, mystery of the daily presence of Christ among us in holy wine, in holy bread, in holy water, in holy word, in holy deed, in every sanctified substance, even in matter as in spirit, mystery of communion of sins and of virtues—all are recorded once in the Bible, and all are recorded and repeated also in our daily life—that is what we call our Slav Orthodoxy. We take the mystic outlines of the Bible and do not care about the details. In those mystic outlines we put our daily life, with its details of sins and sufferings. We conceive the Christian religion neither so juristic as the Roman Catholics, nor so scientific as the Protestants, nor even so reasonable and practical as the Anglicans, but we conceive it rather as dramatic.

SLAV ORTHODOXY IS NOT SELF-SUFFICIENT.

We are quite conscious that our religion is not solely Christ's work. Every drop of blood of a Christian martyr is a stone in the work. Every suffering man with heroic Christian hopes, and every dying human being with optimistic Christian belief is a collaborator of Christ, or is a founder of our Church. The Church is not at all solely Christ's work, she is the collective work of many and many millions who, in the name of Christ, decisively took part in this mystic race of earthly life. That is just what Christ wanted and prophesied. That is why He washed the feet of His disciples.

The work of Tolstoi is the work of a man; Slav Orthodoxy is the work of the generations. Orthodoxy was first defined by the Christian Jews and Greeks during the first eight hundred years. During the other thousand years Orthodoxy was enriched by the Slav Bible, *i.e.*, by Slav religious experiences, by Slav martyrs, saints, heroes, by Slav sins and repentances, by Slav struggles and convulsions for Christ. It is a very large record, a very large Bible indeed, a wonderful drama, quite new, fresh, original, although in old forms and words, and signs. Still Slav Orthodoxy is not self-sufficient. She would become by human inertia self-sufficient, unless Providence sent her punishment from time to time. Tolstoi was for Orthodoxy a punishment. He was like a whirlwind which pulls down many things but at the same time purifies the unhealthy air. He was not at all a demon, but a man sent by God to help our Church; and he helped very much indeed—as all the sects and critics of Christianity from the beginning have helped the Christian cause, ridiculing and exposing the Christian Paganism manifested in ecclesiastical pride, in superstitions, prejudices, intolerance, *etc.*

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What are the present needs of Slav Orthodoxy? Oh, her needs are great, her thirst is immense. She does not need so much what Tolstoi proposed for her, or what Harnack could give her, neither does she thirst after the stricter and clearer juristic definitions, nor after a “sweet reasonableness,” as Matthew Arnold expressed Christ’s being, a new theology or a new worship.

She needs more Christian dramas blended in one. She needs more of Christ on earth, more votes for Christ, all the votes for Christ instead of dividing them between Olympus and Golgotha. She needs to be united with all other Churches in one Christ-like body and spirit, in order that all the pieces of a broken mirror may be recomposed and that Christ could see in it His whole face. She is thirsty for more stigmata, more suffering, more sins. Yes, she is thirsty for more sins, I say, and more virtues; she likes to have all the sins and all the virtues of the world confessed and recognised as the common burden and common good. She is thirsty for a communion of sins and virtues among men, she is thirsty to call you *brothers*. She is thirsty to cry in exaltation to every man under the sun: “Poor child, give me just your sins (you don’t need them) and I will give you my virtues, in order that I may be ashamed of your sins and you may be proud of my virtues.”

For centuries Slav Orthodoxy seemed to the Western world like an immobile tortoise with a multi-coloured shell and with no great probability of its being inhabited by a living being. The outside world looked at this multi-coloured, hard and unchangeable shell, sometimes with love, sometimes with horror—always with an intense curiosity and almost always with a doubt that there could be any living thing in it. I will try to show you that there was and still is a living being contained therein, with many more movements, dissatisfactions, convulsions, longings and sufferings than it seems possible could exist.

II

SLAV REVOLUTIONARY CATHOLICISM

A FAR AIM AND A NARROW WAY.

If Providence bestows on the English Church only once in every half century a man like Bishop Westcott, this Church, I think, can be sure of a solid and sound longevity. Well, this Bishop Westcott spoke once enthusiastically of “*the noble catholicity which is the glory of the English Church*.” My intention in this lecture is to describe to you an island in the Roman Catholic Church among the Slavs, which island is distinguished by a *noble catholicity*. “I believe in the holy *catholic* apostolic church.” This sentence that you repeat in London, as do the Roman Catholics in Rome, and we Orthodox in Moscow, has always two meanings, a sectarian and a universal, or a narrow one and a

sublime one. The first meaning belongs to the people who imagine Christ standing at the boundary of their Church, turned with his face to them and with his back to all other

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“schismatic” peoples. The second belongs to the people who think that Christ may be also beyond their own churchyard; that the dwelling of their soul may be too narrow for His soul, and that their self-praisings and schismatic thunderings are very relative in His eyes. I propose to speak to-night about the people of this second category, *i.e.*, of the people who are in the Christian history like a link connecting the different parts, the different Churches, into a higher unity. I will limit my considerations in this lecture to Slav Roman Catholicism. I call my theme of to-night “Slav Revolutionary Catholicism.” Why “revolutionary”?

Why not? Is not Christianity a revolutionary movement from its very beginning? Is it not the most wonderful and the most noble among the revolutionary movements in history? Cardinal Newman and many others spoke about the evolution of Christianity. *Revolution* is the word much more applicable to it. The spreading of this revolution from a poor village in Galilee over all the world—that is the history of the Church; or, if you like, the evolution of a revolution. As a volcano is an internal movement of the earth which gives a new shape to the surface, so the Christian revolution was also an internal movement, which gave a new form to the drama of human life. The Christian religion seemed very simple, it was even poor in simplicity, and still—what an incalculable impression it made! It was simple in aims and in means. It had but one aim, and there was one way only to it: to attain good only by good deeds; to fight for justice only with means that were just; to realise Love only by Love itself; to push darkness away, not by a greater darkness, but by light; to come to God the Perfect by a perfect way. Christ preached a new aim and showed a new way—a very sublime aim and a very limited way indeed. In the pre-Christian world there were manifold aims and manifold ways and means. In Sparta, skilfulness in sinning and hiding sins was tolerated and even applauded. In ancient Rome, till the full sunset of its strength, a good man was regarded as a weak man. Among the pagan Slavs, a prosperous man was envied more than a virtuous man. Christianity cleared the spiritual atmosphere and deepened human life. “Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.” It was very clear. “Narrow is the way which leads unto life.” It was very deep. Through Hell you never will reach Heaven. In making the devil your companion you will never come to God. And God is the only aim, Christ the only way to that aim; a very far aim, a very narrow way.

JAN HUSS'S REVOLUTION.

Your great compatriot, Wycliffe, is rightly considered as the beginner of the Reformation. Wycliffe spoke, and his word was his great mission on earth. But his word in Bohemia became flesh—yea, more than flesh—blood and fire. Human words are never great except when transformed into a drama—when incarnated into life. Wycliffe was never so great in England as he became

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in Bohemia. Christianity in Bohemia was at that time relatively young, nearly three times younger than in Rome. But since Prince Borivoj was baptised by the Slav Apostle, Methodius, never did Bohemian Christianity stand nearer to the primitive Bohemian paganism than at the time when King Wenceslas ruled in Bohemia, and Pope John XXIII ruled in Rome, and Jan Huss served as preacher in a Prague chapel called the Bethlehemian. The paganism under the style of poor Jesus, against which fought Huss, was much more obstinate and aggressive than the paganism under the style of Perun, against which fought St. Methodius. Everywhere was found a substitute for Christ, everywhere a pretext for an easy life and for a broad way instead of the narrow one. Sins and virtues had been equalised by means of money. The Church buildings had been transformed into public places for the exchange of sins and virtues. “*Repentance, not Money!*”—exclaimed Jan Huss. But his voice was stifled by the piercing sounds of the drums by which the sale of absolution for sin was announced in the streets. Again exclaimed Jan Huss: “The whole Bohemian nation is longing after Truth.” But the traders in Christ’s blood and tears laughed him to scorn. The doctors of theology asked their colleague Huss to confess that “the Pope is the head and the Bishops the body of the Church, and all their orders must be obeyed.” But Huss did not care very much either about the head or the body, but principally about the *spirit* of the Christian Church. And this spirit he saw eclipsed. He saw men again falling back to the creed of serving “two masters.” He looked to the heart of the Christian religion and saw that it was sick, and his soul revolted against it. But his righteous revolution was regarded as a malevolent innovation, his words as a scandalous licence, and his tendencies as a deliberate destruction of Christianity. Therefore Jan Huss was brought before a tribunal of Christian judges, condemned to death and burnt to ashes, *ad magnam Dei gloriam*, as the Bishop of Lodi preached on that occasion.

The fact was that the Council of Constance was a great innovator, and that Huss stood for the true catholicity of old. He fought for the primitive Christian spirit which always inspired, vivified and purified the Christian world, and his judges introduced a quite anti-Christian, a quite new spirit into the Church, the spirit of *judging* and *killing*. The sufficient proof—if you need proof at all—of this is that Huss suffered as a Christian martyr and through painful *suffering* brought his cause to glory; whereas his judges killed him in the hope through a *crime* to promote the Christian cause, and so covered their names with shame. The truth and glory of Jan Huss’s cause were manifested last year throughout the whole of the globe. The whole world celebrated the quincentenary of his martyr death. I participated in this celebration

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in New York. It was a rare spectacle, that the New World saw. The Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Methodists and Baptists, all the Churches and denominations participated in it. We went together, we prayed together, and we felt united in one and the same spirit. That was a great moment, for many of us the unique moment, when we *experienced* what is meant by the *catholicity*, by the noble catholicity, of the Christian Church, as Bishop Westcott called it. It was an elevated and sweet feeling. The diabolical spirit of the Council of Constance never could unite us, but the Christian Catholic spirit of Jan Huss united us. The memory of Pope John XXIII divides the world, whereas the memory of the great apostle of the Bohemian nation unites it. Yet the revolution of Jan Huss was not of a personal character. It was not directed against John XXIII, or against the Vatican as Vatican—it was directed against the spirit of *Forum Romanum* which crept into the Vatican and dwelled there. It was directed against Jupiter, who took the place of Christ in Rome and who invisibly inspired the Council of Constance; and against Perun, who, disguised, smiled from every church in Prague, and with a smile ruled over the souls in Bohemia under the name of Christ.

THE POLISH REVOLUTION.

Mickiewicz, Sienkiewicz! Two great milestones in the history of the Polish soul; two great milestones in Christian history also! Both Roman Catholics and both revolutionists in religion. The religious revolution they made can be characterised only by the words “noble catholicity.” Both of them were attracted by Primitive Christianity much more than by the official Church of their own time. Sienkiewicz’s work “Quo Vadis?” is by far better known than Mickiewicz’s lectures on “The Official Church and Messianism.” Yet the same religious ideal has been pictured in both these works. Mickiewicz put on record as the true Christian *men of suffering, of intuition and of action* (“*hommes de douleur, d’intuition, d’action*”). Sienkiewicz described the first Christians as being such men. He revived the first days of Christianity in Rome. What striking contrasts between paganism and Christianity! Two quite different worlds in conflict—one world consisting of men of pleasure, and the other of men of suffering. On one side: Nero, Petronius, Vinicius, Seneca himself, and a mass harassed only about *panem et circenses*. On the other side: Paul of Tarsus, Petrus, Lygie, Ursus and many others willing to suffer and to die, and singing in suffering and in dying: *pro Christo! pro Christo!* On the one side, the proud Roman citizens, who adored force and who gave sacrifices to good and to evil spirits equally in order to save or procure their miserable, fleeting pleasure. On the other the humble inhabitants of the suburbs of Rome who adored only the Good Spirit of the Universe and did not care about pleasure, but about Justice and Love. Nero or Christ! The Emperor of the *Casa Aurea*, who, oversaturated and annoyed by life, finished by suicide; or the Prophet from Nazareth who came to establish the Kingdom of God on earth and who was forcibly crucified by the adorers of darkness!

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I have read many Roman Catholic teachers of catechism. I doubt whether all those *teachers* did for Christianity as much as an *artist*—Sienkiewicz —did with his charming story, “Quo Vadis?” He aroused so much interest, and so many sympathies even among the unbelievers; I am sure he converted to Christianity many more than any *propaganda fides* working on a half-political, half-scientific foundation. He put Christianity on a purely religious foundation, and he was understood not only by the Roman Catholics but by the whole world. He found the very heart of the “noble catholicity,” and he inspired the world. He showed once more that Christianity is a drama and not a science.

Sienkiewicz loved Christianity, but he saw that it was still far from gaining a decisive victory. He knew the horrible injustice done to his Christian nation by the surrounding Christian nations. He was horrified looking at Bismarck. He called Bismarck the “true adorer of Thor,” because he was a true follower of a pagan philosophy expressed in the Iron Chancellor’s sentence—*Might over Right*. Yet Sienkiewicz prophesied that “Germany in the future cannot live with Bismarck’s spirit.” She must change her spirit, she must expel Thor and again kneel before Christ, because the “Christian religion of two thousand years is an invincible power, a much greater power than bayonets.”

Mickiewicz hoped that only the Christian religion can save mankind. Christ is for him the central person in the world’s history. Christ never made concessions to evil. But His Church to-day is making compromises with all kinds of evil. The official Church is publishing diplomatic Notes and promoting the publishing of books. That is all. The Church is afraid of suffering, although “there are even to-day enough occasions for the Church to suffer.” “Prelates wear the purple which symbolises martyrdom: But who on earth has heard lately of the martyrdom of a Cardinal?” Mickiewicz bitterly complains that the “high clergy deserted the way of the Cross. They never would suffer. In order to escape suffering they fled as refugees to books, theology and doctrines. But *la force ne vient que de la douleur*.” “The lower clergy, the Russian as the Polish, conserved the depot of faith intact,” but still they are in a darkness of prejudice and vice. It is remarkable how large a view of the Christian Church had Mickiewicz. He did not care only for the Roman Church. He called the Russian Orthodox and the Polish Roman Church by one name—“the Church of the North.” He cared about Christ’s Church, and he believed steadfastly in her Messianic *role* in the world. “The men of conventions must be defeated,” he said. The pride of the high clergy and the fear of suffering must disappear. “The first need for a modern man is to be inspired and elevated, *de s’allumer et de s’élever*.” The Church is the only bearer of inspiration and elevation; not the official Church, but the Messianic Church of “men of suffering, intuition and action,” *i.e.*, the primitive Church of Christ, which Sienkiewicz so magnificently described and for which Jan Huss so heroically fought.

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THE SOUTHERN SLAV REVOLUTION.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century, a preacher of the Gospel in Trieste and Laibach, *Primus Trubar*, published successively the New Testament, Psalter and Catechism in the vulgar Slovene language. It produced the greatest imaginable excitement amongst the Slovene clergy and people. Christ and the Prophets spoke for the first time to the people in mountainous Carniola and Istria in a language that the people could understand. A minority of the clergy shared the popular excitement, whereas the majority was filled with fury against the innovator. But Trubar went his way courageously and continued to publish and republish the sacred books in the Slovene tongue. The affair had the usual ending: the violent persecution of the disturbers of the *semper eadem*, and the victory of the persecuted cause. Trubar died in exile from his country, his books were burnt, the churches in which his books had been read pulled down, and the people who dared to speak with Christ and the Prophets in their native language terrified. At the same time, the Turks, after having devastated Serbia and Croatia, descended on Slovenia with the sword, burning pulling down, and terrifying everywhere.

Yet the great question of the ecclesiastical language could not be stifled. Even before and after Trubar, the Slavs on the Adriatic coast of Dalmatia and Istria insisted on the so-called *Glagoliza* as the language which should be used in the divine service. *Glagoliza* is not the common language of the Croats and Slovenes, but it is an old and sacred form of the same tongue. Rome opposed for a long time, declined afterwards, opposed or half-opposed again, till the question is to-day brought to a very acute phase. Pope Paul V permitted the use of the *Glagoliza* in the Church. This permission was repeated by John VIII. and Urban VIII. There was printed a *Missale Romanum, slavica lingua, glagolitico caractere* (Rome, 1893). Still, one can say that although it is theoretically allowed, it is practically forbidden. It is used to-day in some new places, like Krk, Cherso, Zara, Sebenico, in Senj, Spalato, etc. But the fact remains that the Southern Slavs, or the Slavs generally, do not like the Latin language in the divine service. For the Slav conscience it is something incongruous: the Latin language of Nero and the spirit of Christ. Every language is the bearer of a certain spirit. Latin is the bearer of a juristic and despotic spirit. Ranke said: "The Papal Church is a legacy of ancient Rome." [1] If this be true, the language doubtless was one of the principal reasons for it. With the language of the Caesars also crept into the Church the spirit of the Caesars. This spirit was brought to a triumph in 1870 at the Council of the Vatican.

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As the Croats and Slovenes protested against the language of the Caesars, so they protested also against the triumphant spirit of the Caesars in the Church. Bishop Strossmayer opposed the dogma of Papal Infallibility with a sincerity, obstinacy and eloquence which can be compared only with the spirit of the “*golden age*” of Christian history. In a letter to an old Catholic friend, he wrote: “It is nonsense to say that the Popes cannot live without these miserable rags called temporary possessions.”[2] Is this not true apostolic language? Again he wrote: “What occurs to-day in Rome is obviously God’s punishment and at the same time a providential way to those reforms which the Church needs in order to fulfil her mission with more success in the future than she has done till now.”[3] And to Dr. Doellinger he confessed quite openly: “And what about my nation and its future? It seems to me quite certain that it will one day get rid of Roman despotism.”[4]

[Footnote 1: “History of the Popes,” Chap. I.] [Footnote 2: “Letter to Professor Reinkens,” Schulte: *Der Altatholicismus*.] [Footnote 3: *Ibid.*] [Footnote 4: *Ibidem*.]

THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION.

By its interference, religion can inspire science, and again science by its interference can purify religion. The most beautiful spectacle in human society is a priest contributing to science and a scientist contributing to religion. The one-sided man is always an imperfect man; and an imperfect man as a teacher of perfection is a dangerous teacher for young generations.

Two Slavs, Nicolaus Copernicus, from Thorn, and Ruggiero Boscovich, from Ragusa, both Roman Catholic priests, were at the same time both ardent scientists. Copernicus postulated the heliocentric planetary system instead of the geocentric. This happened soon after Columbus made a great revolution in geographical science by discovering America. Some people thought the end of the Church had come after Copernicus’ discovery that the sun and not the earth is the centre of the world. But Copernicus not only did not think so, but continued quietly in his vocation as a priest and dedicated his famous work to Pope Paul III.

Ruggiero Boscovich was not such a great discoverer as Copernicus; still he was one of the most distinguished scientific and philosophic minds in the eighteenth century. In his “*Theoria philosophiae naturalis*,” he tried to prove that bodies are composed not of a continuous material substance but rather of innumerable point-like structures or particles which are without any extension or divisibility. These elements are endowed with a repulsive force which can, under special circumstances (of distance), become attractive. Boscovich’s philosophical system can be called a dynamistic *atomismus*.

Men with much smaller scientific successes sometimes consider it their duty to separate themselves from the Christian Church. But great men like Copernicus and Boscovich

possessed in a high degree the *noble catholicity* which should always exist between religion and science. For every great revolution in science meant also a great revolution in religion. A scientific revolution could never shake the realities of religion, but only the illusions of religion.

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This was likewise the great result of the religious revolutions among the Slavs: not to shake the realities but the illusions of religion. Pride, superstitions and hatred have produced all the revolutions in the Church, the revolutions which meant for the Church real ventilation or punishment. These revolutions gave light and air to the Roman Church. Either the official books admit it, or they do not. No matter; the living Church admits it. She has built monuments to the prophets whom she killed or persecuted. No one is without a glorious monument—neither Huss nor Savonarola, neither Bruno nor Hieronymus of Prague, neither Trubar nor Strossmayer. The living Church always admired men of suffering and not men of pleasure. It was not the self-sufficient prelates who promoted the Christian cause, with their books and notes and discussions, but the sufferers, hungry and thirsty for the Kingdom of God. Christ was victorious over Nero in the Coliseum, but oftentimes afterwards Nero was victorious over Christ in the Church. But Nero must go, and Christ come. We have all pledged our word in our childhood to act so that Nero's spirit may decrease and Christ's spirit increase in the world. We cannot otherwise keep our pledge unless we adhere to the *noble catholicity* of the Christian Church, which is the very kernel of vulgar and verbal catholicity. But we cannot grasp all the Christian centuries and generations behind us and bind our own life with what is *noble* and *catholic* in all of them unless we are men of suffering, intuition and action. And we can be all three.

III

THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT OF THE SLAVS

WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS WORLD.

That is the principal feeling of the Slav soul: we are neither alone in this world nor destined for it. Whether I wander in the streets of London or stand in the green fields outside, I have always the same feeling of human loneliness and helplessness on one side, and the company of some overwhelming and invisible powers on the other. I say the *feeling* and not *thought*, because I feel they touch me and I am unhappy because I cannot touch them. They seem to be like shadows, and still I am sure they are greater realities than I am. My life is dependent on theirs and their lives are connected with, but not dependent on, my life. My being is quite transparent to these higher intelligences, while their beings I can feel only in the most lucid moments of my life. The dreamy nature around me is pervaded by them, and my own life, I feel, is pervaded by them also. In some way they disindividualise me, but on the other hand they give me strength, light and inspiration.

What is the number of these powers surrounding us? "Many," answered Paganism. "One only," answered Judaism and Islam. "One in Trinity," answered Christianity.

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So—*Christianity is a via media* between limitless Polytheism and absolute Monotheism. Professor Haeckel of Jena, in his hatred of Christianity, instanced Mohammedanism as a better religion and scornfully called the Christian religion “Polytheism.” The definition is not altogether untrue. Paganism was not wholly false. The Christian dogma of the Trinity in relation to this world symbolically means unity in multitude. This dogma expresses a principle, an idea, rather than a number. As we cannot define God’s being chemically, historically, psychologically, *etc.*, how can we hope to define Him mathematically? God is beyond numbers; He is beyond scientific research; beyond all expression. *One in three*, that is half-way to Polytheism and to Monotheism. *One in three* gives the substance of God’s life and binds Him to His own work, the created world.

God’s own life is dramatic internally, and externally (in relation to the world). That is the real meaning of the dogma of the Trinity. God is somehow one, and yet not one; rather He is a pluralistic unity. He can take part in the human drama and still remain the God of the Universe. He can suffer and still remain perfect. He can be omnipresent in the world and still not be wholly immersed in it. “I cannot understand it; it is a mystery to me,” exclaimed Tolstoi. Certainly he could not understand it; who could? We cannot understand our own beings. Modern biology discovered that a human body consists of millions and millions of corpuscles, minute organic cells which live their life and go their way unconscious of the human person formed by themselves. New discoveries may open up new problems, but the ancient mysteries about everything in the world continue to be omnipresent. How could we have more knowledge about God except some few glances, some imperfect allusions, some symbolical combinations?

However, lacking a clear and perfect understanding, we still feel that we are not alone in the world. God is all round us like the atmosphere that we breathe. The more we try to escape from this atmosphere, the closer it seems to pervade us. Tolstoi felt this as strongly as the most orthodox Fathers of the Church. Yet his doctrines on God, vague and pantheistic as they are, slow to ascribe to God any traditional qualities and trying in vain to invent new ones—his doctrines on God are less comprehensible than the dogma of the Trinity—less comprehensible, less applicable, and unfruitful.

GOD ONLY IS GREAT

Not Napoleon, but God; not London, but God. Tolstoi analysed Napoleon’s life and character, and found that he was no better or greater than thousands of other men who followed him. Why should London be called great? Yes, perhaps it can be called great compared with anything on earth, except God. I say, *except God*, because after a thousand years, *i.e.*, after one God’s day, God will be surely the same, and London? Will it be in existence a thousand years hence? Who knows? Walking in the streets of London I look round me and see nothing great except God.

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The famous Russian literature from Gogol to Dostojevsky is the finest psychological analysis of men. The result of this analysis was: there exists no great man. No one is great: neither Shakespeare nor Napoleon, neither Peter the Great nor Kutuzov, neither the Russian landlords nor the Czar himself, neither Prince Bolkonsky nor Raskolnikov, neither Nero nor St. Paul, neither Beaconsfield nor Osman Pasha, neither Pope nor Patriarch, neither Dalai-Lama nor Sheik-ul-Islam. How could they be great since they must sleep, and eat, and be sick and disappointed, and despair, and die? A review was made by the Russian authors—a review of ancient and modern great men—and a verdict arrived at. For a thousand years Christian Russia kept silent and listened to the hymns to the ancient and modern great men, to the heroes whom they worshipped. She listened to the hymns and worship of the great men while she begrudged praise to the good and saintly and suffering men. Russia is called “Holy,” not because she pretends to be *holy*, but because her ideal is holiness—not greatness but holiness. She first made use of the word in the nineteenth century. The poet Pushkin first used it, and he used it in the customary way, like Lord Byron, or Goethe, praising the great men, although still alluding here and there to the true Russian ideal—to the good and saintly man. But he spoke not in order to say a new, an original word to the world, but only to break the silence and to attract the attention of the world to Russia. He was the first of a series of preachers. He was listened to and applauded, but he said nothing new. After him followed the preachers: Gogol, Tolstoi, Goncharov, Tchekhov, Turgenev, Dostojevsky, and many others, like a choir, in which three voices are still the strongest and most expressive: Gogol, Tolstoi, Dostojevsky. What did they say?

They held a grand review of the souls, of the ancient and modern souls, and found that there exists no great man among them. That was their verdict. In all their writings they tried to show in the clearest manner, and to the smallest detail, that there is no great man in the world. They analysed everyone who was mentioned and adored by worldly society or by tradition as a great man, and proved that he was not a great man at all. It was very courageous indeed to speak like that in a world which was accustomed from the beginning, in the pagan as in the Christian epoch, to adore greatness, to divinise great men, to imitate and to worship heroes. It was still more courageous to speak like that in the nineteenth century, when the worship of great men found so many advocates, when the name of the demi-god Napoleon filled every corner of the earth; when German philosophy, poetry and music emphasised personality and individuality when the whole continental theology followed the way of Caesar and interpreted Christianity as a teaching and promotion of individualism in human life. Yea, it happened in the time when Carlyle, fascinated

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by German theories, ended the matter and pressed the whole world's history into some few biographies. Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship"—curiously enough—was published about the same time as Tolstoi's "War and Peace." Two antipodes! Dostojevsky's "Brothers Caramazov" was published nearly at the same time as Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" with its message of the Superman. Again two antipodes! You will in vain try to find such contrasts in the world as the Russian and Germano-Carlylean literature. Petronius and Seneca could read and understand very well Goethe and Carlyle, but they could not read and understand Tolstoi and Dostojevsky, nor could they understand the Christianity of their own time.

"Great men!" exclaimed the Roman world on their dying beds.

"Great men!" exclaimed rejuvenated Western Europe in the nineteenth century. History consists of great men. The very aim of history is to produce great men.

"No," answered Holy Russia, who kept silent for a thousand years. The ideal of the great man is the fast ideal of the childhood of mankind, of the youthful Pagan world. We are grown up in the Christian spirit; we can no longer live in the childish illusions and dreams of great men. We see them as they are. There has never existed and does not yet exist a great man. No one great man ever existed.

On this point Tolstoi and the Holy Synod were in agreement with each other and with the common spirit of the Russian people. They all agreed with their whole heart in the denial of the Greco-Roman worship of great men, which worship was everywhere revived in modern Europe in poetry, philosophy, politics, art and even in theology. For eighteen hundred years Western Europe was the spokesman of the Christian world and Russia kept silent. When, after eighteen hundred years, Russia came to the world, her answer was a decisive *No*. But that was not all she had to say. She had also to say a decisive *Yes*.

PANHUMANISM.

No and *Yes*. There is in the Slav religious conscience a *No* and a *Yes*.

No—for a great man; *Yes*—for a saintly man.

No—for pride; *Yes*—for humility.

No—for individualism; *Yes*—for panhumanism.

No—for longing after pleasure; *Yes*—for longing after suffering.

History has proved that a great man is impossible and, even more, undesirable, and that a saintly man is both possible and desirable. It is proved also that a so-called great man meant a great danger for mankind; a saintly man never could be dangerous. We do not need great men at all, we need good and saintly men. We ought not to seek after greatness, but after goodness and saintliness. Greatness is no real virtue, but goodness and saintliness are virtues. Greatness is only an illusion, but goodness and saintliness are realities. Christianity came to impress these realities on the human conscience and to sweep illusions away.

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The whole history of Christianity is a continual struggle between realities and illusions. All the wars between Christians and pagans, and between Christians themselves, from the time of Christ until our time, had always the same meaning—a struggle between the Christian realities of goodness and saintliness and the pagan illusions of greatness. The present War has the same meaning as all the wars since Christ came until Bismarck. This war was prophesied by Dostojevsky forty years ago. Dostoievsky was the only contemporary man towards whom Nietzsche felt respect and even fear because of his deep thought and clairvoyance. With his genial insight into human nature, Dostojevsky saw clearly the inevitable conflict of the different camps of Europe, whose apparent and hypocritical peace was only a busy preparation for conflict. “Everything will be pulled down,” he said, “especially European pride.” He had also a vision of what will come after this great conflict. “Christ,” he said, “nothing else but Christ Himself will come in the form of panhuman brotherhood and panhuman love.”

YOUR SINS ARE MY SINS.

Love the sinner as well! Do not fly away from the sinners, but go to them without fear. After all—whoever you may be—you are not much better than they are. Try to love the sinners; you will see that it is easier to love those whom you despise than those whom you envy. The old Zosim (from the “Brothers Caramazov”) said, “Brothers, don’t be afraid of the sins of a sinner; but love a sinner also—that is the record of love upon earth.” I know you love St. Peter and St. John, but could you love the sinner Zacchaeus? You can love the good Samaritan but love, please, the prodigal son also! You love Christ, I am sure; but what about Judas, the seller of Christ? He repented, poor human creature. Why don’t you love him? Dostojevsky—like Tolstoi and Gogol—emphasised two things: first, there is no great man; secondly, there is no worthless man. He described the blackest crimes and the deepest fall and showed that the authors of such crimes are men just as other men, with much good hidden under their sins. Servants and vagabonds, idiots and drunkards, the dirty *katorzniki* from the Serbian prisons—all those people are God’s sons and daughters, with souls full of fears and hopes, of repentance and longings after good and justice.

Between *saintliness* and *vice* there is a bridge, not an abyss. The saintliest and the meanest men have still common ground for brotherhood. Your sins are my sins, my sins are your sins. That is the starting-point for a practical and lucid Christianity. I cannot be clean as long as you are not clean. I cannot be happy as long as you are unhappy. I cannot enter Heaven as long as you are in Hell. What does that mean? It means that you and I are blended together for eternity, and that your effort to separate yourselves from me

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is disastrous for you and for me. As long as you look to the greatest sinner in the world and say: "God, I thank thee that I am not as that man," you are far from Christ and the Kingdom of God. God wants not one good man only, He wants a Kingdom of good men. If ninety-nine of us are good and saintly but one of our brothers is far from our solace and support, in sin and darkness, be sure God is not among us ninety-nine, but He has gone to find our brother whom we have lost and forgotten. Will you follow him or will you stand self-sufficient? Never has there existed in the world such a social power binding man to man and commanding each to take and bear the other's sorrows as Christianity did. Your sins are my sins, my sins are your sins. Such a conception of the Christian religion had Tolstoi in common with Dostojevsky and Gogol, with the Holy Synod, with the popular religious conscience of millions and millions of the living and the dead, in the orthodox world, and with all the *jurodivi*, the fools for Christ's sake. That is the religious spirit of the best of the Slavs.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILISATION.

The following is the Slav point of view: Christianity came into the world, not in order to inaugurate a new civilisation, but to infuse a new religious spirit, to clear and purify the human conscience. A perfect Christian spirit can exist quite outside civilisation as well as in the midst of the most complicated civilisation. A Christian negro, in his nudity, picking up dates under a palm tree, can be as good and saintly a man as any business man from the Strand in London or from the Fifth Avenue in New York. And, on the contrary, the most civilised men, like Bismarck and Nietzsche can be of a much more anti-Christian spirit than any primitive human creature in Central Africa or Siberia. Many civilisations have been created without Christianity. You cannot say that Christian London is a more perfect and beautiful city than Pagan Rome or Mohammedan Cordova were. But you may perhaps say that the spirit of London is more sublime and humane, more good and saintly, than the spirit of Rome and Cordova. Well, it is the *spirit* which regards Christianity, and nothing else. Civilisation is only an occasion for Christianity to prove its spirit. It is an occasion of suffering, and also of corruption. In both cases Christianity has to be tested. Christianity has to fight against a Pagan civilisation as well as a Pagan barbarism. It is sometimes harder for the Christian spirit to fight against the first than against the second form of Paganism. It was easier for the Christian mission to Christianise barbarous Africa than cultivated Rome. And imagine how much it will cost till Bismarckian and Nietzschean Germany "changes her spirit" as Sienkiewicz foretold.

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I mention this relation between Christianity and civilisation to prove that a civilisation with *any* spirit is not attractive to the Slav, but rather the civilisation with the Christian religious spirit *only*. Tolstoi denied all civilisation just because he did not see the Christian spirit in it. The Church was reserved towards modern science and art just because she saw the anti-Christian, proud, egoistical spirit in many expressions of them. Better the poor Christian spirit in a cottage of Macedonia than a rich and cultivated Paganism in Vienna. The spirit with which a railway is made counts and not the railway itself. We are never alone but always in the presence of a great Spirit who encircles and inspires us. Whatever we do through this inspiration is living and good; whatever we do without His inspiration, but under the supposition that we are alone in this world, is wrong and dead. A great civilisation may be wrong and dead Yea, as there is no great man, there is no great civilisation. The ideal of Slav Christianity is a good and saintly man, and also a good and saintly civilisation. The very essence of life is mystic and religious. What is a man or a civilisation without mysticism and religion? They are like a painted landscape on paper. You enjoy it from a distance, but when you touch it you are disappointed. Everything without God is discontentment, emptiness.

Blessed are those—I wish you all may be numbered among them—whose life is full of God. They are connected with the sun and the stars, with the living and the dead, with the past and the future. They possess a wonderful bridge over every abyss in life, and they are always safe. They are bright in darkness, joyful in suffering, hopeful in death. Their life on earth, in this very limited sphere of life, is escorted by the whole of the Universe, from one end to the other. I wish that such a religious spirit belonged not only to the Slavs but to all mankind.