

CHAPTER V

CHURCH AND PEOPLE

"HOLY Russia," the Empire is called, and the troops of the Tsar are his "Christ-loving army." The slow train stops at a wayside station, and among the grey cottages on the hillside rises a white church hardly supporting the weight of a heavy blue cupola. The train approaches a great city, and from behind factory chimneys cupolas loom up, and when the factory chimneys are passed it is the domes and belfries of the churches that dominate the city. "Set yourselves in the shadow of the sign of the Cross, O Russian folk of true believers," is the appeal that the Crown makes to the people at critical moments in its history. With these words began the Manifesto of Alexander II announcing the emancipation of the serfs. And these same words were used by those mutineers on the battleship *Potemkin* who appeared before Odessa in 1905. The symbols of the Orthodox Church are set around Russian life like banners, like ancient watch-towers. The Church is an element in the national consciousness. It enters into the details of life, moulds custom, maintains a traditional atmosphere to the influence of which a Russian, from the very fact that he is a Russian, involuntarily submits. A Russian may, and most Russian intelligents do, deny the Church in theory, but in taking his share in the collective life of the nation he, at many points, recognises the Church as a fact. More than that. In those borderlands of emotion that until life's end evade the control of toilsomely acquired personal conviction, the Church retains a foothold, yielding only slowly and in the course of generations to modern influences. Or it may happen, and often does happen, that the intelligent in his eager intellectual search,

in his ardour of social service is suddenly caught away by a current of religious feeling which combines with nationalist instinct to draw him back into the Church. A strangely complex institution is the Orthodox Church and very subtle are its influences.

A Russian heads his letters with a date thirteen days later than that recognised by the rest of the civilised world simply because the Church, on purely traditional and irrational grounds, insists on the maintenance of the Old Style. He may protest against the anachronism, and if he has strong feelings on the subject he may use the New Style as well as the Old, heading his letters with such a complex date as December 28, 1912, January 10, 1913. But he cannot abandon the Old Style for the simple reason that it is observed in all public transactions, in banks and Government offices. A high school boy may be a devoted admirer of Nietzsche or Marx, but he knows perfectly well which saints' days in the year mean a whole holiday. The average Russian intelligent does not dream of going to church on Sundays, and of priests on the whole he has an exceedingly poor opinion. But at certain important moments of his life he invokes the Church's aid. He goes to church to be married, and before marriage confession and communion are necessary. The priest christens his children, and every Orthodox Russian bears the name of a saint, Greek, Jewish, Roman, or Russian. And when he dies priest and deacon again come into his home and sing a mass for the repose of his soul, and afterwards, with solemn and touching ceremony commit his body to the ground. There is one great festival of the year in which all Russians, whatever be their standing or opinions, joyfully take part. Nowhere is Easter celebrated with such tremulous intensity of feeling as in Russia.

But it is just because the Church occupies such a conspicuous position in public life that it is difficult to determine the real attitude of the people to religion. The Russian people seem decorously and deeply religious. A cabman

bares his head and crosses himself when he passes church or shrine. A merchant in a tramcar will suddenly cease reading the city column in his morning paper and bow and cross himself reverently because of a passing funeral. In every cathedral in St. Petersburg and Moscow, at all hours of the day, women are kneeling before the sacred pictures, bowing to the ground and whispering endless prayers. A Russian peasant crosses himself before and after eating, crosses himself when he sets out on a railway journey and before he retires to rest. In nearly every Russian house ikons or sacred pictures hang in the corners, and before them tiny lamps with floating wicks are constantly burning. But over against these facts stand others equally characteristic, such as the prevalence of drunkenness, and the fact that not in England, France, or Germany is it possible to hear in the public streets such an astonishing variety of bad language as in Russia. In attempting to define the Russian people's attitude to religion one may easily slip and stumble. But of its attitude to the Church as an institution the routine of daily living gives abundant illustrations.

In its most intimate connection with the people the Church is represented by the village priest far more than by metropolitan, archbishop, or archimandrite, and infinitely more than by the Holy Synod with its lay Chief Procurator. The village priest represents the living continuity of ecclesiastical tradition. He has not an easy life. He receives a salary paid by the Treasury through the Synod of from about £15 to £30 a year. He has a parsonage and glebe land, sometimes barely enough for a vegetable garden, sometimes enough to keep a horse and a few cows on, and to grow produce for sale. The salary is eked out by various fees from the parishioners, amounting in all from £50 to £90 a year according to the size of the parish. For a christening peasants pay from sixpence to a shilling, for a wedding from a pound upwards. But the priest must provide out of his own pocket for the lighting of

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the church for the wedding and the warm wine that bride and bridegroom drink after communion. And if the birth certificates of the pair are not in the priest's keeping and have to be copied from the registers of another parish he must have them copied and forwarded at his own expense. For a funeral the fee is from six to ten shillings. And then there are endless small fees. Three times a year, at Christmas, Epiphany and Easter, the priest makes the round of the parish, and holds a short service in every house. For each visit he receives from threepence to a shilling. For the mass sung for the repose of the soul which the relatives order on the twentieth or fortieth day after the decease, the fee is from fourpence to sixpence. For every service, in fact, held by the priest at the request of the parishioners, over and above the regular services on Sundays and the appointed Church Festivals, he receives a trifling fee. Under such conditions the questions of fees may easily become a source of friction between priest and parishioners, and it is not surprising that the village priest is often close-fisted and grasping.

Questions of ways and means, of kopeks and roubles harass the village priest continually. The fees he receives he must share with the deacon, for every priest in holding a service must be aided by a deacon, or an unordained assistant called a *psalomshchik* or cantor, who chants the responses. But the priest's wife helps him to solve the economic problem, for, as a rule, she is an excellent housekeeper. The clergy form a caste apart, priests and deacons marry the daughters of priests and deacons, and it very often happens that an old priest on retiring passes his parish on to his son-in-law. The priest's wife brings with her a tradition of good house-keeping that has been handed down in the families of the clergy from generation to generation. She knows well how to bake the cabbage or meat pasties that *batiushka*, the Little Father, loves, how to cure ham, to salt cabbage and cucumbers, to make all kinds of jams, kvass, cherry, raspberry and black currant brandy, and birthday cakes and

sweets for Easter. She sews and embroiders blouses for the boys and dresses for the girls, and sees that all the children have warm felt boots in the winter, and the boys high leather boots and the girls shoes in the summer. The family is always a large one, and means are very limited, but somehow the *popadia*, the priest's wife, manages to make ends meet, and her cheerful bustle and constant forethought make the problem of life, which for the village priest is not at all metaphysical, but consists in an unceasing pressure of petty cares, less harassing than it might otherwise be. If she dies leaving little children, the lot of the widower is a hard one, for the Russian priest may not marry a second time.

The children's education is well provided for. After learning the elements from father or mother at home or in the parish school, the boys are sent to the head town of the government to the School for the Sons of the Clergy where they are educated free of charge, and the girls to the Eparchial or Diocesan School for Girls where teaching and board are also free. The instruction given in these schools is very ecclesiastical in character. Modern languages are not taught, but a great deal of attention is paid to Church Slavonic, Church Music, Divine Service, and Church History. The boys are educated with a view to their becoming clergymen, and the girls with a view to their becoming clergymen's wives. From the School for the Sons of the Clergy the boys may pass into a Theological Seminary where they are trained for the priesthood. But only a small proportion of priests' sons follow their father's profession. Many become clerks in various Government offices, some, either by their own efforts or aided by their father's scanty savings, make their way to the University or Technical Colleges and so into the various lay professions. The number of seminarists who enter the priesthood is lessening year by year, and the question of filling the vacancies is becoming a serious one in many parts of Russia. Priests' daughters after leaving the Eparchial School either return to their homes, where they stay until

their marriage with some young deacon or priest, or else become teachers in the parish schools or in the Eparchial School itself. Some break through the magical ecclesiastical circle and go to the cities to continue their education in the Women's University College or Medical College, or in one of the numerous *Kursy*, courses of lectures or higher schools, pedagogical or technical, or in language schools, in dentists', nurses', or medical assistants' training schools. And then they become country school teachers or doctors, or find themselves suddenly deported to Siberia for having joined a socialistic organisation, or simply marry a student and share his adventurous lot.

The priest's home life is full of cares and anxieties, but it makes him very human, gives him a very real sympathy with the cares of his peasant parishioners which are, after all, in their petty, harassing, economic character, very like his own. But there are the broader cares, the business of the parish, the care of souls, and these lie heavily upon the zealous pastor. The ways of his ministry are definitely appointed and strictly regulated. His duty is to be the faithful instrument of a complex tradition. First of all, he has regularly to hold service in the little parish church and in outlying chapels. But to hold services is not a simple matter. Walking down the village street in a low-crowned hat and blue cassock with a cross on his breast, bearded, long-haired, he is simply the village "pope," *Batiushka*, the Little Father, Father Nikon, Vasili or Michael. But when he enters the church, dons his robe of cloth-of-gold, and the altar doors open, and he comes out before the assembled congregation chanting and swinging a censer in the smoke of which the sacred pictures in their glittering frames take fantastic forms, and the shadows within the altar become full of mystery, then Father Vasili becomes another being, a priest, with powers of which some intimation is given in the sad, sweet, slowly rising and falling tones of the choir, the familiar but solemn Slavonic words of the prayers and the sonorous responses of the deacon.

The Church touches the peasants in some way hard to define. They stand in rows, the men on the right, the women on the left, with folded hands, listening to the music and chanting, and gazing at the sacred pictures of the Saviour, the Madonna, St. George, St. Nicholas the Wonder-worker, or the worn, stern, ascetic face of St. Sergius Radonezhsky. They bow and kneel when the priest bids them do so, and often bow and cross themselves when a wailing note in the music, a name, a phrase in the prayers makes a sudden appeal. Sometimes the women or a pilgrim near the door kneel and bow ecstatically, touching the floor with their foreheads and whispering, *Gospodi pomilui* (Lord have mercy). The priest closes the altar doors and disappears from view, opens them again and reads the gospel for the day, turns his back to the congregation and bows low before the altar. There is no break in the service, choir and deacon take up the burden when the priest's voice ceases, and in that world of strangely vibrating and plaintive utterance the peasant congregation is held for two hours or more until at last the end of the mass is reached, and the priest advances holding out the Cross, and the parishioners throng round to kiss it and to receive a blessing.

Rarely does the village priest preach a sermon or attempt to make the church service a vehicle of religious instruction. The mass is a direct appeal to the emotions, and what the congregation chiefly demands from the priest is that he shall "serve well," that is to say, that he should have a good voice, a good ear, and that he should be able to carry through without blundering the complex ritual with its incessant demand for vigilance in detail. A good priest must be able to serve well not only in the routine of low masses, but in high masses on the great festivals, in the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great and other Lenten liturgies, and in the Christmas and Easter services. It is the Easter service that puts on the village priest the heaviest strain. For six weeks he has been fasting, refraining absolutely from meat, eggs, and milk

products, and rarely eating fish. There are many extra services in Lent, and he must confess his parishioners one by one. Holy Week is the most difficult week of all with its incessant prayers and its atmosphere of deep gloom, and when Easter Eve comes Father Vasili is thin and pale and his eyes have a febrile brightness. Winter is over, ice and snow have melted, the trees are still leafless, the fields black and bare, and the wind is chilly, but there is a sense of coming Spring in the air. The service begins two hours before midnight. All the peasants of the neighbourhood are there, and the schoolmaster, the village tradesman, the gentry of the parish and, it may be, a few passing artisans and tramps. Up till midnight the music is low and dreary. Then there is a restless movement. Every member of the congregation lights a candle. Youths fire off guns on the church steps. The priest and deacon advance toward the door, peasants grasp the ikons and church banners, and with candles, ikons, and banners, and with singing the congregation walks out into the churchyard and in procession around the church. Before they re-enter the priest cries, "Christ is risen." The congregation answers, "He is risen indeed!" The choir breaks into joyful singing and the happy mass of Easter morning begins. After the service is over the priest must bless the *kulich*, Easter cakes, and the *paskha*, a sweetmeat made of sour milk, eggs, and sugar, which the peasant women have brought to church with them. Then come the days of visitation and feasting, long journeys from village to village, with prayers in each cottage, and here a glass of tea with *kulich* and *paskha*, and there a glass of vodka, so that often at the end of a long day from weariness and from much eating and drinking after the long fast priest and deacon are barely able to mumble the words of the prayers.

So the year goes round with its long calendar of fasts and feasts in all of which the priest must take the leading part. There are four great fasts, Lent, which lasts seven weeks, including Maslanitsa, Butter or Carnival Week, when, though

milk, butter, and eggs are permitted, meat is forbidden; the fast of the Assumption of the Virgin, which lasts two weeks, the fast before St. Peter's Day, and the fast before Christmas, which lasts from November 14 until Christmas Eve. The priest must observe these fasts even if others are negligent, and he must also fast weekly on Wednesdays and Fridays. Then there are the extra services, on the day of the patron saint of the village, for instance, or in time of drought when priest and peasants go into the fields to pray for rain, or on a day on which the village community has vowed to hold service in honour of a saint who has stayed an epidemic among the cattle or in some way brought an answer to prayers. There are prayers to be said, too, when the cattle are driven out to pasture in spring, and there are name-days when special services are sometimes ordered by the more well-to-do families, and *panikhidy*, or masses for the repose of the souls of the deceased, and *akathists*, or hymns in honour of the Saviour, the Virgin, and the Saints, to be sung on special occasions. To carry out the purely ritual duties of his profession is for the village priest no light task.

Another important part of his duties is to explain the meaning of this ritual. It would be a mistake to imagine that the peasants' experience in the Church is nothing more than a vague, aesthetic emotion. They have certain religious conceptions which are formed partly from words in the service which they vaguely understand, more rarely from the reading of the Gospel and lives of the saints, partly from the floating mass of custom and legend, and partly from direct instruction. Instruction is given by the priests to the children in the parish schools maintained by the Holy Synod, and also in the Zemstvo schools and those maintained by the Ministry of Public Instruction. In these schools the children are taught to read Church Slavonic when they are barely able to read Russian, which is very much as though English children were taught to read Wycliffe's Bible in the infant

classes. Church Slavonic is a slightly modified form of the Bulgarian language as spoken about the ninth century in the neighbourhood of Serres in Macedonia, and as used in the translation of the scriptures made by the Slavonic missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, and in the services of the Orthodox Church. The alphabet is different from the Russian, and there are many words, grammatical forms and phonetic combinations which are not to be found in the Russian language. Church Slavonic as taught in the parish schools certainly does not develop the intelligence of Russian children, but some learn enough to catch a good many fragments of meaning in the words of the Church Service. The priest gives instruction in Catechism and Church History, too, but it is only a rare pastor who succeeds in making these dry bones live. The religious instruction given in the schools is, as a rule, a numbing, deadening thing, and probably contributes far less to the formation of the people's religious conceptions than the reading of the lives of the saints or the stories of wandering "brothers," or the talks of pilgrims during long journeys on foot to the great shrines. For the Russian people talk about religious questions, are perpetually interested in them, in some restless, probing way of their own.

The personal character of the priest counts for a great deal in the life of the parish. "Like pope, like parish," is a Russian saying. Sometimes priests are hopelessly ignorant and stupid, and hold their position in spite of obvious incapacity only through the protection of powerful relatives. Sometimes they give way to drink and, as a rule, priests do not by their example encourage abstinence in their flocks. In the North priests have the reputation of being grasping, and in the South where parishes are smaller and glebe-lands larger and more fertile, they are accused of indolence and moral laxity. The average priest is neither conspicuously devout nor conspicuously negligent. He is a hearty fellow with a broad accent, rather overburdened by the cares of

his office and by family cares, not keenly intelligent, but shrewd, observant, with common sense and humour. He is not interested in theoretical questions, is sincere in his religious beliefs, takes the world as he finds it, and feels thoroughly at home in it, and able to enjoy its good things when they come to him. Often he subscribes to a city newspaper and follows in his evening leisure the course of events in the big world. He has the peasant's liking for foreign politics and is always glad to launch into a vague and placid discussion of the Panama Canal question, or the plans of the German Emperor, or the Suffragette movement in England. There are not a few priests who delight in their office, who are full of a warm and simple faith, and who toil in poor parishes all their lives long without any other object than that of doing good. The wonder, considering all the conditions of service, is not that there are so few good priests, but that there are so many of them.

For the position of the village priest is greatly complicated by his relations with his superiors and with the outside world generally. He is under constant observation, is subject to perpetual interference. His immediate concern is with the *Blagochinny*, or superintendent, usually the incumbent of a large and well-to-do parish, who has oversight over several neighbouring parishes and keeps watch over the behaviour of the priests, inquires into their complaints, examines the parish registers, and investigates the financial affairs of each parish, which are managed by the priest in conjunction with an elective church elder and a parish council. On all these matters the *Blagochinny* reports to the bishop of the diocese or his assistants. Sometimes appeal is made directly by parishioners to the bishop in the head town of the government. But the oversight of the *Blagochinny* concerns not only the spiritual and economical affairs of the parish. It has a political object also. The Russian Church is subject to the State. Above the village priest is a hierarchy of canons, bishops, and archbishops, and the three Metropolitans

of St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Kiev. But this hierarchy is under the control of a lay institution, the Holy Synod, into which Metropolitans and Bishops enter as members, but of which the Oberprocuror or Chief Procurator, a layman, and member of the Cabinet, is the head. There is a striking contrast between the German title for the Minister for the Church and the traditional Byzantine terminology employed in ecclesiastical ritual. The Synod is, in fact, a foreign institution. It was established by Peter the Great in connection with his general reform of administrative institutions and was formed on Protestant models. The office of Patriarch, who was head of the Russian Church during the Moscow period, and who occupied a position corresponding with that of the Patriarchs of other autocephalous Eastern churches was abolished, experience in Moscow having demonstrated that the power of the Patriarch might rival that of the Tsar. And Peter, who was determined to maintain the authority of the State at all costs, forced the Church into the rigid framework of his bureaucratic system. It was characteristic of him that in the ancient monastery of St. Michael in the Ukraine he set the Imperial arms, the double-headed eagle, above the golden cross that surmounted the cupola.

The Church has thus become a bureaucratic institution. And the village priest is made constantly to feel that he is not only a servant of the Church, but a subordinate member of the bureaucracy, a Government official. He is responsible for the conduct of the parish school, for instance, which is maintained by the Holy Synod. But the parish school is frowned on by progressive people in the neighbourhood, and the priest often comes into conflict with *Zemstvo* employees and country gentlemen on this account. Often, too, the priest is compelled to play the part of an informer. If there is a *Zemstvo* school in his parish he must note the behaviour of the teacher, report on his or her political opinions, give warning to the authorities if the teacher lends books freely to the peasants or converses with them on political subjects.

If the young men of his parish display public enterprise, organise a fire brigade or a co-operative society, it often happens that the priest is set to watch their movements and to place impediments in their way. The position of the priests has been especially trying in this respect during the last few years of political conflict. They are constantly associated with the *uriadniks* or rural policemen in the suppression of manifestations of political sentiment disagreeable to the Government. The priests are torn between the fear of endless conflict with their parishioners on political grounds, and the fear of incurring the displeasure of their superiors. Many simply obey orders, become informers and zealous members of the reactionary parties, and try to secure their position within the parish by arousing fanatical reactionary feeling among the peasantry. The better men suffer bitterly in a perpetual conflict between conscience and administrative compulsion. Political pressure on the priesthood reached its culminating point in the electoral campaign of 1912, when the Holy Synod, in order to secure a reactionary majority in the Duma, mobilised the priests in support of the reactionary candidates. The plan failed because a great many priests, shocked at the profanation of their office for electioneering purposes, simply voted as they were told not to and risked the consequences. In all four Dumas priests have been among the deputies, but those who, in the first two Dumas, spoke or voted against the Government—like the devout and earnest Viatka priest, Father Tikhvinsky, who in the name of Christianity protested against capital punishment—have been unfrocked as a penalty, and have, with great difficulty, made their way into other professions. In the Third and Fourth Dumas most of the priests have been members of the reactionary parties.

The position of the village priest is typical of that of the whole of the Russian clergy. There are differences of wealth and position. In the country the priest's life is very like the peasant's. In small towns he has to do almost

exclusively with artisans, small tradesmen, and minor officials. In the larger towns his lot is thrown among the merchants, who hold fast to traditional observances closely interwoven with ecclesiastical ritual. Then there are differences determined by the character of various towns. The priest in charge of some ancient chapel in the sleepy, deserted city of Novgorod naturally leads a life very different from that of the incumbent of a parish in a busy, modern seaport like Odessa. In districts where other confessions are strongly represented, in Catholic Poland, for instance, amongst the Mohammedans on the Volga, or in districts where dissent prevails, the office of the Orthodox priest assumes a militant nationalist character. In the capitals, again, the priests live the hurried, nervous life of a cosmopolitan world. The incumbents of the larger churches receive a good income, while the cathedral clergy prosper greatly, as may be easily seen by comparing a haggard and unkempt country deacon with one of the stout, florid, broad-chested deacons of the Kazan Cathedral. A deacon with a good sounding bass was, until recently, almost in as great demand in the cities as an opera singer, and was paid incredible sums for singing the responses at weddings in wealthy merchants' families.

The parochial priests are called the "white clergy." The "black clergy" are the monks, and between the two there is a striking difference. Monasteries have

Monasticism. played an important part in Russian history.

The fierce self-mortification of the monks of the Kievo-Pechorskaia Lavra, founded in 1062 in Kiev, deeply impressed the imagination of the Southern Russians and contributed to the spread of a strongly ascetic form of Christianity. In the north-eastern forests monasteries were the chief centres of colonisation. A hermit retired into the forest to devote himself to prayer and fasting, disciples gathered around him, and the fame of his miraculous powers attracted people from the settled region, until gradually a village or town grew up, the forest was felled and the soil

brought under cultivation. The new monastery in its turn sent out colonists farther afield, and so the process continued indefinitely. Of great importance as a colonising centre was the great monastery of the Trinity not far from Moscow, founded in the fourteenth century by St. Sergius Radonezhsky. A very large number of monasteries were founded in and around Novgorod and many of them are still in existence. At one time the monasteries promoted literature and learning; monks translated devotional works from the Greek, or transcribed Bulgarian translations, copied and illuminated manuscripts, and wrote historical annals. Then came the inevitable moral decline. Peter the Great and Catherine took strong measures against the monasteries and convents and largely reduced their number, but Alexander I reversed this policy. During the nineteenth century the Government at intervals encouraged the development of monasticism, probably in the hope that it would serve to buttress up the traditional system.

The monasteries still play an important part in the life of the Russian Church for two reasons. In the first place, many of them are objects of popular veneration on account of their historical associations, or on account of the miracle-working shrines, the relics of famous saints which they contain. Nearly all the older monasteries were the scenes of the labours of one of the hundreds of saints in the Russian calendar, or contain an ikon that, according to legend, miraculously fell from heaven—as, for instance, the Iberian Madonna in a monastery on an island in Lake Valdai—or one that shed tears of blood, or turned back from a town an invading army, as did the Madonna at Pochaiev in Volhynia when the Tartar hordes were advancing. In the course of centuries a body of legend has gathered around these shrines, endless stories are related about their miracle-working powers, and the Madonnas of Kazan, Tikhvin, and Pochaiev have a powerful hold on the popular imagination. And every year to all these shrines pilgrims come flocking, yielding to that

impulse to wander, that centuries of roving over the plain have made a part of the Russian nature. Mile after mile the pilgrims tramp, men and women, by forest and river, in rain and sunshine, carrying black bread with them or begging shelter and food by the way "for Christ's sake." They gather at the shrine and kiss the relics, and weep and pray, and feel themselves wrapped and safely guarded in a national tradition that brings heaven nearer. They exchange news and impressions, argue about religious matters, develop their shrewd philosophy and let fall curiously wise sayings.

There are dark sides to the picture. Vagabonds join in the throng and cheat and delude the unwary. And the conduct of the monks in charge of the shrine often has a depraving effect. Pilgrims come to a monastery on the eve of a festival, and find the monks sleeping off the effects of a drinking-bout, while the precincts of the monastery are a scene of licence. In the morning the monks, dirty and bloated, come out in procession with ikons and banners and the pilgrims stupidly follow them into the church where hieromonachs, or monks in orders, blunder hoarsely through the mass. In some great monasteries, like the Lavra in Kiev, the monks systematically exploit the ignorance and simplicity of the worshippers. And generally in the monasteries in or near the cities the idea that monks live a strict, devout, and noble life seems to be an exploded fiction. The curious thing is that the people seem to take the laxity of the monks for granted, and continue to venerate the shrines in spite of the surrounding demoralisation. Not all monasteries have been culpable in this respect. Much depends upon the firmness of the abbots or *igumeni*, among whom there are men of remarkable administrative capacity, and a considerable number of monasteries are free from reproach. The convents have a better reputation than the monasteries for industry and order.

Sometimes in the neighbourhood of a shrine lives a recluse of lofty character and great spiritual tact, to whom the

troubled and anxious come for advice and consolation. Such recluses, *starsy*, or elders, as they are called, were formerly to be met with much more frequently than they are now. One of the most famous was Amvrosiy (Ambrose) of the Optyn Monastery near Kaluga, the original of the elder Zosima in Dostoievsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. Often an element of genuine piety is brought into monasteries by devout peasants who, after having lived honourably in the world, take the vows and retire to spend their last days in quietness and prayer. And for many nervous and harassed women convents serve as a home of rest. A merchant's wife will frequently prefer life in a convent to a sanatorium. As a rule, however, the life of monks and nuns is a dull, uninspired round of formal duties. The monasteries altogether considering their enormous wealth are amazingly unproductive. They support, with a few insignificant exceptions, no charitable institutions, maintain no industries except the manufacture of candles and ikons and the printing of ecclesiastical literature, and contribute no money for national purposes.

But for the Church they exercise a second important function. They serve as administrative training schools, recruiting grounds for the hierarchy. Bishops, archbishops, and metropolitans must be celibates, that is to say, they are members of the "black clergy," live in monasteries, or in houses that rank as such, and are appointed from among archimandrites and abbots. Thus the married clergy are governed by celibates who in their turn occupy prominent positions in the bureaucracy and are subject to lay authority. The double function of the monasteries has a curious effect on the hierarchy. On the one hand, they are guardians of customs that deeply impress the popular imagination and awaken religious feeling. On the other hand, they provide administrators who occupy their place in a strictly co-ordinated bureaucratic system. The result is that the ritual function of the monasteries is subordinated to administrative

objects, and the appeal to the popular imagination is carefully calculated and regulated so that it may further those political ends that the bureaucracy has in view. The working of this system was shown in a curious way in Volhynia a few years ago. The Archbishop of Volhynia, Antony, a very able and energetic man, and Archimandrite Vitaly, of the Pochaiev Lavra, also a man of restless energy, were both ardent supporters of the old regime and strongly hostile to constitutionalism. Amongst the throngs of pilgrims who came to worship at the shrine of the Madonna, they tried to promote a violently reactionary popular movement. In a fanatical young monk called Iliodor (Heliodorus) they found the agitator they needed for their purpose. Iliodor's fervid eloquence, his violent attacks on Jews, constitutionalists and revolutionaries, strangely combined with denunciations of landlords and capitalists generally, had an electrifying effect on the crowd. Iliodor's fame spread far and wide, and he did actually succeed in evoking a strong reactionary movement among the more ignorant of the South Russian peasantry.

But the sequel was unexpected. From the Pochaiev Lavra Iliodor went to Tsaritsyn on the Volga, where he continued his denunciations of the enemies of the Tsar and true religion. Immense crowds gathered around him, for his eloquence seems to have been inspired by sincerity. His preaching became more and more democratic in character, he pleaded the cause of the people not only against the intelligentsia, journalists, and revolutionaries, not only against landlords and wealthy tradesmen, but also against officials, governors, and ministers. And, finally, he began to denounce the Holy Synod—still in the name of the Tsar. The Synod took measures against Iliodor, but he was supported by the Bishop of Saratov, a turbulent ecclesiastic named Hermogen. And it was with the utmost difficulty that the Synod finally succeeded in having Iliodor arrested and conveyed to an obscure monastery, where, after several months of reflection, he

finally seceded from the Orthodox Church. His patron, Bishop Hermogen, was removed from the Saratov see. This attempt to use the religious fanaticism of the masses as a means of combating the revolutionary movement ended in the religious movement assuming a revolutionary character. So startling and unexpected are the manifestations of mass psychology in a time of unrest.

The Church authorities were largely concerned in the organization of the reactionary parties, the union of the Russian people and others, which by their excesses, their participation in the anti-Semitic riots and massacres, and their extreme violence of language in the Duma, in their meetings and in their Press organs, have given the saddest possible demonstration of the results of using the Church as a political weapon.

There is in the Russian people a capacity for religious emotion which the official Church with all its wealth of tradition and complexity of ritual fails wholly to satisfy, and which seeks an outlet in all kinds of irregular ways. Sometimes these ways are tacitly recognised by the usage of the Church and do not lead to open conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities. There are the pilgrimages to the shrines, for instance, with their halo of romance and adventure. Sometimes in the towns may be seen a *strannik*, or wanderer, a man who in time of sickness, or in sign of repentance for crime has taken a vow of perpetual pilgrimage from shrine to shrine. Bare-foot, often bare-headed, with iron-tipped staff in hand, he tramps year after year from north to south and from east to west until death comes. Often such men are sternly and fanatically religious, but often enough they become simply jolly, careless tramps who love the open road for its own sake and feel thoroughly at home among professional vagabonds. Occasionally the *strannik* preaches or sells tracts or books of devotion. There are often wanderers who collect money for the building or restoration of churches. Such a man may

Religious
Emotionalism.

be a peasant, who, when his wife has died and his sons have grown to manhood, feels impelled to abandon worldly cares and to spend his declining years in religious service.

The thirst for something more than is given by the ordinary routine of church services finds satisfaction again, in the sermons or counsels of popular preachers, either priests or laymen. Besides the preaching gift such a preacher may, like the famous Father John of Kronstadt, have a gift of healing, and then he attracts an enormous number of followers. With such movements the Church authorities have difficulty in coping because they inevitably tend to assume an irregular and sectarian character. Father John was a consistent supporter of the State and the official Church, but his followers, the so-called Johannites, have simply revolted against Church discipline. In all parts of the country there are brothers to whom the common people constantly come for guidance and healing. Recently in a remote corner of Bessarabia, on the frontiers of Roumania, the preaching of a monk named Innokenty evoked such enthusiasm amongst the Moldavian peasantry of the region, that the civil authorities in alarm arrested Innokenty and exiled him to a northern government, whither, in the depth of winter with babes in arms, devoted adherents followed him. In St. Petersburg and Moscow there are several "brothers" whose names are popular among the common people. Occasionally lay brothers secure an astonishing influence in the higher circles of society and at Court, and indirectly exercise political influence.

But religious emotion continually breaks the bounds of the official Church and finds expression in the sects. Russian dissent is one of the most interesting manifestations of Russian popular feeling, and is quite as characteristic as any political movement. Until April, 1905, when the Tsar issued his Toleration Edict, the lot of dissenters was a bitter one. They were subjected to persecution, were regarded as enemies of public order, their places of worship were closed

or carefully watched by the police, frequently their leaders were imprisoned and exiled, and they themselves transported in whole communities. All the powerful apparatus of the State was brought to bear against them. There was a time when schismatics were burned at the stake, and the sum total of the dissenters' sufferings represents a very real martyrdom.

The most important religion outside the State Church is that of the *Raskolniki* "Schismatics," "Old Ritualists," or "Old Believers," who seceded from the official Church in the seventeenth century.

Dissent.

There are no people quite like the Old Believers in all the world. They seceded from the powerful official Church and endured cruel persecution, not for any doctrinal reasons, but because they preferred misprints and mistranslations to correct translations, because they preferred the older spelling of the name "Jesus," and because they insisted on making the sign of the cross with two fingers instead of three. The movement arose owing to the attempt made by the Patriarch Nikon in the reign of the Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich to bring the ritual and the literature of the Russian Church into conformity with the Greek originals, and to correct errors of translation and interpretation that had crept in through sheer ignorance. It was against these perfectly reasonable innovations that the Old Believers raised vehement protest. They wished to retain the old forms absolutely intact, and condemned Nikon's revision as a heresy akin to the Latin heresy, which after the occupation of Moscow during the Time of Trouble by Roman Catholic Polish troops the common people regarded with especial antipathy. In its essence the Old Believers movement was a conservative revolt; it was as though English people were to hold indignation meetings and form a separate Church in defence of the Authorised as against the Revised Version of the Bible. The leaders of the Old Believers were persecuted, and the movement rapidly grew through

persecution. It assumed a democratic character, it became a protest against arrogant authority, a protest against those representatives of the State who persecuted "traditional Christianity," and openly supported heretics, in the long run a protest against the State itself, involving a belief that the Tsar was antichrist. The movement was ennobled by suffering, details of ritual unimportant in themselves gathered far-reaching, heroic associations and became symbols of profound emotions. The old books, the old ikons, the old prayers and words and forms became the more precious because worldly powers denied them, and because their retention involved a continual sacrifice of comfort, ease, and physical security.

The Old Believers fled to the forests of Eastern and Northern Russia and founded new settlements where they might worship in peace. **But they were scattered and with difficulty maintained mutual intercourse.** The separation from the official Church raised problems of dogma and practice which it was not easy to solve. The Old Believers had no bishops of their own, and the question of the ordination of priests was one of almost insuperable difficulty. The difficulty was surmounted for a short time by winning over priests of the Orthodox Church, but this was no permanent solution. Some decided that no priests were necessary; and these became known as the *Bezpopovtsy* or the popeless ones. **The *Bezpopovtsy* in their turn split up into a variety of sects,** for the religious emotion aroused by the Old Believers movement and the peculiar conditions in which they lived led to endless disputes in theological questions, and to the constant appearance of new leaders, and the formation of new sects, or "interpretations" (*tolky*). The extremists amongst the Old Believers, the *Bieguny* or *Stranniky* were convinced anarchists, denied the State absolutely, refused to have any intercourse with the authorities, rejected passports, and were, in consequence, condemned to a life of wandering, of constant escape from the police; hence their

name of *Bieguny* (runners). The Old Believers lived in an atmosphere of legend, dark superstition was very strong among them, they retained unmodified old popular beliefs in evil spirits, and persecution added to their life a peculiar rigidity and gloom.

But they were men of conscience, lived very strictly, refrained from smoking, fasted often, and were extremely methodical in all their dealings. The consequence was that, like many other persecuted communities, they, as soon as the persecution became less severe, began to prosper exceedingly. They built up large businesses, and helped each other regularly as members of such close communities always do. A great many of the wealthiest merchants and manufacturers in Moscow now are Old Believers, and a prominent member of the community is M. Guchkov, the leader of the Octobrists in the Third Duma.

The *Popovtsy*, that large section of the Old Believers who recognise the priesthood, were placed in serious difficulty in the forties of the last century by measures which, by preventing their winning over priests from the official Church, threatened them with a complete cessation of the administration of the sacraments. They averted the danger by founding a bishopric beyond the frontier at Bielaia Krinitza in Galicia, where a small monastery of Old Believers existed. A Greek bishop named Ambrose was brought from Constantinople to occupy the see, and by this means the succession was maintained. Other Old Believer bishoprics were founded in Roumania and Turkey, and in the course of time in Central Russia. The system thus established is called the Hierarchy of Bielaia Krinitza. The restrictions imposed on the Old Believers were gradually relaxed during the course of the last century, but missionaries of the Orthodox Church were very active in combating the schism. The Toleration Edict of 1905 removed the last impediment, and an act passed in 1910 finally regulated the position of the Old Believers. The attitude of the official Church and

administrative practice do not, however, readily conform to the new legislation. At the end of 1912 the whole community of Old Believers was shocked by an act of bitter intolerance committed by a police official in the Government of Archangel. On the grave of the priest Avakum, the leader of the Schism in the seventeenth century, who was burned at the stake, and who is one of the most remarkable figures in Russian history, the Old Believers, confident in the measures guaranteeing liberty of conscience, erected a simple cross. This cross the police official broke into small fragments, which he forwarded together with a report to the governor of the province.

The Old Believers are a particularly interesting community because they preserve so many distinctive features of the Russian life of an older time. They have old ikons which are of great importance for the study of Russian art. Their mode of speech, their domestic habits, their superstitions serve as historical and ethnographical documents. With the spread of education the sterner tenets of the community are losing their hold upon the younger generation, and there is a strong tendency to adapt religious practice to modern conditions. With increasing tolerance on the part of the official Church this would seem to threaten the gradual disappearance of the Old Believers as a distinctive community. But at present the work of the leaders of the modernising movement, as represented by their organ, *Tserkov* (The Church), constitutes an interesting attempt to maintain the continuity of Orthodox tradition apart from those official influences which mainly determine the policy of the State Church.

The Old Believers who recognise the priesthood are a variety of the State Church. Not so the *Bezpopovtsy*, the popeless ones. With the *Bezpopovtsy* begins the passionate wandering of Russian dissent in search of final truth in fields forbidden by the law, by convention and by tradition. It is a strange and desperate adventure, full of dangers, physical and spiritual, full of the joy of discovery, full of the suffering

that is the price of devotion, and of the peace that is its prize. The company of wanderers finds a home in the forest, some new interpretation of scripture, some modification of ritual that seems to solve all doubts and to shine with an intimate, sheltering light of attainment. They settle and build. But restless spirits among them are not satisfied and seek further, testing the resources of prayer, the powers of the spirit, refusing to conform to the ritual of past inspirations. Again and again the past gains on them and makes their new revelations, their new ordinances habitual, unoriginal, traditional in their turn. Their successors accept their word blindly, just as the conformists in the world they had forsaken accepted the word of great teachers of the past instead of seeking direct inspiration. But each little group was persecuted. It was not allowed to grow worldly in its sectarianism, to find in its creed an easy substitute for faith. The dissenters found joy in suffering, rest in endless wandering, and again and again rejected the tranquillity of attainment to pursue some light of lights beyond ever receding horizons. What wonder that they often lost the appearance of common men and seemed possessed by strange powers, and that again and again their spirits were broken by the excess of their yearning? It is the same yearning that is the distinguishing mark of Russian literature, and the spirit that impelled the dissenters is very nearly akin to that spirit that impelled the devotees of popular enlightenment and political liberty.

Who are all these wanderers, these men and women who bear strange names, the *Pomoriane*, *Fedoseievtsy* and *Filipovtsy*, the *Bieguny*, *Stranniki*, *Molokane*, *Dukhobortsy*, *Khlysty*, *Skopty*, *Shtundisty*, the New Israel and the non-prayers, mystics and rationalists, ritualists and protestants, wrestlers with the Spirit and mortifiers of the flesh? They deny each other fiercely, as fiercely as all of them deny the State Church, and each clings fast to the little lamp or to the smoking torch that for him lights a way through the

darkness of this life. But the Bieguny, the Runners, are the prototype of them all, those Bieguny who have no abiding city for they seek one to come. It is true that even these inveterate protestants against Church and State have now largely lost their energy of resistance, that only a few of them now live up to the full extent of their creed and take monastic vows and wander in the forests refusing to have any traffic with the representatives of a State that they consider to be a manifestation of Anti-Christ. Most of them compromise, and live and do business in the world, sheltering their more resolute brothers and sisters if need be, and only going through the formality of an "escape" from the world on the approach of death. But the spirit of their teaching is expressed in their hymns and poems, in poems about young Prince Ioasaf or Iosafat, who left family, wealth, and kingdom to seek the truth in solitude and prayer—a form of the Buddha legend which has found its way to the northern forests—or else in such verses as these:—

"O who will set the fair wilderness before me,
And who will build for me in a still place where no man dwelleth,
That I may not hear the sound of the voice of man,
That I may not see the loveliness of this world,
That I may not behold the vanity of the enchantments of this world,
That I may not desire the glory that comes from man?
Then would I bitterly weep for the heavy sin that is in me."

The Bieguny have gone to the extreme of denial. They run ever that they may grasp the prize of their calling. The other popeless Old Believers who believe that the latter days have come and grace has departed from the earth are less vehement in their repudiation of the world. The Pomoriane, or Dwellers by the Sea—by the White Sea, that is, in the Governments of Archangel and Olonets—will not eat and drink with "unbelievers" for fear of defilement, and refuse to recognise marriages contracted by clergymen of the State Church. But they include in their services prayers for the Emperor, for reasons of expediency, it would seem, rather than of principle. Indeed they are gradually abandoning

those bare crags of principle, firm based on which the earliest teachers of the sect, the monks of the great monastery of Solovki in the White Sea for seven years in stubborn defence of the old ritual against Nikon's innovations defied the besieging troops of the Tsar, or that grim principle in the strength of which so many of the Pomoriane sought victory over the world in self-martyrdom, committing their bodies to the flames. The world is putting new questions to which they cannot easily find an answer. The great cities draw their members from the villages amidst the northern forests, they are claimed by the factory that levels all distinctions of dress and custom, they are compelled to eat and drink with unbelievers. But if any Pomoriane are so defiled they cannot join in public worship. Disputes arise, and at last the workmen assert their right of initiative, organise a community of their own, and hold services in a shed on the outskirts of St. Petersburg. Then there is the difficult question of marriages. It is better for a man not to marry, declare the Pomoriane, marriage is only a concession to the flesh. But if you begin to make concessions you must regulate, and gradually a large number of Pomoriane have come to recognise marriage as an institution but not as a sacrament. And now the greatest difficulty of all besets them. They hold that grace has departed from the earth and that Antichrist reigns. But the State which they have hitherto regarded as the embodiment of Antichrist, has ceased to persecute them, has given them liberty of worship. What then? Perhaps grace has not wholly departed, perhaps a true priesthood is still to be found on the earth. And the popeless ones are earnestly debating the question as to whether they should not reunite with those communities of Old Believers who recognise the priesthood. Has all their suffering, all their faith, their teaching been in vain?

Many groups of the Old Believers are bound by fetters of tradition, and in fruitless disputes over books and ritual dissipate their strength. In a village of Old Believers there

will often be several groups or sects perpetually at war among themselves; so poor are they that they are compelled to have one house of prayer in common, and so bigoted that each group purifies the house anew after a service has been held by any of the others. Khlysty, Skoptsy, Dukhobors, and Molokane are Bezpopovtsy, popeless ones, who have revolted against the letter of the law and claim, each sect in its own way, the liberty of the spirit. The Khlysty and Skoptsy live in a strange world of symbols and ecstasies, of allegory and new revelation, of antinomianism and of fierce trampling on the flesh. They tread paths that many mystics have trodden in their perilous journey in the infinite dark, mystics of the early Church and of the Middle Ages, mystics in America and in Persia, in the Protestant world and Mohammedanism. They are fascinated by the terrible problem of sin and salvation, they are tossed unrestingly on the sea of a perpetual conflict between flesh and spirit. Both Khlysty and Skoptsy seek redemption in the ecstasy of mystical communion, but while the Khlysty do not restrain the flesh, often seem to regard concession to the flesh as an element in ecstasy, the Skoptsy shrink from it in horror; they are eunuchs who interpret with terrible literalness the passage about those who make themselves eunuchs "for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake." How these sects arose, how peasants in remote Russian villages evolved these curious systems of dogma, these ritual dances, this language of symbols it is not easy to understand. Perhaps human nature tends to manifest itself in similar forms under similar conditions, and the teaching of Khlysty and Skoptsy may simply be a natural development of the general revolt against ecclesiastical and political authority which was carried on by the Bezpopovtsy. But it seems hard to resist the impression of a genealogical connection with older heresies. The Bogumil or Paulician heresy made its appearance in Russia soon after the introduction of Christianity, and the close connection between the early Russian Church and Bulgaria, from whom Russia

received the translation of the scriptures and many religious books, facilitated the penetration of Bogumil influences eastward. The Russian Church stamped out the heresy as resolutely as the Roman Catholic Church stamped out in the West that of the Albigenses, who were also of Bogumil descent. But it probably survived in obscure corners of the popular mind as a reminiscence, a tendency, and naturally sprang to life again during the time of religious excitement aroused by the conflict between the State Church and the Old Believers. Is there a connection between the religious dancing of the Khlysty, held with tightly-closed and padded doors and windows in rooms at the back of St. Petersburg courtyards or in peasants' cottages on the Volga, and the services in secluded gardens at the head of the Golden Horn of those Paulicians whose massacre was ordered by the Empress Theodora? Is there a possible connection with the dancing Dervishes of Pera? The Paulicians were Manichaeans; Manicheism was disseminated in Persia and Turkestan, and its influence was felt in the mystical sects of Islam. And with the perpetual impact of the Mohammedan East on the growing Russian State strains of Manichaeian, Paulician, dualistic influence could easily find their way northward. If the influence of Persian art is noticeable on some of the ikons or sacred pictures of the Moscow period, it seems natural to trace in popular beliefs signs of Oriental influence.

But it is far to follow the long routes of belief and custom. The Khlysty are convinced that they have seen with their own eyes a heavenly vision, and that to them are continually vouchsafed new revelations. They have wholly abandoned Orthodox doctrine. They believe in the pre-existence and transmigration of souls. "In the flesh I am sixty-four years old," said a Khlyst woman on trial, "but my true age, the years I lived before I came into this world, I know not." They are dualists, they affirm the existence of a perpetual warfare between flesh and spirit. But at the same time

they insist that God is present only in Man, that from the Creation, He, the Invisible, the Intangible, Unattainable, has chosen man for his dwelling-place. This is what their opponents call "the deification of man." Christ, they hold, was the most perfect embodiment of divinity that the world had seen until his advent. But many christs have appeared since then, and the leaders of the Khlysts, the perfect ones amongst them, are called "christs." Perhaps the name Khlyst, which seems to refer to the practice of flagellation may simply be a distortion by outsiders of the name "Christ," which is in such frequent use in this sect. And while the male leaders, various Ivans and Porphiry's, are called "christs," the shrewd, firm-willed women leaders, the Akulinas and Aksinias, gain the name of *bogoroditsy*, madonnas, or "Mothers of God." Church marriages are not recognised, and if a man will marry he must take to himself a spiritual wife.

All these "christs" and "madonnas" are surrounded by a hierarchy of "archangels," "angels," "prophets," and "saints," members of the communities of the Khlytsy or Skoptsy. The community of believers is a "ship" on the sea of life, or it may be on some river Don, on which the "little ships" of individual lives go sailing; the elder is a "steersman" or "steerswoman." The ship sails over the blue sea, but is not drawn into a whirlpool, for the Lord himself enters the ship, takes the sail into his hands and sits at the helm, so that though the seas roar and be troubled the ship shall not be broken. Or again, the community is a "garden" or a "vineyard," where cypress trees grow with red flowers," "royal flowers," where birds of paradise build their nests and sing the songs of the cherubim and the seraphim. Through the garden flows from Mount Zion a river of living water with banks of silver and yellow sands. And on this river again the King's ship goes sailing with warriors and seamen and Cossacks of the Don who play on the lyre of David for the marriage of the Captain of Hosts who takes

as his bride, Golgotha, the Cross. But round the garden is the dark forest of the world, and the birds who fly beyond the shelter of the garden are lost in its gloomy depths. In the midst of their grey, cheerless lives, with one of their number watching outside the door to give warning if the police should come, the Khlysty sing of bringing sweet apples on a golden dish to a high house and begging the lady, the Empress, the guest and Mother, to accept them. Many of these symbols the Khlysty and Skoptsy have in common, for the Skoptsy are an offshoot of the older sect and represent a reaction against the laxity of the Khlysty at the end of the eighteenth century.

In ordinary life the Khlysty are hardly to be distinguished from their neighbours. All their emotion, all their ecstasy is concentrated in their religious exercises, when gathered together behind closed doors, they sit dressed in white, and by reading and singing awaken the slumbering flame. They strike up a swift, tripping song about the little ships that go sailing, they grow restless, and first one and then another steps out into the midst and begins to dance, panting and jerking the shoulders from side to side, shuffling and whirling. **They dance in pairs, in groups, or all together as a "ship,"** following each other in a ring, or as a "wall," again in a ring, but jumping together in unison. Sometimes they fall into such a frenzy that they lash themselves with bundles of twigs. And frenzy is said on occasion to lead to licence, an accusation, which, though it is repudiated by the Khlysty, constitutes the chief ground for the severe measures of the Government against the sect. Khlysty and Skoptsy are officially classified as the "most dangerous sects."

Perhaps it is a longing for religious ecstasy—the same longing that accounts for the fervour of camp-meetings and various forms of revivalism—that explains the comparatively wide dissemination of the Khlyst teaching in Russia and its persistence, in spite of persecution on the one hand and the spread of education on the other. Only a few years ago, in

1905, during the time of political unrest, a new Khlyst prophet or "christ," arose and, by the proclamation of a new revelation, the advent of a new era, attracted a large number of adherents, chiefly among the Kuban Cossacks in the Northern Caucasus. This prophet, Lubkov, a shop-assistant, and apparently a man of low intelligence, was able by bribing the officials to hold meetings without let or hindrance. He travelled from village to village and farm to farm announcing that he was the "christ of the twenty-first century," in other words, the twenty-first christ after Jesus, and that he had come to found a New Israel. He ascended a mountain near Kislovodsk where he professed to have been transfigured, led his followers to a hot and unfertile "promised land" in Transcaucasia, on the borders of Persia, and finally went off to South America where he intended to found a colony for his adherents.

The Khlysty outwardly conform to the State Church and expend their energy of protest in religious ecstasy. The Dukhobors, Molokans, Stundists, and followers of Sutaiev seek truth in another direction. They relegate metaphysics and ritual to a secondary position and emphasise the ethical aspect of Christianity. Clean living is for them the secret of salvation, and the ethical code of the Gospel must be the standard of life. There are mystical elements in the teaching of Dukhobors and Molokans, but they place in the forefront faith in Christ interpreted as complete obedience to his commandments. The "Molokans," men who feed on the "pure milk of the word," as they explain their own name, or people who drink milk during Lent as the Orthodox slightly say, were once simply a variety of Bezpopovtsy, but their steadily increasing reverence for the Bible as a rule of faith has brought them to a Protestant position, and they are now not unlike Baptists. The Dukhobors or Spirit Wrestlers have suffered imprisonment, stripes, and exile because of their devotion to the doctrine of non-resistance which caused them to refuse military service. They are

Christian anarchists and communists, and the story of their martyrdom for the ideals of primitive Christianity troubled some years ago a world that is not quite sure whether it is Christian or not, and, if it is, how it is to reconcile with the Gospel the whole structure of modern civilisation. Universal brotherhood, peace, love as the supreme law of life, these are the essential features of the doctrine of the Dukhobors, just as they are of Quaker teaching, and their firmness in obeying the inner voice not only brought down on them Cossack reprisals and material ruin when it led them to refuse military service in Russia, but it baffled even very liberal-minded Canadian authorities when it led to a refusal to register title-deeds to the land on which the emigrant members of the sect settled in 1899.

The Dukhobors were a comparatively small sect, but it is remarkable how often teaching similar to theirs has made its appearance quite independently in various parts of Russia. The same thing occurs repeatedly. A peasant begins to think for himself about life, reads the Bible, ceases to attend Church services and revere ikons, professes non-resistance, and refuses to take oaths or to undergo military service, becomes, in fact, a Christian anarchist. Why religious inquiry should so frequently take this form in Russia it is not easy to say. Perhaps there is obscure diffusion of certain teachings that it is difficult to trace. Perhaps the anti-nomian conceptions of the Bezpopovtsy exert an influence in all sorts of unsuspected directions. There may be traces of Protestant influence. Or again, it is possible that a certain anarchist strain in the Russian nature, a reaction against the excessive pressure of the authority of the Church and State may account for the spread of non-resistance teachings. The Stundists, who made their appearance in Southern Russia after the emancipation of the peasantry, were strongly influenced by German colonists of the sect of the Nazarenes who were settled in the Government of Kiev, and German Mennonites had an influence in other governments. The

refusal to undergo military service led in all cases to severe persecution, and persecution naturally inspired in the non-resisters a burning zeal that infected others. There was a joy of self-denial in the doctrine, a sense of release from the fretting claims of the world that made suffering a light thing to bear. Then, when Leo Tolstoy, whose lifelong spiritual conflict was so distinctly and titanically Russian, found rest at last in the simplicity and the doctrine of love and non-resistance as confessed by Dukhobors and the followers of the peasant Sutaiev, when he turned his back on the splendours of his own works of art, obeyed the call of the fair wilderness and set himself to preach his interpretation of the Gospel in the form of a challenge to the whole of modern civilisation, it was the fiercely protesting spirit of Russian dissent that spoke through him, the spirit of the men who threw themselves into the flames rather than obey a state that was for them the embodiment of Antichrist, the spirit of the wanderers in the forests, of the Bieguny and of the Dukhobors. By what mysterious sub-conscious ways did the doctrine penetrate Tolstoy's powerful spirit? He was strangely sensitive to the breathing of the Russian soil, to the voices of the forest, to the spirit of vague restless yearning that the winds bear across the great plain in their wanderings from the north and the east and the south. The soul of the Russian people in which so many influences mingle and blend and grow, influences that are pagan and Buddhist, and Manichæan and Christian, and in their unity altogether Russian, he understood, not by sympathy merely, but by some subtle community of feeling, as though his soul were part of a broader folk-consciousness whose waves move unrestingly within him becoming his private experience, the distress and the joy of his individual soul. That is why Tolstoy was so dear to the Russians and why his death so deeply stirred them, even though the logic of the educated classes learned in the schools and in European Universities raised a barrier between him and these. The later Tolstoy

and Russian dissent are intimately akin. They are wayfarers and pilgrims in search of a city that is very far off.

The force of Tolstoy's example naturally strengthened all the sects of non-resisters during the later years of the nineteenth century, and his doctrine had a certain influence upon the intelligentsia. Instances of refusal to undergo military service were frequent, but of late years less is heard of such cases, and the quietists of all kinds seem to have lost ground heavily during the revolutionary period. Not a few Tolstoyans, in the general fever of unrest, became Socialist Revolutionaries. And the forms of dissent that are now making headway seem to be those that have been imported from Europe, chiefly several varieties of Baptists known under the general name of Evangelical Christians. Since the promulgation of Toleration laws in 1905 and 1906 the Western European sects have made considerable progress, although they are still harassed by administrative impediments and are unable to secure from government officials anything like consistent observation of the principles of tolerance. The missionaries of the State Church combat them in public dispute, as well as by causing the exercise of administrative pressure. Probably the progress of the Evangelical Christians may be regarded as one manifestation of that process of the Europeanisation or perhaps even the Americanisation of Russia which is now going forward so rapidly. The Russian tradesman who abandons his kaftan, cuts his hair short, and wears a collar and tie may, under certain conditions, be led by religious interest to sing in a Baptist meeting a translation of "Shall we gather at the river?"

A certain development of new sects has been noticeable of late years in the large cities. They arise chiefly within the State Church as a result of the popularity of certain preachers or leaders. The Johannites, or followers of Father John of Kronstadt, are a sect of this kind, and so are the followers of "brother" Ivan Churikov in St. Petersburg,

and his Moscow associates, who have gained great influence among the common people by their denunciations of drunkenness and immorality and their appeals for decency. These movements are hardly sects in the strict sense of the word. They are as yet in the stage of currents of popular feeling on which the State Church frowns. But with the growth of the great modern cities, St. Petersburg and Moscow, religious movements in Russia are beginning to assume that nervous, hasty, noisy character which is so characteristic of religious movements in modern Western cities. Up to the present the Salvation Army has not been permitted to extend its operations to Russia, and even if it had been it is probable that it would have failed because the types of mind to which the Salvation Army makes appeal hardly existed in Russia. It is very possible that within a few years such types of mind will be far more common than now, and then perhaps religious development in Russia will take new forms more closely resembling those prevalent in Western Europe. In the meantime all sorts of new teachers are making their **appearance and gathering little bands of followers.** There is the old man who wanders about the Nizhni Novgorod fair, for instance, and preaches that believers in his doctrine shall never die, and that death is simply a sign of want of faith. There are about thirty "immortals" who have accepted his teaching, but one of them recently passed away. And then there is the "Swallow" in St. Petersburg, who teaches that all the Christian States shall transform the world in 1924, and that a beginning was made when, in August 1912, the Archangel Michael solemnly annihilated all evil spirits somewhere in the neighbourhood of New York. It is characteristic of the new outlook that such a city as "New York" is **mentioned in the sectarian teaching.** In the hymns of the Khlysty and Skoptsy it is St. Petersburg and Moscow **that** have a symbolical meaning, and the coming of the Lord is awaited from the hills of Zion and the mountains of the Turkish land.

The authorities of the State Church make few concessions to the modern spirit, though after all when bishops and priests sit even on the Right benches of the Duma they are acting in perpetual contradiction to that denial of constitutional government which is the main theme of their public utterances. The deadening influence of officialism is felt in all departments of Church life. The chancelleries of the Holy Synod and of the consistories which represent the Synod in each diocese are exactly like the chancelleries of any other government department. The affairs of the Church are conducted by laymen, but not by parishioners *in corpore* or their representatives for whom the affairs of the Church would have a direct and personal interest, but by officials of the State. The prelates of the Church are subordinated to these officials: the principles that prevail in the bureaucracy in general prevail in the Church, and thus it happens that without actually wielding temporal authority the Church is at present dominated not by spiritual but by political interests, with sad results. No ecclesiastic of broad-minded or liberal views is admitted to a leading position in the hierarchy, and the process of eliminating men of marked individuality and talent has recently been extended even to the theological academies, institutions of University rank for the higher training of the clergy, from which a number of able, distinguished, and devout professors have recently been compelled to retire in order to give place to men of inferior capacity who had ingratiated themselves with the authorities. The leading organs of the Church, the *Tserkovnia Viedomosti*, and the daily newspaper, *Kolokol* (The Bell), edited by a missionary named Skvortsov, have a marked reactionary character.

Many devout Orthodox Russians deplore the state of affairs that now prevails in the State Church, and persistent efforts are being made to effect reforms. For years the ablest and most liberal-minded of the clergy have been discussing the possibility of freeing the Church from its position

of complete subordination to the State by bringing about the convocation of a Church Council and the restoration of the Patriarchate. This question was very eagerly debated in 1905 before the promulgation of the Constitution, but it was afterwards obscured by other urgent political issues, and only vaguely referred to from time to time. Another question that is frequently discussed in the organs of the liberal churchmen, the *Tserkovno-obshchestvenny Vestnik* (The Ecclesiastical and Social Messenger), published in St. Petersburg, and the *Tserkovnaia Pravda* (Church Truth), published in Berlin, is that of promoting the reform of the parish with the object of enabling parishioners directly to participate in the conduct of Church affairs. In the present transition stage of Russian politics, when the subject of the relations between State and Church, the Monarch and the representative institutions is the subject of constant dispute, it seems hardly probable that any far-reaching reforms will be effected.

And yet, in spite of the retrograde policy with which the leaders of the Church have become identified, there are many indications of a growing interest on the part of the educated classes in the Church and in religious questions generally. The meetings of the Religious and Philosophical Societies in St. Petersburg and Moscow, in which are debated important questions bearing on the relation between religion and social life, attract large audiences and are well reported in the Press. The work of Vladimir Soloviev (1853-1900), the most brilliant of modern Russian philosophers, in whose eyes philosophy was in the long run the handmaid of theology, is now making itself more and more widely felt. Vladimir Soloviev stands before the Russian intelligentsia now as the most striking example of a man of great learning, a poet, a bold and consistent liberal publicist who not only possessed a profound religious faith, but was devoted to the Church as an institution. Recently his letters and an account of his

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life have been published by Professor Radlov, and an exhaustive analysis of his work by Professor Prince Eugene Troubetskoy. In Moscow there is a group of energetic scholars led by MM. Bulgakov and Berdiaïev who, having passed through many varied phases of modern thought, have finally reached a position similar to that of Soloviev and are devoting themselves to the work of elucidating the philosophical bases of orthodoxy.

Religious thought in Russia gives promise, in fact, of very interesting developments. It is a new conception for the bulk of the educated classes that religion, even if it be not accepted in some simple way, may at last be considered and studied, and not wholly ignored as a creed outworn. It is a sign of the times that one of the most widely-read, serious books of recent years is William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The intelligentsia is not any more formally religious than it was, but it has at least relinquished its attitude of uncompromising hostility to religion and is no longer rigidly materialistic. The whole trend of thought in this respect is necessarily very vague, sharply defined dogmas of all kinds are out of fashion in Russia now, both in politics and in philosophy. So far one can hardly point to anything more precise than the removal of an inhibition on religious thinking.¹ But this means a very great deal and opens up all kinds of curious and fascinating possibilities. The hostility of the intelligentsia to religion was one of the chief causes that prevented a real community of feeling between the educated classes and the masses of the people. But now that Russian life is growing more modern, more European in character, the barriers between the intelligentsia and the people are gradually disappearing. And this is particularly true in the matter of religion. Not only is the intelligentsia becoming less pronouncedly anti-religious, but the religious attitude of the people is changing. Indifference is growing, and parallel with it a spirit of inquiry, so that while a great

¹ The recent rapid spread of such movements as Theosophy seems to be a symptom of a growing sensitiveness to European tendencies.

many of the younger peasants have simply turned their backs on the Church, and on religion generally, others are passing over into the sects or else finding satisfaction in various socialistic and humanitarian teachings. And this is one of the ways in which a new uniformity of national temper is being developed.

But as soon as one touches on the present religious temper of the Russian people a hundred interesting questions arise. What will come of all this complex process of the development of individual initiative, reading, education, modernisation generally? Will it undermine the Orthodox Church, or will it lead to reformation and transformation? Roman Catholicism is now fighting its battle in a modern world. But the Eastern Orthodox Church has not until now had to cope with modern conditions, and it is in Russia that it will have to undergo the strain, with what result who would venture to forecast? One can imagine the development of a perpetual interaction of religious and intellectual influences between the intelligentsia and the people, the country and the town. New religious movements arising among the people may attract members of the intelligentsia, now less immune against religious influences than heretofore. And new movements of religious thought amongst the educated class may find all kinds of strange echoes amongst the masses of the people. And in such movements all the latent variety of Russia will be made clear, the variety implied in such facts as that the Siberians have the reputation of being irreligious—though dissent is making rapid progress in Siberia—while the Little Russian is supposed to be especially sensitive in matters of religion. All the phases, all the potentialities of the Russian character will, in that time of outward levelling that must come with the extension of technical civilisation, be brought into more vivid relief. For there will be a far more intense and rapid interplay of thought and yearning on the vital questions that have perpetually and deeply troubled the Russian people throughout the long course of its history.