

THE INFLUENCE OF PLATONISM  
IN RUSSIAN AND SLAVOPHILE THOUGHT

AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FACTORS  
CONTRIBUTING TO THE CONCEPT OF  
COMMUNALITY IN RUSSIA

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.

MICHIGAN STATE COLLEGE

Francis Michael Donahue

1953



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"The Influence of Platonism in  
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Francis M. Donahue

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for

Ph. D. degree in Sociology and  
Anthropology

*Charles R. Hoffer*  
Major professor

Date August 12, 1953



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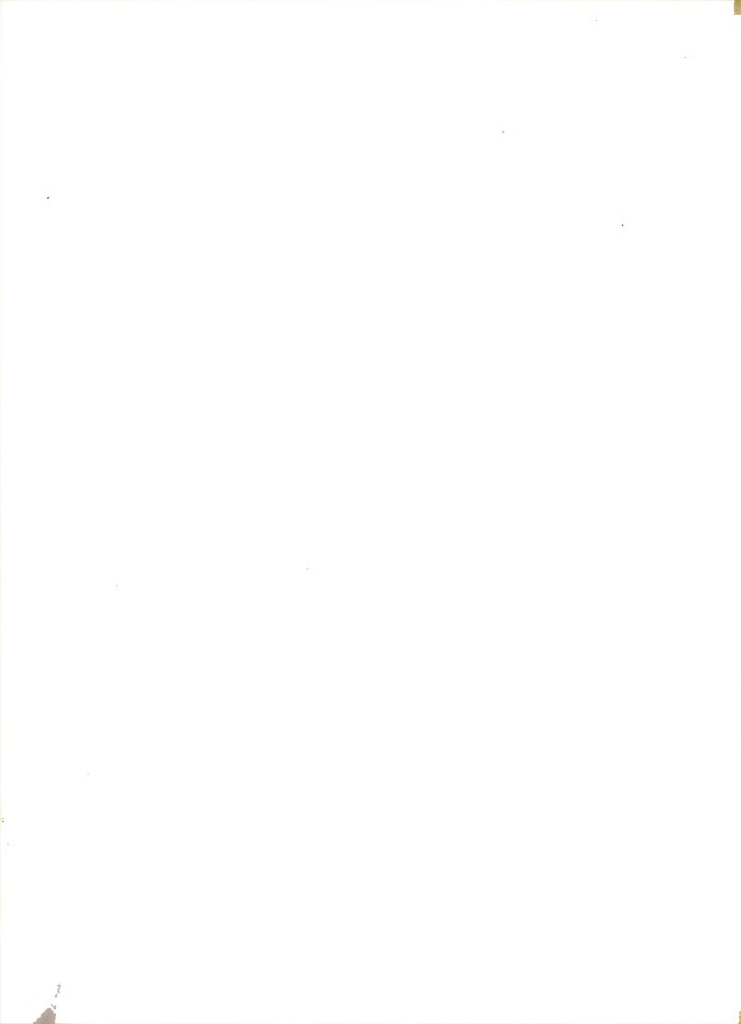
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By

Francis Michael Donahue

A THESIS

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Michigan  
State College of Agriculture and Applied Science  
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

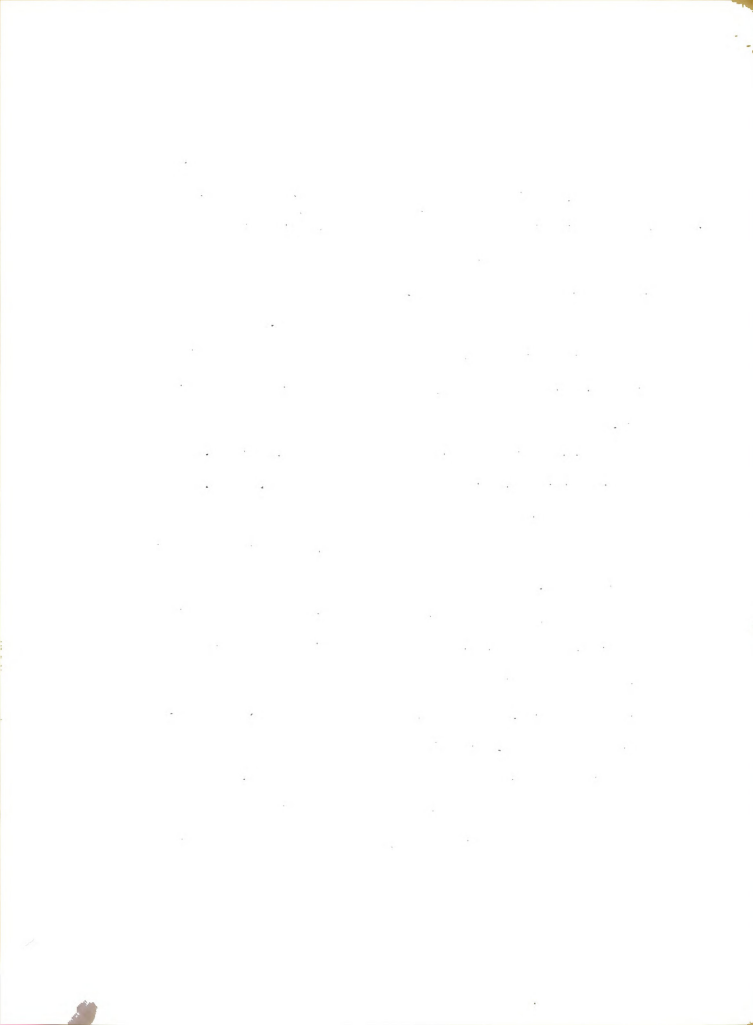
The author wishes to express his sincere thanks to Dr. Paul Honigsheim, emeritus professor of Michigan State College, under whose inspiration and unfailing guidance the research for this thesis was begun and carried through. It is to him that the results are herewith dedicated.

Grateful acknowledgement is also due to Dr. Charles Hoffer for his kind guidance and valuable suggestions, not only in the final preparation of this thesis, but also throughout my graduate work.

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AN ABSTRACT

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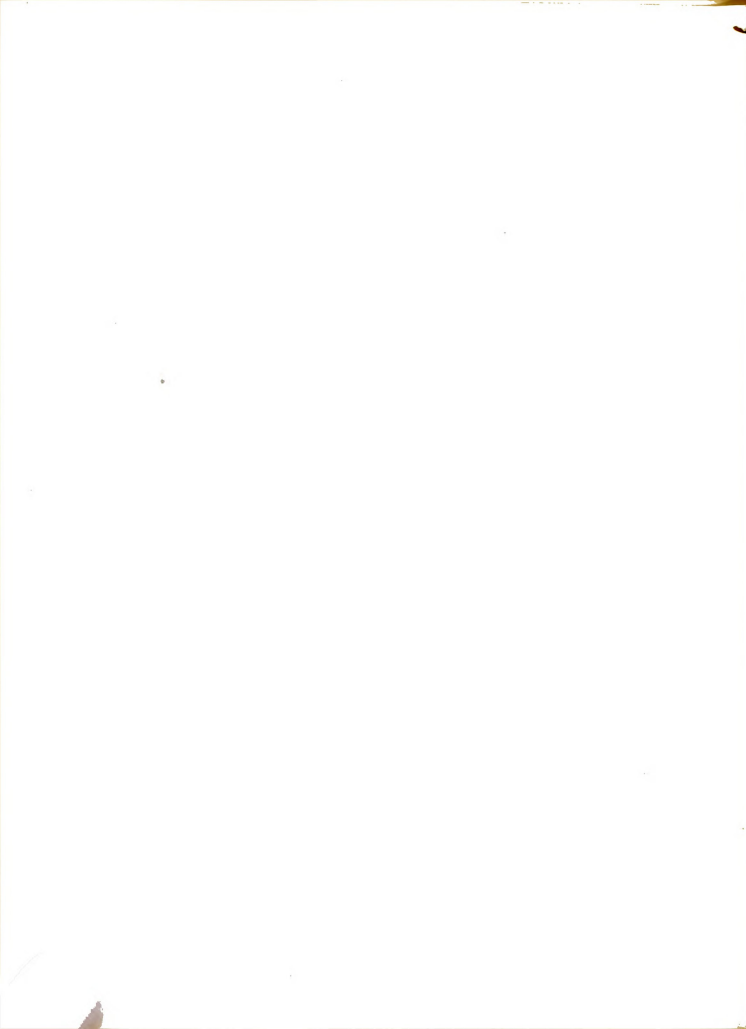
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Charles R. Hoyle



Francis Michael Donahue

The problem, the solution of which is undertaken in this thesis, is to discover whether the realism of Plato and the anti-rationalism and mysticism of the Neo-Platonists have been influential in the development of the theories of the Slavophiles in nineteenth century Russia.

In pursuing the investigation, it has been necessary to extrapolate from the Platonic Dialogues and the writings of Philo and Plotinus those elements of idealism, universalism, mysticism and romanticism that found their way into the writings of the early Christian Apologists, St. Justin Martyr, St. Clement of Alexandria, Pseudo-Dionysius and the Eastern Church "scholastic" St. John of Damascus. A study of these writings clearly shows that the Eastern Church writers assimilated and perpetuated the Platonism of the earlier systems upon which the authors drew in synthesizing their doctrines. From Plato's Republic, Timaeus, and Phaedo originated the doctrines which were developed by the Neo-Platonists and the Christian orthodox writers.

It has been possible to trace these Platonic influences upon the Greek Patristic writers. A survey of the Patrologiae Graecae has made possible the addition of an appendix of relevant passages supporting the postulation that the Greek Fathers perpetuated many of the Platonic doctrines.

When it is remembered that the Greek Church Fathers were widely read and their influence felt both in Eastern Orthodox Catholicism



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Francis Michael Donahue

and in Roman Catholicism, it is seen that there is a clear line of continuity from the Patristics to Byzantine Catholicism, and subsequently into Russian Orthodox Catholicism. Quite independently, there developed two separate streams of Platonism after the Renaissance. One continuum was the Graeco-Russian Orthodox tradition and the other developed into the German romanticist school exemplified by Jacob Boehme, Franz von Baader, Schelling and Hegel. Investigation shows that many of the Slavophiles of nineteenth century Russia came under the influence of the German romanticists and from them absorbed elements of Platonism which supported Russian mysticism, communality, anti-rationalism and the hierarchical structure of the pre-Revolutionary Russian state and Church.

In the unbroken continuity from the East, Platonism, beginning with Plato himself and coming down through the Neo-Platonists, the Christian Apologists, the Greek Church Fathers and Byzantine Catholicism, passed into Russia about 988 A.D. and was absorbed into the theological, philosophical and social systems there.

Essentially, the socio-political system the Slavophiles proposed was a theocratic one. It must be concluded that the Slavophiles (Kirievsky, Khomyakov, Dostoyevsky, Aksakov, Samarin) perpetuated Platonism in their emphasis upon mysticism, intuitionism, and communality. By their emphasis upon the messianic mission of Russia, their detestation of individualism and their general condemnation of rationalism, it would appear that they contributed in some degree to preparing Russia for an acceptance of these same theories which

1944-1945

1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country during the year 1944-1945. It is noted that the country has been in a state of political and economic crisis since the beginning of the year. The government has been unable to carry out its policies, and the economy has collapsed. The population is suffering from poverty and starvation. The situation is described as a state of anarchy.

2. The second part of the report deals with the military situation. It is noted that the country has been invaded by foreign forces. The military has been unable to resist the invasion, and the country has been occupied. The military situation is described as a state of military occupation.

3. The third part of the report deals with the political situation. It is noted that the government has been overthrown, and a new government has been established. The new government is described as a state of political transition.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the economic situation. It is noted that the economy has collapsed, and the country is in a state of economic crisis. The economy is described as a state of economic collapse.

5. The fifth part of the report deals with the social situation. It is noted that the population is suffering from poverty and starvation. The social situation is described as a state of social crisis.

6. The sixth part of the report deals with the cultural situation. It is noted that the country has been invaded by foreign forces, and the cultural heritage has been destroyed. The cultural situation is described as a state of cultural destruction.

7. The seventh part of the report deals with the international situation. It is noted that the country has been invaded by foreign forces, and the international situation is described as a state of international crisis.

8. The eighth part of the report deals with the future of the country. It is noted that the country is in a state of crisis, and the future is uncertain. The future is described as a state of uncertainty.

Francis Michael Donahue

were to appear in full force under the Bolsheviki. At the same time they strengthened the religious forces which offered resistance to the anti-ecclesiastical regime of the Soviets.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The importance of studies about Russia needs hardly to be stressed at this time. In an era when Soviet Russia has come to be one of the major powers of the world, it seems imperative that citizens of the democratic nations understand as thoroughly as possible the history, philosophy, sociology and economic theories of that vast country which hitherto has been somewhat a terra incognita to most Westerners. Any research that can contribute to an increase of knowledge or understanding about Russia today, seems to justify whatever effort that must be spent in its pursuit.

The areas of Russian philosophy, sociology and religion are admittedly difficult ones in which to conduct research, partly because of the paucity of reliable materials and also because of much of the data is in Russian and is carried by very few American libraries. In the area of Russian ecclesiology and religion, many of the writings which have had considerable influence upon Russian thought are written in the Greek language. Even these are sometimes difficult to secure for study and analysis.

Research in materials for this thesis was conducted at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., at Newberry Library at Chicago, Illinois, at Columbia University in New York City, and at the libraries of the University of Michigan and Michigan State College. Fortunately, the works of most of the important writers studied in this

# THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT  
TO THE PRESENT TIME  
BY  
JOHN B. HENNING, ESQ.  
OF THE BARR OF MIDDLESEX, ESQ.  
IN THE COURT OF COMMONS  
AND  
OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED  
AND  
OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED  
IN THE YEAR 1790  
LONDON: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAULS CHURCH-YARD.  
1790.

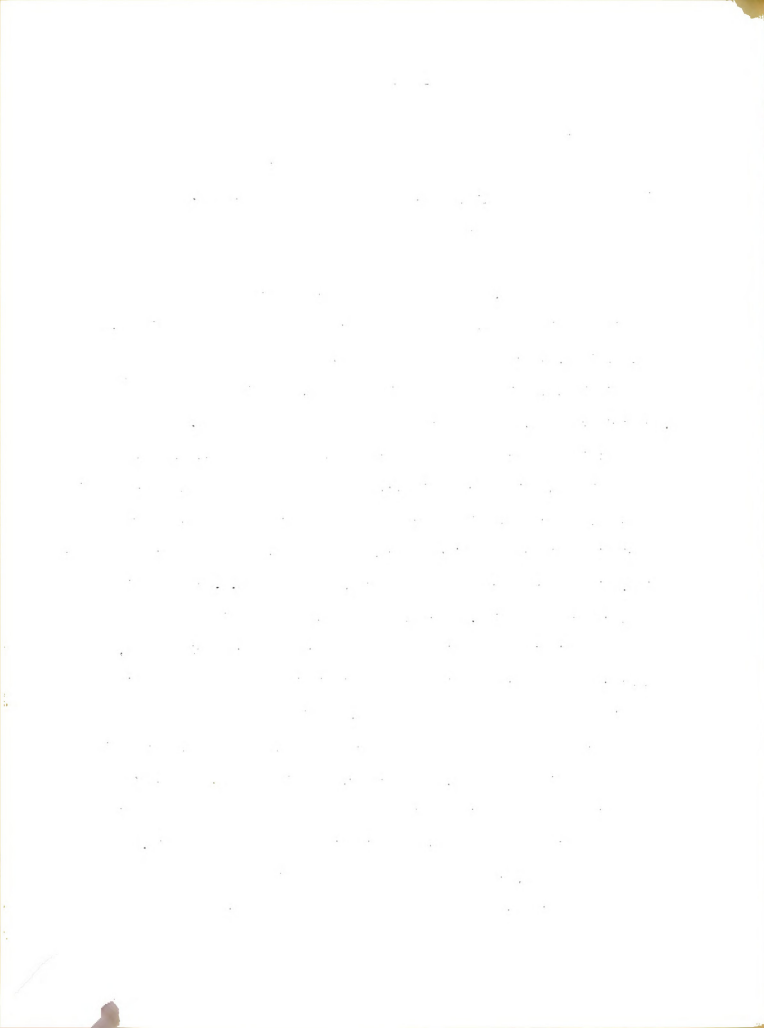
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work are available either in English or in French translations, while such ancient writings as those of the Greek Church Fathers are available in the monumental Patrologiae, both in Greek and in Latin. The author of this thesis has found it helpful to refer to this series frequently.

When research for this thesis was begun, it became apparent that a limitation be set, otherwise the work could hardly have been completed within the time allotted for the doctoral program of this candidate. It was decided, therefore, to devote attention to the major figures who have been influential in shaping Russian thought, especially those who have contributed to the development of the idea of communality.

It is the purpose of this work to study the elements of universalism and wholeness which form so important a part of Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought, to trace the influence these ideas have had upon the early Christian writers and philosophers, especially those of Eastern Christianity, since it was from the East that Russia in 988 A.D. received its Eastern Orthodox faith. Once the link between Platonism can be shown with the thinking and social systems of early Eastern Christianity, it then remains to prove that this Platonic influence found its way into Russia and that it was accepted there. It is hoped that the link between early Greek Christian thought and early Russian religious thought will be established in this paper, and further, that it can be shown that the Platonic concept of universalism was not lost in Russia but was reinforced and revitalized by the Slavophiles in nineteenth century Russia.

In addition, research has shown that Russia was influenced not only by Eastern thinkers but also in the nineteenth century by Western philosophers from Germany, philosophers who gave support in the West to the



the concept of universalism advocated by Plato and his followers.

Farther, this work will endeavor to show that the Slavophile movement in Russia in the nineteenth century did indeed revive and reinforce the Platonic elements in Russian thought and gave to these ideas a new social expression. That the idea of communality advanced by the Slavophiles was an important foundation upon which the Marxian communists were able to build their social and economic system, cannot be neglected.

An examination of Plato's works and the writings of the Neo-Platonists will reveal the principle source of the idea of universalism. The concept can then be traced through the Eastern Church writers, - Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius of Antioch, John Damascene and Justin Martyr. These philosophers and theologians exerted tremendous influence in the formulation of Eastern Orthodox doctrine. Russia, upon its acceptance of Eastern Orthodoxy absorbed these Platonic concepts and gave them a social expression peculiarly its own. The Slavophiles, being romanticists and loyal communicants of Orthodoxy, advanced Platonism and unwittingly helped prepare the way for an acceptance by the Russian people of the Soviet commune and totalitarianism. There was much of Slavophilism, however, which the Soviets completely rejected, just as there is much of the Soviet philosophy and social structure which the Slavophiles would have condemned.

That a study such as this is timely is attested to by one of the leading Russian philosophers of the twentieth century, Nicolas Berdyaev. In his work The Destiny of Man,<sup>1</sup> Berdyaev proposes that it is time for

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<sup>1</sup> Berdyaev, Nicolas. The Destiny of Man. Geoffrey Bles, London, 1937, p. 45 ff.



for what he terms "a philosophical anthropology" since psychology, fiology and sociology have not solved the problem of man. The basis for ethics must be a philosophical anthropology, he contends, as the ancient Greeks so well realized, for in order that man understand man he must begin to philosophize through knowing himself. Philosophy needs to become consciously anthropological.

To carry on such a study as Berdyaev suggests, it is necessary to evaluate the concept of man as advanced by Roman Catholic, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox theology. According to the Roman Catholic view, man has been created as a natural being, lacking in the supernatural gifts of the contemplation of God and union with Him; the supernatural gifts which he enjoys were given to him by a special act of grace. It was precisely those supernatural gifts which man is said to have lost through the Fall, but as a natural being, he suffered comparatively little damage. According to the classical Protestant point of view, man's Fall completely ruined and distorted human nature and resulted in a darkening of man's reasoning powers, left him bereft of freedom and caused him to be completely dependent upon divine assistance. The Eastern Orthodox concept of man has been but little worked out, but its focal idea is the doctrine of the Divine image and likeness in man - the doctrine that man has been created as a spiritual being. Here the Platonic idea of the essential unity of divine and created beings is advanced. Vladimir Soloviev, a nineteenth century Russian philosopher who will be considered in a later chapter, advanced this essentially Platonic idea by using the term "God-Man" as central in his anthropology. Berdyaev

## 1941

1941年1月1日，星期日。上午九时，由上海乘火车赴南京，下午二时抵京，即赴外交部，向外交部次长顾维钧报到。顾次长对我表示热烈欢迎，并嘱我即赴外交部办公厅，向办公厅主任王世杰报到。王主任对我表示热烈欢迎，并嘱我即赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午四时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午六时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午八时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。

1941年1月2日，星期一。上午九时，由南京乘火车赴上海，下午二时抵沪，即赴外交部，向外交部次长顾维钧报到。顾次长对我表示热烈欢迎，并嘱我即赴外交部办公厅，向办公厅主任王世杰报到。王主任对我表示热烈欢迎，并嘱我即赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午四时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午六时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。下午八时，赴外交部各局，向各局长报到。

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regards this view as a humble one and states that "this point of view is the very opposite of naturalism. Christian anthropology teaches not only of the Old Adam but also of the New Adam, of Christ the God-Man, and is therefore a divinely human anthropology." <sup>2</sup>

It is the purpose of this thesis to show that consonant with the Platonic philosophy, Russian Slavophilism considered that the problem of man was completely insoluble if man were to be considered simply as a part of nature and correlative to it. Only in connection with a religious consciousness did the Slavophiles consider that sociology and anthropology were possible. The theory most prevalent in modern Europe was that of man as a social being, a product of society and also as an inventor of tools (homo faber). This theory seems to have had more influence than the naturalistic view. It is to be found in Durkheim and Marx. Socialization in a given environment turns the animal into man.

While the Marxian theories have a greater influence in Russia today, there is still a remnant of what might be termed a "Christian anthropology" among some modern Russian thinkers. This is especially true of the Neo-Slavophiles and the Orthodox Christian thinkers in Russia today. If it is true that the Slavophiles helped prepare the way for the acceptance of Soviet views concerning communality, it is likewise also true that they gave emphasis and helped perpetuate what is here called "Christian anthropology." Russian philosophy, sociology and anthropology is not homogeneous even today, despite the efforts of the "thought police" tactics of the Politburo. An un-Marxian system

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 47.

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of thought thrives among Russian emigres and even within the geographical boundaries of the U.S.S.R. itself. As long as the Russian Orthodox Church exists in Russia, even in its present subordinate state under governmental control, the influence of this "Christian anthropology" will continue to make itself felt and constitutes a very real threat to the Soviet dream of universal Marxian and Leninist communism.

It is hoped that this thesis will that Russian Orthodoxy, which was so basic to Slavophilism, is even today a sociological force which runs counter to dialectical materialism and communism and as such a counter-force it has an importance and relevance in mid-twentieth century world affairs. Many commentators upon the character and psychology of the Russian peasant hasten to indicate that to the Western democratic mind, the Russian seems a bundle of contradictions.<sup>3</sup> It is contended that their devotion edges upon superstition, their godlessness reaches the point of persecution, that they are introspective and visionary, hard-headed and capable, they endure much and go to extremes of violence. The clue to these seeming paradoxes is Russian history; and Russian history, sociology and anthropology cannot be understood so long as the role of Russian Orthodoxy is ignored.

In studying any culture, including the Russian, from the point of view of culture content it must be recognized that a break-down into more or less complex subdivisions is possible. Ultimate analysis leads to an examination of human attitudes and values, to the philosophical elements in the thought processes of a given people, since it is these, in their various combinations and permutations, that constitute culture.

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<sup>3</sup> As, for example, does Berdyaev in The Russian Idea, The Centenary Press. London, 1947, pp. 1-7.

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Not only such cultural facts as speech, material traits, art, government and familial systems must be taken into consideration, but the religious doctrines and practices, ritualistic forms, and moral and ethical concepts must come under examination.

### REVIVALISM

Important among social movements is the revival. Revival movements and nationalistic movements are particularly likely to have a mixed character for in them people idealize the past, venerate the ideal picture that they have, and seek to mold contemporary life in terms of the ideal picture. Perhaps such movements might be explainable as a response to a situation of frustration. Certainly this seems to be so with the revivalism and romanticism of the Slavophiles. Since the future seems to hold forth little promise, a people turn to the past in an effort to regain former glories. That such movements should have a strong religious character is to be expected. It will be shown that Slavophilism was such a movement.

Most nationalistic movements, (and Slavophilism in Russia is an example of this point) have a strong revivalistic character in which the theocratic and religiously fervent social system is glorified. This aspect is intimately associated with the motivation that is so characteristic of this kind of movement - namely a feeling of inferiority.<sup>4</sup> Those who initiate the movement usually have had distressing personal experiences in which they have been made to feel inferior and not as

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<sup>4</sup> This fact is attested to by Stewart Henderson Britt, Social Psychology of Modern Life, Rinehart and Company, New York, 1951, pp. 566-567. In a section on "The Russian Problem" the author contends that inferiority lies behind Soviet Russia's "exalted feelings of nationalism."

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a people privileged enough to enjoy a respectable status. Their desire to establish individual and group self-respect leads them to efforts to improve the status of the group with which they are identified. In such a movement there is not only the creation of an objective, such as the gaining of national autonomy, but usually also an idealization of some past epoch in the lives of the people. It will be shown in later chapters of this paper that such tendencies can be seen clearly in Slavophilism and its efforts to recall and relive the ancient Slavic glory of Russia and to assert Russia's autonomy and superiority. The Slavophiles went to an extreme - they advocated the messianic vocation of Russia.

#### Westernizers Versus Slavophiles

Further, in order to evaluate properly the struggle between Russia and the western democracies in our own time, it is instructive, to say the least, to study the struggle in the nineteenth century between the Zapadniki (those Russians who sought to introduce western technological and cultural advances into Russia,) and the Slavophiles who held to the messianic concept of Russia and the necessity of maintaining intellectual and cultural separation from the materialistic and demoralizing influences of the West. Current Soviet Russian separatism is not a novel social phenomenon. It is but a modern recurrence of the Slavophile and Pan-Slavic ideals of an earlier time.

The conflict between the Slavophiles and the Zapadniki, just as in the twentieth century between Soviet Russia and the western democracies, was a dispute about the destiny of Russia and its vocation in the world. The Slavophiles equated their ideal of Russia, their ideal utopia of the





perfect order of society, with the historic past, while the Zapadniki related their ideal of the order of life which was best for Russia with that of Western Europe in their own day.

What can account for the failure of communication and understanding between the Slavophiles and the Zapadniki? Is it possible that some of the basic areas of misunderstanding still persist into the twentieth century and constitute points of confusion and consequently of disagreement in the international relations between Soviet Russia and the Western World? Certainly there has existed a continuous conflict in ideology between Russia and Western Europe for centuries. It shall be one of the purposes of this present work to attempt an analysis of these basic ideological differences and to trace them to their sources wherever possible. Berdyaev, interested in the same problem, comments thus upon it:

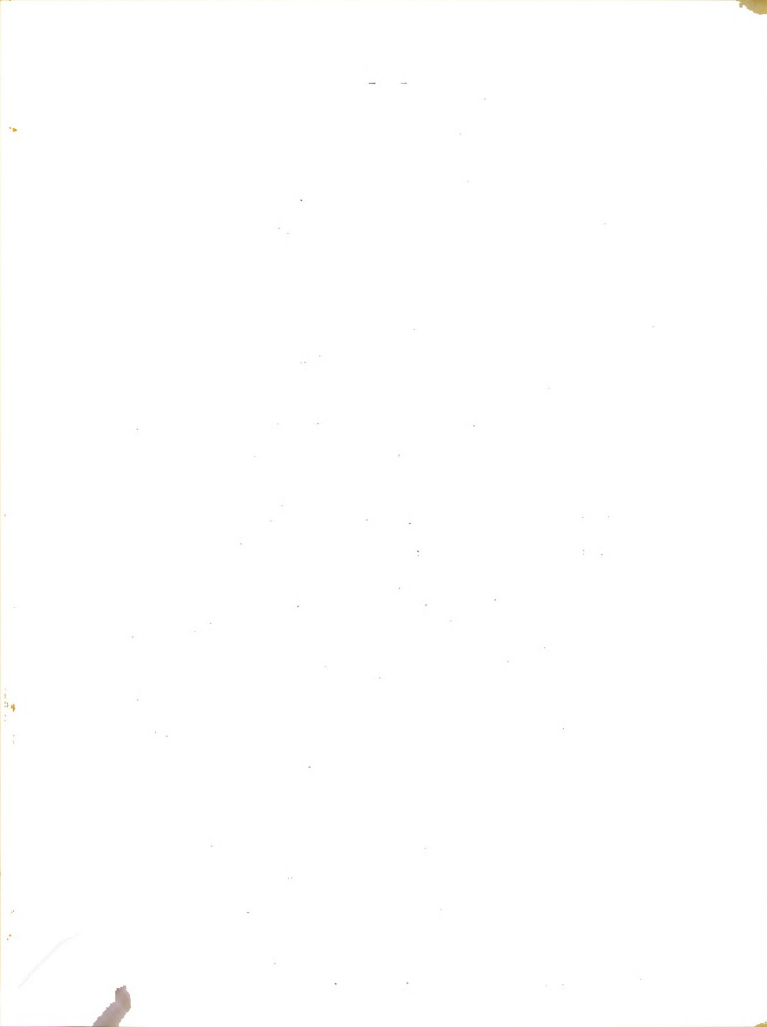
Is the historical path of Russia the same as that of Western Europe, that is to say, the path of common human progress, of common human civilization, and is the peculiarity of Russia to be found only in its backwardness? Or has Russia a special path of its own with its civilization belonging to another type? The Westernizers accepted Peter's reform entirely, and in their view the future of Russia lay in its taking the Western path. The Slavophiles believed in a special type of culture springing out of the spiritual soil of Orthodoxy; Peter's reforms and the Europeanizing of the Petrine period were a betrayal of Russia. <sup>5</sup>

#### The Importance of the Influence of Hellenism

A thorough understanding of the basis for the differences between Russia and the West must begin in the golden era of Hellenic philosophic thought, with Plato, and in a later age with the Neo-Platonic philosophers

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<sup>5</sup> Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, op. cit., p. 40.



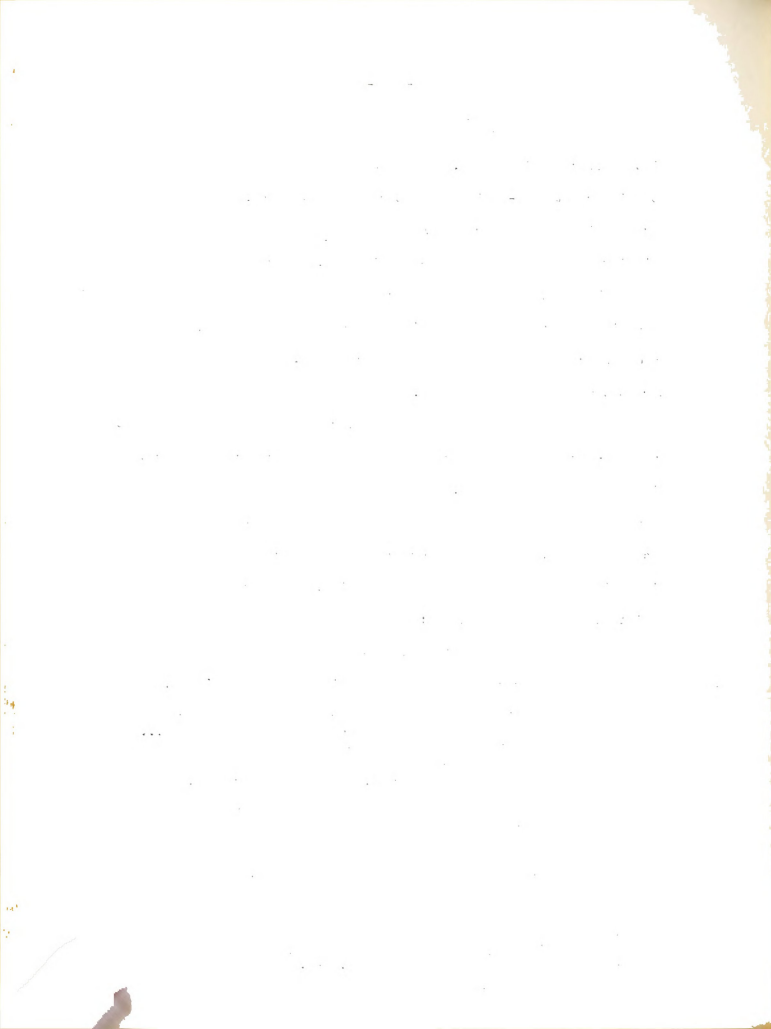
and Christian thinkers who adapted or incorporated Platonic thought into Eastern Christianity. In Byzantine culture is to be found one of the important well-springs of later Russian thought. Orthodox Catholicism is distinguished from Roman Catholicism just as the west is to be distinguished from the Graeco-Asiatic east. In respect to theology and philosophy, Orthodoxy owes much to Plato as well as to Christ and the Old and New Testaments, while in the growth of Roman Catholicism and western civilization, the influence of St. Paul, of Augustine and Aristotle has been predominant.

Perhaps the secret of Russian culture is that it is both Christian and non-European and this causes it to stand apart from both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. The Russians combine in their life and thought elements of Eastern and Western traditions in a way unknown to any other people, and nowhere can this be more clearly seen than in their ecclesiastical and religious life. A modern Russian historian points to this when he states:

The key to the understanding of (the Russian) mind is provided by the study of their own peculiar interpretation of Christianity, for the Russians, more than any other nation have identified themselves with their Church and have expressed primarily through that channel their most intimate and sacred thoughts... Russian Christians are neither Roman nor Reformed, and these are the only types of Christianity familiar to Europe and America. It means, therefore, that most of the western authors writing on Russia have tended to describe the Church there either as an oriental copy of Rome, or as a body subservient to the State and suffering from Protestant limitations. But in reality the Russian Church represents a tradition distinct both from Rome and from Protestantism.<sup>6</sup>

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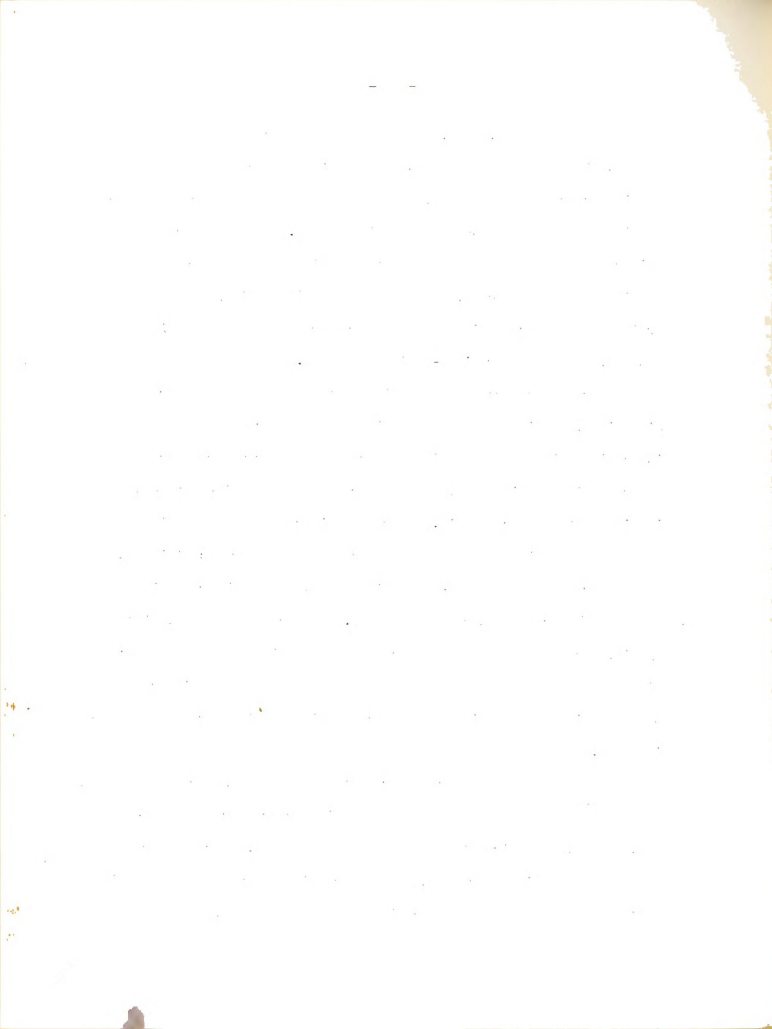
<sup>6</sup> Zernov, Nicolas, The Russians and Their Church, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1945, pp. 2-3.



This study turns, then, to an analysis of certain relevant aspects of Platonic thought and in a later period to the Christian Apologists Justin Martyr and Athenagoras, two of the early Eastern Christian synthesizers of Hellenic and Christian ideologies. After them came the writer known as Dionysius the Areopagite, Clement and Origen of Alexandria and John Damascene, one of the outstanding writers to have exercised a considerable influence upon Eastern, and subsequently upon Russian, thought and religio-social movements.

After a consideration of the influences of these early Christian Platonists, a brief survey of the historical background of Russia and its contact with Byzantium will prepare the way for a more thorough understanding of Kirievsky, the founder of the Slavophile movement in nineteenth century Russia. He was considerably influenced in the development of his doctrines by the German philosophers Schelling and Von Baader, just as the Neo-Slavophile Soloviev came under the influence of Schopenhauer and Eduard von Hartmann. An early German Platonist and mystic, Jacob Boehme also influenced the Slavophiles and this contact with Platonism coming from the West will be seen to have reinforced the Platonic stream of influence which Russia inherited from the Byzantine East.

Other Slavophile leaders deserve attention in this work - Khomiakov, Dostoyevsky and two philosophers who we might characterize as Neo-Slavophiles, Vladimir Soloviev and Nicolas Berdyaev. Berdyaev deserves attention since in a very real sense he carried on many of the teachings of the Slavophiles after the Russian Revolution of 1917, even though he



was exiled from his native Russia and spent his later years in Western Europe. His works have been quite influential upon modern Russian thinkers and though his death ended his literary influence, his works are being read increasingly both in Russia and throughout the Western world. Like the Slavophiles before him, he felt that in the making of a new epoch of history Russia had a unique contribution to make, but he disagreed with the Soviets that this contribution is the perpetuation of dialectical materialism. He is as convinced of the messianic mission of Russia as was the most ardent Slavophile or as is the most zealous Communist, but he differed from the Communist in holding that Russia's leadership must come through the Orthodox Faith, not through the process of world revolution and the sovietizing of the world.

Though there are those who will dispute it, this present work hopes to show that Soviet Russia today bears within its soul the unmistakeable marks of its Orthodox Christian past, not the least of which are its emphasis upon communality, its advocacy of the old Slavophile ideal of Russia's messianic vocation and its distrust of the nations of the West. That Platonism had its share in the development of these ideas among the early Russians, and that Slavophilism revived these ideas which Soviet Russia eventually embraced, this thesis will attempt to show.





## CHAPTER TWO

### PLATO AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

In attempting to show the influence of Platonic thought upon the early Eastern Christian thinkers and the thread of Platonism passed by them to the tenth century Russians, it becomes necessary to analyze the works of Plato himself and to point out those concepts which had special meaning for the Neo-Platonists and later followers of the Greek philosopher.

A careful study of Plato's writings (it must be remembered that these are all the work of his students, for Plato himself, as far as is known, wrote nothing of the extant works credited to him) reveals that his thought went through several stages of development and never crystallized into a single, definite system. Yet it has been possible for historians of philosophy to establish a conception of Plato's philosophy that became more or less standardized, though there remains some doubt whether this reflects Plato's doctrines as envisioned by the philosopher himself.

There can be no doubt, however, that Plato's philosophy has played an important role in world history. An important authority on Plato gives expression to his opinion of how important an influence Plato has had upon world thought:

Too few men realize Plato's influence. To few men does the world owe a heavier debt than to Plato. He has taught us that "philosophy", loving and single-minded devotion to truth, is the great gift of God to man and the rightful guide of man's life, and that few to whom the intimate vision of truth has been granted are false to their calling unless



they bear fruit in unwearied and humble service to their fellows. All worthy civilization is fed by these ideas, and whenever, after a time of confusion and forgetfulness, our Western world has recaptured the sense of noble living it has sought them afresh in the Platonic writings. Plato has been called, with some truth, the father of all heresies in religion and science; he has been, in the same degree, a fountain of all that is most living in all the orthodoxies.<sup>7</sup>

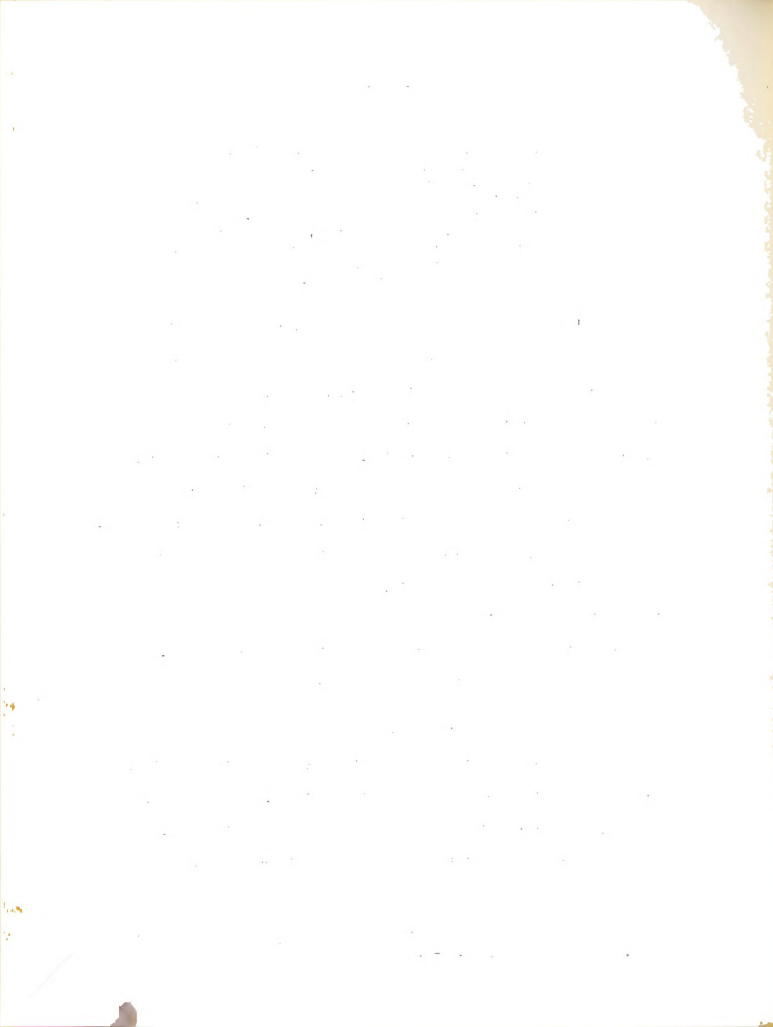
Plato's eminent position in world thought results from his being the first Western philosopher to attempt a critique of pure reason as the instrument for obtaining scientific knowledge. Before his time, reflection had devoted its efforts to a study of the facts of nature as presented to empirical observation. The Milesians sought for the solution of the problem of causality and devoted their search to an attempt to reduce all nature to its elemental substance and components. As a consequence, they proposed various solutions, some thinkers singling out the primordial elements of air, fire, earth or water, or by the imaginative construction of an ephemeral substance believed to contain the properties of several substances but without specific form. This was one of the problems with which Plato wrestled also.

#### Plato's Doctrine of Ideas

Plato undertook an investigation into every question both in the areas of moral jurisprudence and physical science. Every object, he teaches, has two constitutional aspects, its matter and its form. Since he regards matter as limitless, he holds that it can be divided into a

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<sup>7</sup> Taylor, Alfred Edward, Platonism and Its Influence, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1932, pp. 3-4.



multiple of units each exhibiting the same form. Such forms or "Ideas" function ontologically as ideal patterns in which the objects of experience participated. For example, in the Symposium, Phaedo and in the sixth, seventh and tenth books of the Republic, Plato maintains that the Ideas or Universals used in perceiving and knowing are independent, immaterial substances, which exist in a realm of their own. Thus, Ideas belong to objects but can only be comprehended by the methods of logical analysis.

Plato regarded the forms as reality in contrast to the world of sense experience or appearance. He contended that the forms are immutable, eternal, perfect, and known only through reason; while the world of becoming, the world of particulars, is constantly changing, coming into existence and passing away.<sup>8</sup>

It must be admitted that there is a shifting of emphasis on occasion to be found in Plato's doctrine of the Ideas. On some occasions he sets up the Ideas for practical or logical guidance, and then again he seems to have believed that the Ideas constitute another, transcendent world. According to this latter approach, Plato conceived of the Ideas not as independently existing entities but rather as logical essences.

One of the modern authorities on Platonism, Jowett, contends that Plato was not primarily interested in empirical investigation but rather in a priori reasoning, a concern with the world outside empirical investigation as capable of providing the key to an understanding of the world as seen by man. Thus Jowett writes:

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<sup>8</sup> Plato, The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett, Oxford University Press, London, 1892, III, p. 341.



He (Plato) has no notion of trying an experiment and is hardly capable of observing the curiosities of nature which are tumbling out at his feet, or of interpreting even the most obvious of them. He is driven back from the nearer to the more distant, from particulars to generalities, from the earth to the stars. He lifts up his eyes to the heavens and seeks to guide by their motions his erring footsteps.<sup>9</sup>

It is this element in Plato's philosophy that fosters the spirit of mysticism so characteristic of the Christian East and in a later chapter we shall see how the Platonic idealistic influence, assimilated into the Christian Faith, reinforced the mysticism of Greek, Syrian and Egyptian Christians and through the medium of their writings, this mystical and idealistic concept was transmitted to the Russians and eventually found its revival among the Slavophiles.

A further study of Plato's works, especially the Timaeus, clearly illustrates the doctrine of the reality of the Ideas or Forms, thus stressing "otherworldliness" as being more important and more real than the visible and empirical world. Timaeus speaking to Socrates in this Dialogue says:

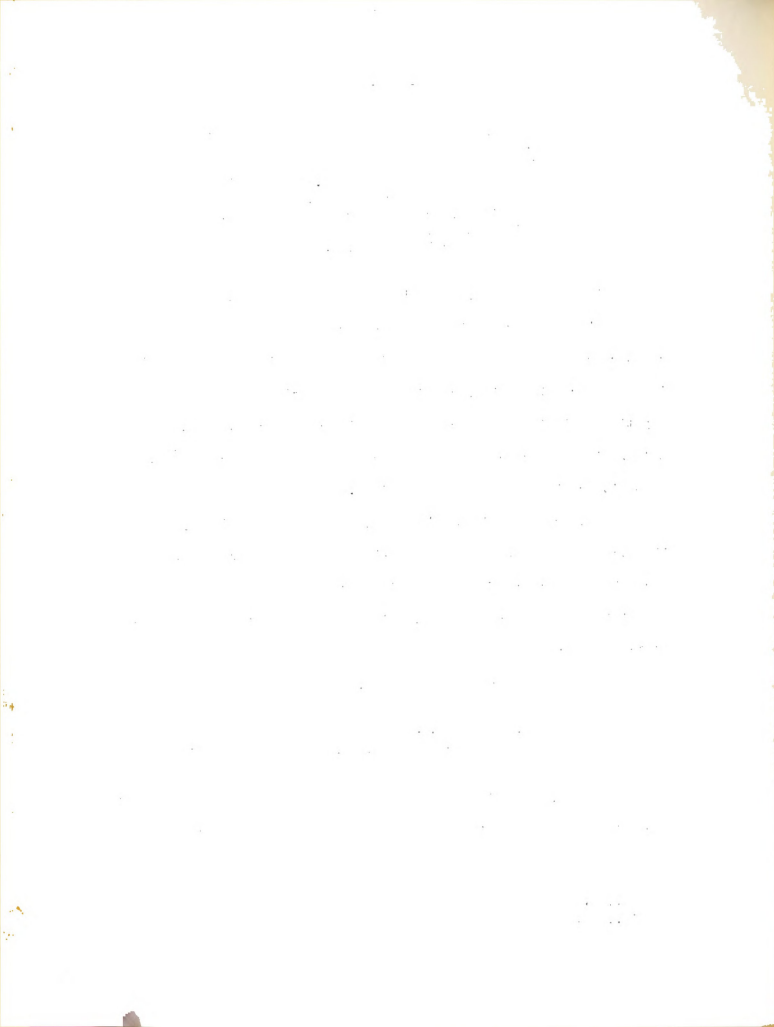
The work of the creator, whenever he looks to the unchangeable and fashions the form and nature of his work after an unchangeable pattern, must necessarily be made fair and perfect; but when he looks to the created only, and uses a created pattern, it is not fair or perfect.<sup>10</sup>

Here then, is a statement which interpreters of Plato in the early Christian centuries believed to be an evidence of his bifurcation of

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 341

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 448-449





reality and his stressing of the primacy of the invisible and eternal. The eternal pattern can be spoken of with certainty while the created copy, the world of sense experience, can only be described in the language of probability. The intermediary between the two worlds is for Plato the Soul.

In the Timaeus the divine Craftsman is presented as forming the soul and body of the material universe out of pre-existing material according to a pattern which is contemplated in the world of Ideas or Forms:

And there is still a question to be asked about him: Which of the patterns had the artificer in view when he made the world, - the pattern of the unchangeable, or of that which is created? If the world be indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to that which is eternal; but if what cannot be said without blasphemy is true, then to the created pattern. Every one will see that he must have looked to the eternal; for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And having been created in this way, the world has been framed in the likeness of that which is apprehended by reason and mind and is unchangeable, and must therefore of necessity, if this is admitted, be a copy of something. Not that it is all-important that the beginning of everything should be according to nature. And in speaking of the copy and the original we may assume that worlds are akin to the matter which they describe; when they relate to the lasting and permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and permanent, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and immovable - nothing less.<sup>11</sup>

It is in the Timaeus also that Plato represents the doctrine that the world is "moved", caused, by the self-moving, intelligent directing power which rules and orders all the material universe to good ends by

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 449-450



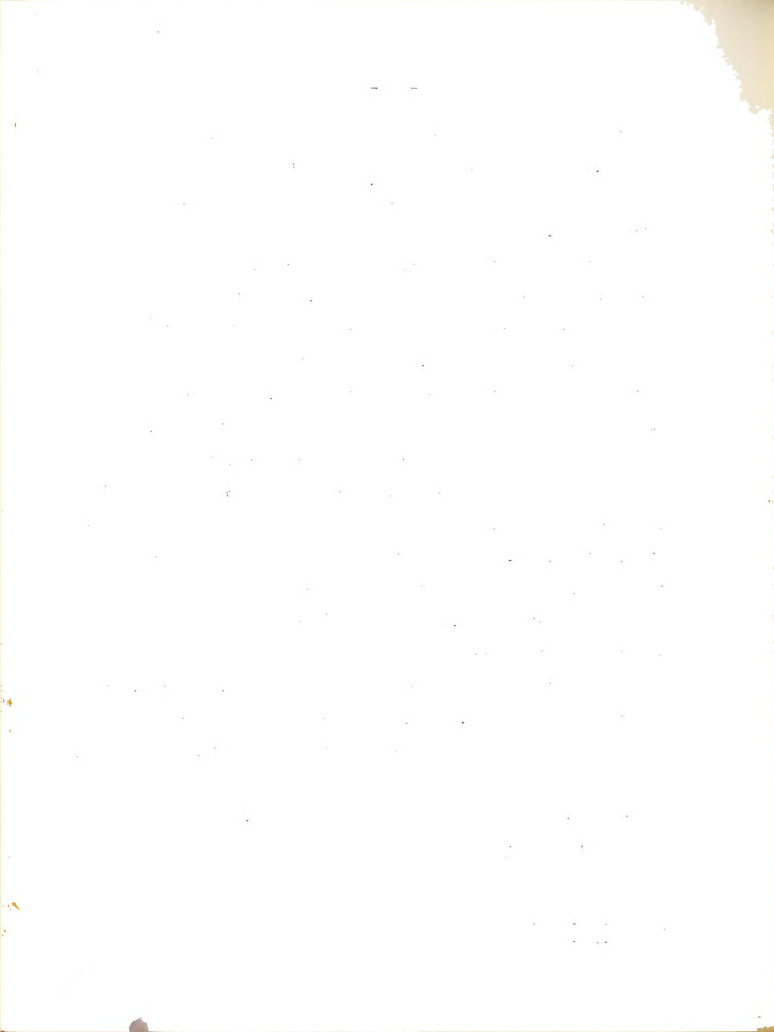
bringing it into the most perfect possible conformity with the world of Forms. This is the very substance of Plato's theology and its influence on subsequent philosophical and theological thinking is quite profound. As a consequence of the assimilation of this element of Platonism into Christian theology and philosophy, social movements were also influenced and colored accordingly. These ideas became part of the culture pattern of the early Christians and were transmitted by them to succeeding generations. Thus, Platonic theological thought was an important element in determining social action. The correlational studies that have been made by psychologists and by sociologists, of the correspondence between the presence of certain beliefs and attitudes and the training of the individual, the religion of the individual, his socio-economic status, and the beliefs and attitudes of his parents, siblings, friends, etc., clearly indicate that as an element in early Christian thought, Platonism was an important determinant of belief and consequently of social action. This is not surprising since there is hardly a social or political or ethical system of the western world which has not been anticipated or considered by Plato - despotism, democracy, the optimism of Fourier or St. Simon, the naturalism of Rousseau; the survival theory of Darwin, the "superman" ethics of the Nazis, the biological eugenics of modern "planned parenthood" groups,<sup>12</sup> the advocacy of woman suffrage<sup>13</sup> - Plato has taken cognizance of them all.

Plato's Republic has often been considered to have provided the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 152

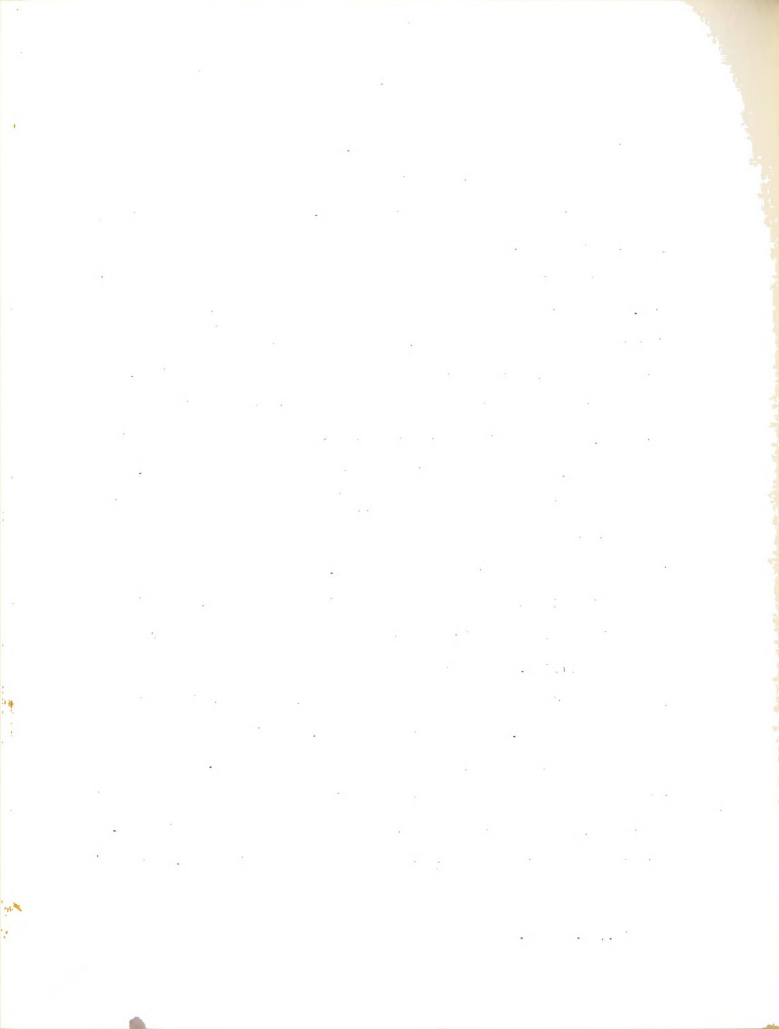


prototype of the ecclesiastical hierarchy of both the Eastern Orthodox Catholic and the Roman Catholic Churches. Thus there entered into the Christian religion another Platonic influence which has been a lasting one through twenty centuries of Christianity. In Book II of the Republic, for example, Plato presents the doctrine which both the Eastern and Western Churches have incorporated into their ecclesiastical structures. True, ecclesiastical history clearly indicates that the Catholic hierarchy is of apostolic origin, but whether consciously or unconsciously, early Christians, particularly those who studied Plato and Plotinus, must have seen in the Republic an almost exact counterpart of their hierarchical structure. The Christian Church regarded as the earthly representative of the Divine, was given the primacy over the purely secular realm.

Socrates in Book II of the Republic<sup>14</sup> elicits replies and solutions to the problem of the prosperity of the unjust and the sufferings of the just and adds some observations of his own. He does not say that happiness consists in the contemplation of the ideal of justice, and still less will he be tempted to affirm that the just man can be happy in great physical suffering. But first he dwells on the difficulty of the problem of restoring man to his natural condition, before he will answer the question at all. He will frame an ideal, but his ideal comprehends not only abstract justice, but the whole relations of man. By using the illustration of the large letters he implies that he will look for justice in society, and that from the State he will proceed to the individual. This is in line with the a priori emphasis so common in Plato. Socrates'

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 36 ff.



answer in substance amounts to this, - that under favorable conditions, in the perfect State, justice and happiness will coincide, and that when justice is once found, happiness may be left to take care of itself. In Greek thought it was common to begin with the State and then go on to the rights of the individual. In ancient history and through the medieval times, man is not looked upon so much as an individual but rather as an individual among many, the citizen of a state which is prior to him. Man, under such a system, was not supposed to have any notion of good or evil apart from the law of his country and the creed of his church. Later, in the Slavophile theories, this concept will be expressed in the maxim "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism!" The Church has priority over the State and the State over the citizens.

This universalism which has rightly or wrongly been attributed to Plato is most clearly seen in medieval thought and is a clear illustration of the influence of religious and philosophical thought upon the socio-political structure within a culture. In making an ethical judgement, it was common among the churchmen of the West during the Middle Ages to consider the greater universal as the greater good. Thus, they considered God as the Absolute Universal, the Summum Bonum. Next in order as being of lesser universality they posited the Church, which they called "Universal" or "Catholic" and claimed for it a universal jurisdiction over all men and all nations and even over the arts, sciences and letters, just as Plato held that his ideal state should do in the Republic.<sup>15</sup> The Church in the Middle Ages claimed authority over

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 87.





all created beings and objects on earth, over any state or civil institution. Therefore, in any dispute between Church and State, the State should concede its inferiority to and dependence upon the Church. In a continuum of groups of lesser universality, of lesser "reality" and consequently of lesser value after the State came cities and provinces, guilds and societies, families and finally the individual who was expected to submit himself to all authorities superior to him, recognizing each in its proper place and importance - God, the Church, State, town and village authorities, guild masters, and finally family heads. Commenting upon this hierarchical structure, one authority on Plato makes the following remarks:

In great saints and doctors like Athanasius and Augustine, who carried out the arduous task of formulating the logos of the Church and of guarding it against distortions, we find a really suggestive example of what Plato meant by his φύλακες or "guardians." The teachers, administrative bishops, the members of the militant and protective orders carried out the doctrine, protecting it against internal and external violence, and applied it to the ever-shifting flux of circumstances. These are precisely the functions of Plato's ἐπὶ κούροις or auxiliary guardians. The great body of "the faithful" to which also the guardians belong, and for whom they exercise their onerous functions, correspond to the friendly brotherhood of the Republic, each of them must be educated to the limit of his capacity and given all that he requires for the proper performance of his function, whatever it may be. <sup>16</sup>

In its Slavic form, this concept found expression in the emphasis by the Slavophiles upon their watchword of theocracy, "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism!" This program declared the tsar's will to be

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<sup>16</sup> Wild, John D., Plato's Theory of Man, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1946, pp. 108-109.



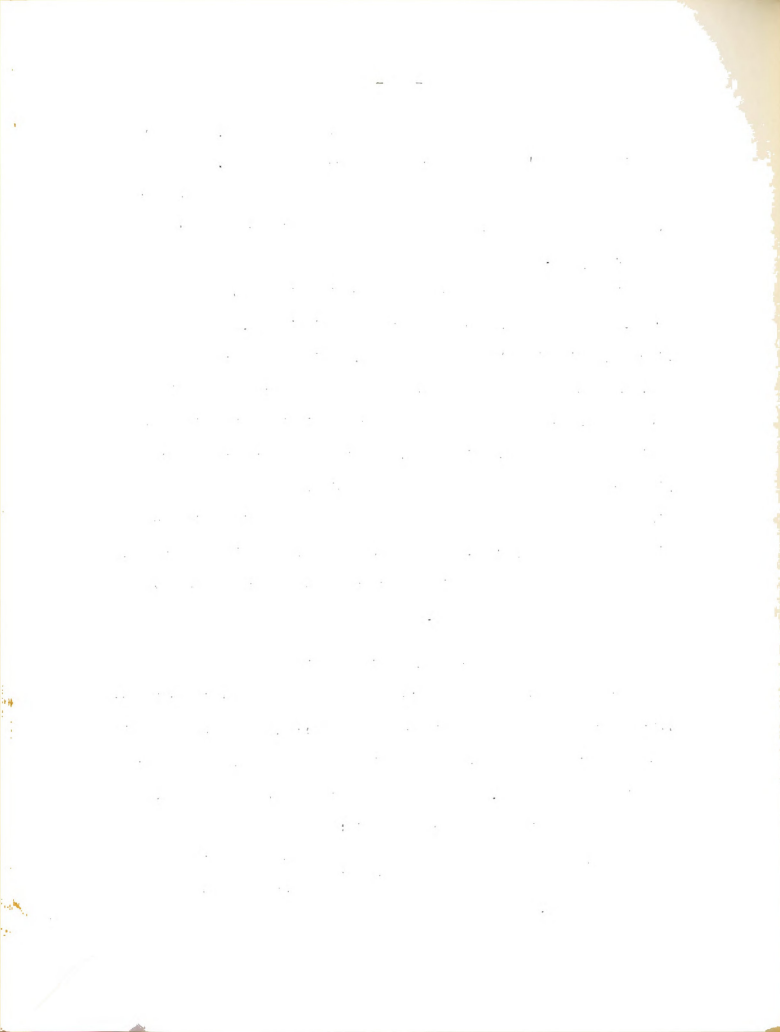
a divine revelation and deduced state activities and administration policies from God's will thus revealed through Orthodoxy. Thus the Platonic hierarchical concept and a priorism found a fulfillment in the Slavephile movement. This will be examined in greater detail in a later chapter.

Plato apparently foresaw the oligarchic drift that can come from the executive function becoming an end in itself, and the human hierarchy, with its opinions and dogmas, taking the place of eternal law. The structural changes and policy of the Church at the time of the Edict of Constantine illustrate very precisely what Plato must have envisioned when he gave his warnings lest the timocratic hierarchy yield to the demands of security and prestige, and as a consequence sink more and more into traditionalism and regimentation into the final stages of oligarchy. Perhaps nowhere else is this so clearly seen as in the Russian ecclesiastical state where the tsar assumed both religious and temporal control.

#### Platonic Emphasis on Unity

Still another of the Platonic elements of emphasis which reinforced early Christian social and philosophical patterns, and later in Russia became an important element of the Slavephile movement, is the stress on unity and wholeness. Plato considered the greatest good of states to be unity and discord the greatest evil:

Can there be any greater evil than discord and distraction and plurality where unity ought to reign? or any greater good than the bond of unity? There cannot. And there is unity where there is community



of pleasures and pains - where all the citizens are glad or grieved on the same occasions of joy and sorrow. Where there is no common but only private feeling a state is disorganized - when you have one half of the world triumphing and the other half plunged in grief at the same events happening to the city or the citizens...Or that again which most nearly approaches to the condition of the individual - as in the body, when but a finger of one of us is hurt, the whole frame, drawn towards the soul as a center and forming one kingdom under the ruling power therein, feels the hurt and sympathizes all together with the part affected, and we say that the man has a pain in his finger; and the same expression is used about any other part of the body, which has a sensation of pain at suffering or of pleasure at the alleviation of suffering ...in the best ordered state there is the nearest approach to this common feeling.<sup>17</sup>

Unity and "oneness" has always been basic in the Christian ethos.

Likewise, in Slavophilism we find an enthusiasm about the village commune (obshchina, zadruga or mir) and an insistence upon its merits.

The spirit of collectivity and communality is essentially Platonic and is more characteristic of Eastern Orthodox culture than of those culture areas where Roman Catholicism has been dominant. This is further evidenced by the conciliarity of Orthodoxy in distinction to the oligarchical system of the papal ecclesiarchy.

Typical of the spirit of both Eastern and Western Churches is the emphasis on "group-mindedness" rather than upon individualism in religious matters. In Protestantism, however, the emphasis is upon individualism in religious interpretation. The Eastern and Western Catholic emphasis on "group-mindedness" as an element of culture is correlated with social action in secular matters so that in socie-

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<sup>17</sup> Op. Cit., Republic, p. 156.



political movements the individual predisposed to a pattern of behavior in which subordination has become more or less habitual and individualistic initiative is frowned upon by the group or even condemned.

Plato felt that his predecessors, like Socrates, had gone to the extreme in making man the center of the universe. True, he saw value in their point of view, but he realized that it was not complete. As a consequence, he sought for a solution to the problem of man's place in the universe which would satisfy the best in the thought of both the early Greeks and the Sophists.

The result of his search was the dictum that man is the measure of all things, because there lie in him certain universal principles, ideas or concepts that are basic to all knowing. These ideas he held correspond to reality and man by his thinking is able to grasp the true nature of things. But Plato makes it clear that the true nature of things lies outside man's sense experience in the realm of eternal Forms. The true universe, the really important and worthwhile world is the universe of changeless, pure, eternal ideas. These things we experience through our senses are only copies of the real and the world of sense experience is an "unreal world" in Plato's sense. All of its imperfections come from the fact that it is impossible to impress the idea perfectly upon matter. Matter is imperfect and thus distorts the idea to some extent, causing it to fall short of the perfection of the Idea or Form.





### The Inferiority of Matter

The implication of the foregoing Platonic theory is that matter is inferior to the realm of Ideas. This concept of the inferiority of matter and the world of sense experience was not neglected by the Gnostic Christian groups nor by the more orthodox theologians and philosophers. St. Paul, for example, in one of his Epistles states this concept which is purely Platonic, though it may have been unconsciously so: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."<sup>18</sup> The bifurcation of reality into the perfect Forms and the imperfect empirical world was easily translated into the mystical elements of early and later Christian thought. This led to an emphasis on otherworldliness and a consequent condemnation of the "world, the flesh and the devil." Platonism, while it did not originate the monastic ideal of abandonment of the world, nonetheless gave reinforcement to the idea of asceticism and renunciation of the imperfect material world and the desirability of mystical striving for contemplation of the Ideal world beyond the periphery of sense experience. Later, as will be seen in Slavophilism, there continues a similar emphasis in the renunciation of the secularism of the Western world and a preference for the spirituality of Russian Orthodoxy as superior.

Plato held firmly to the idea that the universe is composed of

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Corinthians, 4: 17-18.



two principles: mind and matter. Mind is wholly distinct from matter. Matter is, for him, a dual weight that mind must carry because mind has become entangled with matter. With such a concept it became an easy and logical step for the Gnostics of the first and second centuries of the Christian era, followers as many of them were of Platonism, to advocate subjection of the body to the spirit as a way of rising above the encumbrances of matter. Thus, salvation was to be achieved by denying the appetites and impulses of the body, even to the point of celibacy and in some extreme cases to self-castration so that the individual would have no part in the perpetuation of other beings weighted down by the burden of a material, fleshy body. In holding this concept, it follows that mind, or soul, is regarded as the only true reality, the thing of most worth, the principle of law and order in the universe.

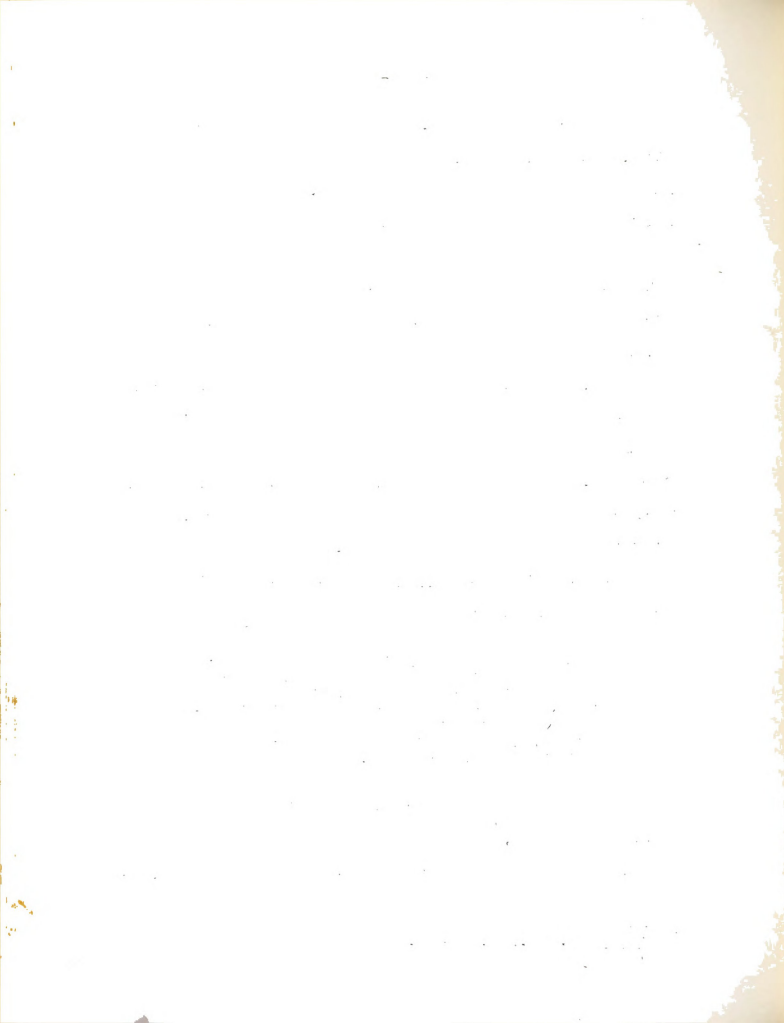
In the beginning of the Timaeus Plato states the principle of the inferiority of matter:

What is that which always is and has no becoming; and what is that which is always becoming and never is? That which is apprehended by intelligence and reason is always in the same state; but that which is conceived by opinion with the help of sensation and without reason, is always in the process of becoming and perishing and never really is. <sup>19</sup>

To clarify his point, Plato relates in mythical form the genesis of the world of sense, the world that "is always in the process of becoming and perishing and never really is." There was an "architect,"

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<sup>19</sup> Timaeus, op. cit., pp. 448-449.



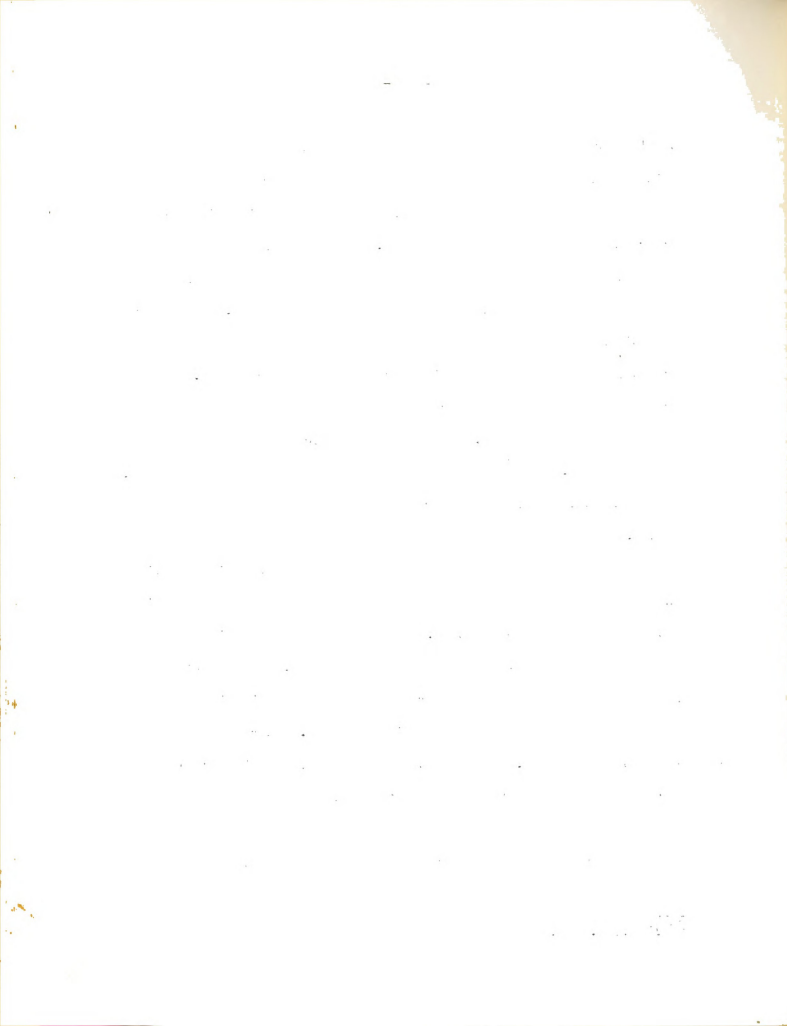
the "demiurge" who acted as an intermediary between God and matter, bringing the Ideal world and the empirical world together much as a sculptor might fashion out of stone a statue which is chiselled according to an ideal pattern or plan.<sup>20</sup> The matter, dead and thus a slave, is impressed by mind with the ideas which mind has experienced in the ideal world, and it is these which are real. In Eastern Christianity, this Platonic idea was expressed by the desire to escape from the trammels of the material world by strict asceticism. This freeing oneself from the control of matter would make possible the higher life of the spirit. The asceticism which also appears in the Epistles of St. Paul was carried much further by many of the Gnostics. It was the natural and logical result of their dualism of spirit and matter.

There is still a further parallel between the Christian Gnostics and Plato. Both were concerned with the problem of the relationship between mind or soul and matter. Plato uses to explain his concept the myth of how mind became entangled with matter. He says that it existed on a star in its pure form and that after a time it felt an urge to have experiences in the empirical world. Therefore it became imprisoned in a body. But once thus imprisoned, the mind or soul struggles to free itself from the material shackles and to return to the star.

The Christian Gnostics held that sparks of divinity were intro-

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 460.



duced into the world, not by the demiurge but by a more spiritual aeon. These sparks of divinity settled in human beings and the men thus endowed from above lived thenceforth in an alien world far from their true home. How they were to be released from their captivity and restored to the divine realm where they belonged was the great religious problem of the Gnostics. Nevertheless, Gnostic and Platonist both gave serious consideration to essentially the same problem - escape from the world, escape from the flesh to live the life of the spirit. With regard to social living the Gnostics were to rise from all terrestrial things, by the towering efforts of contemplation, and thus to make it possible for souls whose origin was regarded as celestial and divine to return to their true realm. They were ordered to mortify by hunger, thirst and other bodily forms of asceticism, the sluggish body which restrains the liberty of the immortal spirit, that in this earthly life they might enjoy communion with the Supreme Being, and ascend after death, actige and unincumbered to the world of spirit. Here the Gnostics were in full agreement with Plato who says in the Timaeus: "He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence."<sup>21</sup>

Still another aspect of Plato's teaching must not be neglected in this study. Reference has already been made to the Platonic stress on unity and harmonious cooperation. It has also been seen that this idea has been carried out in the Russian mir or rural collectivity. This agricultural collectivity is a form of social and economic expression

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 461.





that would fit in well with Plato's social and economic philosophy. Though there is no direct evidence to support it, it is possible and even probable that the Russian inheritance of Platonism predisposed them to collectivization as a socio-economic expression of their religious philosophy of unity and cooperation. In its turn, it is highly probable that the mir and the theory of collectivity made for an easier acceptance of the Marxian and Leninist programs of reform. In fact, there are many who would consider Plato the first apostle of communism, even though he limited his communism to the upper classes. One American political scientist has recently declared that Soviet Communism and Platonism possess common factors:

...the ideal state of Plato and that of the Russian communists have many elements in common; both hate commerce and money economy; both regard private property as the sole source of all evil; both would eliminate wealth and poverty; both favor a collective education of the children, exempted from paternal care; both regard art and literature only as a means of state education; both would control all science and ideology in the interest of the state, both have a rigid central dogma, a kind of state religion to which all individuals and social activity must be sub-ordinated...both schemes are capable of realization only under the protection of violence of armed force. <sup>22</sup>

#### Platonism Stresses Class Society

The essence of the Platonic conception is to cultivate to the highest point, by separation of classes and by special training, every natural difference of faculty. This requires exactly what the Marxian

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<sup>22</sup> Englemann, Political Philosophy from Plato to Jeremy Bentham.



communistic philosophy requires in its ideal of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs." It must be admitted that the Platonic community of goods is applied only to the ruling class of guardians and to the military class of their auxiliaries. The industrial portion of the Platonic community is apparently left to the system of private property and commercial competition - though no doubt with just so much regulation from the guardians as is necessary to preserve the social health and restrain excesses. It would seem that this offers a system more practicable than socialism of the modern industrial type. Again, unlike Soviet communism, Plato does not believe in a classless society. He believes that every society necessarily has classes, and moreover, that the essential psychological classes are, so to speak, fixed by nature. In this advocacy of a class society, the Slavophiles are in closer agreement with Plato than are the Soviets.

For millenia men have had their optimistic beliefs and dreams. Plato's Republic and the theocracy advocated by the Slavophiles are two examples, while the messianic hope of both Slavophilism and modern Sovietism bear the mark of utopianism. It seems highly probable that the Platonic inheritance of the Russians aided in predisposing them to this form of idealism.

In connection with utopianism, an American sociologist offers the following comments upon the theories of Plato:

Adopting the premise that man can control his own social relations and that concerted volition is the inevitable result of similar external surroundings, (Plato) constructed one of the most nearly complete utopian plans for an ideal society of which history bears any record. It is interesting



to note that, aside from its communistic aspects, this utopia of Plato provided for the first comprehensive scheme of eugenics in the history of social or biological philosophy. Plato's theory that the elite should govern society stimulated later aristocratic political theory and has been embraced by the Fascist and "managerial" philosophers of our own day.<sup>23</sup>

Plato outlined the organic theory of society and believed that not only the economic but also the ethical basis of society is embodied in the functional division of labor. In this respect the Republic contributed what is probably the most satisfactory analysis of the economic foundations of society to be found in the works of any writer of antiquity.

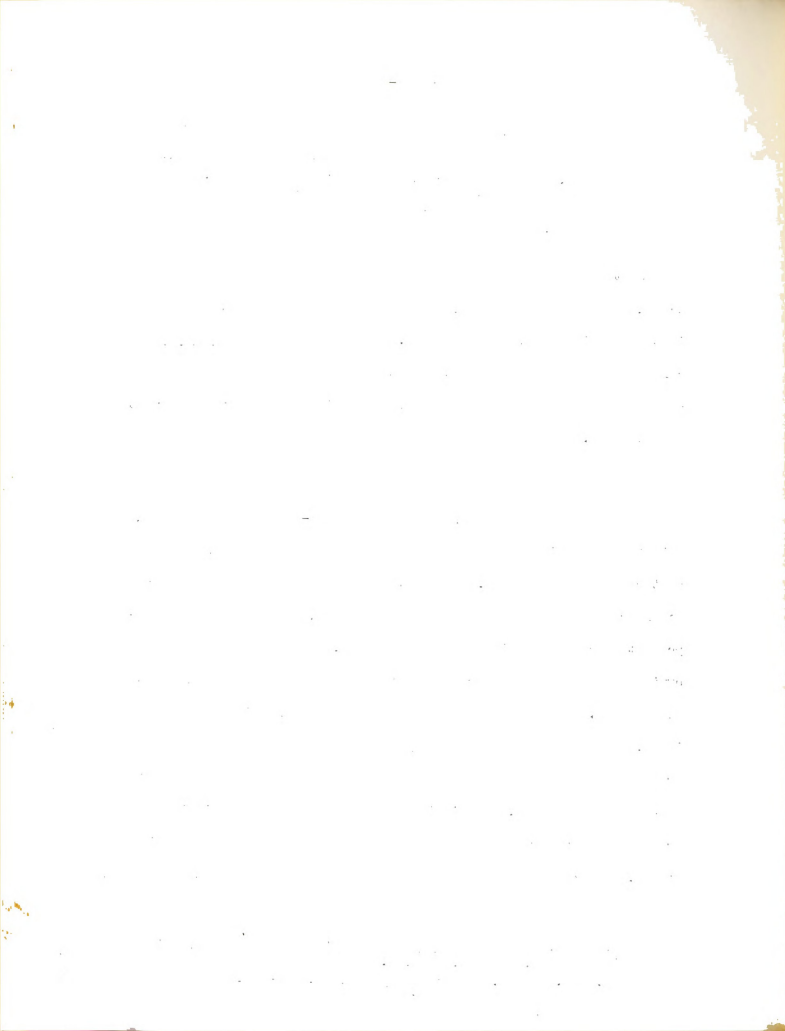
#### Platonic Mysticism

In still another respect, Plato and the Neo-Platonists after him, laid the foundation for the mystical emphasis in the epistemological system of the Slavophiles. One of the first of ancient philosophers to offer a fairly complete theory of knowledge, Plato held that sense-perception could not give genuine knowledge. Man must pass beyond the empirical to ideas which are not derived from experience and not dependent upon it. The soul comes into the world carrying within itself true ideas. These have been planted in it in an existence previous to birth. True knowledge is reached when these ideas are remembered and take the fore in consciousness.<sup>24</sup> This is conceptual knowledge as distinguished from sense knowledge which according to Plato is not actually knowledge at all. Conceptual knowledge has in it an element of the intuitive which

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<sup>23</sup> Barnes, Elmer, An Introduction to the History of Sociology, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948, p. 7.

<sup>24</sup> Meno, op. cit., II, p. 40 ff; Phaedo, II, pp. 213-217.



reveals the true essence of things rather than their mere accidental aspects.

Mysticism involves the belief that knowledge of reality, of God, of truth, is attainable by intuition or spiritual insight without the medium of senses or reason. In this sense, Plato was clearly proposing a mystical epistemological system in his philosophy. One of the foremost Roman Catholic philosophers of our time explains the relationship between Platonism and mysticism thus:

Because existence as such (seems) inconceivable, metaphysical reflection has spontaneously conceived being as "that which is," irrespective of the fact "that it is." Being then became selfhood, and, because selfhood could not be understood otherwise than as unity, the metaphysics of being gave birth to a metaphysics of the One. Thus, having reduced the whole of being to self-identity, metaphysics finally subjected being to a transcendent cause radically different from being; and, since what is above being is not intelligible, the will to achieve exhaustive intelligibility by eliminating existence drove metaphysics to subject to an unintelligible non-being the whole order of intelligible reality. This is why all Platonisms sooner or later lead to mysticism, and sooner rather than later.<sup>25</sup>

Mystical contemplation leaves behind both senses and intellectual operations, and all things known by sense and intellect, and strives to achieve unity with God. From the psycho-sociological point of view, this sort of mysticism results in a passivity toward the problems of daily living in a world of sense experience. This was more clearly recommended by Plotinus and such Christian mystics as Dionysius the Areopagite than in Plato himself, who did show considerable concern for the social, political and economic aspects of the state. Yet, the mystical element in Plato influenced the Neo-Platonists who gave greater

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<sup>25</sup> Gilson, Etienne, Being and Some Philosophers, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 1949, pp. 39-40.





greater emphasis to this element of Platonic philosophy. The Hellenistic combination of Platonic metaphysics with Stoic ethics remains even today the dominant type of Christian religious philosophy.

In the Russian mystical concept there has always been a sense of the ephemeral nature of human life and an acceptance of it. Death and the crippling effects of disease have not been as generally viewed with alarm as in most Western cultures. In fact, the hunchback, the epileptic, the deformed and the insane were regarded as special objects of veneration and care since they bore in their bodies the marks of the divine will. This peculiarly Russian idea is known as kenoticism, a form of nonresistance. This is seen in the voluntary acceptance of death by two of the earliest canonized saints of the Russian Church, Boris and Gleb.

#### Platonic Attitude Toward Death

In Plato, also, there is the concept of not only willing acceptance of death, but a desire for it. In the Phaedo, Plato proposes that the true philosopher desires death, since death is the separation of soul and body, and the philosopher desires such a separation. He would like to be freed from the domination of bodily pleasures and of the senses which always obscure his mental vision. The true philosopher, according to Plato will hold that

...thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her - neither sounds nor sights nor pain nor any pleasure, - when she takes leave of the body and has as little as possible to do with it, when she has no bodily sense or desire...<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Phaedo, op. cit., II, p. 204.

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<sup>26</sup> Phaedo, op. cit., II, p. 204.



The body, then, is a hinderance that should be disposed of as soon as divinity will allow. This strong mystical and ascetic emphasis is further set forth by Plato in the following terms:

When real philosophers consider all these things, will they not be led to make a reflection which they will express in words something like the following? "Have we not found," they will say, "a path of thought which seems to bring us and our argument to the conclusion, that while we are in the body, and while the soul is infected with the evils of the body, our desire will not be satisfied? and our desire is of the truth. For the body is a source of endless troubles to us by reason of the mere requirement of food; and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the search after true being: it falls us with loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in fact, as men say, takes away from us the power of thinking at all. Whence come wars, and fightings, and factions? whence but from the body and the lusts of the body?...It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body - the soul in herself must behold things in themselves: and then we shall attain the wisdom which we desire, and of which we say that we are lovers; not while we live, but after death...In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible intercourse or communion with the body, and are not surfeited with the bodily nature, but keep ourselves pure until the hour when God himself is pleased to release us. <sup>27</sup>

This passage could have been penned by some Russian monk or by one of the more devout of the Slavophiles, or for that matter by any of the early Christian ascetics! The true philosopher, according to Plato, is to be revered for his acceptance and even his desire for death. Similarly, the impression made upon Russian society by the death of Boris and Gleb, is demonstrated by the following fact.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp. 205-206.

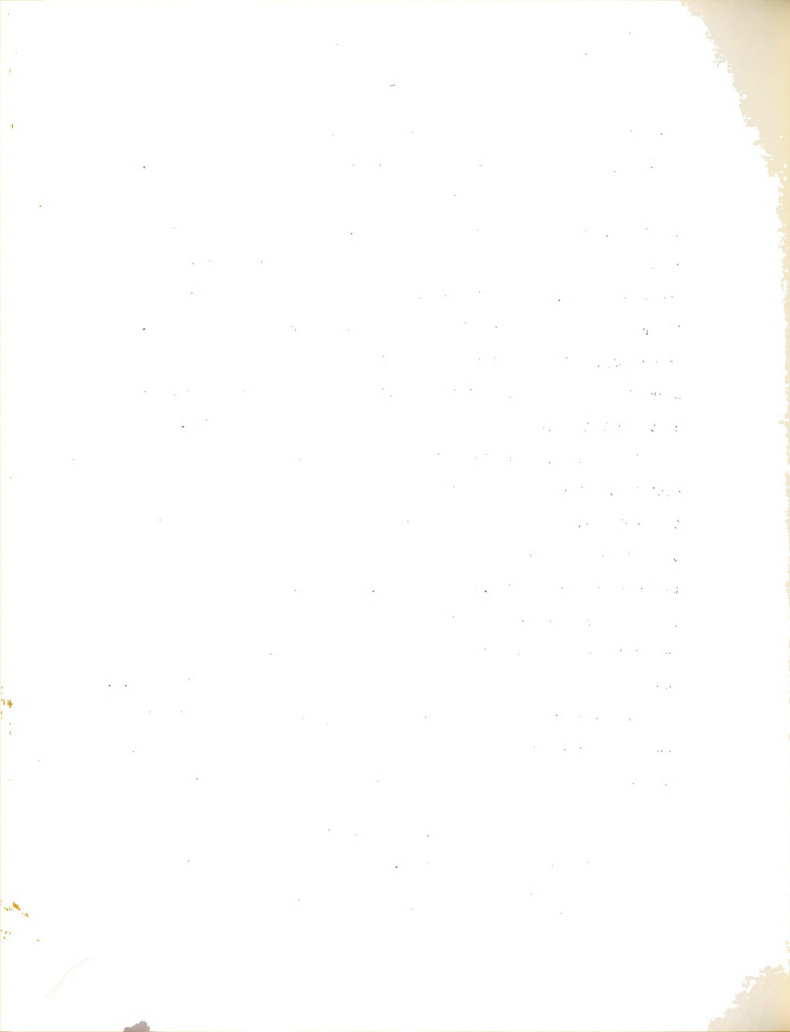


Each time early Russian chroniclers relate the political murder of a prince, they hold the example of Boris and Gleb before their eyes. It means that the assassination is represented as a self-offering sacrifice, made for the atonement of sins. The voluntary character of the death is often contradicted by the circumstances related by the same author. It is difficult to speak of voluntary death; what is probably more accurate is to speak of the nonresistance to death. Apparently, this nonresistance communicates the quality of voluntary sacrifice to death and purifies the victim in those cases where, except for infants, the natural conditions of purity are lacking.

In any case, Platonic attitudes toward death seem to have been assimilated into Russian religious thought through the mediation of the early Church Fathers and to have been given additional impetus by the cultural patterns typical of Russia at the time of its conversion to Orthodox Christianity. Undoubtedly, the strong ascetic attitude of the Gnostics is also responsible for the continuation of the Platonic asceticism and world-denial in the hundreds of monastic establishments for men and women in Russia from time time of its conversion in 988 A.D.

The following quotation from the Phaedo reads as though it might have been written by any one of the early Church Fathers or ascetics, so harmoniously do the sentiments expressed blend themselves:

The true philosophers, Simmias, are always occupied in the practice of dying, wherefore also to them least of all men is death terrible. Look at the matter thus: - if they have been in every way the enemies of the body, and are wanting to be alone with the soul, when this desire of theirs is granted, how inconsistent would they be if they





trembled and repined, instead of rejoicing at their departure to that place, where, when they arrive, they hope to gain that which in life they desired...Will he not depart with joy? <sup>28</sup>

In Chapter IV of the present work the Platonic mystical strain will be studied more fully in its relation to the Eastern Christian writers and mystics. However, before continuing the consideration of those elements of Platonic thought which are most consonant with later philosophy, in fairness to the pure Platonic tradition a comment should be made to give the balance to the mystical and ascetical element of Plato's work. Plato made no condemnation of pleasure nor of the goods of the sense world without some reservations. The authority on Plato, A.E. Taylor clarifies this aspect of Platonism:

...(Plato's) philosophy teaches us that a man's soul is the most precious thing about him, because it is most peculiarly himself; the body again, is more truly himself than any of his belongings. Hence the rule of right judgement is that the best of all goods is goodness of soul, virtue and wisdom; goodness of body comes only second, and the "goods of fortune" third...Plato is no enemy of human pleasure. He is fully prepared to argue the point that, even by the rules of the calculus of pleasure and pain, if you formulate the rules correctly and work the sum right, the life of the man who puts the soul first, the body second and "fortune" only third, will prove to be the most truly acceptable as well as the most noble. <sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the Russians went to an extreme in their asceticism, but their theology is filled with urgings toward self-sacrifice and contempt for bodily comfort. That this was so, at least until

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. p. 207.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, op. cit., pp. 61-62.

the same way as the other two, but with a different result.

The first result is that the first two cases are not the same.

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The twenty-fifth result is that the first two cases are not the same.

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The twenty-seventh result is that the first two cases are not the same.

the time of the Revolution in 1917, is evident from the comments upon his own people by Nicolas Berdyaev, an eminent twentieth century Russian philosopher whose works will be considered in greater detail in a later chapter. Berdyaev calls attention to the "characteristic of the spirit of Russian religion" which is yurodstvo, a willing acceptance of mockery and humiliation, contempt and suffering. "The burning of oneself alive as an exploit of religion, is a Russian national phenomenon, which is almost unknown among other peoples...The Russians are fugitives and bandits: the Russians are also pilgrims in search of divine truth and justice. Pilgrims refuse obedience to the powers that be. The path of this earthly life presented itself to the Russian people as a way of truancy and a way of pilgrimage." <sup>30</sup>

The similarity between these views concerning the true philosopher and the true Christian is striking, and if it does not show the influence of Platonism upon Christian thinking, it at least illustrates the harmony that exists between them on many points. Both seek escape from the meta-phenomenal world and both hold its material goods as of lesser importance than the spiritual. In characteristic fashion, the Russians being the extremists they are, even self-inflicted death by burning has been looked upon popularly as a good thing because it provides escape from life and provides an advent into the true realm of the spirit. It must be admitted that this contempt for the world is undoubtedly due more to the Neo-Platonic and early Christian writers who were influenced by Platonism

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<sup>30</sup>Berdyaev, The Russian Idea, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

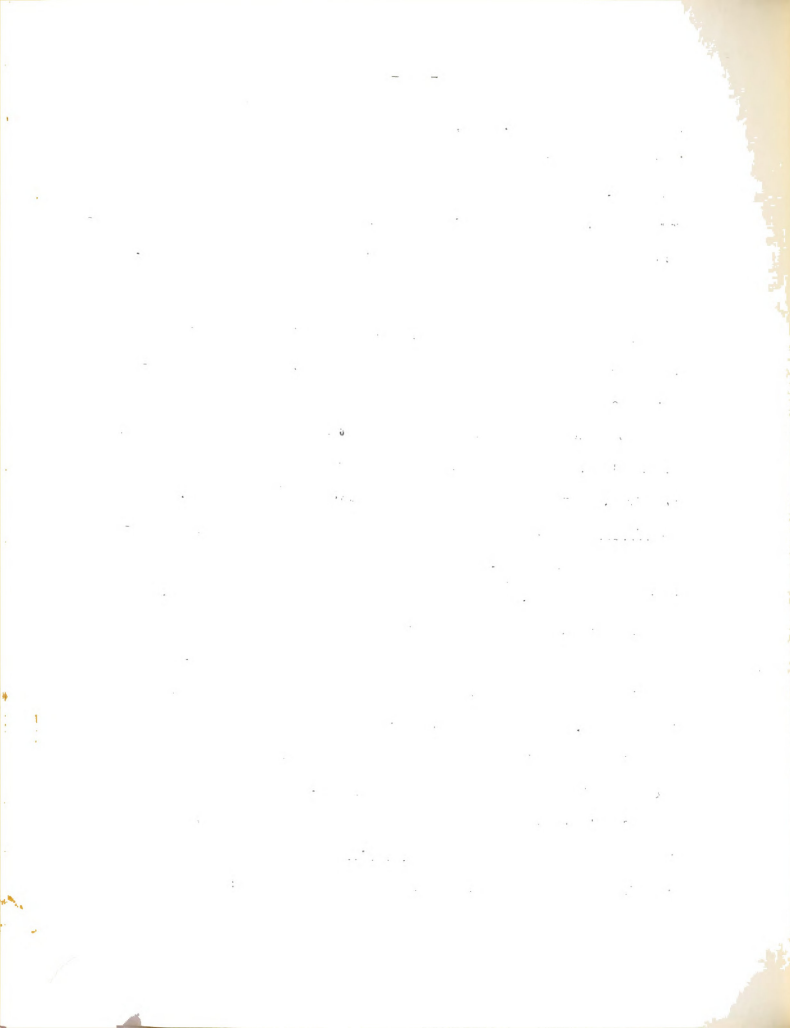


than to pure Platonism. Yet, Plato did provide the seed of this idea which was developed (some might say warped) by those who came after him. The fact remains that the impetus in Eastern Christianity bore a strong and indelible imprint of Platonism though the later development given these ideas would probably not have met with his approval.

### Cosmology in Plato

The mystical and ascetic doctrines in Plato's works fit into the general tenor of his philosophy and theology. Not the least important of his contributions to early Christian thought, which in its turn determined the direction of subsequent Eastern Orthodox philosophy and theology, are his concepts of the nature of the divinity and his cosmology, upon which some few comments have already been made. In the Timaeus he sets forth both the cosmological and teleological arguments for belief in God. He considers the visible universe, at least in its present form, to be an effect which must have had a cause, and that the order, and beauty and excellence of the universe are the result of the presence and operation of some regulating intelligence. The creation of the world is the impression of order on a previously existing chaos. The formula of the Greek philosopher Anaxagoras that all things were originally in a state of confusion and that mind arranged them summarizes the first part of the Timaeus.

Plato's cosmological argument for a belief in the existence of God is stated in the beginning of the Timaeus during the account by Timaeus speaking to Socrates about the creation of the universe:



Now that which is created, as we affirm, of necessity must be created by a cause. But the father and maker of all this universe is past finding out; and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible. And there is still a question to be asked about him: Which of the patterns had the artificer in view when he made the world, - the pattern of the unchangeable, or of that which is created? If the world be indeed fair and the artificer good, it is manifest that he must have looked to that which is eternal...<sup>31</sup>

Developing this thought further, Plato speaking through Timaeus conceives that prior to the creation of the universe, there must have existed in the Eternal Mind some fundamental principles of Order, Right and Good. Every conceivable form, every possible relation, every principle of right, must have been eternally present to the divine thought. As pure intelligence, the divinity must have always been self-conscious - must have known himself as substance and cause, as the infinite and perfect. The created universe must be an image, empirically speaking, of the ideas which exist in the reason of the first Great Cause. Timaeus states this clearly:

Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free of Jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing on the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable. <sup>32</sup>

In philosophical terms that were to be used by Eastern and Western Christian theologians who adopted Greek philosophical terminology in

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<sup>31</sup> Timaeus, op. cit., p. 449.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 450.



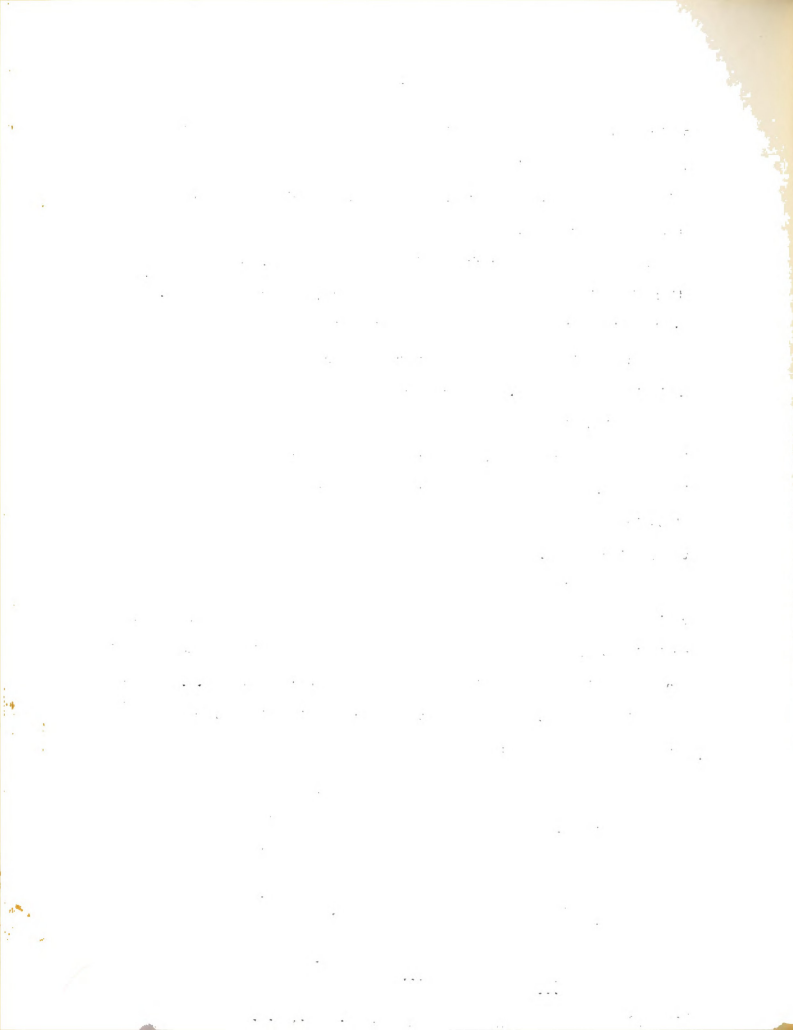


their writings, Plato in the Timaeus states that it is not possible that the Supremely Good deity would do anything except what is most excellent, fair and beautiful. Therefore, the deity is conceived as possessing these same attributes.

In addition to the works of Plato already quoted, there were other Platonic writings current among the early Eastern Christians. Greek Christianity preserved the Platonic writings more carefully than was done in the West and they are more influential among the Christians of the East. History accounts a renewed interest in the study of Plato in the West during the 12th and 13th centuries. Platonism in the Eastern Church, however, did not suffer the same eclipse as in the West. Its tradition is more or less continuous though the Neo-Platonic element is more readily accepted than the purer Platonism of the earlier period.

In concluding this chapter, in which attempts have been made to review the chief aspects of the philosophy of Plato which have, directly or indirectly, had an influence upon Eastern Christianity and subsequently upon Slavophilism in the nineteenth century, the comment of A.E. Taylor on the importance of Plato indicates the role this philosopher has played in world affairs:

To few men does the world owe a heavier debt than to Plato. He has taught us that "philosophy", loving and single-minded devotion to truth, is the great gift of God to man and the rightful guide of man's life, and that the few to whom the intimate vision of truth has been granted are false to their calling unless they bear fruit in unwearied and humble service to their fellows. All worthy civilization is fed by these ideas, and whenever, after a time of confusion and forgetfulness, our Western world has recaptured the sense of noble living it has sought them afresh in the Platonic writings. Plato has been called, with some truth...a fountain of all that is most living... 33



### CHAPTER III

#### THE NEO-PLATONISTS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON EARLY EASTERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Neo-Platonism is a third century philosophical system which attempted to harmonize the writings of Plato with Jewish and Christian thought. Neo-Platonic thought will be considered in this chapter as an attempt to give the principle concepts of the system some acceptance among Eastern Christian philosophers and theologians. That such a synthesis took place is apparent when one studies the works of Plotinus and sees their similarity to the writings of many of the Greek Church Fathers. The attitude toward synthesis not only originated from the general trend of Hellenism, but it is also in conformity with the course of Greek philosophy itself. As one modern writer states it, "Neo-Platonism as a form of thinking is an ever possible adventure of the mind to reduce the apparent differences, without eliminating them, into a Unity, with which they are gradually connected: Ex Uno Plura." <sup>34</sup>

The tendency toward a philosophical basis for Christianity was more apparent in the Eastern part of the Church than in the Western where a practical and legalistic heritage was left by Tertullian and his followers. Roman Catholicism inherited the legalism of imperial Rome, while Greek Orthodox Catholicism inherited the mystical and philosophical attitude of Greece. In the early Church, therefore, philosophy

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<sup>34</sup> Kullman, Eugene, "Alexandrian Philosophy," in A History of Philosophical Systems, ed. Vergilius Ferm, Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1950, p. 131.

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found a more congenial soil for its growth and development in the Eastern Church rather than in the Western. It becomes important, then, to consider the origins and nature of the earliest Eastern Christian thinking and to investigate how such thought was influenced by Platonism and Neo-Platonism.

The importance of such a study has been realized by most historians of philosophy, A.H. Armstrong among them. The relationship of ancient Greek philosophy to early Christian thought is commented upon by Armstrong thus:

...any survey of the thought of the Graeco-Roman world which left out early Christian theology would be absurdly incomplete, and then the influence of Christian theology on later European thought has been very great, and it is absolutely necessary for a historian of ancient philosophy to give some account of that theology's beginnings. It was after all through Christian theology that Greek philosophical ideas were transmitted to the Middle Ages, to a greater extent than is sometimes realized, to the Renaissance and to the philosophers of later times. The persistence of this indirect Hellenic influence through the theological tradition alongside the direct influence of the works of the Greek philosophers themselves when they became known again in the West is the very interesting and important phenomenon in the later history of philosophy. 35

Certainly any study of the culture of the Russians before the nineteenth century and any study of the Slavophiles and their social and political concepts, that did not recognize the influence of Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought would be far from complete also. Such a study might well begin with Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C. - 50 A.D.)

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35 Armstrong, A.H., op. cit., p. 163.



and with Plotinus, whom some consider the greatest individual thinker between Aristotle and Descartes. Nor can such a study omit the Christian Apologists, especially Justin Martyr, who in a very real sense perpetuated Platonism in the Eastern Church.

#### Philo of Alexandria

Philo of Alexandria was born about 20 B.C., sometime after the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Augustus. Being of Jewish background, he is often called Philo Judaeus or Alexandrinus. The Jewish diaspora in Egypt was the most thoroughly Hellenized of all the Jews. Armstrong tells us that they read the Hebrew Scriptures in Greek, and had a considerable literature of their own in the same language. Hellenization did not, however, make the Jews of Alexandria heterodox for they remained faithful Jews, Philo among them. Philo, attempting to do what the Christian Apologists were to attempt later, sought to synthesize the Hebrew Scriptures with Hellenic philosophy. He regarded the Book of Genesis not as an historical fact but as a kind of Platonic myth describing the creation of Intelligence. In his adoption of this method, Philo stands at the beginning of a long list of Christian commentators who found his method useful. <sup>36</sup>

With Philo, the Logos principle so much stressed by Plato and the later Neo-Platonists is the principle that mediates between the Supreme God and the world of matter. Such a concept is of course essentially of Greek origin, being taken directly from the Stoics. But Philo gave

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., pp. 159-160.

this idea a Platonic coloring by regarding the Logos as containing the Ideas in accordance with which the empirical world was formed. Most distant from God is matter. Due to this separation, felt in a special way by the human soul, there is a desire for unity with the divinity in an ekstasis, a mystical union.<sup>37</sup> Here again is to be found a reinforcement of the mystical element which was soon to reach its fuller development and expression among the early Christians. Plotinus also gives this unio mystica detailed expression, probably because of Philo's influence, for there is little doubt but that Philo and his works were carefully studied by Plotinus.

Philo's identification of the Logos with the Platonic world of Forms and the concept of the Supreme God using the demiurge in the process of creation is undoubtedly the most important and influential aspect of his work. Armstrong comments on this as follows:

This bringing into connection, however confusedly, of the Platonic doctrine of archtypes, of a spiritual world which is the pattern of the visible, with the Jewish doctrine of God the Creator, led to very great developments in the thought of the Fathers and mediaeval theologians (and incidentally, to a great deal of misunderstanding about the original meaning of Plato's Timaeus).<sup>38</sup>

One aspect in which Philo's thought differs from that of Plato, however, is the idea of free creative act of inbreathing by God instead of a necessary participation and the concept of the soul as created in the image of God. Philo calls the soul the pneuma, a term also used by St. Paul. The concept of man created in his highest faculty, the soul,

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.,



in the image and likeness of God was of great influence on subsequent Christian theology.

Jowett believes that the influence of the Timaeus upon Philo and Plotinus and subsequent thinkers is the result, partly at least, of a misunderstanding. The Neo-Platonists, he contends "found hidden meanings and connections with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and out of them elicited doctrines quite at variance with the spirit of Plato."<sup>39</sup> Some Neo-Platonists were of the opinion that Plato had been divinely inspired or again that his doctrines were received from Moses and the Hebrew Scriptures by a diffusion of culture or by an actual study of them in Palestine. Thus, they are readily disposed to find in Plato's works doctrines which they believe to be essentially Christian. Among such concepts believed to be found in Plato are the Logos, the Trinity, the Church, genesis of the universe in the Hebraic-Christian sense, statements about the attributes of God and the immortality of the human soul.

Plato's doctrines may have been but poorly understood or they may have been misinterpreted, but it is these adaptations of Platonism that have come to have importance in shaping and moulding the socio-political and religious movements in both East and West. The study of Plato in the original then, may be of intense interest to modern philosophers, but from a socio-cultural and historical view, it is the Plato of the Neo-Platonists and of the early Eastern Christian theologians we must study if we are to understand the Slavophile period of Russian history.

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<sup>39</sup>Jowett, B., The Dialogues of Plato, op. cit., III, p. 342.

Armstrong states that a fuller understanding of the influence of Platonic thought on the early Christian and subsequent philosophical thought must be traced through what he terms "Middle Platonism," the somewhat confused and obscure period from the first century B.C. to the second century A.D. The Platonic thought of this period was apparently of great influence on the first Christian philosophical theologians and provided a foundation for the philosophy of Plotinus. Commenting on the importance of this Middle Platonic period, Armstrong says:

Middle Platonism, like nearly all philosophies and pseudo-philosophies of its age, was first and foremost a theology and a religious way of life. Its primary objects were knowledge of the truth about the divine world and "the greatest possible likeness to God". The personal religious attitude of its adherents varies considerably, from the superficial, emotional, rather bogus religiosity of Apuleius or Maximus of Tyre to the deep and genuine piety of Plutarch, the ascetic otherworldliness of Numenius or the detached, rational outlook, with little sign of deep religious feeling of a scholarly Platonist like Alvinus. And for our purpose of tracing the history of traditional European philosophy it is the theology or metaphysics of Middle Platonism, with its views on the nature and destiny of the human soul, which is of primary importance.<sup>40</sup>

Most important of these metaphysical views is the positing of the divine supreme mind as first in the hierarchical ordering of being, and regarding it as the first principle of reality. Thus, the Forms as contemplated by Plato become for the Middle Platonist simply the thoughts of the deity. Further, the Middle Platonists identified their divine Supreme Mind with Plato's Good. The Supreme Mind or God becomes the cause of the Forms. This concept is of very great importance in early Christian thought because it places the God of the Christians above all things, makes Him a transcendent being not

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<sup>40</sup> Armstrong, A.H., op. cit., p. 149.

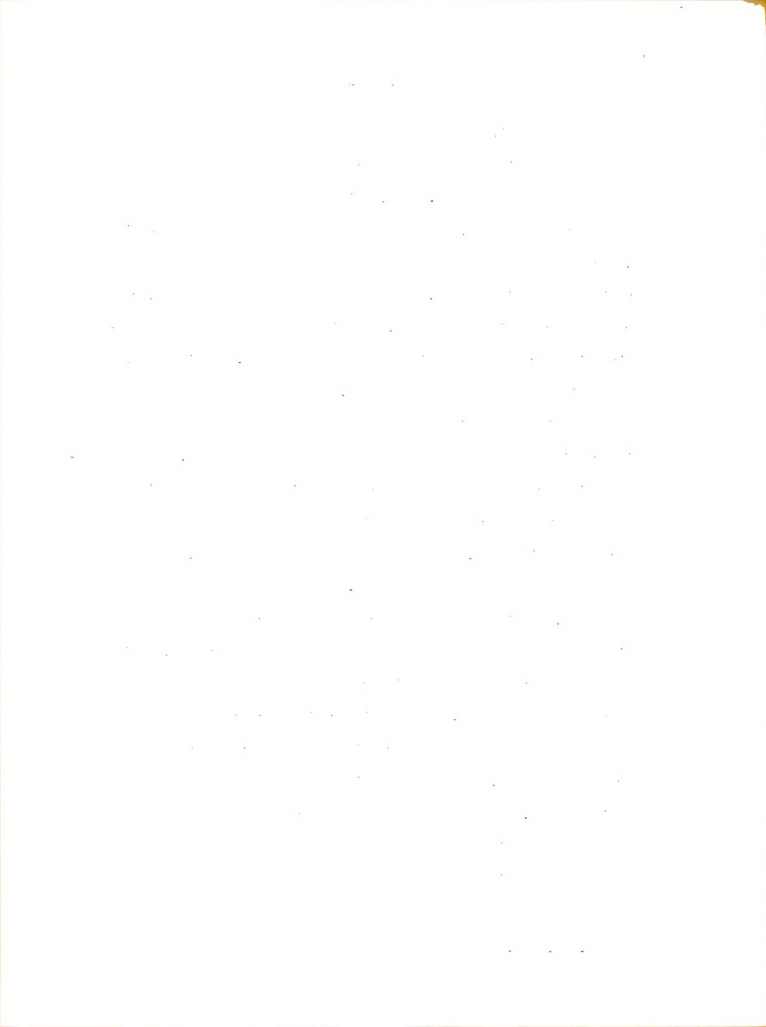
out of contact with the material world but definitely in touch with the human soul in this life and accessible to man through the process of mystical contemplation. Yet, while the human soul may come to have some knowledge of God, Middle Platonism held that the Supreme Mind is so great a distance from mortal man that any sort of direct knowledge of it would be impossible. God, though far removed from men, can be reached through intermediaries. We will see later how the Pseudo-Dionysius carries this belief out in great detail. It is a doctrine also which is basic to all mysticism.

Apuleius and Maximus, both Middle Platonists, use the concept of intermediaries between human beings and the Supreme Mind. Their intermediaries are the gods of mythology, the divine heavenly bodies and the demons, "supernatural beings not impassible nor according to some accounts necessarily immortal, of varying nature and disposition, who act as intermediaries between gods and men."<sup>41</sup>

Thus, in Middle Platonism, reality is represented by the Supreme Mind or God, standing at the head of the hierarchy, remote, exalted and ineffable; then come the intermediary beings or lesser gods and demons and finally man. Such a hierarchical ordering of beings may not have been in complete accord with the hierarchical arrangement proposed by Plato, but its connection with the Platonic concept is unmistakable. The problem of evil was traced by the Middle Platonists to an evil Soul immanent in matter and controlling all of the material universe. Numenius in the second century held that matter in itself was

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 151.



evil and working at cross purposes with the plan of the Supreme Mind.<sup>42</sup> Here is the element of contempt for matter and the positing of the immaterial and spiritual as of higher value which was to characterize the attitude of the early Christian ascetics, an attitude which has already been shown in the previous chapter of this work to have had some foundation in the work of Plato himself.

It seems certain that all through the first and second centuries A.D. there was a strong current of popular Platonism which preserved the main positive doctrines of Plato. This is clear from the so-called Timaeus Locrus, the recently discovered fragmentary commentary on the Theaetetus of Plato, the long passages preserved by Eusebius from the second-century Platonist Atticus, the Introduction to Platonism by Alcinous, the essays of Plutarch and the discourses of Maximus the Tyrenian, all works from this period. As in Philo, the most striking feature of this popularized Platonism is its combination of Plato's doctrine about God and the intelligible Forms with the Aristotelian conception of an eternal formless matter as the substratum upon which God impresses, or from which he educes the various forms of things. The writings of the early Greek Fathers and the Apologists naturally draw upon this and to the third century A.D. the works of Philo continued to provide a model for the reading of Platonism into the Scriptures. It must be remembered that Eastern Christians, especially the Greeks who were the theological leaders of the period, were familiar

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<sup>42</sup> Kullman, Eugene, op. cit., p. 134.



with the Greek classics. These writings made a deep impression upon them, for they always remained an essential part of their education. The Hellenes, as the Byzantines called the non-Christian Greeks, were considered as unbelievers, but ancestors. Every educated Byzantine could understand Homer and a great number of them were familiar with Plato and Aristotle, though Plato seems to have been more congenial to their culture and philosophical tendencies.

### Gnosticism In The Platonic Stream

In further stracing the mainstreams of thought which bear the impress of Platonism, and which eventually converge into Slavophilism, especially those systems or schools of thought which properly fall within the Christian era, it is especially important to examine the Gnostics. Gnosticism did not originate in Christianity, nor was it confined to Christian circles. There were Gnostics before the time of Christ and there continued to be Gnostics quite outside the Christian movement and entirely apart from it. Their controlling interest was to escape from the present world of sense experience and to enjoy the blessings of a higher world of the spirit, as has already been briefly indicated before in this work, as a characteristic doctrine in Platonism and Neo-Platonism. The Gnostics were dualists who emphasized the contrast between the spirit and matter and set over against the material world in which men live, the invisible world of the spirit to which they should aspire. Their dualism, however, was more extreme than that of other Platonists or Neo-Platonists.





Gnosticism was more than a mystery-religion; it was also a philosophical system. The Gnostics evidenced a strong interest in questions of cosmology, theology and anthropology, as well as in the way of salvation. In the Graeco-Roman world of the first several centuries after Christ, two general philosophical tendencies or trends were prominent: Stoicism which was controllingly ethical in its interest and monistic in its ontology; and Platonism which was dualistic and predominately religious. As already seen, there was a type of orientalized philosophy in Plato himself, particularly in the Timaeus, and this steadily gathered strength and finally culminated in Plotinus who will be considered later in this chapter. To this general tendency the Gnostics belonged, at least in their philosophy.

The Platonic contrast between the material and the spiritual, the sensible and the ideal, which was conceived as two closely related orders of being, the one lower and the other higher was transformed under the influence of Persian dualism into an absolute contradiction between matter and spirit, darkness and light, good and evil, these being regarded as mutually hostile and altogether exclusive of each other. Matter is considered as irremediably evil. The sociological consequences of this philosophy are easily discernable, - amendment and improvement are quite impossible and certainly not to be desired; the only blessing is escape from this world of evil. In later chapters it will be seen that this concept forms one base for Slavophilism - the belief held by the Russian movement that the West had become materialistic and unspiritual, while Russia, following the spirit and holding aloof from



the pleasure-centered, technological, money-centered West. Oddly enough, Soviet Russia today still accuses the Western democracies of being "capitalistic" - too much concerned with private ownership rather than communality, too much concerned with an economy based upon material gain. Yet, paradoxically, Sovietism is founded upon the philosophy of dialectical materialism.

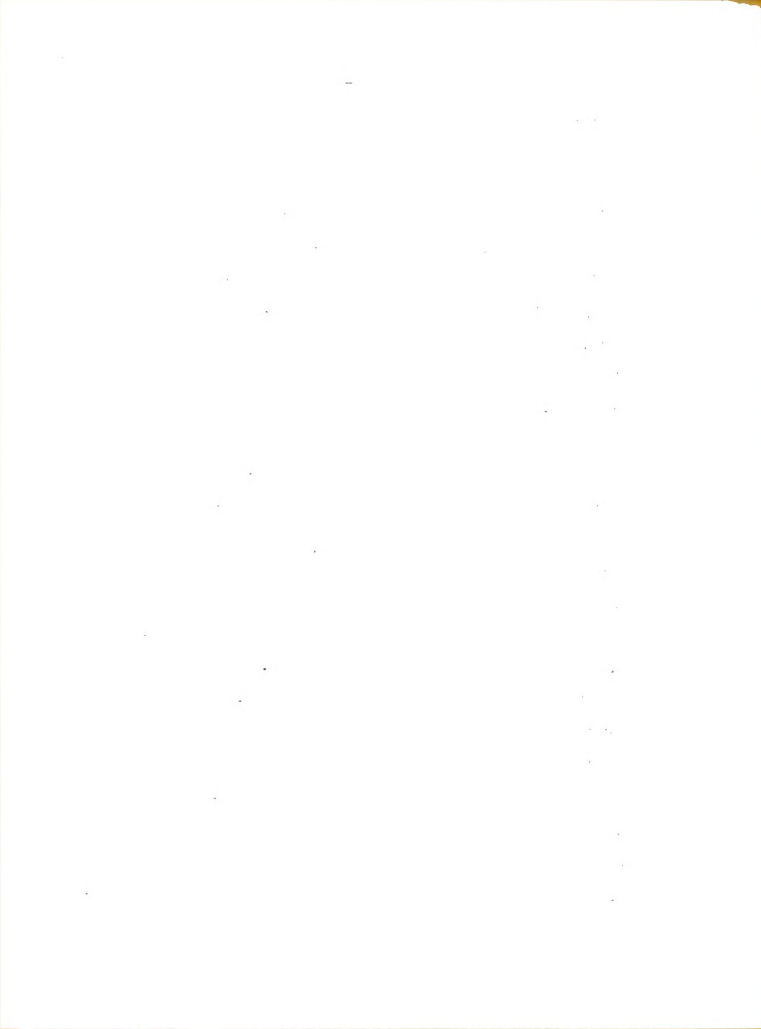
Salvation, for the Gnostics, could be achieved by knowledge, not by philosophy or learning or intellectual attainments of any kind. This knowledge is of a Platonic sort, consisting of a vision of God and oneness with him. This saving knowledge of God and union with him might be mediated, the Gnostics believed, by rites and ceremonies upon which many of the Christian Gnostics, especially, laid great stress. Salvation might also be achieved by proper conduct. Escape from the chains of the material world depended in no small measure on one's treatment of the flesh and the control of its inordinate passions. To crucify and subdue the flesh by strict asceticism was one of the surest ways to free oneself from slavery to the body and make possible the higher life of the spirit.

Oddly enough, however, asceticism was not the only sort of conduct recommended by the Gnostics. Some of them took the opposite view and maintained that the control of the flesh may be broken by libertinism, by giving free rein to the passions, disregarding the ordinary conventions and laws of morality, and living beyond good and evil in a realm of perfect freedom. This antinomianism finds a counterpart in the writings of the Slavophile, Dostoyevsky whose literary creations, criminals,



prostitutes and thieves are felt to be closer to God than even the monk in his cell. In the Slavophile tradition, Dostoyevsky indicated that criminals and other immoral persons were best able to be good Christians because their lowly estate could not but make them humble and not too presumptive of divine mercy. This humility and the recognition that they needed God more than the saint, place them, in Dostoyevsky's works, above their immoralities. Certainly, in Dostoyevsky, these moral and social outcasts were considered superior to the highly technocraticized Westerners, who did not even belong to the true Faith. Again, Russia has always had its eccentric sects, groups of moral rebels who like the antinomians among the Gnostics, held that the way to overcome evil was by wallowing in it. Wild sexual orgies characterized the activities of these Russian sects.

As indicated before, there is a strong ascetic character in all Christian thought, both Eastern and Western, and there is little doubt that much of it represents a sort of accommodation by the orthodox Christian groups to the heterodoxy of the dualistic Gnostics. True, much of Christian asceticism comes through St. Paul who like the Gnostics was a thorough-going mystic and ascetic. To understand the origin of monasticism in the Eastern and Western Churches, Gnostic dualism, contempt for the material world and the emphasis on ascetic subjugation of body to spirit, cannot be overlooked. The denial of the body as a thing of evil, or at least as a temptation to evil, the emphasis on mystical union with God, the Gnostic advocacy of celibacy, are attitudes that have found a place in more orthodox Christianity.



### Platonic Influence Upon the Christian Apologists

The first group of orthodox Christian writers who employed Greek philosophical ideas and terms for the elucidation of their theology were the Apologists of the second century. They were philosophical thinkers who had reflected on the meaning of Christianity and who undertook to present it to non-Christian outsiders in philosophically respectable terminology and thus vindicate its right to be. To do this, they employed Greek philosophical language to clothe Christian doctrines and to express their meaning. As might be expected, along with the terminology they assimilated from Greek philosophy many of the concepts which were capable of being harmonized with Christian teaching. Plato lent himself especially to such a harmonization or synthesis. In the next chapter fuller consideration will be given to the Christian Apologists. Before concluding the present chapter, however, it yet remains to clarify the position of the writer many historians of philosophy regard as the shining-light of Neo-Platonism, - Plotinus.

The founder of the Neo-Platonis "system", Plotinus, (204-269 A.D.) was born in Lycopolis, Egypt, went to Rome and taught philosophy there for twenty-five years. His school at Rome was to have great philosophical influence both on Eastern and Western thinkers, though his greater influence was to be felt in the western world where his doctrines were better known than in the Greek East.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Turnbull, Grace H., The Essence of Plotinus, trans. Stephen MacKenna, Oxford University Press, New York, 1948, pp. xv-xx.

In the Greek East, however, the works of Plotinus were far from unknown. Through Proclus (410-485 A.D.) the Neo-Platonic tradition was to influence the Byzantine world, especially through the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite whose works owe so much to the writings of Proclus.

Plotinus' lectures delivered at Rome were published in six books of nine sections or Enneads. In the Enneads he proposes the doctrine that all reality consists of a series of emanations from the One, the eternal source of being. The first necessary emanation is that of the Nous, - the mind or intelligence. Secondly, and of lesser importance and reality is the Psyche or soul. Finally, there is matter which is the lowest of the elements. Man, according to Plotinus, belongs partly in the realm of spirit and partly in the realm of matter.<sup>44</sup> The body according to this view has a reality other than phenomenal. Allowing this, Plotinus is able to demonstrate against his opponents that a reality of a different kind from that of the material body must be assumed.<sup>45</sup> In his metaphysics he goes further and reduces corporal things in effect to phenomena. Like later philosophers he finds himself confronted with the problem of mind-body relationship but he attempts to settle this difficulty by holding that body and soul remain unmixed in spite of their union.

The general doctrines of the Neo-Platonists are closely connected

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 118-125.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.



with a consciousness of evil and the felling of the need for salvation. This of course, presupposes the Platonic dualism in the ethical life. The evil in human persons is to be referred to the physical appetites which being resident in the body and somehow a part of it leads to the conclusion that the body, and therefore matter, is somehow evil. For the Neo-Platonist matter is felt to be evil and the flesh always and necessarily in struggle against the spirit. Salvation lies then, not in regulating bodily desires but in exterminating them, in rising above the sense world and finding happiness in the life of the spirit. Tradition holds that Plotinus was ashamed that he was compelled to dwell in a body and to evidence his contempt for his physical nature he refused to ever name his parents or commemorate the day of his birth.<sup>46</sup> "The human side of life - its feelings, emotions, everyday activities - thus loses all its worth; it is as nothing to the soul, the real self. The sensuous life is a mere stage play - all the misery in it is only imaginary, all grief a mere cheat of the players."<sup>47</sup>

It is not difficult to find some basis in the writings of Plato for these doctrines of Plotinus, for Plato had stressed the primacy of the transcendent world. The Neo-Platonists, however, went beyond the purer Platonic doctrines. Reality had still been for Plato the world of Ideas and their rational basis was their most important attribute. Plotinus passes over all distinctions and differences in his attempt to arrive at ultimate reality, and this imprints upon

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<sup>46</sup> Rogers, Arthur Kenyon, A Student's History of Philosophy, MacMillan Company, New York, 1932, p. 168.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.; also, Plotinus, Select Works of Plotinus, ed. G.R.S. Mead, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., London, 1929, pp. 22-43.

the mystic character upon his writings.

Plato held that to free the soul of the impediment of the body was the surest way to soar to contemplation of God. Plotinus goes still further, however, and holds that not only must man rid himself of the bodily life, but he must free himself from the intellect too. This anti-rationalistic doctrine advocated by the Neo-Platonists was not soon to be forgotten.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE APOLOGISTS ON EASTERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

The first group of Christian writers to have employed systematically Greek philosophical ideas for the elucidation of their theology were the Apologists in the second century. The work these writers intended to do is indicated by their name - apologists. Their concern was to defend Christianity against pagan calumnies, and more positively, to present it in such a manner that it would prove attractive to educated men. The upper classes by the middle of the second century were beginning to find an interest in Christianity, even though it was generally a hostile one. Christian beliefs and practices were being widely discussed and this provided an opportunity for the Apologists to present their views.

Anti-Christian writers were active, however, in criticizing the new system of Christianity. The series of anti-Christian apologetical works begins with a book by Fronto, the tutor of Marcus Auralius. Unfortunately this work, like those of Celsus, Porphyry and Julian the Apostate are not extant. We know them only through the Christian Apologists who often quote passages from the non-Christian writers. The object of the second century Apologist was not so much to answer these particular attacks by rhetoricians and philosophers as to make Christianity attractive and comprehensible to the cultured world in general, and in particular to the Antonine Emperors and their circle. It was for this reason that they employed the language of philosophy, Stoic or Platonic,



which the readers they hoped for would understand. This led to important developments, for the meanings of the philosophical terms used was necessarily altered when they employed them in a Christian context, and Christian theology underwent considerable development, and sometimes change or distortions which later and more expert theologians had to rectify. It was during this second century period that Platonism and Neo-Platonism entered the stream of Christian thought under the guise of philosophical language and ideas. A syncretism resulted which, whether the Apologists were conscious of it or not, embraced Platonism and incorporated it into the theology of the new faith. Such ideas eventually bore fruit in action as principles of Platonic mysticism and universalism were gradually put into practice throughout the Christian communities. The idea became father to the act and social attitude.

The first Apologists wrote in Greek. Here again we find a ready channel for the communication of Hellenic ideas and their incorporation into Christianity. Christianity appeared in an age when there was a strong revival of, and a dissemination of Greek philosophy. The first two centuries after the beginning of the Christian era saw a popularizing of philosophy throughout the Roman Empire. Men were looking for answers to burning questions about the after-life, God, morality, and earthly happiness. The crudities of the mystery religions were failing to satisfy many of the more earnest and more intelligent searchers who turned to philosophy, and to the philosophically-phrased teachings of Christianity, hoping to find there the solutions they desired.

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<sup>48</sup> Latourette, Kenneth Scott, A History of the Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1938, p. 15; and Von Dollinger, John Ignatius, The First Age of Christianity and The Church, Wm. Allen and Co., London, 1877, pp. 281 ff.

There were numerous teachers of philosophy lecturing widely in halls throughout the Roman Empire where they taught their systems. Such lectures were well attended and widely established wherever Rome held sway. Thus, Platonism and Neo-Platonism made a particularly marked impression not only upon the general populace but also upon many of the Christians. Latourette writes of the influence of the philosophers upon Christian thinkers:

Hellenistic Judaism, and notably Philo, owed much to Plato and the ideas associated with his name - although Philo may have been more Pythagorean than Platonic. While, in accordance with the prevailing syncretism of the times, Platonism was not followed meticulously and contributions from other sources were welcomed and may even have predominated, much of that school has passed into the warp and woof of the Judaism of the Dispersion. Since early Christianity drew so extensively from the constituency of Hellenistic Judaism, something of the Platonic attitude must early have made itself felt. It is often asserted...that the "Logos doctrine" of John's Gospel was descended ultimately from Plato. Philo seems to have been largely used by some of the Christian Fathers, and through him whatever of Plato had shaped his thought passed on into Christianity...The Alexandrian school, which, led by Clement and Origen, did so much to acclimatize Hellenistic philosophy in Christian circles, brought in Platonic as well as other contributions.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, it is clear that the second century Apologists helped Christianity to assimilate many Platonic concepts and what they assimilated has continued in Christian thought. In later centuries, in addition to the Platonic continuity in Eastern Orthodox countries including Russia, there were to be revivals in Christian mysticism and theology of Platonism - as in Eckhard and other German mystics like Jacob Boehme, in the Cambridge Platonists of the second half

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<sup>49</sup> Latourette, op. cit., pp. 311-312.





of the seventeenth century and again in our own century by Inge, the British commentator and writer on mysticism.<sup>50</sup>

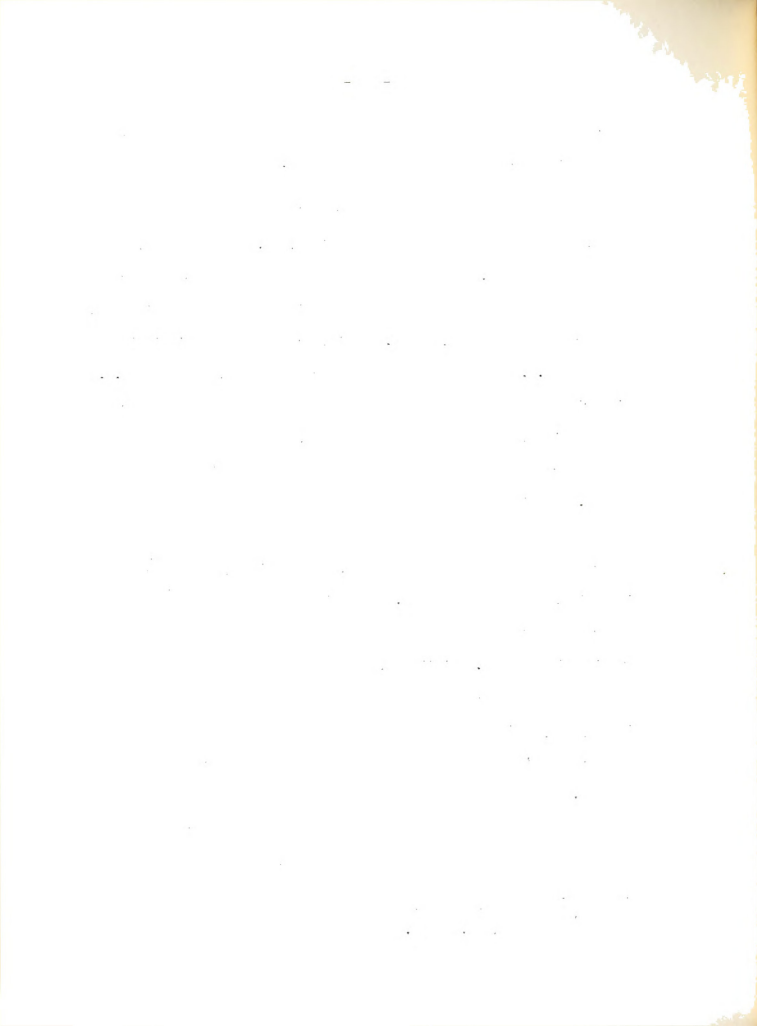
#### Justin Martyr Transmits Platonism

Among the Greek Apologists (Aristides, St. Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras and St. Theophilus of Antioch) by far the most important theologian and the only one of the apologists who is of any interest for our present purpose, is St. Justin, converted to Christianity about 130 A.D. and martyred at Rome where he taught, about 165 A.D. His writings can be taken as an example of that of the entire group of Apologists, noting certain differences, and remembering that he is more profound and much better philosophically equipped than the others. Justin had known and been deeply impressed by Platonism, especially the doctrine that the human soul can by its own natural powers attain in a flash to a vision, a Platonic noesis or illumined intuition, of the Supreme God. We shall see later that this same theory of Platonic mysticism is found in Jacob Boehme and among the Russian Slavophiles. Similarly, this element of mysticism is one of the most characteristic of Eastern Orthodox theology (as for example in hesychasm which will be discussed toward the end of this present chapter) and is more distinctive of the Eastern Church than of the Western.

Justin himself tells of his study of Plato and throughout his writings he makes reference to Platonic doctrines, often admitting

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<sup>50</sup> Inge, William Ralph, Christian Mysticism, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899, pp. 77 ff.



the acceptability of Platonic concepts. In his Dialogue with Trypho,  
Justin admits his debt to the Platonists: <sup>51</sup>

I decided to seek out the Platonists, for their fame was great. I therefore spent as much time as I could with a wise man who had recently settled in our town and who was eminent among the Platonists. Each day I advanced and made all possible progress. The perception of immaterial things captivated me exceedingly and the contemplation of ideas gave my mind wings... I hoped forthwith to look upon God. For this is the end of Plato's philosophy. <sup>52</sup>

Platonism alone, however, did not satisfy Justin. Eventually he turned to Christianity and there found what he believed to be the culmination and fulfillment of the truth Plato and other philosophers had sought. Yet, after his conversion to Christianity Justin did not abandon Platonism but attempted to Christianize and reinterpret it.

According to Justin, the essence of philosophy is the search for truth and truth can mean nothing<sup>53</sup> else than the knowledge of God, or beatitude.

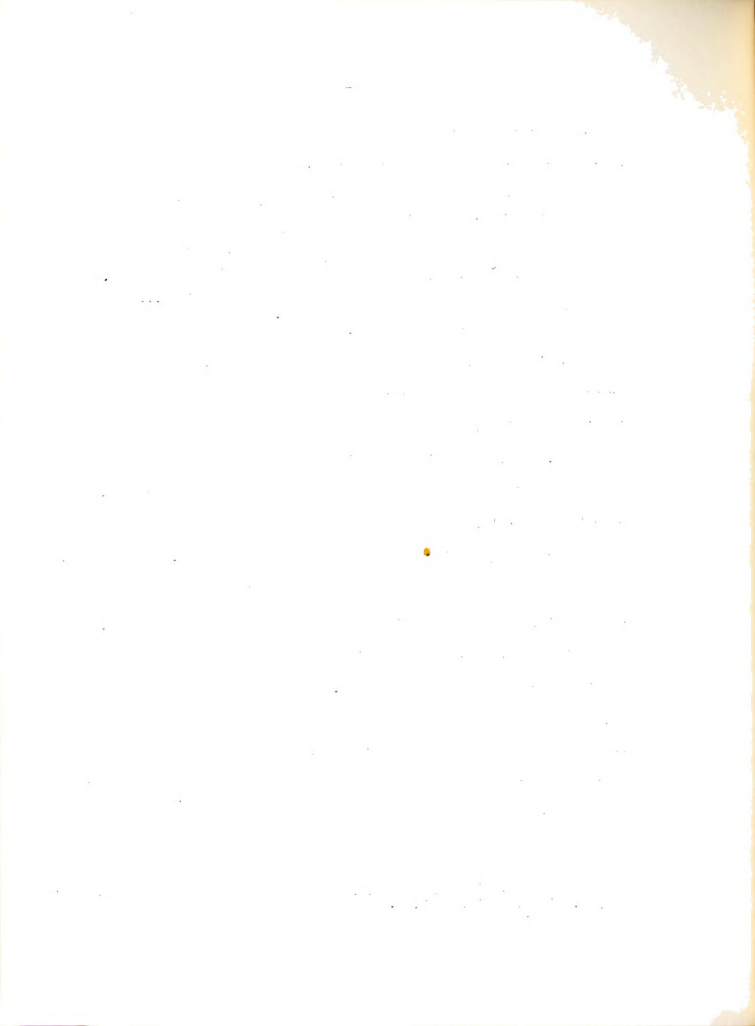
Plato taught that God can be known by the natural reason<sup>?</sup>, for God and man are akin, but though Justin had once agreed with Plato on this, he eventually asserted that only by divine revelation can man arrive at a full and true knowledge of divinity. Platonism continued to influence him, however, for he recognized that even without revelation a man may know many things about God, but his knowledge is abstract not concrete and it lacks clearness and particularly that assurance which revelation alone can give.

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<sup>51</sup> See Appendix A

<sup>52</sup> Justin Martyr, Dialogus Cum Tryphone Iudaeo, Patrologiae Graecae, ed. by P. Migne, Paris, 1857, p. 473.

<sup>53</sup> See Appendix B



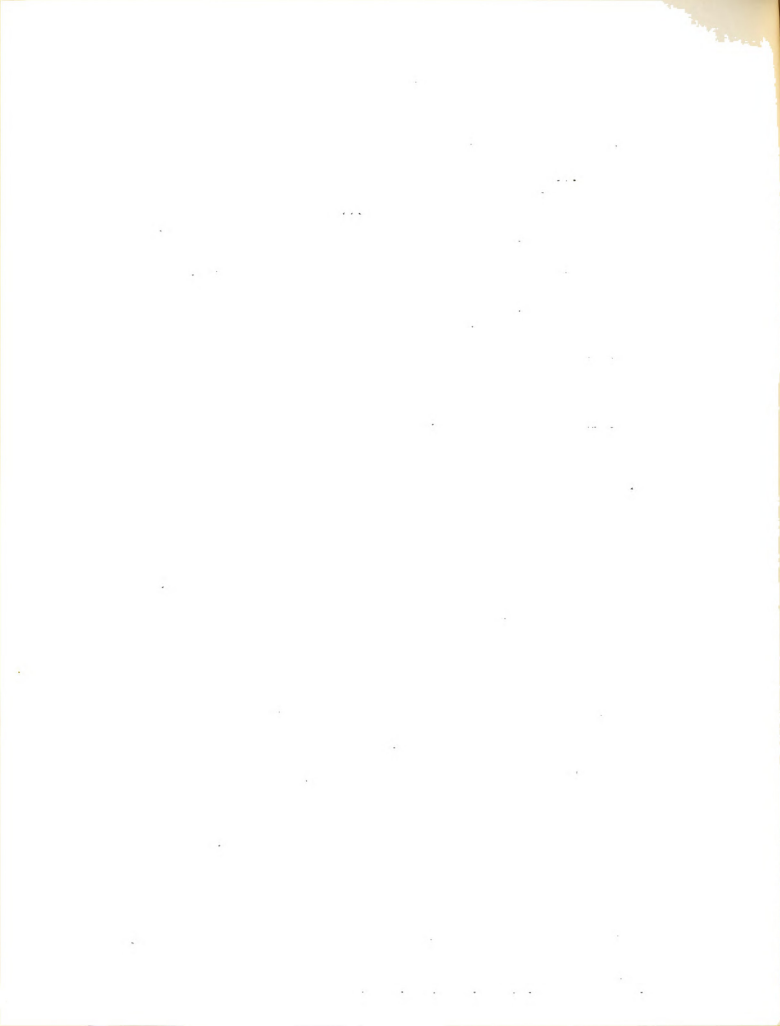
Armstrong commenting upon the influence of Platonic thought upon Justin Martyr says:

...his attitude toward the Greek philosophers, especially Plato and the Platonists, is very friendly and not at all denunciatory...his predilection for Platonism slightly affects his theology on one point. He holds very clearly the Judaeo-Christian doctrine of God as transcendent Creator, bringing all things into being out of nothing but a free act of will; and he holds also firmly the traditional doctrine of the Trinity, not yet formulated with complete clearness and precision.<sup>54</sup>

Another evidence of the Platonic influence upon Justin and other Christian Apologists such as Athenagoras is the use of the term Logos in their writings. The term Logos, which means both reason and word, was common in the philosophical vocabulary of the day. It was used by the Stoics for the divine forces resident in the world and by the Platonists for the intermediate beings or agents which bridged the chasm between God and the universe and made it possible for God to communicate with the world and act upon it. Even in the Gospel of St. John there is the Logos Christology, showing the popularity of the concept even before the Christian theology had been formulated in philosophical terminology by the Apologists and later writers. Like Clement of Alexandria in the third century, Justin uses the term in a Christianized sense. The idea of the Logos was made up, like Philo's, of Platonic and Stoic elements. It was a combination of the supreme idea or archetype of Plato and the seminal principles or resident forces of the Stoics which constitute all life. Hence the Logos was to be considered above and in the world of men and things. He is at once transcendent, as Plato insisted, and immanent, the absolute of philosophy and yet the personal God of traditional Christianity.

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<sup>54</sup>. Armstrong, A.H., op. cit., p. 166.



Justin's use of the term was justified and probably suggested by the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, but he employed it with a strictly apologetical purpose, not merely to emphasize the philosophical character and respectability of Christianity. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that Justin's Platonic leanings caused him to look with sympathy upon this Platonic idea, regardless of its source in the Christian writings. He took it up and reemphasized it, thus strengthened the Platonic strain in early Eastern and Western Christianity.

While the other Apologists are generally satisfied to denounce paganism and all its works, including philosophy, - though this did not prevent them from being sometimes deeply affected in their own thought by Platonic and Stoic doctrines - Justin had too fine a mind to ignore the truths he finds in pre-Christian philosophic thought and his attitude toward it is very friendly and not at all denunciatory.

It is in his Logos theology that Justin makes one of the outstanding contributions to Christian mysticism and synthesizes Platonism with Eastern Christian thought. In combining Plato's world of ideas with the Logos-concept of the Christian Scriptures, he became the originator of the philosophical exposition of the Logos. Justin put this philosophical concept to use within the Christian community.

Justin's Platonism shows itself further in a slight concession to the doctrine of intermediary powers, by which he brings the generation of the Logos into close connection with the creation of the world, and presents the Logos very much as the instrumental Power through Whom the





Father made the world. Others of the Apologists pushed this "subordinationist" tendency very much further.<sup>55</sup>

On still another point Justin shows that while he disagrees with Plato on the doctrine of eternal punishment, he continues nevertheless to refer back to the Platonic ideas:

Plato said that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them. We assert that the same thing will happen, but through the agency of Christ, and that the wicked will be punished in these same bodies together with their souls, and that forever not for a thousand years only as Plato said.<sup>56</sup>

It is not with Plato's doctrine of punishment that Justin disagrees, but with Plato's concept of the duration of that punishment and the agency through which it is to be meted out.

Justin is an example of the Platonic philosopher turned Christian who uses his philosophy to gain a hearing for the Christian teaching. He strove to translate into a language that the non-Christian would understand, those teachings of Christianity to which he himself gave credence.

#### The Platonism of Clement of Alexandria

Alexandria in the third century was the intellectual capital of the Roman world. Its inhabitants were chiefly Greeks, Jews and native Egyptians, but the first outnumbered the others and gave a predominantly Hellenic character to the city. Great thinkers were

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<sup>55</sup> See Appendix C for Justin's comments on the Platonic doctrine of creation.

<sup>56</sup> Justin Martyr, "Apologia I Pro Christianis," Patrologiae Graecae, op. cit., p. 338; also, See Appendix D.

drawn to Alexandria from every part of the world to study at its famous library and to utilize the scientific organization of its Museum.<sup>57</sup> It was in Alexandria that the effort of philosophy to replace the Hellenistic religions as interpreter of the riddle of life now reached its fuller expression. The Alexandrians became an important link in the chain that binds the Christian era to the great culture of the Greeks.<sup>58</sup>

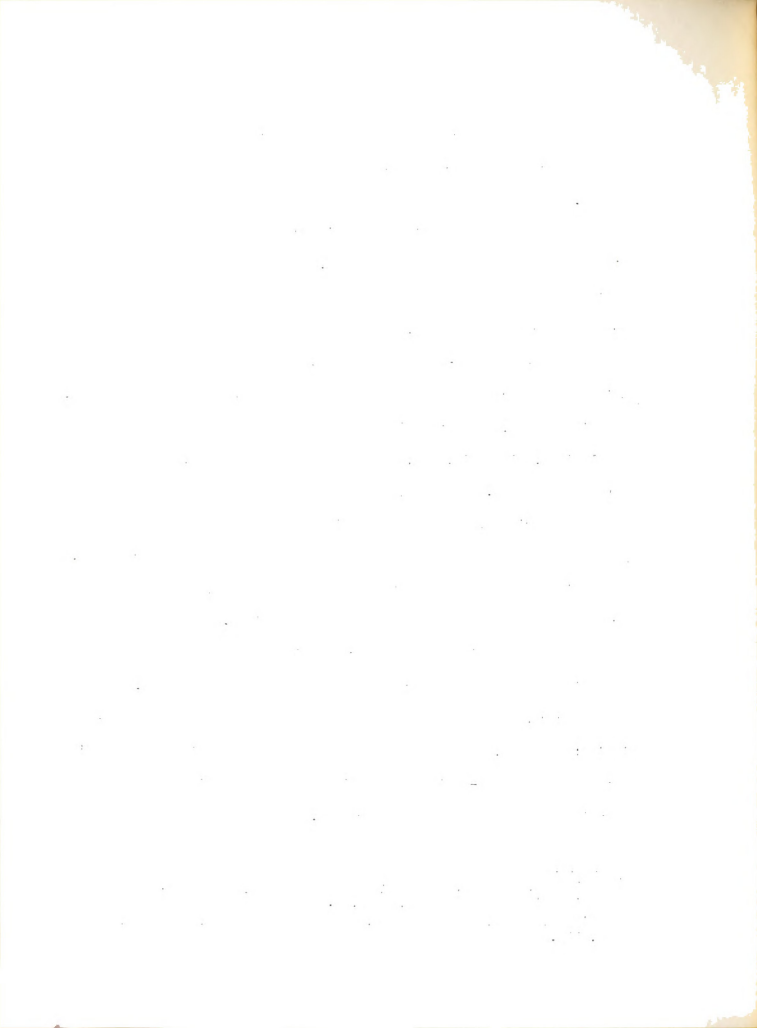
The system of Neo-Platonism which characterized the Alexandrian philosophical school was led by Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus and Porphyry. Ammonius Saccus, an Alexandrian laborer, is known chiefly by the work of Plotinus, his pupil, for, if he himself wrote at all, his works have all perished. Plotinus, already referred to earlier in this work, left Alexandria after the death of his master and for the next twenty years the elite of the world capital at Rome filled his lecture rooms. As Plotinus developed the thought of Ammonius Saccus, so Porphyry arranged and systematized the teaching of Plotinus.

These Alexandrians were far from desiring any reconciliation of philosophy with the new religious system of the Christians. On the contrary, the movement they led was markedly hostile to Christianity: Porphyry, among his other works, writing classical antiquity's masterpiece of anti-Christian polemic - a great work in fifteen books of which only a few pages have survived.

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<sup>57</sup> McGiffert, Charles, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1949, p. 177.

<sup>58</sup> Brinton, Crane, Ideas and Men, Prentice Hall, Inc., New York, 1950, p. 114.



One of the leaders of the Christian community at Alexandria (which traces its foundation as a Christian center back to 61 A.D.) was Pantenus, a convert from Stoicism and teacher of Titus Flavius Clemens whom we know as Clement of Alexandria. It is the work of the latter that is important as a Platonic link, for it was to exercise an influence far beyond the local Egyptian community. Clement's teachings were to exert a leading influence in Western Christian thought until the time of Augustine of Hippo and to give to the theology of the Eastern Church an orientation and a spirit which it has never lost.

Clement was born in Athens, probably about 150 A.D. He came to the lecture halls of the school in Alexandria and developed an enthusiasm for the Greek philosophies. Finding philosophy unsatisfactory, he turned to Christianity, but he continued to hold Greek philosophy in high regard. Almost at the beginning of one of his more renowned works, the Stromateis, Clement recognizes that philosophy came from God and in agreement with Justin Martyr he believed that the Logos revealed truth, though not in the fullness in which it is found in Christianity, to the pagan philosophers. He gave recognition to truth wherever he found it, even among the non-Christian philosophers. "By images and by direct vision those Greeks who have philosophized accurately see God," he states in the Stromateis.<sup>59</sup> He indirectly acknowledges his debt to Greek philosophy and attests to its validity when he writes:

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<sup>59</sup> Clement of Alexandria, "Stromatum Liber Primus", Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus 8, op. cit., chap. XIX, pp. 805-813. See also Appendix E



Let those who say that philosophy took its rise from the devil know this, that the Scripture says that the devil is transformed into an angel of light. What then is the devil about to do? Plainly when about to prophesy. But if he prophesizes as an angel of light he will speak the truth. <sup>60</sup>

Clement does not hesitate to rank Platonism as the highest of all the ancient philosophies, not without some criticism of certain of its elements, however. <sup>61</sup> To Clement there was but one river of truth although many rivulets. Philosophy is to be used as an ally to theology, he contends.

Clement is clearly Neo-Platonic in his speculation about God. Far removed from the world, without characteristics and fully transcendent, stands God. Clement holds that He is changeless and timeless, an Absolute, beyond space and description, a pure being - to be apprehended only by pure thought abstracted from the limitations of sense. His mysticism is apparent when he contends that true knowledge comes not through rational or empirical investigation but by illumination. Thought may move toward God by the analysis of subtraction of characters (e.g. not color, not shape, not extension, not any qualification) to a state where no characterization is possible. Man's anthropomorphic images of God merely misrepresent God. <sup>62</sup> The Logos is considered to be both transcendent and immanent, as divine as God. God the Absolute has been made manifest by the Logos as the Son of God and founder of the Christian faith. Thus Clement was a Christian

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., Tomus 9, Liber Sextus, chap. VIII, p. 288; also see Appendix E

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Tomus 8, Liber Primus, chap. VII, pp. 732 ff.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., Liber Secundus, chaps. XVI, VII.

Neo-Platonist heavy in emphasis upon the doctrine of the Logos which reflected Plato's supreme idea. There are even some authorities who regard Clement of Alexandria as the real founder of Neo-Platonism. In any event, Clement stands as an important figure in the continuity of Platonic thought in the early Christian East and from him and his influential works were to go strains of Platonism throughout the history of oriental Christian philosophy and theology.

In one aspect his philosophy contributed, though perhaps indirectly, to the strengthening of a mystical strain which has characterized the Eastern Church and which was later to be so marked a part of the Russian religious life. Along with Origen, another of the Alexandrian Christian philosophers, Clement stressed a Christian gnosis. Clement believed that the true gnostic had as his ideal likeness to God.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Clement felt that the supreme aim of the true Christian should be imitation of God and a striving to achieve mystical union with Him through faith and knowledge. True, Clement was far less of an ascetic than many of his contemporaries. He did not advocate celibacy and does not despise the body. But he felt that self-control and freedom from carnal desire was an aid to the true gnostic.<sup>64</sup> Apatheia or passionlessness is the ideal for Clement. To live superior to the secular interests of life, entirely released from slavery to desires and ambition that hold most men, this Clement felt made man most like God who is impassible.<sup>65</sup> Like all mystics he holds that the knowledge of God is an end in itself and not merely a means to other ends. Man was created that he might attain the knowledge

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., chap. xix, pp. 1040 ff; see also Appendix F.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., Liber Quartus, chap. XIII, pp. 1296 ff.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., chap. XXIII, p. 1361.

of God and the true gnostic is the one that knows Him. Higher than all else it is to contemplate God eternally.<sup>66</sup> Man needs Divine enlightenment and it is the Logos Who instructs men through divine illumination.<sup>67</sup> Well might the Greek hesychasts of a later century, or Jacob Boehme, the German mystic have found much to inspire them in the Stromateis. Clement did not stress man's ability to achieve this illumination but regarded it as a divine gift, as is salvation.

While Clement follows Philo and the later Platonists in emphasizing the transcendence of God and identifies God with the philosophical Absolute, he holds that man can come to some knowledge of Him. Since God is a pure being, beyond space and time, an idea of Him can be reached only by a process of abstraction:

The sacrifice acceptable to God is unchanging abstraction from the body and its passions. This is the really true piety; and therefore was not philosophy rightly called by Socrates the practice of death? For he who does not employ sight in thinking, nor drag in any of the other senses, but with the pure mind itself reaches the objects, he follows the true philosophy. This is what Pythagoras wished with the five years of silence which he recommended to his disciples, that turning away from the senses they should look upon the deity with the mind alone.<sup>68</sup>

Further, Clement gives suggestions as to how this mystical union with the Absolute may be achieved:

We may apprehend the ways of purification by confession and that of contemplation by analysis, going forward to the first notion, beginning by analysis with the things that underlie it, removing from the body its physical qualities, depriving it of the dimension of depth, then of breadth, and then of length. For the point that is left is a monad, so to speak, having position, from which

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Liber Secundus, chap. XI, p. 985.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., "Paedagogus," op. cit., Tomus 8, Capitula Libri Primi, chap. VII, p. 312-324.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., "Stromateis" Liber Quintus, chap. XI, p.101; see also Appendix G.



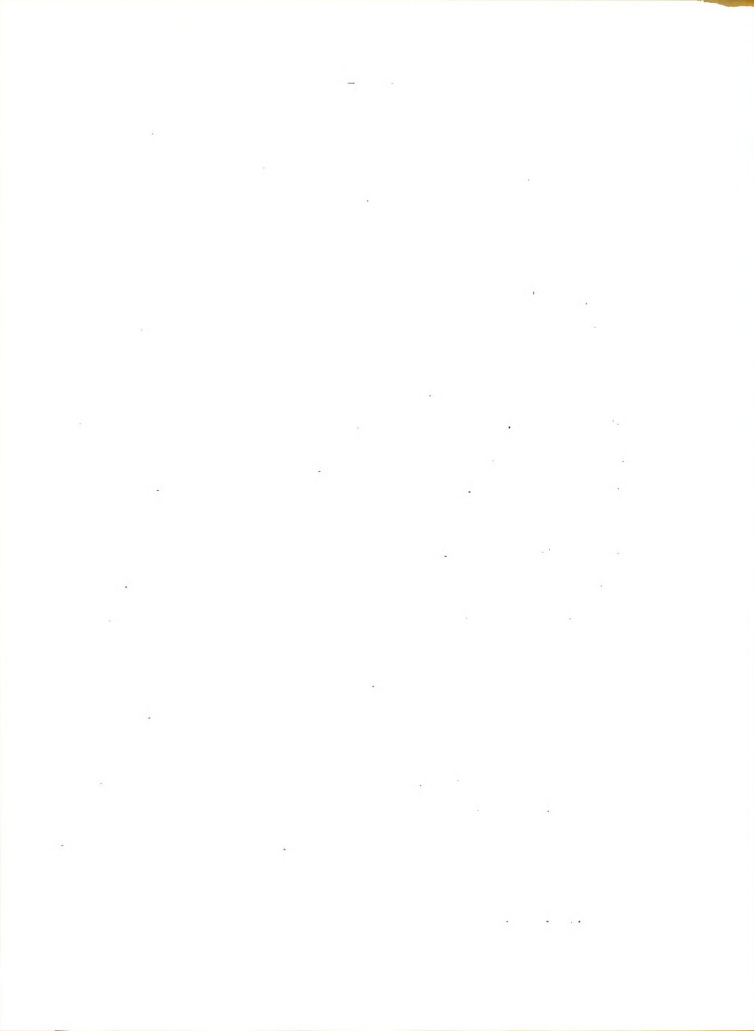
if we abstract position we have a monad in thought. If therefore taking away all that pertains to bodies and to the things called incorporeal, we cast ourselves into the immensity of Christ and thence by purity go on into the void, we may come somehow or other to the understanding of the Almighty. <sup>69</sup>

### Palamas and The Practice of Hesychasm

Clement's mysticism is one of the influences in the current which later fed Hesychasm, that peculiarly Eastern Christian practice of mystical contemplation practiced by monks of Mount Athos, particularly in the fourteenth century, and which spread gradually to the monasteries of Russia. Ascetic training, along the lines suggested by Clement of Alexandria, was believed to lead to the beholding of the uncreated light of God, which accompanied the Transfiguration. It was taught that this "light of Tabor" and all divine operation is distinct from the divine essence. There have always been those in the Eastern Church who have aspired to reach the "delights of contemplation." In the fourteenth century Palamas, a mystic of Mount Athos in Greece, built up a whole theology in justification of hesychasm and the theology was unanimously adopted by the monks. In 1351 a Council was called to discover whether hesychasm was based upon heretical assumptions. At the outset the question was whether the hesychasts were right in claiming that by holding the breath, by making the spirit re-enter the soul, and by gazing fixedly upon the navel they could attain to the vision of the uncreated light which shone on Tabor. To justify this view Pala-

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., p. 108.



mas, overturning the dogma which had been crystallized for centuries, proposed to distinguish between the divine essence and the operations of that essence. The Council saw in his writings only a simple development of the ancient creeds. Palamism gave official sanction to Hesychasm and resulted in a mystical resurgence. For ten years, (1341-51) the dispute over hesychasm disturbed and divided the Byzantine Empire which was in the last stages of its decline, and brought oriental mysticism, represented by the monks of Mount Athos and their defender Gregory Palamas, into conflict with Latin rationalism which was represented by the opponents of hesychasm. Essentially, this is much the same dispute that is to be found later in the nineteenth century between the Slavophiles and the Zapadniki or "westernizers", should mystical intuitionism or rationalism and empiricism reign supreme in Russia.

The life of solitude and mystical contemplation had long formed part of the Eastern Orthodox religious discipline, though it must be remembered that St. Basil, while not forbidding eremitism, did not wish to see an increase in the number of hermits. Hermits or hesychasts were regarded as belonging to the highest grade of the monastic life, just as Plato gave a higher status in his hierarchy to those who were able to rise above the demands of the body by philosophizing. To attain the highest grade of the Orthodox monastic life was regarded as a privilege reserved for those coenobites who had given proof of their sanctity and were farthest advanced in perfection. St. Athanasius, the founder of the Lavra, the oldest and one of the largest monastic institutions

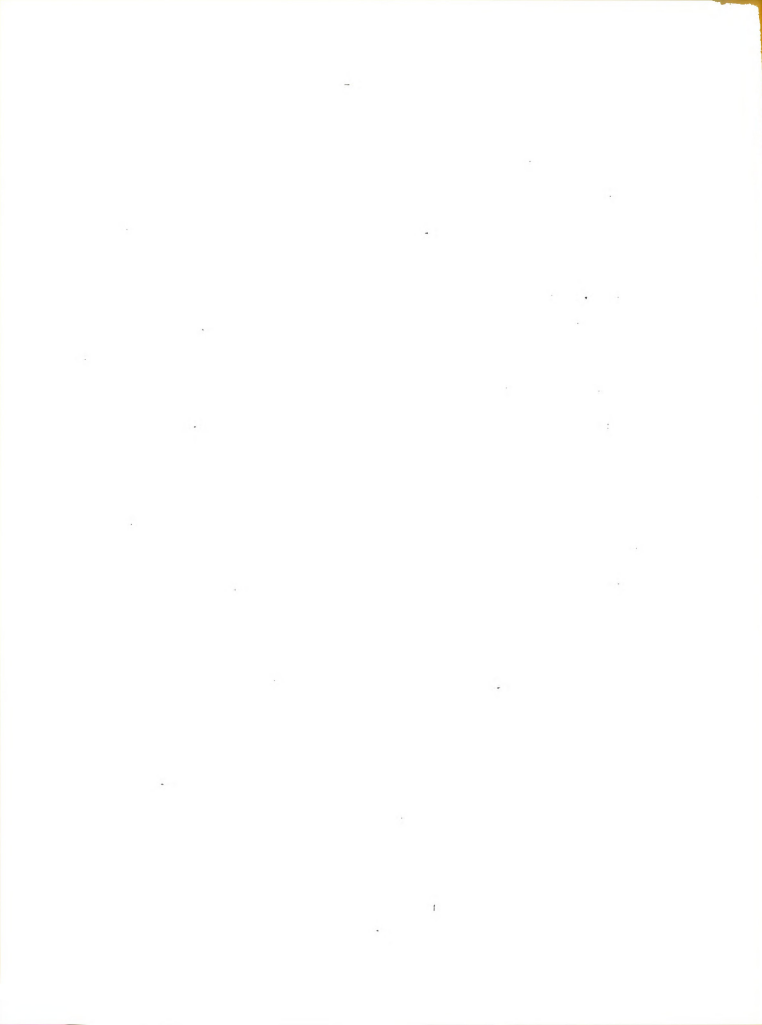


on the Athonite peninsula, stipulated in his Rule that out of 120 monks only five should be permitted to live the life of a solitary, that is, to withdraw into separate cells in order to give themselves to mystical contemplation. In the fourteenth century revival of mysticism there were some rather daring theories, however, that apread on Athos. Some of these were not unlike those of the Indian fakirs, urging mechanical methods to achieve the Divine Illumination. The Council in 1351 freed hesychasm from some of the more grotesque features and restored this striving for mystical union with the Absolute to a system much closer to that suggested by Clement of Alexandria.

Something of the chain of continuity of this mystical concept can be seen if it is remembered that eventually there were Russian monks on Mount Athos where they received training in hesychasm. Some of these monks returned to supervise monasteries in Russia and carried with them the theories and practices of hesychasm. In Russia hesychasm was adapted to the Slavic environment and character and the peculiar genius of the Russian mystic was to embrace mystical contemplation enthusiastically. From the Russian monasteries the mystical influence spread even to the laity and was undoubtedly one element in forming the spirit and philosophy of the Slavophiles who venerated the mystical tradition of Russian Orthodoxy and sought its perpetuation.

A modern spiritual work, written by one who styles himself simply "a monk of the Eastern Church" contains these passages treating of hesychasm as practiced by the Orthodox Church today:

The aim of man's life is union (henosis) with God and deification (theosis). The Greek Fathers have used the



term "deification" to a greater extent than the Latins. What is meant is not a pantheistic identification, but a sharing through grace in the divine life. This participation takes man within the life of the three Divine Persons themselves...Accordingly, contemplation begins with the "prayer of simplicity". This prayer consists in placing oneself in the presence of God and maintaining yourself in His presence for a certain time, in an interior silence which is as complete as possible, while you concentrate upon the divine Object, reduce to unity the multiplicity of your thoughts and feelings, and endeavor to "keep yourself quiet"...The prayer of quiet and the full union are degrees of the hesychia, which is, in some form or other, the introduction to Eastern contemplation. Above the hesychia comes the ecstatic union. Such a contemplation would constitute an end to which it would indeed be worth subordinating all human life.<sup>70</sup>

Contemplatives of the Eastern Church today would find kindred spirits in Clement of Alexandria, Origin and the hesychasts of Athos in the fourteenth century. Similarly, the Slavophiles of the nineteenth century blend into the whole mystical thought and practice of the Eastern Orthodox Church and derive their impetus from it.

Hesychasm has been identified with other leaders in addition to Palamas and the monks of Athos. Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), the abbot of St. Mamas of Xylokerkos, ~~author~~ of the Hymns of Divine Love, and his disciple Nicetas Stethatos (c. 1050) also deserve mention. In order to understand and estimate hesychasm as a sociological and psychological phenomenon within Eastern Orthodoxy, it may prove helpful to disentangle it from the violent polemics associated with it and to see its distinctive marks in as objective a light as possible. The following succinct analysis may assist in

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<sup>70</sup> Anon., Orthodox Spirituality, S.P.C.K., London, 1945, p. 22.





a clearer understanding of this type of mysticism. Four main points seem characteristic of the hesychast method:

- (1) the striving towards a state of total rest or quiet, which excludes reading, psalmody, meditation, etc.
- (2) the repetition of the "Jesus-prayer."
- (3) practices designed to help the concentration of the mind, such as physical immobility, control or suspension of breathing, fixation of the eyes on the heart, the stomach and the navel, in order to let the mind go back into the heart; this last operation was called omphaloscopy or emphalospsychia.
- (4) the feeling of an inner warmth and physical perception of a "divine light" or the "light of Tabor."<sup>71</sup>

Immediately there comes to mind the Indian yoga practices and the similarity between these two eastern religious practices is at once apparent. Omphaloscopy as an attitude in hesychasm is not completely eastern however, for even the western founder of the Jesuits, Ignatius Loyola lays down some very precise direction in his "Spiritual Exercises" about attitudes of the body during prayer. The Russian, Vladimir Soloviev, also suggested the control of breathing as an aid to prayer. Yet, all these techniques are regarded simply as means to an end, and that final goal is mystical union with God.

One last comment on hesychasm and Orthodox mystical contemplation seems expedient. The so-called "Jesus-prayer" so much used in Russia as an aid toward contemplation, aroused some speculation among Orthodox theologians. The following comment illustrates the manner of its use:

Shortly before 1914 the question of the "Jesus-prayer" raised a new controversy among the Orthodox monks on Mount Athos. A mystical school extolled the worship

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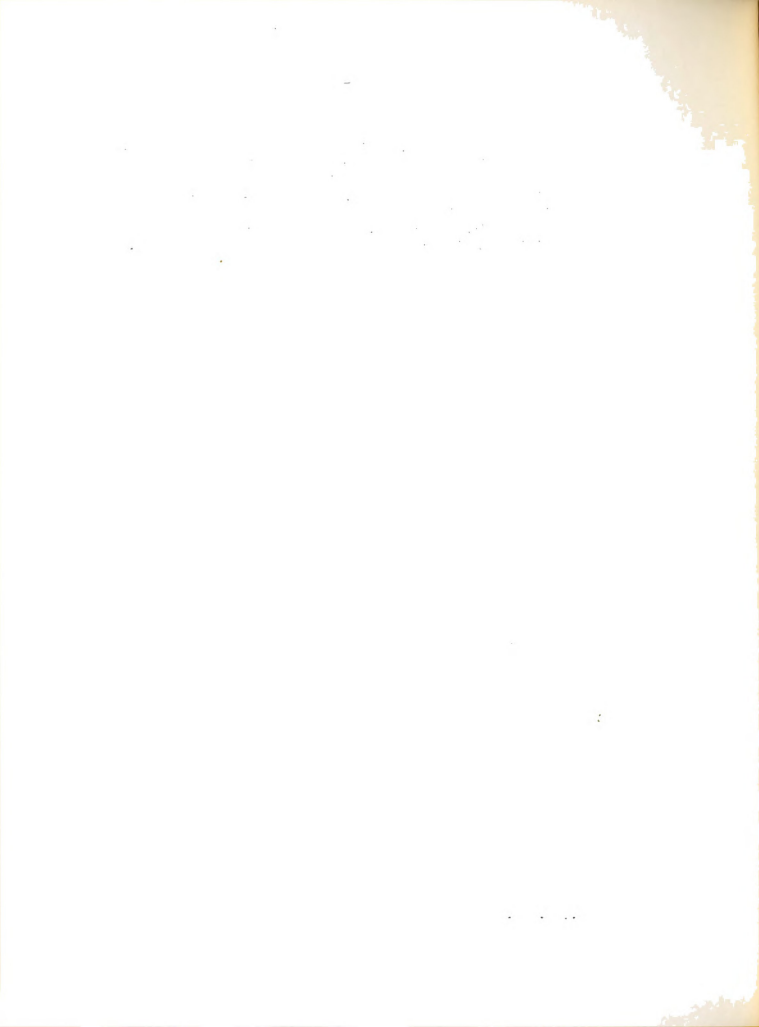
<sup>71</sup>Ibid., p. 19 f.



of the Name of Jesus (onomatolatreia) as of the actual bearer of Divinity. This was regarded as patently unacceptable according to Orthodoxy, which nevertheless does not exclude the possibility of the "sacramental" view of the Name of Jesus. The "Jesus-prayer" has been intensively in use during recent years, especially among the Russian emigration. Here is apparently one of the living and interesting aspects of Orthodox mysticism. <sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 21.



## CHAPTER V

### THE PLATONIC INFLUENCE OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE UPON EASTERN CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Since the Pseudo-Dionysius is the next link in the chain of Eastern Christian thought which shows the imprint of Platonism, it is well to examine the role played in the perpetuation of this philosophy by the works of this disputed writer. Throughout the long history of Byzantine literature there is continuity; here there is no break with the ancient world as there is in western Europe. The Eastern Orthodox Church which allied herself with the imperial court of Constantine, and at an earlier period with Greek philosophy, shows the clear and unmistakeable traces of Platonism. The leaders of the Eastern Church in the early centuries had studied at the same universities as their pagan contemporaries, and the rhetoric and philosophy which all alike had learned did not fashion pagan eloquence alone. It moulded also the form of Christian literature and thought. Neo-Platonism profoundly influenced the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers, St. Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa. To essay an analysis of the Platonic concepts in the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers would be a most satisfying but tremendously extended labor. Consequently, while it properly belongs to the continuity of the present study, it must be passed over to conserve space and time.

About the year 500 A.D., however, there appeared a writer and teacher who issued his works under the name of Dionysius. Too little is known about the man to give any reliable biographical material about



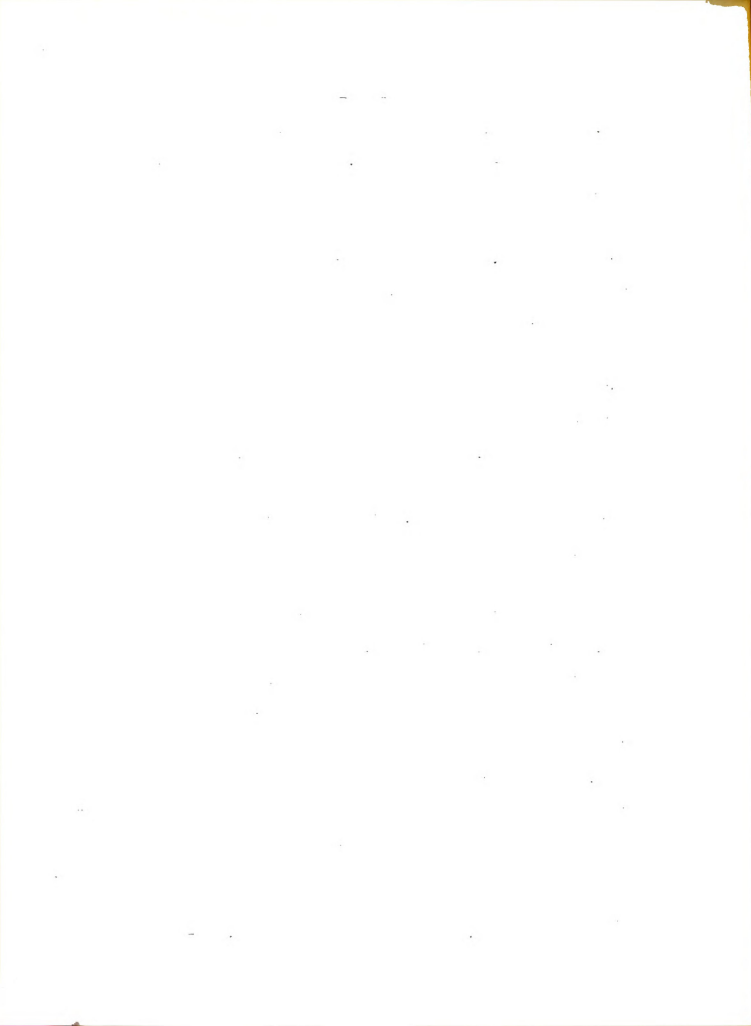
him. It is known, however, that he borrowed largely from the works of the Neo-Platonist Proclus, whose works were accepted as a product of the Apostolic age and thus gained a prestige and venerability that insured their preservation and assimilation into Orthodox thought. Proclus wrote Neo-Platonic hymns which became models for later hymnologists.

The works of Pseudo-Dionysius (or Dionysius the Areopagite as he is called by those who believe him to be the author of the writings attributed to him) became the basis for commentaries on philosophy and theology which continued to be written until the thirteenth century. His influence is widespread, both in the East and West and through him Platonism also is reinforced within the stream of Christian thought. His primary aim is the ecstatic vision of God, when the soul in complete passivity (and this becomes the crucial doctrine as far as its sociological consequences are concerned) after long purification is enlightened from above and is united with God. Purification, illumination, union with God are thus the stages Dionysius suggests for man's mystical ascent.<sup>72</sup>

In tracing the influence which the pseudo-Dionysian writings made, it must be borne in mind that this influence extended beyond the Middle Ages. Concepts from the Dionysian writings found their way certainly into Western Christian theology, but they were also more widely assimilated into Eastern Orthodoxy and strengthened the strain of mysticism and communality which characterize not only Greek but Russian Orthodoxy.

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<sup>72</sup> Baynes, Norman H., Byzantium, Oxford, 1948, pp. 221-229.

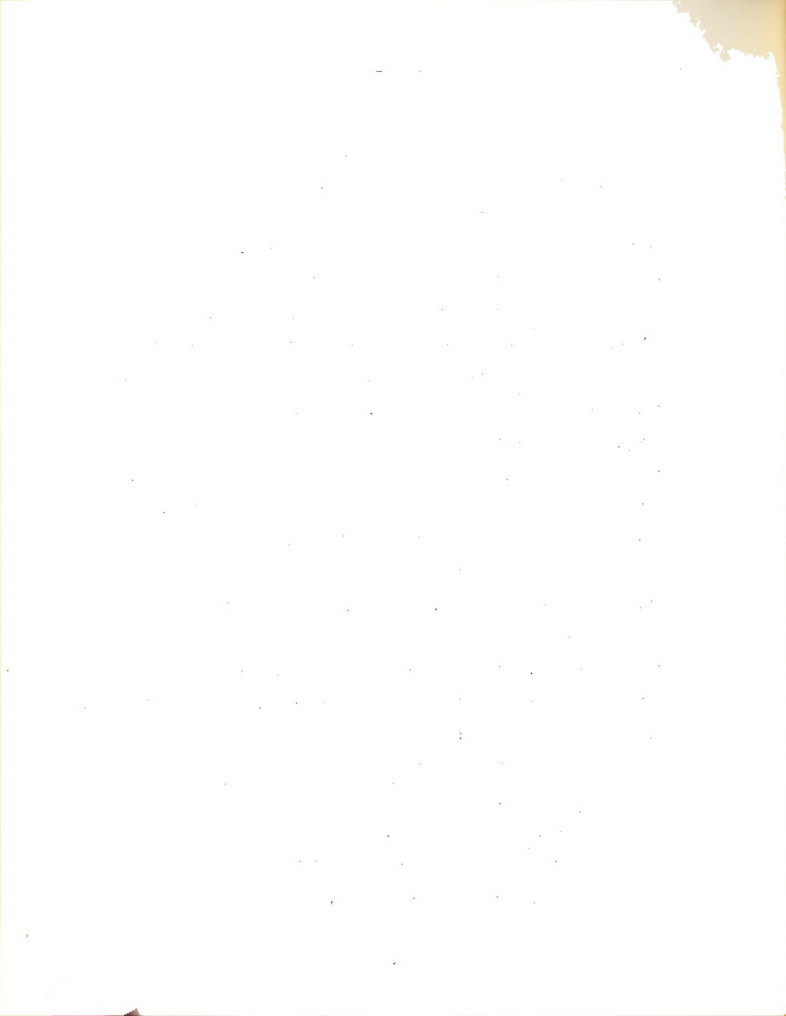




It is the uninterrupted influence of the Platonic aspects of the Dionysian writings upon Russian thought, and more especially upon the Slavophiles, which is of interest here.

The writings of Dionysius reveal an interest and a spirit quite unlike that of most of the theologians of the period. Although they were produced at a time when the Christological controversies were absorbing the attention of intellectual and layman alike, they show no trace of these controversies but pursue their own ends relatively untouched by the polemics and violent battles produced by the questions concerning the nature of Christ. While the author is not certainly known, many authorities believe that he was the Dionysius referred to in the Book of Acts, and thus he would have been a convert of Paul. This accounts for the importance the Dionysian writings gained. A sure sign of the weight of their authority is the use to which they were put during the Council of Constantinople in 533 by the Monophysites to support their claim. At first, their authenticity was debated, but they were soon regarded as the product of the age immediately following the Apostles. Historians today doubt that they could have been written much before the fifth century. Latourette, the church historian, evaluates them as follows:

Most notable of all influences of antiquity upon Christian thought and practice was that of Greek philosophy. The Church Fathers who had borne the impress of the Greek schools were studied and revered, notably Augustine. Through them generations of churchmen and theologians imbibed of Greek thought. Platonism had its effect. The writings associated with the name of Dionysius the Areopagite, saturated as they were with Neo-Platonism, made a decided impress



upon some of the mediaeval and Renaissance mystics and thinkers.<sup>73</sup>

Fedotov, a Russian historian, states that "the first word of Byzantinism was Pseudo-Dionysius of about the year 500;...through Dionysius the whole tradition of late Neo-Platonic theurgical mystics of Iamblichus and Proclus merged into the mysteries religion of the ancient Christian Church; it was reinforcement of the previous, already mighty, sacramental stream."<sup>74</sup>

The works of Pseudo-Dionysius are made up of four treatises and ten letters. The treatises, all of them addressed to Dionysius' fellow-priest Timothy, are entitled The Celestial Hierarchy, The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, Divine Names, and Mystical Theology. The letters are addressed to various Christians of the first century, including the Apostle John. Half a dozen other works are mentioned by the writer as his own but they have altogether disappeared, if they ever existed.

There is a distinct Neo-Platonic theme in the extant writings, - the concept of union with God. To show the importance of it and how it is to be secured as the author's chief concern. Though the writings contain considerable theological material the controlling aim was not theological but religious, and the moving purpose was practical not speculative. Thus, Dionysius makes union with God the supreme good. To be a partaker of God, to share in His divine life and thus to become deified, this is man's chief end. The achievement of the fullest possible likeness to God and the fullest possible union with him is equated with salvation. Plotinus had earlier stressed the

<sup>73</sup>Latourette, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 416; also, Whittaker, Thomas, The Neoplatonists: A Study in the History of Hellenism, Cambridge University Press, 1918, p. xx, p. 318.

<sup>74</sup>Fedotov, George P., The Russian Religious Mind, Harvard U. Press, 1946. p. 27.

same concept and it is the same element of mystical unity which Dionysius emphasizes in his Mystical Theology. Plotinus had stated his mysticism thus:

The soul by nature loves God and longs to be at one with Him in the noble love of a daughter for a noble father; but coming to human birth and lured by the courtships of this sphere, she takes up with another love, a mortal, leaves her father and falls. But one day, coming to hate her shame, she puts off evil, once more seeks her father and finds peace...He who has seen knows what I say - that the soul takes on another life as it approaches God; thus restored, it feels that the Dispenser of true Life is there and that we must put aside all else and rest in this alone, this become, this alone, all the earthly environment done away, in haste to be free, impatient of any bond holding us to the baser, so that with our entire being we may cling about This, no part of us remaining but through it we may touch God...in this seeing we neither see nor distinguish nor are there two. The man is changed, no longer himself nor self-belonging; he is merged with the supreme, sunken into It, one with It, only in separation is there duality. <sup>75</sup>

Plotinus and Dionysius both carry out this theme throughout their works. It will be interesting to recognize this same attitude later in Russia and to see this ideal given a social expression, even in the field of agriculture. Unity, unity, oneness and communality - these are stressed continually. Man must achieve unity with God and man should achieve communality with his fellow believers. The mystical and religious doctrine finds expression in the social realm and in some ways lost its spiritual meaning among many Russians, and especially among the Communists who turned their backs upon the spiritual. Yet the Soviet totalitarianism became easier to achieve among a

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<sup>75</sup>Plotinus, The Enneads of Plotinus, trans. by Stephen McKenna, Medici Society, London, 1917, p. 214.



Russian people predisposed by centuries of training to accept the social fact of communality. Other non-religious factors were also at work in the creation and perpetuation of the sense of communality among the Russians, but certainly the Platonism they had inherited from Byzantium assisted in its continuation even after the Soviets siezed power and prostituted the sense of communality to their own non-democratic ends.

Dionysius stressed the doctrine that the attainment of likeness to God and oneness with Him is indeed the great aim which all should set before themselves. In carrying out the renunciation of the things of the world which Plotinus had called "mortal and evil," man is able to rise to God. From a sociological point of view, this perfectionism often leads to schism.<sup>76</sup> Thus, in the early Christian Church, and in modern times for that matter, we find that "perfectionist" groups separate themselves from the parent body as a sect, vowed to retain a more orthodox form of doctrine or more primitive practices. Mysticism tends to rise above the bureaucracy of the ecclesiastical unit and to set aside rational regulations and restrictions. This often eventuates in

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<sup>76</sup> In his section on "Sociological Consequences of Radical Protest," Joachim Wach comments upon this phenomenon thus: "The protest against conditions in the ecclesiastical body usually begins from within as a reform movement, not necessarily with intentions of causing a schism, which, on the contrary, is, as we saw, more often than not anxiously avoided. The inner logic, vitality, or radicalism of the new movement or the intransigent attitude of the mother-community or its representatives, however, may prove more powerful than the good will of the dissenters, and a secession results." Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1944, p. 186.

A study of the schismatic movements within the field of religion will bear out the contention that the mystic, impatient of rules, and even of authority, develops an antinomianism which frequently ends in separation from the original group. It is barely possible that this was one aspect of the "separatism" and sense of superiority of the Slavophiles who rejected the West as crass and excessively mundane.

schism. In seeking oneness with God the mystic often favors individualism, paradoxically enough, while at the same time he strives for wholeness and unity and condemns atomism and separatism.

#### Dionysius on Mystical Union

In the writings of Dionysius, the treatise on Divine Names, the longest of the four, is devoted to a consideration of the nature and attributes of God. At the same time though it is largely given up to the practical aim of promoting and fostering an interest in union with the Deity.<sup>77</sup> He states that when man communes with God in prayer, it is as if climbing up hand over hand by a chain let down from heaven we appeared to be drawing the sky downward instead of ourselves upward; or as if in a boat, pulling upon the cable that held it to the shore we appeared to be drawing the shore to the boat instead of the boat to the shore. "Therefore," he concludes, "it is above all necessary, and especially in the field of theology, to begin with prayer, not in order to attract to ourselves the power which is present everywhere and nowhere, but by commemorating and calling upon God to give ourselves into his hands and become one with him." <sup>78</sup>

Dionysius posits three methods of attaining to mystical knowledge of God, the linear, the spiral and the circular. In the first method man passes from observation of the world to a knowledge of its artificer; in the second method man reached the Deity through a process of dialectic or discursive reasoning; while the third method has man abandoning all material and sense objects and even the use of his reasoning powers to

<sup>77</sup>Dionysius, "Divine Names," Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus III, Chap. III, p. 680; see also Appendix H.

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

accomplish the mystical unity.<sup>79</sup> This is a typically Russian concept also, as shall be seen in the Slavophile writers who sought reality not through empirical evidences or rational arguments, but spurning these, turned to mystical intuition as the key to reality. According to Dionysius, such a method is the highest of all and is the only way of attaining complete union with God. Only in the ecstasy of mystical oneness do men really possess and enjoy the Deity.

Reminiscent of the Clementine theory about divinity, Dionysius contends that God is unapproachable and incomprehensible. There is no difficulty in identifying this as a strain of Neo-Platonism. There is one difference in the interpretation of Clement and that of Dionysius, however. Dionysius holds this concept of transcendence as of primary importance in his thought, while Clement does not make it essential to his concepts. Dionysius makes this concept of transcendence a veritable corner-stone of his philosophy and theology and he is sternly opposed to any anthropomorphizing of God. He agrees with Plotinus in holding that literally speaking, man is incapable of describing the Deity but can only speak of Him in negative terms, saying what He is not.

Dean Inge, who has studied the relationship between Platonism and Christianity, has commented upon the Orthodox attitude toward attempts at a knowledge of God:

...deification may be conceived either as essentialization or as substitution. The former was the doctrine of the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., Tomus IV, 8-9.

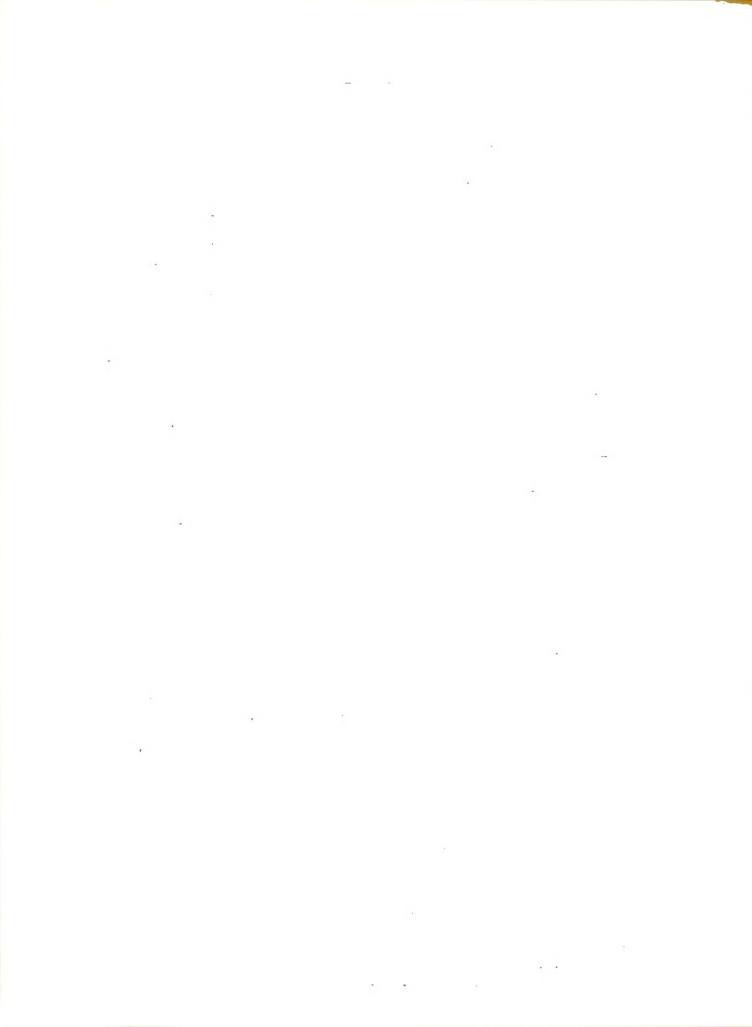


Platonists - "the throne of the Godhead is the mind of man"; the latter was the doctrine of the mysteries, in which the divine element was sacramentally imparted or infused. Platonism insists that we can only know what is akin to ourselves. If there were nothing god-like in human nature we could not know God. Orthodox theology repudiated with horror the notion that man is of the same nature (homocousion) as the Father; but spiritual union with the Logos-Christ was not inconceivable.<sup>80</sup>

Dionysius, along with the other Orthodox theologians, regards God, the Divine Supreme Mind, as first in the hierarchical ordering of being, and holds that the deity is the first principle of reality. Thus, the Forms as contemplated by Plato become for Dionysius and the Neo-Platonists simply the thoughts in the mind of God. The Neo-Platonists further identified this divine Supreme Mind with Plato's Good. This concept is of very real importance in early Christian thought because it places God above all things, makes Him a transcendent being not out of contact with the material world but definitely in touch with the human soul in this life and accessible to men through the process of contemplation, not through the use of reason. It is here that the mystical and romantic elements of the later Slavophiles was to find a common ground of understanding with Dionysius the Areopagite and the Neo-Platonists, with Eckhart and Jacob Boehme in the West, and with Schelling and his idealism, for the Slavophiles were anti-rationalists and insisted that man can know not only God but all truth only through mystical contemplation or by divine revelation, directly granted to man. While God can be reached by men, He is yet far removed from men and is to be reached only through intermediaries. The Orthodox Church becomes such a mediary

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<sup>80</sup>Inge, W.R., Mysticism in Religion, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1948, p. 45.



in the Slavophile system and being the representative and mystical extension (through the concept of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ on earth) of God, it should have precedence over all mundane institutions and secular endeavors. In this system of thought, only the finite can be known, the infinite is unknowable.<sup>81</sup> Man is incapable of conceiving of God or of forming an image or conception of Him. Man can only name Him in broad general terms, man can only praise Him. It is interesting to note that the Russian term for Orthodoxy is "Pravoslavnoje" (true-worshipping believers) whereas the literal translation into the Staroslavonic language would be "Pravovirnije" (true believing). It is the aspect of worship, rather than that of theological speculation about the nature of God, as is characteristic of Western Catholic theology, that typifies the Russian Orthodox attitude toward religion. Man can only worship God - he has no right to expect satisfying answers concerning His nature or His being. For this reason the Slavophiles condemned Western Christians for attempting to apply finite reason to the search for infinite truth. Russia they regarded as superior to the West because it has preserved the true relationship with God. Sociologically speaking, this Russian emphasis on the mystic or latriac attitude toward God rather than the scholastic rationalism, gives to the Slavophiles an "otherworldly" character which evidences itself in their attitude of passivity toward poverty, crime, sin, and most other social matters. Their Neo-Platonic and Platonic heritage caused them to be theocentric rather than anthropocentric. Any social program

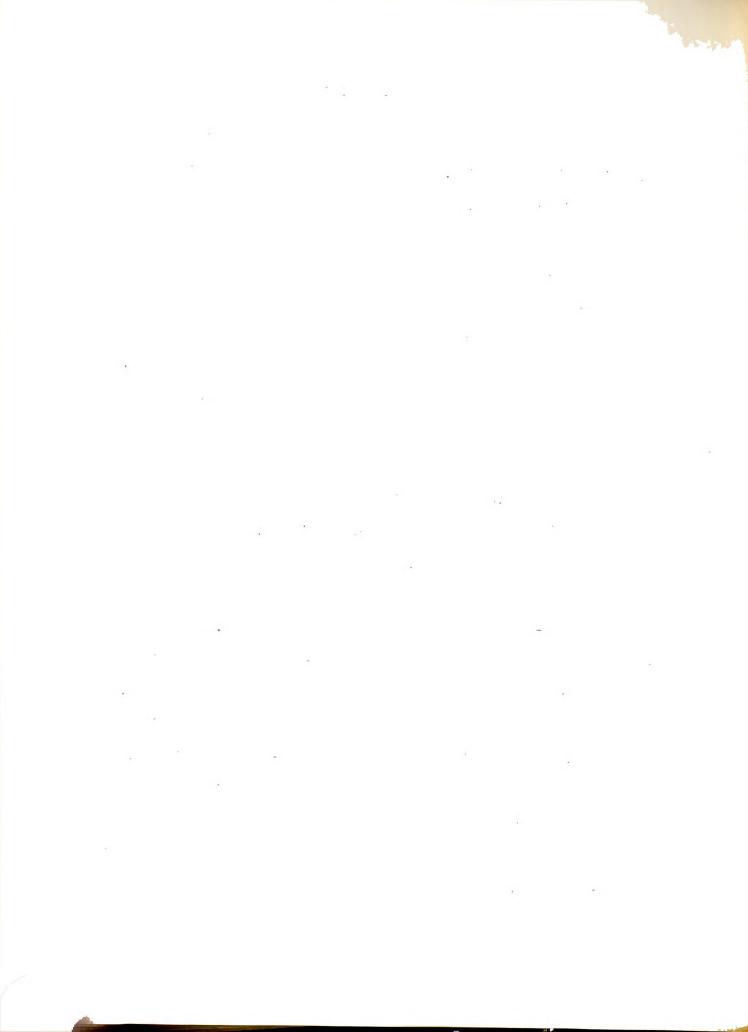
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<sup>81</sup> Dionysius, Divine Names, op. cit., I, 1 ff.



they may have envisioned hinged entirely upon the primacy of a spiritual regeneration. Social reform would flow inevitably from this primary factor. For this reason the Slavophiles condemned the west as "materialistic" and too much concerned with the things of the world. One evidence of how far apart, in this one respect at least, are the Soviet Communists from the ideals of the Slavophiles is the primacy of concern of the Slavophiles for the spiritual and the primacy of concern of the Communists for the materialistic.

The interesting question has often been raised concerning how much of the writings and thought of the patristic fathers, who had been influenced by Platonism, was known in the Kievan period of Russian history. While it might seem to modern historians that the early Russians must have had most, if not all, of the patristic writings available to them, it must be admitted that the Slavs of the tenth century and several succeeding centuries knew the works of the Neo-Platonic Church Fathers only indirectly. This does not mean that the mystical tradition of Neo-Platonism did not influence the theology and even the social institutions of Kievan Russia. While the writings of the Fathers may not have been widely read in early Russia, the Greek missionary clergy, priest-monks and bishops, who had received their theological training in the strictest Byzantine tradition, preached sermons imbued with mysticism and based upon the Greek Church Fathers. Thus, indirectly, the early Slavs imbibed Neo-Platonism.



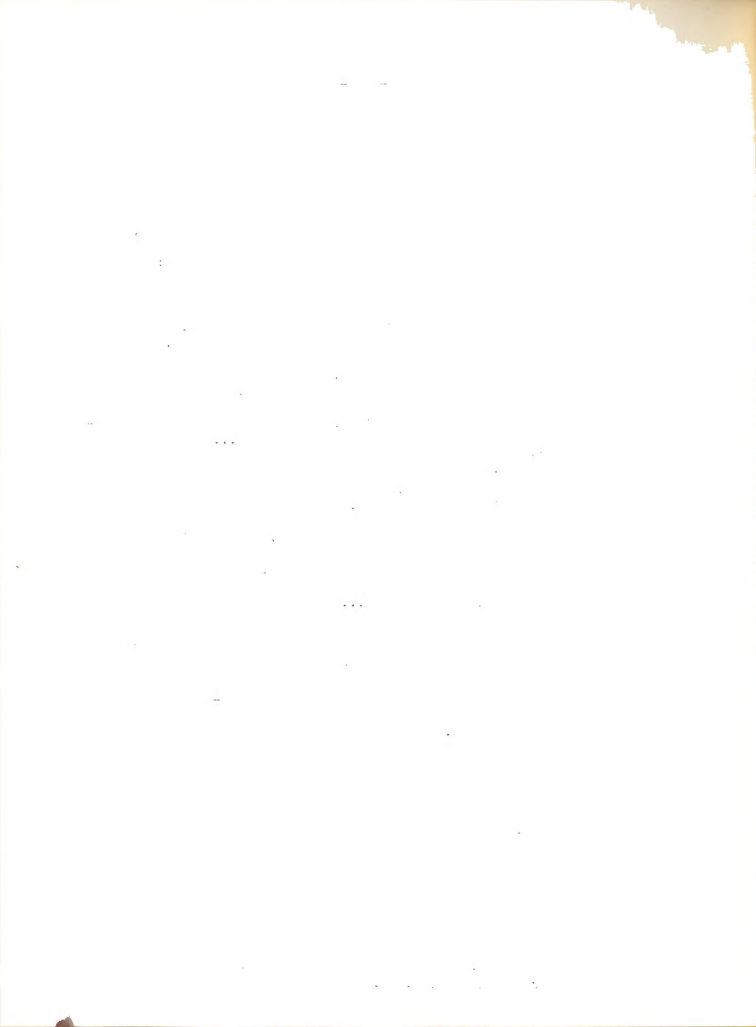
However, when the question of the extent to which the patristic writings were read among the early Russians is considered, and how well the writings of the Neo-Platonic Christians were known in Russia, it seems necessary to follow the conclusion of George Fedotov, one of the modern authorities on religious Byzantinism who writes:

In the field of the patristics the question is raised of how much of the immense theological library of the Greek fathers was accessible to the (early) Russian. This question sometimes was answered in an optimistic way. The catalogue of the names of the fathers whose works were known in Russia is really very long. But if one passes from names to writings, the impression is changed. Very few of the classical works of Greek theology were known in Russia, (during the Kievan period). Most of the translations pursued merely practical and edifying aims...Nothing except fragments and sermons, was read of Saint Cyril of Alexandria; nothing in the early period from the mystical school of theology, Gregory of Nyssa, Maxim the Confessor, Dionysius the Areopagite. Of the works of Basil the Great were studied his ascetic treatises and the Hexaemeron, the cosmological commentary on Genesis. A selection of sermons from Gregory Nazianzus represented for the Russians the summit of Greek theological thought. The sermons were saturated with high dogmatic ideas construed upon Platonic metaphysical background... 82

While he discounts the theory that the Neo-Platonic patristic writings were widely studied in Kievan Russia, Fedotov does not deny that the early Russians were made familiar with Neo-Platonic ideas by their Greek mentors. In any event, as a knowledge of letters became more widespread in Russia, even though such knowledge was restricted to the clergy and a few of the nobles, an interest in the patristics developed. Iaroslav, the last of the great princes of Kiev inaugurated the Russian cultural spiral and laid the foundations for cultural progress by gathering around the Cathedral Church of Saint Sophia a circle of

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<sup>82</sup>Fedotov, George P., The Russian Religious Mind, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1946, p. 45.





learned clergy and translators. Thus, the quantitative growth of the intellectual elite continued for generations, in spite of the Mongolian invasion.<sup>83</sup> Fedotov says of this growth in culture:

The process (of cultural growth) finds its eloquent parallel in the West during the Carolingian Renaissance when the impulse given by Charlemagne to the cultural revival came to full fruit in the reign of his grandson Charles the Bald at a time when the empire was already in ruins.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, despite the fact that early Russian thought was slow in following the Neo-Platonic spirit of Byzantium, while the first response of the newly-converted nation was most spontaneous and powerful, it was not until almost the fourteenth century that the more conventional school of Neo-Platonic philosophy came into its own in Russia. It was during this later period that the Neo-Platonic trend becomes more clearly discernible. It is a commonplace among historians of religion that Eastern Orthodoxy stresses the cosmological aspects more strongly than do the Christians of the West who put unquestionably more emphasis upon anthropology. The Eastern Church shows its Hellenistic legacy which is seen in the writings of Origen through to St. John Damascene.

From the Pseudo-Dionysius there also came into Russia further elements of mysticism. Partly under the inspiration of Dionysius, still more as a result of the common mystical tendency of which the Areopagite's writings were one of the most striking products, the mystical interpretation of the cultus ultimately became general in Orthodoxy. It is through the sacraments that Dionysius thinks that

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p 367.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p 368.



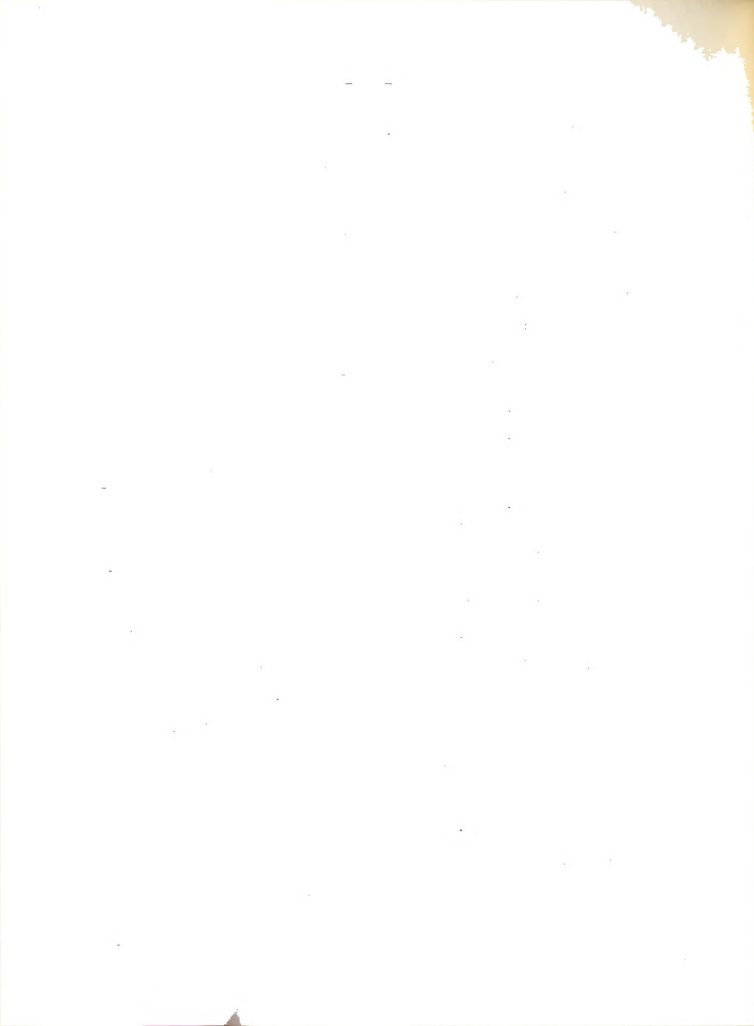
unity with God can be attained. In a passage that might well have been written by one of the Slavophiles, Dionysius addresses a fellow-priest Timothy and begs him to abandon worldly and materialistic entanglements and follow the via negativa which means the repudiation of all the affirmations of the reason and the abandonment of all definite ideas, to lose himself in God in the ecstasy of mystical oneness with Him:

Do thou, dear Timothy, in thy eager striving after mystical visions abandon both sense-perception and mental activity, all things sensible and intellectual, all being and not being, and as far as is possible mount up without knowledge into union with the One who is above all being and knowledge; for by freeing thyself completely and unconditionally from thyself and from all things, thou shalt come to the superessential brightness of the divine darkness, if thou turnest thy back on everything and art loosed from everything. But take care that this come not to the ears of the uninitiated, who being entangled in existing things imagine that there is nothing superessential above the things that are and suppose that they can grasp with their understandings the One who has made the darkness his hiding place.<sup>85</sup>

Similar traces of this concept were to be found in the works of Clement of Alexandria, as has already been noted, and in Gregory of Nyssa,<sup>86</sup> and in others among the Greek Fathers, but none of them gave the emphasis to this idea that Dionysius did. In this matter Dionysius was completely in harmony with the Neo-Platonist Plotinus. If man is to reach ecstatic union, he must rise above reason and material existence to the supersensual realm where man can at least enjoy God, even if he is unable to know Him. It is worth noticing in this connection that like Plotinus, Dionysius believes that this ecstatic union is a rare thing and limited to a spiritual elite. Similarly, the Slavophiles felt that the

<sup>85</sup>Dionysius, "Mystical Theology", Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus 3, p. 998.

<sup>86</sup>See his Vita Moysis.



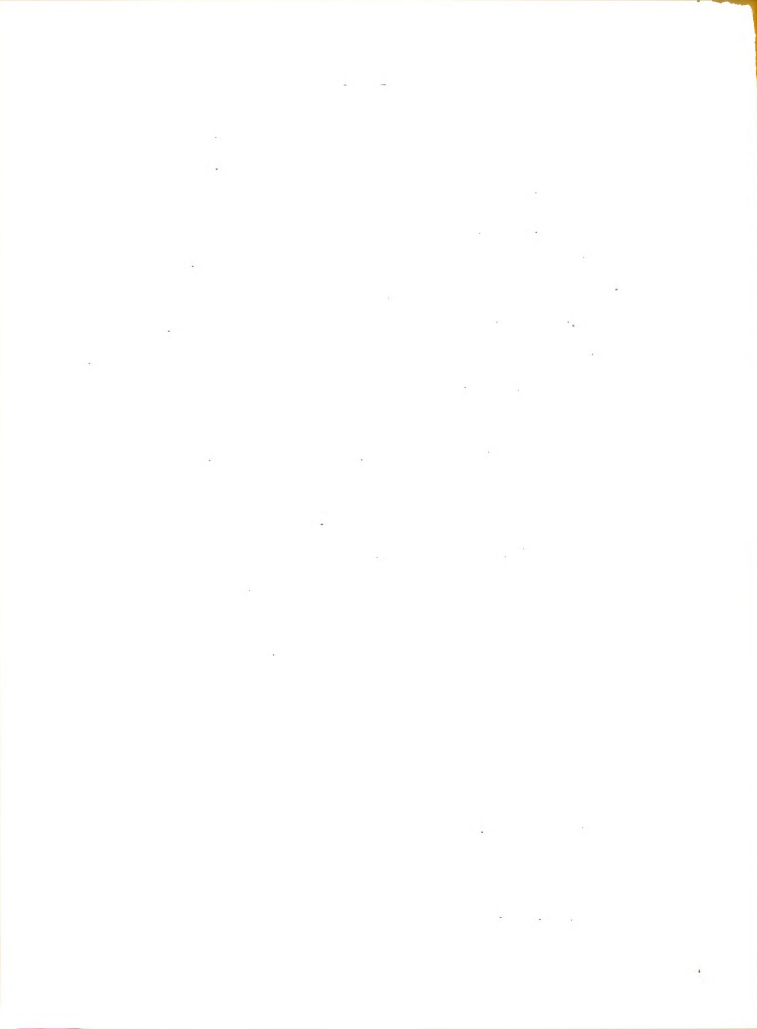
Russian Orthodox believers formed a spiritual elite, possessed of the True Faith and capable of closer union with God. For this reason the Slavophiles considered the Russian nation superior to the peoples of the West. Thus, Dostoyevsky regards the beggars and illiterates as being closer to God than the erudite man of letters. He further elaborates this theme of rising above the things of sense toward unity with the Divine in his many references to suffering. Through physical suffering man can be cleansed of the dross of the material. In what is perhaps his most famous work, The Brothers Karamazov, the Slavophile Dostoyevsky has his characters utter the following thoughts: "Fourteen years I've been in hell. I want to suffer. I will accept my sufferings and begin to live."<sup>87</sup> A Russian monk in the same novel quotes a passage from the Gospel of St. John enunciating the same idea: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Again this states the theme that being spiritually dead to material things is the way to union with God.<sup>88</sup>

#### Further Comments on the Platonism in Dionysius

Arthur McGiffert, who has seriously studied the Patristic writings and the philosophical and environmental influences upon them, clearly states his opinion that Dionysius not only assimilated Neo-Platonism but transmitted it. McGiffert says in this matter:

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<sup>87</sup> Dostoyevsky, Feodor, The Brothers Karamazov, Heritage Press, New York, 1933, pp. 235-236.  
<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

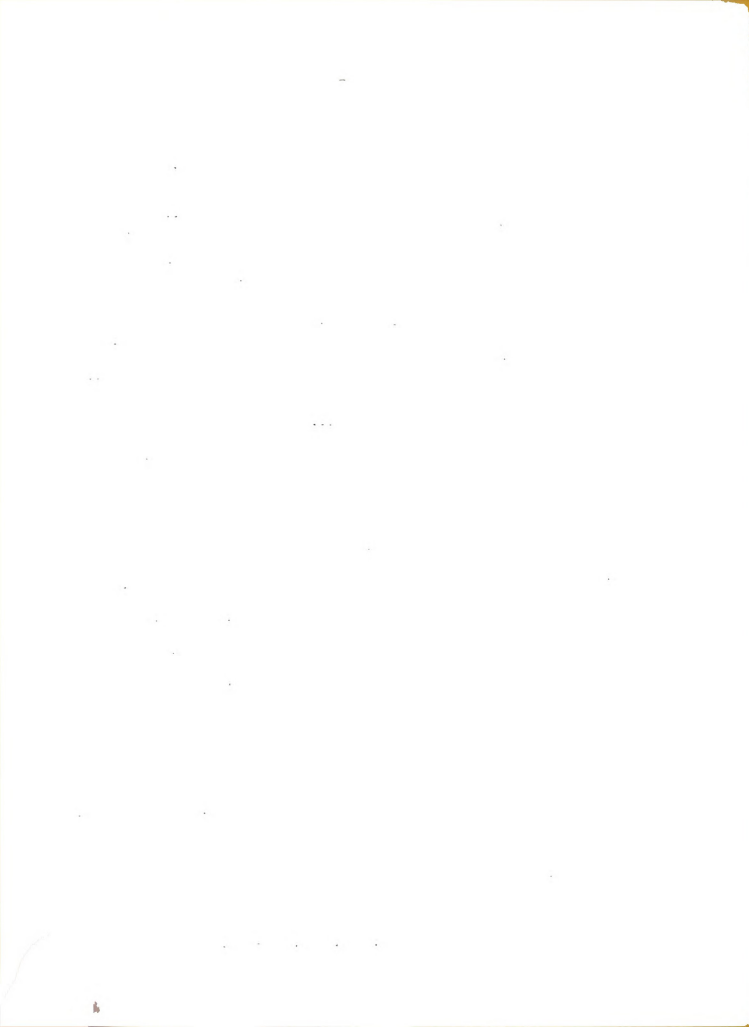


It is commonly taken for granted that (Dionysius) was a Neoplatonist before he became a Christian and brought his Neoplatonism over into the church with him. Whether this be true or not at any rate he felt its influence at several points, particularly though not exclusively as represented by his older contemporary Proclus...The influence of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings was enormous. It was due to them in no small part that the eastern church of the Middle Ages was a genuine mystery-cult not only in fact but in theory as well. In them were set out more clearly than in any other Christian documents of the ancient church the principles that constitute a true mystery-religion: a sacred ritual with secret and symbolic rites which are open only to the initiated, and through which a knowledge of divine things is imparted and a man enters into union with the divine... And still more, thoroughgoing mysticism of the Neoplatonic type was widely fostered and was given an increasing currency by the reading of his works...Indeed it would hardly be too much to say that they were the fountain head of most of the mysticism in the western church of the Middle Ages. <sup>89</sup>

What McGiffert leaves unsaid is that while the influence of the Dionysian writings were very considerable in the West, they were even more powerful in the Eastern Church where their spirit was more in harmony with the general spirituality of clergy and laity alike. It is important for the purposes of this present work, however, to recall that the West did have its mystical schools, one of which, under the influence of Dionysius, influenced the Slavophiles. The mysticism of the Pseudo-Dionysius came to the Slavophiles and the Russian mystics of the nineteenth century not only directly from the Byzantine heritage but in an indirect route through the Western mystics like Jacob Boehme and von Baader whose works were widely read by the Slavophile leaders. The sociologist Joachim Wach likewise credits the early Christian Neoplatonists, Dionysius included, with exercising an influence upon the

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<sup>89</sup> McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, op. cit., pp. 305-307.





modern philosophers such as Herder, Kant, Schelling, Baader, Hegel and various Russian Christian writers. Wach also highlights the importance of such a theological influence upon social groups when he writes:

The attitude of the individual toward society in all its forms and the influence of a religion on social relations and institutions will depend largely on the spirit which permeates the doctrines, cult, and organization of a religious group. Interhuman relations in a given society are determined by it. Institutions such as marriage, family, kinship, and state are perceived in the light of the central religious experience, and a corresponding ideal of society is formulated.<sup>90</sup>

That the Neo-Platonism of Dionysius exercised such a lasting influence in shaping the social institutions within Eastern Orthodoxy is amply attested by the manifold statements of theologians and sociologists.

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<sup>90</sup> Wach, Joachim, op. cit., pp. 47-49.

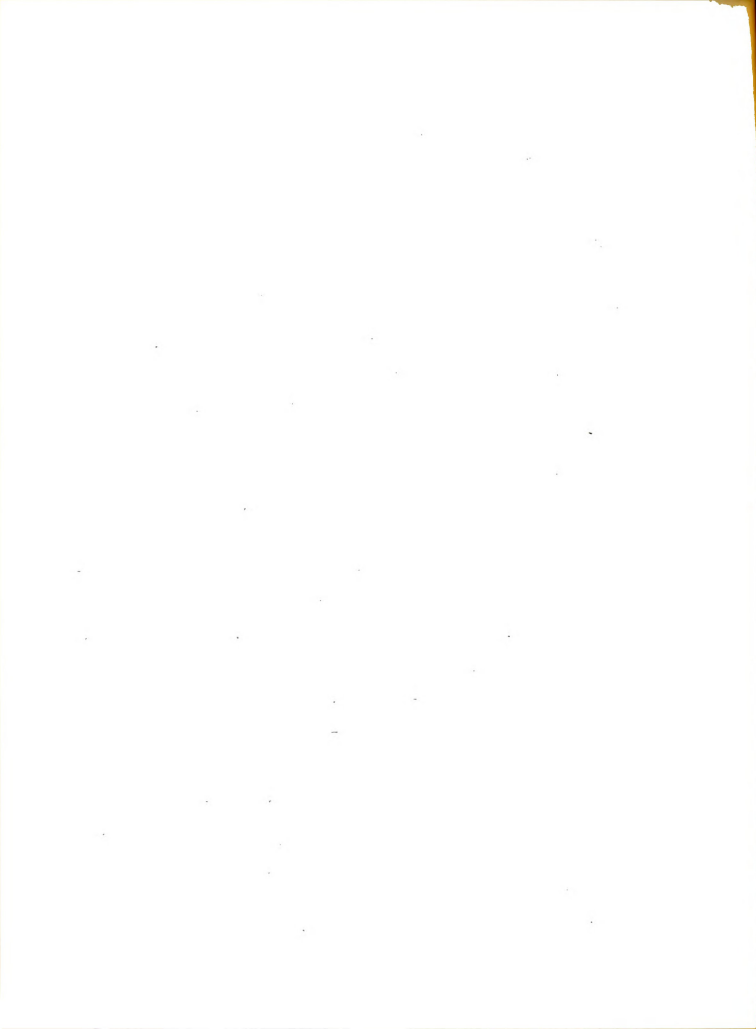


## CHAPTER VI

### JOHN DAMASCENE AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY IN THE MIDDLE AGES

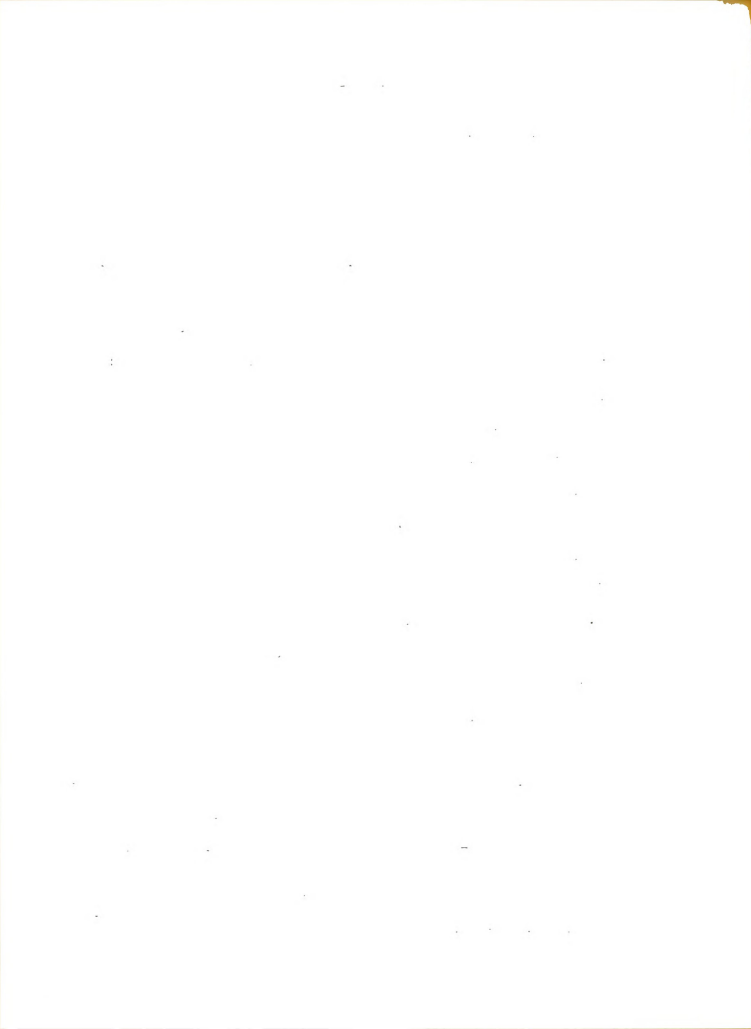
In the eighth century Eastern Christianity tended to become static and its theological development reached its climax. One of the streams leading to this static rather than creative and continually growing type of theological life in the Eastern Church was the rise of speculative mysticism into a position of central importance. Note has already been made of the growth of this type of mysticism from Clement of Alexandria to Pseudo-Dionysius in the sixth century. The conception of gnosis in the Alexandrine fathers included a mild sort of cognitive mysticism. The conception of deification of believers, stressing the practical assimilation of human into divine life, was taught by Irenaeus and Athanasius, repeated by the Cappadocian Fathers, Basil and the two Gregorys, and elaborated into full-flown mysticism by Maximus the Confessor, the foe of the Monophysite and Monothelite doctrines in the seventh century. Maximus was a commentator on St. Gregory Nazianzen, but he is important here because he was the popularizer of the highly mystical writings of Pseudo-Dionysius.

The late Neo-Platonism of Pseudo-Dionysius is, in many ways, the culmination of a process of development from the Republic and the Timaeus of Plato, in which the principles of the Good, Reason, and Soul are presented as basic factors in and beyond reality, through Plotinus, Iamblichus and Proclus, with increasing complication of casual chains and growing emphasis on the remoteness or inaccessibility of the ultimate principle from which all reality proceeds. Plotinus called it the One,



or the Good, or God. Proclus uses the same terms, and adds that from the One or God spring a definite number of unities (henads) or gods, of different ranks or degrees of inclusiveness, each of which is the source of further diversities and at the same time the indwelling principle of their requisite unity. The One itself remains aloof. Plotinus holds that from the One flows forth Nous (variously rendered by translators as Mind, Spirit, Intellectual Principle).<sup>91</sup> Proclus agrees in the general conception, but complicates it in two ways: Nous (which springs from certain of the divine henads) is in itself a triad of Being, Life, Mind, and from it spring a plurality of minds of different grades, each of which again is the source of still other chains, all of whose members participate in being, some in life, and still fewer in consciousness. Plotinus holds that from Nous flows Psyche, which he equates with the principle of life and motion, which unlike Nous becomes individuated into particular souls, each with its body. Again Proclus agrees,<sup>92</sup> but again he complicates the pattern by specifying divine souls thinking timelessly, lesser souls that think temporally but perpetually, and souls that vary between consciousness and unconsciousness. Bodies are a further step down in the scale, since they are divisible into parts, being spread out spatially as souls and minds are not. The theoretic limit of plurality would be sheer multiplicity without unity - but that would be Non-being. Plotinus sometimes writes as though Non-being were synonymous with evil. Proclus, on the

<sup>91</sup> Whittaker, Thomas, The Neo-Platonists: A Study in Hellenism, second edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1928, pp. 163-68.  
<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 231-239.



contrary, holds that evil is misconduct, not mere privation.<sup>93</sup> Both Plotinus and Proclus agree that the work of God is unification, and that salvation for the individual is return toward unity, apprehended now in mystical intuition.

The radical differences between such a point of view and the Judaeo-Christian way of thinking need scarcely be pointed out. Instead of voluntary creation and discontinuity between God and the world, Neo-Platonism stresses with all emphasis the continuous and inevitable flow of the world from God. Instead of the corruption of man and the need of divine grace for redemption, Neo-Platonism usually thinks of evil as deficiency - as a shadow is absence of light - and of a gradual return of men through moral and mental discipline to unification, best apprehended in ecstatic union. It is this Neo-Platonic religious thought that is set forth, partly in Christian theological terms, partly in the vocabulary of speculative mysticism, by Pseudo-Dionysius. The works of St. John Damascene flow logically and naturally from these Neo-Platonic roots planted in the earlier centuries.

#### The "Scholasticism" of John Damascene

John Damascene exemplifies what might be called an "Orthodox scholastic," though there is little evidence of the attempt to harmonize the affirmations of faith with the findings of natural reason, which was distinctive of Western scholasticism. What prompts the Western schoolmen, whether within the community of the Church, of Judaism, or of Islam, is in each instance the same difficulty, namely, the problem posed

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<sup>93</sup> Proclus, in his work De Malorum Subsistentia,

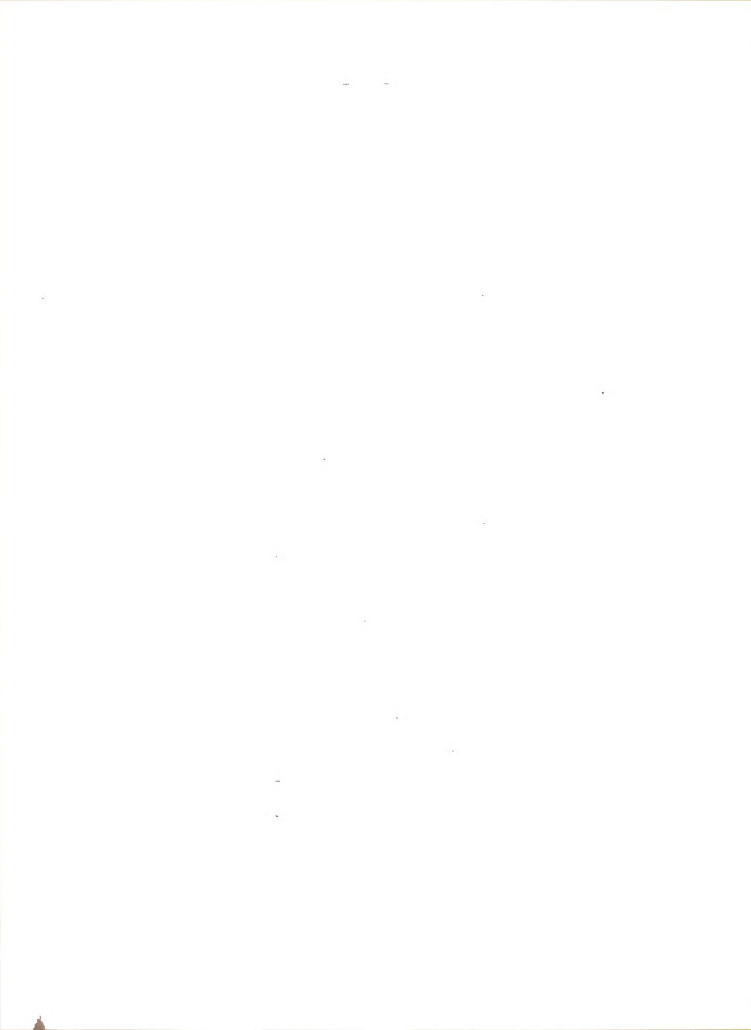




for faithful members of a religious community by the discovery or the popularization of an intellectual understanding of the natural world which appears to conflict with the demands of faith. The scholastic task is that of working out reconciliation of the findings of natural reason on the one hand and the affirmations of religious traditions on the other. Apparently no such problem confronted John Damascene. Yet he is a scholastic in his systematizing tendencies and his preoccupation with the schematizing of insight already attained by earlier thinkers.

John Damascene might be called the last of the great theological doctors of the Eastern Orthodox Church. With him the productive period in theology may be said to have closed for centuries as far as the East was concerned. John himself as a matter of fact did not contribute to the development in any significant manner. He was not a creative thinker and actually he seems to have added very little of his own to the body of theological doctrines. But he summed up all that had gone before and set it out in clear and orderly fashion, thus supplying the Eastern Orthodox Church with an orthodox system of theology which has remained normative ever since. Widely studied in countries where Eastern Orthodoxy is found, his writings have been of great influence in introducing or perpetuating Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought in the intellectual systems of the Orthodox nations.

John Damascene came of a prominent Christian family in the ancient city of Damascus where, after his father's death, he held political office



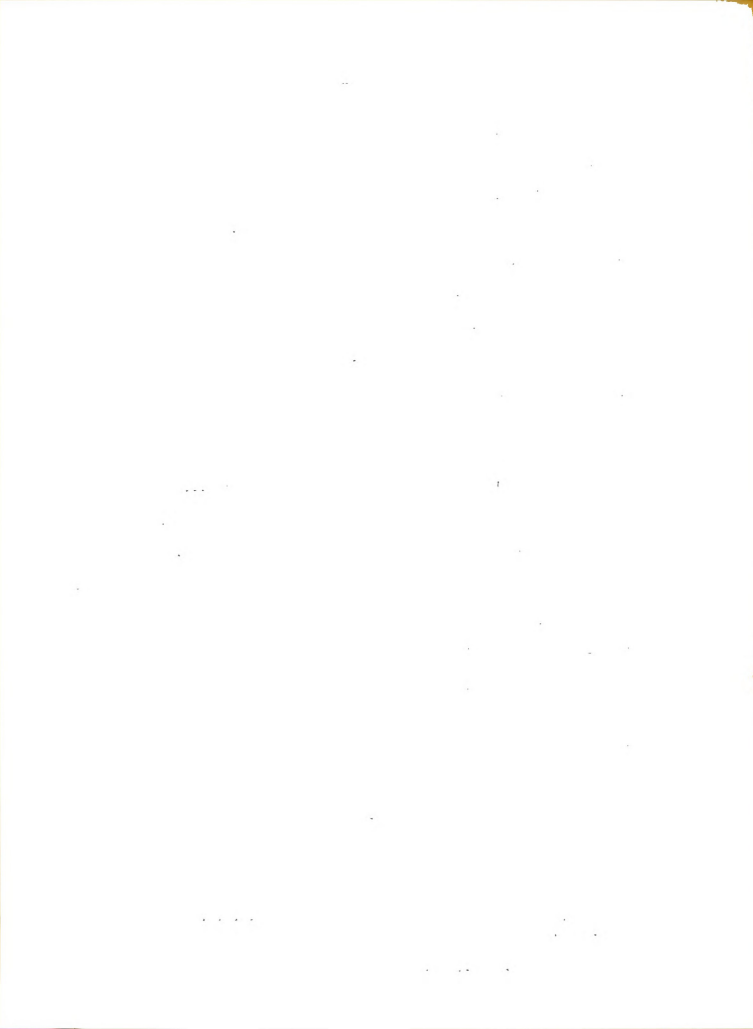
under the Caliph, an office hereditary in his family. In the relative safety of Syria, he was able to utter his three famous orations in defence of ikons. After a time in the service of the Caliph, John retired from his public career and entered the St. Sabas monastery near Jerusalem, where he spent the remainder of his life in productive study and writing. He was ordained as a priest of the Orthodox Church in Jerusalem.

It was in the monastery of St. Sabas that he composed his famous Fountain of Knowledge, a summary of the theological writings of the Eastern Church Fathers. The influence of this work has not been confined to the Eastern Orthodox Church, however, for one Byzantine scholar comments on John's influence in the West by saying: "...(The Fountain of Knowledge) translated into Latin in the twelfth century, was one of the most important sources of the Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas."<sup>94</sup>

John Damascene first attracted attention, while he was yet a layman in fact, by his energetic opposition to the iconoclasts and the image-destroying policies of Emperor Leo the Isaurian. In his work De Imaginibus Oratio, he advances the arguments which have become traditional with both the Eastern and Western Catholic Churches, that the ikons aid devotion, that they make Christ and the saints seem closer to men, and that there is the same reason for them as for other sensible signs of spiritual realities.<sup>95</sup> Further, he states that the reverence paid to the sacred images is not the same worship paid to God, but is

<sup>94</sup> Every, George, The Byzantine Patriarchate, S.P.C.K., London, 1947, p. 101.

<sup>95</sup> John of Damascus, "De Imaginibus Oratio I," Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus 94, op. cit., pp. 1240 f.



a lower form which amounts to something akin to homage or respect, and that it is not the material object that is honored, but the saint represented by the ikon. He is careful to show that those who would refrain from reverencing ikons come close to holding the Manichean heresy which treats matter as evil.<sup>96</sup>

### The Fount of Knowledge

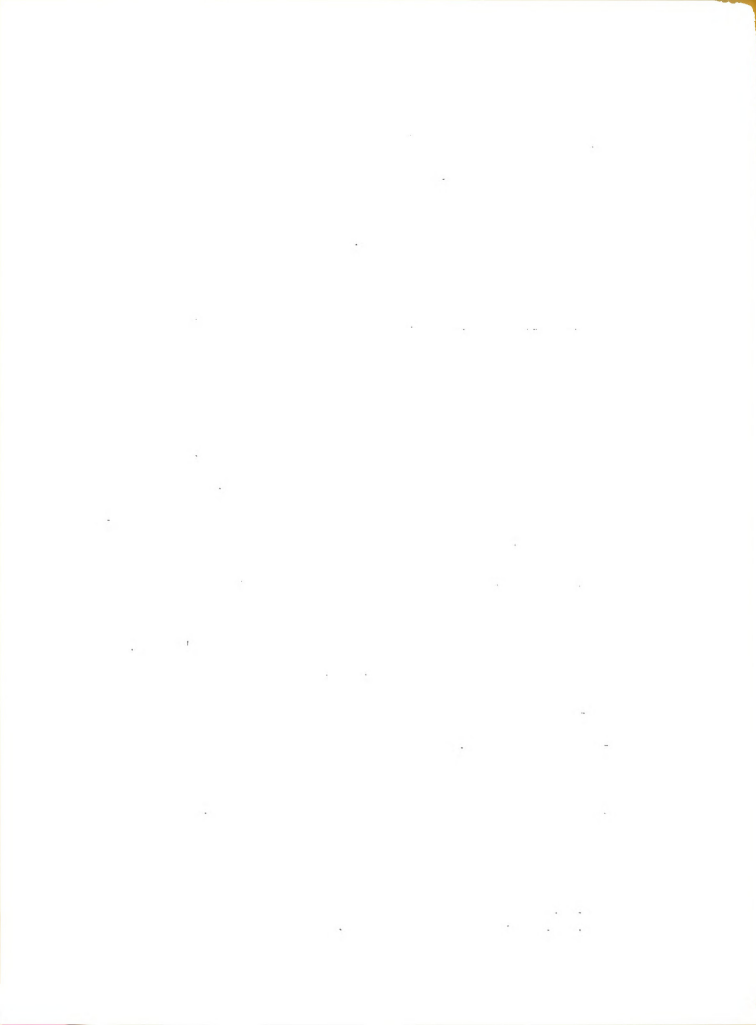
The Fount of Knowledge, which is generally recognized as the most important of the works of John Damascene, is a large thesaurus of passages from the Scriptures and from the patristic writings and is largely concerned with Christological essays setting forth the Orthodox position against the Monothelites, Nestorians, and Monophysites. It also contains an able defense of Orthodoxy against Islamism. The Fount of Knowledge is divided into three sections, the first containing St. John Damascene's philosophical prolegomena, the second the history of heresy, and the third section, which contains a full summary of the chief doctrines still held by the Eastern Orthodox Church, systematizes the writings of the theologians in the East before John's time.

A careful study of Damascene's writings indicates that he held Pseudo-Dionysius in very high regard and assimilated many of his Neo-Platonic concepts.<sup>97</sup> It is also clear from further study of his writings that he depended greatly upon the three Cappadocian Fathers, Sts. Basil, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzen. But the catholicity of his writings causes him to refer frequently to other authors, Nemesisius

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 1245.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p.1239; also see Appendix I.



of Emesa, Leontius of Byzantium, John Chrysostom, Athanasius and Cyril of Alexandria.

While it is admitted that the works of John Damascene lack originality, it cannot be denied that his works had great value and considerable influence, especially upon later Eastern Orthodoxy. Certainly, Damascene possessed a considerable capacity for systematic thinking and he was able to state the theological and philosophical doctrines of his predecessors in clear and concise statements.

#### John's Statement of Orthodox Beliefs

In his extensive work De Fide Orthodoxa, John concerns himself with the nature of God, generally in terms which are clearly Neo-Platonic. The chief difference between John's conception of God and that found in the thought of the Cappadocians is that while the latter began with Platonic presuppositions and tended, on the whole, to stress the triplicity of the Divinity, finding unity as a theoretic insight which supervenes upon a first impression of trinality, Damascene represents God as incomprehensible and ineffable and above all being. Not that He does not exist but that He is more than all existing things and even existence itself.<sup>98</sup> Knowledge has to do with what is and if God is above all being He must also be above all knowledge. Like Plotinus, Damascene is ready to state what God is not, but denies the possibility of stating explicitly what God is.

Following the Neo-Platonic tradition, John Damascene contends

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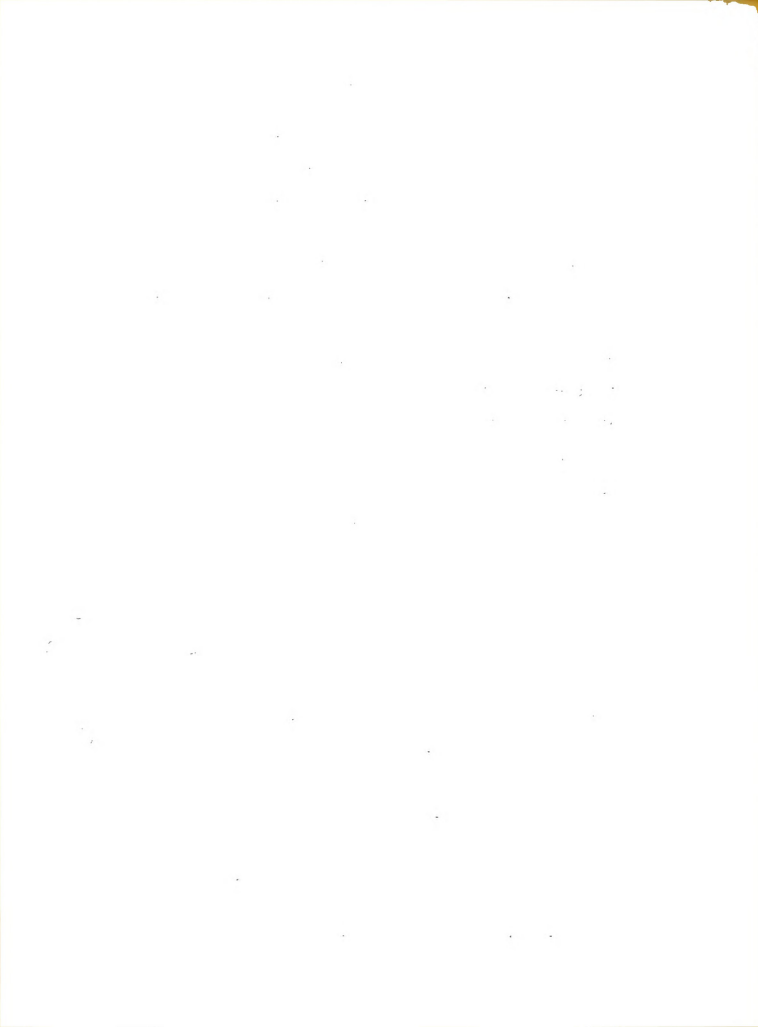
<sup>98</sup> John of Damascus, "De Fide Orthodoxa," Liber Primus, op. cit., chap. IV, p. 798; also see Appendix J.

that though God is above human comprehension, He has not left man in complete ignorance concerning Himself. He has implanted in all men the conviction that He exists. Moreover, the creation of the world and its preservation and government show the divine power and majesty, and through the law and the prophets man achieves some knowledge about God. Beyond this man must not go, John asserts. And in this he reinforces the concept in Eastern Orthodoxy, later to be so strongly defended by the Slavophiles, that man comes closer to the deity through mystical union than through rational searching. The sociological implications of this are to be seen in the Russian attitude that secular learning is useful only insofar as it leads one to God, but that empirical and rational investigation can carry a person only so far, within the realm of what Kant calls the phenomenal world, but beyond the periphery of sense experience (in the area which Kant terms the noumenal world) man must use faith and seek mystical oneness with the deity. For this reason Dostoyevsky felt that unlettered persons and even idiots might attain mystical unity with the deity, since such unity comes not through the strivings of superior intellects or according to rational or empirical systems, but through a humble yearning and spiritual seeking. John Damascene held that man must be content with what has been divinely revealed and be careful not to overstep tradition and revelation.<sup>99</sup> This concept was given social expression by the Slavophiles who reemphasized Orthodox traditionalism and romanticism in opposition to the rationalism of the West. It was the contention

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<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 790; see also Appendix K.





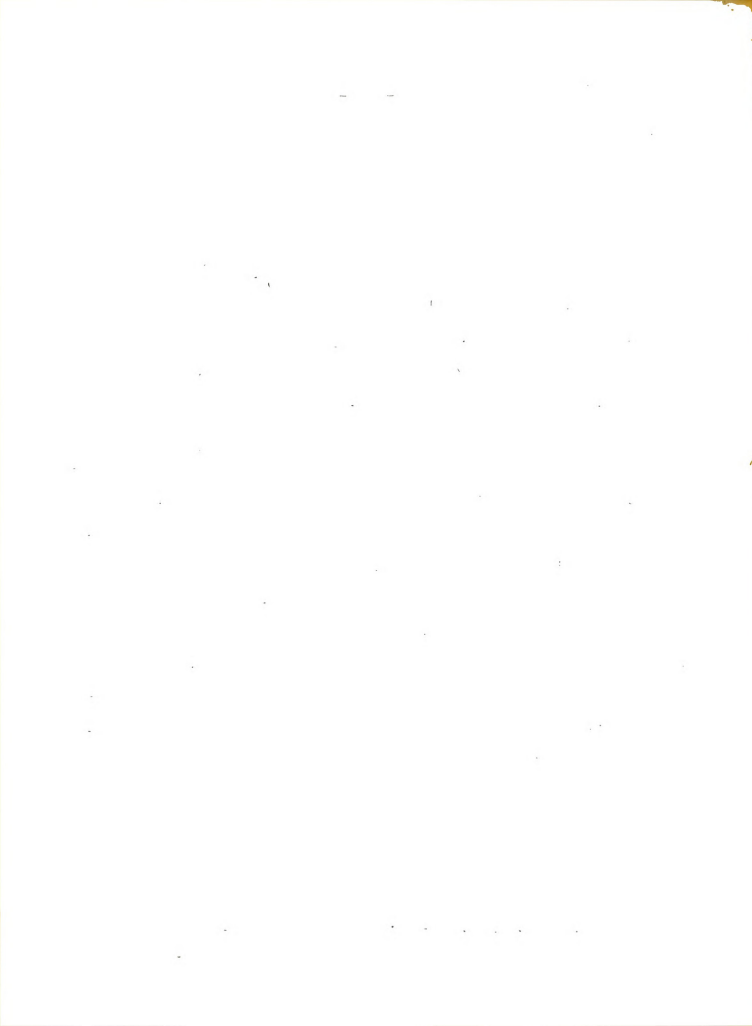
that the Russian people, Orthodox and under the leadership of the tsar, even though they might be lacking in scientific knowledge so treasured by the Western peoples, were still superior in morality and in spiritual insight and consequently possessed the key to bringing political, economic and spiritual salvation to the entire world. So the Slavophiles believed. John Damascene's concepts helped lay the foundation for this messianic vision.

Though the knowledge of God's existence is inborn, Damascene held, Satan has led many to deny it. John therefore repeats the commonly accepted theistic proofs from a changeable world to an unchanging creator and from an ordered world to an intelligent designer - the common teleological and cosmological rational arguments. Similarly the familiar arguments are employed to show that God is one not many.<sup>100</sup>

John's controlling interest, like that of most of the Eastern Orthodox Fathers for some centuries before him, was Christological rather than soteriological. The greater part of the third book and several chapters of the fourth in the De Fide Orthodoxa, were devoted to speculation concerning the person of Christ and even in his philosophical prolegomena Damascene had something to say upon the subject. After referring to the incarnation very briefly at the beginning of the third book - where the method of it seems to interest him more than the fact itself - he entered upon a lengthy discussion of the person and natures of Christ and only at the conclusion of the book spoke of Him in

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., Chap. V, pp. 790-802; see also Appendix I.



passing as having offered Himself to the Father as a ransom, thus freeing men from condemnation. In this connection, the old idea shared by Origen and others that the ransom was paid to Satan is precluded.<sup>101</sup> In the fourth chapter of the fourth book, where John Damascene has most to say about the work of Christ, he declares that Christ came to restore the likeness of God, which man had lost by his sin, to free men from corruption and death by granting them union with Himself. Here again is to be found the Neo-Platonic emphasis on union through an intermediary. Again in chapter thirteen it is stated that Christ took on human nature in order to cleanse man and make him incorruptible and to give man a share in His divinity which was lost by the fall.<sup>102</sup> It would be difficult to find a clearer statement of the Christian concept of union with God, not through knowledge, but through divine grace, as the Slavophile held.

#### Sacramentalism in Damascene's Thought

In his chapter on the Eucharist, John Damascene carried out the Orthodox doctrine of mystical union and defends the traditional concept that the species of bread and wine are supernaturally transmuted into the actual Body and Blood of Christ.<sup>103</sup> John rejects the opinion that this change is only symbolically represented or that it is through faith that the recipient comes into union with Christ. Damascene insists that the bread and wine, after the epiklesis, become in reality the very divinity

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., chaps. III, IV, pp. 1106-1110.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 1135.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p. 1147-1150; see also Appendix M.



of Christ, and the substance of bread and the substance of wine disappear, leaving only the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. This was not a new doctrine in the Eastern Orthodox Church, but is the traditional one taught by St. Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodoret, and many others. In the eight<sup>h</sup> century it was quite generally accepted throughout the east and west. The Slavophiles regarded this doctrine as basis for their teaching about the mystical union of man with the divine and regarded Russia as possessing this apostolic method of achieving oneness with God, whereas, with the possible exception of the Roman Catholics, the Christians had lost the Eucharistic medium of unity.

In emphasizing the Eucharist as the way of achieving mystical union, Damascene points to those scriptural passages wherein Christ says that anyone who eats His flesh and drinks His blood, abides in Him and He in them. John did not stress the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist as some of the other Eastern Fathers had done, but contented himself with stressing the doctrine of man's coming into union with the divine by Eucharistic communion. It should be apparent that the Platonic aim of mystical union is here given a very specific technique of being achieved. John made no attempt to understand rationally the manner in which the transmutation was achieved, he lacked the scholastic interest in the way in which the sacraments become operative. Like the Russian and Greek Orthodox and the Slavophiles, John simply states the belief that through the reception of the Eucharist, man, sinful and finite, comes into a state of oneness with the all-pure and infinite God. Human understanding he did not regard as necessary in the reception of the

Sacrament or in the attainment of the unity with God. It could come to the poor, the ignorant, the repentant sinner. All of this was in accord with his general theological and philosophical position of stressing the mystical rather than the legalistic elements in theology.<sup>104</sup>

#### Appraisal of John Damascene's Influence

John Damascene passed on to Eastern Orthodoxy of succeeding generations the mystical and Platonic doctrines which he culled from the writings of the Greek Fathers who had themselves been influenced by Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy. He is a link, a most influential and powerful link, between the patristic writers and Russian Orthodox and Slavophile writers. His influence was first felt by the ordinary Greek school-boy and the Greek intellectual. The early training of Greek students included a study of the writings of not only Plato and Plotinus, but of the patristic writers and St. John Damascene after the eighth century. True, with the Moslem invasion, Greek learning did not progress far - it had to struggle to keep what it had received from the past and could do little to contribute new impetus to the further development of philosophy or theology. Yet, Greek monks and bishops did not allow the works of John Damascene to sink into oblivion and when Russia was Christianized by clergy from Greece, these ecclesiastics carried Byzantine Platonism with them to the Slavs.<sup>105</sup> Wherever Eastern Orthodoxy

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<sup>104</sup> McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, op. cit., pp. 323-324.

<sup>105</sup> Baynes, Norman H., op. cit., pp. 202-216.

was professed or taught, the mystical influence of John Damascene was felt, and Russia was not an exception. Commenting on this influence upon Russian thought, Professor Lossky, a modern Russian philosopher, writes:

The Russian people accepted Christianity in 988 and as soon as the works of the Fathers of the Church began to be translated into church slavonic, they got their first introduction to philosophy. As early as the twelfth century a translation was available of St. John Damascene's system of theology...The philosophical introduction to (his works) was translated in the fifteenth century but fragments from it appeared in Sviatoslav's Izbornik in 1073. In the fourteenth century the works of Dionysius the Areopagite with commentaries by St. Maxim the Confessor were translated. These books and also the works of other Eastern Fathers were available in many Russian monasteries. <sup>106</sup>

Reference has already been made to the fact that the works of John Damascene were also influential in the development of the theology of Thomas Aquinas in the Western Church. Peter Lombard was also influenced by Damascene. <sup>107</sup> Thus, this Eastern Orthodox Neo-Platonist found his works introduced into the stream of Western theology and philosophy. Jacob Boehme, Baader and Schelling absorbed his thought and in turn were to pass it on in an indirect route to the Slavophiles who studied their philosophy in German universities or by reading the writings of these German romanticists in Russian translations.

With John Damascene Eastern Orthodox theological development virtually ceased for centuries. Today, especially in Greece there is a revival underway, but for centuries while Greece remained under the

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<sup>106</sup> Lossky, N.O., History of Russian Philosophy, International Universities Press, Inc., New York, 1951, p. 10.

<sup>107</sup> McGiffert, Arthur Cushman, op. cit., p. 330.





Turks, there was little original work among Eastern theologians. True, there have been some theologians in the East of high quality and originality since the eighth century, but none have given as complete and as penetrating an analysis of the early teachings and practices of the Church as had John Damascene. His place in Eastern Christianity and the influence his works had upon subsequent Orthodox thinkers has been compared to that of Thomas Aquinas in Western Christianity,<sup>108</sup> and such an estimate seems accurate in view of the veneration paid to John both as a saint in Eastern and Western Christendom and as a theologian and philosopher by scholars who may not find themselves in accord with his doctrinal position. With him an era of Byzantine glory came to a close. The Slavophiles, romanticists that they were, sought to revive not only the ancient glories of Russia but to return to the theological glory of the East at the time of Damascene, one of its brightest lights.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.,



CHAPTER VII  
BYZANTINE AND PLATONIC INFLUENCES UPON  
KIEVAN RUSSIA

In tracing the continuity of Byzantine Platonism and its influence upon Russian thought, it is important to note the ways in which Russia received the Greek culture after the conversion of Grand Prince Vladimir in 988 A.D., and the subsequent reception into Eastern Christianity of the mass of the Russian people. Herein lies the major link between the older Byzantium which was the inheritor of the "glory that was Greece" and the mighty people of the vast northern plains and steppes. Modern Russia today, under the Soviets, may try to devise its own history and make it appear that Russia owes little debt to Byzantium, but objective historians who have studied Russian and Greek history of the ninth and tenth centuries, recognize the fact that the meeting of the two cultures caused the creation of an entirely new third culture. Russia before it became Christianized and Russia under Christianity are vastly different, and it must be recognized that Christianity had a tremendous impact upon Russia.

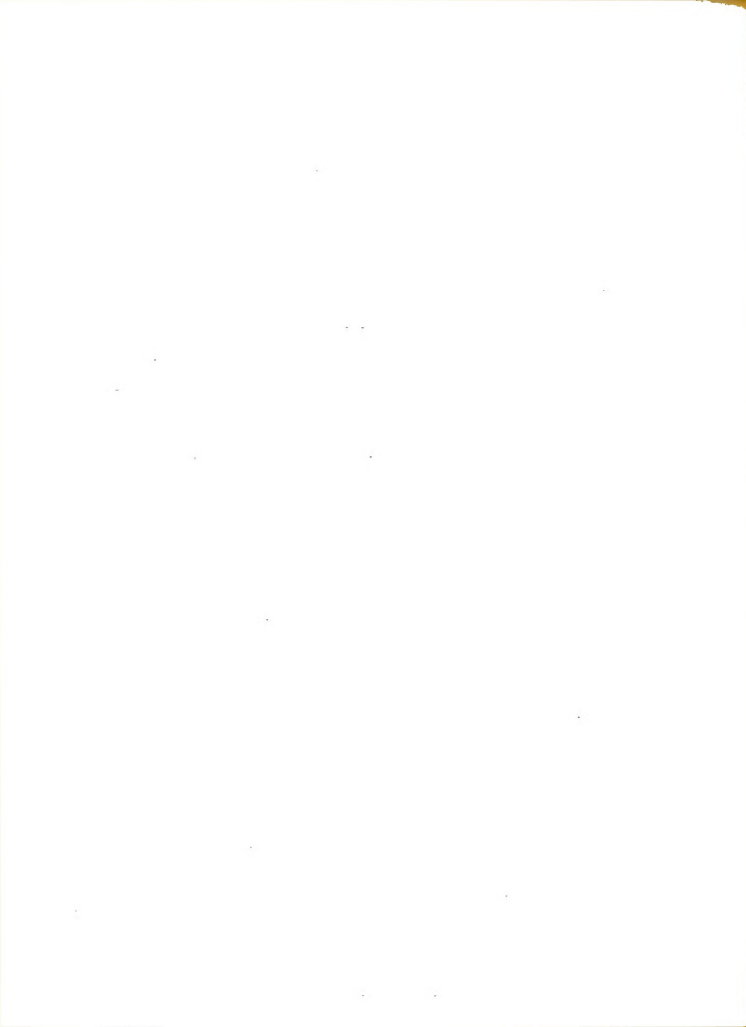
In considering Slavic Byzantinism, one Russian writer points to a basic difference between the culture of Russia and that of the West:

Nobody can understand the destiny of Russian culture and religion without being aware of a primordial difference between Russia and the Christian West. Both had inherited their culture and their religion from the ancient Hellenistic world: the one from the Latin source, the other from the Greek. The Greek tradition was undoubtedly richer and more original: the Romans were disciples and imitators of Greece.<sup>109</sup>

However, despite the riches Russia inherited from Byzantium, it

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<sup>109</sup>Fedotov, George P, op. cit., p. 37.



must be noted that all of the classical culture of Greece was not received by the Slavs when they embraced Eastern Orthodoxy. Greece kept its treasures and would readily have given them to the Russians, but apparently the Russians were not too interested in receiving them. One reason advanced for this is that the Slavs did not have to rely upon the Greek language and this constituted a barrier to assimilating the riches of Greek literature and philosophy. Only those works which were translated into the Slavonic language were given more than a minor reception.<sup>110</sup> When Sts. Cyril and Methodius, energetic missionaries from Greece to the Slavic nations before Russia's conversion, gave the Slavs the Slavonic alphabet, they also provided them with Slavonic translations of the Scriptures and the Liturgy of the Greek Orthodox Church. The Greek language was little known in Russia and it was through the medium of translations that such works as the writings of St. John Damascene came to find popular acceptance among the Rus. Thus, the provision of the Slavonic language by the brothers Cyril and Methodius was an "ambiguous gift,"<sup>111</sup> in that it fostered a more intimate understanding of the Scriptures of the Christian Church and the Liturgy, which the Rus heard in their own tongue, but at the same time they were not stimulated to study Greek. Thus, the vast treasure-house of Greek literature remained for long closed to them, until translations were gradually made. The teaching by the Greek monks and bishops, who for some time were in charge of the Russian Church, helped instil many elements of Byzantinism,

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p. 40.



but it was a slow and incomplete process. Had the Greeks found it possible to teach the Russia people the Greek language or to have supplanted Slavonic with Greek, the record of Russian culture might have been greatly different.

One Russian writer even repudiates the theory that Russia derived any real benefit from its Byzantine heritage. Commenting upon the Byzantine influence upon Russian culture, he states:

The cultural influence of the church and religion absolutely predominated in the earlier (Kievan) periods of Russian history, as it usually does with all peoples in an identical state of development. Nevertheless there was, and still exists, a widespread opinion that the prevailing influence of the church was specifically the national peculiarity of the Russian people. There were two divergent views regarding this peculiarity. The forebears of Slavophilism ascribed to it all the virtues of the Russian life...The other view ascribed to this peculiarity all the shortcomings of Russian life. It found its most vivid expression in the writings of Chaadaev. If Russia lags behind Europe, if its past is sad and its future dark, if it runs the risk of remaining for ages frozen in its Chinese immobility, it is due to corrupted Byzantinism. From this poisoned source Russia adopted the great Christian conception, whose vital force was severed at its root by Byzantine formalism. Actually the influence of the Byzantine church on Russian culture was great, but it was a destructive influence.<sup>112</sup>

It is not the purpose of this paper to evaluate the Byzantine and Neo-Platonic influences upon Russia, whether they were for good or bad, but it does seem that whatever the Russians possess of art, literary style, religious fervor, Christian virtue and refinement must be traced, in part at least, to its inheritance from Greece.

There seems little doubt but that the early Russian clergy were more intrigued by the beauties of the Byzantine liturgical ceremonies and in the mystical aspects of the monastic life than in serious philo-

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<sup>112</sup> Miliukov, Paul, Outlines of Russian Culture, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, Penna., 1948, p. 1 ff.

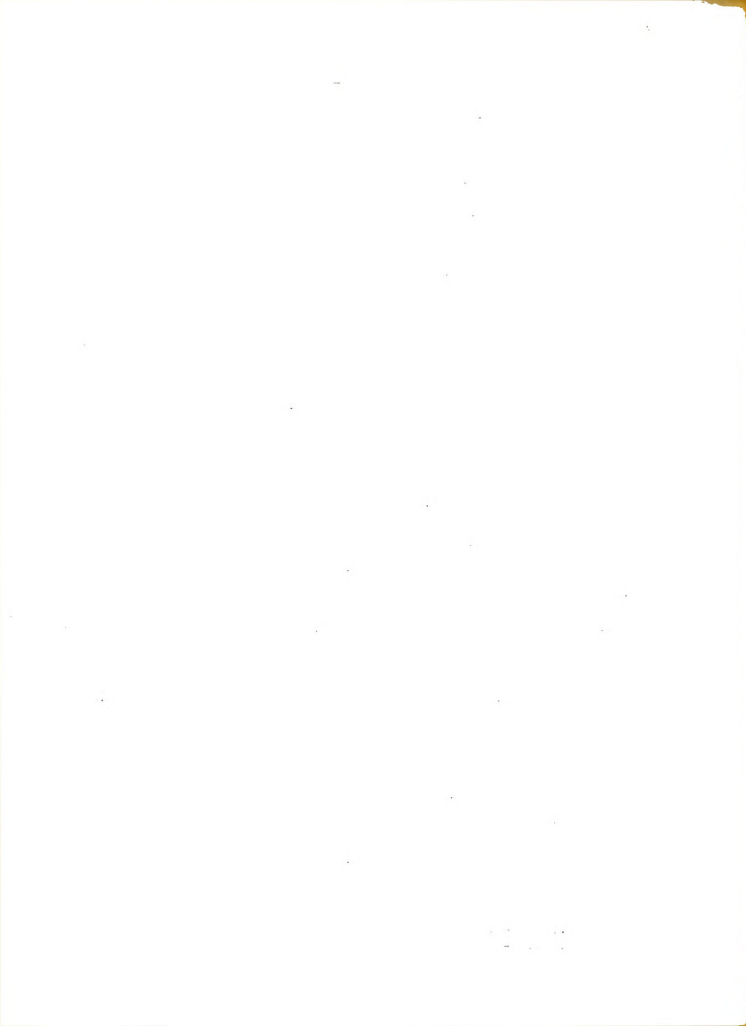


sophizing or study. There is some evidence of how the Russians in the tenth century hastened to "partake of the viands of the Byzantine holy feast." <sup>113</sup> There was quick imitation of the Byzantine monastic system, ascetic practices and even such extreme penances as those performed by Simeon Stylites. The Paterikon, a record of the lives of the early monks of the famous Pechersky Monastery of Kiev, soon became one of the most popular literary works of Russia during the century after Vladimir's conversion to Greek Christianity. This work gives some indication of the slight regard in which even theological learning was held by the monks. Though the Pechersky Monastery was later to become the center of learning as well as of piety in Ukraine, in its earlier days philosophy and theology found little earnest acceptance. The Paterikon, speaking of the literary works of several of the monks, considers it a temptation of the evil one and a pitfall to spiritual pride. To the monk Nikita, the devil is said to have appeared in the form of an angel and to have said to him: "Thou must not pray but read books; through them thou shalt hold communion with the Lord and will be able to give a helpful word to them who come to thee, while I shall pray continually for thy salvation." <sup>114</sup> The monks, seeing the learning of Nikita, suspected that he was under the influence of the devil and they exorcised him, causing him to lose the knowledge he possessed. With such an attitude toward learning, it is not surprising that the early monks of Kiev were not much concerned with the literary treasures of Byzantium. It is little wonder that Miliukov

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 2-5.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., p. 5-6.



writes of the first and second century after Vladimir's conversion that the piety and learning of the Russians was far from what it might have been:

Only a few confused records have reached us, but nevertheless they prove that among the laity it was a rare exception to find a conscious attitude toward the questions of ethics and religion. Men like Vladimir Monomakh, who brought into harmony the claims of worldly morality and Christian ethics, were met with only at the top of Russian society, while the masses, contrary to Khomiakov's opinion, had not even assimilated the ritual, that is, the external manifestation of Christian life. We agree with Prof. E.E. Golubinsky that the mass of the population of ancient Russia of the pre-Mongol period had not the time to assimilate anything - either the external form, or the inner meaning of the Christian faith. <sup>115</sup>

It would be untrue to say, however, that the Kievan period was entirely without its learning. Monks and laymen engaged in the writing of historical records, one of the largest and most valuable of which is the Annals or Chronicles. The work of monks the Annals are contained in two chief compilations, the so-called Primitive Chronicle, covering the period from the earliest times in Russia to 1116, while the so-called Kievan Chronicle covers the period from 1116 to 1200. The Primitive Chronicle in certain late manuscripts is ascribed to Nestor, a monk of the Pechersky Monastery and it shows quite definitely the influence of Byzantine models. Nestor follows the Byzantine tradition of hagiography in his writings of the lives of Princes Boris and Gleb and of St. Theodosius. The part of the Primitive Chronicle treating of the life of Theodosius is particularly valu-

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

able to historians because of their intimate and familiar detail of the everyday life in Kievan Russia. <sup>116</sup>

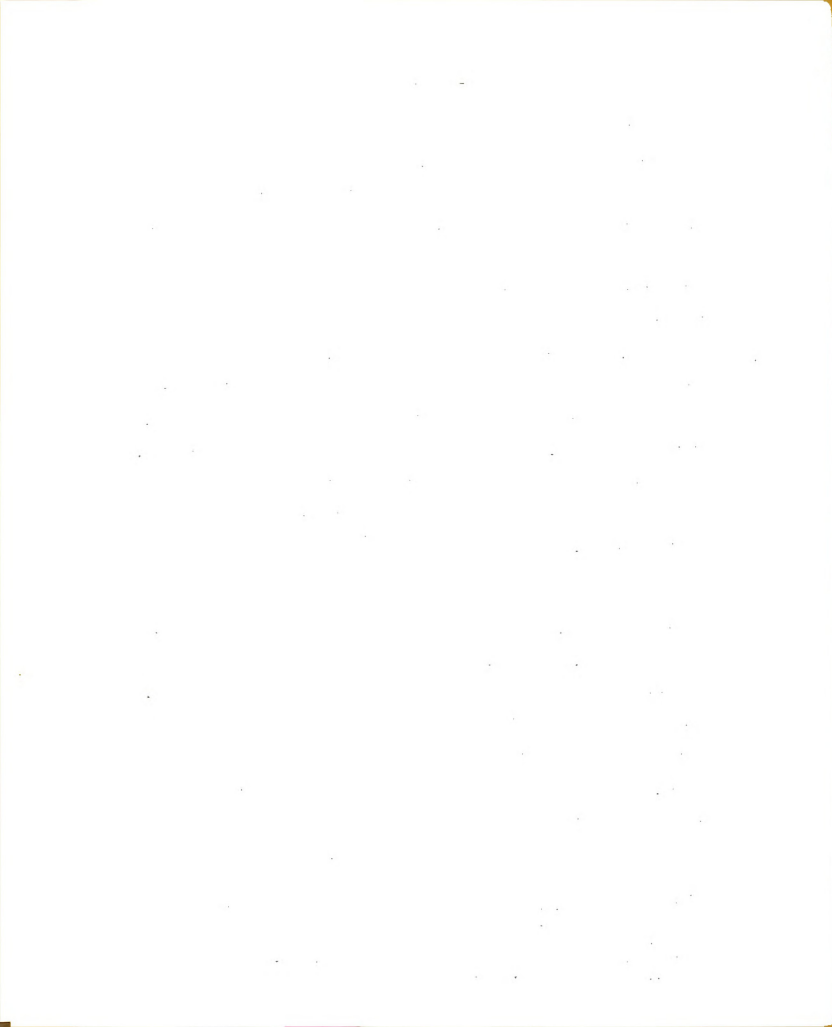
The Byzantine influences are found in Kievan literature chiefly in the works of the higher clergy. One piece of Russian oratory produced about 1045, is considered by many critics to be comparable to the "highest rhetorical achievement of contemporary Greece." <sup>117</sup> This work is known as the Oration of Law and Grace, reputed to have been written by Ilarion, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kiev. It clearly shows Byzantine influences in its ornate and subtle rhetoric and gives evidence of familiarity by the author with the Byzantine methods of trope, simile and allusion. But it must be admitted that such works were rare. The majority of the writings of the Kievan period were of a much simpler style and are little concerned with Byzantine rhetoric or philosophical thought.

The Greek clergy who had come to Russia to guide the development of Orthodoxy there, were considerably in advance of the native clergy. It must be noted, therefore, that the institutions and culture which the Greeks introduced could not fail to exert a considerable influence. The Greek ecclesiastics assumed a very real leadership throughout the nation and must be considered as the most persistent educators of the people. While the Grand Prince remained in political control, his subjects were being prepared by their Greek tutors and the shape of Russia underwent a gradual but permanent change. <sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Mirsky, Prince D.S., A History of Russian Literature, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1927, pp. 10-16.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>118</sup> Masaryk, Thomas Garrigue, The Spirit of Russia, Geo. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., London, 1919, p. 135, vol. I.



One of the factors which spurred on the policy of more widely Christianizing the people of Russia, was the threatening invasion of Byzantium by the Slavs. In Russia, the Byzantine hierarchy, which led the Russian missions, was concerned from the very outset, not with religion alone, but with ecclesiasticism as well. The Byzantine church was a mighty social organization, and consequently acquired in Russia, too, great political and social influence. Sociological explanations of Kievan Russia are apt to pay far too little attention to the direct and indirect influence exercised upon society by the Greek and Russian clergy. This influence is far from inconsiderable if it is remembered that it brought much more of Byzantine culture to Russia than the simple establishment of a hierarchy with its churches and monasteries. In addition, it was not long before the church in Russia, like the Roman church among western nations, came to exercise a conscious and carefully planned political and social influence, for it was introduced into Russia as a state church and operated throughout in this capacity.

#### Byzantine Dominance in Russia

After their conversion to Greek Orthodoxy the Russians were educated by the Greeks and while the process of acculturation was a slow one, it was an increasingly powerful one, nonetheless. Byzantium had been ravaged on several occasions by the pagan Russians, and for this reason the Christianization of these Slavs was politically expedient, all the more because the Arabs and the Turks had begun to encroach upon the Byzantine dominions. The positively draconian subjugation of the Bulgars gave a striking demonstration of Byzantium's attitude toward the Slavs.

The motivation behind the Greek policies were not entirely selfish, however, for there were definitely sincere and zealous missionaries who took seriously the moral responsibility to disseminate the Faith which the Greeks had received from apostolic times. Yet, as Masaryk indicates, Byzantium did hold a policy of imperialism, as is shown by the territories included within the eastern Roman empire - Asia Minor and the region adjacent to the Black Sea, parts of Africa and even large areas within Italy. "Down to the day of Byzantium's collapse, this imperialist policy was never abandoned by Byzantium, and it was a policy in which the patriarchate of Constantinople participated, willingly or unwillingly."<sup>119</sup> It was but natural then, that the Greek mentors should attempt to reproduce in Russia as much of the Byzantine cultural, political and religious patterns as possible.

In Kiev the Byzantine prelates constituted a veritable state within a state. The Archbishop of Kiev was appointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople whereas in Byzantium the bishops were elected by their own colleagues. Kiev was simply an ecclesiastical dependency of Byzantium, and among the Greek bishops the Kievian metropolitan occupied the seventy-first place.<sup>120</sup> Among the twenty-three metropolitans of Kiev in the days before the Tartar invasion, only three were Russians, the remainder consisting of three southern Slavs and seventeen Byzantine. Many of the priests and monks were likewise Greeks. Little wonder then that Byzantine influence gradually permeated Russian culture and that Neo-Platonic doctrines and mysticism based upon the writings of the Eastern Church

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<sup>119</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-40.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.





Fathers who were Neo-Platonists, eventually assumed importance in the thought of the Russians.

There were other Byzantine influences too which subtly and indirectly brought into Russia elements of Neo-Platonism along with the general culture of the Greeks. Masaryk comments on this influence as follows:

We must not underestimate the influence of the chroniclers and of all those who were able to write, most of whom, having had a Greek education, diffused and confirmed the ideas and ideals of Byzantium. <sup>121</sup>

It would seem that it was not long before the church and its organizations became a model which princely administration strove to imitate. Anyone studying early Russian literature is forced to recognize the multiplicity of church doctrines and canons which form part of the civil code and public practice in Russia. The Greeks brought to Russia the idea and the practice of law and the legal code; they introduced a regular system of legal procedure; and above all, ecclesiastical centralization set an example to princely policy.

Such social and political organization, however, did little to influence the Russians either in assimilating the philosophy and theology of the Greeks or in originating one of their own. It was the importation of religious works from Byzantium which carried Neo-Platonism into Russia along with such works as the lives of the saints and scriptural commentaries.

For example, from Athanasius of Alexandria the only dogmatic work available was his Contra Arianos, a rather casual choice by a Bulgarian

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 36.



translator.<sup>122</sup> It gained very little popularity in Russia, however, because Arianism was unknown in that territory and the Kievian clergy evidenced little interest in this foreign heresy. Other writings from Byzantium, saturated with the Platonic and Neo-Platonic elements, gradually received increasing study and acceptance among the Russians during this period. Sermons of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Basil the Great were known and imitated. Fedotov attests to this Kievian familiarity with works with Platonic foundations:

A selection of sermons from Gregory of Nazianzus represented for the Russians the summit of Greek theological thought. The sermons were saturated with high dogmatic ideas construed upon Platonic metaphysical background...In Russia they were studied and admired by the most learned men, and difficulties occurring in them proved provocative of disputes among the readers. One of the Byzantine exegetes, Nicetas, was translated as well.<sup>123</sup>

In addition to the purely dogmatic and homiletic writings accepted from Byzantium and which were instrumental in inculcating Russian religious thought with Platonic elements, there were other religious works which were to prove influential and to give additional strength to Neo-Platonic mysticism as practiced by the Russian monks. Part of the patristic writings which were early familiar to the Russians were the ascetic treatises on the contemplative life. Monasticism, as a sociological phenomenon, cannot be understood in Russia unless one examines its very roots which were imbedded deep in the mystical thought of Byzantium. The desire for mystical union with God, found many men and women in Kievian

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<sup>122</sup> Fedotov, George, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

Russia ready and anxious to abandon all the usual pursuits of life and to dedicate themselves to a career of self-abnegation and contemplation. To rise above the things of the world, to conquer the urgings and demands of the flesh, to aspire to the ecstasy of mystical union with the divine, such aspirations led countless men and women to fill the spacious monasteries of Russia and when these became crowded, pioneers were always prepared to move into virgin territory, to the north and north-east. Undoubtedly, some of this pioneering and the resulting monastic establishments which sprung up in the far-off reaches of the forests, even in Siberian wilds, was motivated by the urge for adventure or prompted by simple ennui. But to suppose that these were the only reasons for the monastic pioneering, would be to fail to understand the strength of the spiritual aims of the monks whose longing for the "real" life of the spirit, as over against the worldly life in the larger and more populous areas, seems to have been the strongest motivation for their mobility. The constant civil warring between the princes, the eventual invasion by Pechenegs, Khazars and Polovtsy left little peace for the monks to engage in contemplation. Peace could only be found in those northern regions where but few pioneers had penetrated. Thus, the Neo-Platonic and Christian concepts of asceticism and abandonment of concern for the material things of life, led many to join the trek to the north. As one consequence of this religiously-motivated migration, new villages and cities developed around the monastic establishments.

In the sixteenth century, during the period of the ascendancy of Moscow in political importance, large numbers of monks wandered

throughout Russia, seeking escape from the "world." Bernard Pares, an authority on Russian history, commenting upon the spread of monasticism during this period writes:

Very large areas had by this period come into the possession of the Church. The earlier monasteries of the Kiev period had been established mostly near towns and usually owed their foundation to the generosity of princes and boyars, though sometimes to that of a group of peasants. In the appanage period every small princely capital required a monastery at its gates. But as time went on, monasteries sprang up on a different basis, and more and more frequently in remote parts of the country. Typical of the origin, in the first part of the 14th century, of the famous monastery of the Trinity. St. Sergius, when the Volga was raided by Tartars, took refuge in the forest where he soon found himself surrounded by a growing peasant community. Ascetics in some cases roamed for twenty or even fifty years about Russia before founding a monastery; St. Paul Obnorsky lived for three years in the trunk of a lime tree. Young disciples of large communities went afield to found others. In this way arose a whole chain of monasteries, a whole network of pioneer colonisation; by one line it advanced as far as the White Sea to Solovetsk (1429); St. Stephen of Perm led another advance to the Ural mountains. These inroads upon the wilderness were looked upon as a holy work. <sup>124</sup>

In monasticism the Neo-Platonic ideal of the superordination of the mystical and the spiritual over the material and worldly, finds social expression. In a sociological sense then, it was the monasteries and the monks and nuns in Russia who often acted as agents in the dissemination of this Platonic ideal throughout Russia and spurred on ascetic movements among the laity. The Russian monasteries became centers of mysticism where contemplation was the ideal. One might call the Russian Orthodox Church a "mysteric" Church in several senses.

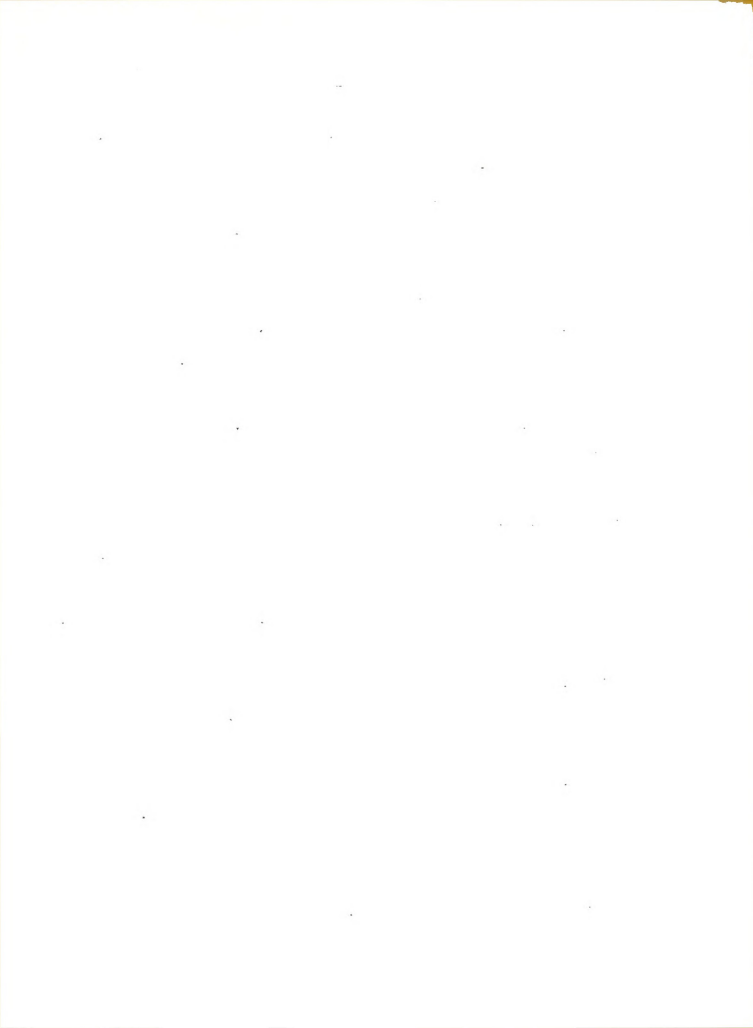
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<sup>124</sup> Pares, Bernard, A History of Russia, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1951, p. 118.

First, the Orthodox Church adopts, in regard to the sacraments, a realist attitude. She believes that the sacraments are not mere symbols of divine things, but that the gift of a spiritual reality is attached to the sign perceptible by the senses. She believes that, in these mysteries, the same graces are present today which were formerly imparted in the Upper Room, or at the waters where the disciples of Christ baptized, or in the descent of the Holy Spirit. In each of those divine gifts there is a mystical as well as an ascetical aspect. The mystical aspect consists in the fact that sacramental grace is not the outcome of human efforts, but is objectively bestowed by God. The ascetical aspect consists in the fact that the holy mysteries bring forth their fruit in the soul of the adult recipient only if that soul is assenting to, or prepared for, it.

The Russian Orthodox Church is also "mysteric" in another way. She is somewhat reticent concerning her intimate treasures. She keeps in the word "mysterion" its meaning of "secret." She fears familiarity. Orthodoxy veils and covers what the Roman Catholic Church lays open and exhibits. Orthodoxy lacks the minute and legalistic definition of the manner in which the sacraments convey their fruits. This indefiniteness might be explained by saying that Orthodoxy wants a mystery to remain a "mystery," and not to become a theorem or a juridical institution, or a fact to be empirically or rationally investigated and defined.

A further evidence of the attitude of Orthodoxy of avoiding too materialistic an interpretation or use of its spiritualities is its practice of the veneration of ikons. It must first be noted that the



Eastern ikon is not, like the Latin image (either painted or sculptured), a resemblance.

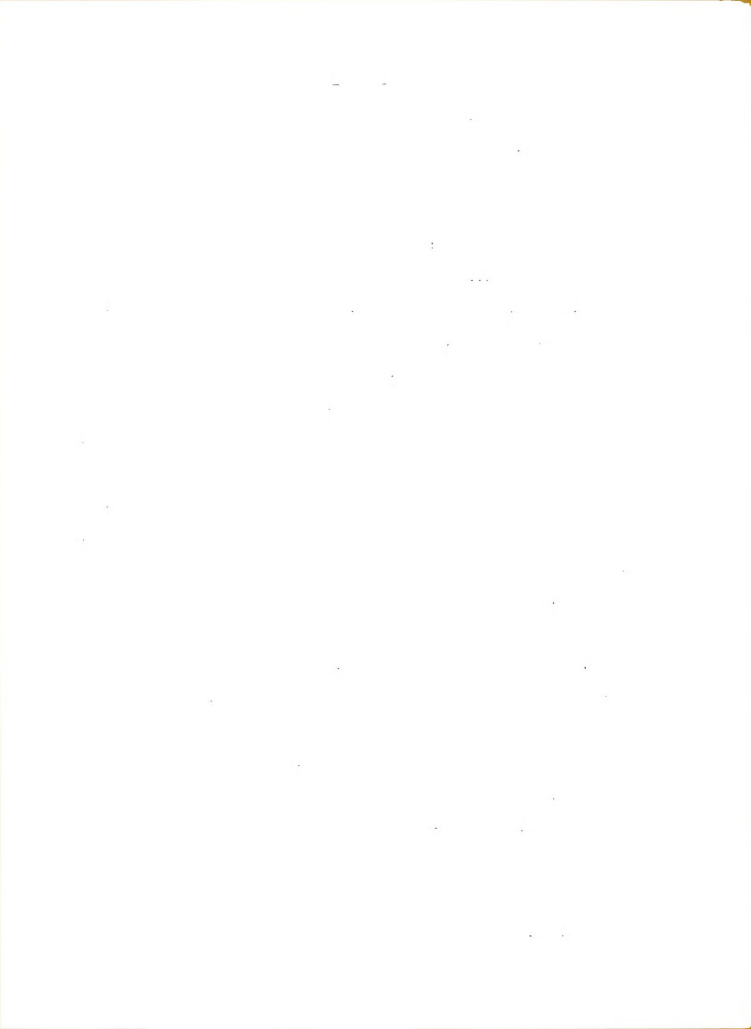
### Russian Ikonography

The entire Orthodox Eastern Church claims that it keeps the precept of the Decalogue: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or likeness..."<sup>125</sup> The ikon is a kind of hieroglyph, a stylized symbol, a sign, an abstract scheme. The more an ikon tends to reproduce human features, the more it swerves from the ikonographical canons admitted by the Church. Far from being the manifestation of a religious sensualism or materialism, the Orthodox conception of the ikon expresses an almost puritanical hostility against the "sensuous." Some recent Orthodox Russian writers (Bulgakov and Ostrogorsky) see another difference between the ikon and the Latin image or statue. While the likeness is for the West a means of evocation and teaching, the Eastern ikon is a means of communion, a mystical unity with the spiritual. The ikon is filled with the grace of an objective presence; it is regarded as a meeting place between the believer and the Heavenly world. This concept is taught by St. Theodore the Studite, and also in certain Greek texts which found popularity in Russia. The ikon in the home of the Russian peasant became for him a link between the physical world and the "other" world of the spirit. The Russian clergy, especially the monks, propagated this veneration for ikons in all the areas settled by the Church. The ikon-corner was a constant reminder of the dichotomy between the worldly and material and the "other" realm of non-sensuous

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<sup>125</sup> Exod. 20.4)





and spiritual reality. But while there existed a dichotomy, there were "links" or "bridges" provided by religion so that even the most illiterate peasant felt it possible to live in both realms, even though his spiritual life did not press upon him as constantly as did the material and sensuous.

### Mysticism in the Eastern Liturgy

Like the ubiquitous ikon, which was universally accepted throughout Russia, and whose influence was not restricted only to the elite or the educated, the Greek liturgy constituted a powerful, universal and stable factor of religious education. Fedotov says of it:

It was universal and permanent. Nothing forms and transforms personality like prayer. Through liturgical prayer in the Slavonic idiom, the Greek religious mind and feeling made a tremendous impact on the Russian soul. And today it maintains its effectiveness in the same way as it did in the time of Vladimir. The Eastern liturgy is one of the most beautiful and original creations of Byzantine culture. So it became the main vehicle of Byzantinism in Russia...Many of the court ceremonies and adoration formulas, the silk and gold vestments, were adopted by the Church (from the imperial palace). Even now, after more than a thousand years and on foreign Slavic soil, the Constantinopolitan palace lives in every Orthodox Church, particularly in the Cathedral. The beginning of the episcopal Mass, for instance, closely follows the ceremony of the Emperor's dressing. <sup>126</sup>

Further accentuating the mystic attitude in Russian Orthodoxy, and continuing the Neo-Platonic concept of the "two worlds," is the ecclesiastical architecture of the Russian church buildings. For example, the dome of the Byzantine church is a symbol in stone or metal of heaven descending upon earth, of the spiritual realm coming

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<sup>126</sup> Fedotov, George, op. cit., p. 51 f.

to meet the material. The church architecture which the Russians inherited from Byzantium is a constant reminder of the Neo-Platonic Christian emphasis on two realms. The ikonastasis is more than a wooden or marble screen to hold ikons - it stands as a symbolic reminder to the worshipper that here earth ends and heaven begins. Just as the ikonastasis separated the sanctuary from the body of the church building, so in Russian symbolism the screen symbolizes the separation between heaven and earth, between the realms of matter and the spirit. Every Orthodox Church has a central opening in the ikon screen, the "Royal Doors",<sup>127</sup> which also become symbolic of the very gates of Heaven.

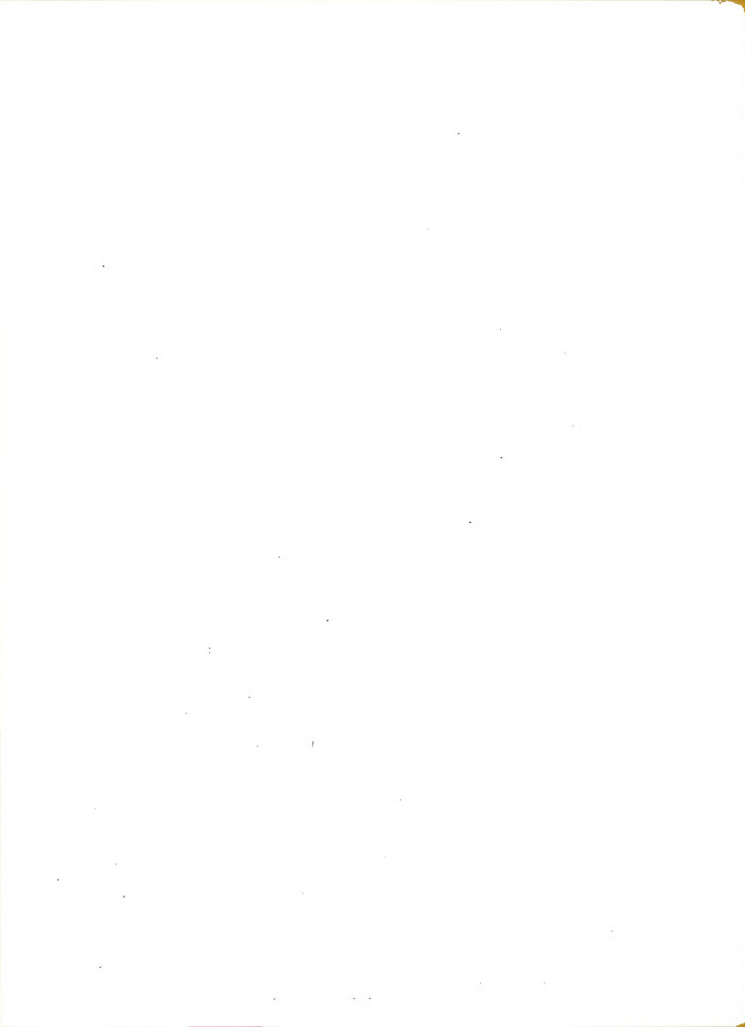
Further Byzantine influences are found in the external appearances of Russian churches. On the roof there are usually one or several cupolas (towers with rounded or pointed roofs), signifying that the Orthodox Christian should detach himself from earthy things and aspire to those things which are "real" and spiritual. For example, one Orthodox writer explains the symbolism of the cupolas in this manner:

One crest or cupola signifies that the community of christians has only one head - Christ; three cupolas are erected in honor of the Most Holy Trinity; five points to Christ and the four Evangelists, who left for us descriptions of Christ's life; while seven indicate the Seven Sacraments (through which we receive the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost), and the seven Oecumenic Councils, by the ordinances of which Christians are guided to this day; nine crests remind us of the nine classes of angels who dwell in Heaven, whom Christians wish to join in the Kingdom of Heaven, while thirteen crests signify Christ and His twelve Apostles. Every cupola, or where there is none, the roof, is surmounted with a cross, the instrument of our salvation.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> These seem to be developed from the veil which separated the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple from the part used by the laity.

<sup>128</sup> Bashir, Antony, Studies in the Greek Orthodox Church, Syrian Orthodox Archdiocese, Brooklyn, N.Y., 1945, p. 41 F.



Thus, almost every ritual, vestment and even the church architecture symbolize for the Russian Orthodox believer the Platonic concept of the two worlds, and the superiority of the spiritual world over the material.

Russian Byzantinists: Clement of Smolensk,  
Cyril of Turov and Hilarion of Kiev

One further indication of Byzantine influence, and through it of the Platonic concepts which found their way into Russian thought, is to be seen in the writings of three Russian Byzantinists: Clement Smoliatich, Hilarion of Kiev and Cyril of Turov. Because of the key offices these men held, and because the chroniclers consider them to have been the most learned men of their time, their influences are important in this study. All three were Orthodox bishops, while two of them filled the very important post of metropolitan-archbishop of Kiev. They were in a position to exercise a lasting influence upon the theology and social institutions which Kievan Russia was to bequeath to the later epochs of Russian history.

Born in 1104 at Smolensk, Clement was elevated in 1147 as metropolitan of Kiev. Unfortunately, only one fragment of Clement's writings remain, but it is sufficient to show that Clement deserves the highest place among Russian-Byzantine scholars. Clement has been reproved by his critics of having interpreted the Christian Scriptures from the points of view of Plato, Homer and other Greek philosophers, but such criticism is not valid. Fedotov contends that Clement had no familiarity with the Greek philosophers, but only that through patristic writings



did he gain familiarity with some of their ideas as these were interpreted by the Fathers. There is no doubt, however, but that Clement did have a very wide familiarity with these early Greek Church Fathers' works. His commentaries upon obscure passages in the Sermons of Gregory Nazianzen and Basil the Great prove that he had a deep and penetrating understanding of their works, and what is more important, of the philosophical concepts which permeate their writings. He may not have been able to identify such concepts as having originated with the writings of Plato or the Neo-Platonists, nonetheless he knew the concepts and made them his own, having received them through the medium of the Fathers. Clement made no claim to originality of thought, but freely admitted his dependence upon the patristic authors.<sup>129</sup>

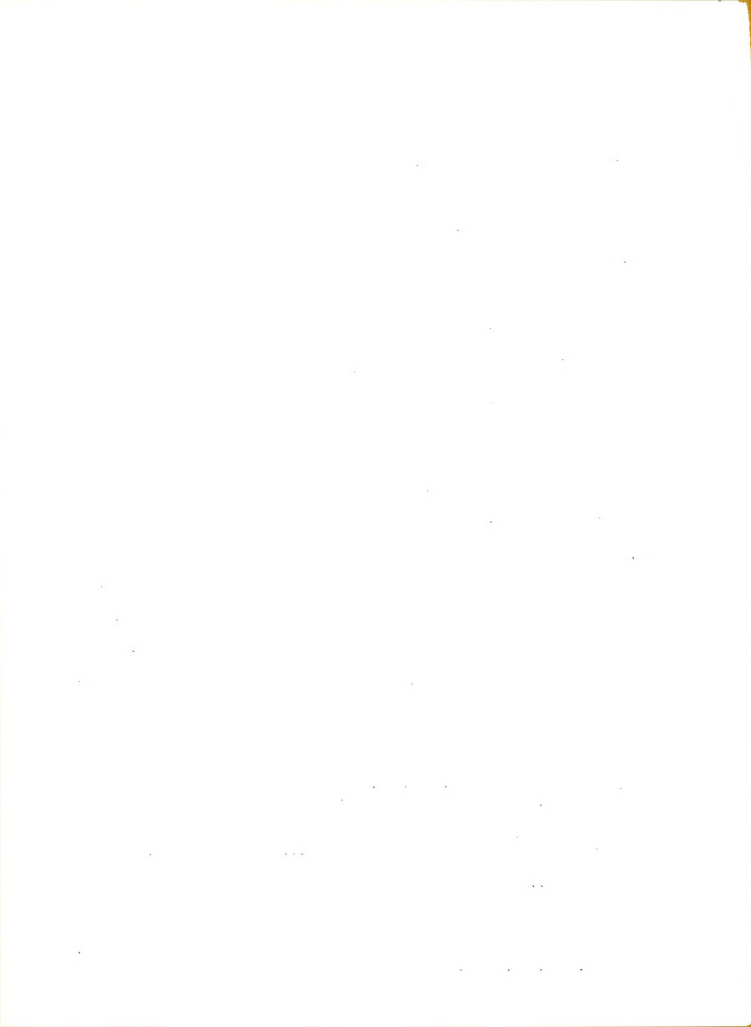
The paucity of materials from Clement of Smolensk makes it extremely difficult to draw any further conclusions from his works. Commentators, however, recognize his importance as a Byzantinist, despite the problems involved in attempting to know him better.<sup>130</sup>

More is known, however, about the second of the Russian Byzantinists of the Kievian period, Cyril of Turov. Born in the middle of the

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<sup>129</sup> Fedotov, George, op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>130</sup> Fedotov, for example says of him: "The short extent of Clement's work does not allow us to draw any conclusions as to his religious tendencies. We have a better idea of his theological method than of his underlying religious interests...We can take them, at best, as the expressions of Byzantine ecclesiastical fashions of intercourse...the reflection of a patristic humanism of the best epoch, represented by Gregory of Nazianzus. At the present state of our knowledge we are bound to give up the insoluble task of reconstructing the spirituality of Clement Smoliatich and instead look upon him merely as a formal pupil and imitator of Byzantine literary style. op. cit., p. 68 F.

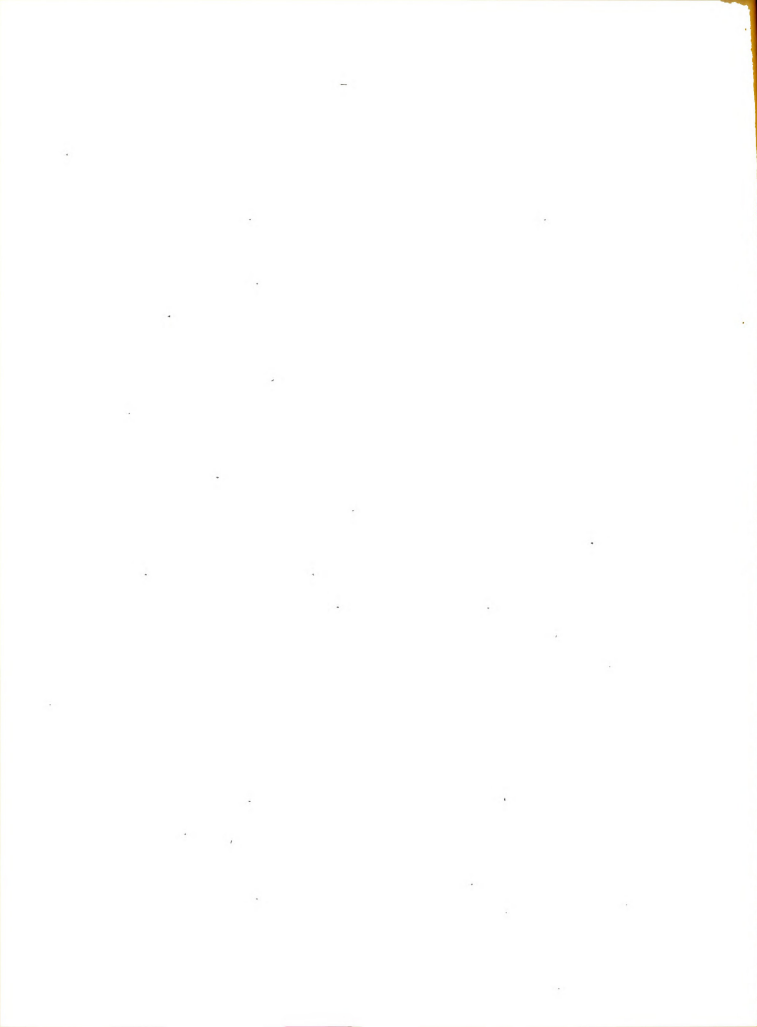




twelfth century, and son of a wealthy and princely family, he entered the monastery and eventually became bishop of Turov, not far from Kiev. He engaged in ecclesiastical politics and wrote some epistles concerning polity, but these have apparently been lost. An unworldly man, he wrote sermons, letters and prayers from which it is possible to learn something of the philosophy that motivated him. Many of his panegyrics have been placed in the Panegyricon of the Russian Church. His epistles are didactic and impersonal and treat of the life of the monk, exegesis of the Scriptures and the patristic writings. Widely used in ancient Russia were prayers which he composed, largely for private use, but which eventually found their way into prayerbooks which bore the imprimatur of the Russian Orthodox Church authorities.

It is in his sermons, however, that Cyril reveals his Byzantinism best. He was one of the most gifted orators of the Russian Church, following the style and thought of men like St. John Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Gregory Nazianzen. His admiration for these earlier Fathers did not cause him to engage in a slavish imitation of their works, however, but he seems rather to have imbibed deeply of the Byzantine spirit and to have filled his sermons with a truly Eastern mysticism. Concerning his dependence upon Greek sources, Fedotov writes:

Did (Cyril) read Greek fathers in the original? It is generally so accepted, although he could have known them through Slavonic translations as well. His theological wisdom, while of a good alloy, never exceeds the limits of the available Slavonic library of his time. As proof of his direct use of Greek sources some have referred to the close affinity of his Gospel exegesis to that of Theophylactes, Greek bishop of Bulgaria, his contemporary, who had not at that time been translated. Yet, as Theophylactes is only a compiler of ancient exegetes, mostly Chrysostom,



there is not necessarily a direct influence of the Greek author upon the Russian. <sup>131</sup>

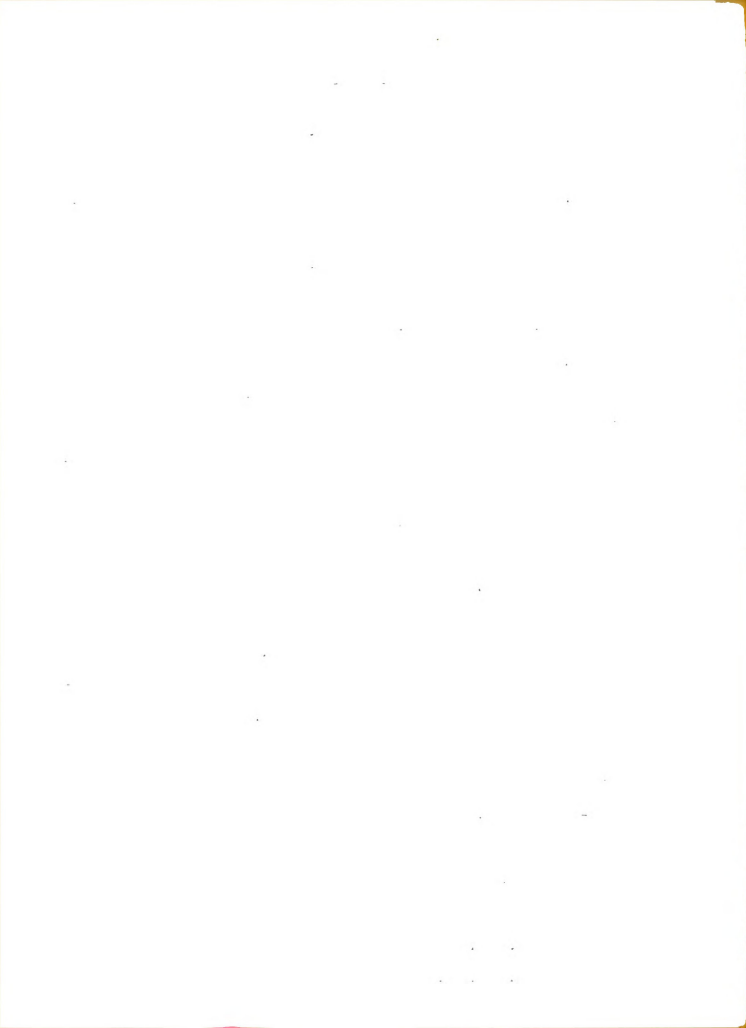
Cyril might be criticized for a lack of concern for practical matters. He does not offer his audience any moral or social teaching. In exceptional cases when Cyril concludes with a practical suggestion he usually gives it an ascetic emphasis. In a sociological sense, however, there is apparently one important effect of the work of men like Cyril - out of the anti-humanistic Byzantine theology they represent, immediately follows the strictly hierarchical conception of society, a conception that is so truly Platonic. The ecclesiastical hierarchy corresponds to the celestial one, according to Pseudo- Dionysius, <sup>132</sup> the ecclesiastical itself supported by the civil and political. That which is really striking in Cyril and typical, not of the doctrine but of the life in Byzantium, is the substitution of the ecclesiastical hierarchy for the celestial, and the claims of the civil to a place in the Kingdom of God.

This same concept is later to find practical expression in 1472 when Ivan III married Zoe (Sophia) Paleologus, niece of the last of the Byzantine emperors, Constantine Paleologus, who died in 1453 fighting against the Turks to defend Constantinople. When Zoe came to the court in Moscow, she brought with her much of old Byzantium, its court ceremonial, its political astuteness and some of the prestige of the Greek-Roman empire. Ivan III took up the role of successor to the Greek emperors and regarded himself as the champion of the entire Eastern Orthodox Church. Moscow claimed to be a third and last Rome, succeeding

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<sup>131</sup>Fedotov, op. cit., p. 70 f.

<sup>132</sup>Dionysius the Areopagite, "Ecclesiastical Hierarchy", Patrologiae Graecae, op. cit., V.4.



Constantinople, the second Rome and also the ancient first Rome, the home of the Caesars. Under this concept, there was a definite place in the earthly Kingdom of God for the civil ruler.<sup>133</sup> The state was now to support the Church and the Church and ecclesiastical hierarchy to support the Russian state. A Russian historian, commenting upon this event and its importance in Russian history, writes:

The Grand Princes of Moscow at last became sole rulers of a vast country, and the problem arose of defining their place in the life of the nation. The answer to it was found in the belief that Moscow was the successor to Constantinople, and that the Tsars were the legitimate heirs of the Byzantine Emperors. The expansion of every nation, the growth of every empire is usually the outward sign of an inward conviction of the people that they have a special mission to perform. The striking transformation of the small Moscow principality into one of the largest states in the world was the result of the deep-rooted belief of her people that they were called to defend Eastern Orthodoxy, left without protection since the fall of Constantinople in 1453...The Russians, together with the rest of Eastern Christians, believed that the Church and the Empire were both instituted by God and were indispensable for the maintenance of true religion.<sup>134</sup>

Cyril of Turov helped to lay the foundation for this idea of Russia as the protector of Orthodoxy, and it was but a short step to accepting, as the Slavophiles were later to do, the concept of the Messianic mission of Holy Russia to the whole world, Eastern and Western. In Neo-Platonic terms, the "real" authority in Russia had to be one with divine sanction, since the spiritual realm is above the earthly, and the Tsar, by assuming the role of protector of Orthodoxy, arrogated to himself a divinely-given authority. In its most extreme

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<sup>133</sup>Pares, Bernard, op. cit., p. 87 ff.

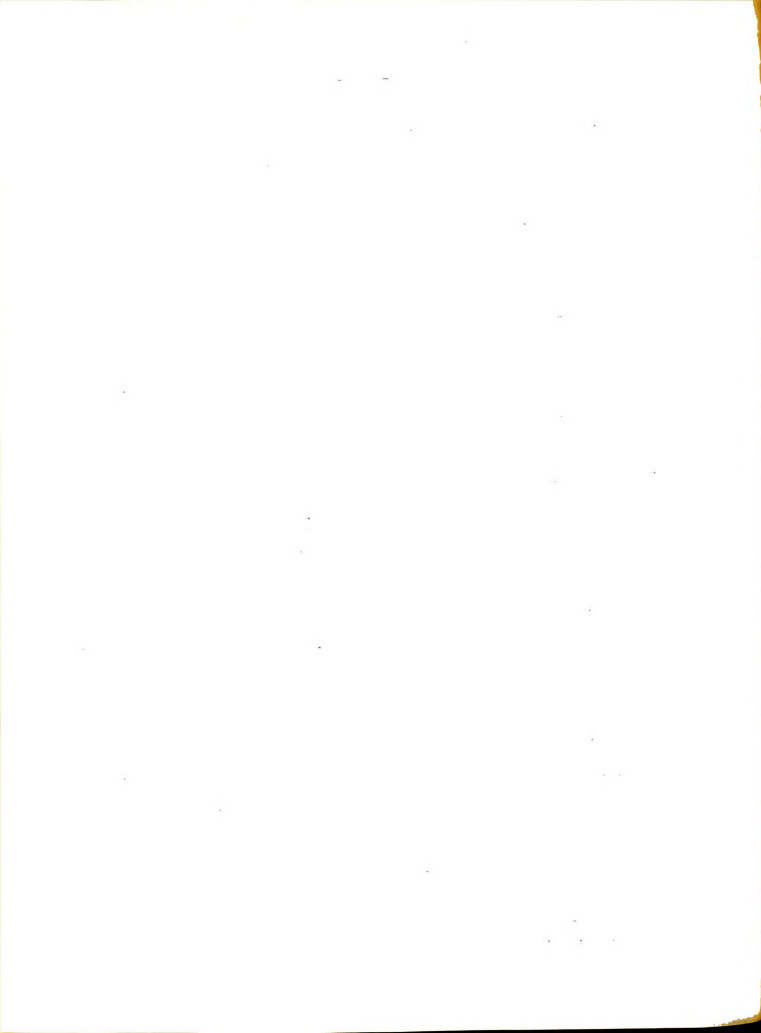
<sup>134</sup>Zernov, Nicolas, op. cit., p. 49 f.

form, under Peter the Great, the Russian Orthodox Church was to be reduced to a position of subordination to the secular ruler, a concept which he apparently learned during some of his visits to Protestant countries.<sup>135</sup> Despite the captivity of the Church by secular authority during the late years in Russian history, theologians never lost the ideal of the supremacy of the Church over the state, just as Pseudo-Dionysius held that the spiritual must ever take precedence over the material and the secular, and as Plato in his Republic had held that the intellectual must take precedence over the sensual. Kirievsy, the first great light of Slavophilism, was later to express the ideal of the temporal serving the eternal, and the state serving the Church, and the entire Slavophile movement stressed this ordering of society with the Church above all else.

The third of the Russian Byzantinists, Hilarion of Kiev, is generally considered the best of the theologians and preachers of ancient Russia. He is important also because he was the first native Russian to become archbishop of Kiev, about 1051. Most of the preceding metropolitan-archbishops at Kiev had been Greeks. Nothing more is known about Hilarion for the chroniclers are strangely silent about his biography. His two most important works, On Law and Grace, and Confession of Faith, from a literary point of view show Byzantine influences. They are also filled with references to patristic writings. The Confession should be included in that category of Byzantine writings which have the Nicene Creed as a prototype. It contains no original speculation but

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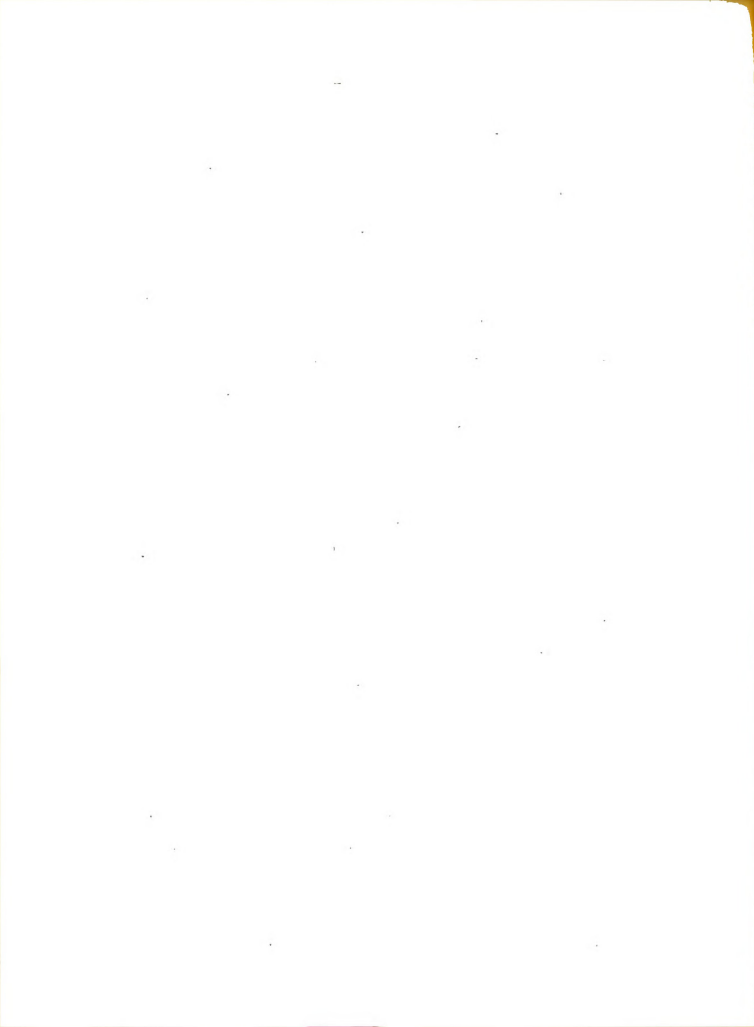
<sup>135</sup> Ibid., p. 121.



attempts what St. John Damascene had done in condensing and systematizing the patristic writings into shorter formulae. Actually, Hilarion's Confession seems to be not a translation but a free adaptation of some Greek original. Yet, in its dogmatic terminology, in its precision, sense of proportion and thoroughness, it shows its author to have been a man with thorough theological training. The source of Hilarion's theology is definitely the patristic writers who transmitted the Neo-Platonic influences. He emphasizes otherworldliness and universalism rather than freedom from law. Speaking of salvation through Christ, Hilarion in his sermon on Law and Grace, dwells upon the duality of the divine-human nature in Christ. Such a formula is the bequest of the Christological discussions of the ancient Eastern Church surviving in Byzantium.

The Platonic aspects in Hilarion's writings are apparent. He stresses "otherworldliness" in the light of spiritualistic immortality, but greater stress is given to resurrection and the "real" life after death. The present life is not the "real," it is only the preparation for the eschatological end. This is a favorite theme of the Platonists and it finds its sociological ramifications in the stress placed upon the Resurrection of Christ among the Orthodox in contradistinction to the somewhat anthropocentric emphasis by the Latins upon the sufferings, the death, and the human life of Christ. These events the Orthodox almost minimize, not in a docetic way, but in considering them not as important as the final triumph of the Resurrection. Human suffering is less "real" than the eschatological end, eternal life, the Russian Orthodox Christian believes. Earthly conditions pass,



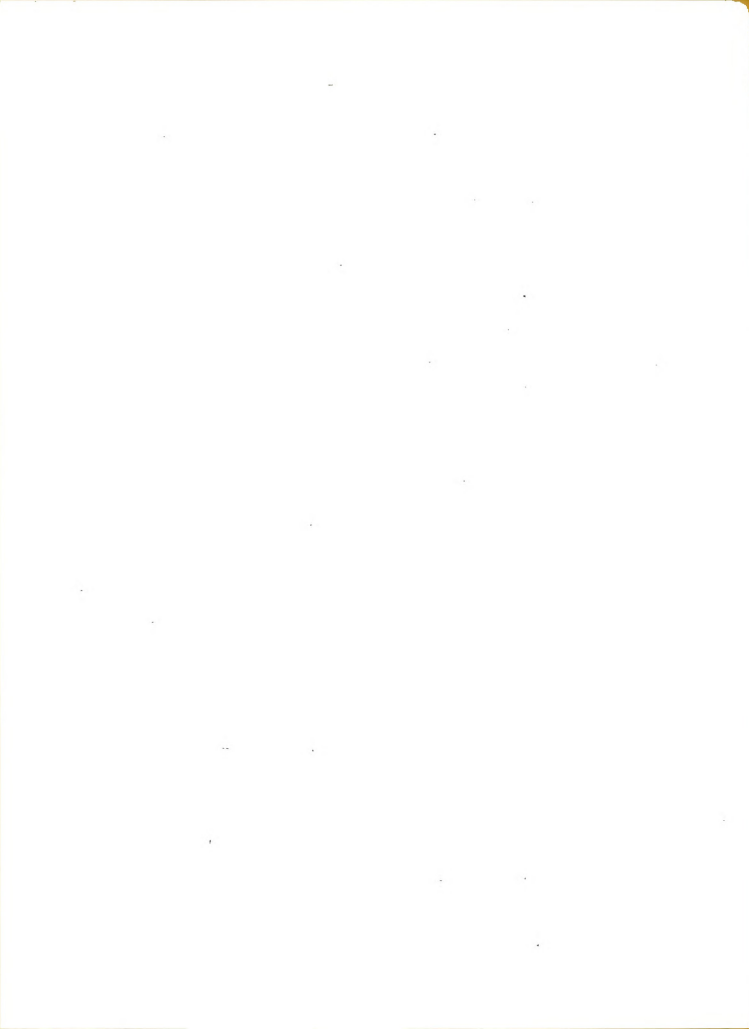


they do not long endure. Eternity alone endure endlessly. This concept forms the basis for a peculiarly Russian religious concept, that of kenoticism, voluntarily suffering sickness, adversity and even death for love of Christ, a concept already investigated briefly in an earlier section of this paper. As has already been seen in the lives of Sts. Boris and Gleb, kenoticism means suffering without offering resistance, giving oneself with perfect resignation to whatever suffering life may bring.

In Russian Orthodox theology, suffering is simply a means to eternal life, it is to be borne patiently and even with some rejoicing, but it is not a punishment from God or a scourge to recall men to spiritual paths in their lifetime. The synoptic Gospels have deeply entered the Orthodox popular conscience. The simple and unconditional precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and the call of Christ to all those who suffer and are heavily burdened, have found a special echo. These Gospel passages lie at the root of Russian kenoticism. One should understand under this term not a particular theological concept of the kenosis, (in the technical meaning of the word,) but a singularly vivid awareness of all that the "humiliation of Christ" and His "taking the form of a servant" <sup>136</sup> imply. The self-lowering of Christ, meditated upon by simple and ardent souls, gave birth to a special kind of asceticism in Russia, not unknown in the West but more proper to the East: the ascetic way of the "fool for Christ's sake" (in Slavonic it is called "yurodiv"). Non-resistance to violence, exemplified by

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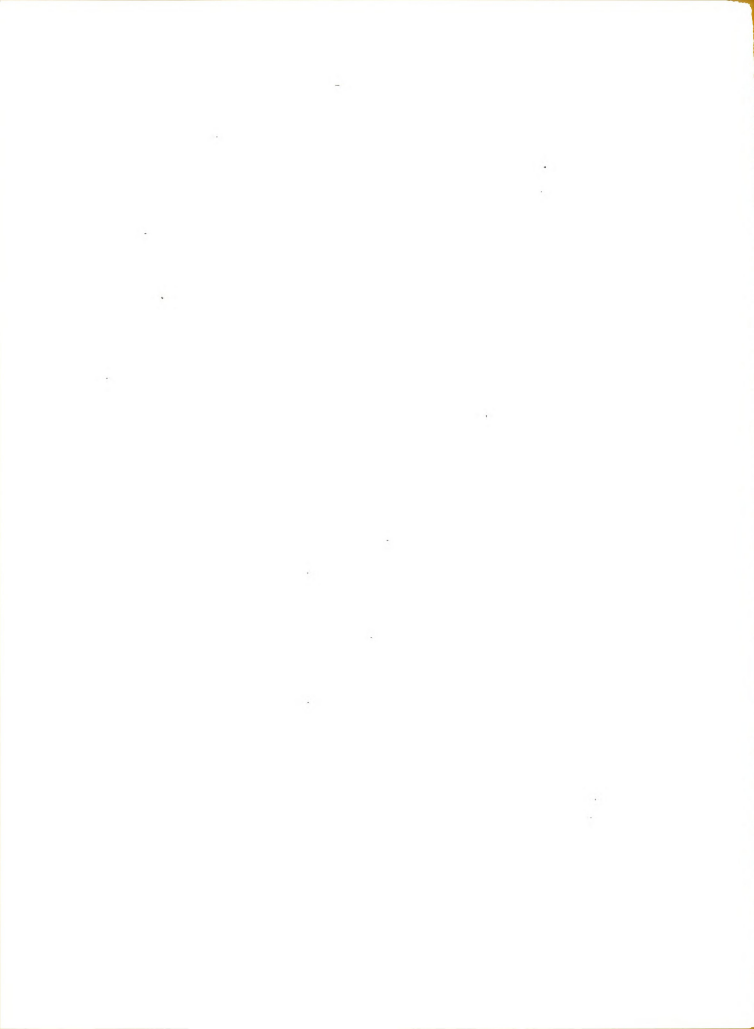
<sup>136</sup> Phil. 2.7.



Boris and Gleb before being systematized by Tolstoi, belongs to this trend. A kind of connaturality between the Russian soul and suffering has been produced, in the name of Christ, a passionate pity and generosity towards all the suffering and humiliated. This breaking of a compassionate heart comes over and over again in almost all Russian literature, especially in Dostoyevsky's novels.

### Russian Platonism

From the middle of the twelfth century, Russia knew no peace. Her princes became engaged in a never-ending struggle in which the notion of proper succession became utterly confused, and the stronger and more audacious members of Rurik's family began to seize by force the more prosperous towns and held them until they were ejected by rivals who led stronger armies. Kiev, the ancient capital, was the center of a particularly bitter struggle. In these years of anarchy and political decline, the only force that cared equally for all Russians was the Orthodox Church. There was a striking contrast between the breakdown of the political system and the steady growth of the Orthodox religion among the Russians. The entire culture of Russia, especially during the Kievan period (from the ninth to the thirteenth century) was inspired and guided by the Orthodox Church. Before Kiev fell, it had fulfilled its function of indoctrinating all the rest of Russia, even though this indoctrination may have been superficial in some respects, with the religion and much of the culture Russia inherited from Byzantium. This mixture of Byzantine and ancient Russian culture now produced a new synthesis - with elements of both cultures finding

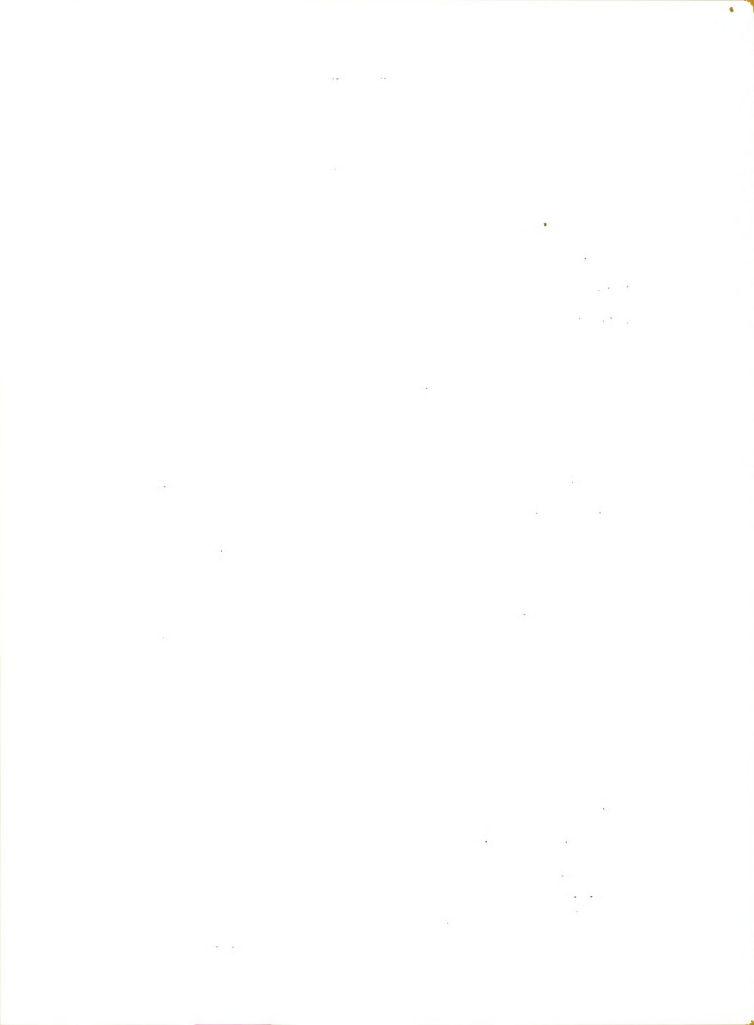


a place among the Russians.

During the Kievian period is to be found the important link in the chain which unites Byzantium to Russia, and which brought the Platonic ideas into the stream of Russian theology and philosophy, and as a consequence eventuated in certain social attitudes which have their basis in Platonism. This Platonic thought was never wholly to be lost, though at times, under Westernizing influences such as during the time of Peter the Great, it may have been temporarily obscured. Those elements of thought which Russia inherited from Byzantium and which Byzantium had in turn earlier inherited from its patristic writers who has assimilated Platonism and Neo-Platonism might be summarized in the following way. In his search for reality, Plato and the Neo-Platonists who followed him, held that it was the Universal which was unchanging. Orthodoxy similarly holds that the Highest Universal, God, is unchanging and the only Real. By a further extension of this principle, Orthodoxy itself is unchanging in its essentials, because, rejecting relativism, Orthodoxy contends that the "faith once and for all delivered to the saints" is divinely revealed truth, independent of cultural changes, geographical conditions or any other purely worldly or environmental factor. Being theocentric in its emphasis, rather than anthropocentric, Eastern Orthodox Catholicism emphasizes the concept of God as the Absolute, the Real.<sup>137</sup> The patristic writers regard Christ as God and

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<sup>137</sup> N.O. Lossky makes the following observation on the Platonic and Neo-Platonic influences in Russia: "With the help of the writings of some of the Russian clergy who attempted to continue the theological and philosophical work of Byzantium, e.g. the Metropolitan



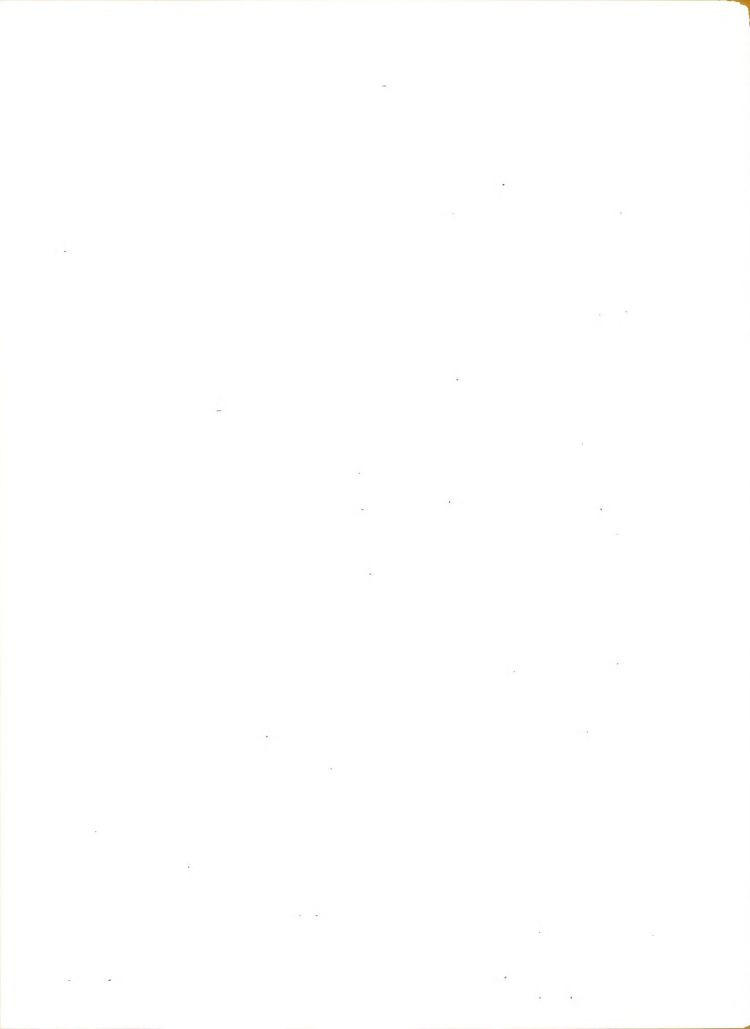
therefore hold that the religion He established had certain aspects that cannot change, since they have the divine and the Real as their base and origin. The Church is not simply a human organization, a reflection of a universal Idea, it is considered to be the Mystical Body of Christ, an extension in time and space of the divine operation. To fail to understand this concept, is to fail to understand the basis of the Slavophil concept of the Orthodox Church and the reason for the Slavophile belief that Orthodoxy alone has, and always will, remain essentially unchanged.

It should be remembered that Platonism and Neo-Platonism held that the Real is beyond empirical investigation and cannot truly be known through the senses. Human reason can never actually comprehend God. He is beyond man's scrutiny. For this reason, Orthodoxy has always failed to understand Latin Christianity's emphasis on reason as a key to the knowledge of God. [Mystical intuition may give man some knowledge of God, but this is a sudden "flash of divine light" which penetrates man's soul; it is never something man achieves by his own powers.] Like most other oriental religions, Eastern Orthodox Catholicism tends to regard human living in the world of sense experience as less real than life in the spirit. Thus, the Orthodox stress on contemplation and hesychasm.

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Pyotr Mogila in the seventeenth century and Bishop Feofan Prokopovich at the beginning of the eighteenth," further reinforcement was given to perpetuating and propagating Platonism. "Among laymen mention should be made of Grigory Skovorda (1722-1794), a moralist who based his doctrine primarily upon the Bible, but also made use of certain neo-Platonic theories (e.g. in his interpretation of matter), of Philo, the Fathers of the Church and the German mystics (in his teaching about the outer and the inner man, the abyss of the human spirit and of the Divine being, of the spark in the heart of man - a favorite simile of the German mystics.)" Lossky, N.O., op. cit., p. 10.





There is in Platonism the concept of an elite, the philosopher kings, the initiates who are in possession of the truth. Russian Orthodoxy, particularly as it was interpreted by the Slavophiles, was regarded as the possession of only those Eastern Christians who were in communion with the historic Eastern Patriarchates - these Christians alone possessed truth in its fullness. The West was to be regarded as being in error and confusion because it had departed from Orthodoxy. The Russians were regarded as a chosen people, a divinely elected elite, with a messianic mission to bring light to the rest of the world. This, the Slavophiles believed, was the Mission of Russia, not because of any proficiency in secular knowledge or skill, not because of any innate superiority of a Slav over a non-Slav, (though certainly there were some who had this feeling of racial or national superiority) but principally because the Russians alone, of all the peoples of the world, had preserved the True Faith and been gifted by God with His Divine guidance which the Russians had accepted, while the West preferred to go its own way, following after the gods of Science, Technology, Rationalism and Empiricism.

There is in Plato's philosophy (see his Republic) a non-democratic attitude and an emphasis on an aristocracy of the "lovers of wisdom." Among the Orthodox, wisdom has been canonized and the principle church within the Greek Patriarchate, the Cathedral of the Agia Sophia, or Holy Wisdom, at Constantinople, attests to the reverence paid by Orthodox Catholics to truth. But it is holy wisdom, or divine wisdom that is revered, not the worldly wisdom of the materialist. This holy wisdom was not regarded by the Slavophiles as the possession of all men (any more than Plato considered all men able to become philosophers) but

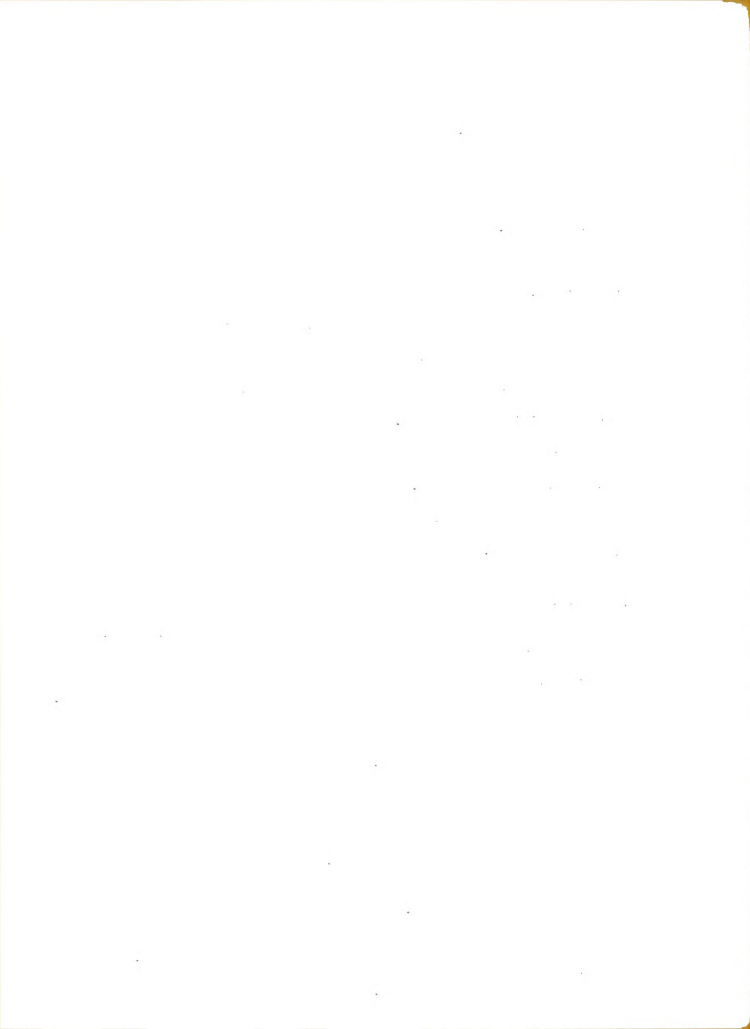


only of the Russians. This Truth the Russian believed, was given through the Holy Scriptures and perpetuated and guarded through the Seven Ecumenical Councils and the synods and provincial councils of the Orthodox Church. Even the Greek Orthodox Church of Constantinople, many Russians believed, had lost some of the True Faith at the Council of Florence.<sup>138</sup>

The mystical elements of Platonism, which were enlarged upon and expanded in Neo-Platonism, held that knowledge of the Real can come only through profound insights that lie deeper than any knowledge gained through empirical perception. Ideas or mystical experiences gained through contemplation cannot be put to the test of sense investigation to estimate their validity. It is unreasonable to expect the Eternal to submit itself to tests proposed and conducted by finite men limited by time and space.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>138</sup> This Council was held at Florence, Italy in 1439 during which an attempt was made to effect the reunion of the Orthodox, Roman, Armenian, Coptic and Syrian Jacobite Churches. The attempt failed, even though some Greek ecclesiastics were incline to compromise in order to secure military assistance against the Turks. The Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople formally repudiated the Council in 1472. Because of the compromising attitude of the Hellenes at the Council, the Russians adopted the attitude that Constantinople lost her right to leadership among the Orthodox and that this leadership passed to Moscow and its Patriarchate.

<sup>139</sup> An example of this is to be found in the Roman Catholic attempt to determine, with precision, the exact moment when the species of bread and wine are transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. Roman theology states that it occurs at the precise moment when the words, "Hoc est enim corpus meum," and "Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei" are pronounced by the priest. Eastern Orthodoxy attempts no such precise knowledge, simply holding that the entire Canon of the Liturgy, from the historic words of institution to the Epiklesis effects the transmuting. In the same way, Orthodox Catholicism knows no such controversy as that in which mediaeval schoolmen engaged, seeking, for example, to determine the precise number of the elect, the damned, or the angels that might stand on a pin-point. Orthodoxy professed itself shocked at such attempts by finite minds to fathom the infinite designs of God.



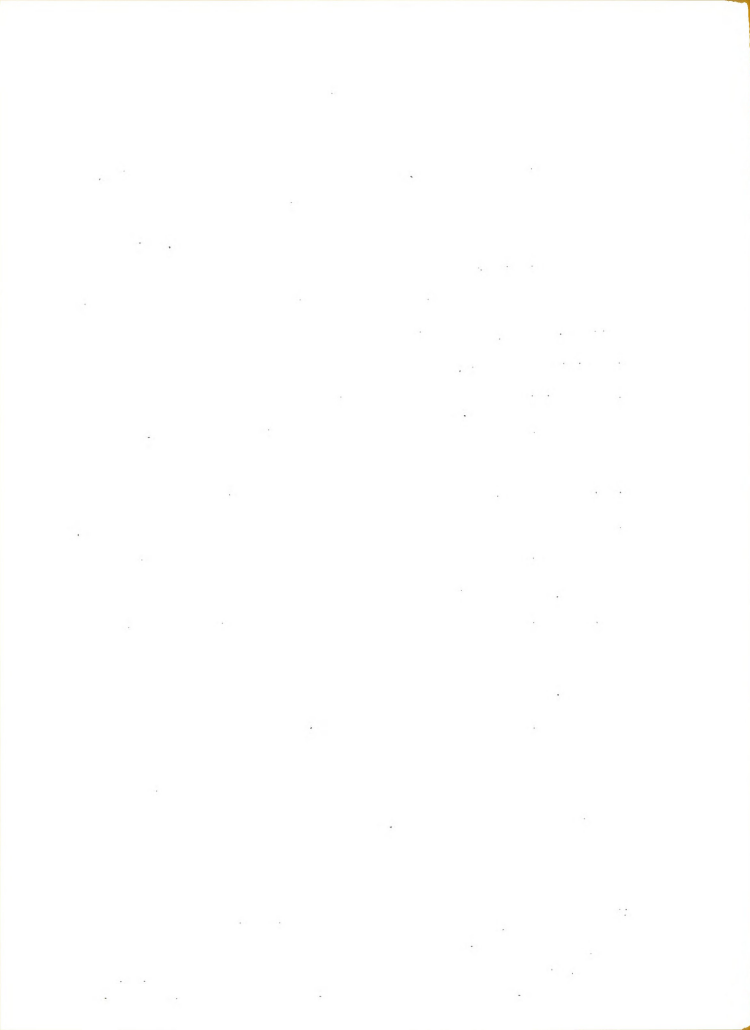
Yet another Platonic theory is to be found in the philosophy of the Russian Slavophiles. The only hope of political salvation, according to Plato in his Republic, lies in establishing the rule of the wise over the unwise. Slavophilism held the same theory. It led to the messianic concept of Russia as "Savior of the World," as the sole possessor of the "right way" to social and political salvation; while Orthodoxy, even as its name implies, is the only "right belief" in spiritual matters. Among the Slavophiles, the Russian Orthodox way to the elimination of moral and social wrongs was through the government of the "wise" Russian Orthodox over the "unwise" Westerners. Strange that even today the Soviets hold a theory not too different, but perhaps it is not so strange after all, for the theory existed among the Russians long before the Soviets wrested control of the country from the Tsar.

Platonism viewed life sub specie aeternitatis and thus it was mystical. It emphasized dogmatism. Russian Orthodoxy and Slavophilism similarly viewed life, and the solution of all man's problems was to be sub specie aeternitatis, with Russian Orthodoxy as the sole possessor of Truth. As Dostoyevsky wrote: "The Russian people know Christ in their heart, and possess His true image."<sup>140</sup> He ascribed the gifts possessed by the Russian people, not to their superior natural qualities, which he denied, but to their meeting with Christ, which transformed and elevated the whole nation.

These Platonic concepts then, will be found in Russian philosophy

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<sup>140</sup> For example, Dostoyevsky expressed the idea in this way: "Let our country be poor, but this poor land Christ traversed with blessing in the guise of a serf. Why then should we not contain his final word?" Dostoyevsky, Feodor, Journal of an Author, trans. S. Kotliansky and J. Middleton Murry, John W. Luce Co., Boston, 1916, p. 113.



and sociology, especially during the period of the Slavophile movement. Before discussing the Slavophiles themselves, it is necessary to turn to several precursors who transmitted the Platonic doctrines after the mediaeval period. The mediaeval period in Russia will not be separately considered, for after the Kievan era, during which the Byzantine influence and the Platonic concepts entered into the stream of Russian thought, these ideas continued to develop. It was only during such brief periods as the reign of Peter the Great that they were temporarily obscured. Even when contact with the West was established, as will be seen, Platonic influences did not cease but were reinforced by Western mystic philosophers. Thus, while this paper has largely been concerned heretofore with Eastern influences culminating in Slavophilism, it is important to turn now to the influences entering Russian thought from the West.





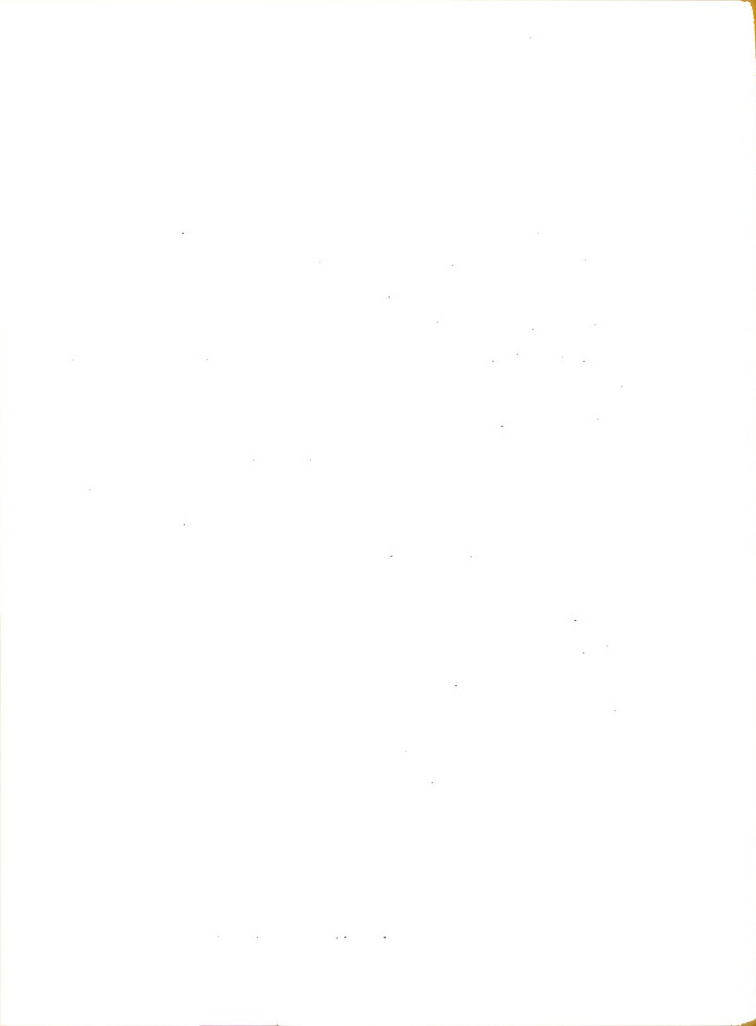
## CHAPTER VIII

### THE INFLUENCE OF PLATONISM FROM THE WEST

When Vladimir Soloviev, the nineteenth century Russian philosopher, began his study of the doctrines of Slavophilism, he was led from them to Plato, and also to Neo-Platonism, to Plotinus and the early Greek Church Fathers. From the Slavophiles he also passed to Schelling, and Schelling prepared his path to Baader, Jacob Boehme and other mystics. Each of these thinkers became a link in the continuity of influence upon Slavophilism and each link is traceable back to Plato himself. While Soloviev does not stand completely in the philosophical arena with the Slavophiles, it must be admitted that he derived some of his doctrines from them, and his research investigated the antecedents of the Slavophiles and traces them, both in the East and in the West, to Plato.

Ivan Kirievsky was the founder of Slavophilism in the nineteenth century. He was born at Moscow on March 22, 1806 of an aristocratic family. Through an uncle, Zukovsky, Kirievsky was led to study German romanticist literature. This study led him to a deeper interest in this school of thought and in 1830 he went to Berlin where he attended lectures on philosophy, theology and history under Carl Ritter, Stuhr, Raumer and Schleiermacher.<sup>141</sup> It was during this sojourn in Berlin that Kirievsky became personally acquainted with Hegel, whose works he had studied assiduously before he made the acquaintance of that philosopher. Eventually Kirievsky went to Munich where he studied for

<sup>141</sup>Masaryk, Thomas Garrigue, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 239.



a short time with Schelling. In 1832 he began functioning as editor of a literary review, The European, which was regarded as so extremist that it met with official suppression.

The influence of Schelling upon Ivan Kirievsky had its effect and was to color Kirievsky's subsequent writings. It remains to show that Schelling represented a Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophy and it is the mystical doctrines in such works as Of Human Freedom and The Ages of the World that seem best to illustrate this. While Schelling makes rather sharp and cutting references to persons who substitute an employment of labels for an understanding of ideas,<sup>142</sup> one might well hesitate to apply to him the term "mystic" or to describe his attitude as one of mysticism. Yet a mystic orientation is revealed in his writings when it is recalled that he often included ideas from such mystics as Jacob Boehme, the shoemaker of Gorlitz, "from whose speculations on evil, original sin and free will Schelling seems to have derived his conception of a 'dark, negative principle' so important in his work Of Human Freedom."<sup>143</sup>

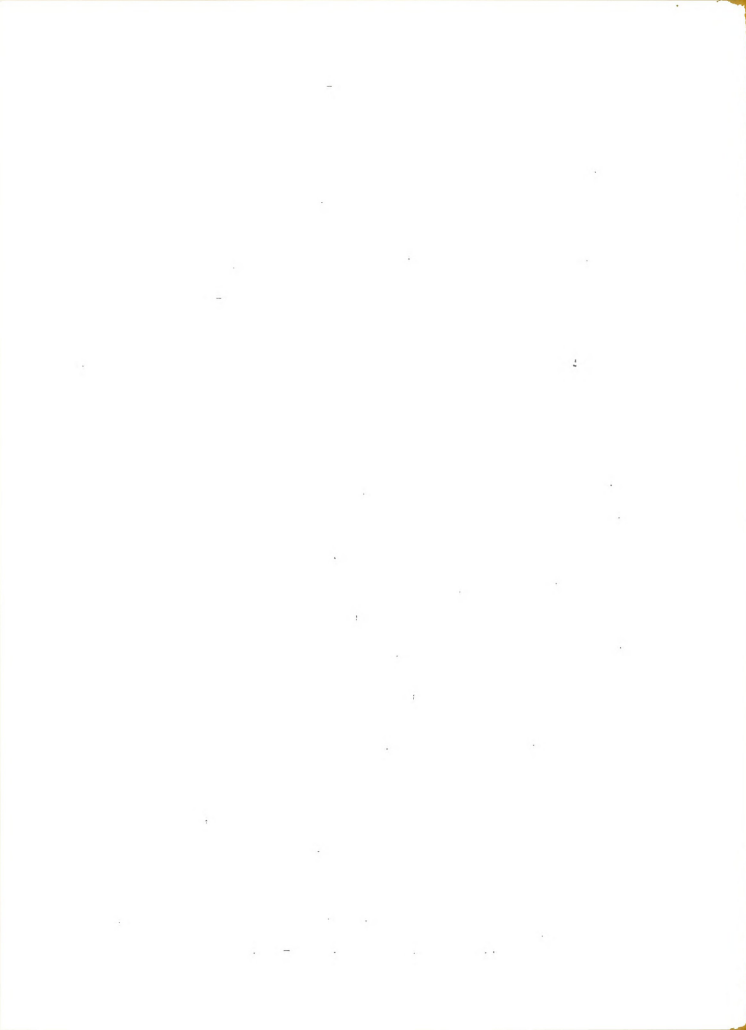
#### Schelling's Concepts and Their Influence upon the Russians

To estimate adequately the importance of German philosophical influences upon Russian thought, it is necessary to reflect that though alienated from France during the reign of Nicholas I, Russians who desired culture turned towards Germany. Attendance at German universities

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<sup>142</sup>See Schellings Works, VII, pp. 333-336 and pp. 338, 372, 410.

<sup>143</sup>Gutmann, James, translation of Of Human Freedom, The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, 1936, pp. xlv-lll.



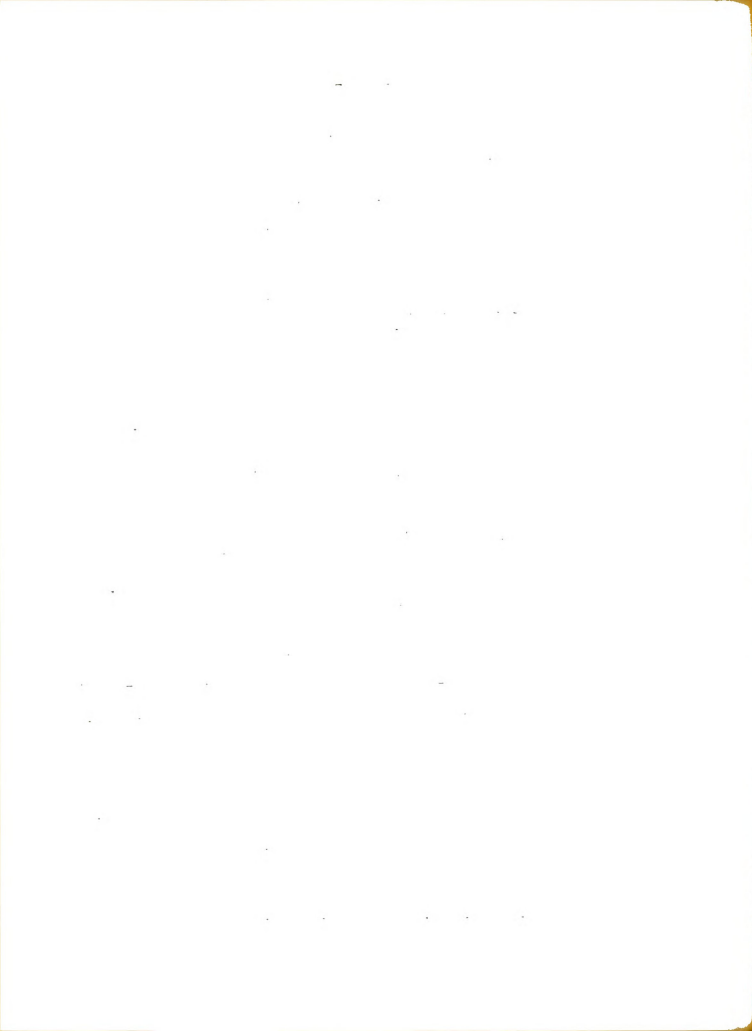
began in the early eighteenth century, encouraged by German professors who had lectured in Russia and who persuaded their students to spend some time in the German schools. Masaryk, commenting on the German influence upon these Russian students, writes:

At the German universities the Russians studied various disciplines, devoting themselves above all to the officially demanded economic, legal, and technical culture, mining being the most important subject under the last head. Widespread was the influence of Haxthausen, who visited Russia in 1843 to examine the Russian mir and Russian economic conditions in general. Apart from their theoretical studies, it was inevitable that Russian students in Germany should be influenced by German philosophy and literature and by the political tendencies dominant in academic and cultured society. The philosophy of Kant and of Fichte had little direct influence in Russia, but the influence of Schelling and Hegel was extensive. It was especially owing to the thoroughness of its theory of cognition, to its moral earnestness, and to its bearings upon ethics and practical conduct, that German philosophy owed its power in Russia. Schelling's aesthetics played a part in the development of Russian literary criticism; and Schelling and Hegel, with their philosophy of history, did much to promote the foundation of Russian philosophy of history.<sup>144</sup>

It was the romantic idealism of the early nineteenth century Germans that attracted the Russian students. The founders of classical German Idealism were pre-eminently Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814); Schelling (1775-1854); and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). There were important differences in their individual systems of thought but they were all expressions of a fundamentally similar philosophical attitude. Though he disowned them, they were all followers of Kant. They were influenced by his academic formalism. More important, they

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<sup>144</sup> Masaryk, T.G., op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 122 F.



accepted his contention that the primary consideration for philosophy is the nature of knowledge.<sup>145</sup> Fichte, Schelling and Hegel all challenged and rejected Kant's doctrine of the limitations of human knowledge. On the basis of what he had himself admitted as to the functions of reason, they pressed beyond these limitations. The Critical Philosophy failed to satisfy their demand for ultimate unity. The Whole was called by such terms as: the Absolute, the Absolute Idea, the Absolute Spirit, God. Always, however, there was the Platonic concept of the transcendence of reality. Hegel talked of the Absolute as the "Idea which knows itself," the "Thought which conceives itself," "The reason which knows itself," etc.,

It was Schelling who concentrated the greater part of his reflection and writing on Nature. To him, in the earlier period of his thought, Nature as the objective side of the duality of knowledge was more impressive in its extent and duration than the subjective side as found in human consciousness. Plato held the same concept. The Absolute, as known by "transcendent reason" is something other and wider than that. It is the unity of the real and the ideal.<sup>146</sup> For human knowledge there is a distinction of the objective and the subjective. Both are "posited" by the Absolute, which does so in "positing" Itself.<sup>147</sup>

Further evidence of Schelling's Platonism is to be found in his Aesthetics. In Schelling's philosophy a natural form is beautiful if and when it becomes the revelation of the Idea - which is the romantic conception of the essential in nature. As presented by the artist the

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<sup>145</sup>Schelling, F.W., The Ages of the World, trans. by F. Bolman, Jr., Columbia University Press, New York, 1952, pp. 4-10.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid. p. 100.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid. p. 275ff.



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting department in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements. It also highlights the need for transparency and accountability in the reporting process.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It emphasizes the importance of using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, which show a significant positive correlation between the variables being investigated. The findings suggest that the implementation of the proposed strategy will lead to improved performance and efficiency.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research. It acknowledges that the sample size was relatively small and that the study was conducted in a specific context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings.

5. The fifth part of the document provides a conclusion and recommendations for future research. It suggests that further studies should be conducted to explore the long-term effects of the proposed strategy and to investigate the role of other factors in the research model.

individual form is seen to be the eternal Platonic type. And on this principle Schelling could evaluate the relative aesthetic standing of the different arts. Sculpture, which he considered to be an essentially ancient art, is below painting, the art of the modern world. Painting is more capable of presenting the characteristic (the ultimate Platonic Idea) than sculpture, since the painter is limited to actual space like the sculptor. Whereas painting can represent any amount of space, and can make something beautiful out of even what approximates to ugliness, sculpture is limited to the space it occupies and what is literally there. So the medium of painting is more capable of spiritual presentation than the hard matter of sculpture. The Eastern Orthodox Church and the Slavophiles did not find this idea novel. Orthodoxy has always maintained a similar point of view in opposition to the Roman Catholic Church, where sculpture was the predominant art form of ecclesiastical decoration.

To investigate in detail the philosophy of Schelling and Hegel and the other German idealists, important as they are, is beyond the scope of this present work. Entire volumes could be written about them and their works. The concern of this paper is to show that the German philosophers of Idealism and Romanticism had an influence upon the Slavophiles, and that this Western influence mediating Platonism, was coupled with and reinforced the Platonism which Russia had earlier inherited from the Greeks.

Berdyaev indicates that there was a strong influence upon the Slavophiles from the German romanticists:

The basic Western influence, by which Russian nineteenth century thought and culture were moulded to a remarkable degree, was the influence of German romanticism and idealism at the beginning of the century, especially the influence of Schelling and Hegel who became almost Russian thinkers. This influence did not mean a slavish imitation such as the influence of Voltaire had meant in the eighteenth century. German thought was taken actively and worked over into a Russian type of thought. It is particularly necessary to say this of the Slavophiles, among whom the influence of Schelling and Hegel fertilized theological thought, just as the influence of Plato and the Neoplatonists formerly fertilized the theological thought of the Eastern doctors of the Church. Khomyakov founded an original Orthodox theology into which worked-over themes of German idealism enter.<sup>148</sup>

#### Jacob Boehme: Platonist and Mystic

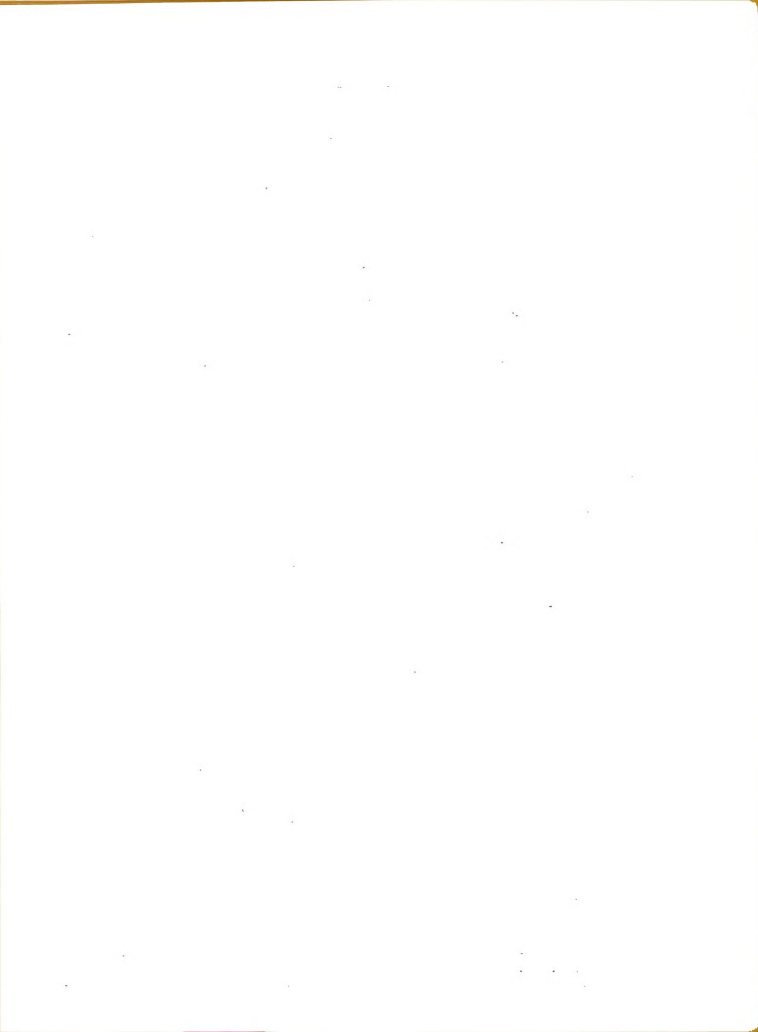
In addition to Schelling and Hegel, the German mystic Jacob Boehme exerted an influence upon the Slavophiles and in so doing, contributed an element of Platonism from Western thought to the Russian movement. Since most of the Slavophiles studied and were influenced by his writings, some survey of them seems important at this point.

Jacob Boehme was born in 1575 in the small market town of Old Seidenburg in Upper Lusatia. His parents were of the poorest sort and Jacob's education had to be limited. One of his biographers, William Law, says that "his first employment being the care of the common cattle among the rest of the youths of the town. When grown older he was placed at school where he learned to read and write and was from thence apprenticed to a shoemaker in Gorlitz."<sup>149</sup> Boehme was later to regard himself as the recipient of various supernatural illuminations. In 1600, when he was twenty-five years of age, he is reported

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<sup>148</sup> Berdyaev, N., The Origin of Russian Communism, Centenary Press, London, 1937, p. 27.

<sup>149</sup> Law, William, The Life of Jacob Boehme, M. Richardson, London, 1774, p. xi.



to have been "replenished with a heavenly Knowledge; insomuch, as going abroad into the Fields, to a Green before Neys-Gate at Gorlitz, he there sat down, and viewing the Herbs and Grass of the Field, in his inward Light he saw into their Essences, Use and Properties, which were discovered to him by their Lineaments, Figures and Signatures."<sup>150</sup>

In 1610 Boehme wrote his work Aurora or The Morning-Redness. Other writings followed in quick succession, despite civil prohibitions against his "eccentricities." His biographer commenting upon the popularity of his works says that "the publication of his books brought men of great learning from distant places to consult him. Soon his writings came to be read in Russia, Sweden, Poland, Denmark, the Netherlands, England, Germany, Spain, and Italy, and even in the city of Rome."<sup>151</sup>

A study of Boehme's writings reveals those concepts which, whether consciously so or not, were certainly consonant with Platonism. For example, writing about God as the "Original" of all things, Boehme says:

But the spirit of man is descended, not only from the stars and elements, but there is hid therein a Spark of the Light and Power of God. It is not an empty word which is set down in Genesis, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him." For it has this sense and meaning, viz. that he is created out of the whole being of the Deity. The Soul has its Original...and so the Holy Ghost rules in it.<sup>152</sup>

Clearly this is a statement which coincides with Plato's doctrine of Ideas and his concept of man's essential character. Here Boehme states what is essentially the Platonic doctrine of Ideas, the originals according to which all particular things have been fashioned. In another

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<sup>150</sup>Ibid., p. xiv.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid., p. xix

<sup>152</sup>Boehme, Jacob, "The Aurora," The Works of Jacob Boehme, the Teutonic Philosopher, compiled by William Law, M. Richardson, London, 1774, Vol. I, p. 22.

place, Boehme further addresses himself to the same topic, when he writes:

For you see, feel and find, that all these (earthly images) must yet have a higher Root from whence they proceed, which is not visible, but hidden; especially if you look upon the starry Heaven which endures thus unchangeably; therefore you ought to consider from when it is proceeded, and how it subsists thus, and is not corrupted, nor rises up above, nor falls down beneath, though indeed there is neither above nor beneath there. Now if you consider what preserves all thus, and whence it is, then you find the eternal Birth that has no Beginning, and you find the Original of the eternal Principle.<sup>153</sup>

In numerous other places in his writings, Boehme refers to what he calls the "Root of the Genetrix," that all things exist "which from Eternity have their Original," "the Matrix of this world stands in the Eternal Matrix," and so on.<sup>154</sup> Clearly consonant with Platonism is Boehme's following statement:

Now if we will speak of the beginning and birth of this world then we must consider the Root of the Genetrix, feeling every principle is another birth, but out of no other essence...which from Eternity has its Original. Then it is seen and found clearly and plainly before our eyes that out of the incomprehensible Matrix (which is but a spirit) the comprehensible and visible proceeded.<sup>155</sup>

#### Boehme's Anti-Rationalism

Along with other idealists, Boehme stresses the inability of human reason to know reality. In this the Slavophiles were one with him. Reality lies beyond the grasp of our senses, Boehme contended, and if it is to be known at all, it is by the process of insight and Illumination rather than through the strivings of man's reason. Plato

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<sup>153</sup>Ibid., Vol. V, "The Three Principles of the Divine Essence of the Eternal Dark, Light and Temporary World", p. 33.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., pp. 34-37.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid.



too held that the physical senses are incapable of bringing man to a knowledge of ultimate truth and reality. According to Plato, the absolute truth of justics, beauty and other ideas is not perceived by the senses, which only introduce a disturbing element.<sup>156</sup> Boehme writes in a similar vein:

Reason, which is gone forth with Adam out of Paradise, asks, Where is Paradise to be had?...Beloved Reason, one cannot lend the Key to another to unlock this; and if one has a Key, he cannot open it to another. They gross eyes cannot behold it, because they are from the third principle (the temporary world) and see only by the Splendor of the Sun (divine Illumination)...but the gross body cannot see into it, because it belongs not to Paradise, it belongs to the earth, and must putrify and rot. It must lay off this third principle (earthly flesh.)<sup>157</sup>

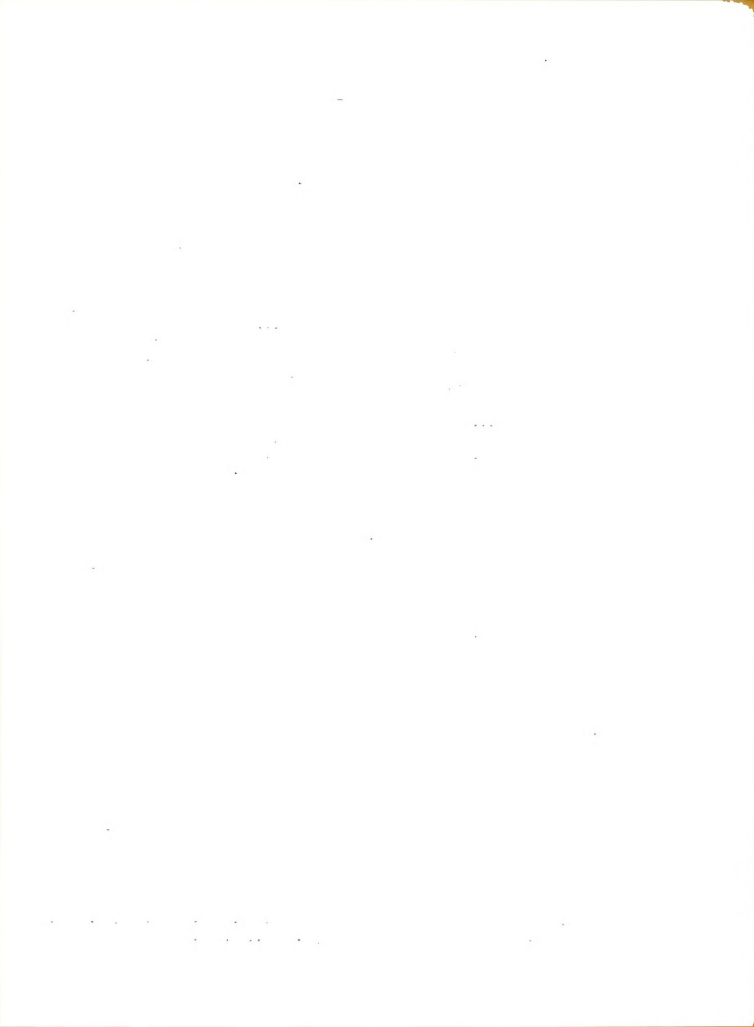
It is little wonder that the anti-rationalistic Slavophiles found in Jacob Boehme a kindred spirit. They nourished themselves at the well of his mysticism and revelled in his emphasis on divine illumination as having greater validity in epistemology than human reason or sense experience. While rejecting the rationalism of the West, the Slavophiles could find in Boehme, though he was a German, a thinker they could understand and whose doctrines they found acceptable. In their romanticism, the Slavophiles rejected the ideas of the rationalistic writers of the Enlightenment, who had expounded intellectualistic interpretations of the origin of society and the state as artificial products of conscious choice and deliberation. Like other romanticists, (such as Burke, Louis de Bonald, Joseph de

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<sup>156</sup>Plato, "Phaedo" in the Jowett translations, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 222.

<sup>157</sup>Boehme, J., "The Three Principles", op. cit., p. 61.





Maistre, Ludwig von Haller, Herder, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Friedrich Karl von Savigny) the Slavophiles insisted that social institutions, government, religion and the like are the natural outgrowth of an organic evolutionary development but with divine sanction and with God as their beginning. This encouraged giving more attention to the social and cultural foundations of all human institutions, a trend of a distinctly sociological nature. But while social and historical truth was considered important by the Slavophiles, they contended as did Boehme that the inner reality of things was unknown and unknowable to empirical investigation or ratiocination. Along this line Boehme wrote:

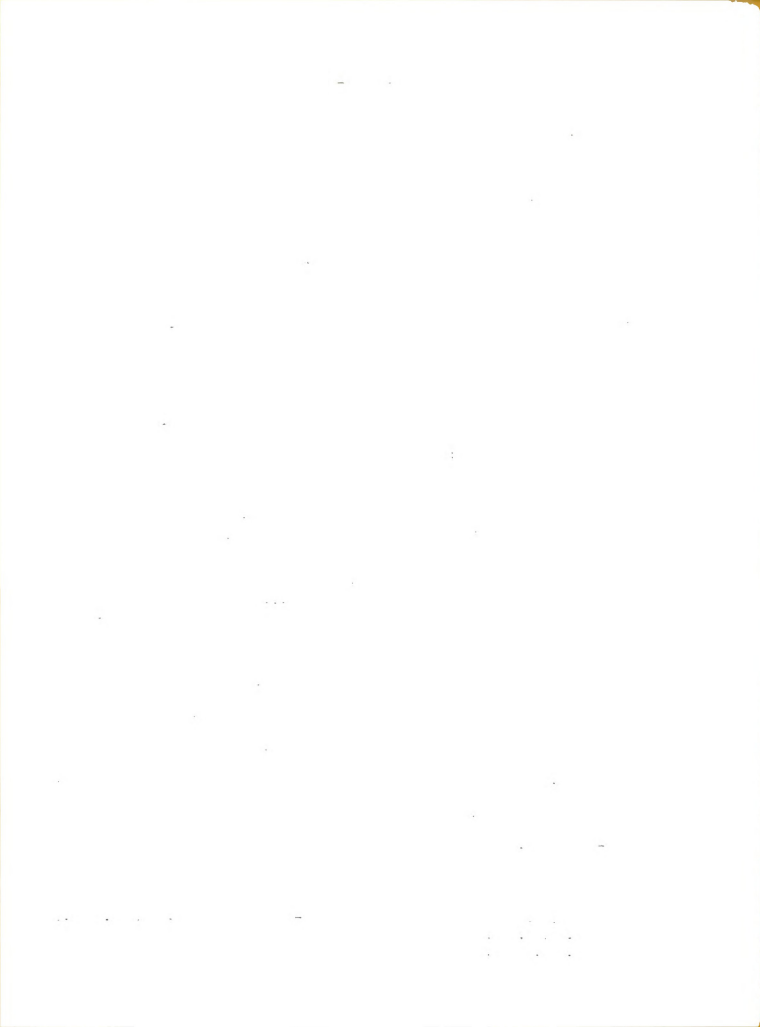
We must wholly reject our own reason, and not regard the dissembling flattering art of this world, it is not available to help us to that Light; but it is a mere leading astray, and keeping us back," and further, Reason always asketh, Out of what is the earth and stones, also the elements and stars generated? We cannot know this in the reason and art of this world, neither can the books of the Doctors teach it...in this world we are blind concerning it, neither can we learn it of any body.<sup>158</sup>

Clearly Platonic is Boehme's statement that man "must confess that his knowledge is not his own but from God, who manifests the Ideas of wisdom to the soul in what measure he pleases."<sup>159</sup> The animal body attains only a glimpse of reality, just as by a lightening flash. Boehme's map of reality is based, like that of most mystics, on the number three, and has several interesting points of contact with Neo-Platonism. The universe in its essence consists of three worlds,

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<sup>158</sup>Boehme, J., "The Contents of the Three-Fold Life," Vol. II, op. cit., Chap. 3, p. 51.

<sup>159</sup>Ibid., p. 53 f.



which are "none other than God Himself in His wonderful works." Without and beyond Nature is the Abyss of the Deity, "the Eternal Good that is the Eternal One" - a Plotinian definition of the Absolute which may have reached Boehme through Eckhart and his school. One of his concepts is similar to the Platonic doctrine of the nous for he holds that from a primal fire or fount of generation were born the pair of opposites through which the Divine energy is manifested: the dark-world of conflict, evil, and wrath which he equates to Eternal Nature in itself, and the light-world, of wisdom, love and goodness which is Eternal Spirit in itself. Here again is to be perceived the Platonic ancestry of one of Boehme's most characteristic ideas.

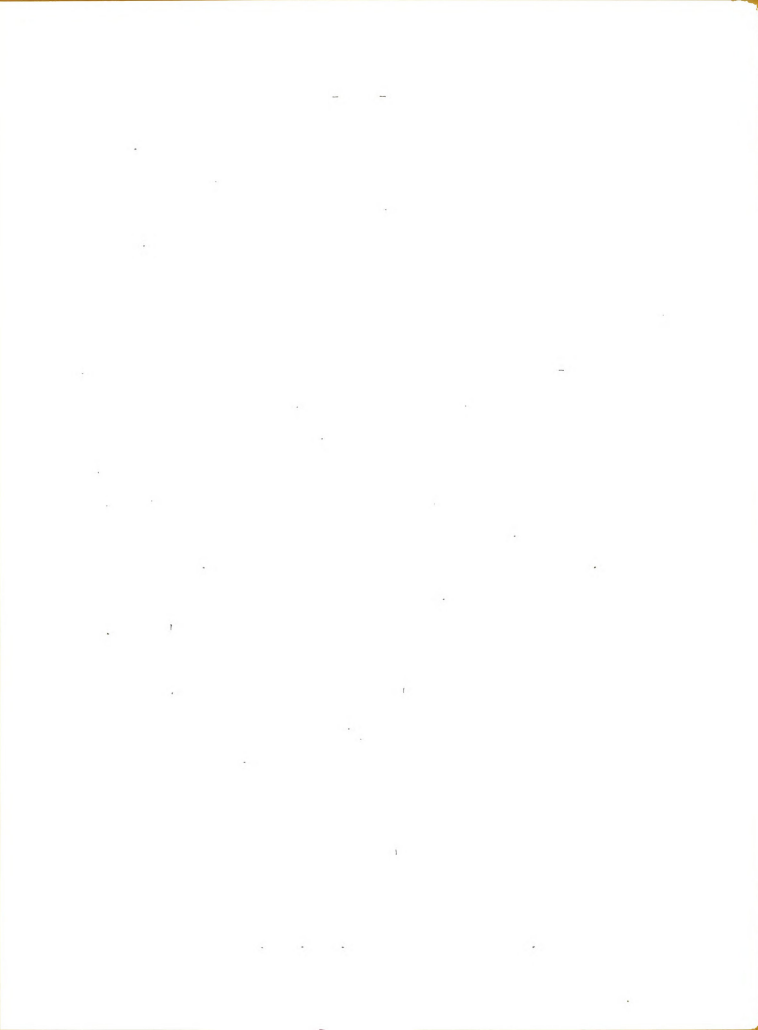
The entire universe, Boehme held, is a vast alchemic process, a seething pot, perpetually distilling the base metals into celestial gold.<sup>160</sup> As with the cosmos, so with its microcosm man. He too, is in the process of becoming. Everyone who yields himself to the impulse of the Light stands by that very act in the heaven of God's heart. Hence at the end of this vast dynamic vision, it is found that the imperatives which govern man's entry into truth are moral: patience, courage, love and surrender of will. These evangelical-like virtues are the conditions of man's knowledge of reality. Like all mystics Boehme held that God dwells in all things and nothing comprehends Him unless it be one with Him.

#### Boehme's Influence on the Slavophiles

Commenting upon the influence that Jacob Boehme had upon Russian

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<sup>160</sup>Boehme, J. "Mysterium Magnum," op. cit., pp. 89 f.



thinkers, Lossky says that many translations of Jacob Boehme's works were widely circulated in manuscript form and some were published, while I.G. Schwarz (1751-1784), a German professor at Moscow, used the works of Boehme, especially his Mysterium Magnum in his lectures.<sup>161</sup> The Russian mystic M.M. Speransky (1772-1839) was also influenced by Boehme, while Vladimir Soloviev and Nicholas Berdyaev owed some of their concepts to the German shoe-maker, for as Lossky says:

Man's irrational freedom is rooted in the "nothing" out of which God created the world. That "nothing" is not emptiness; it is a primary principle prior to God and the world, containing no differentiation, i.e., no division into a number of definite elements. Berdyaev borrowed this conception from Jacob Boehme who designated this primary principle by the term "ungrund" (the groundless, the Abyss). In Berdyaev's opinion, Boehme's "ungrund" coincides with the conception of the "Divine nothing" in the negative theology of Dionysius the Areopagite...<sup>162</sup>

While Schelling and Boehme exercised considerable influence upon the Slavophiles, there were other Western thinkers who contributed to the development of this Russian school of thought - von Baader, and to a lesser degree the German pessimist, Arthur Schopenhauer. While a study of the works of these men would be interesting and instructive, it must be deferred in favor of a more intensive analysis of the Slavophiles themselves, since it is primarily with them that this paper is concerned.

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<sup>161</sup>Ibid., p. 10 f.

<sup>162</sup>Lossky, N., op. cit., p. 235.

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## CHAPTER IX

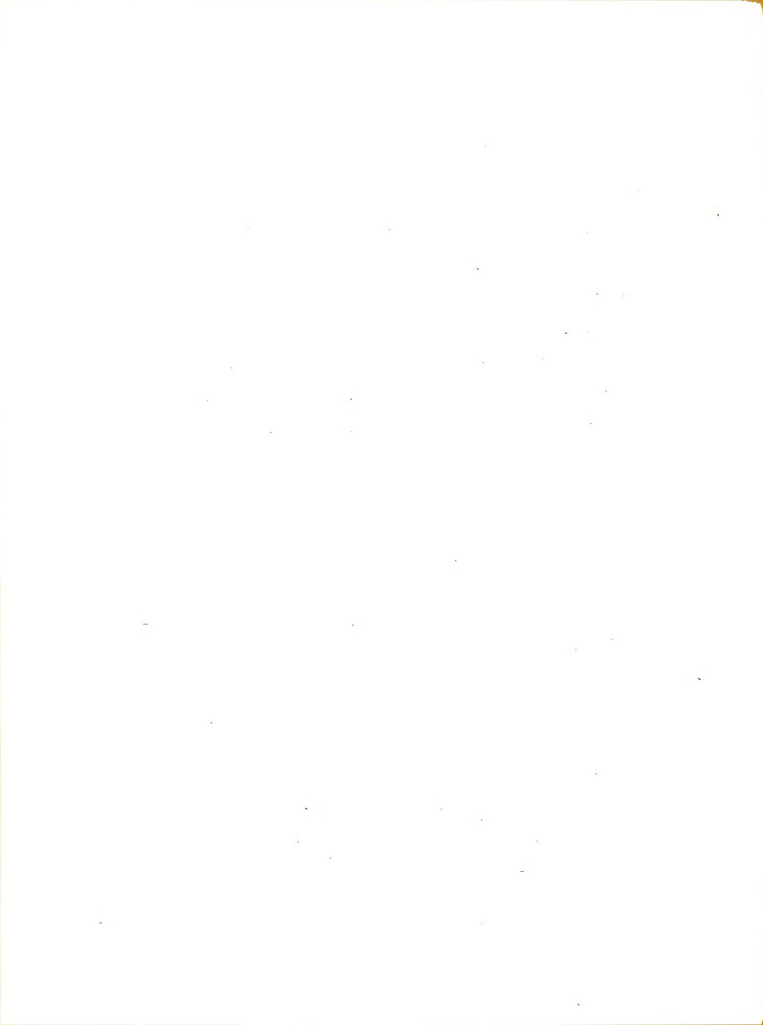
### SLAVOPHILISM AND ITS FOUNDERS: KIRIEVSKY AND KHOMYAKOV

A Western observer of Eastern European events can hardly realize to what extent even the present Soviet social and political structure reflects the spiritual and national tradition of Russian Orthodoxy and of Slavophilism. It certainly is misleading to interpret the Russian revolution and its results exclusively as a fruit of Marxian ideology. The ideas of Marxian socialism were unquestionably a powerful weapon in the revolt against the old political, social and ecclesiastical theocracy of tsarist Russia. Without Marxism, Russian Communism is an unexplainable phenomenon. However, soon after the liquidation of the old order and the Civil War, in the period when the organization of the Soviet system was being constructed, many of the old spiritual and national elements of Russian history began to reemerge and shape the life of the people. Even today there can clearly be discerned the contribution, often intangible and undefinable, offered by "kenotic" Orthodoxy to the national community.<sup>163</sup> The emphasis upon self-sacrifice, simplicity and poverty, the deep compassion for wretched human beings, was in the background, some Russian historians believe, of the revolutionary movement among many of the Russian intelligentsia. That such a spirit

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<sup>163</sup> Russian thinkers speak of the "kenotic" (self-emptying) spirit of Eastern Orthodoxy, referring to St. Paul's interpretation of the Incarnation: The Son of God stripped himself of all heavenly splendor, "emptied" Himself as it were, assumed the form of a poor servant, entered the life of labor, toil, humiliation and extreme sacrifice - and did it in silence, with patience, endurance and unqualified obedience. Russian historians often point to the kenotic spirit of Orthodox monks as the foremost civilizing agency of early Russian history, and of the national revolt against the Mongols. Monks, of high theological learning, like Sergius of Radonez would form small groups of kenotic Christians in order to clear forests and swamps, to conquer the wilderness, to build churches and provide spiritual and material care for the lost, the toiling and the suffering. Obviously, modern Sovietism would like it to be believed that





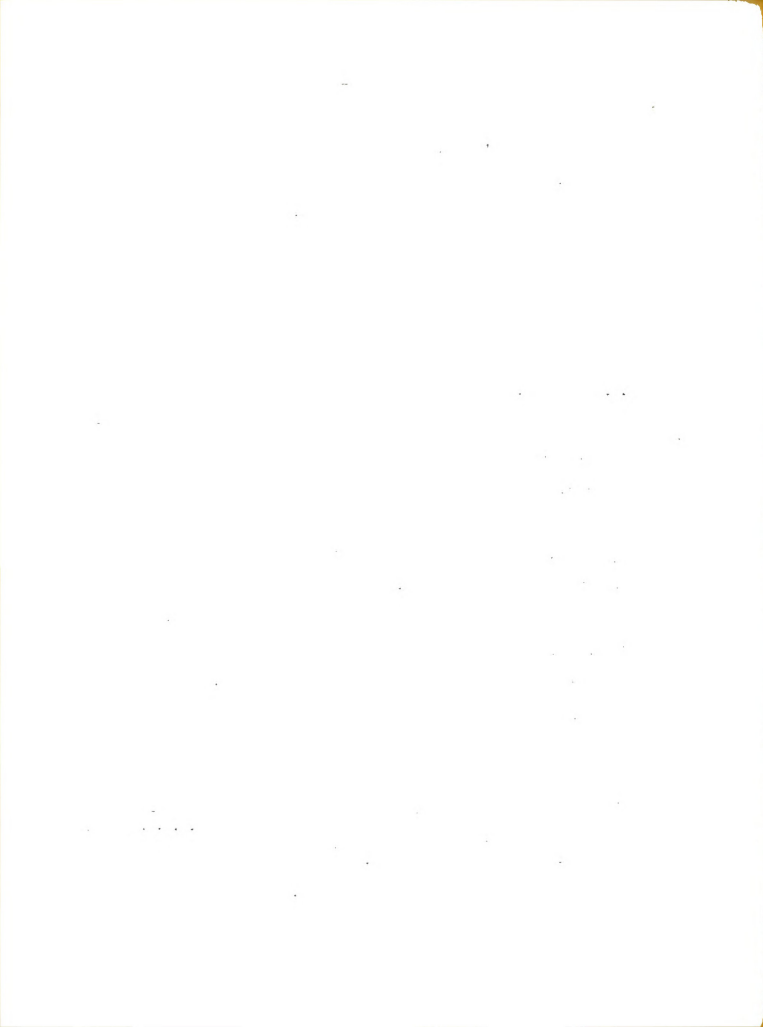
should have persisted even under the Soviets, and despite their attempts to stamp it out, attests to the deepseated spirit of Orthodoxy. Slavophilism in the nineteenth century attempted to play a major role in mediating this spirit.

### Principles of Slavophilism

Slavophilism marks the beginning of independent philosophical thought in Russia and owes its genesis to Ivan Kirievsky (concerning whom some introductory remarks were made in the previous chapter) and A.S. Khomyakov. Essentially, Slavophilism was an attempt to overcome the German type of philosophizing on the strength of the Russian interpretation of Christianity based upon the works of the Eastern Fathers and nourished by the national peculiarities of Russian popular religious thought. It was to be a "going back" in typically romanticist manner, to the "glories of Russia's past" and seeking to find there the guideposts for the future. It was not the purpose of the Slavophiles to formulate simply a philosophical system (in fact, neither Kirievsky nor Khomyakov worked out a system of philosophy) but to set out a program and establish the spirit of a movement. The purpose of the Slavophiles was to develop a systematic Orthodox Christian world conception.

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the same spirit of self-sacrificing concern for the down-trodden, the weak and the impoverished still motivates the U.S.S.R. today, but the Christian concept is gone, at least from official and party-sanctioned institutions. When the Christocentric attitude was driven underground, the Soviets substituted naked force in place of the Christian concern for man.



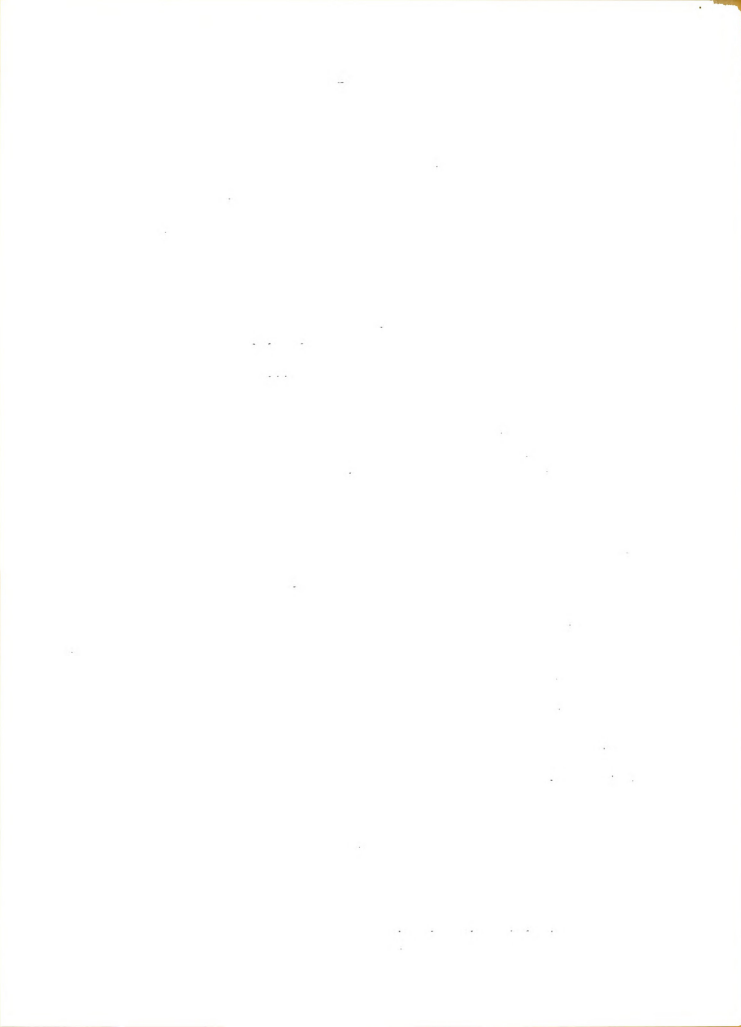
While Kirievsky and Khomyakov are generally recognized as the founders of Slavophilism, the roots of the system were already buried deep before these two leaders began their writings. Prince Mirsky, commenting on the earlier origins or roots of Slavophilism, says:

Slavophilism was an emotional attitude before it became a doctrine. Slavophilism in the strict sense was a creation of Khomyakov and the Kireveskis in the thirties, but Slavophile feelings had long been alive in many Russian minds. I have spoken of the naive nationalism of Admiral Shishkov. S.T. Aksakov was a living link between these older forms and the developed creed of the thirties and forties...The primacy of the moral and religious law, of ancestral tradition, and of the spontaneous sense of the right and just over the written laws and regulations of the State, and the primacy of the whole unreflecting reason over the lower logical and dissecting reason were the principal tenets of the Slavophiles. This they found in Old Russia and in the Orthodox Church.<sup>164</sup>

In addition to the "primacy of the whole unreflecting reason over the lower logical and dissecting reason," there were other doctrines accepted and propagated by the Slavophiles. Russia to them was the legitimate successor of the ancient Byzantine Empire and also the heir to the ecclesiastical position of Constantinople, the Second Rome. Russia was regarded by the Slavophiles as the vessel of salvation for all humanity and they held Western Europe and the Roman Catholic Church in scorn because of the stress these placed upon logical reason and formal law. Russia was to have a Messianic mission, not because she was Russia, but because she alone had received and preserved the purest tradition of Orthodox Christianity, and because in her early history she had developed higher and more Christian principles of society than

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<sup>164</sup> Mirsky, D.S., op. cit., p. 207.



had the West. The scorn of the Slavophiles was not restricted to the Western Europeans, however. They condemned the Zapadniki or "Westernizers" among the Russians, especially Peter the Great whom they held had violently torn Russia away from her true tradition and injected the baleful influences of the dissident West. To the Slavophiles, the monarchy of Peter was not truly national for it had abjured the national ideals and gone to the school of the godless absolutism of the West. It had humiliated and enslaved the Church by eliminating the Patriarchate and substituting in its place the State-controlled Holy Synod.

Slavophilism was not, however, an arid romanticism. Berdyaev attributes to it a certain freshness and originality:

Creative originality in religious and philosophical thought was shown by the Slavophiles. They established the mission of Russia as distinct from that of Western peoples. The originality of the Slavophiles lay in this: they endeavored to comprehend the distinctiveness of the Eastern Orthodox type of Christianity which lay at the basis of Russian history. <sup>165</sup>

There were three guiding principles of Slavophilism which were held in common with the Tsarist Government, but with a difference in interpretation of the ideals: Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality. The Government placed primary emphasis upon autocracy and desired to subordinate Orthodoxy and nationality to it. Sovietism holds a similar view, desiring to utilize the Russian Orthodox Church for purposes of empire-building among the Balkan peoples, most of whom are members of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church. For the Slavo-

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<sup>165</sup>Berdyaev, N., "The Origin of Russian Communism," op. cit., p. 28.



philes, however, the religious principle held first place and they sought to propagate an Orthodoxy that was purified and free from any governmental control. The prostitution of the Orthodox Church for purposes of political aggrandizement that is practiced by the Soviets, would have been abhorrent to them. They also envisioned a pristine Orthodoxy freed from the distortions which they attributed to the influences of the Westernizers and the rationalism and political absolutism resulting from the introduction of foreign ideologies. Because of these views, Slavophilism was generally in opposition to the State. Clarifying this opposition, Berdyaev writes:

...there was a strong element of anarchism in (the Slavophiles). They defended monarchy on the ground that it is better for one man to be defiled by possessing authority, which is always sinful and vile, than the whole people. The Tsar has no right to authority, and no more has anyone else. But he is constrained to bear the burden of authority which the people have laid upon him. <sup>166</sup>

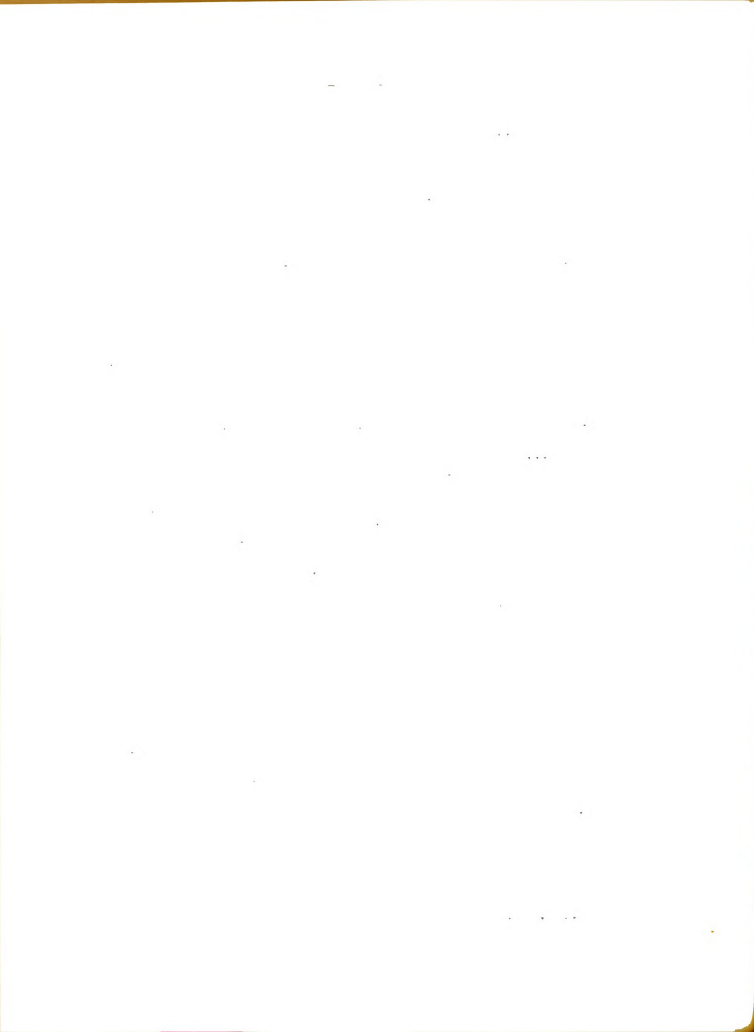
#### Slavophile Nationalism

Throughout the writings of the Slavophiles, even from their earliest period, there is an emphasis on narodnichestvo - which means a belief in the Russian people, not simply the intelligentsia, but more especially the common people, the muzhiki or peasants. One who holds this philosophy is called a narodnik - a lover of the common people. Basic to this idea is the belief that the Russian common people have preserved the true life, unencumbered by Western accretions,

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<sup>166</sup>Ibid., p. 30.



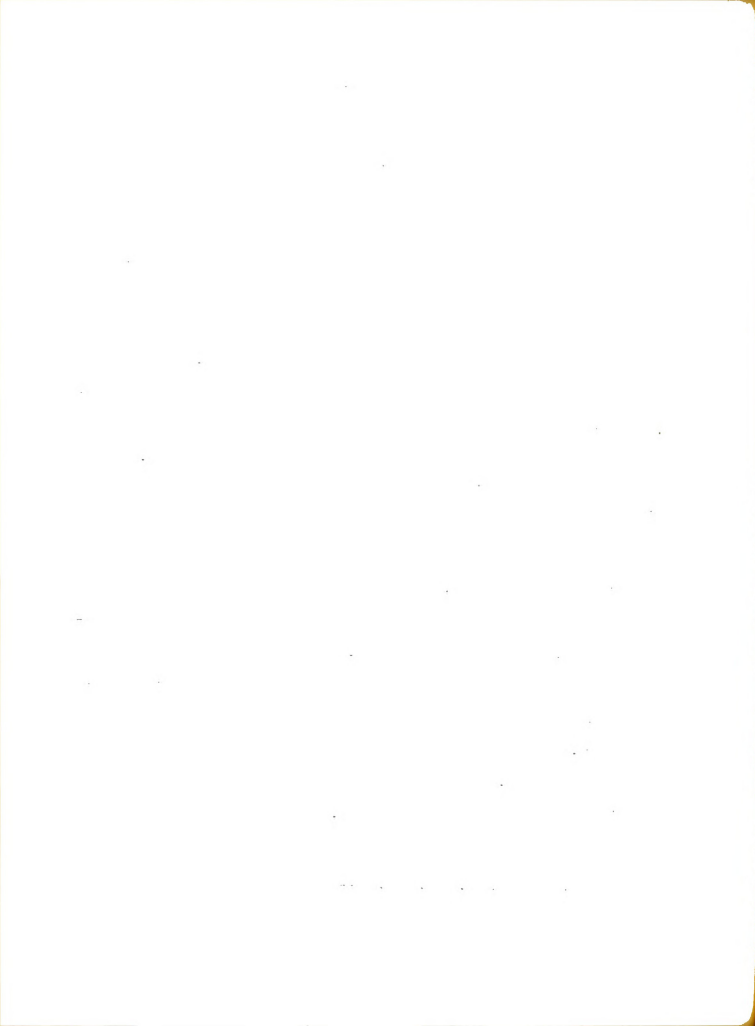


a life closer to the religious teachings of Orthodoxy. There were actually two types of narodniki; the religious narodniki such as Dostoyevsky and Kirievsky and the other Slavophiles, who held that the true life of the people was founded upon their closer relations to Orthodoxy and their purer living according to its principles; and there were the secular narodniki, like Bakunin, Hertzén, and the narodnik socialists of the latter part of the nineteenth century who believed that in the people was to be found hidden social truth. The upper classes were to be condemned, according to the narodniki, because they had exploited the people instead of seeking their true strength from them and seeking to preserve the wholeness as one people with them.

Out of Bakunin's socialist doctrines there arose in the seventies a group of radical students who evidenced an intense dislike for an opposition to the government and centered their entire devotion in the service of the peasants. Nicholas Chaikovsky and Prince Peter Kripotkin conducted propagandist education in support of their concept of narodnichestvo, especially among workmen. They came to the conclusion that to help the peasants one must live and dress like a peasant; and students, men and women began taking up by hundreds any posts in the country. Some were teachers or village clerks, others became blacksmiths or nurses. A few kept inns or shops which served as depots from which their literature was circulated.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup>Pares, Bernard, op. cit., pp. 370-374.



The narodniki of the Slavophile religious type saw the chief guilt of the cultured upper classes in their separation from the religious beliefs of the common people, and from the life of the peasantry. Such separation offended and outraged their sense of "wholeness" and communality. The socialist narodniki of the secularist type had a much greater significance, for it was the guilt of the cultured classes in their exploitation of the peasant for economic gain. It cannot be overlooked that these beliefs contributed to the general anarchism which was eventually to culminate in the Russian Revolution in 1917. To regard the Slavophiles as preachers of an uninfluential ideology is to fail to realize the very real social effects they helped produce. If Slavophilism remained somewhat sterile during its own decades in the nineteenth century, it poured its bit of pressure into the stream where, coupled with other anti-governmental and pro-populist ideologies, it was to contribute to the swelling current that would soon sweep away the tsarist regime and inaugurate the regime of the Soviets. Could the Slavophiles have envisioned Sovietism they would have been aghast at the thought that they contributed in any way, no matter how small, to its birth. One Slavophile, Feodor Dostoyevsky did actually predict the rise of a system such as Sovietism, and he was unsparing in his condemnation of it.

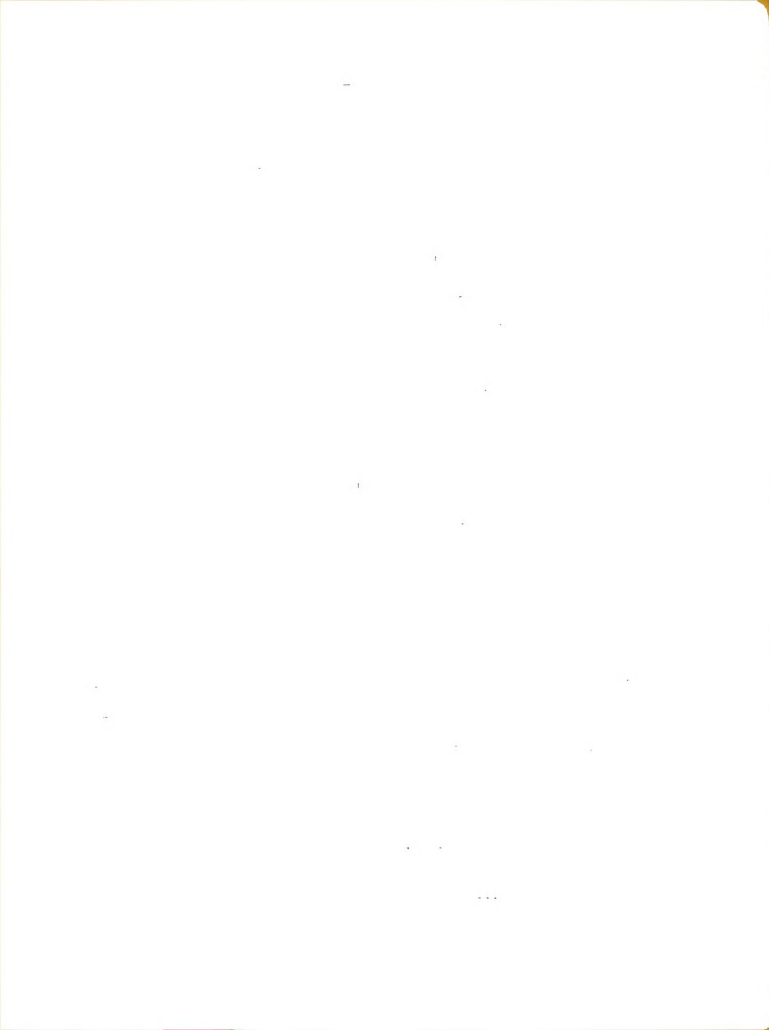
#### Slavophiles versus Westernizers

The greater part of the nineteenth century in Russia was filled with the disputes of the Westernizers and the Slavophiles. To the Slavophiles, Russia was a holy mother and they loved her as such; to

the Westernizers Russia was to be treated as an adolescent child desperately in need of guidance and instruction. Both Slavophiles and Westernizers realized that the Russian philosophy of history was obliged before all else to solve the problem of the meaning and significance of Peter's reform which had, so to speak, sliced Russian history in two. Essentially the conflict centered around the two questions: was the historical path of Russia the same as that of the West and is the peculiarity of Russia to be found only in its backwardness; or, as the Slavophiles contended, has Russia a special path of its own with its civilization belonging to another type? The Westernizers accepted the reforms of Peter unreservedly and it was their belief that Russia's future lay in following the leadership of the West. The Slavophiles believed in a special type of culture having its very roots buried deep in the spiritual soil of Eastern Orthodoxy and they regarded Peter as a traitor to Russia and his attempts at reform they considered to be a betrayal of the superior Russian culture into the hands of the materialistic West from which Russia has nothing to learn but much it was able to teach.

Commenting upon the philosophy of history adopted by the Slavophiles, Berdyaev writes:

The Slavophiles absorbed the Hegelian idea of the vocation of peoples and what Hegel applied to the German people they applied to the Russian. They applied the principles of Hegelian philosophy to Russian history. K. Aksakov (one of the early Slavophiles) even said that the Russian people had a special vocation for understanding the philosophy of Hegel...Among the classical Slavophiles there



was no complete rejection of the West; they did not use such language as "decay" in speaking of it; they were too good universalists for that. The Slavophiles confused their ideal of Russia, their ideal utopia of the perfect order of society, with the historic past.<sup>168</sup>

Following the Platonic doctrine which they had assimilated into their philosophy the Slavophiles were bent upon the idea of the organic and upon integrality - wholeness. The German romantics contributed to this idea, as has already been indicated, but much of the idea was indigenous. The perfection of life, according to the Slavophile ideal, consisted in its being organic, but they projected this ideal conception of the organic upon the historical past, upon the pre-Petrine era; they could see no sign of it whatever in the Petrine period. It is strange that the Slavophiles should have had this "blind-spot" in their thinking, for they should have realized that Muscovite Russia was far from being the embodiment of the ideals they sought. The Slavophiles were lovers of freedom no less than were the Westernizers. Certainly there was no freedom in the autocracy of Muscovite Russia, any more than there is in the Soviet Union in modern times.

The romantic element in the Slavophile system of thought was essentially an emotional one - an emotional attitude which held that Russia was superior to the other cultural, national and religious groups throughout the world. Sociologically, this attitude of the Slavophiles was one of ethnocentrism and as a phenomenon found in nineteenth century Russia (as well as in the U.S.S.R. today) it cannot

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<sup>168</sup> Berdyaev, N., "The Russian Idea," op. cit., p. 40 f.





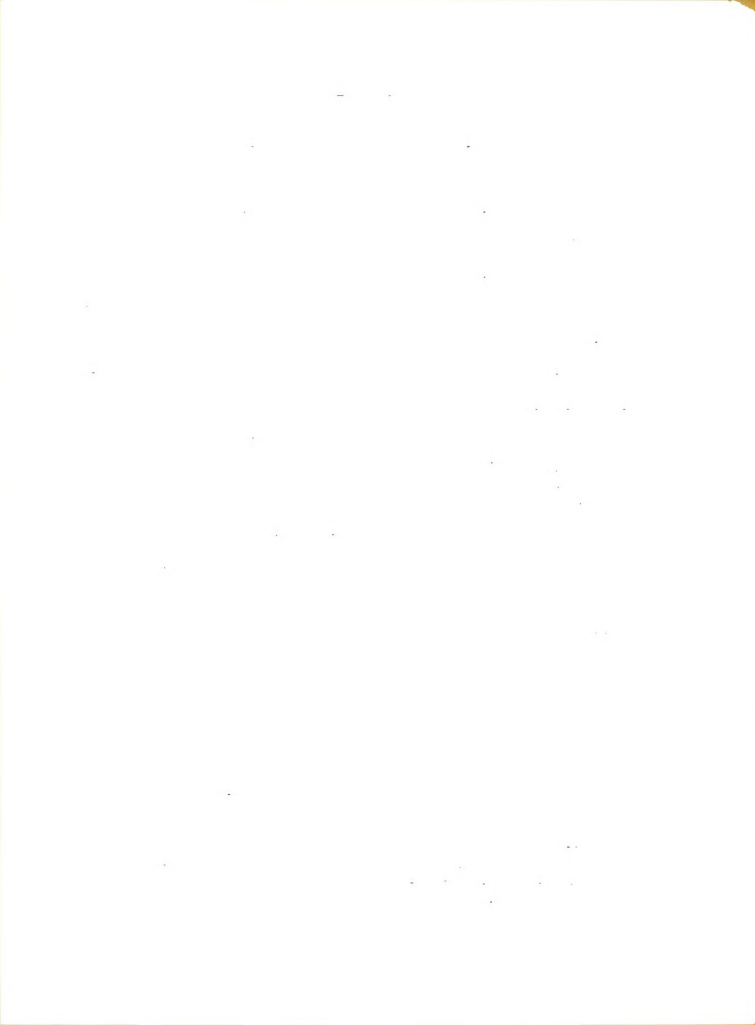
be considered unique.<sup>169</sup> Fraternal organizations, churches, political parties, as well as racial and nationality groups manifest this same emotional attitude. In a marked degree, however, ethnocentrism was characteristic of the Slavophile movement and the writings of such men as Dostoyevsky, Khomyakov and Kirievsky breathe forth an impassioned ethnocentrism based upon the conviction that Russian Orthodoxy, Russian nationality and Russian society are superior to the religious, political and cultural institutions of the Western world. Narodnichestvo is simply a Russian term which modern sociologists would equate to a Russian form of ethnocentrism. To the Slavophile, therefore, Russia's past was wonderful, its present more than magnificent, while its future was envisioned to be above everything that the boldest imagination could picture. True, some Slavophiles did find much to criticize in the Russian society of their day, but these "evils" they felt were not truly Russian but accretions that had crept in from the West.

Some Factors That Contributed to The  
Further Development of Slavophilism

In tracing the factors which contributed to the development of the Slavophile ideology, Honigsheim has shown that Orthodoxy and romantic philosophy from the West have had their influences.<sup>170</sup> Commenting further

<sup>169</sup>Gittler, Joseph B., Social Dynamics, McGraw and Hill Co., New York, 1952, pp. 13-14, 317-327.

<sup>170</sup>See Appendix N.



upon the relation between the Slavophiles and their successors the Panslavists, Honigsheim states that while there were some differences between their philosophies and the social systems urged by them, they nevertheless had at least two points of view in common: (1) They both condemned the legalistic emphasis, originating from the inheritance of Roman law, found in Roman Catholicism. They condemned the atomization of Western society and traced the separatism and schism which followed the Italian Renaissance and the Protestant Revolution. Western philosophy was also anathematized with the exception of the systems of such men as Plato, Blaise Pascal, Hegel, Schelling and von Baader, all of whom were anti-rationalistic and essentially different from the Thomism endorsed by Roman Catholicism. (2) In a positive vein, the Slavophiles and the Panslavists (Konstantin Petrovich Pobjedorostseff and the anti-soviet refugees Sergei Bulgakov and Nikolas Berdyaev) were in agreement with the idea that in no other society anywhere in the world was the Christian social concept of a brother-to-brother relationship between equals and a father-to-child relationship between superior and the subordinated to be found except in Eastern Orthodox Russia.<sup>171</sup>

The conflict between the German romantics and Western rationalism has already been touched upon. F. Schlegel spoke about France and England, which were the West to Germany, in the same way as the Slavophiles spoke about the West, including in it Germany too. But all the same, Ivan Kirievsky succeeded in formulating the typical

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<sup>171</sup>Honigsheim, Paul, The Roots of the Soviet Rural Social Structure: a reprint of an article in Agricultural History, July 1951, pp. 104-114.

marks of the difference between Russia and Europe. The type of Russian thinking and Russian culture was always very distinct from that of Western Europe, a fact it might be well for modern savants to bear in mind in their studies of Soviet Russia. Russian thinking was much more totalitarian or inclined to accept totalitarianism than many of the Western nations.

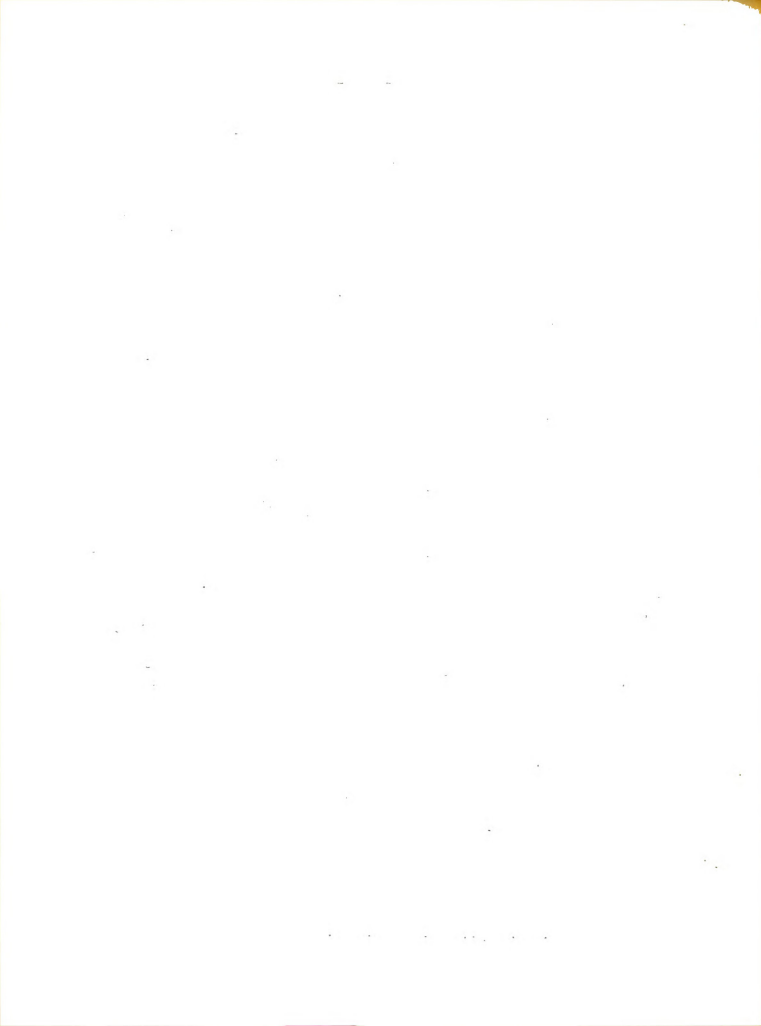
Masaryk has pointed out that the Slavophiles extolled Russia because she did not produce any counterpart to scholasticism. He gives as a reason for the absence of a scholastic attitude in Russia the historical fact that Russia was not called upon to defend the doctrines of the Church against classical paganism, as the Western Church was required to do. "The slavophiles," he states, "are fully representative of the spirit of the Russian church when they attack logic and spurn Aristotle, and when they cling to Plato and his contemplation of eternal ideas and unchangeable verities." <sup>172</sup>

#### Slavophile Attitude Toward Autocracy

Throughout the writings of the leading Slavophiles, Kirievsky, Khomyakov, Aksakov and Dostoyevsky, it is clear that the movement recognized autocracy as one of the most important principles of state order. Without any desire to please the government, but as an expression of their own ideology, the Slavophiles conceived their idea of autocracy. They were convinced that the Russian people did not aspire to rule, did not long for political rights, that the Russian

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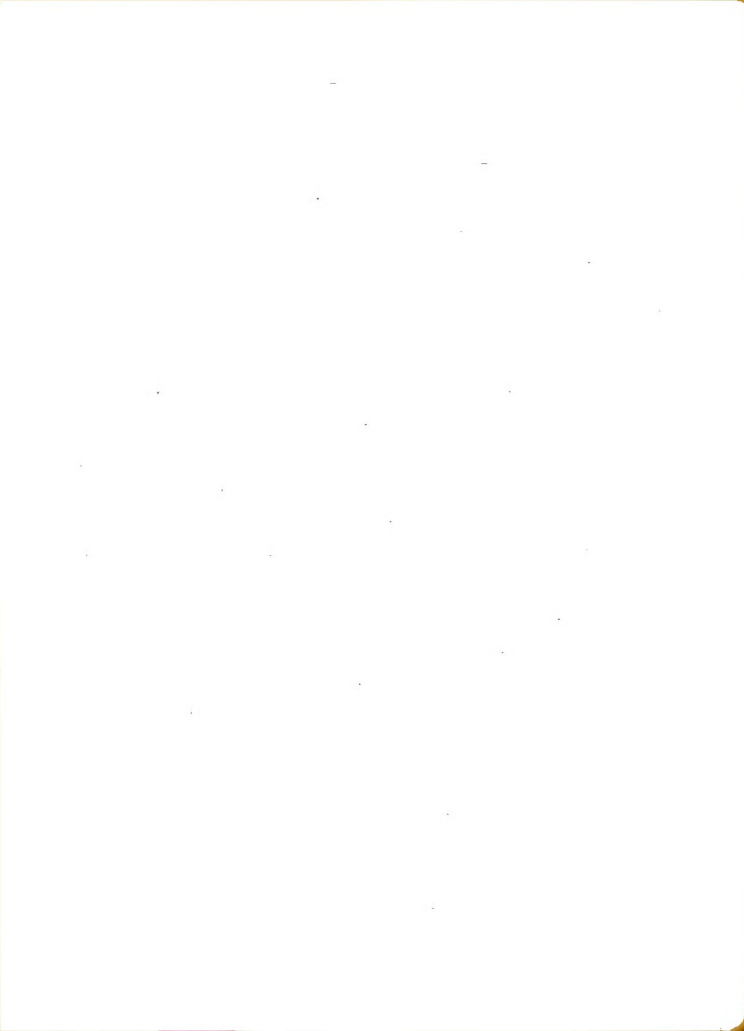
<sup>172</sup>Masaryk, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 490.



people separated, as it were, the state from the people, that it did not wish for self-government, and therefore allowed the government an unlimited power in matters of state. Having renounced its power in favor of the tsar, the Russian people preserved freedom of private life. On the basis of such an agreement, (which is reminiscent of the theory of the origin of the state by contract) there was developed the Slavophile doctrine: Unlimited political state power to the government; to the people complete moral and spiritual liberty of life, of speech and of thought. That this was pure utopianism is apparent, especially under the autocracy of the Tsars.

This abstract theory of the Slavophiles concerning the lack of any desire on the part of the Russian people for power, came under serious criticism by the Westernizers. They pointed out that the Slavophile theory was based on certain historical facts, while ignoring others. It created the unconvincing concept of freedom without power, without activity. Spiritual freedom presupposed the existence of freedom of individual life, but the latter in Russia, while called free, was subordinated to tsarist authority. Of what use was it to talk of freedom of speech when it was forbidden to express one's opinions freely in public? On several occasions the Slavophiles themselves found their opinions condemned by the State and themselves silenced by governmental decree.

The deeply patriotic movement of the Slavophiles, which conceived in the Russian autocracy a form of ideal relations between the tsar and the people - which saw in the Orthodoxy of the state a

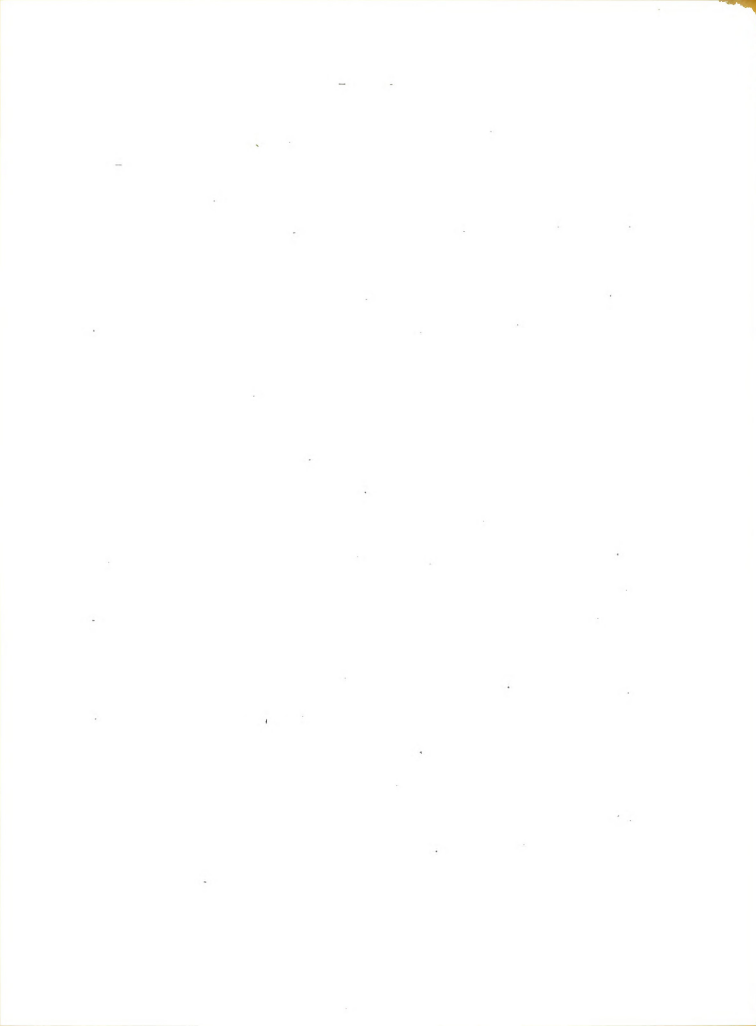


basis for the spiritual progress of the country, and in a strictly national development the only way for such progress, - that movement stood in opposition, not to the autocratic tsar, but to an irresponsible and all-powerful bureaucracy.

This we find that the Slavophiles, who had the same political formula as the governmental party, differed from the latter in the personnel and in the way of carrying their principles into practice. While the government party demanded complete subordination to its principles, and did not recognize any criticism, the Slavophiles tried to prove their points by appealing to history and by endeavoring to persuade others to accept their views. But the theory of the Slavophiles had an inner contradiction. They believed that the chief foundation in the life of the Russian people was a voluntary and free association of free men in the state and in religion, and their free complete subordination to the state authority and to the church, at the same time reserving the free will of man and freedom of thought. They tried to find evidence to support this view in the pages of Russian history. This theoretical combination in the Slavophile ideas was the sequel of a peculiar and very one-sided interpretation of the Russian historical process.

As a matter of principle, the government of Tsar Nicholas I did not recognize any participation of public thought in the affairs of the state administration. For the ruling power the Slavophiles were idealists, notwithstanding their patriotic tendencies.





It cannot be denied that Slavophile theories were far removed from reality. The prestige of the Russian Orthodox Church was upheld not by the mute subordination of the clergy, but by the faith of the laity. The central ruling power was represented throughout the country by exceptionally uncultured officials. The rights of the people, the enforcement of the law, the justice of the courts were cynically mocked by the local authorities. Even the conservative Slavophile Khomyakov, in his verses Russia (1854) wrote this about his fatherland:

She is blackened by the dark injustice of the courts;  
By the yoke of serfdom is she infamed;  
She is full of ungodly flattery, of baleful lie,  
Of deadly and shameful laziness is she full,  
And of abomination of every kind. <sup>173</sup>

All the order of state and community was permeated by serfdom, which disgusted Khomyakov and all other serious-minded students of Russia's social conditions. Serfdom was disgracing the owners and depriving the serfs of every vestige of human dignity.

#### Ivan Kirievsky: His Importance to Slavophilism

It is necessary at this point to undertake an evaluation of the importance of Ivan Kirievsky and his work in the development of the Slavophile movement.<sup>174</sup> To Kirievsky the Slavophiles owed the most

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<sup>174</sup> Ivan Kirievsky became a Slavophile and a devout member of the Russian Orthodox Church after being subjected to influences from Khomyakov and the pressures of Peter Kirievsky, his brother, who had developed an almost fanatical romanticism about Russia. In an attempt to propagate Slavophilism, Ivan Kirievsky undertook to publish several journals, The European (1832) and Moskvityanin. Both efforts were ended by the Tsarist government.

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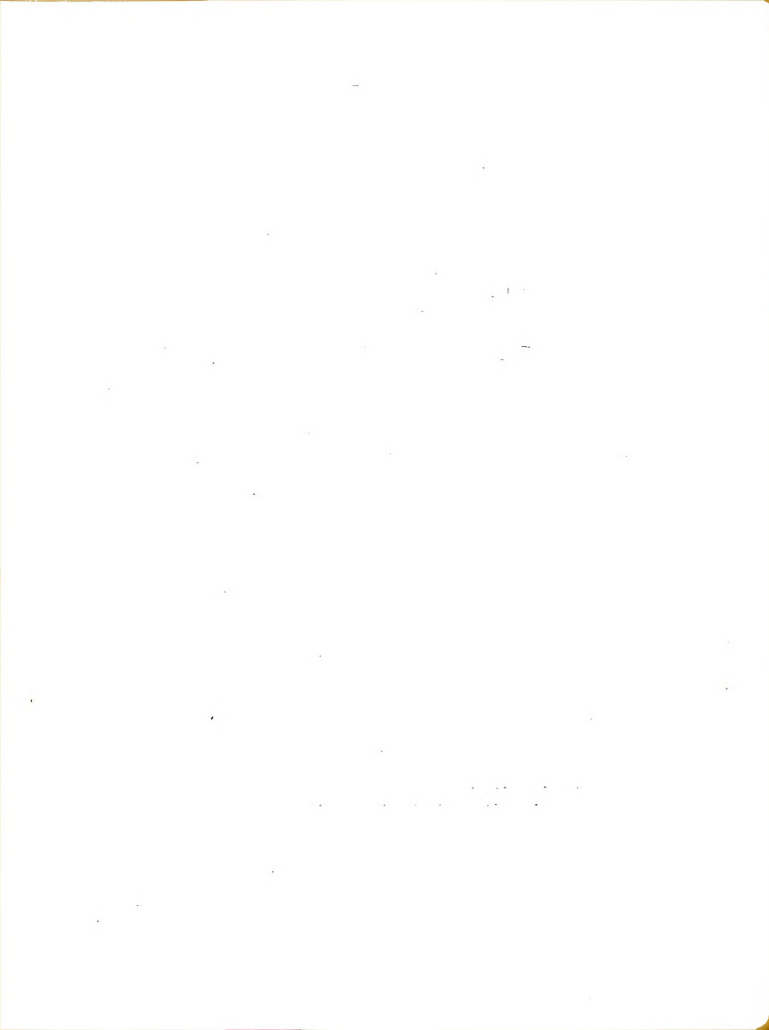
profound and the most general formulation of their ideology as a philosophic doctrine. As a matter of mere chronology, Kirievsky was the philosophic founder of Slavophilism. Commenting upon the importance of Kirievsky as Slavophile's founder, Prince Mirsky writes:

Kirievsky was the master of a beautiful style, which unlike Khomyakov's, is closely akin to Karamzin's and Pushkin's. He was the first Russian intellectual layman to resume the long-lost contact with the profoundest and most alive mystical currents inside the Orthodox Church, and in this respect he is, together with Khomyakov, the fountain-head of all modern Orthodox culture. 175

Something of the influence of Russian Orthodoxy upon Kirievsky's thinking can be understood when it is remembered that after his marriage, he came under the spiritual guidance of a monk, Father Filaret, of the Novopassian monastery near Moscow. Under the direction of Filaret, Kirievsky came to have a clearer understanding and appreciation of the religious foundations of Russian history and his views on Orthodoxy were strengthened considerably. He frequently visited the monastery until the death of Filaret in 1842 when he accepted a Father Makary as his confessor. Makary encouraged Kirievsky to undertake an extensive and penetrating study of the Greek Church Fathers. 176

<sup>175</sup> Mirsky, op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>176</sup> Masaryk, op. cit., Vol. I. pp. 241-46. Masaryk summarizes the leading ideas supported by Kirievsky after he came under the influence of Fathers Filaret and Makary. Kirievsky held that in its intimate nature Russia is different from Europe and that the basic reason for the difference is a religious one. Russia is mystical and demands less empirical evidences for its faith, while the West, both Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is tainted, he feels, by the rationalism and legalism they have inherited from ancient Rome.



### The Social Theories of Kirievsky

Kirievsky further proposed the theories that while the Russian ideal concerning property is communal, the European ideal gives little value to the individual and places greater importance upon the value of the soil. Sociologically, these opposing ideas produce differing familial systems: in Russia the patriarchal family was the norm, based upon a unity that is moral in essence and which eventuated in the organic development of the mir, then the state and finally achieving its summation in the tsar. In the West, however, each family is usually individualistic and this leads to an atomization of society. Kirievsky held that in Russia the nation and the Church are cemented together as separate units on the basis of an internal oneness of spirit, whereas in the West any apparent unity that is achieved must come from external force or political pressure.<sup>177</sup>

The social conditions he found in Russia and in the West, Kirievsky traced to the two differing types of philosophy held by Eastern and Western Christianity. Historically he traced the foundations of the separate development of the two cultures to the value systems and basic ideologies held by ancient Rome and ancient Greece and it was his contention that the legalism of the West produced the Great Schism between the Eastern and Western Catholic Churches in 1054, with the Roman segment of Christendom abandoning the ancient Faith and departing on the path of rationalism and individualism, thus breaking the bond of unity which is a mark of the True Church. Thus, he formulated the theory that

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<sup>177</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

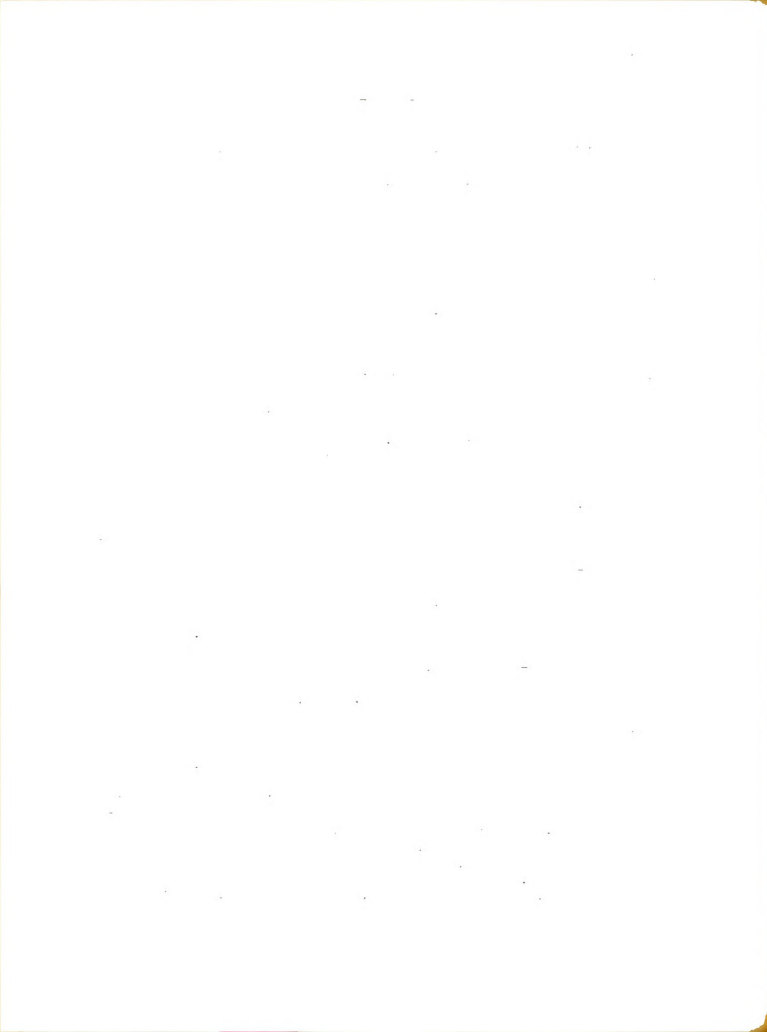


the Eastern Catholic Church, especially that of Russia, was superior to Western Christianity. Further, not merely the religious life of East and West were to be evaluated according to his concept, but he subjected the total culture of East and West to careful scrutiny and decided that Russian cultural and institutional structures were far superior to those of Europe. Stemming from rationalistic scholasticism, which caused every man to feel that through the use of his reason he could arrive at a knowledge of truth; and from Protestantism which engendered a further emphasis upon individualism, European culture tended to become schism-producing. Kirievsky was apparently forgetting the many sects and schismatic groups that had split off from Russian Orthodoxy. Revolution, he contended, is but a logical outcome of the legalo-rationalistic heritage mediated to Europe by Roman Catholicism. In contra-distinction to this confusion and egoism which he believed was to be found in the West, Kirievsky extolled the concept of sobornost, the unity and wholeness he felt was to be found in Russia.

In his anti-rationalism, Kirievsky proposed that Europe adopt Russia's mystical and romantic system. Thus, Masaryk writes that Kirievsky proposed that

The cold analysis of the critical understanding, which since Roman days has been the leading power in the west, must be replaced by a return to reason; from logic, syllogistics, dialectics, we must return to mystical contemplation. The critical understanding has isolated the individual psychical faculties, has attempted to make the independent one of another, has led to an inner division in the human spirit. Rescue from this state can be secured in one way only, by a return to faith, to contemplation, to intuition,





in a word to that reason wherein all the spiritual energies, acting as a perfect unity, constitute a living whole. This unity of the spirit was, he says, most perfectly achieved among the Greek fathers of the church...at any rate, the saving Russian philosophy could be established upon the foundation of Schelling's teachings; the Greek Fathers would serve this philosophy as signposts, would offer it the principles requisite for the guidance of life.<sup>178</sup>

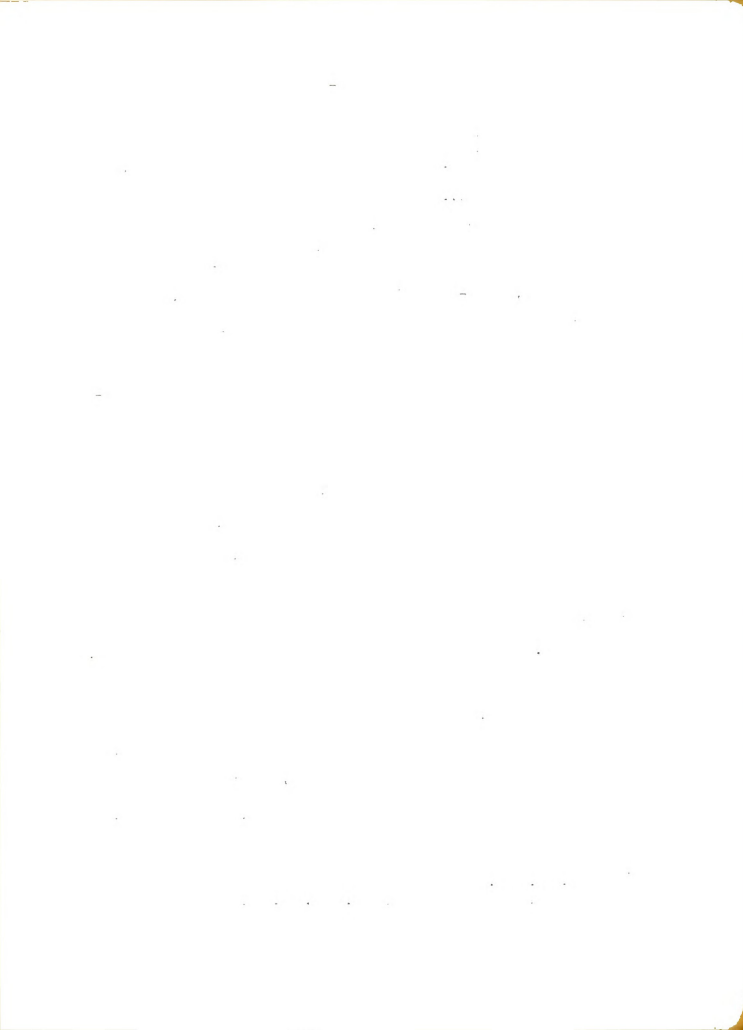
Berdyaev, a Neo-Slavophile of the twentieth century, contends that Kirievsky did not condemn everything European, but felt rather that Russian culture was the highest degree of Western culture and that it was not characteristic of Kirievsky's thought that the pre-Petrine institutions were perfect, but rather that the spiritual wholeness of the Orthodox Church, its continuity and perfection through the centuries of its existence, was the basis for Russian hope in her peculiar mission as leader of the world.<sup>179</sup>

It was characteristic of Kirievsky's thought, as it was of that of the other Slavophiles, that they erred as did all the European romanticists in seeking the ideal for the future in the dead pages of the past. Rousseau had made the same mistake and the Slavophiles, men of penetrating insight that they were, fell into the same erroneous concept of history. One aspect of this romanticism of the Slavophiles was the concept that Moscow was to be regarded as the Third Rome, the legitimate heir to the glory, prestige and authority that the Latin First Rome had enjoyed and which the Second Rome, Constantinople, had

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>179</sup> Berdyaev, "The Russian Idea," op. cit., p. 48.

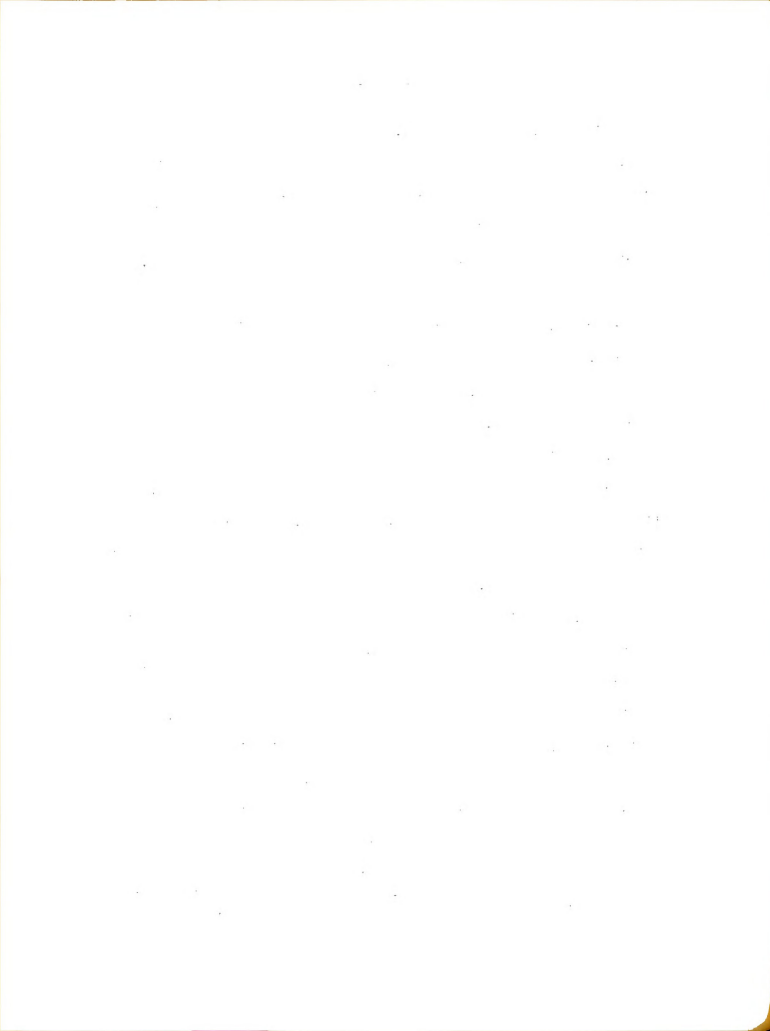


lost with the fall of Byzantium. Looking into the future, the Slavophiles anticipated the eventual triumph of Moscow as religious leader and teacher of the world.

Of sociological importance, however, was the difference in Kirievsky's concept of the romantic past from that of Schelling. In contrast with Schelling and with the devotees of romanticist hero-worship, Kirievsky turned for help to the muzhiki, the Russian peasant. For Kirievsky the muzhik was the ideally religious man, and as will later be shown, this same concept was the basis of the literary works of Dostoyevsky. Kirievsky insisted that the thoughts which were to save Russia must be elaborated by the totality of the faithful, and he declared genius to be superfluous if not positively harmful. This led to his agrarianism with its social basis. He greatly admired the mir and extolled it as a fundamental social unit of the Russian social and political systems.

Thus, from Kirievsky through to the later Slavophiles there is a definite sociological importance to their philosophy of social unity and communality. How was this wholeness, the sobornost, to find its social manifestation? The Slavophiles answered that the mir, the rural collectivity, was the most desirous social institution to give expression to their philosophy of Platonic oneness. Professor Honigsheim has traced the origin and development of this rural social system in Russia. In his monograph, Honigsheim states:

The explanation of the mir's origin now almost universally accepted is as follows. The landowner, interested in receiving regularly the tribute supposedly due him, made the entire



peasantry responsible. Since tribute was expected from all, the poorer peasants as well as those with larger families insisted upon the redistribution of land according to the number of able-bodied male members. The interests of the landlords as well as the poor and large peasant families favored the development and maintenance of this relatively young institution. More important than this historical reality was the role which the ideology of the mir played among certain Russian groups. To understand it...a discussion of the sociology of the Greek Orthodox religion is essential.<sup>180</sup>

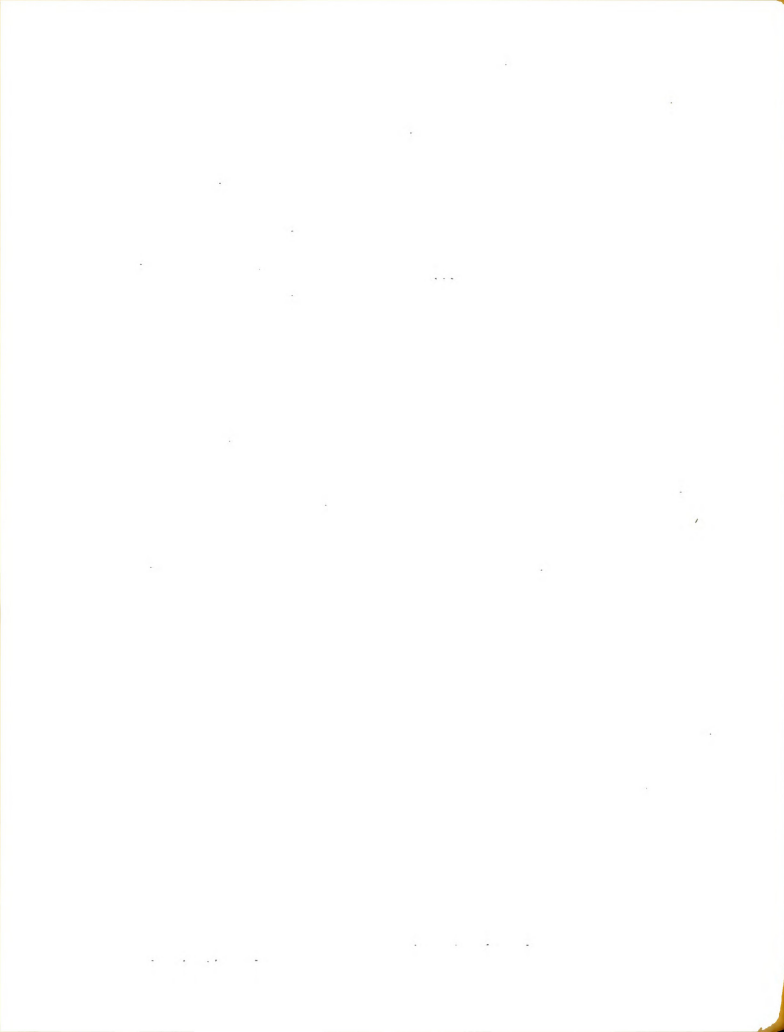
#### The Russian Concept of Sobornost

Russian philosophers are constantly pointing out that Russian thought struggles to achieve wholeness, which Eastern Christians set in opposition to the atomistic rationalism of the West. Kirievsky points this out throughout his works and it is found to be a fundamental theme in much of Russian literature. "Russian atheists assert wholeness, totalitarianism, no less than the Orthodox Slavophiles. Psychologically, Russian Orthodoxy is wholeness, totalitarianism; the Russian Westernizers to whom the religious type of Slavophile was alien, was influenced by Hegelianism, which to them was simply a totalitarian system of thought and life embracing absolutely everything."<sup>181</sup>

This concept of wholeness, which is so characteristic of the Slavophiles, might be considered to be the commune idea of totalitarian Communism. True, the Slavophiles conceived of wholeness as being man's unity not only with one another, but with God. This is definitely a Platonic way of expressing the idea, and it is truly Christian also. In a sociological sense, the philosophic doctrine

<sup>180</sup>Honigsheim, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>181</sup>Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," op. cit., p. 27.



of wholeness, so clearly expressed in the theological doctrine of sobornost, finds social expression in the mir, the commune, the totalitarian state. That the idea of wholeness and the communal spirit has been deep-seated in Russian thought for centuries, can hardly be denied. All the Marxists added to this idea was the philosophical and economic elements of dialectical materialism and attempted to eliminate the spiritual base. The communal spirit among the Russians long ante-dates the appearance of Marxism. The roots of Russian community-mindedness must be sought in its Platonic inheritance and in its Christian theology.

Kirievsky expressed something of this concept of sobornost<sup>182</sup> when he asserts the "spiritual communion of each Christian with the plenitude of the whole Church."<sup>183</sup> Such a concept seems to have been given a greater social expression among the Russians than among Western

<sup>182</sup>Professor Florovsky defines sobornost and comments upon it as follows: "The Church is completeness in itself; it is the continuation and the fulfillment of the theanthropic union...In the Church mankind becomes one unity. The life of the Church is unity and union. The Church is a unity not only in the sense that it is one and unique; it is a unity, first of all, because its very being consists in reuniting separated and divided mankind. It is this unity which is the sobornost or catholicity of the Church. We are speaking here of wholeness, not only of communion, and in any case not of a simple empirical communion...it belongs not to the phenomenal and empirical, but to the noumenal and ontological plane; it describes the very essence, not the external manifestation." Florovsky, George V., "Sobornost: the Catholicity of the Church," in The Church of God, S.P.C.K., London, 1934, pp. 51-75.

<sup>183</sup>Kirievsky, Ivan, Complete Works, ed. by Gershenson, Moscow, 1911, Vol. I, p. 278.





Christians, certainly greater than among the Protestants who have become atomized into a multitude of sects resulting from the individualism so characteristic of the Reformed churches. Kirievsky further comments upon this concept of wholeness, in which the communal idea is certainly included, when he writes that "the distinctive type of Russian outlook on every type of order is the combination of personal independence with the general order as a whole," but the mind of Western Europe "does not comprise order without uniformity."<sup>184</sup>

Kirievsky, along with the other Slavophiles, thus insists that the wholeness of society, combined with the personal independence and the individual diversity of the citizens, is possible only on the condition of a free subordination of separate persons to absolute values and in their free creativeness founded on love of the whole, love of the Church, love of their nation and state.

Though first preached by the Slavophiles as one of their most important doctrines, the concept of communal landownership was later advocated by the Populists. Optimistically, both groups believed that the feebly developed instinct of the *mir* concerning private property would act as a bulwark to protect Russia from assimilating the capitalism of the West. Demanding the nationalization or socialization of land, the Populists held to the conviction that the peasant would easily move from the communal to the collective agricultural regime.<sup>185</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>185</sup> Korensky, Alexander, Russia on the Eve of World War I, The Russian Review, Autumn 1945, p. 13.

Commenting upon the difference between the Slavophile and the Populist and Tsarist concepts of land economy, Kerensky writes:

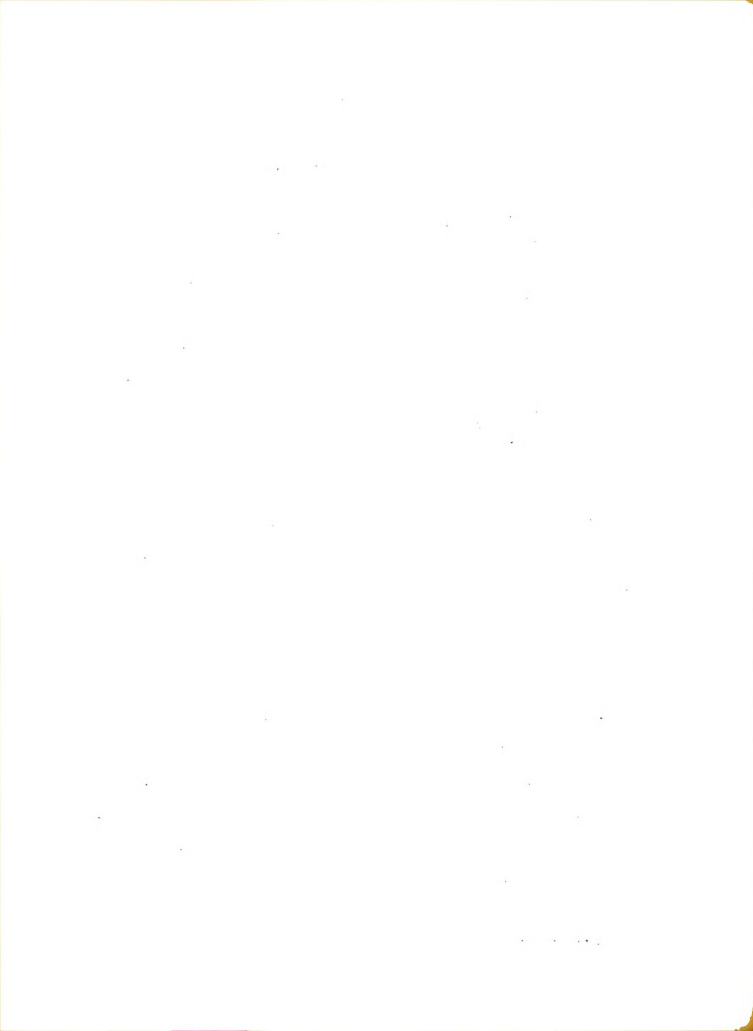
Actually the peasant commune, such as it existed in Russia, had very little in common with the ideal commune of the Slavophiles or the Populists. For the administration, it was simply a convenient police apparatus, permitting it to "keep the peasants under tutelage and to treat them like children," in Witte's words. Until 1903, when the principle of joint liability finally was abolished, it was especially convenient as an institution for tax-collecting as the arrears due by a member of the commune had to be paid by all the other members. Thus the obschina in the hands of the administration was corrupted and turned into a source of economic regression. And the peasants themselves were irritated by the fact, that, according to the existing system, they were compelled to remain in the commune whether they liked it or not." 186

Alexei Stepanovich Khomyakov

From Kirievsky and his concept of the mir, a study of the Slavophile movement leads naturally to Alexei Stepanovich Khomyakov. Born May 1, 1804 at Moscow, Khomyakov was the son of Stepan Khomyakov, a widely read and cultured man who nevertheless evidenced little strength of character. The education of his children was left in the hands of his wife, Maria Kireevskaia, a remarkably intelligent and religious woman. According to Russian custom of the time, Alexei and his brother were tutored at home. The brothers could speak and write in French, German, and English as well as in their native Russian. In addition, they soon acquired competence in Latin, Greek and Sanscrit. As part of their education they were familiarized with the philosophy of Western Europe.

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186 Ibid., p. 14.



The influence of his mother helped Alexei to develop a deep and lasting religious consciousness. His mother kept the rigorous fasts of the Orthodox Church faithfully and attended the Divine Liturgy regularly. She was able to communicate to her sons a fervor and loyalty to Orthodoxy similar to her own. In 1822 Alexei entered the Russian army. While in St. Petersburg he associated with the decabrists but dissented from their views. He travelled a good deal, took part in the Turkish War of 1829, but the greater part of his life he spent in Moscow, reading, writing and debating with his firends. It was through intercourse with his friends, K. Aksakov, Samarin, Koselev, Herten and the Kirievsky brothers that Khomyakov developed his Slavophile ideas. He died of cholera on September 23, 1860.<sup>187</sup>

Commenting upon Khomyakov's importance and genius, Nicholas Zernov writes:

He belonged to a rare class of genius who can be equally creative in diverse spheres of human activity. He was a gifted poet and a good painter; a historian and a philosopher;...he was a journalist and born controversialist; but above all he was a theologian. Khomyakov's attitude to the Church was different from that of the other members of the Slavophile movement. Many of them were keen churchmen, but most of them passed through periods of indifference or doubts, or even of open hostility against Christianity. The Church was for them a treasure-house which they found as a result of a struggle, it was for them a truth which they had at first denied and despised. This was not Khomyakov's position. He was never outside the Church...His main emphasis on the spirit of love and freedom that makes the Church one fellowship knit together by faith and charity is consonant with the whole trend of Russian spirituality.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>187</sup>Masaryk, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 254.

<sup>188</sup>Zernov, Nicholas, The Church is One, S.P.C.K., London, 1948, pp. 7-11.



Many of Khomyakov's views in philosophy and history were derived from Kirievsky and they show a clear pattern of Platonism. He attempted to carry Kirievsky's thought a step beyond what that writer had done, yet there are many points upon which the two leaders of the Slavophile movement disagree. With Kirievsky, Khomyakov begins from the thesis that human life as a whole finds its true fulcrum in religion. He regards history as the history of religious development and to him religion is the motivating force in history. If Karl Marx is an economic determinist, Khomyakov can be considered a religious determinist. Faith, he held, was the factor in history which motivated all of man's higher activities. History is itself a continuous struggle between freedom and necessity. If religion be a true historic energy, it follows that there must be a struggle between two divergent religious outlooks, the religion of material necessity and the religion of spiritual freedom. This struggle ends with the establishment of the religion of the spirit and of freedom.

Commenting upon this concept of those who are within and those who are outside the Church, Khomyakov writes:

All the notes of the Church, whether inward or outward, are recognized only by herself, and by those whom grace calls to be members of her. To those, indeed, who are alien from her, and are not called to her, they are unintelligible; for to such as these, outward change of rite appears to be a change of the spirit itself, which is glorified in the rite...a partial revolt against false doctrines, together with the retention or acceptance of other false doctrines, neither is, nor could be, the work of the Church; for within her, according to her very essence, there must always have been preachers and teachers

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and the role of the accounting department in ensuring the integrity of the financial statements.

2. It also highlights the need for regular audits and the importance of having a strong internal control system in place to prevent fraud and errors.

3. The second part of the document provides a detailed overview of the company's financial performance over the past year, including a breakdown of revenue, expenses, and profit.

4. It also includes a comparison of the company's performance to industry benchmarks and a discussion of the factors that have contributed to its success.

5. The third part of the document outlines the company's financial goals for the upcoming year and the strategies that will be implemented to achieve them.

6. It also includes a discussion of the risks that the company faces and the measures that will be taken to mitigate them.

7. The fourth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings of the audit and the recommendations that have been made to improve the company's financial reporting process.

8. It also includes a discussion of the steps that will be taken to implement these recommendations and the timeline for completion.

9. The fifth part of the document provides a final summary of the company's financial performance and a statement of the company's commitment to transparency and accountability.

10. It also includes a discussion of the company's vision for the future and the role of the accounting department in achieving that vision.



and martyrs confessing, not partial truth with an admixture of error, but the full and unadulterated truth.<sup>189</sup>

In this passage, Khomyakov is stressing the concept of sobornost as thoroughly as did Kirievsky. The Church just be united, not only in ceremonies or external administration and organization, but in an inner spirit of communality, and this inner spirit must be given external expression in a communal spirit of fraternal cooperation. No smallest degree of untruth can be permitted to mar the orthodoxy of the faith of the entire group and those who depart from group-membership or lose their faith, are guilty of revolt. As Berdayev has commented on Khomyakov's sociology: "it almost looks with Khomyakov that there cannot be Christianity without the village community. The idea of personality, as being as central in Christianity as that of collectivity, was repressed in the Slavophiles' sociology."<sup>190</sup>

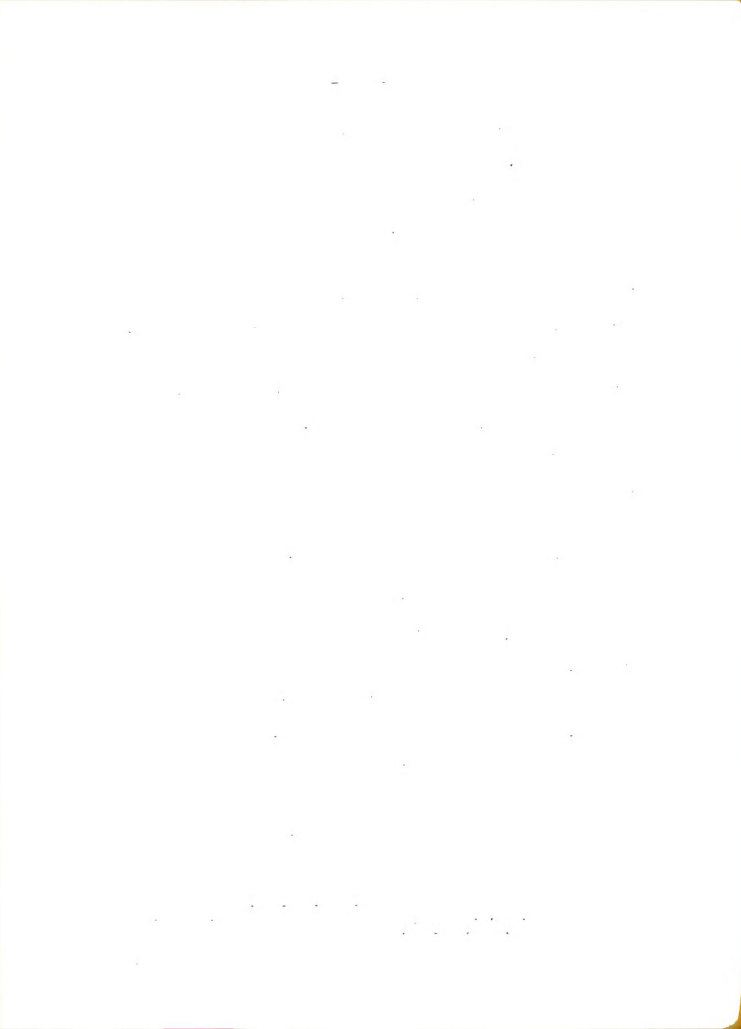
#### Khomyakov's Ecclesiology

Essentially, Khomyakov's treatise on the unity of the Church, is Platonic. He insists upon the concept of sobornost, of the unity of the visible church with the invisible church; of mankind upon earth with God. Thus he states: "The Church is one. Her unity of necessity follows from the unity of God; for the Church is not a multitude of persons in their separate individuality, but a unity of the grace of God, living in a multitude of rational creatures."<sup>191</sup> Here Khomyakov stresses

<sup>189</sup>Khomyakov, The Church is One, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>190</sup>Berdyaev, N., A.S. Khomyakov, Put, Moscow, 1912, p. 198 F.

<sup>191</sup>Khomyakov, op. cit., p. 14.



the all-embracing unity of the Church. In the sociological sense, this signifies that Khomyakov, like Kirievsky, rejected religious individualism and subjectivism. The individual as a religious being was by him subordinated to the religious whole, for he considered such subordination to be the necessary consequence of the existence of the one God Who had revealed truth to man. Khomyakov thus attained to a "civitas dei" wherein was abolished the distinction between this world and the next, the individual becoming already in this world a dweller in the city of God.<sup>192</sup>

The basis of the social structure, according to Khomyakov and the other Slavophiles, was the family, and they conceived of Russia as founded upon the patriarchal organic theory of society. The State should exist in a condition analogous to the family, a close-knit unity based upon a common economy, a common religion, and a common Russian cultural background. To say that the Slavophiles were "family-minded" is another way of stating that they held the concept of sobornost in a marked degree.<sup>193</sup>

In Khomyakov's works, perhaps more than in any of the other Slavophiles, the religious element is stressed. While the Slavophiles maintained that there were three basic principles in Russia: Orthodoxy, autocracy and the sentiment of nationhood, it was Khomyakov, more than the others in the movement, who emphasized the integral relationship between Russian culture and Russian Orthodoxy. True, all the Slavo-

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<sup>192</sup>Ibid., p. 17

<sup>193</sup>Berdyaev, "The Russian Idea," op. cit., p. 49.

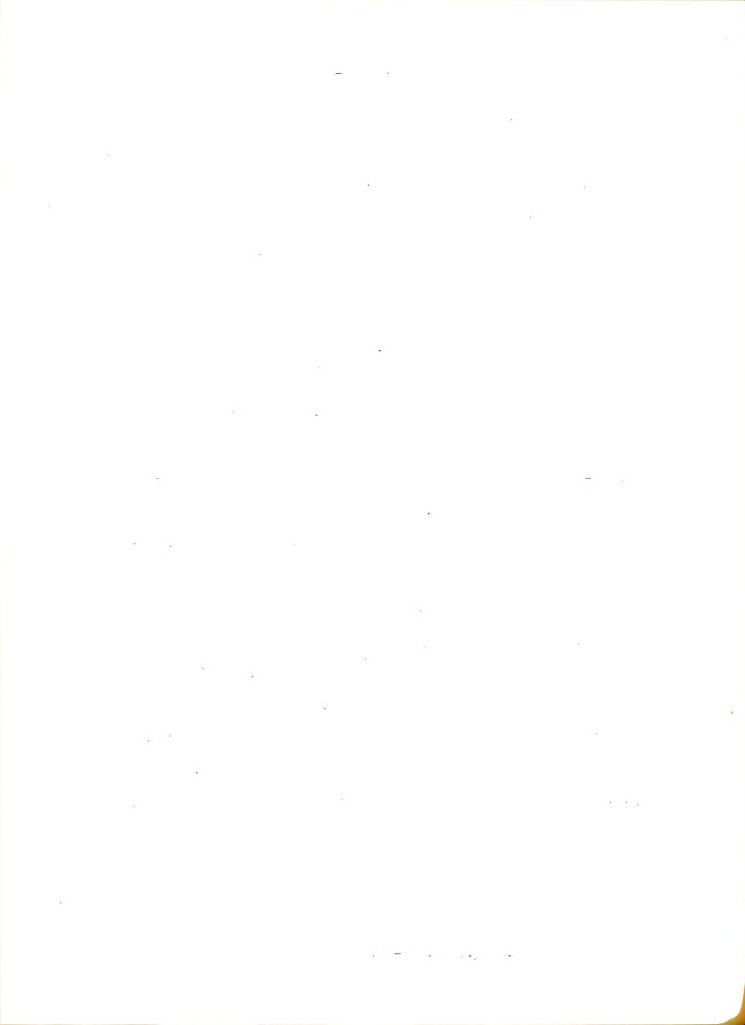


philes placed Orthodoxy first in their classification of the triad and they would never have consented to placing the Church in a subordinate position to either autocracy or the sense of nationhood. But Khomyakov's attitude toward the Church was different from that of the other members of the Slavophile movement. He was so deeply rooted in the spiritual life of the Church, he was so absolutely certain of her divine origin, that no one was more outspoken than he in his criticism of her failures. He was always convinced that there is no greater proof of disbelief in the Church than the attempt to conceal her defects from her own members. His fearless criticism caused him many difficulties, and he soon earned the reputation of a free-thinker and even of an atheist among the conservative-minded members of Russian society.

The part of Khomyakov's teaching that created the most discussion and earned him the most severe criticism was his concept of ecclesiastical authority. Here is to be found a clue to how deeply the idea of sobornost had penetrated into his thinking, for he ascribed the supreme ecclesiastical authority, not to the collective episcopate of the Orthodox Church alone, but he would subject their decisions to the approval or disapproval of the entire church, clergy and laity alike, before the doctrines became definitive. This is contrary to the accepted doctrinal position of the Orthodox Church, which holds that the Episcopate assembled in the Ecumenical Councils possesses the charisma of the Apostles and is entitled to define doctrines of faith or morality without further reference to the laity or lower clergy.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>194</sup>Khomyakov, op. cit., pp. 18-23.



### Khomyakov's Criticism of the Western Church

Khomyakov is in agreement with the other Slavophiles when he contends that the Western Church is in error and that only the Eastern Orthodox Church has preserved the fullness and purity of the faith. Because of this retention of the unadulterated faith, he asserts of Orthodoxy:

By the will of God the Holy Church, after the falling away of many schisms, and of the Roman Patriarchate, was preserved in the Greek Eparchies and Patriarchates, and only those communities can acknowledge one another as fully Christian which preserve their unity with the Eastern Patriarchates, or enter into this unity. For there is one God, and one Church, and within her there is neither dissension nor disagreement.<sup>195</sup>

This thought is the basis of the Slavophile doctrine that Orthodoxy alone is able to teach men truth. It is the basis of the idea of Russia's messianic mission, and of the condemnation of Western Christianity for having departed from truth. Papal claims to infallibility are viewed by Khomyakov as basic to errors of Roman Catholicism:

The papal authority which took the place of Catholic infallibility, was an external authority. The Christian, formerly a member of the Church, a responsible sharer in its decisions, became a subject of the Church. It and he lost oneness, and though he remained in its bosom, he was outside it. The gift of infallibility, attributed to the Pope, was placed outside of any influence of moral environment upon him. In this way no perversion of the Christian milieu, nor even the personal corruption of the Pope himself, could influence his infallibility in any way whatever. The Pope became an oracle, deprived of freedom, an idol in flesh, moved by a hidden mechanism. For a Christian this oracle was debased to the level of material phenomena, the laws of which may and should be subjected to the investigations of reason. The inner connection of man and the Church was broken. Purely external and consequently ratio-

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<sup>195</sup>Ibid., p. 30.





nalism because it includes not only the human reason but his whole being.<sup>196</sup>

By an inner necessity, Khomyakov held, Roman Catholicism and its emphasis upon rationalism led to the Roman Church becoming a state. The faith had to be defined by laws and degrees and everything connected with faith had to be rationally explained. Reformed Christianity, because of its Latin heritage, Khomyakov insisted, was drawn into the same camp of rationalism as that in which the Roman Church was to be found. According to Khomyakov both the Roman Catholics and the Protestants are tainted with rationalism:

As soon as authority became external, knowledge of religious truth became separated from religious life. Relations among men changed. In the Church they had formed one whole because one soul dwelt in them: this connection disappeared. It was replaced by a common subjection of everyone to the supreme Roman authority. As soon as the first doubt as to the legality of this authority arose, unity was destroyed. Because the doctrine of papal infallibility was not based on the holiness of the Universal Church, the Western world, when it arrogated to itself the right to change or (as the Romans say) to explain the Creed and to disregard utterly the opinion of the Eastern brethren, did not even pretend to be morally above the East. No, it simply invoked an accidental peculiarity of the Episcopate and its succession, as though all other bishops, consecrated by the Apostle Peter, regardless of their See, would not have been just as much his successor as the Bishop of Rome. Rome never said to men: "Only he may judge me, who is perfectly holy, but he will always think as I do." On the contrary, Rome destroyed every connection between knowledge and interior perfection of spirit. It liberated reason, though it seemed to trample on it.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>197</sup>Khomyakov, A.S., Collected Works, ed. by Dimitri Khomyakov, Moscow University Press, Moscow, 1900, Vol. II, p. 55.



Within its limits, Roman Catholicism aimed at unity, and secured unity, Khomyakov held, but at the cost of freedom, whereas Protestantism sacrificed unity to freedom.

Further, Khomyakov considered Russian Orthodoxy superior to Western Christianity because Orthodoxy had been able to retain a more mystical philosophy, a contemplative outlook, whereas the West had lost its theocentric outlook and had become materiocentric:

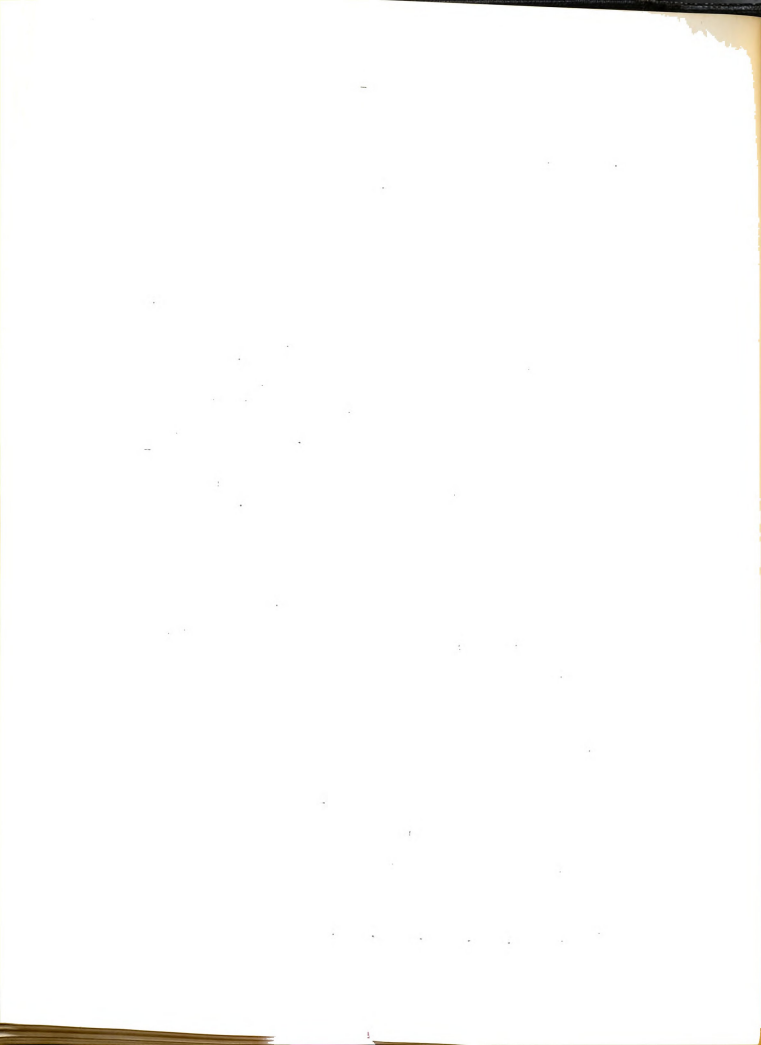
Kant was the continuation of Luther, and Feuerbach the continuation of Zwingli and Carlstadt. In Feuerbach and Stirner, postkantian German philosophy reached its nadir, individualism and subjectivism manifesting their true essence - egoism. Protestantism is rationalism in an idealist form, while (Roman) Catholicism is rationalism in a materialist form. To Catholic rationalist materialism Khomyakov gives the name of "talismanism" holding that the Catholic prayer is a mere conjuration, where the Orthodox Christian maintains a genuine spiritualism in ritual and in prayer.<sup>198</sup>

If this attitude of the Slavophiles is understood, it is easier to realize the reason for their superior attitude about Russia and what they considered her mission to the world. The Slavophiles quite sincerely believed that the West was sitting in outer darkness and that Russia had the moral responsibility to bring light out of the East to dispel the rationalism and materialism of the West. Even today, Russian Communists hold a similar idea, though their missionary zeal has lost its Christian character and there has been substituted in its place a religion of materialism.

#### Khomyakov's Correspondence with Palmer

An interesting and illuminating source for an understanding of

<sup>198</sup>Masaryk, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 256.



Khomyakov's theories is the collection of his letters to William Palmer, an English clergyman, who repeatedly sought to be received into Communion by the Orthodox Church, but upon being told that he would have to accept Orthodox doctrines without reservation, he joined the Church of Rome.

Khomyakov's correspondence is highly informative of his, and the Slavophile, point of view about the Western nations. One such letter, written from Berlin in 1847 illustrated Khomyakov's attitude toward the West, and gives the reasons for his feelings:

I am writing to you from the capital city of self-contained discord, from Berlin; and my first word shall be Unity. Nowhere can I feel so deeply the necessity, the holiness, and the consoling power of that Divine principle, Unity. Not to be found in the vain and weak efforts of individual intellects (for every intellect makes itself its own centre, when indeed there is but one true centre: God);... An almost boundless Individualism is the characteristic feature of Germany, and particularly of Prussia...Even the desire for harmony seems to be extinguished...The hand of decay is on that country, notwithstanding the apparent progress in material improvements.<sup>199</sup>

Khomyakov here criticizes Germany because it has lost the sense of unity, sobornost, communality, which the Slavophiles so greatly emphasized. He views the sociological condition of German individualism from a Platonic point of view and regrets that there is not the harmony and wholeness which he believes to characterize Russian society.

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<sup>199</sup> Khomyakov, "Correspondence with Mr. Palmer," Russia and the English Church, ed. by W.J. Birkbeck, Rivington, Percival and Co., London, 1895, Vol. I, p. 77 f.

1890. 1891. 1892. 1893. 1894. 1895. 1896. 1897. 1898. 1899. 1900.

1901. 1902. 1903. 1904. 1905. 1906. 1907. 1908. 1909. 1910. 1911.

1912. 1913. 1914. 1915. 1916. 1917. 1918. 1919. 1920. 1921. 1922.

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### Khomyakov's Criticism of Russian Failures

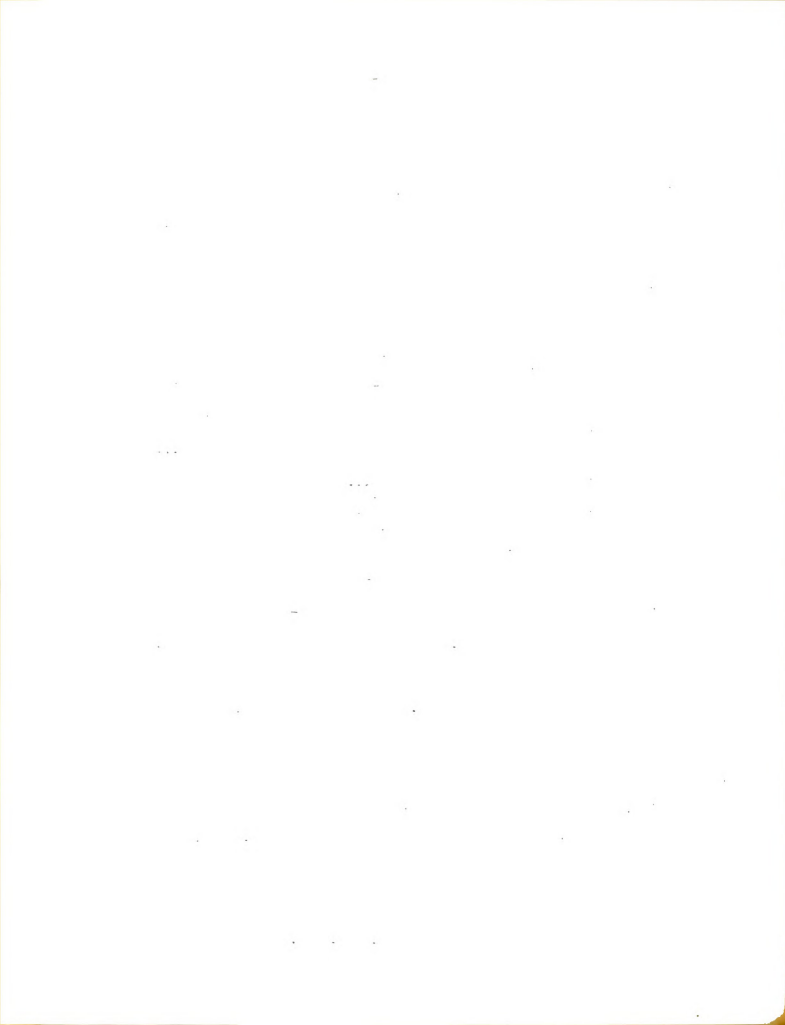
The very root of Slavophilism is the theory that the Church is above autocracy and nationalism. The Church, the Slavophiles contended, must have a source of its supreme authority and this, Khomyakov held, is to be found in the Holy Spirit acting in and through the Church, thus making it superior to all secular institutions:

Every action of the Church, directed by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of life and truth, sets forth the full completeness of all His gifts - of faith, hope and love; for in Scripture not faith only, but also the hope of the Church is made manifest, and the love of God; and in works well pleasing to God there is made manifest not only love, but likewise faith and hope and grace... The gifts of the Holy Spirit are inseparably united in one holy and living unity... Holy Church confesses her faith by her whole life; by her doctrine which is inspired by the Holy Ghost; by her Sacraments in which the Holy Ghost works; and by her rites, which He directs.<sup>200</sup>

Here again is to be found the Neo-Platonic doctrine of the unity of the visible Church with the Invisible - the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ. If the Church is the Mystical Body, the Slavophiles held, then it deserves priority over the purely secular realm of state or nation. Like many theocrats, logically and upon the abstract plane, Khomyakov regarded the state when compared with the Church as imperfect and a simple earthly institution, but none the less concrete. This historic state had the function of protecting the church against its enemies. Yet, Khomyakov did not allow his vision to be obscured by a blind worship of

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<sup>200</sup> Khomyakov, "The Church is One," op. cit., pp. 18 ff.





the Russian past or present. He was critical of many of Russia's mistakes and weaknesses, but he contended that these were the result of Russia being infected by Western egoism and the loss, to some degree among the Westernizers, of the sobornost concept of Orthodoxy. Certainly he condemned censorship which he found galling. When Russia suffered reverses in the Crimean War, he said that this was a punishment from God because so many in Russia had departed from the true faith.<sup>201</sup>

Khomyakov wrote a series of sharply accusatory poems in which he vents his shame over Russia's weaknesses. In one of these he sets forth the concept of Russia's messianic mission and how unworthy she had become to fulfill this divinely appointed work:

But now alas what sins lie heavy,  
Many and awful on they soul!  
Thou art black with black injustice  
And slavery's yoke has branded thee  
And godless flattery and baneful lying  
And sloth that's shameful, life-denying,  
And every hateful thing in thee I see.

For all that cries for consolation,  
For every law that we have spurned,  
For sins that stain our generation,  
For evil deeds our fathers learned,  
For all our country's bitter passion  
Pray ye with tears the while ye live.  
O God of Might, of Thy compassion  
May'st Thou forgive! May'st Thou Forgive! <sup>202</sup>

The exalted vocation Khomyakov and the other Slavophiles foresee for Russia is expressed in another poem by Khomyakov, titled,  
To Russia:

<sup>201</sup>Masaryk, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 265 ff.

<sup>202</sup>Quoted in Berdyaev's The Origin of Russian Communism, op. cit., p. 94.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. The text outlines various methods for organizing and storing data, including digital databases and physical filing systems. It also mentions the need for regular audits and reviews to ensure the integrity of the information.

2. The second section focuses on the role of communication in achieving organizational goals. It highlights the importance of clear and concise communication, both internally and externally. The text provides guidelines for effective communication, such as using appropriate language, listening actively, and providing feedback. It also discusses the benefits of open communication and how it can foster a collaborative work environment.

3. The third part of the document addresses the challenges of managing resources and personnel. It discusses the importance of efficient resource allocation and the need for a skilled and motivated workforce. The text offers strategies for recruitment, training, and performance management. It also touches upon the importance of maintaining a healthy work-life balance for employees to ensure long-term productivity and well-being.

4. The final section discusses the importance of innovation and continuous improvement. It encourages organizations to embrace change and seek out new ways to optimize their processes and products. The text mentions the role of research and development in driving innovation and the importance of staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends and technologies. It also discusses the importance of fostering a culture of innovation and encouraging employees to share their ideas and suggestions.

Be proud, O Land! - thy tongues have spoken, -  
And lift thy crowned front on high!  
O giant land! whose sword hath taken  
Half the wide world beneath the sky

Bounds there are none to thy dominion;  
And Fortune's self obedient stands,  
Slave-like, attentive to thy pleasure  
Awaiting thy august commands!...

Fruitless is every haughty spirit,  
Gold fails, steel breaks and rusts away;  
But strong is the bright world of martyrs,  
And mighty are the hands that pray.

And lo, for this, that thou art humble,  
Childlike and simple to believe, -  
That in thy heart's deep silent treasure  
Thy Maker's word thou did'st receive, -

To thee He gave a heavenly calling,  
To thee He gave a glorious meed, -  
To keep this heritage for nations,  
High sacrifice, and holy deed!...

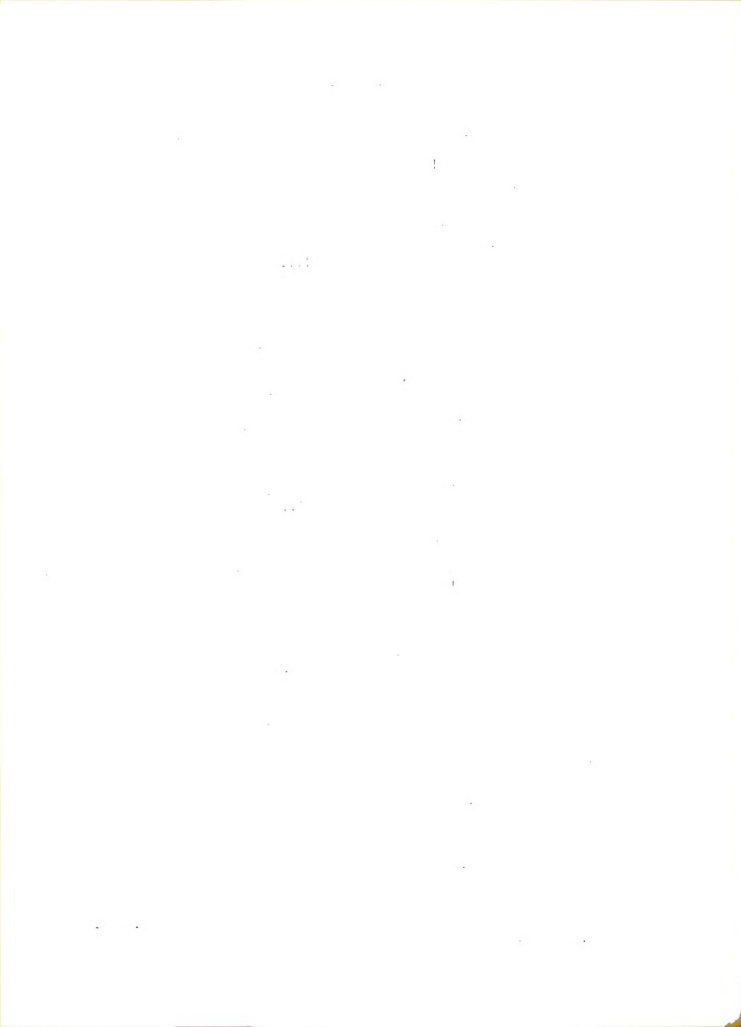
Attend to it! and so embracing  
All nations with affection true,  
Tell them of God's mysterious freedom;  
Pour faith's bright beams upon their view!

So shalt thou stand in glory marvelous  
Above all tribes of earth; as high  
As this blue arch, that God's protection  
Veils and reveals to mortal eye. 203

Though Khomyakov has expressed the Slavophile doctrine in poetic form, he states the dream of Russia's leadership of all nations and considers that Russia alone, because of her loyalty to religious truth, when all other nations have departed from this truth, is capable of bearing aloft the standard of social and religious salvation.

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<sup>203</sup> Khomyakov, "To Russia", Russia and the English Church, op. cit., p. 225 ff.



It is of interest that Khomyakov and the Slavophiles were not alone in their condemnation of the West for its decadence and its materialism. A contemporary of Schelling, Franz von Baader, who had a considerable influence upon the Slavophiles, held a point of view very similar to that of Khomyakov and his group. In a letter to Count Uvarov, the Russian minister of education, Baader expresses a truly Slavophile opinion concerning the West, despite the fact that he himself was from Western Europe. A Roman Catholic of rather liberal tendencies, Baader was impressed by Russian thought and admired the work of the Slavophiles. His letter<sup>204</sup> speaks of the decay in Europe and "looks for the salvation of the West in Russia and in the Orthodox Church." Had this letter been written by Khomyakov himself, it could not have expressed in clearer terms the viewpoint of the Slavophiles. Franz von Baader was so acceptable to the Slavophiles because of his essentially Platonic philosophical outlook.

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<sup>204</sup> The following letter, quoted by Nicolas Berdyaev in his work, "The Russian Idea," op. cit., p. 54 ff., was first published in a book by E. Susini called "Lettres inedites de Franz von Baader, and is entitled "Mission de l'Eglise Russe dans la decadence du Christianisme de l'Occident." It reads as follows:

S'il est un fait qui caracterise l'epoque actuelle, c'est assurément ce mouvement irresistible de l'occident vers l'orient. La Russie qui possede en elle l'element Europeen occidental aussi bien que l'element oriental, doit, dans ce grand rapprochement necessairement jouer le role de l'intermediaire qui arretera les funestes consequences du choc. L'Eglise Russe de son cote a maintenant, si je ne me trompe, une tache semblable a remplir a l'occasion de la decadence alarmante et scandaleuse du Christianisme dans l'Eglise Romaine et de sa dissolution dans l'Eglise protestante, elle recoit a mon avis une mission intermediaire qui est plus liee qu'on ne le pense de l'ordinaire avec celle du pays auquel celle appartient. Qu'il me soit permis d'indiquer en peu de



One last comment upon Khomyakov and his contribution to Slavophilism and the contribution of Platonism to his own thought. He was an adversary of political enlightenment and of rationalism. An opponent of Hegel's theory of the state, he expressed his opposition also to Roman law and its logic and contended that customary law was to be preferred. The doctrines of the historical school of law, which Khomyakov supported, conceived the folk-spirit mythically and mystically, in the sense of the romanticists. It was natural that this should coincide with the Slavophile doctrine. Khomyakov regarded the state, to use an expression of his own, as a living and organic protective mantle for society. Such was the normal state, but there also exists abnormal and morbid states, those whose activities develop inorganically, without the aid of the common people and in opposition to them. Actually, he leaves only two spheres of activity for the state, art and science. These two activities are nation in the strict sense, he contends, - these alone are expressions of the folk-spirit. This concept is in accord with the theocratic emphasis of the Slavophiles for if religion and dogma, and if in conjunction with religion the principles of law, morals and

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mots cette decadence du Christianisme dans l'occident et les causes pour lesquelles l'Eglise Russe s'etait maintenue a l'abri de cette decadence, est en etat, par ci-meme, d'exercer une influence liberatrice sur l'occident...La providence a tenu jusqu'a ce jour l'Eglise Russe en dehors de ce mouvement europeen, dont l'effet a ete de dechristianiser aussi bien la science que la societe civile; et precisement parce qu'elle a defendu l'ancien catholicisme contre ces deux ennemis, le papisme et le protestantisme, parce qu'elle ne proscriit pas l'usage de la raison comme l'Eglise Romaine sans laisser passage, comme le protestantisme, aux abus qui en peuvent resulter - elle seule est capable de se presenter comme mediatrice, ce qui du reste devra se faire par le seul secours de la science en Russie "par des Russes".





politics are revealed, there is very little left for the sphere of folk-activity.

Khomyakov advocated a collectivist social system, insisting that the Platonic ideal of wholeness could best be achieved through such a structure. In his famous "Message to the Serbs" in 1860 he expounds this philosophy quite clearly:

Above everything, preserve every communal institution and court. There is more truth in them than in all others. Besides, through it men became accustomed to seek the good opinion of their brethren about themselves. In countries where the village or city assembly decides affairs, there, from an early age, every man is educated in sound notions about legality and justice. Reasonable judgement is developed and the dangerous but only-too-common indifference to the public well-being is eradicated. The communal meeting is the popular school, which is superior to all bookish education and cannot be replaced by it. Because of the village assemblies, the spirit and reason of the Russian peasants were saved, in spite of the serfdom imposed upon them by unjust law. It is desirable that the assembly should pass all votes unanimously. Such is the old Slavonic custom. <sup>205</sup>

Since he was a resolute collectivist who preferred communal land-ownership by peasants to small private properties, Khomyakov sincerely held that Russia would develop its communal idea further. He even envisioned that collective ownership of industry would develop out of collective farming. <sup>206</sup>

While he is little known outside Russia, Khomyakov has had a lasting influence, not only in theological circles but his theories which helped crystallize Slavophile doctrines, directly or indirectly influenced most of the creative thinkers since his time in his native Russia.

<sup>205</sup>Khomyakov, "Collected Works," op. cit., Vol. I, p. 404.

<sup>206</sup>Ibid., p. 291.

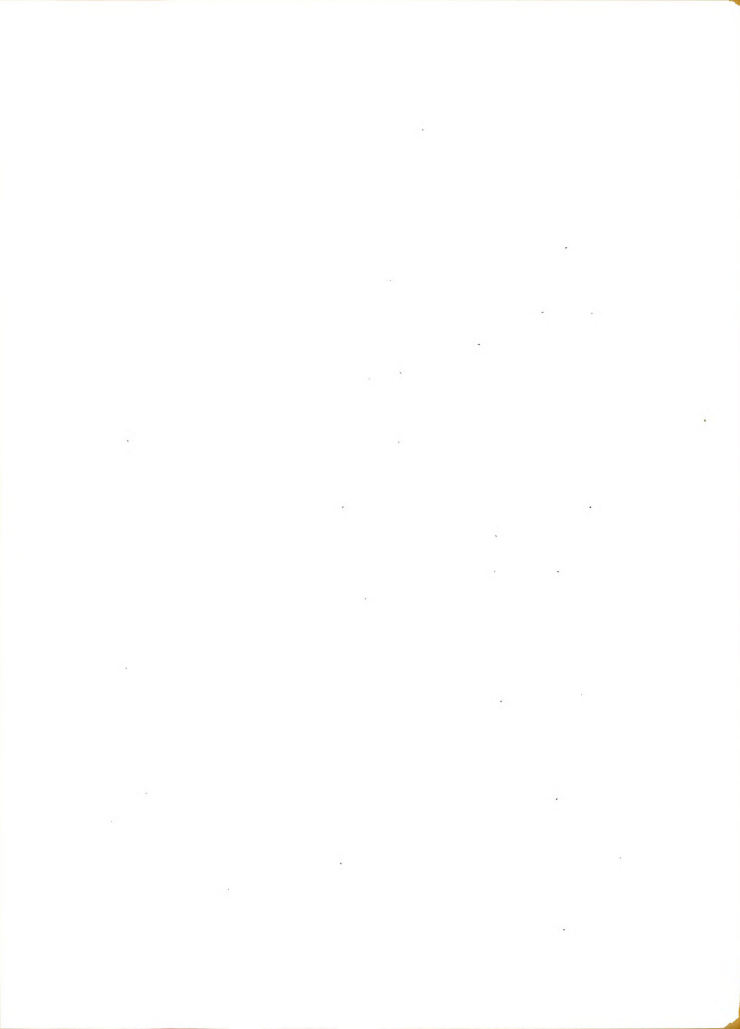
## CHAPTER X

### FEODOR DOSTOYEVSKY: SLAVOPHILE PROPHECY OF COMMUNISM

Since Slavophilism was essentially a socio-religious movement in the nineteenth century, it is fitting that it should have its own prophet. The function of the ancient Jewish prophets was not simply to foretell the events to come, but also to sound the clarion call to repentance. Both functions were fulfilled among the Slavophiles by Feodor Dostoyevsky.

Since the writings of Dostoyevsky are currently receiving extensive study and the facts of his life are quite generally known among students of literature, philosophy, history and religion, a cursory review of his life should suffice for the purposes of this work. Born at Moscow on October 30, 1821, his father Mikhail Dostoyevsky was a landowner and his mother a pious daughter of a Moscow merchant. Feodor studied at the College of Military Engineering, became a commissioned officer, but evidenced little interest or enthusiasm for the profession. He read widely in the writings of Western authors and was considerably influenced by such men as Dickens, Balzac, and Victor Hugo.

During the closing years of the reign of Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855) there developed a particularly oppressive government-defying reaction. The Tsarist government spared no efforts in suppressing liberal thought, considering it to be essentially a kind of insubordination and revolt against the Tsar. This did not prevent the young intelligentsia of Moscow from discussing and publishing forbidden points of view. Dostoyevsky participated in the activities of the liberal



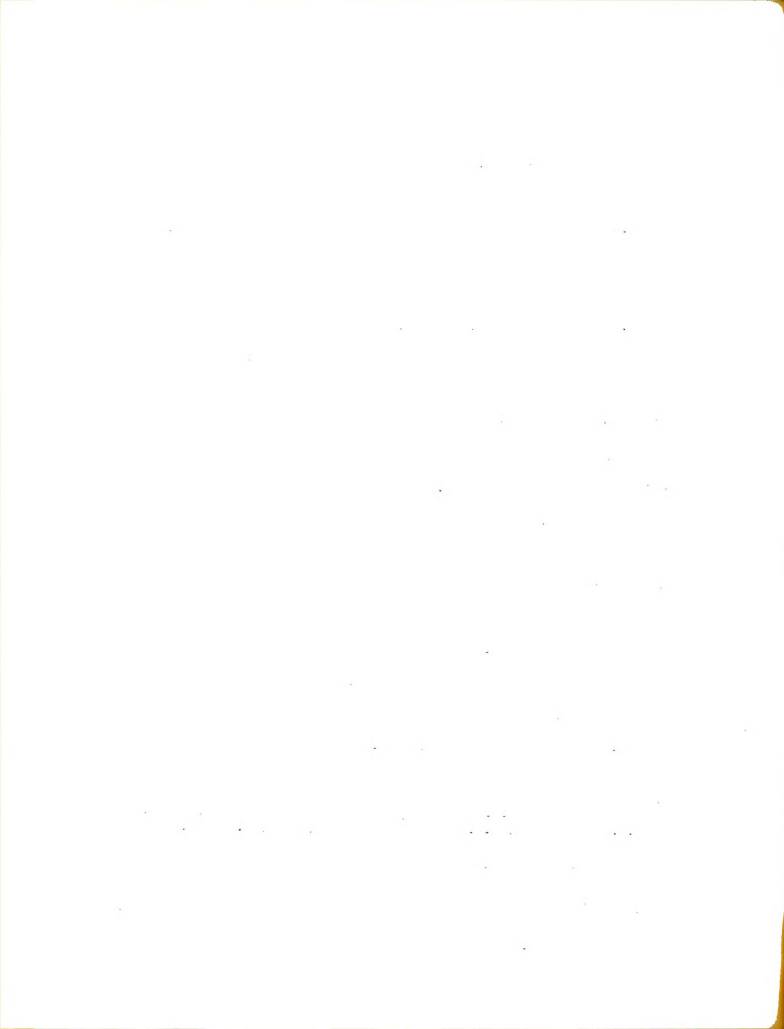
Petrashovsky and became acquainted with the social theories of Fourier and Saint-Simon. It was because of these activities that Dostoyevsky found himself subject to court-martial and condemned to death. The execution was to take place on December 22nd, 1849, and the condemned were already at the place of execution when a reprieve was granted and the sentence commuted to exile in Siberia at hard labor. After five years, however, Dostoyevsky was permitted to return to Moscow where he soon regained his social position, married and continued with his literary efforts. Not only did he engage in writing widely-read and controversial novels, but he published several journals which exerted a wide influence and served as channels for the dissemination of Slavophile concepts.<sup>207</sup>

Bankruptcy, frustration, sickness (Dostoyevsky had contracted epilepsy during his exile in Siberia) and continued difficulties with the government over his "liberal" ideas, served to give the man a deeper insight into the experience about which he was to write so profoundly - suffering. But fame came to him before his death and he experienced what so few great men do, the adulation and respect of his nation, the people whom he had so faithfully depicted in his novels. He died on January 28, 1881.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>207</sup>Dostoyevskaya, A.G., Dostoyevsky Portrayed By His Wife, trans. by S.S. Koteliansky, E.P. Dutton and Company, 1926, p. 15 ff.

<sup>208</sup>The sources for biographical material on Dostoyevsky are particularly numerous. Actually, all of his novels have come to be considered autobiographical in considerable part; in addition his Journal of An Author, his letters to his wife, his wife's diary, and letters to members of the Slavophile movement constitute a series of documents permitting a penetrating insight into the thought and life of Dostoyevsky.



No simple account would ever suffice to convey the thinking of so complex a man as Feodor Dostoyevsky. At times he seems contradictory. For example, his attitude toward Western Europe seems generally to have been that of his Slavophile contemporaries. Shortly after his marriage to Anna Gregorevna, while travelling in Germany, he wrote to a friend, "If you only knew the profound distaste, almost amounting to hatred, that I feel for the whole of Western Europe!" Again he writes his friend Maikov in 1867: "...I went away then; but I left with death in my soul. I did not believe in Europe; that is, I believed that its moral influence would be a very bad one...The Germans upset my nerves..."<sup>209</sup> Not only the Germans came under his scorn, however, but other Western nations were included in his contempt. Later in his life, perhaps after further study and contact with German thinkers, Dostoyevsky became a Germanophile, something unique among the Slavophiles, who though they may have admired some writers of the West, were usually contemptuous of Western culture and considered it inferior to Russian.

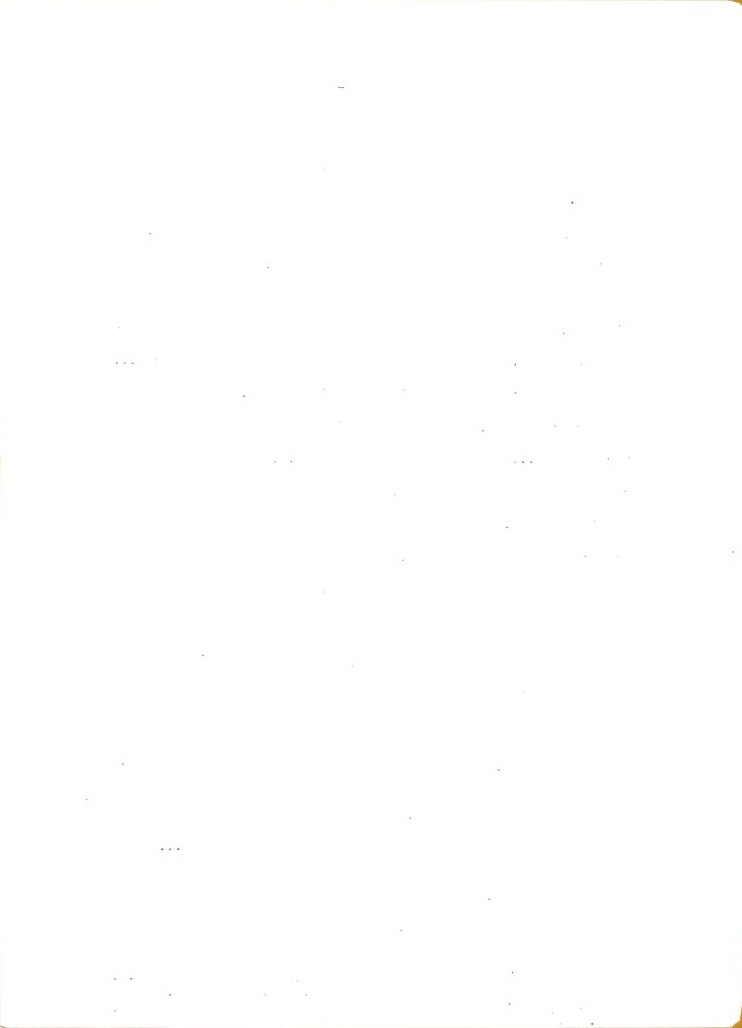
#### Dostoyevsky As Anthropologist

In a very real sense, Dostoyevsky was an anthropologist and a social scientist. Zernov recognizes this when he writes of him:

All his life Dostoyevsky was absorbed in the solution of a single problem. His lifelong passion was the study of man, and his contributions in this field completely revolutionized modern psychology and sociology...He was able to penetrate those concealed corners of the human soul which had not been visited before by scholars and writers. Dostoyevsky's man, compared with man as he appears in the works of other writers, seems to possess a fourth dimension.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>209</sup>Dostoyevsky's Letter to Maikov, quoted in Dostoyevskaya, A.G., Dostoyevsky Portrayed by His Wife, op. cit., p. 202 ff.

<sup>210</sup>Zernov, Nicolas, Three Russian Prophets, S.C.M. Press, London, 1944, p. 87.



In a similar vein, Berdyaev states that after Dostoyevsky, the study of man was bound to be something different from what it had been before.<sup>211</sup> Almost every aspect of man's existence was studied and written about by Dostoyevsky, - the question of cultural determinism, freedom of the will, theodicy, man's relation to his fellow man in group living, and the problem of man's rebellion, - against himself, against religious and ecclesiastical norms, against traditions and political institutions. Wide as his study ranged, it lacked nothing in depth of analysis. Perhaps it is his very depth of penetration into the human personality that gives his characters a seemingly paradoxical nature. Zernov explores this possibility when he writes:

At first sight, man as seen by Dostoyevsky appear to be grotesque, abnormal; one is inclined to dismiss them as pathological cases, as the creation of the unbalanced mind of that strange author. But this first impression disappears when they are more carefully analyzed. One can see then that their problems and struggles are typical of those which beset all human beings, that the impression of unreality first produced is due to the concentration in a short space of time, of a conflict which is usually spread over many years in the life of other people. Dostoyevsky's writings break new ground because he faces boldly and frankly those conflicts which men usually keep secret even from their closest friends.<sup>212</sup>

There can be no doubt that Dostoyevsky reveals the substratum and the underlying depths of man's nature and the depths of the subconscious. He treats of the psychic strata where the mind and will are in constant contact with what he regards as higher spiritual

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<sup>211</sup>Berdyaev, "The Russian Idea," op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>212</sup>Zernov, "Three Russian Prophets," op. cit., p. 88.





entities, where the ordinary stream of experience is constantly deflected by ultimate and absolute values. This he does indirectly in his novels. There is no direct analysis by the author of the mental states or aspirations of his characters. Instead, he allows them to reveal their inner psychic conflicts by what they do and by what they say.

It is not the purpose of this paper to undertake an extensive literary analysis or a psychological study of Dostoyevsky's works, intriguing as this might be. It is pertinent to the purpose of this paper, however, to attempt an analysis of his works to determine the elements of Slavophilism, Platonism and Byzantinism they contain. Since the antecedents of Slavophilism have already been shown to be essentially Platonic and Neo-Platonic, it should suffice simply to indicate that Dostoyevsky holds those basic beliefs which have already been found in Slavophilism and which are of a Platonic nature. Such doctrines as that of sobornost, superordination of Orthodoxy over nationalism and autocracy, mysticism and an inclination to disparage rationalism, and the belief in the messianic mission of Russia, are held by Dostoyevsky in common with the other Slavophiles.

The non-imaginative writings of Dostoyevsky fall into two periods: the articles he contributed to Vremya between 1861 and 1865, and The Diary of an Author, written between 1873 and 1881, the year of his death. In these works as in his novels, it is clear that his political philosophy may be defined as a democratic Slavophilism or a mystical populism. As a sociologist Dostoyevsky contends that the Russian ed-



ucated society must be redeemed by a renewal of contact with the muzhiki and by an acceptance of the people's religious ideals - that is to say, of Russian Orthodoxy. By the term "the people" Dostoyevsky, like Khomyakov, always means the peasants, the group he almost idealizes in his writings.

#### Significance of the Pushkin Address

Perhaps the most significant of the non-imaginative writings is Dostoyevsky's famous Pushkin Address in which he praises Pushkin for the virtue of "pan-humanity," which he considers to be the gift of understanding all humanity - all peoples and all civilizations. In this speech, delivered on June 8th, 1880 before a well-attended meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, Dostoyevsky clearly states many of the basic points of view which have earned for him the title Ivan Aksakov seemed willing to confer upon him, - "leader of the Slavophiles." In his speech, Dostoyevsky unburdens himself of a number of very clear statements about Europe, and his attitude toward it. In a prefatory section to his Pushkin Speech, Dostoyevsky voices a typically Slavophile concept when he looks for the eventual downfall of the West and the triumph of Russian culture:

The eighty millions of (Russia's) population represent a spiritual union whose like cannot be found anywhere in Europe, and because of this alone, it is impossible to say that the land is untidy, it is strictly impossible to say even that it is poor. On the other hand, in Europe, - this Europe where so many treasures have been amassed, - the whole social foundation of every European nation is undermined, and perhaps will crumble away tomorrow, leaving no trace behind, and in its place will arise something radically new and utterly unlike that which was before. And

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2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. It emphasizes the importance of using a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study, which show a significant positive correlation between the variables being investigated. The findings suggest that the proposed intervention could have a beneficial impact on the target population.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the limitations of the study and the need for further research to confirm the findings. It also provides recommendations for future studies and practical applications of the research results.

5. The final part of the document concludes the report and expresses the authors' appreciation for the support and assistance provided by the research team and the funding agency.

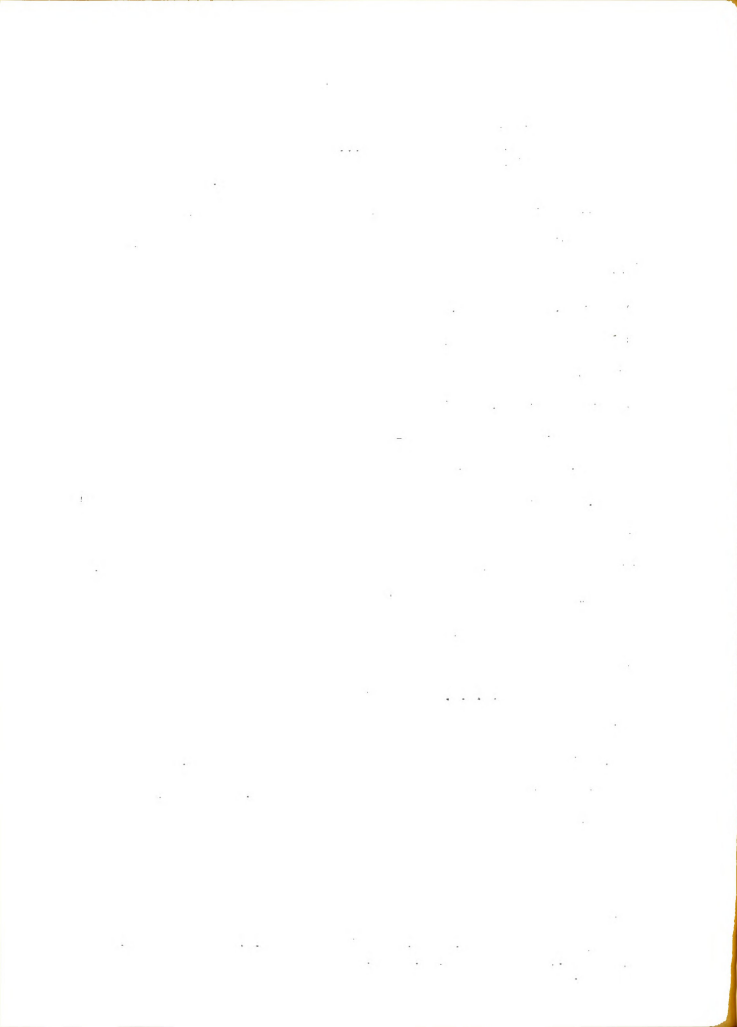
all the treasures which Europe has amassed will not save her from her fall...To this social order, infected and rotten indeed, our people is being pointed as to an ideal to which they must aspire.<sup>213</sup>

The "treasures" of the West, -technical superiority, wealth and empirical science, cannot save Europe Dostoyevsky contends. Russia possesses piritual and cultural treasures far surpassing those of Europe, he believes, and it these threasures, especially the spiritual unity of the people, that will eventually cause Russia to survive and assume world leadership while Europe will have rotted away and been utterly destroyed. It is not the economic or political system of Russia that will cause this triumph - he denies that in their "fundamental substance the moral treasures of the spirit depend upon economical power."<sup>214</sup> Here is a basic and very real difference between Dostyevsky's concept of the messianic mission of Russia and the concept of such a world-engulfing mission as envisioned by the Marxists and Leninists. The latter conceived of Russia's eventual triumph as purely materialistic and economically based, but for Dostoyevsky and the Slavophiles, (were they to evaluate the dialectical materialism and atheistic communism of the present day U.S.S.R.) any social system devoid of a religious foundation would be foredoomed to failure for exactly the same reasons the Slavophiles looked for the eventual downfall of the West.

In a written reply to one of his critics, M. Gradovsky, who had taken issue with some of Dostoyevsky's statements in the Pushkin Speech, Dostoyevsky further clarifies his attitude toward the West and his belief

<sup>213</sup>Dostoyevsky, "Introduction to Pushkin Speech," Pages From the Journal of An Author, trans. by S. Koteliensky and J.M. Murry, John W. Luce and Co., Boston, 1916, p. 38 f.

<sup>214</sup>Ibid.,



in Russia's mission to bring sanity and both spiritual and social salvation to the world:

And by the way, M. Gradovsky, when you censure our lack of organization, blaming Russia and pointing to Europe with admiration, you say: "And in the meanwhile we cannot get rid of the inconsistencies and contradictions of which Europe got rid long ago." - Has Europe got rid of them? Where did you learn this? She is on the eve of ruin, your Europe, of a general, universal and terrible catastrophe. The ant-hill which has long been in course of formation within her, without a Church and without Christ (for the Church, having muddled her ideal, was long ago embodied in the State), with a moral principle shattered to its foundations, having lost all that it had of universal and of absolute - that ant-hill, I say, is wholly undermined...The symptoms are terrible! Alone, the inveterately unnatural political situation of the powers of Europe may serve for a beginning to anything! How could they be natural, if their formation was unnatural and the abnormality has accumulated for centuries? One small portion of mankind shall not possess the rest as a slave; yet it was solely for this purpose that all the civic institutions of Europe (long since un-Christian, which are now perfectly pagan) have hitherto been formed. <sup>215</sup>

Strangely enough, however, Dostoyevsky did not categorically damn the West, nor does he feel that a rapprochement with the West is impossible to achieve. Readily does he affirm that in the West there are elements of good. He even believed that Slavophilism might assist in bringing about a harmony with Europe, particularly in Russia among the Westernizers who were representatives of a pro-Western attitude. The real mission of Russia, he contends, is to effect the union of all humanity. <sup>216</sup> The true destiny of Russia, he held, was to show all men the

<sup>215</sup>Ibid., p. 104 f.

<sup>216</sup>Mirsky, D.S., op. cit., p. 349.



# 1. Introduction

The first part of the paper is devoted to a review of the literature on the topic. The second part discusses the theoretical framework and the third part presents the empirical results. The fourth part concludes the paper.

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way to universal brotherhood. This Russian mission he holds to be "pan-European and universal."<sup>217</sup> His comment about this destiny, contained in the Pushkin Speech, is clear and unequivocal:

To become a true Russian, to become a Russian fully, (in the end of all, I repeat) means only to become the brother of all men, to become, if you will, a universal man. All our Slavophilism and Westernism is only a great misunderstanding, even though historically necessary. To a true Russian, Europe and the destiny of all the mighty Aryan family is as dear as Russia herself, as the destiny of his own native country, because our destiny is universality, won not by the sword, but by the strength of brotherhood and our fraternal aspiration to reunite mankind.<sup>218</sup>

For all his desire to see East and West reunited, Dostoyevsky does not accept revolution by the sword as the method to be used to achieve this unity. Explicitly he repudiates any such method and very clearly proclaims the method which he and the Slavophiles would employ to effect the unification of mankind:

In the course of time I believe that we - not we, of course, but our children to come - will all without exception understand that to be a true Russian does indeed mean to aspire finally to reconcile the contradictions of Europe, to show the end of European yearnings in our Russian soul, omni-human and all-uniting, to include without our soul by brotherly love all our brethren, and at last, it may be, to pronounce the final Word of the great general harmony, of the final brotherly communion of all nations in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ!...I say that to this universal, omni-human union the heart of Russia, perhaps more than all other nations, is chiefly predestined.<sup>219</sup>

Dostoyevsky's method of world unity is clearly a religious and a Christian one, in accordance with the prayer voiced by Christ Himself: "That all may be one!" The world domination Dostoyevsky en-

<sup>217</sup>Dostoyevsky, "Pushkin Speech", op. cit., p. 66.

<sup>218</sup>Ibid.

<sup>219</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

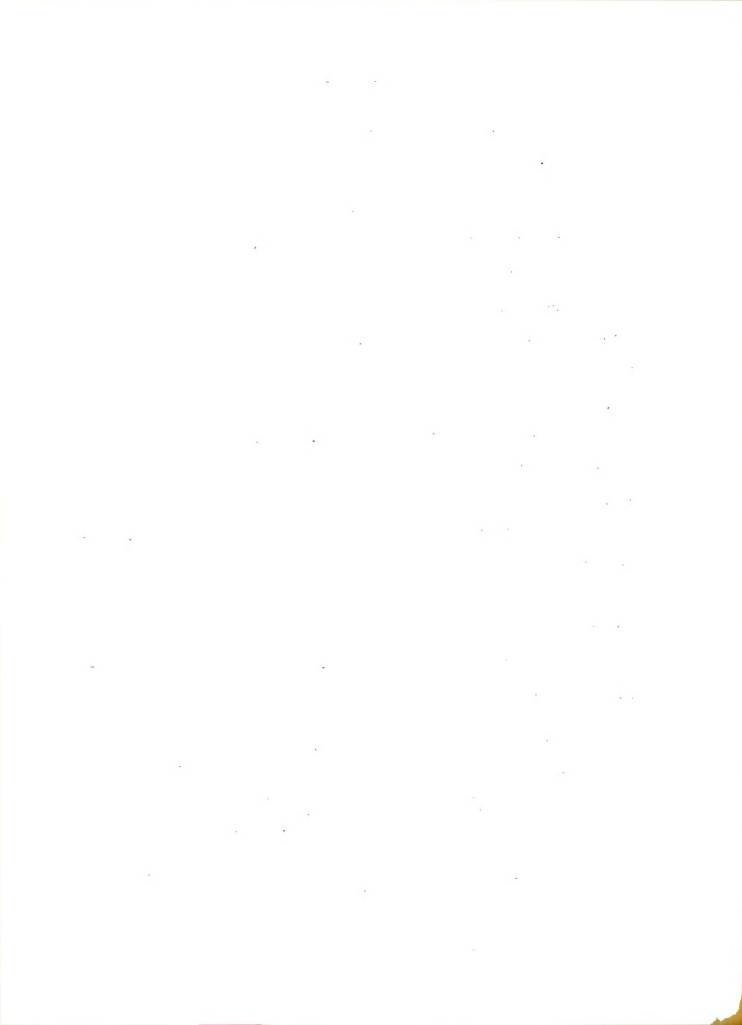


visioned was to eventuate in a theocracy not the totalitarianism of the Soviets.

### Dostoyevsky's Anti-Papalism

Despite his affirmation of love for Europe, Dostoyevsky does not believe that Europe can be saved from ruin and he attributed the catastrophe to one basic cause, Roman Catholicism, and its spiritual off-shoot, Protestantism. Dostoyevsky disliked the totalitarian spirit of Romanism and associated it with the denial of freedom, lust for power and readiness to compromise with evil if such a compromise promised immediate advantages. Thus, he proclaimed that the revolt against true religion as manifested in Europe had its deep roots in the Roman Catholic system demanding submission to authority even when such obedience conflicts with the voice of conscience. Several times he expressed his conviction that there was a possibility of a working compromise between the Vatican and totalitarianism. Dictatorship in political life and in social systems he considered similar to the totalitarianism of the Roman system. He gives voice to his attitude toward rationalistic Roman Catholicism in the following terms:

(In Russia) Christ Himself will not be eclipsed by the sciences, as in the West, where, however, He was not eclipsed by the sciences, as the Liberals assert, but long before the advent of science, when the Western Church herself distorted the image of Christ, changing herself from a Church into a Roman State, and again incarnating the State in the form of the Papacy. Yes, in the West Christianity and the Church truly exist no longer, though there are still many Christians, nor will they ever disappear. Catholicism is truly Christianity no longer; it degenerates into idolatry; and Protestantism with giant strides runs down the steep into Atheism and into a



wavering, fluid, fickle, instead of an eternal morality... Socialism is the coming power for the whole of Western Europe. If at some time in the future the Popes find themselves abandoned by the governments of this world, then it is quite possible that they will throw in their lot with a Godless Socialism. The Pope will appear before the multitude as a barefooted beggar, and will declare that all the Socialists want and teach is in the Gospel, but that not till this moment has it been opportune to make such a disclosure. <sup>220</sup>

In his opposition to the rationalism of the Roman Catholic system, Dostoyevsky reveals his essentially Platonic philosophy, which was the foundation of the Slavophile social program in the structural form of Russian Orthodoxy. He voices his opposition to the rationalism and legalism of Roman Catholicism and avows his own adherence to the mysticism of Orthodoxy and the essential freedom for the individual which Orthodoxy permitted.

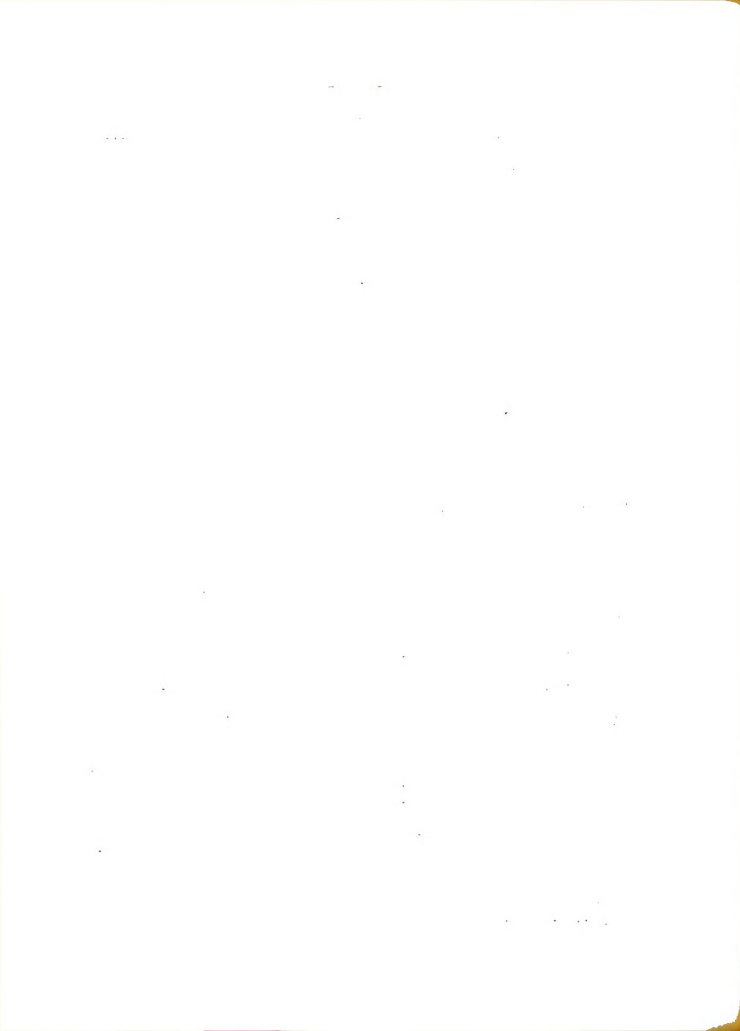
#### The Crucible of Suffering

In stressing the Platonic doctrine of universalism, Dostoyevsky claimed that it was rooted in the characteristic of the Russian mentality - freedom from fear of suffering. The Russians, alone among all the peoples of the world, he contended, are capable of bearing suffering. In his Journal he comments upon this Russian characteristic:

I think that the main, the fundamental spiritual necessity of the Russian people is the need of suffering, of constant, ubiquitous suffering. It seems that we have felt that need from time immemorial. The Russian people even in their happiness experience some degree of pain, otherwise their happiness lacks its fullness. Never even in the most triumphant moments of their history were the Russian people proud or arrogant.

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<sup>220</sup>Ibid., p. 74 f.



On the contrary, they remained humble and penitent, ascribing their victory, not to their own efforts, but to God's gracious help and protection.<sup>221</sup>

One of his works which clearly shows this capacity for suffering, and in which the mystical and Platonic foundation of his writings is clearly manifested, is his mature work Letters from the Underworld, written in 1869. In this work he attempts to express in mystical form his basic sociological conviction that the institutions within society cannot be made to serve man's needs until they are purged and elevated. The dross of materialism must be eliminated and man must rise above the things of the world to union with God. Dostoyevsky offers the remedy of social equality, brotherhood based upon charity in its truest sense - this is the one medicine for the sicknesses of humanity. He evidences his faith in the supreme value of the human personality and of its freedom and in the irrational religious and tragic foundation of the spiritual universe, which is the typically Neo-Platonic way he regards as above reason, above the distinction of good and evil. This is the faith, ultimately, of all mystical religion. It becomes the basis of the Slavophile sociology and their philosophy of history.

Dostoyevsky does not consider these elements in his thinking to be romanticizing in the usual sense of the word. In fact, he repudiates German and French romanticism:

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<sup>221</sup>Ibid., No. 4, 1873.





Generally speaking, we Russians have never gone in for that stupid transcendental romanticizing of German and, still more, French origin in which nothing is ever done by anybody, though the ground be shaking beneath one's feet and all France be going to pieces... On the contrary, the qualities of our romanticists are directly opposed to the transcendental-European standard, and not a single stanza in the European style finds acceptance here... The nature of our romanticists is to comprehend everything, to see everything, and frequently to see everything incomparably more clearly than do more practical intellects. <sup>222</sup>

Here the author stresses a kind of universalism, a Platonic striving for wholeness and unity of apprehension, based not upon "practical intellects" or purely empirical evidences, but upon a mystical intuition. The Russian readiness for suffering, he held, enabled this people to enter into a close fellowship with other nations, - their hearts and minds were open to the flow of new life coming from others. This faculty to understand others, this mystical insight, he held to be given only to those who have suffered much and yet are not crushed by their experience.

#### Dostoyevsky's "Communism"

While he stresses the need for universalism, Dostoyevsky does not recommend Communism. He was a revolutionary in spite of the conservative appearance of many of his views. He rebelled against the injustices of human laws and expressed the Russian antinomian spirit and it cannot be denied that his writings show evidence of an enmity toward the bourgeois while maintaining the supreme worth of the muzhiki. Yet, he did not support any denial of freedom or rejection of the spiritual, as does Russian Communism today. An example of his genius for foreseeing future events that

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<sup>222</sup>Dostoyevsky, F., Letters From The Underworld, J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., London, Trans. C.J. Hogarth, 1913, p. 52.



were to take place in Russia after his death. While he was a revolutionary, "he wanted revolution, but revolution with God and Christ."<sup>223</sup>

By his rejection of materialism and his insistence upon the ultimate reality of the spiritual, Dostoyevsky reemphasizes not only his Orthodoxy but his Platonic heritage as well. In his Journal, he develops his concept of a Platonic-type universalism in the social order, based upon the spiritual:

Our people, in the overwhelming majority, are still Orthodox, and they live by this ideal, though they do not express their ideal in a rational and scientific manner. As a matter of fact, our people have nothing else to offer except this ideal. They sincerely desire to build their whole life upon this foundation though they often pollute themselves by sin and become pitiful victims of their ignorance and passions.<sup>224</sup>

Here Dostoyevsky states that the foundation of the Russian ideal social structure is the non-material and non-empirical, though Russian Orthodoxy is the visible institution for its expression. He then continues:

The main mistake of the Russian intelligentsia is that they do not recognize the presence of the Church among the Russian people. I do not speak about the church buildings or clergy; I speak about our Russian Socialism - the aim of which is the realization of a universal Church on earth in the degree in which the earth can embrace the fullness of the Church. I speak about the never-quenched, ever-present thirst among Russian people for the great universal and brotherly oneness in the name of Christ...Not in Communism, nor in its mechanical forms, is contained the Socialism of the Russian people. They believe that the final salvation and the all-illuminating unity is in Christ and in Him alone. This is our Russian Socialism. Those who do not understand the meaning of Orthodoxy for our common people, and its final purpose, will never be able to understand our nation.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup>Berdyayev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," op. cit., p. 100 F.

<sup>224</sup>Dostoyevsky, "Journal of An Author," op. cit., p. 152.

<sup>225</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

In his work, The Brothers Karamazov, written in 1880, just two months before his death, he has a chapter entitled "The Grand Inquisitor." In this well-known section, Dostoyevsky attempts to show the Roman Catholic Church at the height of its power serving not Christ, but the Evil One. Here too lies the whole charge that the author would bring against the revolutionary intelligentsia. Godlessness, he holds, leads eventually to a denial of freedom of the spirit. In making these charges he defends the freedom of the spirit, which in Dostoyevsky is entirely revolutionary and overthrows the Grand Inquisitor in every Church and State. In the legend of the Grand Inquisitor there is also to be found an essentially Platonic concept - that mystical union with the Deity is above all physical strivings. Clarifying this aspect of the legend of the Grand Inquisitor, Zernov writes:

The slowness of Christian progress, according to Dostoyevsky, has been caused by the unwillingness of the members of the Church to face the challenge of freedom. Many of them have avoided meeting Christ, and tried to fill the gap by acts of charity, by missionary zeal, by learning, or by obedience to Church authority. All these virtues, laudable as they are, are of little help. Good example and moral rules are powerless to cure men.<sup>226</sup>

In this passage, Zernov sees Dostoyevsky preaching a spiritual communism, based not upon good works, social planning, eleemosynary activities or science but upon a universalism, the Russian sobornost, unity of man with his fellow man and union of all mankind with the transcendental supreme Reality. The enemies of the basic freedom which he advocated, Dostoyevsky recognized in the developing idea of Communism, which he foretold would soon plague the West. The proponents of materialistic social and

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<sup>226</sup>Zernov, "The Three Russian Prophets," op. cit., p. 108.

economic systems were regarded by him as the true enemies of mankind.

Shortly before his death he wrote in the Journal that "Something new is rapidly approaching all of us, and we must be ready to meet it."<sup>227</sup>

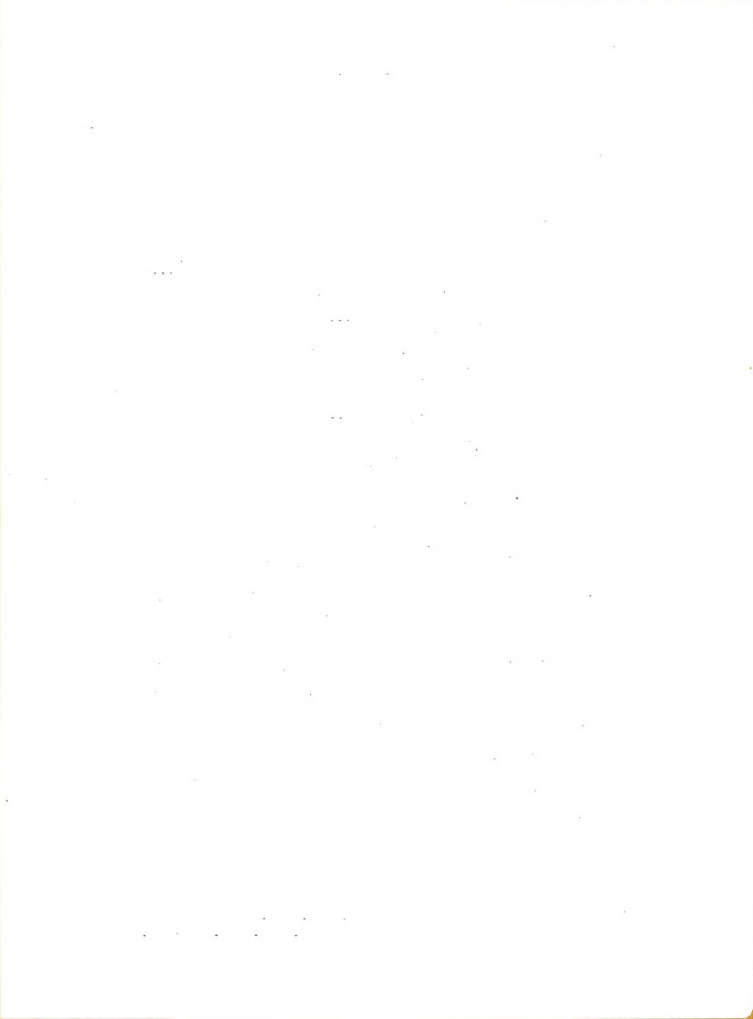
Commenting upon this pr@science Zernov writes:

The changes which he predicted have taken place, the new world of totalitarianism has come into existence...The Communist Revolution is not only an economic experiment, it is also one of the sharp turning points in the religious evolution of mankind...Dostoyevsky was the first writer to describe the outlook of the militant atheist, a man who hates God, and who treats Christ as his personal enemy. He discovered these godless fanatics among his Russian contemporaries but he was aware that they were heralds of a new epoch when religious problems once more would rise to pre-eminence...He knew that this revolt was coming and he was aware that the Russians would be at the head of it. But he also knew that the same Russians would offer the strongest opposition to the forces which aim at the enslavement of men under the pretext of their liberation.<sup>228</sup>

The revolution which Dostoyevsky foresaw was to be diametrically opposed to the kind of revolution he himself urged upon the people of Russia. He would have urged the Russians to revolt against the very materialism and rationalism which some of them were soon to accept. With Dostoyevsky, being a Christian and having a Platonic base to much of his thinking, revolution should eventuate in a theocratic society, whereas the revolution of the Bolsheviks was to be in the opposite direction, toward a materialism. Dostoyevsky would emphasize the spiritual, the transcendental, while the Bolsheviks turned their attention away from the spiritual toward what Dostoyevsky and the Platonists considered to be the less real, the less worthwhile, -

<sup>227</sup>Dostoyevsky, "Journal of An Author," op. cit., 1881.

<sup>228</sup>Zernov, "The Three Russian Prophets," op. cit., pp. 112-113.



toward the sense-perceived world of matter.

### The Theocratic Utopianism of Dostoyevsky

While Dostoyevsky gave a religious character to his philosophy of history, it should be borne in mind that the prophetic character of the philosophy of history may take secularized form as it did in the nineteenth century. Actually, the messianic idea is deeply inherent in all the philosophy of history of that century, despite the fact that it gives the appearance of having thrown off Christianity. The prophetic element in the works of Hegel, Marx, Saint-Simon and Comte cannot be overlooked. The whole of their philosophy of history was permeated by prophetism and has no meaning without it. It is not less prophetic in Comte and Marx who were opponents of metaphysics, than in Hegel, the metaphysician. Comte knows that in the history of mankind a positive period will come to replace the theological and metaphysical period, and it is his fond hope that the religion of humanity will triumph. Marx also envisions the destruction of bourgeois capitalism which he holds causes the exploitation of man, and he looks to the triumph of socialism, when the proletariat, the chosen people, will find liberty.<sup>229</sup> Berdyaev comments upon this non-religious philosophy of history as follows:

Whence comes this knowledge of the mankind of the future? Is it possible to regard it as scientific knowledge? No, it is messianic faith; it is a secularized form of the old chiliastic idea. The idea

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<sup>229</sup>Berdyaev, N., The Divine and The Human, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1949, p. 169 f.



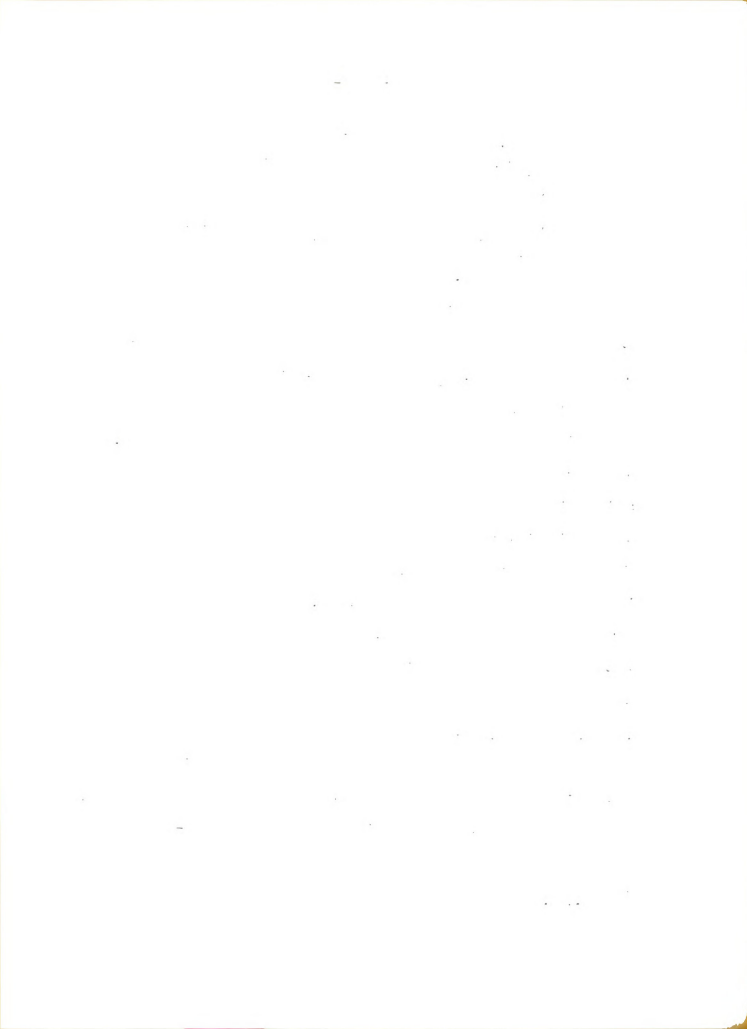


of the progress of mankind, which since the time of Condorcet has been fundamental to the philosophy of history, is religious and Christian in its origin; it is a secularized form of the Christian idea of movement towards the Kingdom of God as the basic theme of world history. The idea of progress seeks to give a meaning to world history but its exponents seek to give an illusion that it gives an immanent meaning to history whereas in fact its meaning is transcendent.<sup>230</sup>

Dostoyevsky recognized this and constructed a theocratic Utopia which is a denial of the old world, a denial of the State and of bourgeois life. His "great idea" - his Christian Socialism, as he called it, was something more striking and radical than the mere political and economic reforms based on Christian principles. He was acutely aware that only man's complete liberation from evil could satisfy the craving of the human heart for peace and happiness, and if this victory over self could ever be secured, it would carry with it the conquest of death, and the restoration of man to the fullness of life of the past generations. Perhaps this may be regarded as a distorted Utopianism. Yet, this was the problem which Dostoyevsky debated in all his chief novels, but he gave a definite answer to it only in the last, and probably the greatest of his works, The Brothers Karamazov. Here can be seen the influence of the Greek Church Fathers upon his philosophy of history and upon his sociology, for, whether he accepted their influence consciously or unconsciously, he held in common with them and with the Platonic and Neo-Platonic

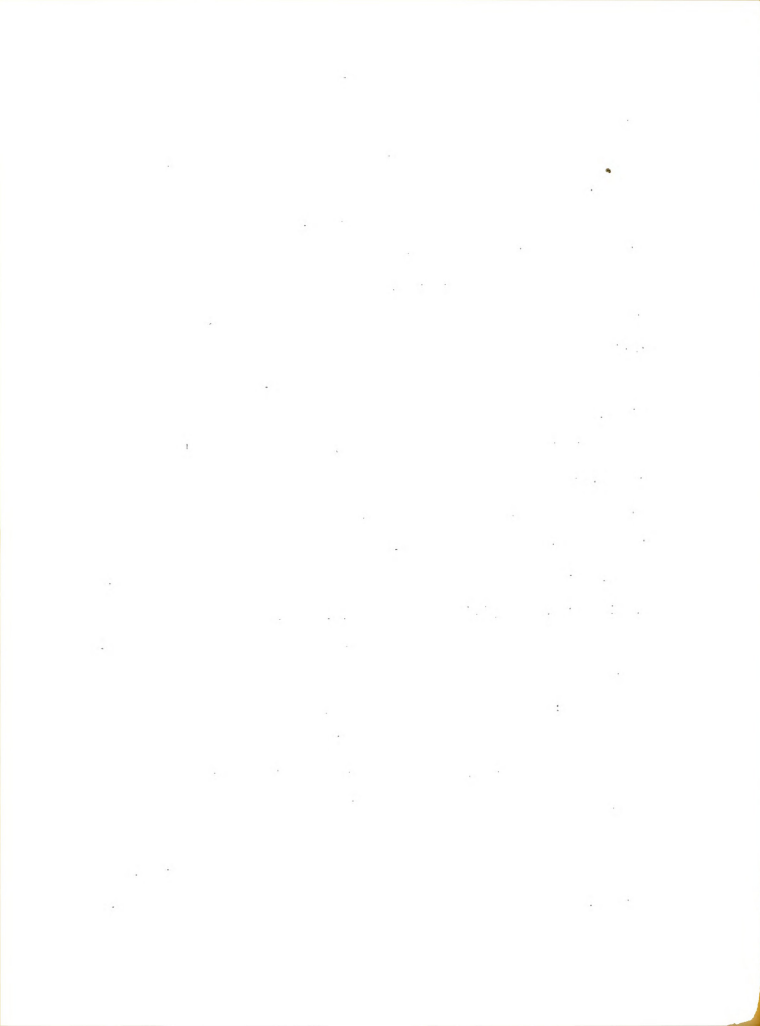
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<sup>230</sup>Ibid., p. 171.



writers of the early centuries the concept that the impirical is not the real, this life upon earth is not the final and true end of man. Reality lies beyond the periphery of sense experience, in what Kant would call the noumenal realm. Thus, Dostoyevsky, like the Byzantine Fathers holds that man upon earth can never finally achieve a lasting or permanent happiness because he is not destined for permanent existence upon earth, he is, to use a Platonic term, "coming to be," "Becoming," but he has not yet truly achieved the fullest stature of his being. Augustine of Hippo, who was strongly influenced by the Platonist philosophy, held a similar concept when he voiced the dictum that man's heart can never find satisfaction in the physical world because man was not made for earth but for eternity, and only there will his yearnings and strivings truly be met.

The utopia of a worldly paradise greatly disturbed Dostoyevsky. In his works, Versilov's Dream and The Dream of the Ridiculous Man which display great genius, he dedicates his searching to this theme. There are three possible answers to the question of world harmony or social good: (1) the belief that harmony, paradise, life in the good, can be achieved without freedom of choice, without world tragedy, without physical suffering, but also without creative work; (2) that harmony, paradise and the good life may be purchased at the price of innumerable sufferings of all human generations doomed to death and turned into the means for the happiness of those who are to come; or, (3) harmony, paradise, the good life results from freedom and suffering,



an economy into which all who at any time lived and suffered enter, that is to say, the Kingdom of God. Dostoyevsky rejects the first two solutions and accepts the third, theocracy. This is the essential theme of all his writings and in it he is in harmony with the Neo-Platonic thinkers and the Byzantine Church Fathers. It seems reasonable to accept the belief that Dostoyevsky, imbued as he was with Eastern Orthodox philosophy and doctrine, which he expresses in all his writings, is but the perpetuator of a Platonism in Byzantine Christian form.

Closely related to his concepts concerning freedom and suffering is Dostoyevsky's philosophy, or perhaps it is best to call it his sociological theory, of labor. Since he posits the premise that everything religious is connected with spiritual freedom, he is confronted with the problem of why spiritually free man must engage in the "slavery of labor." Labor is hard and compulsory, it is under the power of law. Dostoyevsky states that man labors freely and he regarded labor as a work of redemption. Thus he changes the compulsory law of labor into a spiritual freedom. The possibility of this freedom is always open and no social environment can deprive man of it. Society requires of man different forms of work, ranging from compulsory slave labor to compulsory socially organized labor. But personality as a free spirit accepts labor as its own personal destiny - a person may feel that his work is his vocation and transmute it into creativeness. Labor is thus transfigured and enlightened when it is expressed in spiritual freedom as redemptive or as creativeness. Thus, Dostoyevsky



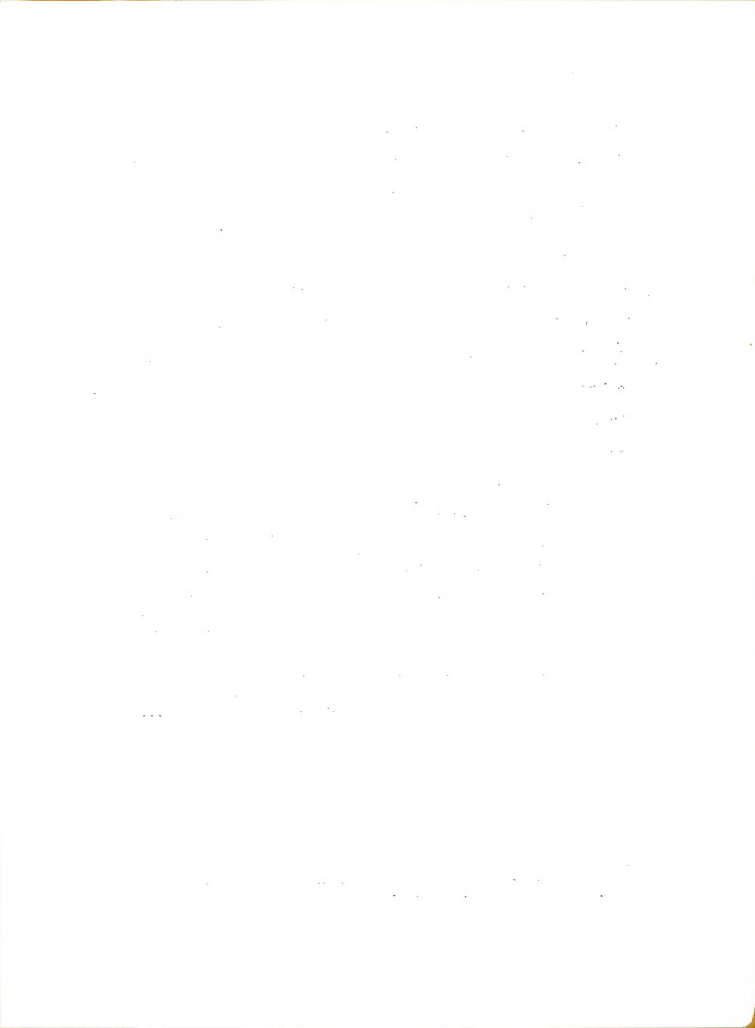
seen in labor, as in suffering, a way of mystical union with the Divine. Labor is but a way for man, living in the world and bound temporarily to the flesh, to rise above the slavery to the flesh and become capable of living in the realm of the spirit.

Dostoyevsky, for all his romanticism and philosophizing, yet remains a sociologist who studied the institutions and human groupings of nineteenth century Russia and in sometimes somber and sometimes brilliant word-pictures portrays the social conditions, human motivations, causes and effects in the social system as he saw them. Thus, one Russian commentator has been able to evaluate Dostoyevsky's work by stating:

One pardons Dostoyevsky everything, because when he speaks of the ill-treated and forgotten children of our town civilization he becomes truly great through his wide, infinite love of mankind - of man, even in his worst manifestations. Through his love of those drunkards, beggars, petty thieves and so on, whom we usually pass by without even bestowing upon them a pitying glance; through his power of discovering what is human and often great in the lowest sunken being; through the love which he inspires in us, even for the least interesting types of mankind, even for those who never will make an effort to get out of the low and miserable position into which life has thrown them - through this faculty Dostoyevsky has certainly won a unique position among the writers of modern times...<sup>231</sup>

<sup>231</sup>Krppotkin, P., Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1919, p. 170.





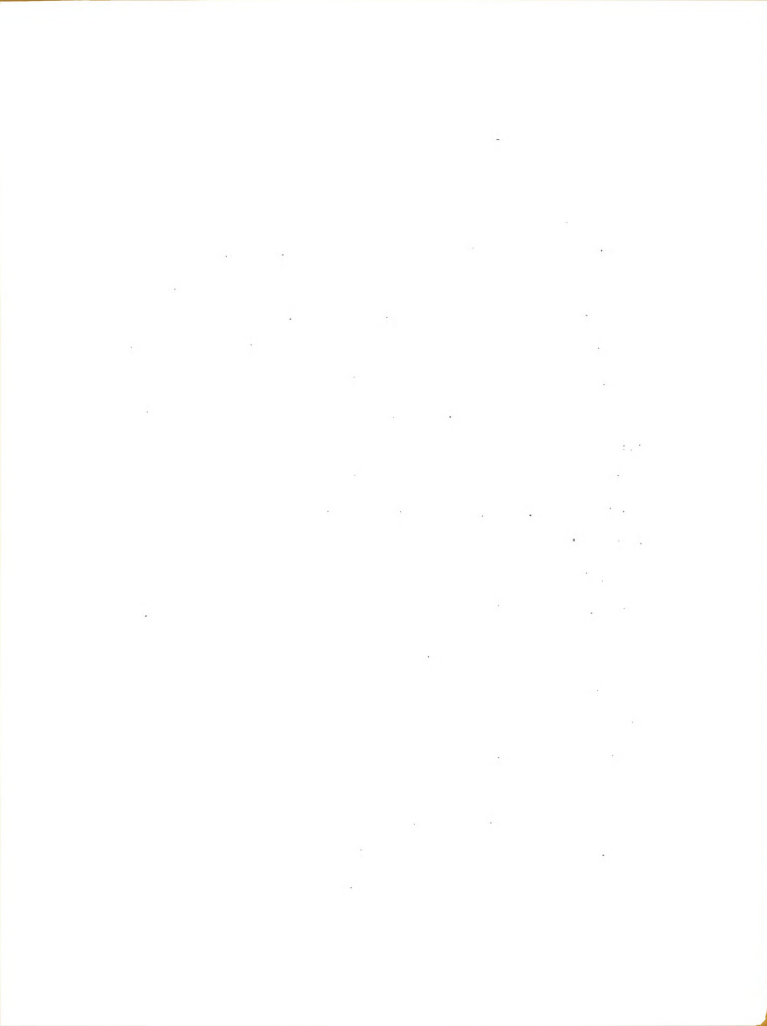
## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEO-SLAVOPHILES: SOLOVIEV AND BERDYAEV

No survey of the works of the Slavophiles would be complete without at least a few words of comment about Pobedonoscev (1827-1907); Vladimir Soloviev and Nicolas Berdyaev. True, none of these three men fall completely into the category of Slavophiles, but they should be considered as Neo-Slavophiles. Each of these Russian writers recognized the debt they owe to Slavophilism and in their writings and political or social activities there is clearly seen elements of Slavophilism. True, they do not accept Slavophilism unconditionally nor do they repeat Slavophile doctrines without adding concepts of their own or eliminating certain aspects of the earlier system. Yet, in essence they prefer the Russian religious, social and political system to that of the West, though Soloviev, at least, is willing to make many more concessions to the West, particularly Roman Catholicism, than the Slavophiles would have done.

#### Pobedonoscev: Procurator of the Holy Synod

Konstantin Petrovich Pobedonoscev, was an ardent defender and proponent of the romanticist social system advocated by the Slavophiles - theocracy. It is clear from his writings and his thought that his fundamental principles are similar to those held by the leading Slavophiles, Kirievsky, Konstantin Aksakov, Samarin and Khomyakov. In nihilism and revolutionary terrorism, Pobedonoscev found the precise antithesis as a philosophy of history, to his own fundamental outlook, which was that Old Russian civilization, as the pre-



cise opposite of western civilization, could alone constitute the true basis for a genuinely Russian political system.

Pobedonoscev's attitude toward Western Europe was the same as that of the Slavophiles for he held that Russia possessed true social order while Europe was plagued by anarchy; Russia was life while Europe offered only death, - death of the individual and of the nation, death at once moral and physical. His anti-rationalism appears in his contention that the essential malady of Europe and of liberalism was a dependence upon reason and empirical science. Sometimes he attacked logic and the syllogistic method, sometimes he censured logical formalism. Herein, he contended, was to be found the causes of Europe's decadence. Contrasting Russia with the West, Pobedonoscev extolled immediate sensation, warm feeling and intuition. It is easy to understand his holding this point of view when one recalls that he had studied in the school of Rousseau, and like so many of the romanticists he rejected empirical science, philosophy and "civilization." Unlike Rousseau, however, he did not advocate a return to a state of nature, but to the prepetrine Third Rome with its Byzantine Orthodoxy and the doctrines of the Greek Fathers, to the mysticism of the earliest Christian centuries. He accepted in its entirety the mystical psychology of the Slavophiles, but as a practical sociologist and statesman, he carried it out to its logical political and social consequences.

In 1880, Pobedonoscev who had been trained in civil law and had been tutor to Alexander II, was appointed chief procurator of the Holy

Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, a position he held until 1905. He had ample opportunity in this position to take into action his social theories. It is interesting therefore to note his activities as procurator. The question of the relationship between church and state, the representatives of the spiritual and the earthly realms, was regarded by Pobedonoscev as of paramount importance. He criticized the attempts at a solution that had been made in Europe. In the papal system, he felt, the church controlled the state. The more or less liberal systems which had developed from the eighteenth century onwards, granting equal rights to all religions, independence of the state from the church, and a free church in a free state, he regarded as vague half-measures, and could not be effectively carried out in practice. He contended that the church, in view of its educational responsibilities, could not possibly renounce the moral guidance of the citizens. A separation between church and state he regarded as de facto impossible. Thus he held that since there is a natural harmony of purposes between church and state, the Orthodox Church should be the state church in Russia. He treated with unusual severity and harshness any sectarian group that dissented from Orthodoxy. In this he was certainly at variance with Dostoyevsky who taught that spiritual freedom was an essential part of Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, his stress on mysticism, the superiority of Russian culture over that of the West, and his belief that in Orthodoxy lay the hope of the world, - in these concepts he was at one with the Slavophiles.

Vladimir Soloviev

Another of the Neo-Slavophiles was Vladimir Soloviev (1853 - 1900), perhaps the most thoroughly Russian of Russian philosophers, yet paradoxically he sought to realize the conscious unity of mankind in religion through union of Russian Orthodoxy with Roman Catholicism, thus forming what he considered would be the Universal Church. Certainly there are elements of Platonism in his writings, and his doctrine of Sophia or Wisdom is essentially Platonic. His mysticism and romanticism place him in a continuum that developed out of Slavophilism.

In contrast to the Slavophiles, however, Soloviev wrote a series of philosophical books and created a complete system, while the Slavophiles did not succeed in forming a definite or harmonious philosophical system. Soloviev's philosophy shows clear traces of the influence of Plato, Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer, and certainly Schelling contributed much to the development of Soloviev's theories. He was an enigmatic and self-contradictory writer. At one time he embraced the position of the Slavophiles and at another he produced a devastating attack upon Slavophilism. In one of his works he criticized Slavophilism in the following terms:

I do not doubt at all the sincere personal religiousness of this or that warrior of the "Russian foundations"; only it is clear to me that in the system of the Slavophile ideas there is no legitimate place for religion as such, and if it got there, it was only through a misunderstanding, with some one else's passport, so to speak.<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>232</sup>Soloviev, Vladimir, Slavophilism And Its Degeneration, St. Petersburg, Vol. V., 1889, p. 185.



He calls Slavophilism a "zoological patriotism" and contends that the messianic idea of the Slavophiles has been transformed into "zoomorphic nationalism," and an idolatrous worship of the nation and everything in its past. He condemned the particularism of Orthodoxy and in some passages seems to contend that the Greek Church originally separated itself from the whole body of Christianity, and that it was not the Roman See that became dissident, as all Easterners agree.<sup>233</sup>

Those parts of his writings which are evidences of his Neo-Slavophilism, however, contradictory as they may be to some of his other statements contained in some of his works, deserve further study. For example, the following passage shows clearly the Platonic element, the concept of universalism and wholeness of all creation;

In itself, the divine beginning is the eternal all-One, abiding in absolute repose and immutability; but in relation to multiplicity of the finite being which left it, the divine beginning appears as the active force of unity - Logos ad extra. The multiple being in its discord rises against the divine unity, negates it; but Divinity, the principle of all-unity by its very nature, is merely aroused by the negative action of the disintegrated existence to positive reaction, to the manifestation of its unifying force, at first in the form of external law and then gradually realizing a new positive unification of these elements in the form of absolute organism or internal all-unity.<sup>234</sup>

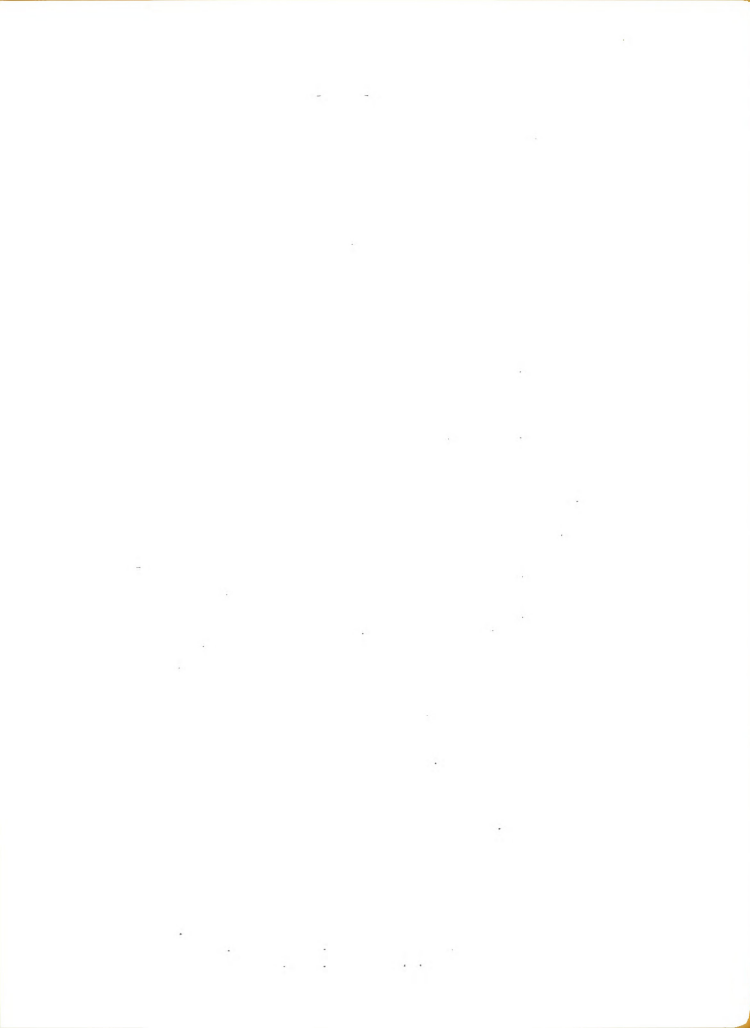
It is the Logos which Soloviev believes to be the unifying force in all creation. Closely allied to this concept is his doctrine of

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<sup>233</sup>It has been proven that Soloviev received the Sacraments of the Russian Orthodox Church before his death and died as a member of that Church, not as a Roman Catholic as some contend.

<sup>234</sup>Soloviev, Vladimir, Godmanhood, ed. by Peter P. Zouboff, Harmon House, Poughkeepsie, N.Y., 1944, p. 145.





the Sophia. The Greek word for Wisdom, Sophia is scripturally but another name for the Word of God in His pre-eternal existence. For Soloviev, it is on one hand the world-soul, the ideal humanity, the principle of unity in created nature; and on the other hand, "Sophia is the body of God, the matter of Divinity, permeated with the beginning of divine unity."<sup>235</sup>

Like the Slavophiles, (despite his contradictory statements about the truth of Roman Catholicism) Soloviev considered Orthodoxy to be the only religious or social institution capable of restoring the concept of Godmanhood and spiritual unity to man. Thus, he writes his views of the Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church:

The East did not fall into the three temptations of the evil beginning - it preserved the truth of Christ; but keeping it in the soul of her nations, the Eastern Church has not realized it in external actuality, has not given it expression in factual reality, has not created a Christian culture in the same manner as the West has created an anti-Christian culture...In the Orthodox Church the enormous majority of its members were captivated into obedience to the truth through an immediate inclination, not through a conscious (reflective) process in their inner lives.<sup>236</sup>

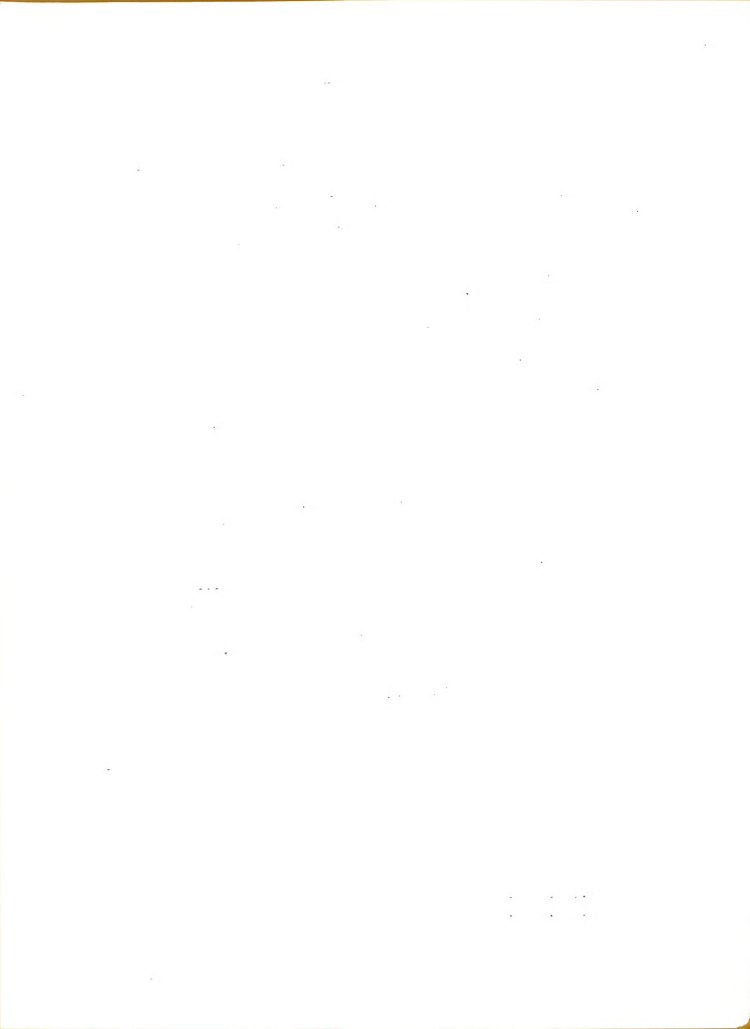
#### Soloviev's Pro-Orthodoxy

There are further evidences that Soloviev shared the Slavophile point of view about the West, particularly about Roman Catholicism. The following quotations taken from his lectures, show clearly that he held the Slavophile view of the preeminence of Orthodoxy over the

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<sup>235</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>236</sup>Ibid., p. 224.



Western religion:

The unbelief which at first was hidden in Roman Catholicism as an unperceived embryo was later on clearly revealed. Thus in Jesuitism - that extreme, purest expression of the Catholic principle - the moving force was an outright lust for power, and not the Christian zeal; nations were being brought into subjection not to Christ, but to the Church authority...The falsity of the Catholic way was early recognized in the West and finally this realization found its full expression in Protestantism... Protestantism easily passes into rationalism... In the history of Christianity the immovable divine foundation in humanity is represented by the Eastern Church, while the Western world is the representative of the human element.<sup>237</sup>

Here again there is a preference, in Platonic strain, for the realm of the spiritual over that of the material and the human. Soloviev is on additional common ground with the Slavophiles and the Platonists when he repudiates the absolute reliability of human reason. He blamed German philosophy and Protestantism for encouraging this emphasis on human reason. On this concept he writes:

Self-confidence and self-assertion of human reason in life and knowledge is an abnormal phenomenon, it is the pride of the mind; in Protestantism, and in rationalism which issued from it. Western humanity fell into... the falsity of this path...Human reason could master neither the passions and the lower human interests in life, nor the facts of the empirical reality, in science... And behold, indeed, the dominion of rationalism in European politics and science is replaced with the preponderance of materialism and empiricism. This path has not been traversed to the end as yet, but its falsity has been already recognized by the leading minds in the West itself.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>238</sup>Ibid., p. 221 f.

Soloviev held that the moral nature of man, the "good" is from God, and toward God's perfection man is striving. This realization of moral value is the theme of history, he held. All social sanction and the value of all social institutions depends upon the principle of man's absolute worth. But the realization of this worth demands social organization. So in his sociology, Soloviev contends that man is involved in the examination of social problems, national, economic, penal and juridical, the questions of war and peace. The national ideals should express not exclusiveness and aggression but a living sense of a people's share in the divine work on Earth. Like Dostoyevsky, Soloviev is a theocrat. Penal justice, according to Soloviev, should never lose sight of man's inviolable moral dignity or lose hope in the ultimate reclamation of the evil-doer. Thus, Soloviev condemned capital punishment. Exploitation of the poor he also condemned, because he regarded men as not merely economic agents. Without the directive principle of man's essential worth and dignity, all social reform is futile, he held.

There were two major principles of Russian sociology, Soloviev contended: (1) the individual and society must be inseparable and supplementary to each other; and (2) social progress can come only with the identification of the individualized man and socialized man. Herein he stresses his universalism and the concept of man striving for unity with the Divine.

Nicolas Berdyaev

The last of those writers who might be considered as Neo-Slavo-

philes is Nicolas Berdyaev (1874-1948), the renowned Russian exile philosopher. He died in Paris on March 23rd, 1948. He was one of the few Russian emigre thinkers and writers who continued to support the policies of the Orthodox Church in Russia after the revolution. He saw in the present day Russian Church the seed of a mission to impart to the world a doctrine and social system based upon the fusion of Christian and social truths. At the age of twenty-five he was exiled from Kiev to the north of Russia, and early in 1917 he was again threatened with banishment for having criticized the Governing Synod of the Russian Church as a political body at the mercy of the civil power. After the revolution he was appointed to the chair of philosophy at the University of Moscow, but after twice undergoing imprisonment he was finally expelled by the Soviet regime in 1922 as an ardent member of the Orthodox Church. He lived first in Berlin and then in Paris, where he directed the Academy of the Philosophy of Religion, which he founded.

#### Russian Messianism and Anti-Communism

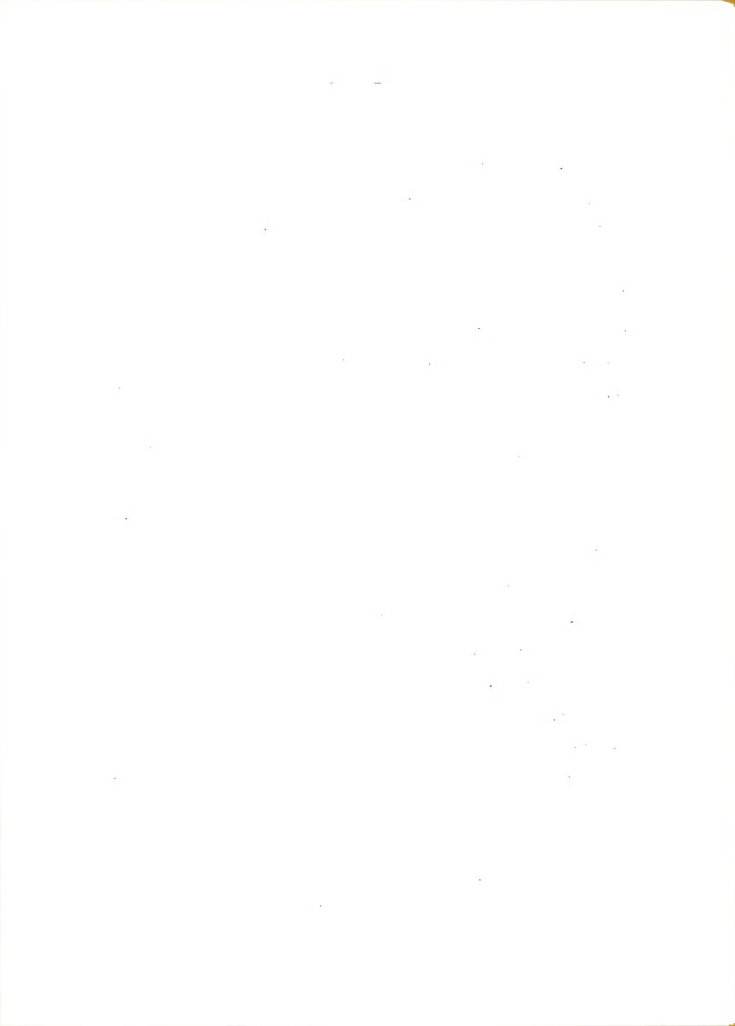
In his works, as in those of the Slavophiles and in Soloviev, Berdyaev insists upon the messianic mission of Russian Orthodoxy, he makes the same emphasis upon the Platonic concept of universalism, the same belief in the Neo-Platonid doctrine of the supreme reality of the spiritual and the right of the spiritual over the secular and the material world. A voluminous writer, Berdyaev formulated a number of social theories upon the basis of his philosophy of history.



Platonism is an insistence upon the supreme value of the Absolute. Berdyaev considered democracy as complete relativism, a negation of all absolutes. Like the Slavophiles before him, he insists upon communality based upon Orthodoxy. He held that the character of democracy is purely formal and that it knows nothing of its own essence and that within the limits of its affirmed principles, has no consistency. Democracy, he held, is indifferent to the direction and essence of the popular will, and has no criterion whereby it may judge its tendencies or decide the worth of the will itself. Thus, he regards power in the people's hands as not ordered toward any object, and good and evil are alike indifferent for democracy. It is tolerant, he believed, because of this indifference, - because it has lost faith in Truth, and because it is totally unable to choose any truth. It is logically the development of the decadence of Roman Catholicism which in turn degenerated into Protestantism and individualism, Berdyaev contended. Individualism is the opposite of the communality and universalism which Berdyaev, and the Slavophiles, view as the summum bonum in the social realm.

Yet, anyone making even a cursory study of Berdyaev's works will realize that this Russian thinker was an ardent opponent of atheistic communism, even though he criticized many elements of democracy. One of his major works is devoted to a study of the genesis of Russian Communism and contains numerous condemnations of its philosophy and its social system. In the following passage, Berdyaev's anti-communistic point of view is clearly evident:





The spirit of communism, the religion of communism, the philosophy of communism, are both anti-Christian and anti-humanist. But the social system of communism. But the social system of communism possesses a large share of truth which can be wholly reconciled with Christianity, more so, in any case, than the capitalistic system, which is most anti-Christian. Communism is right as against capitalism. The falsity of the communist spirit and of its spiritual servitude can be condemned only by those Christians who cannot be suspected of defending the interests of the bourgeois capitalistic world.<sup>238</sup>

Berdyaev recognizes Russian Communism as a totalitarian system and he condemns it, though not without finding in it at least one element which he believes is in accord with the philosophy of Christianity, viz., "In economic life serve others, serve the whole community and then you will receive everything which you need for your life."<sup>239</sup> Of totalitarianism, however, he has only the most condemnatory of attitudes, for he writes:

Totalitarianism always brings slavery with it. The totalitarianism of the Kingdom of God alone is an affirmation of freedom. But totalitarianism in the world of objectivization is always slavery. The objectivized world is partial and it does not lend itself to a complete, totalitarian ordering of things.<sup>240</sup>

It is this principle in Berdyaev which causes him to advocate a social system similar to that proposed by the Slavophiles - a theocracy or the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth. Here again is evidence of his essentially Platonic philosophy which underlies his sociology, for he gives priority to the spiritual over the

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<sup>238</sup>Berdyaev, "The Origin of Russian Communism," op. cit., p. 225.

<sup>239</sup>Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>240</sup>Berdyaev, "Slavery and Freedom," The Centenary Press, London, 1943, p. 206.

material and secular realm - the real is the Divine and spiritual for it is the realm of Being, while the physical world, the objectified world, the world of becoming, is less real and therefore less to be valued.

Far from advocating a social utopia, Berdyaev warns that utopianism is replete with dangers and pit-falls. He contends that utopia leads to a monism which in turn leads to the enslavement of mankind. Thus, he rejects the utopian theories by holding that they deprive man of his personal dignity, personal conscience and freedom of spirit.<sup>241</sup> Commenting upon the falsity of the utopian ideal, he writes:

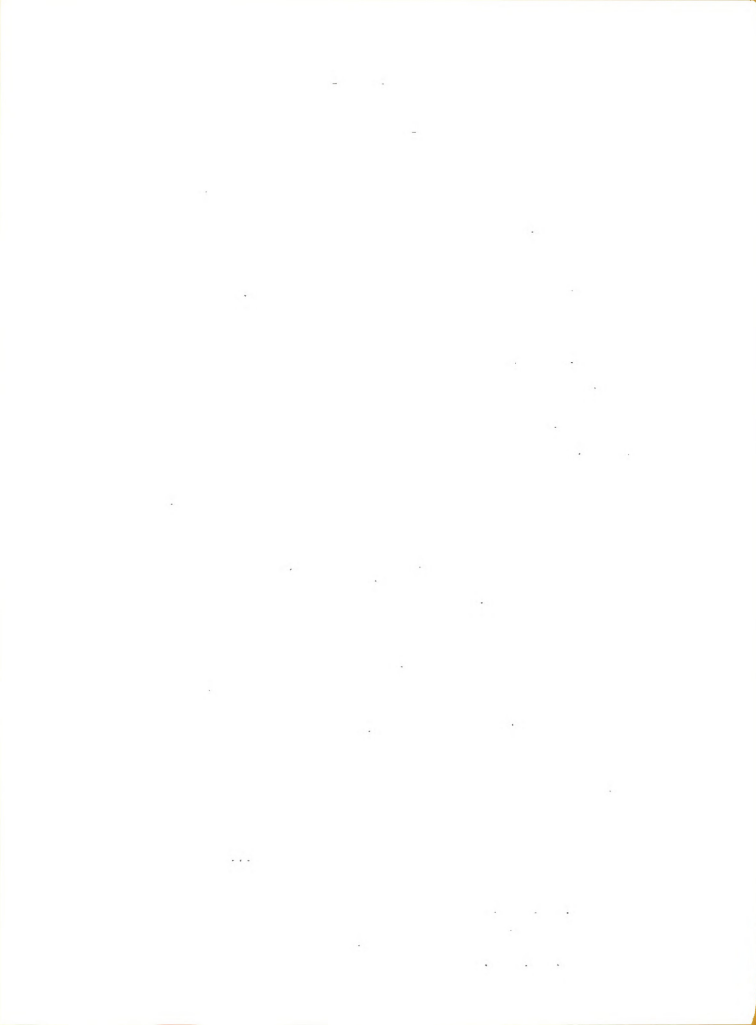
The Utopia of terrestrial paradise and beatitude is closely connected with the doctrine of progress. But this Utopia is nothing more than a perversion and distortion of the religious faith in the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, the grotesque rationalization of an unconscious millenarianism. Such a concept has been discredited in theory and rejected as unfeasible in practice. The Utopia of a terrestrial paradise contains the same fundamental contradictions as those involved in the doctrines of progress, in so far as it also postulates an ultimate perfection within time and the limits of the historical process.<sup>242</sup>

Again the Platonic element is clear in Berdyaev's thinking concerning man's social activity. He is willing to accept the concept of progress as the workings of a Divine Providence toward the "absoluteness of divine life" but he holds that "it would still be false to conclude that the generation destined to emerge on the peaks of history would be assumed within the absolute..."<sup>243</sup>

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., p. 207.

<sup>242</sup> Berdyaev, N., The Meaning of History, trans. by George Reavey, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1936, p. 191.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., p. 193.



Berdyaev's proposal of the solution to mankind's social problems is the solution advanced by the Neo-Platonists - unity with the Divine and there will follow a perfect ordering even of the secular realm. Thus, it is his contention that "the very foundation of mysticism is an inner kinship or union between the human spirit and the divine, between creation and the Creator."<sup>244</sup> Mystics, from the time of Plato and the Neo-Platonists onward have always insisted upon this union, this harmony between the world of sense experience and the spiritual realm. In reply to the rhetorical question as to the essence of mysticism, Berdyaev replies:

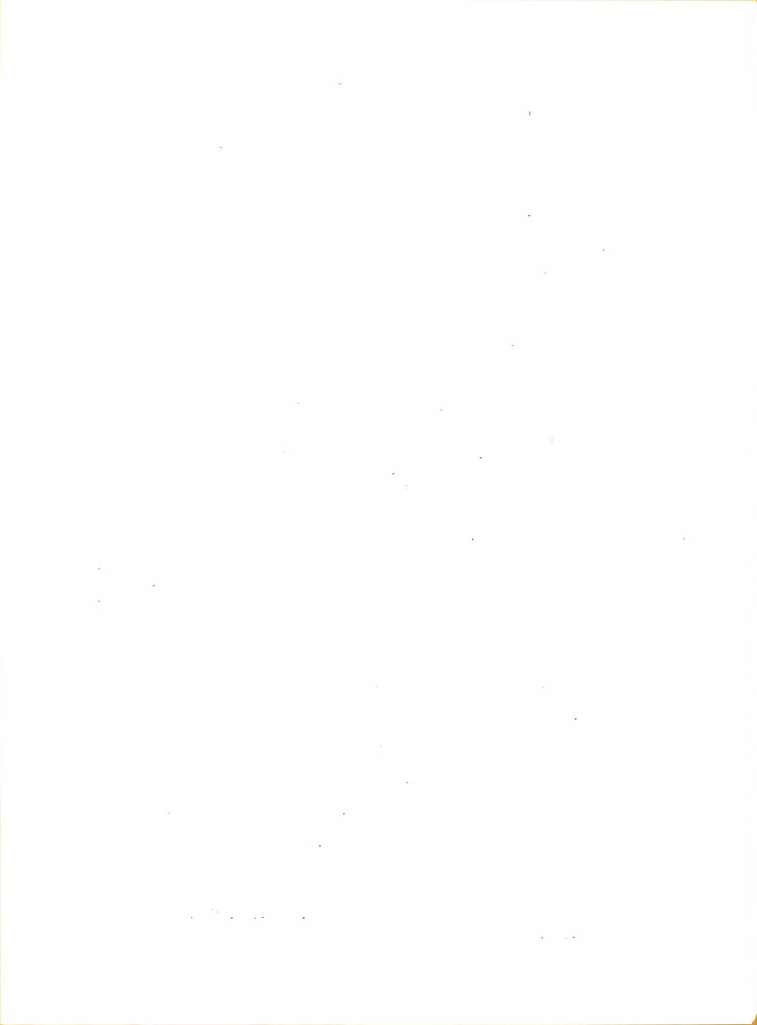
Mysticism is the overcoming of creatureliness (Kreaturlichkeit). That is the deepest and most intrinsic definition of its nature. In mystical experience there is no longer any insurmountable dualism between the supernatural and the natural, the divine and the created, for in it the natural becomes supernatural and the creature is deified. But perfect union with God does not mean the disappearance of man altogether, nor the obliterating of the distinctions between the two different natures. It is only created nothingness which is superseded. Mysticism is the way of deification both for man and the world. On this point the mystics of all ages and creeds are at one.<sup>245</sup>

Herein lies Berdyaev's social program, his plan for the bridging of the dualism between supernatural and nature, the divine and the created. It would be interesting to explore the relationship between this mystical concept, which Berdyaev holds in common with other mystics, including the Hindu, and the passivity and non-resistance which seems to follow from mysticism. Such an exploration, however, would be beyond the scope of this paper.

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<sup>244</sup>Berdyaev, "Freedom And The Spirit," op. cit., p. 242.

<sup>245</sup>Ibid., p. 243.



## CHAPTER XII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The course is run. The heritage which Plato left in ancient Greece has assuredly found acceptance in modern times and it seems proper to recognize the Slavophiles of the nineteenth century as having a share in the perpetuation of Platonism. That the ancient Greek philosopher's metaphysical and social philosophy should have found soil in the wide plains of Russia is quite understandable in view of the part which Eastern Orthodox Catholicism has played in mediating Platonism and Neo-Platonism through the patristic writers and the ecclesiastical structure of Orthodoxy. That Russia accepted Eastern rather than Western Catholicism was undoubtedly one of the most crucial events in world history, for along with its acceptance of Byzantine Christianity there came a whole new culture and a philosophical and social system which merged with the ancient Varangian culture of pre-Kievan Rus.

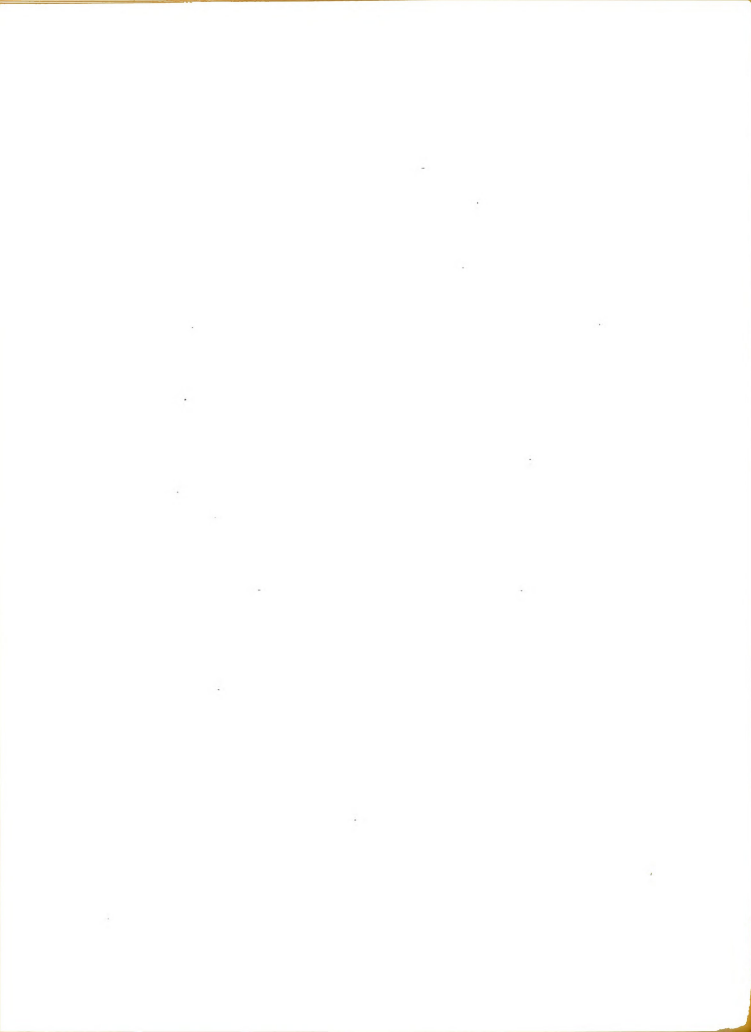
It is an accepted theory in cultural anthropology that when two cultures meet, with one a weak or poorly developed system while the other is more highly developed and powerful, there is not simply an elimination of the lower and an absolute acceptance of the higher culture, but rather there is a merging of cultural elements with the higher gaining dominance. Something of both cultures remain, one supplementing the other. That this occurred in Russia is attested to by historians and cultural anthropologists. It is for this reason that the socio-ecclesiastical institutions of Russia, while resembling





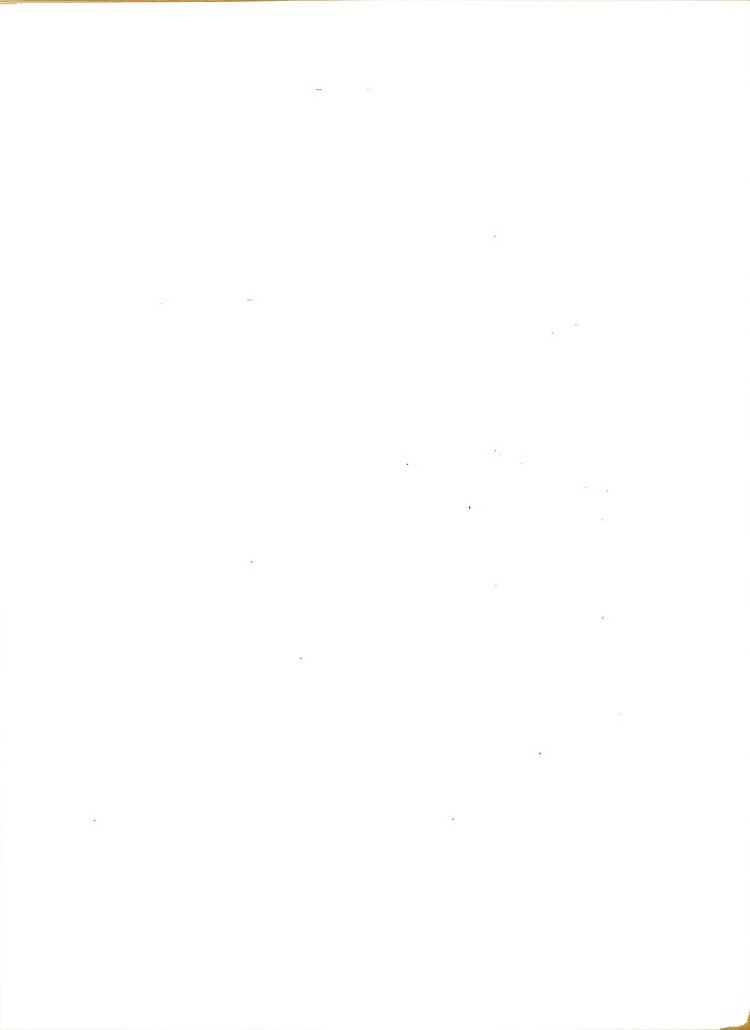
in some degree those of Byzantium, still possess large elements which are distinctly pre-Kievan and quite definitely and predominantly Slavic.

In its deepest and most intimate nature Russia differs from Western Europe. Even though Russia today is officially non-religiously oriented, it cannot be denied that the deep and abiding roots of Russia are sunk into an Orthodox religious faith. The contrast between the two cultures, Eastern and Western, is determined by religious and ecclesiastical differences, and it was these that the Slavophiles stressed. Essentially, the difference between pre-Revolutionary Russia and Western Europe was the contrast between faith and empirical knowledge inimical to faith; between tradition and criticism; between Orthodox Catholicism on the one hand and Roman Catholicism and predominantly German Protestantism on the other. The dominant philosophy of pre-Revolutionary Russia was that of the Greek Church Fathers while in Europe scholasticism and the essentially Protestant philosophy which developed out of scholasticism have been the mainsprings of culture. The Russian state grew organically out of the idea of communality and the social and economic expression of this was the mir. In Western Europe, however, the State usually developed as a result of armed occupation and the subjugation of foreign people. In the realm of law, Russian law was quite largely a development from the Canon Law of the Eastern Church and the convictions of the people, whereas Western law, imposed by the Roman conquerors, eventuated in an outward legalism.



The present study, beginning with a discussion of Plato's Realism and mysticism, found principally in the Republic, Timaeus, and Phaedo, has attempted to show that these works contain the doctrines which, while Plato did not develop them to the extremes that later philosophers were to do, nevertheless provided a foundation for the mysticism and realism of the Neo-Platonists, the Gnostics, the orthodox Greek Church Fathers and such western philosophers as Jacob Boehme, Franz von Baader, Schelling and Hegel. While it has not been the purpose of this paper to enter into a detailed study and summary of the complete works of each of these philosophers, it should be noted that only certain stages of their writings may have influenced the Slavophiles, while the Russian thinkers may have ignored or purposely overlooked the writings of these men in other stages of their development. Thus, Schelling passed through five stages of his own philosophical development. Only two of the stages provided concepts which the Slavophiles found compatible with their own concepts. Thus, they accepted Schellings doctrines which this philosopher had evolved during those periods when he was most under the influence of men like von Baader.

Plato's philosophy advanced the concepts of mystical unity of man with the Ideal. He advocated unity and condemned plurality. His doctrine of the reality of the Ideal realm, which he considered the world of Being, also postulates a world of Becoming, the world



of particulars, of fallible sense experience. In believing that the latter realm is less real, Plato gave rise to the concept which the Neo-Platonists were later to develop, that the realm of the spirit, the unseen world, is more to be valued than the transient, unreal world in which man lives out his natural life.

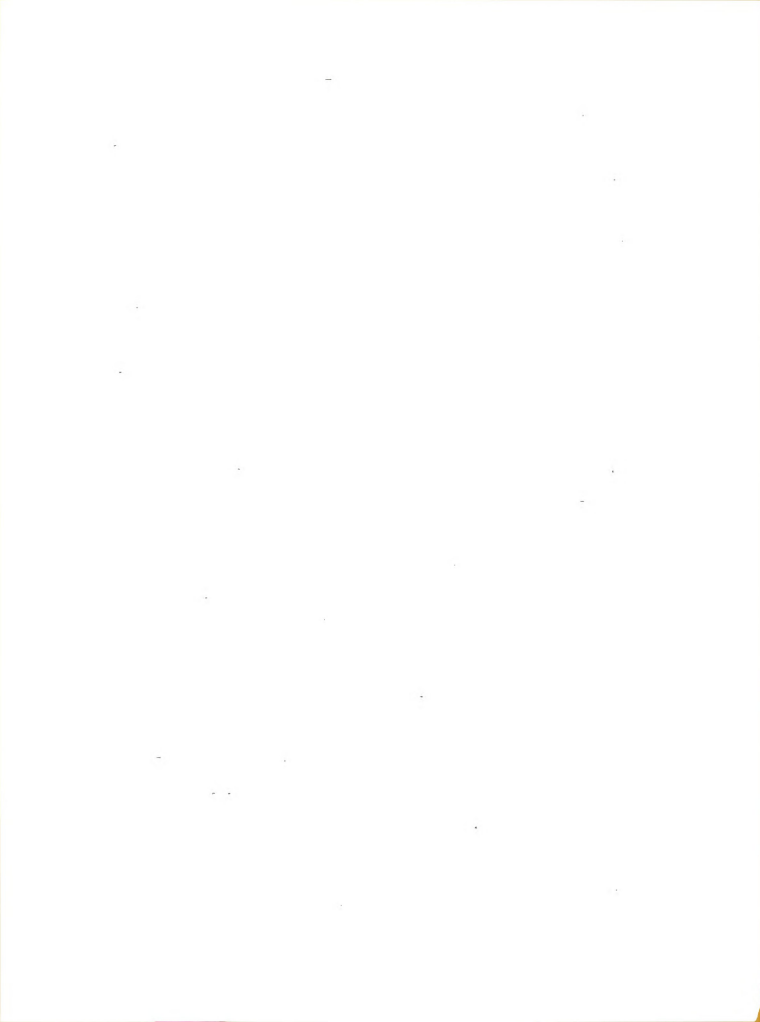
The Neo-Platonists, Plotinus especially, synthesized Plato's doctrines with Jewish and Christian religious beliefs and evolved a system of philosophy which the early Christian philosophers found quite in harmony with many of their own beliefs. Thus, they assimilated Platonic and Neo-Platonic theories into their own writings. It was necessary to employ philosophically respectable terminology during the early existence of the Christian Church in order to impress upon pagan intellectuals that Christianity was not only a reasonable and logical school of thought, but that it provided the final and complete solution to many of the problems that had been harassing the people of the Roman Empire during the first few centuries after the birth of Christ.

Out of Platonism and Neo-Platonism developed the idea that matter is inferior to the world of spirit. The Gnostics and the Manichaeans based their world-rejecting philosophy and theology upon this theory and turned to celibacy and asceticism. In some degree, this rejection of the world of sense experience influenced the growth of orthodox Christian monasticism and helped give rise to a mystical trend that has persisted in Christianity. Strengthened by evangelical passages supporting asceticism and rejection of the

"world, the flesh and the devil," early Christian writers engaged in an apologetical campaign to explain and propagate Christianity. St. Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria deliberately accepted Platonic theories and often rephrased them in Christian terms or took Christian beliefs and rephrased them in Platonic terminology. As might be expected, this resulted in a "canonization" of elements of Platonism and in their perpetuation by the Christian Church. The Eastern Church evolved a theology and philosophy which was influential in the West as well as in the Eastern territories of Christendom.

Upon the Platonized writings of the Christian Apologists, later Christian theologians and philosophers like Pseudo-Dionysius and St. John Damascene built their systems of thought. The writings of Pseudo-Dionysius and Damascene were particularly influential throughout both sections of Christendom and assisted in the perpetuation of those Platonic and Neo-Platonic doctrines that had been brought into Christian literature during the post-Apostolic period.

Byzantium, until it fell to the Turks in 1453 preserved and dogmatized the literature of the previous centuries and regarded them as tests of orthodoxy. The Byzantine socio-ecclesiastical system was founded upon the hierarchical theories of Plato and the evangelical and apostolic constitutions. With the mass-conversion of Russia to Eastern Christianity in 988 A.D. Platonism passed to the Slavs. Greek priests and bishops were the first tutors of the Russian Christians and as might be expected, they brought with them to Russia not only their religious faith but



Byzantine political, architectural, aesthetic, and literary cultural elements as well. Thus, Kievan Russia received along with Eastern Christianity certain doctrines of Platonism and Neo-Platonism as well. As Russian scholars became better trained, they looked back into the literature of the Greek Church Fathers and accepted from them the mysticism, emphasis upon communality, rejection of rationalism and aspects of romanticism which have remained inherent in Russian thought.

While the thread of Platonism was continuous in Eastern Orthodox Catholicism from the first centuries of the Christian era, the West was not without its own Platonic tradition. Thus, Jacob Boehme, the German shoe-maker mystic stressed the anti-rational doctrine of the superiority of Illumination and mystical intuition as a way of knowledge. Schelling in his first and fifth phases, and the metaphysics of Hegel produced a German school of romanticism and mysticism which was to influence the nineteenth century Russians who studied the works of the German philosophers. In this manner, the Platonic tradition which had existed uninterruptedly within Eastern Orthodoxy in Russia, received reinforcement from those Western philosophers who had been influenced by Platonism.

The Slavophiles were thus the recipients of Platonic influence from two sources, Eastern Orthodoxy and German Romanticism. Slavophilism was not simply an abstract system of philosophy divorced from a sociology, for it sought to give social expression to its Platonically based theories of the superiority of the spiritual to the temporal.





Thus there came into being the shibboleth of Slavophilism: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationalism." The Slavophiles, however, always insisted that Orthodoxy, as being the extension of the spiritual realm on earth, should take precedence over the Tsarist State and over nationalism. The Slavophiles adopted the anti-rationalistic theories of the Greek Fathers who were media of Platonism and they thus condemned the legalism and rationalism of Western Europe. They placed the blame upon Roman Catholicism for the materialism they professed to find in Europe and stated that scholasticism and Aristotelian logic led eventually to individualism which in turn degenerated into anarchy. Protestantism was regarded by the Slavophiles as a decay logically resulting from the rationalism of Roman Catholicism.

Since the Slavophiles considered the realm of the spiritual to be superior to the material realm, and since the Slavophiles regarded Russian Orthodoxy as the most complete and valid expression of Christian truth, they stressed the messianic mission of Russia to the rest of the world. Russia alone, they believed, was able to lead the confused world out of the chaotic condition into which its materialism and sensuality had plunged it. The Slavophiles considered Russia capable of fulfilling its messianic mission because the Russian people, especially the peasants, had retained the spirit of humility and communality along with the True Faith. Dostoyevsky especially, stressed the superiority of the lowliest Russian peasant to the best educated Westerner, because the peasant relied upon the realm of the spirit, while the Westerner relied upon his machines, his fallible reason, and his individualism to achieve social and eternal salvation.



In their advocacy of the Russian mir, or rural collectivity, the Slavophiles gave social expression to their doctrine of communality and sobornost. Khomyakov especially stressed sobornost, the combination of unity and freedom based upon a religious faith and in his works he regards Roman Catholicism as a unity without freedom and Protestantism as freedom without unity. He contends that in these denominations only an external unity and an external freedom are realized.

It is the contention of the Slavophiles that no "living truth" and especially no truth related to Divinity can be fitted into the framework of logical understanding. It must be an object of faith, not in the sense of subjective certainty but in the sense of immediate givenness. Thus, Khomyakov stated the concept that only where there exists a harmony of faith and understanding is it possible to achieve a "wholeness of reason." Mystical intuition is capable of bringing more certain knowledge than empirical investigation. Kirievsky, the founder of Slavophilism as a movement in the nineteenth century, likewise emphasized mystical intuition, communality, and the superiority of the spiritual or supernatural over the world of phenomena and sense experience.

While they do not fit completely into the Slavophile category, Berdyaev and Soloviev maintained philosophical and sociological positions very similar to Slavophilism in many respects. Soloviev seemed inclined to embrace Roman Catholicism, (a thing the Slavophiles would never have considered possible for an enlightened Russian to do) but



his interest was essentially a literary and philosophical one for he remained a communicant of the Russian Orthodox Church until his death. Soloviev, however, stressed unity, just as the Slavophiles had done. He had little patience with rationalism or empirical science and he showed evidences of holding that Russia had a messianic vocation to the rest of the world. He holds a philosophy of realism in the Platonic sense and shows himself in sympathy with the Platonic doctrines contained in the Greek patristic authors.

Berdyaev likewise shows a philosophy that has assimilated many Platonic theories. Culture and civilization in their earthly expressions he regards as fragile but holding within themselves moments of the eternal. This element of the eternal he holds, has continued on in the life of the Christian Church, the heir of the Graeco-Roman world.

In his anthropology there is a further evidence of Platonic influence for Berdyaev states that man's true image, human personality, is held by man in common with the God-Man. God, says Berdyaev, is Creator but is not entirely transcendent and apart from man. But Berdyaev holds that a one-sided humanism must be answered by what he calls "theandrisim" - which sees the divine in man and the human in God. The idealism which Berdyaev opposes to materialism is certainly no abstract metaphysic, no hypostatization of ideas. His idealism is really a philosophy of the concrete spirit. It is this which he sets up against that crude sort of materialism which characterizes Marxian Communism.



Slavophilism seems especially significant in the nineteenth century because of its similarity in some few respects to Marxian-Leninist Communism in the twentieth. Both movements proclaim the messianic mission of Russia, Slavophilism contending that the vocation is essentially a spiritual one whose purpose is not merely social paradise on earth but an eternal salvation after death; Communism on the other hand is wholly materialistic. For this reason, Slavophiles like Dostoyevsky and Berdyaev the Neo-Slavophile condemned Marxian Communism on ideological rather than politico-economic grounds. What is false in Communism, they held, is its spirit, its materialistic determinism which is a denial of the spiritual.

In its emphasis upon communality, Slavophilism shows a further similarity to Sovietism and Marxian Communism. But here again there is a difference. The communality of the Slavophiles was but the doctrine of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God, whereas the Communists postulate simply the brotherhood of the proletariat, damn the bourgeoisie and completely deny God. Yet one wonders whether the idea of communality which Eastern Orthodoxy and Slavophilism helped perpetuate among the Russians might not have provided an easier acceptance by the Russians of the Communist program. This however is a problem that must be left unanswered in this paper.





## APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

S. JUSTINI PHILOSOPHII ET MARTYRIS

DIALOGUS CUM TRYPHONE JUDAEI

Deinde ut collocutus sum cum eo, auditor illius et familiaris fieri cupiens: Quid ergo, inquit ille, dedisti operam musicae, astronomiae et geometriae? An putas perspecturum te quidquam eorum, quae beatae vitae conducunt, nisi haec prius didiceris, quae animum a rebus sensum movientibus abstrahent et ad ea, quae mente percipiuntur, idoneum efficient, ut ipsum pulchrum et ipsum bonum intueatur? Cum has disciplinas pluribus laudasset, ac necessarias praedicasset, dimisit me a se, postquam ei confessum sum me nescire. Ferebam igitur, ut par erat, moleste quod spe excidissem; eoque magis quod mihi aliquid scire videretur. Rursus cum tempus illud considerarem, quod mihi in his disciplinis conterendum erat, non ferebam me in longum tempus rejici. In hac consilii inopia visum est ut ad Platonicos me conferrem (erat enim magno in pretio) ac cum viro quodam prudenti, qui recens in urbem nostram advenerat, atque inter Platonicos excellerebat, plurimum versabar, proficiebamque et quotidie mihi quam maximae accessiones fiebant. Efferebat me vehementer incorporearum rerum intelligentia, ac meae menti alas addebat idearum contemplatio; sapiensque mihi videbat intra breve tempus evasisse, ac prae stoliditate in spem veneram videndi protinus Dei. Hic enim finis est Platonis philosophiae.



APPENDIX B

...Tum ego: Quid, inquam, majus meliusve facere quisquam possit, quam si rationem omnibus imperare demonstret, illamque apprehendens, eique veluti insidens aliorum errores et studia consideret, quomodo nihil agant quod sanum sit, nihil quod Deo placeat. Prudentia autem sine philosophia et recta ratione inesse nemini potest. Idcirco omni homini philosophandum est, atque hoc maximum et praeclarissimum opus existimandum, caetera vero in secundis et tertiis ponenda; ac philosophiae quidem si adjuncta fuerint, mediocris, et quae assumantur digna, si vero incommutata et destituta ab ea sint, cum illis importuna, quorum manibus tractantur, tum etiam illiberalia ducenda sunt. Philosophia igitur beatitudinem efficit? inquit ille. Illa vera, inquam, et sola quidem. Igitur quid sit philosophia, inquit, et quae ejus beatitudo, nisi quid eloqui prohibet, eloquere.

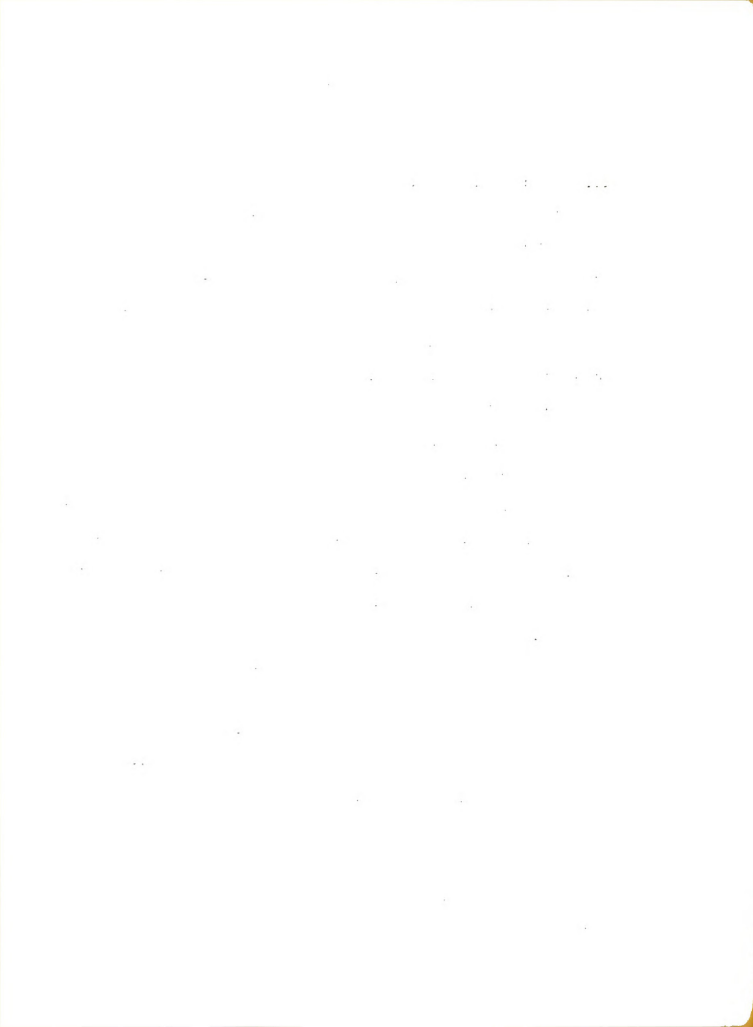
Philosophia, inquam ego, est scientia illius quod est, et veri cognitio. Beatitudo autem hujus scientiae et sapientiae praemium.

Deum autem quidnam vocas? inquit ille.

Quod idem est et eodem modo semper se habet, quodque caeteris omnibus causa est cur sint, hoc sane Deus est. Ita illi ego respondi: meque ille libenter audiebat, ac rursus ita interrogavit...

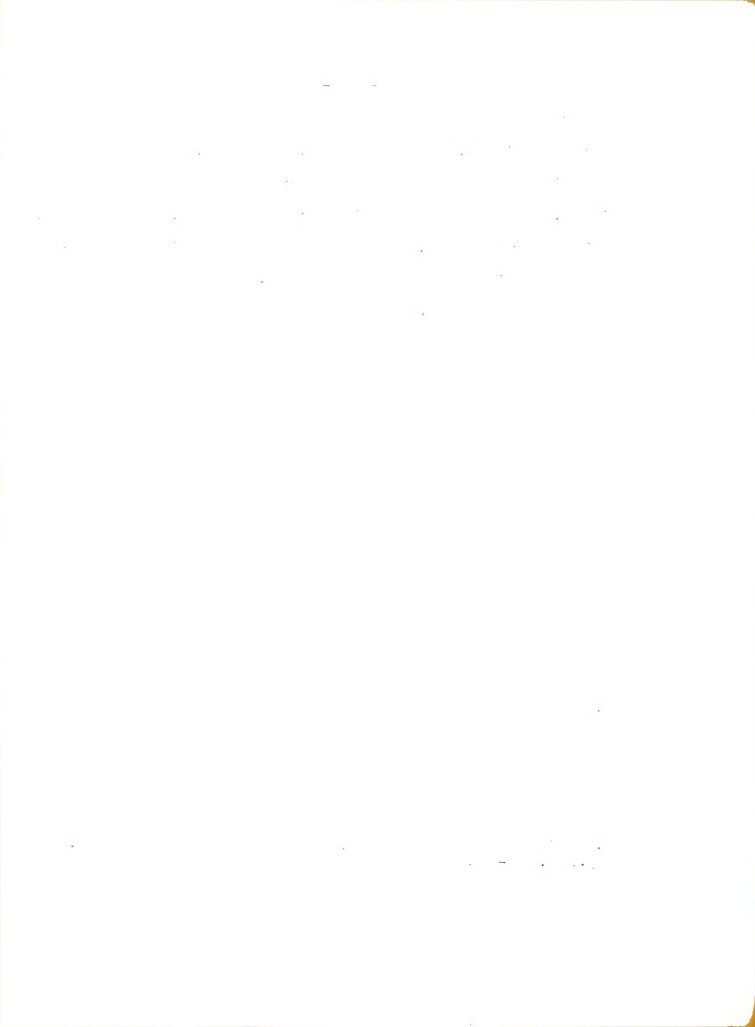
Inest igitur, inquit ille, menti nostrae talis quaedam ac tantavis, aut non citius sensu percepisset? Aut Deum videbit aliquando human mens Spiritu sancto non exornata?

Ait enim Plato, inquam ego, talem esse mentis oculum, atque ad hoc nobis datum fuisse, ut ipsum illud, quod est, hoc ipso pellu-



cido oculo videre possimus; quod quidem causa est eorum omnium, quae mente percipiuntur, nec colorem habens, nec figuram, nec magnitudinem, nec quidquam eorum quae oculis cernantur; sed quidnam est? Hoc ipsum, inquam, quod supra omnem essentiam est; non enerrabile, non explicabile, solum pulchrum et bonum, animis a natura bene informatis ob cognitionem et videndi cupiditatem illico affulgens.





APPENDIX C

Platonem autem, dum post Deum et materiam tertium principium formam esse pronuntiat, argumentum non aliunde accepisse patet, quam a Moyse, cujus quidem ex dictis nomen formae didicit; tunc autem nequaquam a peritis didicit nihil ex his, quae a Moyse dicta sunt, sine arcana contemplatione clare cognosci posse.

Scrpsit enim Moyses sic Deum sibi de tabernaculo mandasse:

Et facies mihi secundum omnia quaecunque tibi monstro in monte,

exemplar tabernaculi. Et rursum: Et eriges tabernaculum exemplar

omnium vasorum ejus, atque ita facies. Et rursus paulo post: Ita

sane facies secundum typum et figuram quae tibi in monte monstrata

est. Haec cum legisset Plato, nec qua par erat contemplatione

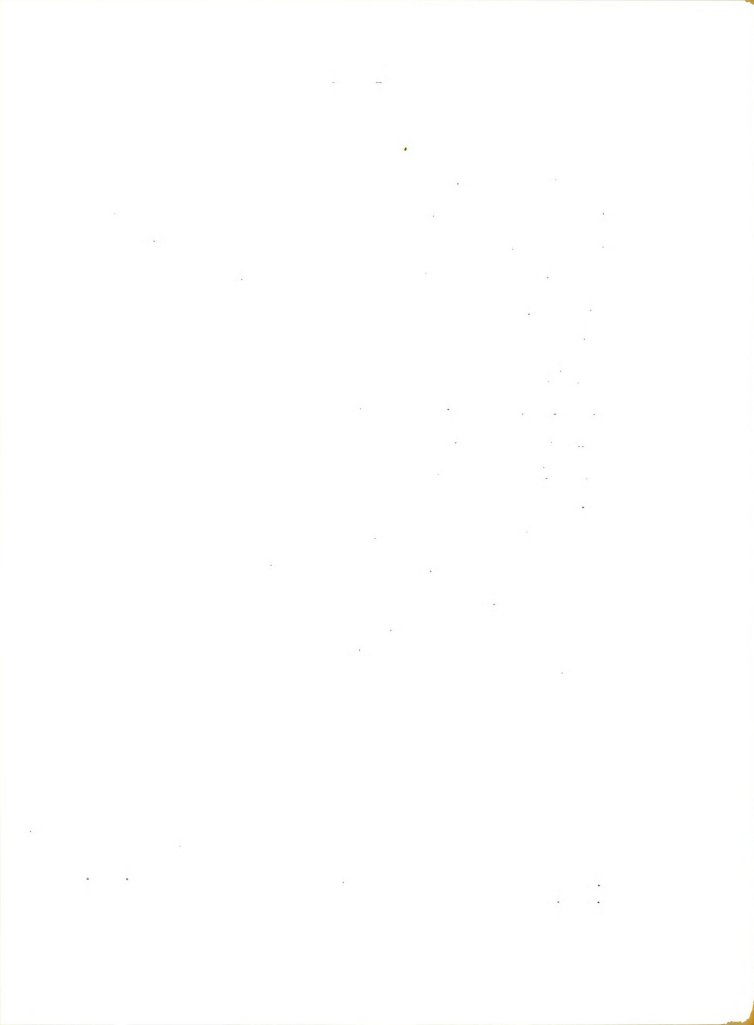
scripta illa verba excepisset, existimavit formam ante id, quod

sensibus subjectum est, separatim existere; quam quidem etiam

exemplar eorum, quae facta sunt, saepe numero vocat, quia Moyses

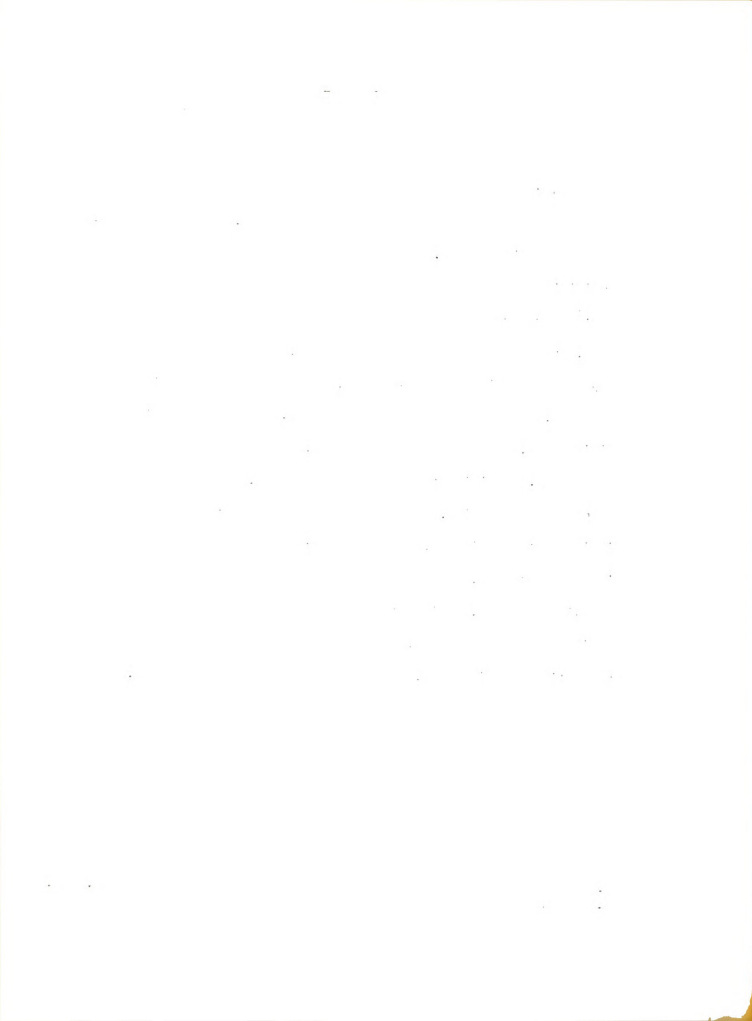
de tabernaculo ita scripsit: Secundum formam tibi in monte monstratam

ita facies.



APPENDIX D

Vestra autem causa haec a nobis dicta esse ex eo intelligite, quod in nobis situm sit negare cum interrogamur. Sed vivere nolumus obstricti mendacio. Aeternae enim ac purae vitae cupidi ad domicilium cum Deo universorum Patre et epifice promissum contendimus; ac properamus ad confitendum, cum persuasum habeamus et credamus, haec bona ab illis comparari posse, qui factis suis testati Deo fuerint se illum sectatos esse, ac illus apud eum domicilium adamasse, ubi nulla vitiositas reluctatur. Ut igitur brevissime dici potest, haec sunt quae expectamus, quaeque a Christo didicimus et docemus. Similiter: quidem Plato improbos, cum ad Minoem et Rhadamanthum venerint, punitum iri ab illis dixit: nos autem idem illis eventurum dicimus, sed a Christo; idque existentibus in iisdem corporibus, una cum suis anamabus, ut poena aeterna puniantur, non mille annorum, ut iste dixit, circuitu definita. Si quis autem nobis incredibile id esse, ac fieri non posse dicat, levis sane est ac quotidianus hic error, quandiu nullius malefacti arguimur.



APPENDIX E

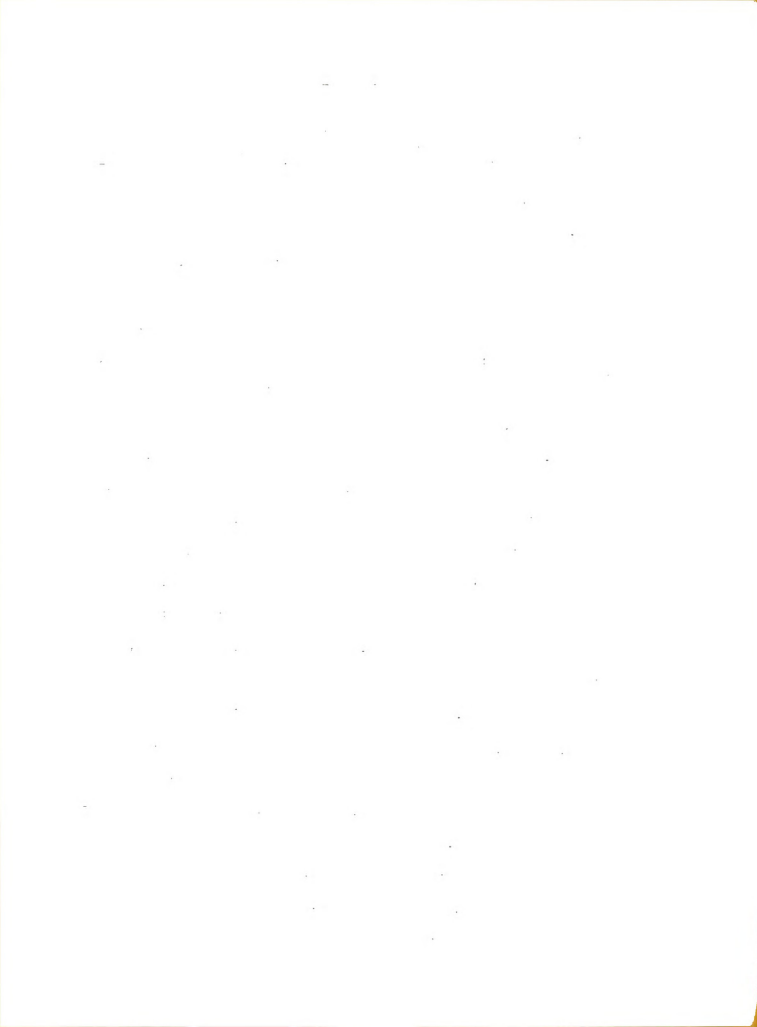
Philosophos aliquam veritatis partem percepisse probat.

Quod itaque testimonio comprobetur, Graecos vera quaedam habere dogmata, hinc quoque licet considerare. Scribitur in Actis apostolicis, Paulum haec dicere ad Areopagitas: "Superstitiosiores vos video. Praeteriens enim, et videns simulacra vestra, inveni et aram, in qua scriptum erat, Ignoto Deo. Quem ergo ignorantes colitis, eum vobis annuntio. Deus enim, qui fecit mundum, et omnia quae in ipso sunt, hic coeli et terrae cum sit Dominus, non in manufactis templis habitat, nec a manibus humanis colitur, indigens aliquo, cum ipse det omnibus vitam et inspirationem et omnia, fecitque ex uno omnes genus hominum inhabitare super universam faciem terrae, definiens statuta tempora et terminos habitationis eorum; ut quaerant Deum, si forte attrectent aut inveniant, quamvis non longe sit ab unoquoque nostrum. In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur, et sumus; sicut et quidam vestrorum poetarum dixerunt:

Hujus namque genus sumus....."

Ex quibus clarum est, quod etiam poeticis utens exemplis ex Arati Phaenomenis, apporbat quae apud Graecos recte dicta sunt. Et per ignotum Deum, honorari quidem per circumlocutionem a Graecis opificem Deum significavit, ex agnitione autem oportere per Filium accipere et discere. "Misi ergo propterea te ad gentes, aperire, inquit, oculos eorum, ut convertantur a tenebris ad lucem, et a potestate Satanae ad Deum; ut ipsi accipiant remissionem peccatorum et haereditatem in iis, qui sunt fide sanctificati in me." Ii ergo

sunt, qui aperiuntur, oculi caecorum: Patris per Filium agnitio, est circumlocutionis Graecae comprehensio; et "converti a potestate Satanae," est mutari a peccato, per quod introducta erat servitus. Nec tamen absolute omnem suscipimus philosophiam, sed illam, de qua apud Platonem quoque dicit Socrates: "Sunt enim, ut aiunt, qui in mysteriis versantur, thyrsigeri quidem multi, pauci vero Bacchi": "multos quidem esse vocatos, paucos autem electos," innuens. Aperte itaque subjungit: "Hi autem, mea quidem sententia, non sunt alii, quam qui recte sunt philosophati: quorum quidem in numero ut essem, nihil in vita, quantum in me fuit, praetermisi, sed omnibus modis contendi. An vero recte contenderim, aliquidve profecerim, cum illuc pervenerimus, certi sciemus, si Deus voluerit, paulo post." An non tibi videtur ex scripturis Hebraicis eam, quae est post mortem, iusti ex fide spernere declarare? Et in Demodoco, si modo est opus Platonis: "Nec existimes me dicere philosophari, in artes incumbens vivere, nec multa discere appetentem; absit: nam ego quidem hoc probrum esse ducebam." Sciebat enim, ut existimo, "eum multarum rerum scientem jam habere mentem, quod docet," ut est Heracliti sententia. Et in quinto De republica: "Nunquid igitur istos," inquit, "omnes, et alios ejusmodi res percipiendi cupidos, artibus vilissimis incumbentes, philosophos dicemus? Nequaquam," inquit, "philosophos quosnam dicis? Eos, inquam ego, qui veritatis delectantur contemplatione." Non enim in geometriae postulatis et hypothesis est philosophia; neque in musica, quae quidem est conjecturalis; neque in astronomia, quae naturalibus, fluxisque, et verisimilibus est referta rationibus; sed opus est ipsius boni scientia et veritate;

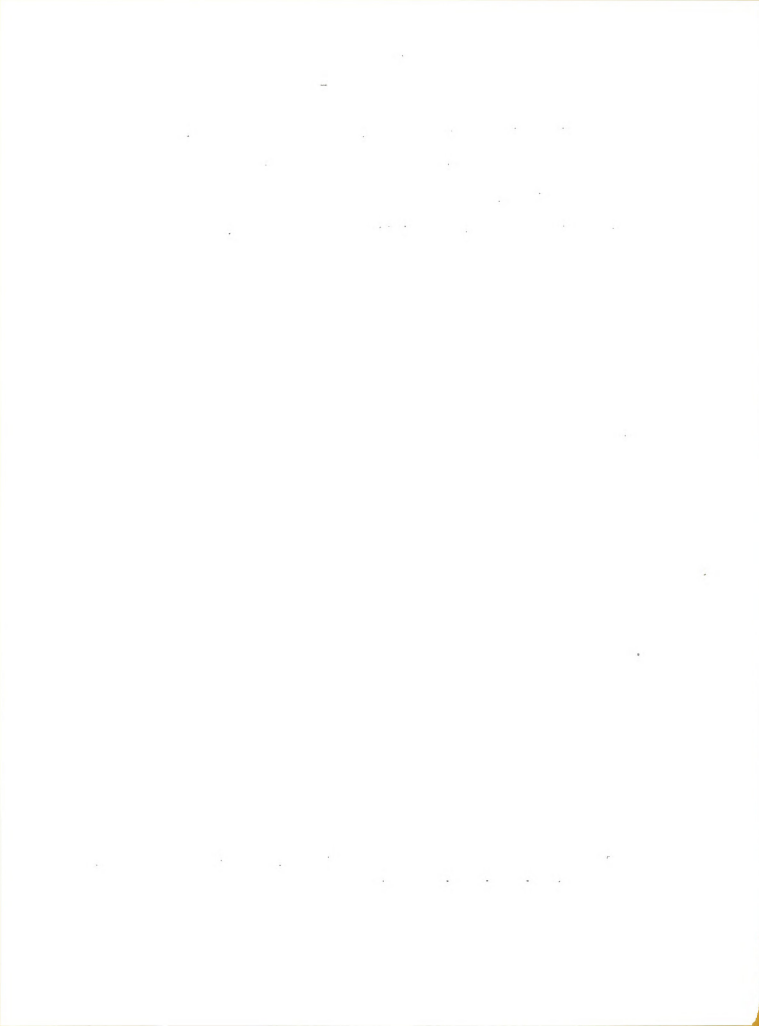




cum aliae quidem sint boni viae, quemadmodum ad bonum. Quare nec ipse doctrinae orbem, quem vocant "encyclopaediam," ad bonum vult sufficere, sed duxtaxat opem ferre ad excitandam et exercendam animam ad ea quae percipiuntur intelligentia.

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Clementis Alexandrini, "Stromatum Liber I," Patrologiae Graecae, Tomus 8, op. cit., pp. 806 ff.



APPENDIX F

De vero Gnostico, quod sit Dei imitator, praecipue  
in beneficentia.

Hic est, qui ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei est gnosticus, qui Deum imitatur quoad ejus fieri potest, nihil praetermittens eorum, quae faciunt ad conciliandum, quatenus fieri potest, similitudinem, continens, sustinens, justè vivens, imperans animi perturbationibus, ea, quae habet, impertians, pro viribus benefaciens, et verbo, et opere. Hic est, inquit, maximus in regno, qui fecerit et docuerit, Deum imitans, consimiliter beneficia conferendo. Sunt enim communiter utilia Dei dona. Quicumque autem superbia aliquid agere aggressus fuerit, Deum, inquit, irritat. Est enim arrogantia animae vitium: cujus et aliorum vitiorum jubet duci poenitentia, ex inconcinnitate concinnando vitam ad meliorum mutationem, per haec tria, os, cor, manus. Symbolum autem signumque haec fuerint, actionis quidem, manus; cor autem, consilii; et os, sermonis... Unum enim oportere docet expeter, per quem facta sunt omnia, et qui iis, qui digni sunt, promissa tribuit. Tum ergo, qui bonus fuerit, regni haeredem, et concivem, per divinam describit sapientiam, eorum, qui olim fuere justī, qui et in lege, et ante legem justè vixere, quorum actiones sunt nobis pro legibus. Et sapientem rursus docens esse regem, quosdam alienigenas introducit, ei dicentes: Rex a Deo tu es in nobis; iis, qui ab eo reguntur, propter admirationem virtutis viro bono sua sponte parentibus,. Plato autem

philosophus finem ponens beatitudinis, dicit eam esse Deo assimilationem, quoad fieri potest: sive cum legis decreto quodammodo, concurrens (magnae enim naturae et liberae a passionibus, nescio quomodo, feruntur ad scopum veritatis, ut dicit Philo Pythagoreus, Moysis res gestas describens), sive etiam doctus ab aliquibus, quae tunc erat, divinis eloquiis, ut qui doctrinae siti semper teneretur.



Ad veram Dei cognitionem optime perveniri, si mentem a rebus carnalibus et mundanis quam maxime abstrahamus; Idque auctoritate philosophorum probari.

Sacrificium autem Deo acceptum, est corporis et ejus affectionum nunquam, poenitenda separatio; is est verus revera Dei cultus. Annon autem prepterea merito dicta est a Socrate philosophia mortis meditatio? qui enim aequè visum adducit in cogitando, neque aliquem trahit ex aliis sensibus, sed ipsa pura mente se rebus applicat, is veram persequitur philosophiam. Hos sibi vult etiam Pythagorae quinque annorum silentium, quod praecipit discipulis, ut scilicet, aversi a rebus sensilibus, nuda mente Deum contemplantur. Haec ergo a Moyse accepta philosophati sunt Graecorum praestantissimi. Praecipit enim ut holocausta, cum ea excoriaverint, membratim dividant, quoniam Gnosticam animam cum nuda fuerit a pelle materiali, absque nugis corporis et omnibus vitiis, quae afferunt vanae et falsae opiniones, carnalibus exutam cupiditatibus, luci consecrari necesse est...

Non abs re ergo in mysteriis quoque quae fiunt apud Graecos, primum locum tenent lustrationes, sicut etiam apud barbaros lavacrum. Post haec autem sunt parva mysteria, quae habent aliquod fundamentum doctrinae et praeparationis futurorum. In magnis autem de universis non restat amplius discere, sed contemplari et mente comprehendere et naturam et res ipsas. Accipiemus autem expiandi, quidem modum, confessione, contemplandi autem, resolutione, procedentes ad primam intelligentiam per resolutionem, ex iis quae sunt ei subjecta ducentes initium, abstrahentes quidem a corpore qualitates naturales, cir-

cumcidentes autem eam quae est in profundum dimensionem; et deinde eam quae est in latitudinem, post haec eam quae est in longitudinem. Quod enim restat signum, est unitas, ut ita dicam, habens situm. A qua si tollamus situm, intelligitur unitas. Si ergo, ablati omnibus quae adeunt corporibus, et iis quae dicuntur incorporea, nos ipsos projecerimus in Christi magnitudinem; et inde in ejus immensitatem sanctitate processerimus, ad intelligentiam omnipotentis utcunque perveniemus, non ita tamen ut quod est, sed quod non est cognoscamus. Figura autem et motus, vel status, vel sedes, vel locus, vel dextra, vel sinistra, de Patre universorum ne sunt quidem cogitanda; etiamsi haec de ipso scripta sint; sed quid significet unumquodque eorum, ostendetur suo loco. Non est ergo prima causa in loco, sed supra locum et tempus et nomen et intelligentiam.

APPENDIX H

De Divinis Nominibus, Caput III

Ac primum, si videtur, perfectum, et quod omnes Dei emanationes manifestat, boni nomen expendamus, invocata Trinitate, quae boni principium est, et bonum superat, et optimas quasque suas providentias explanat. Oportet enim nos primum orationibus ad ipsam, ut ad boni principium, adduci, ac deinde magis ipse propinquantes, edoceri optima quaeque munera quae penes ipsam sunt collocata; nam ipsa quidem praesens adest omnibus, non autem illi adsunt omnia. Sed cum eam sanctis precationibus, et mente tranquilla, et ad divinam unionem accommodata deprecamur, tum demum nos etiam ei praesentes sumus. Ipsa enim nec in loco ita est, ut usquam absit, vel ex aliis ad alia migret. Quinimo dicere in omnibus rebus ipsam esse, quid minus est ejus infinitate, quae et excedit et continet universa.



APPENDIX I

De imaginibus Oratio I

Caeterum quando de imagine ac de adoratione institutus est sermo, agedum, quidnam utraque sit diligentius expendamus. Imago itaque est similitudo exemplar ita exprimens, ut aliqua tamen ratione ab eo differat. Neque enim imago exemplari in omnibus similis est. Viva igitur, naturalis, ac nulla re dissimilis imago Dei invisibilis est ipse Filius, qui in seipso Patrem gerit, ac per omnia idem cum illo est, praeter id unum, quod ab illo tanquam sua causa sit. Naturalis enim causa Pater est: ex causa vero proficiscitur Filius. Nam ex Filio Pater non est, sed Filius ex Patre. Ex ipso siquidem (tametsi posterior illo non sit) habet ut sit id quod est Pater qui ipsum genuit.

Sunt item in Deo imagines et exempla rerum ab ipso producendarum, nempe consilium ipsius aeternum, quod eodem semper sese habet modo. Immutabilis siquidem omnino Deus est, in quo nulla est transmutatio, aut vicissitudinis obumbratio. Has porro imagines, et haec exempla, praefinitiones appellat sanctus Dionysius, rerum divinarum pertissimus, quique ea quae Dei sunt, afflante juvanteque Deo, contemplatus est. Enimvero in Dei consilio omnia ab ipso praefinita, atque indeficienter futura, priusquam fierent, haudaliter expressa erant, ac si quis domum aedificare cupiens, mente prius imaginem figuramve ejus effingat.

APPENDIX J

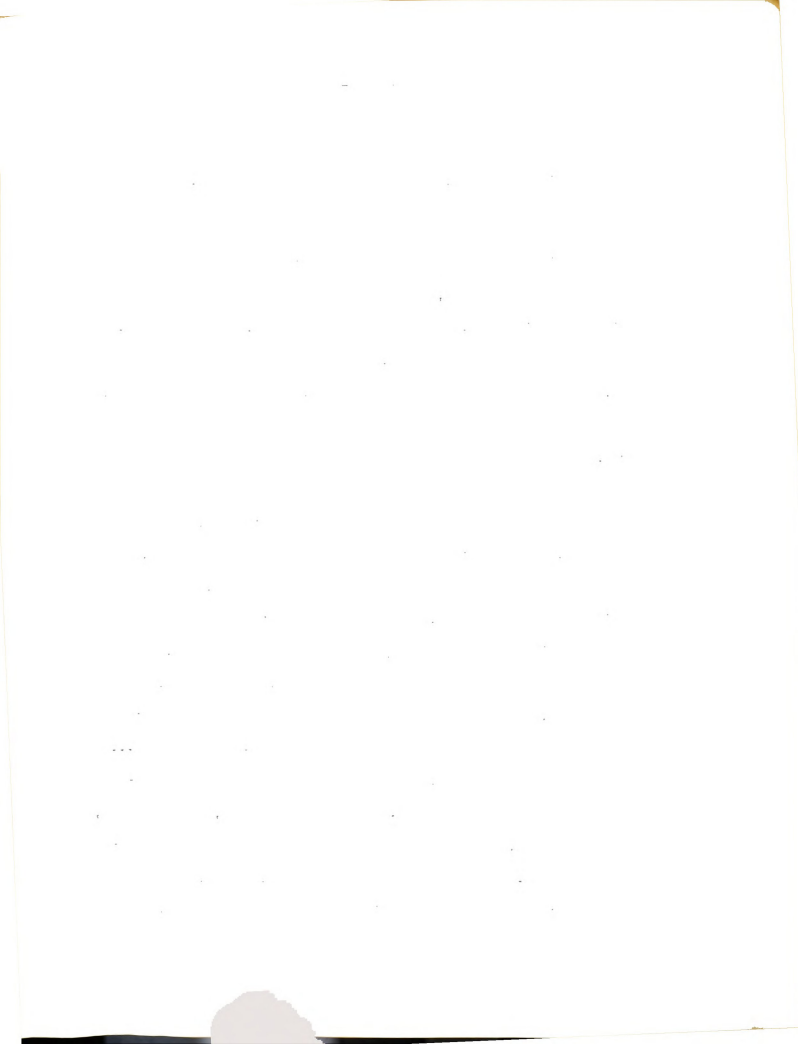
Quidam Deus sit, quodque comprehendendi non possit.

Deum incorporem esse sex rationibus probatur.

Quod itaque sit Deus, liquido constat; quid autem secundum essentiam et naturam sit, nullo prorsus modo comprehendendi, vel etiam cognosci potest. Nam quod incorporeus sit, perspicuum est. Quo enim modo corpus esse queat, quod infinitum et interminatum est, quod figura caret, quodque nec tangi, nec oculis cerni potest, quod denique simplex est nec compositum? quomodo quippe immutabile erit, si circumscriptum ac passioni obnoxium sit? quinam expers passionis erit, quod ex elementis conflatur, atque in eadem rursus dilabatur? compositio siquidem pugnae origo est; pugna, dissidii; dissidium, solutionis; solutio autem a Deo prorsus aliena est.

Qua ratione autem et illud stabit certumque erit, quod Deus omnia pervadat et impleat, sicut sit Scriptura: Nonne coelum et terram ego impleo, dicit Dominus? Neque enim fieri possit, ut corpus corpora permeet, quin simul et dividat, et dividatur, compliceturque, et opponatur per juxta oppositionem, ut loquuntur; quemadmodum liquida omnia cum inter se miscentur ac temperantur...

Igitur quod Deus sit, quodque ejus essentia comprehendendi nequeat, abunde demonstratum est. Quod autem unus sit, et non plures, apud eos quidem, qui Scripturae divinae fidem adhibent, extra controversiam est. Dominus enim quam legem Israelii tulit, verbis iis auspicatur: Ego Dominus Deus, qui eduxi te de terra Aegypti. Non



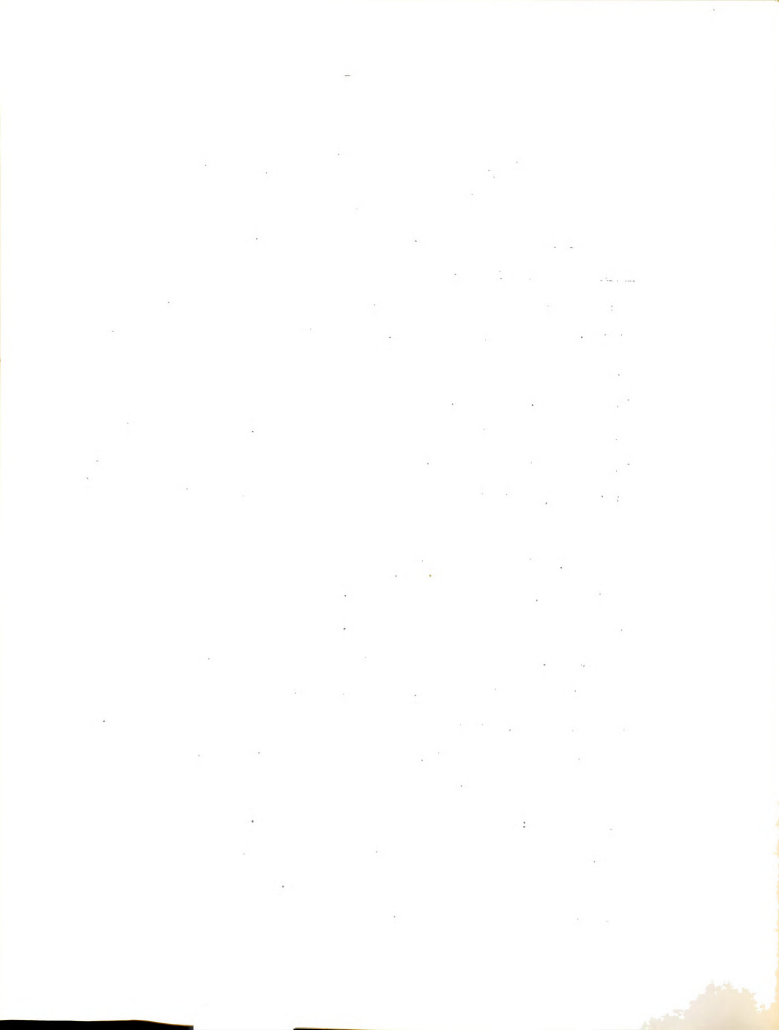
erunt tibi dii alii praeter me. Et rursus ait: Audi, Israel:  
Dominus Deus tuus, Deus unus est. Et per Isaiam prophetam:  
Ego enim, inquit, sum Deus primus, et ego posthaec; et praeter me  
non est Deus. Ante me non fuit alius Deus, et post me non erit,  
et praeter me non est. Quin et Dominus in Evangeliiis in haec verba  
alloquitur Patrem: Haec est vita aeterna, ut cognoscant te solum  
verum Deum. Cum illis autem, qui nullam Scripturae sacrae fidem  
arrogant, ad hunc modum disputabimus.

APPENDIX K

Deum comprehendi non posse; nec ea quae a sanctis prophetis et apostolis et evangelistis minime tradita sunt, curiosius inquirenda esse.

Deum nemo vidit unquam. Unigenitus Filius, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit. Deus ergo nec oratione ulla explicari, nec ullo modo comprehendi potest. Nemo enim Patrem novit, nisi Filius; nec Filium, nisi Pater. Quin etiam Spiritus sanctus perinde novit ea quae Dei sunt, atque Spiritus hominis novit ea quae in opso sunt. At vero, post primam illam beatamque naturam nemo unquam Deum cognovit, nisi cui ipse revelaverit. Neque de hominibus tantum mihi sermo est; sed de Virtutibus etiam illis mundo sublimioribus, de ipsis quoque Cherubim ac Seraphim.

Non nos tamen in omnigena prorsus ignorantia versari passus est Deus. Nemo quippe mortallum est, cur non hoc ab eo naturaliter insitum sit, ut Deum esse cognoscat. Quin ipsae res conditae, earumque conservatio atque gubernatio, divinae naturae praedicant majestatem. Ad haec tum ante per legem et prophetas, tum postea per Unigenitum Filium suum, Dominum, Deum, et Salvatorem nostrum Jesum Christum, prp captu ac modulo nostro notitiam sui patefecit. Quocirca omnia quae nobis, tam per legem et prophetas, quam per apostolos et evangelistas tradita sunt, amplectimur agnoscimus, et veneramur; nec ultra ea quidquam inquirimus. Nam cum Deus bonus sit, omnis profecto boni auctor et largitor est, ut qui nec invidia, nec ullis passionibus affectibusve laboret. Invidentia siquidem procul abest a divina natura; quippe quae onmis perturbationis



expers, solaque bona est. Proinde, cum cuncta perspecta habeat, et quod cuique conducibile sit administret, id quod nostra scire intererat, aperuit: quodque vires nostras et captum excederet, tacuit. Eis itaque contenti simus in his haereamus, nec terminos antiquos, traditionemque divinam transgrediamur.

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S. Joannis Damasceni, "De Fide Orthodoxa, Liber I," op. cit., p. 790 f.

APPENDIX L

Demonstratio syllogistica, quod unus Deus sit.

Deus perfectus est, et absque defectu, sive bonitatem, sive sapientiam, sive potentiam spectes; principii ac finis experts, sempiternus, incircumscriptus, ac denique, ut rem uno verbo complectar, omnibus modis est perfectus. Quodcirca si plures deos esse asseruerimus, inter plures discrimen animadvertere necesse erit. Nam si nihil discriminis inter eos reperiatur, unus potius est, quam multi: si autem discrimen aliquod inter eos existit, ubi tandem erit illa perfectio? Et enim si, vel bonitatis, vel potentiae, vel sapientiae, vel postremo temporis ratione, aliquid in eo ad perfectionem desideretur, Deus certe non erit. At vero identitas sibi per omnia constans, unum potius, quam multos ostendit.

Jam vero si multi sunt, quomodo salva et incolumis ipsis manebit incircumscriptio? ubi enim unus fuerit, illine alter aberit.

Quid insuper afferri potest, quin si mundus a multis gubernetur, non dilabatur, corrumpaturque, et intereat: quippe cum inter gubernatores pugna vulgo persciciatur? discrimen siquidem pugnae et contentioni aditum facit. Sin autem quis dicat singulos parti praeesse; quaeram ex eo quis hujus ordinis auctor fuerit, imperiumque inter ipsos partitus sit? Hic enim potius Deus unus erit. Unus proinde est Deus, perfectus, circumscriptionis experts, mundi architectus et conditor, conservator et gubernator, perfectione omni sublimior et anterior.



APPENDIX M

Christi verum corpus, non figura.

Nec vero panis et vinum, Christi corporis et sanguinis  
figura sunt (absit!), sed ipsum Domini corpus deitate dotatum;  
cum ipse Dominus dixerit: Hoc est, non figura corporis, sed  
corpus meum, neque figura sanguinis, sed sanguis meus Et antea  
Judaeis dixerat: Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis, et  
biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis. Caro enim  
mea verus est cibus, et sanguis meus, verus est potus. Et rursum,  
Qui manducat me, vivet.

APPENDIX N

From "The Roots of the Soviet Rural Social Structure:  
Where and Why It Has Spread."

The five main elements that converged to build Slavophilism were as follows. (1) The landed aristocracy and the landowning Russian branch of the Greek Orthodox Church feared the loss of prestige and economic security if the western pattern were introduced. (2) The Greek Orthodox clergy was afraid that the old traditional Russian Christian faith might be lost. (3) Through the Russian intellectuals such as Kireevski, who studied in Germany, the German Romantic philosophy became known in Russia. Of special importance was the emphasis given by Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling and Benedict Franz Xavier von Eader to the value of the uniqueness of every nation. This idea was applied to Russia, and its unique development became the topic of discussion. (4) Until this time Russian history had been the subject of only a few investigations. One of the earliest was that of Ivan Baitin, who in the epoch of the enlightenment, tried to explain the peculiarities of Russian history by placing emphasis upon the geographical factor and the manner and extent of cultural contact. Then, at the end of the eighteenth century, August Ludwig von Schlozer, a German social and economic historian and statistician, at the invitation of the czaristic government edited Russian historical sources, and glorified Peter the Great for having abolished old ways and for simultaneously having incorporated western patterns into Russia. He also insisted

upon the essential differences between Russia and "Europe" and in that way influenced some Russian historians such as Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamsin. (5) Of even greater influence was the German Romanticist, August von Haxthausen, who lived in the atmosphere of Schelling and Constantine Frantz. Like them, Haxthausen was opposed to democracy as well as bureaucracy but believed in a so-called organic society, i.e., a society composed of estates within the state and based upon the uniqueness of every nation, even every regional unit within every nation. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Haxthausen was called upon by the czaristic government to investigate Russian rural life. At that time, the anti-czaristic "Westerners" as well as the functionaries of the czaristic agricultural administration agreed upon the necessity of rural reforms. But Haxthausen, the protege and friend of the extremely conservative Czar Nicholas I, glorified the Russian rural organization and felt it worthy of imitation by the West. Because of his position, Haxthausen exercised a tremendous influence on the later Slavophiles and Pan-slavists. Thus, the program of both resulted from the convergence of the five factors mentioned above.

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