DOSTOYEVSKY'S ATTITUDE TO INSTITUTIONALIZED RELIGION

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DOSTOYEVSKY AND RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS DISSENT: THE OLD BELIEVERS

The number of religious dissenters in Russia increased significantly between 1860 and 1880, that is, during the main years of Dostoyevsky's writing career. Figures produced by the Ministry of the Interior for 1863 estimate a total of 8.2 million dissenters, distributed among the sects as follows:[1]

Priestists	5.0	million
Priestless	3.0	million
Molokane & Dukhobortsy	.11	million
Khlysty & Skoptsy	.11	million

The findings of a survey carried out by a government official called Yuzov in 1880 reveal a sharp increase to thirteen million, and a tendency towards the more radical trends of sectarianism:[2]

Priestists	3.64	million
Priestless	7.15	million
Spiritual Christians	1.0	million
Khlysty	.065	million
Unassigned	1.145	million

Religious dissent was thus a phenomenon to be reckoned with at this period. Dostoyevsky's personal contact with religious dissent would appear to have been minimal: although it is known that he heard Lord Radstock speak in St. Petersburg in 1874,[3] there is little evidence of any further direct contact with sectarian groups. Yet the number of references to religious dissent in his writings suggests both an interest in and knowledge of the subject. It would appear that most of this knowledge came through reading. Dostoyevsky's wife writes that her husband's library

had contained 'many serious works on history and on the sect of the Old Believers, in which he took a keen interest'.[4] Unfortunately, since most of Dostoyevsky's library was sold off by his stepson while the writer and his wife were abroad, it is not known precisely which works these were. Some idea may nevertheless be gained from a list of books Dostoyevsky is known to have purchased in 1862: the list includes such titles as Stories from the History of the Schism, and In Favour of the Schism.[5] Further, two interesting entries appear in the inventory of the contents of Dostoyevsky's library at the time of his death: Heresies and Schisms during the first three centuries of Christianity; and a pamphlet discussing the teaching of the Russian schismatics on marriage and family life.[6] It should also be recalled that Dostoyevsky was an avid reader of newspapers - a further valuable source of information about the state of religious dissent in Russia.

Dostoyevsky's views on these matters are clearly of considerable relevance to the present study since the dissenters, by definition, represented a movement away from the established Church. The term 'religious dissent' covers a wide range of groups, and includes both those who wished only mildly to reform the existing Church, and those who saw no place at all for the Church as an institutionalized body. In this and the following chapter, we will be concerned to determine the extent to which Dostoyevsky himself discriminated between the various types of dissenting groups; and to establish which, if any, held his sympathy, and for what reasons. We will examine Dostoyevsky's response when

confronted with Russian religious groups who had taken to their logical conclusion those anti-Church tendencies which we have identified in his own religious thought: will the fact that they are Slavs in some way protect them from coming to grief on the rocks of 'Churchless Christianity'; or will they too, like the Protestants and the Jews, be allegedly unable to cope without institutionalized religion? In the present chapter attention will be focused primarily upon Dostoyevsky's attitude to mainstream Old Belief, while in Chapter Eight we will examine his presentation of more extreme religious sectarianism. As background to our remarks, let us first briefly consider the history and development of religious dissent in Russia.[7]

Religious groups which were opposed to the established Church had existed before the seventeenth-century raskol (schism): Bolshakoff points in particular to the Strigolniki, whom he refers to as 'the first Russian protestants'; and the Judaizers, who wanted not to reform, but to destroy the Church.[8] For the purposes of the present study, however, the starting point is the schism which occurred in the Russian Orthodox Church during the patriarchate of Nikon (1652-8). The first half of the seventeenth century had been marked by a series of efforts to reform the Church. Cherniavsky distinguishes three strands of reform: purely administrative reforms effected by the state, such as the establishment of the 'Department of Monasteries'; a movement for moral and spiritual reform, led by the 'Zealots of Piety'; and administrative/intellectual reform, consisting in 'the

correction or emendation of texts and ritual out of a desire for accuracy and uniformity'.[9] It was the latter which proved crucial when, in 1652, Patriarch Nikon introduced two changes in a new psalter which was being prepared, with the intention of bringing the Russian practice into line with the Greek. The changes affected the prayer of Efraim the Syrian; and the way of making the cross (from now on three fingers, not two, were to be used). Avvakum and other reforming priests objected to the changes, and insisted on keeping to the old Moscow practices. There were, broadly speaking, two main reasons for their opposition. First, the Orthodox attached great importance to the symbolic gestures which express a Christian's inner belief: consequently, 'in the eyes of simple believers a change in the symbol constituted a change in the faith'.[10] Second, the issue aroused feelings of Russian religious nationalism, and seemed in particular to challenge the concept of 'Moscow the Third Rome', which had been championed by the Josephites in the sixteenth century. Nikon's demands that Russian religious practices be made to conform to the Greek implied that the Russians had been wrong to claim that the centre of Orthodoxy had been moved to Moscow. Thus, when the 'Old Believers', as those who opposed the reforms came to be known, defended the old ritual, they were really defending much more than that: a belief in the special role of holy Russia.[11] As Western influence grew, the defence of the old ritual also became a defence of native cultural traditions.

The shared ground between Old Belief and the Third Rome theory had an added consequence. According to the theory,

there would not be a fourth Rome. Therefore if, as the Old Believers thought, the Russian Orthodox Church was no longer the true Church, the end of the world must be imminent, and they must be living in the reign of Antichrist. They therefore rejected both the authority of the reformed Church and that of the State and the Tsar. Their opposition to the State was not only the result of such apocalyptic expectations, however. They objected generally to state intervention in the affairs of the Church, and believed in the separation of the spiritual and secular powers.

The immediate concern of the Old Believers after the initial raskol was how to continue as a Church in the meantime. Although they considered themselves to be the true Church, purified of error, their decision to break away from the official Russian Orthodox Church had left them without a priesthood. The first split in their ranks developed from differing solutions to this problem. The 'Priestists' (Popovtsy), who believed that the Church could not exist without a priesthood of apostolic descent, overcame the problem by recruiting their own clergy from among Russian Orthodox priests who left the official Church and became raskol'niki (schismatics) themselves. The Priestists did not, broadly speaking, wander far from the official Church. They differed from it only in ritual, not in doctrine. During the reign of Catherine II some of them became Yedinovertsy, a branch of the established Church especially created for them, in which the old ritual was acknowledged as canonical. The Yedinovertsy did not, however, have their own episcopate, and had to submit

to the official Church.

The 'Priestless' (Bezpopovtsy) adopted a less flexible approach to the problem. They believed that Orthodoxy was definitely lost, and that there could no longer be any true Church or sacraments. Consequently, they decided that the only means of communication now available between the people and God were 'prayer and such religious practices as were accessible to all believers without the mediation of the Church.'[12] In contrast to the Priestists, the Priestless became increasingly extreme and radical, and many sects emerged from their ranks, such as the Theodosians, the Filippovtsy and the Stranniki.

The Priestless sects were characterized by their refusal to acknowledge any external authority as guide in religious matters, and by their reluctance to lay any constraint upon individual freedom. Each of their members had the right of free interpretation of the Scriptures. They did not have ministers, but instead chose 'elders' or 'readers': these were usually virtuous men, who were well-versed in Scripture, but they could occasionally be capricious, even tyrannical. Although the Priestless sects denied the sacraments, they tended to observe the fasts strictly, and they had extreme veneration for holy images and relics. They laid great emphasis upon repeatedly making the sign of the cross and performing salutations (poklony). This aspect of their religiosity has led to charges of ritualism being brought against them: Heard, for example, remarks that they seem 'to find compensation for the rejection of the spiritual rites of the Church in slavish and exaggerated compliance with the

more gross and materialistic'.[13]

In addition to those dissenting groups which had developed as a direct result of the raskol, there existed sects which drew their inspiration from different, sometimes unknown, sources. They may be considered in two broad categories: the mystical sects; and the rationalistic sects. The two had much in common. They shared a disregard of form and ceremony, of tradition and authority. They had contempt for the letter of the law, and were concerned rather with the essence of the law. Their aim was 'spiritual religion', which was pure and undefiled. The mystical sects, represented by the Khlysty and the Skoptsy, trusted to inspiration in their search for pure religion. They accepted and depended upon prophecy, and did not believe in committing their beliefs to paper. They appealed to the senses and the imagination: part of the ritual of the Khlysty was a whirling, dancing movement which induced a state of ecstasy and exaltation. The members of these sects continued to act as bona fide members of the established Church, and outwardly conformed to its rites and regulations.

The rationalistic sects, represented by the Molokane and the Dukhobortsy, were by contrast sober people: they were characterized by honesty, diligence and peaceful obedience to the law. They appealed to reason and conscience as opposed to what they saw as the formality and superstitions of the established Church. They considered external practices and ceremonies to be idolatrous and materialistic, and they consequently rejected ritual, traditional religious festivals and fasts. The Molokane rejected the idea of a priesthood,

maintaining that there could be no bishop except Christ, and choosing instead God-fearing men to act as elders. They did not have sacred buildings, but met in each other's homes to hear the Scriptures, read the Lord's Prayer and to sing psalms. They received the sacraments in the spiritual sense. The Dukhobortsy had a tendency towards mysticism. They paid less attention to the strict construction of the Scriptures and interpreted them symbolically: in a similar way, Christian tradition and dogma were either rejected or understood symbolically. They believed in the Incarnation as an ever-recurring miracle in the life of every Christian. Politically, the rationalistic sects tended towards democracy, or to communism, and many practised the community of goods. They were opposed to oaths and military service.

It remains to mention those sects which had a more or less direct affiliation with Western Protestantism and were essentially of foreign origin. One such group were the Stundists, who first appeared in areas where there were German Lutheran communities. Although similar to the rationalistic sects described above, the Stundists were more extreme: they completely rejected external observances, fasts and rites, and they had no clergy. They too were industrious and honest, and were held to have a good eye for business. The Redstokisty ('Radstockists') had their origin in the English Evangelical tradition: their founder was the English Lord Radstock. While not a mass movement, and existing for the most part among the aristocracy of St. Petersburg, the sect is worthy of mention since, as we have already noted, it attracted the attention of Dostoyevsky and is discussed in Diary of a Writer.

We will first consider Dostoyevsky's interpretation of the raskol itself, as expressed in his publicistic writings at the beginning of the eighteen-sixties. There was considerable interest in the raskol and in sectarianism generally among Russian thinkers at this period, an interest reflected by Dostoyevsky's journals Vremya and Epokha, which contained several articles devoted to the subject.[14] Dostoyevsky reveals his own understanding of the raskol in 'Two camps of theoreticians', which appeared in Vremya in 1862.[15] In this article, the Slavophiles and Westernizers are taken to task for their interpretations both of the raskol and of the reforms of Peter the Great. In a manner appropriate to Vremya's avowed intention of reconciling the warring factions of the Russian intelligentsia, criticism is aimed at both sides. The article is significant for our purposes because it shows that at this stage Dostoyevsky did not see the raskol primarily as a religious phenomenon. In fact, he is rather condescending about the tendency of both Slavophiles and Westernizers to interpret it solely in terms of religion. Neither of the groups understands the raskol, he says: the Slavophiles, 'cherishing in their souls the Muscovite ideal of Orthodox Rus', regard it as a betrayal of Orthodoxy by the narod; while the Westernizers consider it 'nothing but stupid Russian wilfulness, evidence of Russian ignorance which insists on having its own special alleluias and two-fingered method of crossing'.[16] Dostoyevsky implies that such an approach is wrong, and that the full significance of the raskol - which he regards as a positive phenomenon - can be appreciated only if the religious element is placed in a wider context.

What might appear to have been no more than stubbornness he writes, was in fact 'a passionate striving for truth, profound dissatisfaction with reality'.[17] He does not deny that there was a religious dimension to the discontent. However, far from putting forward the view that this religious dissatisfaction stemmed from a desire to maintain the religious status quo in the face of unwanted change, he claims that the raskol was a force for change. According to Dostoyevsky, the religion of old Rus was not worthy of preservation: behind the superficial religiosity was hidden 'if not complete atheism, then at the very least apathy and hypocrisy'.[18] The narod was aware of this, and the raskol was an expression of their unhappiness with such empty spirituality. Dostoyevsky thus rejects the idea that the schism was a manifestation of religious conservatism and stagnation, and instead associates the dissenters with a desire for sincerity in religion. But he maintains that the narod was equally dissatisfied with the state of the social structure and family relationships, and that the raskol was an expression of a desire for change and renewal in all of these areas. Thus, while acknowledging the part played by religion, Dostoyevsky denies that religion provides a full explanation of the phenomenon: the truth towards which the narod was striving had as least as much to do with what could be achieved by social remedies.

In the article discussed above, Dostoyevsky is looking at the beginnings of the raskol, at the time when Old Belief emerged as a distinct religious tendency. The only direct reference to Old Belief as such occurs in his paraphrase of the Westernizers' interpretation of the raskol ('evidence of

stupid Russian wilfulness, which insists on having its own special alleluias and two-fingered method of crossing'): he himself does not focus attention upon the Old Believers or their ritual, since to do so would be false to his own explanation of the raskol, according to which the specifically religious was only one aspect of the whole. However, some impression of Dostoyevsky's likely attitude to the concrete manifestations of Old Belief at this stage may be gained from comments made elsewhere in the article about a similar situation: the narod's response to the Petrine reforms. The similarity between the narod's response to Peter the Great and the Old Believers' response to Nikon is that in both cases ritual came to assume a place of central importance. In the former case, it was the ritual of secular life: traditional Russian beards and clothing. Dostoyevsky claims that the Russian narod is not really interested in externals like beards and clothing, but is rather concerned with 'the spirit, the significance, the essence of the matter'.[19] What happened in the reign of Peter the Great was that 'beards and clothing became something like a slogan' for the narod faced with unwanted reforms.[20] Dostoyevsky's attention thus does not rest with the 'ritual' itself: he looks beyond it to the desires it is evidence of, and suggests that this was how the narod saw it too. In so doing, he implicitly dissociates both the narod and, by extension, himself from any charges of ritualism which might otherwise be brought against them. On the basis of this response it would seem reasonable to assume that, at this stage at least, he viewed the religious ritual of Old Belief in a similar manner; and that, in lending his support to the raskol, he was

supporting not ritualism, but the urges which lay behind that apparent ritualism.

In 'Two camps of theoreticians', the raskol is discussed on the theoretical level. But in Notes from the House of the Dead, which was more or less contemporary with the article, appearing in 1860/1, several Old Believer characters appear in person, and we thus have the opportunity to compare the theory with the practice. The narrator numbers four Old Believers among the inmates of his own hut, and the impression one gains during reading is that there are several more in the other huts. Two approaches are adopted for the presentation of Old Belief. As was the case with Isay Fomich and Judaism, the narrator concentrates upon one individual representative of the faith - the old man from the Starodubovsky Old Believers - in considerable detail, and relates his behaviour at key junctures. But he also gives a composite picture of Old Belief by portraying, at a greater distance, its other representatives.

The portrayal of the Starodubovsky Old Believer reinforces our impression that, although Dostoyevsky the publicist might insist that the raskol as a whole was a social phenomenon, he nevertheless believed that its concrete manifestation, Old Belief, represented a desire for, and movement towards, sincere religious faith. The real-life prototype for the Starodubovsky Old Believer would appear to have been the convict Yegor Voronov, a dissenter from the Chernigov district.[21] The extent to which Dostoyevsky was impressed by the man may be gauged both from the character's positive portrayal within the confines of the novel itself, and when he is placed in the context of

Dostoyevsky's writings as a whole. There are many similarities between the Old Believer and the 'holy men' who appear in the later novels: Makar Dolgoruky and Zosima. Indeed, Mochulsky refers to him as 'the first sketch of an elder in Dostoyevsky'.[22] First, similarities exist on the moral level: like Makar and Zosima, so the Old Believer radiates goodness and kindness to all around. The narrator declares that he has rarely come across 'such a kind, good-hearted being'; and he pays particular attention to the old man's pleasant way of laughing which, he claims, is a sure sign that he is 'a good fellow'.[23] Arkady Dolgoruky in A Raw Youth is similarly struck by the laugh of Makar when he meets him for the first time.[24] There are also striking similarities on the physical level. Dostoyevsky focuses attention upon the Old Believer's eyes: we read that there was 'something peaceful and quiet' in his look, and that he had 'clear, bright eyes, from which radiated tiny wrinkles'.[25] Over the course of Dostoyevsky's writing career, these facial characteristics come to acquire an almost sacred and symbolic quality, and they are key elements in the descriptions of Makar and Zosima. Thus Makar's eyes are said to be 'big, blue and radiant, and surrounded with countless tiny wrinkles'; while Zosima's face is 'covered with tiny wrinkles, particularly around his eyes'.[26] The impression made on Dostoyevsky by the Starodubovsky Old Believer would thus appear to have stayed with him throughout his life, and to have been present in his mind when he was creating the holy men of his major novels. In other words, we are faced with the possibility that Old Belief provided the starting point in Dostoyevsky's search for the human ideal of Christianity.

So far as the novel itself is concerned, the Old Believer is portrayed very positively. He is the only person in the entire camp to enjoy the trust of the other inmates, to the extent that they even hand over their money to him for safe keeping. He is greatly respected by the convicts: we are told that 'they called him Grandad, and never gave him cause for offence'.[27] This apparently casual remark takes on great significance when we recall the brutality which characterizes most of the relationships in the prison camp. It is implied that the kindness and honesty of the Old Believer are the result of his religious beliefs. Indeed, religion is the major element in his characterization. He is depicted by the narrator in various religious attitudes: he prays through the night, sitting on the stove; he celebrates Christmas as a holy festival, instead of abusing it as the Orthodox convicts do; and he reads holy books.[28] It is made quite clear that his faith differs from official Russian Orthodoxy: the narrator reveals that the crime which brought him to prison was to burn down a yedinoverchesky church; and he also mentions that the Old Believer reads not from the Bible, but from his own holy book, which is written in manuscript.[29] While drawing attention to these external differences, the narrator does not lay too much emphasis upon them, and there is certainly no suggestion that the Old Believer is a ritualist. Further, neither in Vremya nor in Notes from the House of the Dead do we learn any details of Old Belief teaching as such. Dostoyevsky is not concerned to establish whether the Old Believers were theologically or ritually correct: his paramount concern at this stage in his writing career appears to be to locate

religious sincerity, and Old Belief is one of the places he finds it.

If the Starodubovsky Old Believer were the sole representative of his faith in Notes from the House of the Dead, the picture would indeed be ideal. However, the other Old Believers, for the most part Siberians, are not portrayed in such a positive light.

> They were a very educated group, cunning muzhiks, extreme dogmatists and pedants, and, after a fashion, strong in argument; a haughty lot, arrogant, sly and very intolerant.[30]

Here we meet features more usually associated with a hostile interpretation of Old Belief. Dostoyevsky would seem to have temporarily abandoned both the positive explanation of the raskol he advanced in 'Two camps of theoreticians' and the respect which characterizes his response to the Starodubovsky Old Believer, in favour of the Westernizers' negative stance. The Siberian Old Believers are not portrayed as being particularly religious, and have none of the positive qualities of their Starodubovsky co-religionist. And they certainly are not in prison for their faith: the Siberian Old Believer Yolkin, for example, is a counterfeiter.[31] Old Belief is not so much a religion for them as an identity, a culture, which corresponds to a particular type of temperament: whether the temperament gives rise to Old Belief or vice versa is not made clear. The only thing which the Starodubovsky Old Believer and the Siberian Old Believers have in common is their title. The portrayal of the Siberians weakens the extremely positive impression of Old Belief created

by the Starodubovsky Old Believer, and suggests that Dostoyevsky, while attracted to Old Belief, was not ready blindly to endorse all its adherents, but only those who displayed the Christ-like qualities for which he looked in all faiths at this period.

The Starodubovsky Old Believer is the fullest portrayal of an Old Believer to be found in Dostoyevsky's writings. In the later novels Dostoyevsky's interest in the faith is reflected not by the presence of Old Believers in person, but by the discernible influence of Old Belief thought on the teachings of his major religious characters. Such is the case with Prince Myshkin in The Idiot. There is an interesting difference between the notebooks for The Idiot and the final version of the novel so far as the form of religious dissent associated with Myshkin is concerned. In the notebooks, extreme sectarianism figures prominently, in the person of the Idiot's uncle, who is a Prygunchik ('Jumper').[32] As the plans progress, the Idiot is associated even more closely with sectarianism, when he becomes the son, rather than the nephew, of the Jumper.[33] In the novel itself, however, the Idiot (Myshkin) loses these direct links with extreme sectarianism, and any he may still have are merely implied, through his close spiritual ties with Rogozhin. Instead, he is associated with Old Belief, as becomes clear during his fateful speech at the Yepanchins' dinner party. We drew attention to Myshkin's reference to Old Belief in the previous chapter, when examining Russian messianism. It occurs as he is talking of the Russian soul's need of a firm 'idea':

> '"He who does not have the soil /pochva/ beneath him does not have God". Those are not my words, they're the words of an Old Believer merchant I met on my travels. He didn't actually use those words, he said: "He who has turned away from his native land has turned from his God".'[34]

The attraction of the Old Believer's words for Myshkin and Dostoyevsky would appear to be the necessary relationship they establish between religion and nationality, and the scope they provide for the development of the concept of Russian messianism. The extent to which nationalistic concerns entered into the rise of Old Belief was noted in the Introduction to this chapter, and certainly Dostoyevsky himself seems to have regarded Old Belief as something which was very Russian. It is significant in this respect that Myshkin's encounter with the Old Believer occurs during his absence from St. Petersburg, at a time when he himself is getting to know the Russian land and people.

Myshkin's associations with Old Belief raise an interesting point of vocabulary. Referring to the role of Old Belief in the formation of Myshkin's thoughts, Peace comments: 'If this is Myshkin's spiritual inheritance, then his actual inheritance appears to have much the same origins; for the relative from whom he inherits his money is also a merchant and an Old Believer'.[35] In fact, it is not absolutely clear from the text whether Myshkin's relative was an Old Believer or a sectarian in the wider sense: he is referred to by the general term raskol'nik, whereas Dostoyevsky sometimes uses the more specific staroobryadets when he wishes to distinguish Old Belief from sectarianism generally. Such is the case with the Old Believer whom Myshkin meets on his travels: he is

referred to as odin kupets iz staroobryadtsev.[36] According to Cherniavsky, 'until 1905 the official name for all sectarians who did not acknowledge the official Church was raskol'niki (schismatics). The term staroobriadtsy (Old Ritualists or Old Believers) was used only by the liberals.'[37] It would be difficult to class Dostoyevsky as a 'liberal' at the time of The Idiot, and his use of the term staroobryadets would, therefore, appear to be worthy of comment. It suggests that he differed from the official Orthodox Church in how he regarded the Old Believers. It might be taken as an indication that he wished clearly to distinguish between Old Belief and sectarianism generally, perhaps because he wanted to keep the phenomenon of Old Belief free from the taint of the more extreme manifestations of religious dissent. Whether he did in fact distinguish between the two forms of religious dissent in this way will be seen in the following chapter.

There is one sense in which Myshkin is very clearly distinguished from Old Belief: he smokes a pipe, whereas tobacco was strictly forbidden to Old Believers.[38] Myshkin expresses a desire to smoke early in the novel, as he is waiting to be admitted to General Yepanchin. Further, tobacco seems to have quite a hold on him:

> 'Is there anywhere I could go to smoke? I have my pipe and tobacco with me. . . . It's just that it's become a habit, and I haven't smoked for three hours.'[39]

Myshkin's habit is all the more interesting because addiction to tobacco, and the resultant lack of freedom from the self, is criticized by Dostoyevsky's later religious spokesmen, Makar Dolgoruky and Zosima. In the notebooks for A Raw Youth,

in a section devoted to the sayings of Makar, we read: 'And he also said that you shouldn't smoke tobacco, and he talked about this a lot, with sadness and sighing'.[40] In the novel itself, Makar relates the fate of the hermit Pyotr Valeryanych, who is unable to free himself from his desire to smoke.[41] In The Brothers Karamazov, Zosima talks sadly of an imprisoned 'fighter for an idea' who is ready to betray his 'idea' if his craving for tobacco can be satisfied.[42] Neither Makar nor Zosima, it would seem, is against tobacco as such, but they regret the loss of freedom which addiction entails. As will be seen later in this chapter, the desire that man should have complete freedom from the self was an aspect of Old Belief teaching to which Dostoyevsky was particularly attracted. Myshkin's longing to smoke suggests that he does not have complete freedom from the self, and seems to constitute a weakness we would not expect to find in one of Dostoyevsky's central religious characters.

Diary of a Writer provides further evidence of Dostoyevsky's sympathies for Old Belief. He draws particular attention to the Old Believers' nationalism, and to their belief in Russia's mission in the future of Eastern Christianity. This arises especially in discussions of the 'Eastern Question' and Russia's continuing conflict with the Turks. Dostoyevsky seems anxious to show that the Russian government's course of action has the support of the Old Believers. In 1876, for example, describing the wide and popular support which the government's decision to aid the Serbians enjoys, he observes that 'Moscow Old Believers have donated and

equipped a complete (and excellent) medical unit which they have dispatched to Serbia'.[43] Dostoyevsky sees this action as evidence of the Old Believers' commitment to the idea of Russia as the saviour of Eastern Christendom: 'Here there manifested itself precisely the idea of the future and ultimate - even though remote - destinies of Orthodox Christianity'. He implies that the Old Believers have been very gracious in identifying themselves with the efforts of official Orthodoxy, writing that they have helped the Serbians 'even though they know very well that the Serbians are not Old Believers but the same as us, with whom [the Old Believers] do not associate in matters of faith'. In his notes for the article, Dostoyevsky is even more forthright about the Old Believers' opinion of official Orthodoxy: 'And yet they know very well that all these Slavs are heretics'.[44] At no point in the article does Dostoyevsky openly declare himself for Old Belief at the expense of official Orthodoxy. Nevertheless, his respect for the Old Believers is clear, and one suspects that he was not unsympathetic to their claim that they had remained with the truth while the official Russian Orthodox Church had gone astray.

While unable to hide his admiration for the Old Believers, Dostoyevsky does not associate himself too closely with the precise theological points on which they differed from the official Church. Indeed, he goes so far as to refer to the differences as 'temporary' and 'fictitious'.[45] Whether the Old Believers themselves would have agreed that their differences were 'fictitious' is of course another question, but it is characteristic of what we have seen of Dostoyevsky's

attitude to the place of ritual in religion that he himself should accord only peripheral importance to such matters.

Although the Old Believers identified themselves with the cause of the Russian State in the Eastern Question and were loyal subjects at times of national crisis, they still stood firmly for the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers: 'What can we say of a Church which, it is pretended, is invincible, because it rests upon the support and sword of the powers of the earth?'.[46] These words bear a striking resemblance to the accusation we have seen Dostoyevsky repeatedly bring against the Roman Catholic Church, and thus point to another aspect of Old Belief teaching with which he was likely to be in agreement. The Old Believers accused the Russian Orthodox Church of having the Emperor of Russia as the head of the holy Church, instead of Christ: in their opinion, the supreme government of the Church should be vested in councils, not in the monarch. Further, they did not consider autocracy to be the only desirable or possible form of government for Russia: 'The Russian clergy preach to the people the indissoluble form of autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality, and deny the form of government to be a thing both human and mutable'.[47]

Dostoyevsky's support for the separation of the temporal and spiritual powers may be readily illustrated with reference to Diary of a Writer and his notebooks, where he frequently speaks out against the idea of the clergy as chinovniki - servants of the state. In the notebooks for 1874/5, an extract concerning new Church laws in Prussia which had completely removed the independence of the Church receives

the brief but telling comment 'N.B. Absolute madness'.[48]

In his 1873 Diary, in an article entitled 'An embarrassed look', Dostoyevsky deals directly with the question of the Old Believers' attitude to the representatives of the official Church, and in so doing makes his agreement with their position quite clear.[49] The topic arises during a discussion of Leskov's The Sealed Angel (Zapechatlenny angel, 1873). Dostoyevsky begins by retelling Leskov's story, which concerns a group of raskol'niki. Although the term staroobryadtsy is not used on this occasion, it appears that the raskol'niki belong to mainstream Old Belief. First, they venerate icons consecrated before the time of Nikon, whereas many of the more extreme sectarians tended to do away with such religious effects. Second, and perhaps more decisive, Dostoyevsky refers to the dissenters approvingly as 'nash raskol', a familiar expression he used to refer to the schism and mainstream Old Belief, rather than the resultant 'ugly' sectarianism.

The central feature of the story as told by Dostoyevsky is the shameful way the official Church acquits itself in the face of blatant interference by state officials. The group of dissenters is visited by an official who attempts to make them pay a levy on each of their icons, which he knows have been taken from an official Russian Orthodox church. When the dissenters refuse, he removes the icons to a church and attaches an official seal to the one most venerated, an icon of an angel. The local archbishop, meanwhile, offers no opposition to this act of sacrilege

by the government. The dissenters plan to steal back their icon, and to replace it with a new, unconsecrated, one, to which a seal has been added to make it resemble the first. On the way to the church, however, the replacement icon miraculously 'unseals' itself. The dissenters, interpreting this as a sign of the superiority of the official Church's icon over their own, are converted to Orthodoxy. A later discovery that the icon became unsealed through natural causes does not lead them to alter their decision.

There are two elements to Dostoyevsky's response to the tale. First, he is extremely critical of the way in which the Orthodox archbishop meekly submits to the state official - incidentally, he remarks, only a minor one - and he interprets the incident as an illustration of the weak position of the Church. 'For how else', he comments with heavy sarcasm, 'can the archbishop's actions be explained, other than by the meagreness of his authority? Surely not by indifference or indolence, or by the incredible supposition that, having forgotten the duties of his office, he has turned into a mere functionary of the government?'[50] If this were so, the Orthodox faithful 'would gradually lose all zeal in the matter of faith, lose their love and devotion to the Church, while the dissenters would look at the Orthodox Church with contempt'. These remarks clearly constitute a strong attack upon the current state of the Russian clergy and the close relationship which existed between Church and State. But they have additional significance for the present study, since they would seem to imply that a place for sincere and energetic priests does exist, and that such priests are instrumental in the

development of the Orthodoxy of the Russian people. Such an attitude is characteristic of a reforming attitude towards the Church, and is thus much less radical than tendencies we have identified elsewhere in Dostoyevsky's writings, according to which there is no role for institutionalized religion or its functionaries.

The second aspect of Dostoyevsky's reaction to the tale is the respect he shows for the dissenters. This is conveyed particularly when he discusses what he regards as the entirely unconvincing ending to Leskov's tale: the fact that the dissenters stand by their conversion to Orthodoxy once the secret of the 'unsealing' has been made known. Significantly, Dostoyevsky only considers the ending unsatisfactory because he has such a high regard for the dissenters: others might well find it entirely probable. He dismisses the idea that the dissenters would have been overcome by 'emotional sensibility /umileniye/ and the kindness of the archbishop who forgave them' as most unlikely, in view of the 'firmness and purity of their former beliefs . . . and the general character of our raskol'.[51] Dostoyevsky implies that the Old Believers understand only too well the pitiful state of the official Russian Orthodox Church, and are in no hurry to rejoin it. Old Belief is not a negative phenomenon: the Old Believers have firm convictions and, Dostoyevsky implies, are justified in dissociating themselves from official Orthodoxy.

Finally, it is interesting to note in passing that Dostoyevsky declares his favourite passage in the story to be the account of a discussion the dissenters hold about icon painting: 'This is a serious section, the best in the whole

story'.[52] This confirms our impression that he certainly did not dismiss the dissenters as narrow-minded ritualists, who adhered to tradition without appreciating the significance of what they did. Further, his remark seems to imply his own support for meaningful ritual, and his appreciation of the beauty of such things as icons.

The stance adopted by Dostoyevsky in 'An embarrassed look' suggests that he strongly opposed state intervention in Church affairs, and considered that the Russian Orthodox Church had compromised itself by not putting up sufficient resistance. To this extent his views coincide with Old Belief. Yet if one examines Dostoyevsky's attitude to the relationship between Church and State more closely, one encounters a complicating factor: his extreme attachment to the Tsar, not only as head of state, but also as an important figure in Orthodoxy. Was Dostoyevsky himself guilty of replacing Christ with an earthly potentate as the head of the Church, as the Old Believers accused the official Russian Orthodox Church of doing?

The idea of the sacred mission of imperial power had been taken by Russian ecclesiastics from Byzantium in the sixteenth century. The official role of the Tsar in the Russian Orthodox Church was to protect dogma. He attended divine service, but could not officiate. It is useful to compare Dostoyevsky's view of the role of the Tsar in Orthodoxy with the view taken by the Slavophiles. The Slavophiles were in favour of having a Tsar because they believed that to have a living figure at the head of a nation was better than having an institution. They did not, however,

admit any religious or absolute justification of the Tsar: the Tsar was not a divine monarch; and there was no mystical connection between the Church and the Tsar. The Church had nothing to do with the form of government in the country.

In a letter to Maykov in 1868, Dostoyevsky wrote that for the narod the Tsar was 'a mystery, a priesthood, an anointing'.[53] The contemporary critic Obolensky praises Dostoyevsky for having drawn attention to this aspect of the popular mind in the speeches of Zosima in The Brothers Karamazov: there, he says, may be seen the popular [narodny] belief that 'in the figure of the Tsar the political and religious domains merge'.[54] In the notebooks to The Devils the character Granovsky (Stepan Trofimovich) jokes about the importance the narod attaches to the Tsar, and implies that the Tsar is even more important to them than God. If the writers of revolutionary proclamations want to influence the narod, he says, they should print the proclamations 'on silver paper, in gold letters, edge them with crimson, and sign them: "a golden diploma from the Tsar" - the narod would destroy both churches and family, if they knew the Tsar had ordered it'.[55]

A slightly more respectful analysis of the narod's attitude to the Tsar may be found in Diary of a Writer for March 1877. In the passage concerned, Dostoyevsky is ostensibly defining the position of the narod regarding the Eastern Question, but his own sense of identity with the views outlined is clear. Dostoyevsky remarks that the narod's favourite name for the Tsar is 'the Orthodox Tsar' (Tsar pravoslavny), and that for them he is 'the defender, the uniter ... and the liberator of Orthodoxy'.[56] The Tsar's task

is to free Orthodox Christendom from 'Mohammedan barbarism and Western heresies': Dostoyevsky remarks that on several occasions already the sword has been used to good effect against the first of these threats.[57] Dostoyevsky's apparent acquiescence in the use of the sword on Christianity's behalf contrasts sharply with the view he expresses elsewhere that compulsion must not be used in religious affairs: in the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', it is explicitly denied that Christianity requires any assistance. Here, however, Dostoyevsky implies that for the Christianity of a nation to be maintained and protected, rather more concrete help than the 'image of Christ' is required.

Dostoyevsky's support for the Tsar as the defender of Orthodoxy seems to open him to charges of dual standards: he seems to be lending his support to the view we have seen him attribute to Roman Catholicism to the effect that 'without universal state power the Church cannot continue here on earth'.[58] To a certain extent the place of the Tsar in Dostoyevsky's religious thought may arguably be explained with reference to the Christ/Church distinction we noted in the previous chapter. We suggested that 'Christ' and 'Church' had separate and distinct roles for Dostoyevsky, the latter functioning more as a political and nationalistic body.[59] It would initially appear that the Tsar operates in the realm of the Church, rather than that of Christ, and that Dostoyevsky associated him with politics and nationalism, rather than with faith as such. Later in the article, however, in addition to the liberation of Orthodoxy the Tsar's task is also said to be 'the defence of the Christian faith'.[60] He thus moves closer

to the realm of Christ; and it is perhaps not inappropriate at this point to recall Dostoyevsky's reference to the Tsar as 'a priesthood, an anointing'. It would appear that Dostoyevsky's views differed from Old Belief in this respect.

The Old Believers placed their confidence not in the Tsar and his might, but in the 'force of piety'. They believed that through the strength of Christian piety, practised by individuals, this sinful and impure world could be transformed into a completely holy world. Zenkovsky refers to this religious trait as 'theurgical': 'It is not a matter of knowledge of God, or of a "sense" of God, but of activity in God, specifically, the transfiguration of life'.[61] For its effectiveness, this idea of 'activity in God' depends upon many individuals renewing their own lives, rather than upon institutionalized means. Dostoyevsky was greatly attracted to the idea of transforming the individual as a means to attaining widespread Christianity. The influence of this aspect of Old Believer thought on his own religious thinking may be illustrated with reference to the notebooks for The Devils, where much of the positive ideological burden is carried by a character called Golubov.

Konstantin Yefimovich Golubov was an Old Believer peasant who lived in the nineteenth century, and who in the late eighteen-sixties joined the Orthodox Church, becoming a Yedinoverets.[62] Dostoyevsky first learned of him through an article by N. Subbotin in Russkiy vestnik (The Russian Messenger)[63] in 1868. The article, entitled 'Russian Old Believer literature abroad', went into the teachings of Golubov in some detail, and Dostoyevsky was favourably impressed by what

he read, as an oft-quoted extract from a letter to Maykov shows:

> And do you know who the new Russian people are? There's that peasant, the former sectarian with Pavel Prussky, about whom there was an article with extracts in Russkiy vestnik. . . . He's not the type of the future Russian man, but of course he's one of the future Russian people.[64]

Golubov was not the only figure with Old Believer tendencies whose name appeared in the notebooks for The Devils. An early variant for the name of Shatov was Shaposhnikov, and it has been convincingly argued that this is a reference to the Old Believer Bishop Arkady, whose real name was Andrey Rodionovich Shaposhnikov.[65] Further, in a letter to Maykov in which he discusses The Life of a Great Sinner (Zhitiye velikogo greshnika), from which The Devils arose, Dostoyevsky mentions two other figures with Old Believer links.[66] One is Pavel Prussky, who was Golubov's teacher and guide in the Old Believer monastery where the latter spent some years, and who similarly joined the Orthodox Church in the eighteen-sixties, becoming a Yedinoverets. The other is the monk Parfyony, who himself spent some time as an Old Believer. Golubov, Parfyony and Pavel Prussky are all mentioned in the guise of authoritative religious teachers, faced with the daunting task of guiding the Great Sinner.

Dostoyevsky's inclusion of these Old Believer characters may be interpreted in two ways. One can attach the greatest significance to their eventual return to the official Church, and the accompanying implication that they had seen the error of their Old Believer ways. This would be to assume that Dostoyevsky himself considered the Old Believers to be at fault, an assumption not borne out by the evidence examined earlier in

this chapter.[67] Alternatively, one can attribute their inclusion to Dostoyevsky's approval of Old Belief as a religious tendency, an assumption more consistent with our findings so far.

Parfyony and Pavel Prussky are no more than mentioned in the plans for The Life of a Great Sinner. The Old Believers who appear in the notebooks for The Devils, Shaposhnikov and Golubov, are presented in rather more detail. Shaposhnikov is the first to feature in the notes, where he is associated with two concepts related to Old Belief. The first is nationalism: the need to 'know' Russia, and to believe in Russia's worth: 'Shaposhnikov - the fundamental type. His convictions . . . No-one knows himself in Russia. We've all overlooked Russia. We can't recognize our own individual qualities.'[68] Shaposhnikov's views on Griboyedov's Chatsky, which come at a later stage in the notes, are in a similar vein: 'Chatsky . . . He overlooked the Russian narod . . . in its faith, its history, its customs, its significance, its huge numbers - he saw only quit-rent.'[69] The second theme with which Shaposhnikov is associated may be traced specifically to the teachings of Golubov. It is the apparently paradoxical teaching that to be free one must be a slave. The notebook entry in which it first appears reads as follows (here, Shaposhnikov is called Shatov): 'Be a slave and you will be free. (Apostle Paul). Opinion expressed by Shatov to Granovsky.'[70] This idea is expressed several times in the notebooks.[71] Dostoyevsky seems to have considered it representative of Old Belief in general, since it is also associated with Old Belief in his plans for a story called Death of a Poet (Smert' poeta), which date from the period

September 1868 - January 1870. Among the characters in the story are a poet, an atheist, a priest and a raskol'nik. At the beginning of the notes the priest's views are challenged by the atheist, and the raskol'nik comes to the former's defence:

> Once the raskol'nik stood up [for the priest] and started talking about freedom and the free person (N.B.According to the Apostle Paul) - he takes up when the priest has already shirked the discussion, and shows that he has the better understanding of freedom.[72]

In this episode, Old Belief clearly gains at the expense of official Russian Orthodoxy.

Closely related to Golubov's teaching concerning freedom in slavery was his insistence upon the need for self-restraint and self-mastery, concepts he expressed using the terms 'samostesneniye' and 'samoupravleniye': 'There is no freedom without moderation. Freedom without self-restraint [nesamostesnitelnaya svoboda] is not freedom, but an outrage'.[73] Self-restraint, which must be coupled with humility, is accessible through the infallible knowledge and the centuries-long experience of the Orthodox Church:

> The substance of consciousness . . . restricts itself to two dogmas: Orthodoxy [pravoveriye] and morality [nravstvennost'], knowledge and deeds, invisible love and visible striving; while morality depends to a much greater extent upon Orthodoxy than superficially educated people, administrators and atheists think. These two dogmas are inextricably linked.[74]

This teaching on the need for self-mastery and humility caught Dostoyevsky's attention, and is attributed to Golubov on several occasions in the notebooks:

> The ideas of Golubov are humility and self-mastery /samoobladaniye/, and that God and the kingdom of heaven are within us, in self-mastery, and freedom is there too.[75]
>
> Golubov says: 'More humility is needed; consider yourself as nothing, then you will be saved and you will receive peace'.[76]

The value of the teaching is also apparently recognized by the Prince (Stavrogin):

> 'I am not a genius, but I have nevertheless thought up something new which no-one, except me, has ever thought of in Russia: self-mastery /samoupravleniye/'.[77]
>
> 'But before any thoughts of rebirth and resurrection - self-mastery /samoobladaniye/'.

With hindsight we know that the need for humility became an important element in Zosima's teachings in The Brothers Karamazov; and in his polemical exchange with the liberal Gradovsky in Diary of a Writer Dostoyevsky puts forward the related concept of self-perfection as the basis for the transformation of society, questioning Gradovsky's assertion that real social change can come only through institutionalized means.[79]

Most of the notebook references to Golubov's teachings are brief and to the point. On one occasion, however, Dostoyevsky chooses to expound them in some detail:

> Golubov says: 'Paradise is in the world, it exists even now, and the world is created perfectly. Everything in the world is enjoyment, if it is normal and legitimate, only under these conditions. God created both the world and the law, and created another miracle - He showed us the law through Christ, as an example, in life and in a formula. Therefore, unhappiness comes solely from abnormality, from not observing the law. For example, marriage is Paradise and is completely sincere, if the partners love only one another and unite in mutual love in their children. At the slightest deviation from the

> law marriage immediately turns into unhappiness. . . . There are many different types of deviation, but they all come from a lack of self-control [samoobladaniye]. He who has ten children and no capital, considers himself unfortunate, because he is unable to master his wilful desires and sinks to the state where he groans at every privation. Self-control comes from discipline, and discipline is in the Church.'[80]

Mochulsky considers this speech of Golubov to be 'one of the most important documents we have concerning Dostoyevsky's religious world-view'.[81] At the same time, he finds it problematical:

> One might think that these reflections were written not by Dostoyevsky, but by Tolstoy; the rationalism and moralism of the sermon on self-mastery is so astounding, the teaching about paradise on earth is permeated with such naturalism. For Golubov, Christ is only an 'example' and formula, the Church is only discipline, salvation is only the fulfilment of the law!

Mochulsky is right to say that the arid moralism of the speech seems most un-Dostoyevskian in character. Further, the claim that 'self-control comes from discipline, and discipline is in the Church' conjures up a sombre, authoritarian Church, something clearly at odds with what we have so far seen of Dostoyevsky's religious ideal. Our earlier examination of Golubov's own writings, however, has shown that he tended to appeal not to an inquisitorial Church, but rather to the spirit of Orthodoxy. He looked not to strictly defined rules to provide 'discipline', but to qualities such as humility and love:

> Orthodoxy [pravoveriye] teaches that my well-being consists in the well-being of others . . . that if I am a slave I should work for my master as if for myself, and if a master, I should be as concerned about my slave as about myself. [Orthodoxy] unites all through humility and love.[82]

Thus we see that the terms 'discipline' and 'Church' used in Dostoyevsky's exposition of Golubov's teaching are really short-hand for rather less stark concepts. Golubov looks not to an institutionalized body, but to something far less tangible and, as such, consistent with the type of Christianity we have come to expect from Dostoyevsky.

The specific teaching of Golubov concerning the need to be a slave in order to be truly free had attractions for Dostoyevsky other than those we have examined above. He interpreted it in a way which enabled him to justify one particular feature of his religious ideology which we identified earlier as being at odds with Old Belief: his support for the Tsar as an important figure in Orthodoxy, and his attachment to the Russian autocratic system. This becomes apparent in the following extract from the notebooks for The Devils, where the Prince is reflecting upon the political order in Russia:

> It's not the Anglosaxon possession of rights, it's not the democracy or the formal equality of the French (of the Roman world). It is genuine brotherhood. The Tsar at the head, slave and freedom (Apostle Paul) . . . Russia is not a republic, not Jacobinism, not communism . . . Russia is simply the incarnation of the spirit of Orthodoxy (slave and freedom).[83]

Golubov's teaching has provided Dostoyevsky with religious justification for his commitment to Russia's system of government and the Tsar: Russia's autocracy is the large-scale political model of Golubov's freedom through slavery. In distinction to the Slavophiles, therefore, Dostoyevsky effectively considered autocracy to be a divinely appointed system of government. And the conviction stayed with him,

as his 1875/6 notebooks illustrate. Dostoyevsky is responding to an article he has read about Aristotle's Polemics, and is clearly anxious to dissociate the Russian autocracy from Aristotle's definition of tyranny, which reads: 'A tyranny is a monarchy concerned only with the interests of the monarch'.[84] Dostoyevsky makes several remarks intended as a defence of Russia, among which is the following:

> The narod has a direct apprehension of two things:
> 1) Orthodoxy
> 2) It never considers the monarch to be a tyrant, the most freedom possible /naiboleye svobody/. It doesn't conceive how the monarch could be afraid of it, and not give it every kind of civic freedom.[85]

The influence of Golubov's teaching is clearly discernible in Dostoyevsky's inclusion of the phrase 'the most freedom possible'.

Golubov does not appear in the final version of The Devils: in the notes made by Dostoyevsky on 10 April 1870 we read: 'Golubov is not needed'.[86] His ideas are apportioned among the other characters, in particular the Prince (Stavrogin), Shatov and Tikhon. Pascal implies that part of the reason for the disappearance of Golubov was that, as an Old Believer, he represented 'a ritualistic and canonical conception of the Church to which, it would appear, Dostoyevsky never gave his consent'.[87] All that we have so far discovered in our study tells us that Pascal is right to dissociate Dostoyevsky from a rigid conception of the Church. But the findings of the present chapter lead us to question his implication that for Dostoyevsky Old Belief was primarily 'a ritualistic and canonical conception of the

Church'. Certainly, Dostoyevsky was greatly attracted to Old Belief: he seems to have regarded the Old Believers as the élite of Orthodoxy, and to have associated them with sincere, 'inner' spirituality. But this attraction did not constitute support for ritualism, or for an institutionalized Church as a necessary mediating body. Rather, we have seen that Dostoyevsky tends either to ignore or to treat as a matter of secondary importance the ritualistic side of Old Belief, and, on occasion, implies that the Old Believers themselves share his view. It is significant in this respect that in the notebooks for The Devils there is no mention of the ritualistic side of Golubov's religion; and that on those occasions when the Church is referred to, the term is not intended in the rigid sense which might initially appear to be the case. The main reason for Dostoyevsky's attraction to Old Belief was, we would suggest, entirely unrelated to any ideas the Old Believers may or may not have had about the specific nature of the Church as an institution. His interest appears to have been initially stimulated by the sincere spirituality of the Starodubovsky Old Believer portrayed in Notes from the House of the Dead. To this initial positive impression was added sympathy with specific elements of Old Belief teaching, in particular, the nationalistic dimension of Old Belief; and the belief that Christianity is above all concerned with the state of the inner man, and that it is with the individual that one must begin. We would suggest that the disappearance of Golubov from The Devils had more to do with the evolution of Stavrogin as a character than with any desire on Dostoyevsky's part to

dissociate himself in any way from Old Belief. Golubov attracted Dostoyevsky because of his ideas, and those ideas were not jettisoned, but apportioned among the other characters, to appear not only in The Devils, but also in Dostoyevsky's later writings.

Of course, the mainstream Old Believers still supported the concept of the Church as an institutionalized body, and it cannot be denied that in the presentation of Old Belief in Diary of a Writer Dostoyevsky gives rather more prominence and support to the Church as an institutionalized body than has so far been the case. In 'An embarrassed look' he seems to support the idea of an institutionalized Church free from state interference, and to imply that there is a place and a role for a committed and sincere hierarchy. Both of these views belong to a reformer of the Church, rather than to a destroyer of the same; and to that extent Dostoyevsky may perhaps be accused of inconsistency with views implied elsewhere in his writings, most notably in the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor'. For the most part, however, Dostoyevsky's interest in Old Belief does not contradict what we have so far seen of his religious ideal.

Up to this point we have dealt exclusively with those aspects of Old Belief which attracted Dostoyevsky. There was, however, a further dimension to his attitude to the faith: what seems to amount to an awareness that Old Belief gave rise to the 'darker' side of religious dissent, extreme religious sectarianism. Even in the very positive portrayal of the Starodubovsky Old Believer in Notes from the House of the Dead,

there are hints of a darker, fanatical dimension. The narrator refers to Old Believers generally as 'fanatics'; and he expresses his surprise that the apparently 'meek and mild' Starodubovsky Old Believer could have committed the rebellious crime of which he has been convicted.[88] Dostoyevsky thus raises the question of the violence which is a potential of the Old Believer nature. His remarks might pass unnoticed, were it not for the fact that the narrator implies the existence of a link between the Old Believer and an extreme religious fanatic who also used to be in the prison camp. The prisoner concerned 'would get up at midnight, light a wax Church candle, climb up onto the stove, open /his Bible/ and read until morning'.[89] One day he attacked the Camp Major because he wanted to be punished and to suffer. He died as a result of his punishment. Although the narrator specifically states that the prisoner did not belong to any particular sect, such a desire to suffer at the hands of the authorities is characteristic of the Beguny (Wanderers).[90] It is surely not purely coincidental that the Starodubovsky Old Believer uses the same stove as a place of prayer, a fact which the narrator underlines: 'The old man was sitting on the stove (the same one that the learned convict who had tried to kill the Major used to pray on all night), and was praying from his manuscript book'.[91]

The possibility that Old Belief may serve as a stepping stone to unhealthy religious sectarianism is further illustrated by the family of Rogozhin in The Idiot. Several members of the family have connections with Old Belief: Rogozhin's dead father used to sympathize with the Old Believers, and

considered that 'the old faith was more correct';[92] Rogozhin's aunt lives in Pskov, an Old Believer centre; and Rogozhin's name can be derived from the Old Believer Rogozhskoye cemetery in Moscow.[93] But whereas we have become accustomed to seeing Old Belief portrayed in a positive light, the atmosphere surrounding Rogozhin's family is dark and sterile, and various distortions of religion have grown from the family's Old Believer roots. Thus we learn that Rogozhin's father 'also greatly admired the Castrates' and had some Castrate tenants;[94] his aunt sits with yurodivye (holy fools) all day, and is ominously declared to be 'worse than a nun';[95] and Rogozhin's brother is unparalleled in his sacrilegious behaviour, having cut the gilt tassels from his father's coffin(kisti litye, zolotye, obrezal).[96] Much later in the novel a similar phrase is used of Rogozhin himself. During a visit to Rogozhin's house, Myshkin repeatedly picks up a paper knife, and he asks Rogozhin whether he uses it to cut pages. Rogozhin replies in the affirmative:

> 'Ty listy, shto li, im razrezayesh'?'
> 'Da, listy ...'[97]

Although the effect is lost in translation, the two phrases are linguistically reminiscent of one another: kisti litye/listy . . . obrezal/razrezayesh'. The connection is sufficient to convey Dostoyevsky's apparent implication that religious sectarianism is a matter of degree: Rogozhin, who through his name is associated primarily with Old Belief, possesses the same potential for shocking religious sacrilege as his brother.

All of this is far removed from the positive portrayal of Old Belief which constituted the major part of this chapter: instead we have effectively progressed to the theme of the next chapter, extreme religious sectarianism. While greatly admiring Old Belief, Dostoyevsky seems to have detected in it, particularly at the time of The Idiot, a potential for destruction in spiritual matters. On the one hand he seems to be implying that the Old Believers, by breaking with the official Church, have preserved true Christianity; while on the other, he would appear to be suggesting that once one has broken with the official Church, one will inevitably end with atheism and sacrilege; and that sectarianism is a degeneration, rather than a distillation, of religion. Whether this was, in fact, Dostoyevsky's assessment of more extreme religious sectarianism is the question to which we will now turn.

1. The following figures are taken from P. Miliukov, Outlines of Russian Culture. I. Religion and the Church (New York, 1960), 116. Miliukov writes that 'students of the Schism had no difficulty in proving that these figures . . . were incomplete, especially the last ones'.

2. Ibid.

3. Anna Dostoevsky, Reminiscences, 224.

4. Ibid., 176.

5. The full list of titles relating specifically to the raskol appears in PSS, VII, 394.

6. L. P. Desyatkina & G. M. Fridlender, 'Biblioteka Dostoyevskogo. (Novye materialy)', Dostoyevsky. Materialy i issledovaniya, IV (Leningrad, 1980) (253-71), 260, No. 66; 265, No. 151.

7. The following account will of necessity be superficial, and no attempt will be made to include all those sects which existed during Dostoyevsky's lifetime. Instead, one or two representative groups will be mentioned in each category. Further information regarding those sects to which Dostoyevsky himself referred in his writings will be provided as necessary in this and the following chapter. For a more subtle and detailed account of the raskol and the development of religious sectarianism in Russia, see:
S. Bolshakoff, Russian Nonconformity: The Story of 'Unofficial' Religion in Russia (Philadelphia, 1950; reprinted New York, 1973).
F. C. Conybeare, Russian Dissenters, Harvard Theological Studies, X (Harvard, 1921).
A. F. Heard, The Russian Church and Russian Dissent (New York, 1887; reprinted New York, 1971).
A. I. Klibanov, History of Religious Sectarianism in Russia (1860s-1917), trans. Ethel Dunn, ed. S. P. Dunn (Oxford, 1982; original Russian edition 1965).

8. Bolshakoff, op. cit., 35-6.

9. M. Cherniavsky, 'The Old Believers and the New Religion', Slavic Review, XXV, 1966 (1-39), 6.
For further details about the 'Zealots of Piety' and their relationship with Nikon, see S. A. Zenkovsky, 'The Russian Church Schism: Its Background and Repercussions', Russian Review, XVI, No. 4, 1957 (37-58), 39-42.

10. T. Ware, The Orthodox Church (Harmondsworth, 1963), 122.

11. Cherniavsky (op. cit., 4) estimates that at the beginning of the schism as many as 20% of Russians were Old Believers.

12. Miliukov, op. cit., 47.

13. Heard, op. cit., 235.

14. E.g., A. F. Shchapov, 'Zemstvo i raskol. Beguny', Vremya, Nos. 10 & 11, 1862; V. Kalatuzov, 'Montany', Epokha, No. 7, 1864; V. Kalatuzov, 'Ocherk byta i verovaniy skoptsov', Epokha, No. 12, 1864.

15. PSS, XX, 5-22.

16. Ibid., 20-1.

17. Ibid., 21.

18. Ibid., 12.

19. Ibid., 15.

20. Ibid.

21. See PSS, IV, 282.

22. Mochulsky, op. cit., 192.

23. PSS, IV, 33; 34.

24. PSS, XIII, 284-6.

25. PSS, IV, 33.

26. PSS, XIII, 285; PSS, XIV, 37.

27. PSS, IV, 34.

28. Ibid., 109; 34; 33; 34.

29. Ibid., 33; 34.

30. Ibid., 34.

31. Ibid., 187.

32. PSS, IX, 159. For further details of the Prygunchiki, see Bolshakoff, op. cit., 109-10.

33. PSS, IX, 174.

34. PSS, VIII, 452-3.

35. Peace, op. cit., 318 fn. 23.

36. The term staroobryadtsy is used to refer to the Old Believers in Notes from the House of the Dead: see, e.g., PSS, IV, 33; 34.

37. Cherniavsky, op. cit., 1 fn. 1.

38. See PSS, XVII, 411.

39. PSS, VIII, 17.

40. PSS, XVI, 139.

41. PSS, XIII, 288.

42. PSS, XIV, 285.

43. For this and the following two quotations, see PSS, XXIV, 61-2.

44. Ibid., 308.

45. Ibid., 62.

46. Taken from the Old Belief 'Petition', which circulated in manuscript among the Priestists in the eighteenth century: see Conybeare, op. cit., 147.

47.. Ibid., 256.

48. PSS, XXI, 272.

49. Ibid., 54-7.

50. For this and the following quotation, see ibid., 56.

51. Ibid., 55.

52. Ibid.

53. Pis'ma, II, 100.

54. Zelinsky, op. cit., 71.

55. PSS, XI, 80.

56. DP, 1877, 88 (1877 March I, 2).

57. DP, 1877, 88-9 (1877 March I, 2).

58. PSS, VIII, 450. See Chapter Four, 199-200, above.

59. See Chapter Six, 343-4, above.

60. DP, 1877, 90 (1877 March I, 2).

61. V. V. Zenkovsky, op. cit., 108.

62. For details of the life and teachings of Golubov, see: A. Rammelmeyer, 'Bibelzitate aus zweiter Hand. Von der Arbeit F. M. Dostoevskijs an seinem Roman "Die Dämonen"', Unser ganzes Leben Christus unserm Gott überantworten. Studien zur ostkirchlichen Spiritualität, ed. P. Hauptmann (Göttingen, 1982) (384-98), 385-90; and PSS, XII, 178-80.

63. N. Subbotin, 'Russkaya staroobryadcheskaya literatura za granitsey', Russky vestnik, LXXVI, 1868 (99-129; 325-52).

64. Pisma, II, 149.

65. See Davison, 'Sects'.

66. Pisma, II, 264.

67. Rammelmeyer (op. cit., 386) notes that the return of Golubov and Pavel Prussky to the Orthodox fold coincided with the spiritual return of Kelsiyev and Danilevsky to Russia. He feels that Dostoyevsky would have welcomed both events as a sign that the two raskols ('the higher and the lower': see PSS, XI, 88) were coming to an end.

68. PSS, XI, 66.

69. Ibid., 87.

70. Ibid., 85.

71. A full list of the references appears in PSS, XII, 337.

72. PSS, IX, 120.

73. Subbotin, op. cit., 113.

74. Ibid.

75. PSS, XI, 131.

76. Ibid., 126.

77. Ibid., 117.

78. Ibid., 126.

79. See DP, 1877, 545-59 (1880 Aug. III, 3).

80. PSS, XI, 121-2.

81. For this and the following quotation, see Mochulsky, op. cit., 414; 415.

82. PSS, XII, 179.

83. PSS, XI, 167.

84. PSS, XXIV, 85.

85. Ibid., 86.

86. PSS, XI, 135.

87. Pascal, Dostoïevski, 78.

88. PSS, IV, 33.

89. Ibid., 29.

90. See PSS, VII, 394-5. The same tale is incorporated into Crime and Punishment: see PSS, VI, 348. For further details of the Beguny, see Bolshakoff, op. cit., 78-80; Conybeare, op. cit., 156-64.

91. PSS, IV, 34.

92. PSS, VIII, 173.

93. Peace, op. cit., 86; 318 fn. 19. Onasch's claim that although Dostoyevsky portrays Rogozhin's family as Old Believers, he actually intends them to be seen as mainstream Orthodox is puzzling. See Onasch, Der verschwiegene Christus, 136.

94. PSS, VIII, 173.

95. Ibid., 10.

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid., 180.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DOSTOYEVSKY AND RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS DISSENT: EXTREME SECTARIANISM

The references to sectarianism in Dostoyevsky's writings have been commented upon by several critics, evoking a variety of responses. Peace, who draws attention to many links between individual characters and specific sectarian groups which might otherwise pass unnoticed, considers that Dostoyevsky saw the sects as destructive and negative: they constituted the dark side of the Russian religious ideal.[1] Lord suggests that Dostoyevsky was not so much interested in the ritual and creeds of the sects as in 'the essence and form of their religiosity'.[2] Sandoz claims that 'in sectarianism, as an expression of the religion of the heart, Dostoevsky saw the spiritual aspiration of the people'.[3] The same critic is of the opinion that 'to cleanse the Church from within [Dostoevsky] sought spiritual alliance with the Old Believers and sectarians as true representatives of the popular religious mind'.[4] Some of the assumptions implicit in Sandoz' words are at variance with our findings so far: thus he assumes that Dostoyevsky's ultimate aim was a reformed Church; and he does not differentiate between Dostoyevsky's attitude to the sects and his attitude to Old Belief, whereas the previous chapter gave us cause to believe that the more extreme sects might not have Dostoyevsky's full sympathy. It is, however, his basic claim that for Dostoyevsky sectarianism was a positive religious force worthy of emulation which will concern us in this chapter. Our aim will be to establish

whether Dostoyevsky felt that the sectarians had attained the pure, 'Churchless' Christianity of the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' by breaking with the institutionalized Church and concentrating upon the direct relationship between men and God. The question will be considered in two parts. First, we will identify the causes of sectarianism as proposed by Dostoyevsky. We will then look at Dostoyevsky's response to specific features of sectarianism, particularly with regard to the sectarians' attempts to do away with many features of traditional religion.

Our examination of Dostoyevsky's publicistic writings of the early eighteen-sixties in the previous chapter revealed that he viewed the raskol as a whole as primarily a social phenomenon, while acknowledging the existence of a religious dimension, represented by Old Belief. A subsequent analysis of Dostoyevsky's portrayal of Old Belief revealed little which was not closely related to strictly spiritual matters. This suggests that the social dimension of the raskol, as viewed by Dostoyevsky, must have found another vehicle of expression. Comments made by Dostoyevsky in other articles of the same period suggest that he considered this vehicle to be the other form of religious dissent which developed from and existed alongside Old Belief: extreme religious sectarianism. The concept of sectarianism as the narod's instrument of social comment is conveyed very clearly in the 'Announcement concerning subscriptions for the journal "Vremya" in 1861', in which Dostoyevsky summarizes the ideological stance of his new journal. As in 'Two camps of theoreticians', Dostoyevsky again analyzes

the narod's response to the Petrine reforms. The narod, he says, refused to consent to Peter's abandonment of things Russian and to enforced Europeanization, and in so doing found itself isolated. But it did not despair: 'it pondered over itself and its position, and tried to create for itself a world-view, its own philosophy; it split up into secret, horrible sects, it searched out new avenues, new forms for its life'.[5] Dostoyevsky thus explains the rise of sectarianism in terms of a desire by the narod to have its own identity. The sects may be ugly and clandestine, but they are Russian and narodny.

In Winter Notes on Summer Impressions, Dostoyevsky turns his attention to sectarianism among the wretched masses in London.[6] On this occasion the reason he proposes for the success of sectarianism is social and economic discontent among the poor. Many of the London poor submissively accept the terrible conditions in which they live, writes Dostoyevsky, and they believe that this is how things must be. They may look to the gin bottle for comfort, but they do not rebel. Among others, however, scepticism arises, and 'gloomily, cursing, they look for salvation in things like Mormonism'. They as it were avenge themselves on society by becoming Mormons, Shakers and Wanderers (Stranniki). Dostoyevsky evokes biblical images to convey the plight of the London poor. The first comes from Revelation, and is a combination of two separate verses: Revelation 6: 10; and Revelation 8: 9. Dostoyevsky's adaptation reads as follows: 'It will be a long time before these social pariahs are given palm branches and white robes; for a long time yet they will cry to the throne of the Most High:

"How long, Lord?"'. The second image, though fleeting, also combines two separate sources, both connected with knocking: the image of Christ knocking at the door of people's hearts; and Christ's promise 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you'.[7] Dostoyevsky writes that the London masses 'gropingly knock at any door they can find' - and it is the sectarian doors which open to them. Although in the Bible these images are not presented primarily with social justice in mind, this is the interpretation they receive at Dostoyevsky's hands: we are encouraged to assume that the 'salvation' which the London narod seeks in movements like Mormonism is not a matter of theological creeds, but is of a rather more 'earthly' nature.

In the course of his comments on the London sectarians, Dostoyevsky seems to extend his field of vision to include sectarianism in Russia: we have already noted his reference to the Stranniki, a sectarian group associated particularly with Russia; and at other points he appears to be speaking for the guilty upper half of Russian, as well as English, society. He claims, for example, that the masses resort to the sects as an act of 'separation from our social formula, unconscious yet determined separation': his use of 'our' suggests that he may well have been thinking of Russia at the time. Once again, Dostoyevsky introduces the concept of sectarianism as an assertion by the narod of its own identity: 'This is a final, desperate attempt to come together in their own group, and to separate themselves from everything, even the human image, simply in order to be themselves, to avoid being with us'. At this stage, therefore, the sects are accounted for in economic and social terms: there is no suggestion that

either the Russian or the London masses are prompted by strictly religious concerns. Certainly, there are implicit suggestions that the Churches may have been in some way deficient: the extremely negative portrayal of both the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Churches in Winter Notes has already been commented upon in previous chapters.[8] But the criticism concerns the Churches' social responsibilities: purely theological issues do not feature prominently.

This tendency to explain sectarianism in social and economic terms may also be observed much later in Dostoyevsky's writings, particularly in Diary of a Writer, where the spread of Stundism among the Russian narod in areas of German colonization is commented upon several times. In 'Mirages. Stundism and Radstockists', written in 1877, Dostoyevsky explains the Stundists' success in the following terms:

> Several Russian workers employed by German colonists realized that the Germans were better off than the Russians, and that this was because theirs is a different order. Some pastors who happened to be there explained that they have a better order because they have a different faith.[9]

As a result, Dostoyevsky continues, groups of Russians began to listen to what the Stundists had to say, and adopted their faith. Even though Dostoyevsky describes the phenomenon in deliberately sweeping terms, this does not detract from the point he is making. The same message is conveyed in the 1873 Diary, where Dostoyevsky again imagines the narod's response to the life of the Stundists: 'They (that is, the Germans, the Lutheran Stundists) live well, honestly and decently because they do not fast'.[10] Both extracts illustrate

Dostoyevsky's conviction that the narod's attraction to Stundism does not stem primarily from theological concerns, but from dissatisfaction with the harsh conditions in which they live. The superior life-style enjoyed by the Stundists is enough to make the Russian peasants leave Orthodoxy with no regrets. Certainly, the manoeuvre is religious in appearance. Further, the narod's assumption that a religion which brings about a better material life is by definition a superior religion is itself a 'religious' comment, since it reveals a conviction that religion should concern itself with earthly as well as spiritual matters. But although the result is a change of religion, we are asked to believe that the initial impulse for the change was not religious.

The attraction of Stundism for the Russian narod is also attributed by Dostoyevsky to a desire for truth (pravda). The context for his remarks is a discussion of the position of the Russian peasants after the Emancipation in 1861. 'Ever since 19 February', he writes, 'the light of a new life' has begun to shine over the peasants. What they most desire, even crave for, is the truth: 'We don't want unseemliness, we don't want to drink wine - what we want is the truth and the fear of God, but most of all, the truth, the truth above all'.[11] What exactly is meant by truth in this context? A later article, 'The first root', provides a clue:

> Ever since the liberation from serfdom there has appeared in the narod a need, a thirst, for something new, something different from the past; a thirst for the truth, but the whole truth, for their complete civic resurrection to a new life following their great liberation. A new word has been demanded, new sentiments have begun to boil, and there has arisen a profound faith in a new order.[12]

The critical factor in this 'truth' is thus the great changes the Emancipation has brought to the peasantry. In their new status as citizens they have had a glimpse of what life can be like: they have become aware of the dignity of man. Having once caught sight of an alternative order, they want it to continue and to develop. This is the truth they are thirsting for, and it has little to do with religion as such. It is interesting to note where Dostoyevsky places the emphasis in the first of the two extracts cited above: 'truth' clearly comes before 'fear of God'. Although Dostoyevsky uses a word which one is tempted to interpret in a religious sense, religious matters do not appear to be uppermost in his mind, which thus reflects the mind of the narod as he understood it. There is still no sign of the desire for purer and more sincere religion which we have seen him associate with Old Belief.

So far in this chapter we have relied to a great extent upon Dostoyevsky's publicistic writings. Many references to sectarianism may also be found in his fiction. One function of such references is greatly to heighten the atmosphere of the novel concerned, by providing a dark and mysterious back-cloth for the action. Dostoyevsky himself was only too aware of the powerfulness of sectarianism as a theme, and he once urged Maykov to devote a long poem to the subject, claiming that 'such a poem would create an enormous impression'.[13] Sectarian links abound particularly in The Idiot and The Devils, where several of the characters have associations with the

Skoptsy or Khlysty.[14] These two groups were among the more exotic of the Russian 'dark' sects, and the characters' links with them undoubtedly add colour and force to the narrative. At the same time they serve an ideological purpose, revealing more about Dostoyevsky's assessment of sectarianism. First, there is evidence that Dostoyevsky felt that heredity had a part to play in the occurrence of sectarianism. We noted in the previous chapter that all of the members of Rogozhin's family circle in The Idiot are associated with religious dissent or religious fanaticism in some shape or form: his relatives seem to be religious deviants by nature. The sectarian Mikolka in Crime and Punishment also has 'sectarian blood': the police inspector Porfiry Petrovich reveals that 'there are Beguny among his ancestors'.[15]

It would appear that Dostoyevsky conceived of a specific sectarian temperament or psychology: certainly in his novels sectarianism is usually associated with two particular character traits: the tendency to extremism; and the quest for intensity of experience. Dostoyevsky himself made no attempt to disguise his preference for extremes as opposed to what he scornfully referred to as 'the damned golden mean': his comments about the public's response to a novel by one of his correspondents are characteristic in this respect:

> The reactions of the public (so I've heard) have been varied, but the good thing is that the judges may be divided quite sharply into one of two camps: they either pull it to pieces or highly praise it - and that's the best thing - it means it doesn't smell of the damned golden mean![16]

Dostoyevsky considered extremism and the desire for intensity to be characteristic of the essential Russian nature.[17] The

fact that some of his own most extreme characters are endowed with sectarian links suggests that he felt that sectarianism in turn was an expression of 'Russianness'. The characters with sectarian associations in The Idiot provide a vivid illustration of extremism. We have only to think of the episode of Rogozhin and the diamond ear-rings he buys for Nastasya Filippovna with ten thousand rubles he has stolen from his father.[18] It is precisely this episode which endears Rogozhin to Myshkin, which suggests that Myshkin himself is not devoid of such inclinations. Rogozhin's father is as extreme in his avarice as is his son in his recklessness. Nastasya Filippovna, whose name has sectarian connotations (the legendary founder of the Khlysty was a man called Danilo Filippov) displays similarly extremist behaviour when she throws a hundred thousand rubles into the fire at her birthday party.[19]

The link between sectarianism and a strong, extremist nature may be seen particularly in Dostoyevsky's plans for The Life of a Great Sinner. In a note made on 1 January 1870, Dostoyevsky outlines the character of the hero:

> This is simply an elemental type [tip iz korennika], unconsciously agitated by his own elemental strength, which is completely spontaneous and does not know what to attach itself to. Such elemental types are often Stenka Razins, or Danilo Filippovichs, or they become fully-fledged Khlysty or Skoptsy. This is an extraordinary and spontaneous strength, hard to bear for those who possess it, a strength which demands and seeks something to settle on . . . He finally comes to rest in Christ.[20]

In a letter to Maykov, Dostoyevsky charts the course of the Great Sinner's life: 'During his life the hero is first an atheist, then a believer, then a fanatic and sectarian, then an atheist again'.[21] Although sectarianism is one of the stages

the Great Sinner goes through on his way to Christ, it is not depicted as inherently religious: it merely provides him with something to which he can devote his elemental strength.

The potential for violence in such extremist characters is obvious. In The Idiot, the inevitability of Nastasya Filippovna's murder at the hands of Rogozhin becomes evident long before the event. The paper-knife which Myshkin absent-mindedly picks up when in Rogozhin's room is only one clue among many. But the knife seems to have added significance, for it is used by Rogozhin to cut the pages of Solovyov's Russian History.[22] The association between the knife and that particular book seems to evoke the violent potential of Russia, as embodied in Rogozhin's sectarian family.

Dostoyevsky's tendency to associate religious dissent with violence is illustrated by the frequency with which his criminal or revolutionary types foster relations with sectarians. In the notes for The Devils, for example, Nechayev (Pyotr Verkhovensky) tries to enter into an alliance with Golubov.[23] And in plans for a novel about a Prince and a moneylender, the murderer Kulishov knows a raskol'nik.[24] This could simply be taken as a reflection of nineteenth-century Russian reality: we noted in the Introduction to the present study that some of the more radical thinkers saw in the dissenters a source of support for their revolutionary plans; and Dostoyevsky himself is alleged to have wanted closer contact with the raskol'niki during his Petrashevsky days.[25] The character Smerdyakov in The Brothers Karamazov throws further light on the association Dostoyevsky saw between sectarianism and violence. We are given several physical details about

Smerdyakov which suggest that he has sectarian inclinations, and which link him particularly with the Skoptsy: the narrator himself likens Smerdyakov to a Skopets, saying that he looks older than his years and has a yellowish complexion; Smerdyakov does not like women; and he drinks lemonade rather than tea or coffee.[26] Of particular interest are Dostoyevsky's thoughts about the inner workings of Smerdyakov's mind. He likens the taciturn man to the figure depicted in Kramskoy's 'The Contemplator', and proceeds to analyze the character of the latter. The Contemplator, he says, is collecting impressions. Perhaps after many years spent in this way,

> he will suddenly throw up everything and go to Jerusalem, to wander /skitat'sya/ and to be saved, or perhaps he will suddenly set fire to his village, or perhaps he will do both things together. There are a lot of contemplators in the narod. And no doubt Smerdyakov was one.[27]

Dostoyevsky clearly considered duality to be a feature of the sectarian nature, and felt that the energy which the sectarians channelled into their religion could as easily be turned to destructive ends. Ivan Karamazov later develops this theme when referring to what could happen in the event of revolution: Smerdyakov, he says, will be 'first class material . . . when the time comes'.[28]

Dostoyevsky's attention was also caught by the sectarians' desire to suffer. We noted this aspect of the sectarian mentality in the previous chapter when discussing the extreme sectarian who appears in Notes from the House of the Dead.[29] The same trait is demonstrated by Mikolka in Crime and Punishment. Porfiry Petrovich takes it upon himself to explain the

phenomenon to Raskolnikov:

> 'Do you know, Rodion Romanych, what "to suffer" means to some of them? Not to suffer for anyone in particular, but simply "the need to suffer"; that is, to accept suffering, and if it should be from the authorities, so much the better.'[30]

This aspect of the sectarians' mentality was a further way in which they corresponded very closely to Dostoyevsky's analysis of the essential Russian nature, as seen in the Russian narod:

> I believe that the main and most fundamental spiritual craving of the Russian narod is their craving for suffering - perpetual and unquenchable suffering, everywhere and in everything. It seems that they have been affected by this thirst for suffering from time immemorial.[31]

> The willingness of the Russian people to accept suffering has been interpreted in the light of their conception of Christ, in which the emphasis is upon Christ as the suffering servant, and upon the need for humility and compassion.[32]

Although Dostoyevsky himself does not directly relate the sectarians' espousal of suffering to kenosis, his awareness of this shared tendency would have made the sects seem even more Russian to him. Essential Russianness brings us no nearer to essential Christianity, however: there still has been little evidence to suggest that Dostoyevsky regarded the more extreme sects as religious movements.

Although there are many references to specifically Russian sectarianism in Dostoyevsky's fiction, it is rare to come across a character who has links with Protestant-inspired

sectarianism. Doctor Herzenstube in The Brothers Karamazov is a notable exception in this respect. The doctor's role is essentially comic, and the limitations of his medical prowess are hinted at by the frequency with which he declares: 'I can make nothing of it'. He is nevertheless depicted in a very kindly light by the narrator, who refers to him as 'an elderly and most estimable man, the most careful and conscientious doctor in the province'.[33] At a relatively late stage in the novel, during Dmitry Karamazov's trial, we learn a few more details about Herzenstube: he is 'some sort of Herrnhüter or "Moravian Brother"'; and he treats the poor and the peasants free of charge, leaving them money to buy the medicine they need.[34] It is when the doctor tells the tale of 'the pound of nuts' that he acquires special significance. He recalls that when Dmitry was a young, neglected child, he took pity on him and gave him a present of a pound of nuts. As he handed them over, he taught Dmitry the German words for the three persons of the Trinity: 'Gott der Vater, Gott der Sohn, Gott der heilige Geist'.[35] Many years later the adult Dmitry visits Herzenstube, and proves that he has forgotten neither his lesson nor the doctor's kindness. At the trial Dmitry is moved to tears by the memory of the entire episode, and affectionately refers to Herzenstube as 'man of God'.

Herzenstube's pound of nuts acquires almost symbolic significance and is reminiscent of Grushenka's 'onion' which will pull her out of the lake in hell.[36] Herzenstube himself shows the lasting impression one good life can make in the world, and illustrates Dostoyevsky's conviction that social change must begin with the individual. It is useful to compare

Herzenstube to the real-life Protestant Doctor Hindenburg who is described in the March 1877 issue of Diary of a Writer, immediately after Dostoyevsky's discussion of the Jewish Question.[37] Like Herzenstube, so Doctor Hindenburg is completely selfless in his work. He is loved by the poor of the town in which he practises, and he makes no distinction as to religion, treating Protestant, Orthodox and Jew alike. When he dies, the various religious communities in the town respond in like manner, by forgetting their own theological differences and joining to give him a beautiful funeral. Dostoyevsky, whose description of the event is sentimental in the extreme, suggests that in such behaviour lies a clue as to how the Jewish Question might be solved.

It seems reasonable to suggest that Hindenburg, whom Dostoyevsky learned of from a Jewish reader of his Diary, inspired those aspects of Herzenstube's character and life which are revealed in the trial scene. Dmitry's lasting gratitude for the kindness shown him by Herzenstube may be seen as an encouragement to those like Hindenburg who are sustained by the hope that those they help will respond by helping yet others. At the end of his account of Hindenburg, Dostoyevsky comments on his reader's suggestion that there will be legends about the old man: 'And legends - why, they are the first step to action, a living memory and continual reminder of these "conquerors of the world", to whom the earth belongs'.[38] Such as Hindenburg, he writes, 'inspire faith; they constitute a living example and, therefore, a proof'.[39] Dostoyevsky's remarks are consistent with his tendency away from formal

religious creeds and practices, and they reveal what for him is the real medium of religious truth, capable of awakening faith in others: 'a living memory', 'a living example'. Hindenburg's selfless service and Herzenstube's pound of nuts are beautiful memories, and as such they fulfil the same role as the childhood visit to church which features so prominently in the spiritual awakening of many of Dostoyevsky's characters.[40]

By specifying that Herzenstube is a Herrnhüter, Dostoyevsky could be seen to be suggesting that the doctor's kind behaviour stems from the particular nature of his religious convictions. An intention to establish a link between religion and behaviour may perhaps also be detected in the fact that the formula of the Trinity plays as central a role in the tale of the pound of nuts as do the nuts themselves. The young Dmitry has no difficulty in remembering his lesson of theology when he next meets Herzenstube: that theology is intimately linked in his mind with the kindness shown to him. We are reminded of the logic of the Russian narod when faced with the material well-being of the Stundists: 'They . . . live well, honestly and decently because they do not fast'.[41] So far as the child Dmitry is concerned, Herzenstube gave him a pound of nuts because of 'Gott der Vater, Gott der Sohn, Gott der heilige Geist'. Yet, what is to the fore is not any specific religious creed, but pure love and humanity: Christianity without a particular confessionalist colouring. His depiction of Herzenstube is thus reminiscent of the way he tended to depict different religious creeds at the time of Notes from the House of the Dead: he effectively neutralizes

the fact of Herzenstube's religious sectarianism by looking to what is valid for all men and all religions.

Doctor Herzenstube is the nearest we have come to a suggestion that sectarianism is in any way associated with a concern for more sincere Christianity. Certainly, he takes us significantly nearer the specifically religious domain than does Dostoyevsky's portrayal of the 'dark' Russian sects. It is not inappropriate at this stage to consider Porfiry Petrovich's initial assessment of Mikolka in Crime and Punishment: 'And did you know that he is a raskol'nik - well, not so much a raskol'nik as a mere sectarian /a prosto sektant/'.[42] In thus distinguishing between raskol'niki and sectarians, Porfiry mirrors his creator, who similarly seems to have had significantly more respect for the mainstream of Russian religious dissent than for its radical offshoots, even though the latter had a fascination for him. Dostoyevsky was rather more willing, however, to grant the status of genuinely religious movements to the sects of Protestant inspiration, and the essentially 'religious' presentation of Doctor Herzenstube is consistent with this tendency. It is when looking at the sects in this light that Dostoyevsky is inclined to explain their existence with reference to the record of the official Russian Orthodox Church. In so doing he reveals more of his own attitude towards that Church.

The presentation of sectarianism in Winter Notes on Summer Impressions suggested that Dostoyevsky felt that the Church had certain social responsibilities in which it had, for the most part, failed. When discussing sectarianism in

Diary of a Writer, he implies that the Church has responsibilitities other than purely social: it also has a duty to teach and to preach. While not unusual in itself, in the context of Dostoyevsky's religious thought this implication merits closer attention, since it has not been at all clear in our study so far that Dostoyevsky considered the Church to have any such role to play.

First, the Russian Orthodox Church is allocated the responsibility of defending Orthodoxy from the false teachings of sectarianism and other deviant religious movements, such as spiritism. Dostoyevsky suggests that both Orthodoxy and the Church would benefit if this were done: lamenting the spread of spiritism, for example, he comments, 'will not our Orthodoxy, its representatives and leaders, grow and be purified in the battle with this teaching?'[43] It is not enough, however, for the Church to act after the event, that is, after sectarianism has already taken a firm hold. Dostoyevsky implies that the Church should have fulfilled its teaching role all along, and that had it done so, sectarianism would have had little chance of luring the narod away from Orthodoxy. He makes his views clear when considering the reasons for the rise of Stundism. We have already seen him attribute the movement's success in part to the 'light of a new life' which has shone over the narod since the Emancipation. But a further reason he identifies is the narod's very superficial knowledge of Orthodoxy, specifically of the symbolic rituals of the faith, such as fasting. The German Stundist pastor, we read, found the narod 'unenlightened and spiritually backward'.[44] Dostoyevsky does not blame the narod

for this, but implies that a lack of religious education is responsible: 'And where could these poor people have learned about the profound, salutary purpose of fasting? They regarded all their former faith as mere ritual.'[45] Dostoyevsky's words are not a condemnation of ritual as such: he is merely stating that if the deeper significance of ritual is not explained to those who are required to practise it, they will consider their entire faith to be nothing more than a catalogue of actions to be performed for the sake of performance. He implies that it is for the Church's representatives, the clergy, to teach the narod the profound significance of Orthodox ritual: until this is done, the narod will not have experienced Orthodoxy in its fulness. The clergy have failed in their task, however, and the German pastor is the first to have explained the essence of religion to the narod. But all is not lost:

> Our priests too, they say, are beginning to awake. They say that our clergy began long ago to show signs of life. We read with tender emotion the admonitions of the ecclesiastical leaders in the churches, regarding preaching and the moral life.[46]

Even though Dostoyevsky's heavily sarcastic tone suggests that he has little real hope that things will improve, it is significant that he should make such an appeal to the clergy at all, and that he should look for help from a Church which he has elsewhere implicitly identified as a definite barrier to Christianity, along with all other Churches.

When discussing the state of the narod's Orthodoxy separately from the question of sectarianism, Dostoyevsky gives

rather a different impression both about the need to understand ritual in order to understand the essence of Orthodoxy, and about the influence and role of the clergy. The implication that the narod has a poor and formalistic understanding of Orthodoxy and therefore cannot experience Orthodoxy in its fulness undergoes several modifications. One variant may be illustrated with reference to notes Dostoyevsky made in 1876 for a polemical article directed against the writer and critic V. G. Avseyenko.[47] Dostoyevsky criticizes Avseyenko for mocking the narod's attachment to its Holy Fridays, its 'boards' (icons) and its saints Frol and Lavr. Dostoyevsky himself effectively concedes that ritualism, superstition and ignorance play a large part in the religion of the narod: but rather than implying a causal relationship between such ritualism and the inability to appreciate the essence of Orthodoxy, he here maintains that the superstitious ritualism of the narod can and does coexist with a knowledge of true Christianity. Thus he writes that if Avseyenko really understood about matters of faith, then 'beneath the Holy Fridays, the brimstone and the narod's coarse ignorance he would have perceived pure faith, the fire of religion, the genuine Christ, all-forgiving and all-loving (the narod understands Him, despite its Holy Fridays)'.[48] In this particular instance, therefore, Dostoyevsky does not imply any necessary relationship between the level of the narod's understanding of ritual and the state of their faith.

A similar tendency to dissociate ritual from faith may be observed when Dostoyevsky approaches the question from the opposite direction, countering allegations that many members

of the narod no longer carry out the ritual of Orthodoxy and consequently must be regarded as indifferent in matters of faith. Not only does Dostoyevsky deny that such a conclusion may be drawn, but he so words his denial as to equate faithful fulfilment of ritual with hypocrisy and formalism. Thus, commenting on the upper classes' observation that the narod no longer prays, he writes: 'In the narod they see nothing akin to hypocrisy and therefore they conclude that [the narod] understand nothing in religion'.[49] On the contrary, says Dostoyevsky, in the narod may be found 'the essence of Christianity, its spirit and truth'.[50] His conviction that this is so is illustrated by his assessment of Foma Danilov, a common Russian soldier who was tortured to death by the Turks for refusing to convert to Islam: 'Maybe he did not even pray much, although of course he always remembered God'.[51]

Elsewhere Dostoyevsky adopts yet another stance regarding the narod and Orthodoxy when he claims that they do indeed carry out Orthodox ritual and at the same time have a profound understanding of it. The context for his remarks is a discussion of the narod's attitude to icons. Neither Lutherans nor educated Russians, he says, accept that it is possible 'to believe in the true God, at the same time to worship a "board", an image of a saint', and avoid idolatry.[52] Dostoyevsky challenges their understanding of the situation. First, he categorically denies that any Russian peasant confuses the 'board' with God Himself; and he claims that though they believe in the miraculous properties of some icons, 'there isn't a single Russian who would attribute the miraculous force of an icon to the icon itself and not to the will of God'.[53]

The positions outlined above all differ from one another, but what they have in common is that they all seem to be at variance with Dostoyevsky's account of the state of the narod's Orthodoxy when discussed in the context of Stundism. Dostoyevsky's opinion of the role of the clergy undergoes a similar transformation. The original article implied that the clergy had a duty to educate the narod, while setting an example of good moral living. Elsewhere, however, Dostoyevsky explicitly denies that the narod has need of religious teachers, and suggests that the clergy does not have a teaching role to fulfil. First, he claims that the narod has a correct understanding of even the most difficult theological concepts. When discussing monotheism, for example, something the liberals claimed the narod had no conception of, he writes:

> In the mind and soul of the Russian plebeian . . . there very often, if not always, forms an extremely peculiar but correct and precise conviction about those things he believes in, a conviction which fully satisfies him.[54]

The claim that the narod requires no help in religious matters is repeated later in the Diary:

> People tell me that [the narod] do not know the teachings of Christ, and that they don't hear any sermons, but this is a vain objection: they know everything, everything they need to know, although they could not pass an examination in the catechism.[55]

Dostoyevsky does not deny that the Church has played a part in the narod's understanding of Orthodoxy, but the nature of the Church's role clearly differs from what it was alleged to be in the article relating to Stundism. Thus we read that the narod acquired their knowledge of Christ 'in churches where, for centuries, they have been listening to prayers and

hymns, which are better than sermons'.[56] The narod does not go to Church to be taught by the clergy, but to experience in an immediate way the essence of Orthodoxy which is distilled in certain hymns and prayers. It is characteristic of Dostoyevsky in this respect that he occasionally claims that the whole truth of Christianity is contained in one particular Orthodox hymn or prayer, whether it be 'O mighty Lord, be with us!' or 'God and Lord of my being'.[57] Although the priest reads the prayer, he is not there as a teacher and has no independent role: he is merely the vehicle. Dostoyevsky treats the narod not as individuals living at a particular point in time, but as a collective body which extends back into history: the people have been listening 'for centuries'. He seems to imply that there is no need for each individual nineteenth-century peasant to acquire his Orthodoxy anew: it existed centuries before he was born, and is his as a birthright. We encountered the idea of faith as a birthright in Chapter Six, where we discovered a further source of faith for the narod: the soil.[58] The narod's knowledge of Christianity is also credited by Dostoyevsky to its long history of suffering, and to its saints.[59] Although some of these sources of faith are closer to the Orthodox Church than others, on the whole they do not involve the same role for the Church as that implied by Dostoyevsky when discussing the reasons for Stundism among the narod. The elevation of the Church to a position of prominence when Dostoyevsky accounts for Stundism must nevertheless be accounted for. One possible explanation is that Dostoyevsky needed to be able to explain to himself something he found difficult to

accept: the fact that the narod had, apparently with few qualms, abandoned Orthodoxy, even though, according to Dostoyevsky at least, Orthodoxy contained everything they needed and desired. Perhaps it was to defend himself from this thought that Dostoyevsky betrayed his conviction that faith had nothing to do with the official Church, and found himself attributing the narod's apostasy to a failure on the part of that Church. We must not, however, discount the possibility that Dostoyevsky's recourse to the Church is further evidence of the caution which seems to exist alongside the boldness of his religious ideal.

Stundism spread mostly among the lower levels of Russian society. At the same time many people in the upper classes were being attracted to the teachings of Lord Radstock, who went to St. Petersburg for the first time in 1874, and returned to Russia in 1876.[60] Dostoyevsky considered that both Stundism and Radstockism had arisen for the same reason: 'Undoubtedly they arose out of one and the same ignorance, that is, the complete ignorance of our religion'.[61] But the blame for this ignorance is apportioned differently in the case of upper-class sectarianism. So far as Radstockism is concerned, Dostoyevsky identifies three specific failings on the part of the upper classes themselves: 'our lamentable isolationism /obosobleniye/, our ignorance of the narod, our detachment from our nationality'.[62] The failure of the Church is not mentioned, a fact also noted by Heier, who remarks that, while Dostoyevsky's analysis of the estrangement of the upper classes from the people and from Orthodoxy is true, 'he avoids reference to the

historical causes leading to this estrangement and to the role played by the Church and state in it.[63]

In thus omitting to lay the blame upon the Church, Dostoyevsky is arguably more consistent with his own views about the place of the Church in religion than he is when attributing the rise of Stundism to a deficient Church. For the author of the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', the performance of the Church should have no effect upon the faith of the upper classes. Instead, Dostoyevsky associates the aristocracy's loss of true religion with 'ignorance of the narod' - a clear indication of the influence of narodnichestvo on his religious thought. This religious narodnichestvo is superimposed onto the religious pochvennichestvo we identified earlier ('the muzhik's teacher "in the matter of his faith" is the soil itself').[64] If the Church plays any role at all in the faith of the upper classes so far as Dostoyevsky is concerned, it is both minimal and at one remove: it amounts to the ill-defined role which it plays for the narod, as implied during Dostoyevsky's discussion of Stundism, filtered through the narod itself.

Dostoyevsky considered upper-class sectarianism to be symptomatic of the general trend towards isolationism which he detected in Russian society:

> Everybody segregates himself and goes into seclusion, everybody wants to think up something of his own, something new and unheard of. Everybody discards all those thoughts and sentiments which were previously held in common, and begins with his own thoughts and sentiments.[65]

He cites the example of a former nihilist who became religious,

> and in a flash 'went into seclusion and segregated himself', promptly and carefully disregarded our Christian faith, set all former things to one side, and immediately thought up his own faith, also Christian, but 'his own'.[66]

The nihilist's action is not prompted by religious concerns, even though it is religious in appearance: it rather serves to gratify his self-centred, segregated personality. No more are the Radstockists prompted by religious concerns as such, claims Dostoyevsky: they too are suffering from 'isolationism' and have 'a desire for a religion of their own'.[67]

Dostoyevsky was particularly upset by the betrayal of Russia which the upper classes' espousal of Radstockism represented for him. He thus reveals the extent to which he was unable to conceive of religion and nationality separately. In this, of course, he merely reflected the stance taken by both Church and State in nineteenth-century Russia: 'neither the state nor the Church had foreseen that it was possible to choose a religion according to one's personal conviction. Faith was regarded as something . . . inseparable from nationality, a second nature, so to speak. . . . A native Orthodox Russian . . . could not legally cease to be Orthodox.'[68] Leskov's account of Dostoyevsky's attempts to win Yuliya Zasetskaya back to the Russian Orthodox fold from Radstockism illustrates the extent to which nationalism coloured his response to sectarianism. Zasetskaya was a well-known member of St. Petersburg society who made no secret of her allegiance to Radstockism. Dostoyevsky was greatly impressed by her as a person, and considered her devout and sincere in her religion, 'but for this very reason . . . was particularly

grieved that such a "burning soul" "had left her own kin and allied herself with the Germans"'.[69] Such behaviour was tantamount to treason in his opinion.

Dostoyevsky considered Stundism too to be an alien movement. When he first introduces the sect in his Diary, he refers to it as 'German Protestantism in the midst of Orthodoxy':[70] the inclusion of the adjective 'German' reveals that for him at least Stundism is not just a matter of religion, but also of nationalism. Although, as we have seen, Dostoyevsky proposes several reasons for Stundism's success in Russia, the concept of sectarianism as an assertion of narodny identity is notably absent: to include it would have been effectively to admit that the narod could be satisfied by something foreign. Dostoyevsky lists several reasons why he considers Stundism to be wrong: it exploits the narod's sense of emptiness; it is a lie; like any other sect it will degenerate into ritualism. But the objection made with most feeling is that concerning nationalism: 'But what sort of Protestants, what sort of Germans, are our narod?'[71] (My emphasis.) Dostoyevsky does not accuse the masses themselves of betraying Russia. Nevertheless, Vasin in the notebooks for A Raw Youth expresses the author's conviction that Stundism was an anti-Russian phenomenon when he asks 'what could possibly run more contrary to the narodny Russian spirit' than Stundism.[72]

There is thus a clear distinction in Dostoyevsky's mind between the 'dark' sects and Protestant-inspired sectarianism so far as nationalism is concerned: through the former one becomes more Russian, through the latter, less. The

sectarianism of Smerdyakov in The Brothers Karamazov is interesting in that it cuts across this distinction: Smerdyakov is associated with the 'dark' sect of the Skoptsy, yet he deeply scorns and hates Russia and has no real links with the narod (although his mother, Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya, is a profoundly Russian and narodny phenomenon, as will be seen in the following chapter). While sects like the Stundists undoubtedly offended Dostoyevsky's nationalistic sensibilities, what we have seen suggests that he was much more inclined to concede that Protestant-inspired sectarianism was prompted by religious concerns than he was native Russian sectarianism. To this limited extent he may be said to have associated sectarianism with the same desire for sincerity in religion which he saw in Old Belief: although he certainly did not grant the status of 'religious' indiscriminately to all sectarian groups. We will now proceed to an analysis of Dostoyevsky's response to the characteristic features of sectarian groups, particularly their attempts to attain a spirituality which was unencumbered by the trappings of institutionalized religion. Did he find in the sects the 'Churchless' Christianity of the 'Legend'?

Dostoyevsky was energetic in his opposition to what he seems to have conceived of as the 'sectarian mentality', which led religious groups to claim exclusivity and to keep their religion to themselves, fearful lest it become tainted through contact with others. He felt that Russia herself had been guilty of a similar thing in the past: she had wanted to keep Orthodoxy for herself, and in so doing had acted 'in the manner of some raskol'niki who refuse to eat from the same

bowl as you and who believe it to be a holy practice that everyone should have his own cup and spoon'.[73] The phrase 'cup and spoon' (or 'glass and spoon') comes to symbolize this narrow sectarian mentality for Dostoyevsky, as may be seen in the following notebook entry, where he is discussing Russia's Orthodoxy and her future role in Europe. He contrasts the 'cup and spoon' mentality with the concepts of unity and reconciliation:

> The Russian view has consisted of the fact that we are Orthodox, but that is narrow - the glasses and spoons of the raskol'niki. . . . We have Orthodoxy, but the main thing is unity. Unity, first of all, through the destruction of the spoons and glasses.[74]

Dostoyevsky thus seems to have associated sectarianism with the tendency to create barriers by establishing precise ritualistic and theological requirements. He implies that barriers like this should, on the contrary, be removed. Such an approach to the specifics of rite and creed is in keeping with what we have seen of Dostoyevsky's own religious characters, who seem not to be tied by theology or ritual, and who have a tendency to reduce Christianity to its essence. Yet Dostoyevsky displays extreme scepticism when faced with those features of sectarian belief which were allegedly a means to precisely such pure, 'essential' spirituality.

First, he has no confidence that it is possible to dispense with ritual. We identified this tendency to defend the place of ritual in religion in Chapter Five, where we looked in some detail at an allegorical tale told in Diary of a Writer to illustrate Christianity's need of a 'vessel'

or container.[75] We noted Dostoyevsky's conviction that Christianity would 'evaporate' without a container, and that attempts to improve upon the original would lead only to idolatry. Dostoyevsky does not deny that some of the sectarians are sincere in their search for a perfect container which will not detract from Christianity itself: of the Stundists, for example, he writes: 'And yet how much sincerity, how many good beginnings, how much desire to withstand even torments!'[76] But he claims that, far from attaining essential Christianity, the sectarians are soon so engrossed in their efforts to find the correct formula that they become even more tied to ritual than those from whom they broke away: the same familiar, ugly idols reappear, 'and now try to smash them!'[77] The thought is repeated in Dostoyevsky's notebooks: 'For Orthodoxy is even less ritualistic than Stundism. They'll end up with crockery. Radstock too!'[78] Dostoyevsky seems to have considered it inevitable that the various sectarian groups would sooner or later degenerate into mere ritualism: Stundism, we read, 'may begin to fade and to get stale at the very beginning, and be transformed into ritualism, as is the case with the majority of Russian sects, especially if you leave them to it'.[79] He thus makes light of the sectarians' attempts to remove ritualism from religion.

The desire to dispense with ritual was merely symptomatic of the sectarians' overall wish to do without intermediaries between man and God. Many of the sects were convinced that men could enjoy a direct relationship with God, which could be achieved without the mediation of the Church. Rather than turning to the authority of a central ecclesiastical

body, they approached the Scriptures and Christ directly. One might reasonably expect Dostoyevsky to have approved of such a direct approach, but this was not so, and once again the sectarians' actions were discredited by him. His response to the teachings of Lord Radstock is characteristic in this respect. He adopts a very sarcastic tone and is deliberately vague:

> I have heard that Lord Radstock somehow teaches especially about the 'descent of grace', and that, to use the expression of someone who told me about him, the Lord as it were 'has Christ in his pocket' - that is, has an extremely casual relationship with Christ and grace. I must admit, however, that I did not understand what has been reported about people throwing themselves on cushions and waiting for some sort of inspiration from on high.[80]

But do not Dostoyevsky's own characters tend to have a very natural, spontaneous relationship with Christ? Is the creator of Sonya Marmeladova and Alyosha Karamazov calling for formality in religion, for consciously religious attitudes? It may be noted in passing that Radstock has the honour of being referred to as a heretic by Dostoyevsky, a term the latter tends not to use very often, even of the 'dark' Russian sects.[81] He seems to reserve the accusation of heresy for Western religion, rather than Russian, no matter how questionable some of the more extreme manifestations of the latter might appear to the outsider. In fact, he goes so far as to praise 'dark' sectarianism - which we have seen him effectively dissociate from Christianity - at the expense of Lord Radstock, claiming that 'the Khlysty are profound, more profound than certain well-known laws about grace thought up by an empty mind'.[82]

As we noted earlier, many of the sects did not have a priesthood. Frequently, however, they had an unofficial hierarchy, which consisted of the most respected members of their group. In addition, certain sects had their own 'prophets', who claimed to have had direct revelations from God. In the next two chapters we will discover that Dostoyevsky himself had an 'alternative hierarchy'; and it might also be pointed out that although none of Dostoyevsky's characters can be said to have had a 'revelation' as such, spiritual 'illumination' is not uncommon among them. In The Brothers Karamazov, for example, both Zosima and Alyosha undergo a spiritual experience which increases their Christian faith and their sense of mission.[83] Again, therefore, there would appear to be some common ground between Dostoyevsky and the sectarians.

Dostoyevsky first considered the question of the sectarians' 'holy men' in his articles on Russian literature in Vremya in 1861. In the course of a discussion about literacy for the narod, Dostoyevsky remarks that literacy endows a person with great weight in the community: the narod consider the person to have added power; and the person himself feels superior and experiences the need to distinguish himself from his ignorant companions. The illustration Dostoyevsky gives is particularly relevant to the present discussion: 'Look at the so-called learned men [nachotchiki] among the sectarians, and see what an enormous and despotic influence they have over their co-religionists'.[84] This clearly constitutes an attack upon the respected holy men of the sects. Dostoyevsky proceeds to say that each society has an inner need to mark out at least one

person as unusual, 'to set him up before them as exceptional, outside the normal customs and rules; to acknowledge this person as extraordinary and to bow down before him'.[85] (The parallel between these words and those of the Grand Inquisitor about 'miracle, mystery and authority' almost twenty years later is striking). It is for this reason, he comments, that 'Ivan Yakovlevichs' appear. Again, the illustration Dostoyevsky gives is of particular interest to us, for Ivan Yakovlevich Koreysha, to whom he refers, was a *yurodivy* in Moscow who was a well-known figure in the eighteen-sixties, and to whose pronouncements great attention was paid.[86] Such figures were revered by the *narod*. Yet Dostoyevsky refuses to give the figure serious religious credence: both the *nachotchiki* and the 'Ivan Yakovlevichs' are accounted for not in religious terms, but in terms of the psychology of society.

This is merely consistent with Dostoyevsky's overall assessment of the *raskol* in *Vremya*, as we saw above. But even much later, at a stage when his own novels contain positive portrayals of elders and *yurodivye*, he does not offer any more sympathetic an explanation of the sectarian equivalents. Thus, when discussing the possibility that spiritism will spread among the *narod* in *Diary of a Writer*, he comments: 'The *narod* might begin passionately to believe in the new phenomena (after all, they believe in Ivan Filippovichs)'.[87] The name Ivan Filippovich would appear to be formed from the names of the two 'gods' of the *Khlysty*: Ivan Timofeyevich Suslov and Danilo Filippovich.[88] It also once more recalls the figure of Ivan Yakovlevich Koreysha. Dostoyevsky stops short of calling the *narod* gullible for

attaching importance to these figures, but this is what his words seem to imply. Pyotr Verkhovensky in The Devils expresses himself much more clearly in this respect, as he tries to persuade Stavrogin to take the role of 'Ivan Tsarevich' in his revolution. 'We'll put around a legend even better than that of the Skoptsy', he says. Stavrogin will have to remain in hiding, but he may show himself to one or two people, 'and it will get around: he's been seen, he's been seen! They saw Ivan Filippovich, God Sabaoth, too, saw him rise up above the people on a cloud in a chariot, "with their own eyes" they saw it.'[89] Pyotr Verkhovensky thus displays the same scepticism which we have seen in his creator.

The sectarians' attitude to the Bible was a further area of their spirituality which attracted Dostoyevsky's attention. Dostoyevsky greatly valued the Bible in his personal life, as we saw in Chapter One of our study. The importance he attached to it may be illustrated with reference to his notebooks: 'The Bible. That book is invincible. Even the children of our priests who write in our liberal journals won't shake that book.'[90] In a discussion of the part played by the consciousness of a common faith in the Russian contribution to the Eastern Question, we read: 'A common faith [yedinoveriye], that is, a shared belief that in the Gospels Christ said the last word about the development of mankind'.[91] While thus setting great store by the Bible, Dostoyevsky objected to the Bible itself becoming the centre of attention in Christianity. Further, he disliked the reading of the Bible being treated as an academic exercise: Leskov

remarks in his account of Dostoyevsky's encounters with the Radstockist Yuliya Zasetskaya that Dostoyevsky was contemptuous of Bible research.[92]

Dostoyevsky's own religious spokesmen are at home with the Scriptures. In Crime and Punishment, Sonya Marmeladova knows immediately where to find the passage about Lazarus which Raskolnikov wants to hear; and Sofya Matveyevna in The Devils has no difficulty in locating the account of Christ driving out the demons when requested to read it by Stepan Trofimovich.[93] This is not because these women have a dry academic familiarity with the Bible, but because it means a lot to them in their lives. In fact, together with prayer, it is what constitutes their Christian life, since neither of them is a regular member of the Church: Sonya because of her profession; and Sofya Matveyevna because of her travelling existence.[94] Those who request the women to read the Bible to them do so with a sense of urgency, as if they know that they are going to hear something which is of vital importance for them. Bishop Tikhon in The Devils has a similarly vital relationship with the Bible. He knows the letter to the Laodiceans which is requested by Stavrogin word-perfect.[95] And when he relates the passage, he feels its message with the whole of his being. For him the truth of the Bible reading is not a theological statement, but a living conviction. Dostoyevsky's characters do not turn to the Bible for clarification on points of dogma or the minutiae of Christian behaviour, but seem rather to relate to specific passages which for them contain the essence of the matter.

The Bible played an important role for many sectarian

groups. Where they differed from the official Church was in the way they interpreted the Bible. Heard refers to the 'free interpretation' which the raskol allows, and to 'the many explanations it permits of the symbols of the faith':

> It seeks constantly a hidden, allegorical signification, not only in the expressions used, but also in the events narrated by the sacred writers; for instance, the story of Lazarus has been explained as a parable, and not a miracle performed by the Saviour; Lazarus was the human soul, his death the state of sin; Mary and Martha were, one the body, the other the soul; the grave was the cares of life, the resurrection of Lazarus the conversion of the soul.[96]

Heard's reference to the raising of Lazarus leads naturally to a consideration of the way that event is intended to be understood in Crime and Punishment. What we find is a blend of the literal and the symbolic: the Bible story undoubtedly has a symbolic role in the context of the novel, pointing forward as it does to the 'resurrection' of Raskolnikov as a new man; but, as Sonya reads it, there is no doubt but that it is intended to be taken as a literally true story. We might also remind ourselves at this point that Sonya Marmeladova reads the Bible without reference to the Church: she thus exercises the same kind of freedom as the sectarians.[97] Once again, however, Dostoyevsky displays extreme caution and suspicion of sectarianism, and chooses to present their approach to the Bible in a negative manner. In the notebooks for A Raw Youth, for example, Makar Dolgoruky openly challenges the allegorical and metaphorical interpretation of the Bible which was common among sectarians:

> They interpret it allegorically and in a derivative manner (metaphorically), in a spiritual sense. And they thereby dumbfound ignorant people. Worrying about only one thing, how to get any kind of an interpretation out of it, even a stupid one, so long as it is their own.[98]

The sectarians are thus accused of manipulating the Bible for their own purposes. Although Dostoyevsky's own religious characters can be bold with the Scriptures, and although their creator himself invests specific Bible passages with symbolic meaning, that same freedom is denied the sectarians.

The scepticism and sarcasm which we have seen Dostoyevsky display when faced with the sectarians' attempts to forge their own spirituality, free from the authority of the Church, are clear evidence that he did not associate Russian sectarianism with the 'essential' Christianity which he seems to advocate elsewhere in his writings. He implies that, having once broken with the Orthodox Church, the sectarians have moved further from true Christianity, rather than closer to it. However much nationalism might enter into Dostoyevsky's religious thought, it would appear that the mere fact of being a Russian does not after all guarantee a correct conception of the image of Christ: if this were so, then the sectarians would presumably have been quite at liberty to dispense with external authority and to trust to their own inspiration, guided by that image. On the contrary, Dostoyevsky treats their spirituality with notably less respect than he treats mainstream Protestantism, which we have seen elicit caution, rather than sarcasm, from him. He is unhappy when he sees the sectarians exercise spiritual freedom and move away from the mainstream

of Christian belief and practice: he implies that to do such a thing is to set foot on a very slippery slope. Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov in The Brothers Karamazov perhaps surprisingly demonstrates a similarly cautious mentality when he challenges the monks for practising open confession and thereby going against the teachings of the Church Fathers: 'No, Fathers, if we follow you we'll end up with khlystovshchina'.[99]

Even in Russia, therefore, there would appear to be restrictions upon the spiritual freedom which is advocated in the 'Legend'. Dostoyevsky seems to be pointing towards some source of authority in religious matters. At this stage we might usefully recall his allegorical tale concerning the need of a 'container' for Christianity: did we not see that there was allegedly one 'correct' container, that which had evolved over the centuries, and which was reminiscent of Orthodoxy? Dostoyevsky's presentation of sectarianism confirms the impression given by the tale that there is a right way to do things in Christianity. And, contrary to what we might expect, the source of knowledge of this right way is said to be the Church. This, at least, is what Dostoyevsky suggests when talking of Lord Radstock: 'True, all these sectarian preachers always destroy, even if they don't intend to, the image of faith given by the Church, substituting for it their own [image of faith]'.[100] And a little later, after referring to Radstockism in the same breath as the Khlysty, Dostoyevsky comments:

> Of course, I am not scoffing when I mention these sects side by side with Lord Radstock, but he who has left the

> true Church and thought up his own, even to all appearances a most splendid one, will necessarily end up in the same way as these sects.[101]

Institutionalized religion is thus apparently reinstated by Dostoyevsky. It would appear that the image of Christ is not, after all, purely a birthright, but that some sort of vehicle is still needed in order that it can be conveyed to the hearts of the Russian people. By breaking with the Orthodox Church, the extreme sectarians have forfeited its help in this respect. The Old Believers, meanwhile, are apparently still in close enough contact with the Church to continue to enjoy the guarantee of knowledge of the right way. It is unlikely that this knowledge is acquired through correct ritual and frequent Church attendance: although the Old Believers are traditionally associated with such an approach to spirituality, we saw in the previous chapter that Dostoyevsky himself pays almost no attention to this aspect of their faith. Further, his own religious characters are notably deficient in this respect. We can only assume that correct knowledge is conveyed in rather less tangible a manner. As we now turn our attention to those forms of spirituality which Dostoyevsky seems positively to advocate, we will be concerned to see how exactly they satisfy the two apparently paradoxical tendencies we have identified in his religious thought: the rejection of institutionalized religion on the one hand; and the appeal to the authority of the Church on the other.

1. Peace, op. cit., 91-5 and passim.

2. Lord, op. cit., 66.

3. Sandoz, op. cit., 32.

4. Ibid., 228.

5. PSS, XX, 36.

6. PSS, V, 71-2. No further detailed references will be given.

7. Luke 11: 9; Rev. 3: 20.

8. See Chapter Four, 204-5 and Chapter Five, 288-9, above.

9. DP, 1877, 13 (1877 Jan. I, 2).

10. PSS, XXI, 58.

11. Ibid., 58; 59.

12. DP, 1877, 581 (1881 Jan. I, 4).

13. Pis'ma, II, 80. Two years earlier, in 1866, Dostoyevsky had responded enthusiastically to Maykov's The Wanderer (Strannik), which was about a group of Beguny: 'This is the first time in our literature that a theme from the world of the sectarians has been dealt with. How novel it is, and how effective! And what force of poetry!' (Pis'ma, I, 447).

14. For further details of the Skoptsy, see Conybeare, op. cit., 363-70. For further details of the Khlysty, see ibid., 339-61.

15. PSS, VI, 347.

16. Pis'ma, I, 302. See also Pis'ma, II, 44 where Dostoyevsky reveals that what he most fears about The Idiot is that it will be mediocre: 'Thirty printed sheets of mediocrity is an unpardonable thing'.

17. See PSS, XXI, 35.

18. PSS, VIII, 12.

19. Ibid., 144-5.

20. PSS, IX, 128.

21. Pis'ma, II, 263.

22. PSS, VIII, 178-9; 180.

23. PSS, XI, 113.

24. PSS, IX, 122.

25. See Introduction, 6-7, above; and Miller & Strakhov, op. cit., 87.

26. PSS, XIV, 115; 116; PSS, XV, 61.

27. PSS, XIV, 117.

28. Ibid., 122.

29. See Chapter Seven, 392, above.

30. PSS, VI, 348.

31. PSS, XXI, 36.

32. See Nadejda Gorodetzky, The Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought (London, 1938).

33. PSS, XIV, 256.

34. These details and the tale of the 'pound of nuts' which follows may be found in PSS, XV, 103-4 and 105-7. No further detailed reference will be given. Details of the Herrnhüter and Moravian Brethren may be found in PSS, XV, 597.

35. Terras suggests that Doctor Herzenstube's story of how he taught Dmitry these words offers a key to much of the biblical symbolism in The Brothers Karamazov: see Terras, op. cit., 118.

36. PSS, XIV, 318-9. The sources for the legend of the onion are discussed in R. Pletnev,'La Légende Chrétienne dans L'oeuvre de Dostoïevsky', Slavic and East European Studies, VI, Pt. 3-4, 1961 (Montreal) (131-57), 153-5.

37. DP, 1877, 118-24 (1877 March II, 1; 2).

38. DP, 1877, 124 (1877 March II, 2).

39. Ibid.

40. See Chapter Two, 71-7, above.

41. See fn. 10, above.

42. PSS, VI, 347.

43. PSS, XXIV, 160.

44. PSS, XXI, 58.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., 59.

47. The article itself appeared in the April 1876 issue of Diary of a Writer: the section which concerns us may be found in PSS, XXII, 113-14. The notes for the section in question appear in PSS, XXIV, 191-2.

48. PSS, XXIV, 192.

49. DP, 1877, 90 (1877 March I, 2).

50. Ibid.

51. DP, 1877, 19 (1877 Jan. I, 3).

52. DP, 1877, 232 (1877 May/June IV, 1).

53. Ibid.

54. DP, 1877, 231 (1877 May/June IV, 1).

55. DP, 1877, 530 (1880 Aug. III, 1).

56. Ibid.

57. See, e.g., DP, 1877, 531 (1880 Aug. III, 1).

58. See Chapter Six, 334, above.

59. DP, 1877, 531 (1880 Aug. III, 1).

60. For details of Radstockism, see E. Heier, Religious Schism in the Russian Aristocracy 1860-1900. Radstockism and Pashkovism (The Hague, 1970).

61. DP, 1877, 15 (1877 Jan. I, 2).

62. PSS, XXII, 99.

63. Heier, op. cit., 60.

64. See Chapter Six, fn. 50, above.

65. PSS, XXII, 80.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 98.

68. Miliukov, op. cit., 149.

69. M. V. Jones, 'Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Leskov and redstokizm', Journal of Russian Studies, XXIII, 1972 (3-20), 6-7. (Hereafter: Jones, 'Redstokizm'.)

70. PSS, XXI, 58.

71. Ibid., 59.

72. PSS, XVI, 233.

73. PSS, XXIII, 46.

74. PSS, XXIV, 225.

75. See Chapter Five, 275-7, above.

76. DP, 1877, 14 (1877 Jan. I, 2).

77. DP, 1877, 15 (1877 Jan. I, 2).

78. PSS, XXIV, 205. 'Crockery' ('posuda'): an alternative term used by Dostoyevsky to express the concept 'cups and spoons'.

79. PSS, XXI, 59.

80. PSS, XXII, 99.

81. See PSS, XXIV, 177.

82. Ibid.

83. PSS, XIV, 270-1; 327-8.

84. PSS, XVIII, 64.

85. Ibid.

86. For further details of Koreysha, see PSS, XII, 234-5.

87. PSS, XXII, 36.

88. See ibid., 338-9.

89. PSS, X, 326.

90. PSS, XXIV, 125.

91. Ibid., 253.

92. Jones, 'Redstokizm', 7.

93. PSS, VI, 249. PSS, X, 498.

94. This aspect of the women's spirituality will be examined in more detail in the following chapter.

95. PSS, XI, 11.

96. Heard, op. cit., 189-90.

97. Onasch rather surprisingly equates Sonya's reading of the Bible with Intellektualismus: see Onasch, Der verschwiegene Christus, 118.

98. PSS, XVI, 137.

99. PSS, XIV, 82.

100. PSS, XXII, 98.

101. Ibid., 99.

CHAPTER NINE

DOSTOYEVSKY'S ALTERNATIVE HIERARCHY: YURODIVYE AND STRANNIKI

In Chapters Seven and Eight we examined Dostoyevsky's response to those alternative approaches to religion which had developed in Russia as a result of conscious efforts to find a corrective to the official Russian Orthodox Church. We discovered that while Dostoyevsky was favourably disposed to Old Belief, he responded negatively to many features of more extreme sectarianism, even though the spirituality of his own religious characters had not infrequently seemed to point in precisely that direction. Further, despite his own call for 'Churchless' Christianity, we saw him appeal to a central authority in spiritual matters, and imply that the Church did indeed have a role to play, even if the precise nature of the individual's relationship to the Church was not clearly defined by him. In the present chapter, we will be looking at two specific religious tendencies which seem to have exercised an appeal for Dostoyevsky, since they are frequently displayed by his positive religious characters: yurodstvo, folly for Christ's sake; and stranstvovaniye, holy wandering. We will be particularly concerned to see how Dostoyevsky's yurodivye and stranniki stand in relation to the Russian Orthodox Church, and to what extent they exercise freedom in spiritual matters. Will they show evidence of acknowledging and needing the Church as a central authority; or will they be able to cope with 'Churchless' Christianity?

The concept of holy folly is common to many different

cultures and religions.[1] It is with St. Paul that the specifically Christian tradition is usually associated, although the strange and symbolic actions of some of the Old Testament prophets may also be regarded as a religious form of folly. Holy folly is not mere eccentricity and madness, but is a vocation and gift from God. Holy fools are those who know the truth in a society which mocks or ignores it. The wisdom they possess does not conform to earthly standards of wisdom, but is divine in origin. Their behaviour is similarly at odds with what is considered normal: they have little concern for self, and frequently behave in a manner which shocks those around. Such behaviour is inspired by the fools' identification with the humiliation and self-offering of Christ: indeed, the figure of Christ is central to them. Like children, holy fools put their trust completely in God to provide and care for them: childlike also is their purity and simplicity of heart.

Historically, holy folly has been especially revered in Eastern Orthodoxy, where it is recognized as a true form of sanctity. Saward identifies two main types of holy folly in the Orthodox East: holy idiocy and folly for Christ's sake. The first grew out of the conviction that the wisdom of simple and uneducated men was superior to that of the world:

> The holy idiot is either an uneducated rustic endowed with great spiritual gifts, or an educated monk who transcends his learning in order to arrive at evangelical and divine wisdom. There is, however, nothing necessarily foolish about his behaviour. The fool for Christ's sake, by contrast, is one who is recognized not only by the world but also by his fellow Christians as foolish - a foolishness which conceals his spirituality.[2]

Within Eastern Orthodoxy, the Russian Orthodox Church in particular was enthusiastic in maintaining the tradition of holy folly: thirty-six Russian holy fools were canonized, as compared with six Greek. The sixteenth century in Russia was particularly rich in yurodivye, of whom the most renowned was St. Basil the Blessed. From the seventeenth century onwards, holy folly became more suspect to the Church, and there were fewer canonizations. Yurodivye were not schismatics, however: at all times they were faithful members of the Church, and they were ultimately recognized as such by the Church. This did not prevent them from criticizing various aspects of official Orthodoxy. Their fundamental concern was that the heavenly should not be subordinated to the earthly. Further, they felt 'an intuitive aversion to the temptation of every false or partial or nominal "embodiment" of Christianity'.[3] They therefore came out strongly against 'respectable' Churchgoers, who substituted hypocritical piety for sincere Christianity; and they openly opposed the Church at those times when it associated itself too closely with the state and thereby compromised its own nature and interests. The yurodivye themselves did not attend Church regularly or openly, although they might, for example, sleep in church porches. Instead, their times of prayer were held in a hidden, solitary place, usually at night.

Dostoyevsky's major novels contain several characters who resemble the traditional yurodivy figure to a greater or lesser degree. First, there are 'fully-fledged' yurodivye, such as Semyon Yakovlevich in The Devils: although of great intrinsic interest, they tend to play a secondary role in the

context of the novels themselves. In addition, there are those central characters who possess yurodivy traits, yet who cannot be fully explained in terms of yurodstvo: Prince Myshkin and Alyosha Karamazov. Part of our task in this chapter will be to identify precisely which aspects of holy folly Dostoyevsky appropriates for his major religious characters, and to what effect. Apart from this distinction between 'full' and 'partial' yurodivye, one may also observe a division according to sex: as will be seen below, Dostoyevsky places particular emphasis upon specifically feminine yurodstvo; and all of his female yurodivye share characteristics which suggest that concepts other than holy folly alone contributed to their creation.

We will begin by looking at a 'fully-fledged' yurodivy: Semyon Yakovlevich in The Devils. Semyon Yakovlevich is based upon the real-life yurodivy Ivan Yakovlevich Koreysha, to whom we referred in the previous chapter.[4] Pletnev suggests that Dostoyevsky's acquaintance with the figure was made through the writings of the monk Parfyony: An Account of the Wandering and Journeying around Russia, Moldavia, Turkey and the Holy Land of the monk Parfyony of the Holy Mount of Athos was one of Dostoyevsky's favourite books, and he had it with him during his European exile, at the period when he was planning and writing The Devils.[5] Parfyony's book contains an account of his own visit to Koreysha, and, as will be seen below, there is evidence to suggest that this account influenced the portrayal of Semyon Yakovlevich.

Altman proposes an alternative source for Dostoyevsky's

knowledge of Koreysha: articles written by Ivan Gavrilovich Pryzhov, who had been a member of the Nechayev circle, and who was well-known in the eighteen-sixties for his research into yurodivye and klikushi ('shriekers').[6] Dostoyevsky was personally acquainted with Pryzhov, whose father had been a doctor in the same Moscow hospital as his own father. Pryzhov himself has been identified by Altman as a prototype for Tolkachenko in The Devils. Among Pryzhov's articles was 'The false prophet Ivan Yakovlevich', which appeared in Novoye vremya in 1860, and was subsequently published separately, under the title The Life of Ivan Yakovlevich, the Well-known Moscow Prophet. It seems likely that Dostoyevsky, an avid reader of the Russian press, would have been familiar with this and other articles by Pryzhov, and reference to Pryzhov's writings will be made where possible in the pages which follow.

Dostoyevsky's Semyon Yakovlevich is essentially a comic figure. Indeed, the visit of Pyotr Verkhovensky's group to their local holy man is one of the few lighthearted episodes in The Devils - although it also has a serious side, since it is used to illustrate the breakdown of moral standards in the town, where suicide and religion have come to be regarded as matters of light entertainment. The narrator introduces Semyon Yakovlevich in a respectful manner, using the phrase traditionally used of holy men, 'prozhival na pokoye'[7] ('lived in retirement'). This same phrase has earlier been used of Bishop Tikhon by Shatov.[8] In Semyon Yakovlevich's case, however, the narrator is inspired to add to the original phrase the words 'in comfort and in clover',

thereby revealing a level of material bliss which might be considered inappropriate for such a 'blessed' man. Physically, Semyon Yakovlevich is suspect, endowed with many features which the reader of Dostoyevsky recognizes as negative: he is 'a podgy man with a yellowish complexion'; he has 'greasy hair' and a 'self-confident /solidny/, sleepy expression'. Further, he lives at the house of a merchant, a class not greatly loved by Dostoyevsky.

Dostoyevsky makes no attempt to disguise the bizarre nature of Semyon Yakovlevich, in whose spirituality prominence is given to jacket potatoes and cups of tea of varying degrees of sweetness: 'one lump or two' takes on an entirely new dimension. (Semyon Yakovlevich's liking for tea reminds the reader of Kirillov, who also spends many hours drinking tea.) The yurodivy's dispensation of grace is apparently arbitrary, since he shows no particular bias to the poor or the sincere. In the context of yurodstvo this is not necessarily a bad thing: a similar arbitrariness is practised by the sympathetically portrayed Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya in The Brothers Karamazov, who is as likely to give the biscuits she receives to the richest lady in town as to a needy child.[9] It may nevertheless be noted that Dostoyevsky seems deliberately to emphasize the illogical dimension of Semyon Yakovlevich's behaviour, as if he wanted to arouse the reader's suspicions. On one occasion, for example, he has Semyon Yakovlevich act in an illogical and arbitrary manner even though the corresponding real-life incident ended in an entirely reasonable way. The incident concerns the fate of a gold coin left by a landowner beating a hasty retreat from the yurodivy's presence. Parfyony

relates that he himself was given the coin by Ivan Yakovlevich to help him on his journey, whereas Dostoyevsky's Semyon Yakovlevich inexplicably gives it to a rich merchant.[10]

On the other hand, Semyon Yakovlevich occasionally shows great discernment in his treatment of visitors. That he once ordered Lyamshin to be literally swept from his presence in a hail of jacket potatoes seems remarkably appropriate; and he further grows in the reader's estimation after his timely and forceful use of the allegedly unrepeatable expletive with which Pyotr Verkhovensky's group is driven away. There is also evidence that Semyon Yakovlevich can discern and reward sincerity in a person when he so desires: he singles out the long-suffering Mavriky Nikolayevich for his idiosyncratic blessing, while continuing to treat the latter's companions with the contempt they deserve.

During his comic portrayal of Semyon Yakovlevich Dostoyevsky takes the opportunity to comment upon the attitude towards <u>yurodstvo</u> of the Church and the <u>narod</u>. The Church's response is embodied in the 'rather too stout' monk who attends Semyon Yakovlevich with a collecting bowl, in order to gather the visitors' offerings, which usually go to the local monastery. The monk's attitude is one of cautious and mercenary approval: the <u>yurodivy</u> is a useful source of income for the Church, but he is inclined to take things too far, as when he endows one particular widow with four whole blocks of sugar. The monk wishes that such religious inspiration could be held in check and not exceed what is reasonable: he thereby shows little understanding of the nature of <u>yurodstvo</u>. Semyon Yakovlevich is notably lacking in some of the more

attractive qualities of the traditional yurodivy, such as humility and childlike simplicity. This is clearly of secondary importance for the Church, however, concerned only that he should continue to be a financial asset. As will be seen below, that same Church shows rather less inclination to accept other yurodivye who may be more sincere, but who are of less benefit financially. The narod's attachment to their local prophet is shown to be complete. They interpret his every word and deed in terms of religious inspiration, as may be illustrated by their response to the aforementioned widow's mountain of sugar: '"Good Lord, good Lord", sighed the narod, making the sign of the cross, "this is clearly a prophecy"'. Dostoyevsky is evidently not beyond gently poking fun at the narod's spirituality on occasions. Since Semyon Yakovlevich is essentially a comic figure, it would perhaps be misleading to read too much into him. The way he is presented nevertheless suggests that Dostoyevsky was not devoid of cynicism when he came across those who claimed to have been chosen by God for a life of holy folly. Semyon Yakovlevich is a timely reminder that a policy of complete spiritual freedom opens the way to individual whim.

Another character who displays several yurodivy tendencies is Father Ferapont, who resides in the monastery in The Brothers Karamazov. Ferapont ostensibly shows little concern for self, and he leads a life of great asceticism, eating nothing but bread and water. In the manner of the 'holy idiots' referred to earlier, he consciously rejects the learning of the other monks: 'I came here knowing little, and what I did know I have forgotten. God has protected me, his little one,

from your great wisdom.'[11] He challenges the hierarchy of the monastery for being tempted by the comforts of the world and abandoning their monastic vocation. In all these respects, Ferapont is a true yurodivy, defending the spiritual principle. Yet there are strong hints that all is not as it seems, and that he has deliberately fostered his yurodstvo in order to exploit the esteem in which yurodivye generally are held for his own purposes. That his folly is not entirely divine in origin is suggested above all by the cynicism with which the narrator refers to him: we read that Ferapont 'behaved in the manner of a yurodivy' and 'at last managed' to get permission to move to the isolated cell of a former great ascetic, 'ostensibly' to look after the many icons contained in it.[12] When Ferapont challenges Father Paisy after Zosima's death, he does so 'yurodstvuya', that is, 'putting on his yurodivy act'.[13] Further, although Ferapont may eat very little, he is not as indifferent to the requirements of the body as initially appears: he actually pays great attention to food, questioning the Obdorsky monk closely about the fasts he keeps, criticizing Zosima for eating sweets and other delicacies, and taking great pride in his own frugal habits. It might also be noted that, for a man allegedly unconcerned about his personal well-being, Ferapont manages to remain remarkably healthy. Semyon Yakovlevich too apparently enjoys good health, whereas both Bishop Tikhon and Zosima suffer from ill-health.

Ferapont's attitude to others enjoying life also casts doubt upon the sincerity of his yurodivy credentials. Although

traditional yurodivye feared earthly comforts, they did not try to tear men away from the fulness of life. Ferapont, however, lacks such a generous spirit, and he scorns others for not following the same harsh regime as himself. In fact, for all his fasting, Ferapont is not an ascetic in the true sense of the word: he exercises his will more than any of the other monks in the monastery, since he deliberately uses his ascetic prowess to obtain exemption from the normal monastic duties. As the narrator comments: 'To tell the truth, they had to grant him this really. Because it was somehow shameful to insist that such a great ascetic . . . be burdened with the usual rules [ustav], if he himself didn't want to obey them.'[14] Ferapont thus does not possess the freedom from the self which is the mark of true asceticism, and which is recognized as such by Dostoyevsky's major religious characters.

Finally, and perhaps most conclusive in the exposure of this self-appointed yurodivy, Ferapont's spirituality is far from Christocentric. On the contrary, he seems to spend most of his time in the company of devils, with whom he is obsessed. Although he claims to be in direct communication with the Holy Ghost (and ventures to distinguish between the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit), he fears Christ, and resists His approaches. As he tells the Obdorsky monk, he is terrified lest Christ snatch him up and take him into heaven alive.[15] For a yurodivy, Ferapont thus demonstrates a surprising attachment to this world. And his relationship with Christ contrasts markedly with that of Alyosha Karamazov or of Zosima, as portrayed in the chapter 'Cana of Galilee'.

There is, then, little, if anything, which Dostoyevsky recommends in Semyon Yakovlevich or Ferapont. Although they both have excellent yurodivy credentials in some respects, they lack that grounding in, and identification with, Christ which we have specifically associated with yurodstvo. The spiritual freedom which they enjoy as holy fools has not, apparently, brought them any closer to true Christianity: on the basis of these two alone, it would be difficult to say why yurodstvo appealed to Dostoyevsky. As we now proceed to Dostoyevsky's female yurodivye, we will discover a different emphasis, and it will become rather more apparent why yurodstvo held an attraction for him. There are several females with yurodivy traits in Dostoyevsky's writings: Sonya Marmeladova and her friend Yelizaveta in Crime and Punishment; Marya Lebyadkina in The Devils; and Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya in The Brothers Karamazov. Three other women characters may also be discussed in connection with Dostoyevsky's presentation of female yurodstvo: Raskolnikov's former fiancée; 'Khromonozhka', the lame girl referred to in several notebook entries dating from the period 1867-1870; and Alyosha Karamazov's mother.

A feature of all Dostoyevsky's female yurodivye is that they are portrayed positively: there is no evidence of guile or dissemblance in them, and their yurodstvo is subjected to doubt neither by Dostoyevsky himself nor by the characters in the novels. The women appear to have been born yurodivye: it has not been a conscious decision on their part, but is a spontaneous reflection of their innermost nature. Unlike both Semyon Yakovlevich and Ferapont, the women

do not take up a public stance as yurodivye in relation to other people: they do not attempt to teach, nor do they make strange utterances. If they are referred to as yurodivye, it is by other people, and the motivation may well be malicious, as when Raskolnikov, in the middle of taunting Sonya Marmeladova about her likely fate, suddenly declares to himself with spiteful delight: 'She's a yurodivaya, a yurodivaya!'[16]

For the purposes of the present study we might usefully compare the women yurodivye's relationship to the official Church with that of their male counterparts. None of the women is adopted by the Church or has a following among Church people in the way that Semyon Yakovlevich and Ferapont do. In fact, it is particularly with regard to the women yurodivye that the Church - together with high society - is portrayed by Dostoyevsky as displaying scepticism about such charismatic gifts. Some of the landowners in Skoto-prigonevsk, for example, claim that Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya's behaviour is governed more by pride than anything else; and the yurodivaya in the convent where Marya Lebyadkina once resided is similarly rebuked by the Mother Superior there: 'It's just stubbornness, it's all put on'.[17] At the same time, the female yurodivye seem to possess a certain quality which communicates itself directly to the narod, and which leads the narod to adopt them. Sonya Marmeladova is loved by the convicts in Siberia; and Marya Lebyadkina makes an immediate impression upon the cab driver who takes her to the Cathedral, so that he thinks to himself: 'It would be sinful to offend someone like you'.[18] Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya

is adopted by the whole neighbourhood, rich and poor, and can wander around in safety: when she is raped, it is tantamount to an act of sacrilege. There is no suggestion by Dostoyevsky that the narod are gullible for showing such devotion to the female yurodivye: rather, the women's acceptance by the common people seems to vouch for the yurodivye's sincerity, and is a token of recognition of their spiritual gifts.

Although effectively rejected by the official Church, the women do not, with the possible exception of Marya Lebyadkina, consciously set themselves up in opposition to it: they seem to assume that they belong. It is nevertheless the case that their spiritual lives are to a great extent independent of the Church and do not follow the pattern of normal Church membership. Indeed, the spirituality of the women tends to be hidden from those around: in terms of the distinction between 'holy idiots' and 'fools for Christ's sake', they thus resemble the latter. Sonya Marmeladova and Yelizaveta rarely go to church, but they meet secretly at night to read the Bible.[19] Of the spiritual life of Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya, we learn only that she too 'rarely went to church', but the fact that she regularly sleeps in church porches seems to indicate some sort of relationship to the Church, and perhaps symbolizes the nights traditionally spent in prayer by yurodivye.[20] The women yurodivye are not consciously religious. They rarely, for example, talk about Christ: but they suffer and are humiliated after the manner of Christ like traditional holy fools, and unlike their male

counterparts. Their whole lives are thus an identification with Christ. Since the women tend to be poor and to belong to the lower social classes, suffering and humiliation are a natural part of daily living for them. But suffering is also inflicted upon them by others: with the sole exception of Sonya Marmeladova, all of Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye figures perish by one means or another, often violently.

The women possess the child-like qualities which are traditionally associated with yurodstvo, and which are conspicuously absent in the male representatives we have so far examined. Ferapont's reference to himself as one of God's 'little ones' is not really consistent with his overall performance; whereas when Yelizaveta in Crime and Punishment is referred to as 'a little child', the designation seems entirely appropriate, even though we know that she is a tall, clumsy creature.[21] Like children too, the women are defenceless: the most memorable example of this occurs when Yelizaveta makes no attempt to fend off Raskol'nikov's axe, as if the thought does not even enter her head.[22] Sonya Marmeladova is actually driven to despair when she realizes the extent of her own vulnerability.[23] Finally, in traditional yurodivy style the women yurodivye pay little attention to their physical needs. Marya Lebyadkina's lack of concern for self in this respect is symbolized by the uneaten bread roll which lies on her table, and by the scanty dress in which she goes to the Cathedral, even though the weather is cold.[24] Although Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya regularly receives gifts of both food and warm clothing, she

immediately gives them away and continues as before.[25] Overall, therefore, it would appear that Dostoyevsky associated genuine yurodstvo particularly with women.

By including so many yurodivye among his religious representatives, Dostoyevsky both demonstrates essentially Orthodox sensibilities and reveals a tendency to look to one side of the official Church in order to locate what he appears to have regarded as direct and genuine spirituality. He is also, of course, consistent with his commitment to Christianity which exists independent of a formal ecclesiastical structure. Yet, by means of the emphasis he places upon women yurodivye, Dostoyevsky puts his own colouring upon this particular form of Orthodox spirituality: contrary to the impression one might receive from Dostoyevsky's novels, genuine yurodstvo has never been the exclusive domain of women, far from that. Further, if one looks closely at Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye, one perceives certain recurring features which do not strictly belong to traditional yurodstvo, and which thus signal a further departure from Orthodoxy. An analysis of these features leads one to conclude that the writer's conception of yurodstvo was intimately associated with specific convictions he appears to have held about women.

First, Dostoyevsky seems to have felt that suffering and tragedy are inherent in womanhood. His women yurodivye suffer in three main ways. Frequently they are lame: their lameness is both a form of suffering in itself and a symbol of the overall suffering they endure. The image of lameness seems to have occupied Dostoyevsky's mind particularly during

the years 1867-1870: references to 'Khromonozhka' ('the lame girl') may be found not only in the notebooks to The Devils, but also in several other planned pieces of writing which date from this period.[26] The association between lameness and yurodstvo is hinted at before this, however, in the description of Raskol'nikov's former fiancée in Crime and Punishment. The girl resembles Dostoyevsky's later women yurodivye. Her religious inclinations are revealed when Raskol'nikov says that she 'liked to give alms to beggars, and dreamed about going into a convent all the time, and once . . . burst into tears when she began to tell me about it'.[27] The theme of lameness arises when, remarking that the girl was an invalid, Raskol'nikov continues: 'If she'd been lame or hunchbacked, I think I would have loved her even more'.[28] The most memorable of Dostoyevsky's yurodivye to suffer from lameness is, of course, Mar'ya Lebyadkina.

A further form of suffering which the women endure is beating, usually at the hands of men. Mar'ya Lebyadkina is beaten by her brother. Alyosha Karamazov's mother is beaten by Fyodor Pavlovich. Yelizaveta in Crime and Punishment is beaten by her elder sister, the pawnbroker: it is significant that the sister has an aggressive and forceful personality, features traditionally associated with the masculine temperament. The most usual form of suffering which Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye undergo, however, is specifically sexual in origin. In almost all of the women, their sexuality and their ability to conceive and bear children is emphasized. The most peaceful example of this is Yelizaveta in Crime and Punishment who, we learn, is continually pregnant.[29]

In this particular case there is no suggestion of violence or suffering, but usually the women's sexuality is a source of extreme suffering. This may occur in the natural course of childbearing: Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya dies while giving birth; and Alyosha Karamazov's mother becomes a klikusha after a difficult labour. Klikushi demonstrate in a particularly vivid way the connection between a woman's fertility and ability to bear children and suffering. Dostoyevsky's interest in klikushi is illustrated in The Brothers Karamazov, where the narrator gives the following explanation of the phenomenon:

> It was a terrible illness which afflicted women, mostly in Russia it would seem, and which bore witness to the harsh existence of our village women; an illness which was brought about by exhausting work too soon after a difficult, abnormal labour without medical help; it was also brought about by the hopeless misery, beatings and so on which some women just can't cope with like other women.[30]

Just as yurodstvo is received cynically by some people, so the klikushi, we read, are accused by some of deliberately behaving in this manner to avoid work. Dostoyevsky, however, casts no doubts upon their sincerity.

In order best to assess the significance of Dostoyevsky's presentation of klikushi, we might usefully turn to Pryzhov's article 'Russian klikushi', which appeared in Vestnik Yevropy in 1868 and which, for reasons outlined earlier, Dostoyevsky might reasonably be expected to have read.[31] Pryzhov, who gives a detailed account of the history of klikushi in Russia, is sympathetic to those afflicted by the illness. He himself is inclined to explain the

phenomenon in terms of the pitiful socio-economic position of the peasantry in general, and of the woman peasants in particular, and he draws attention to various sufferings common to women: the requirement that they be completely subservient to their husbands; their lack of any rights before the law; the physical abuse to which they are subjected. He concludes his article by declaring that there is only one way to prevent women from becoming klikushi: 'by raising the standard of living of the narod, which has fallen so much'.[32] It will be noted that the explanation of klikushi given by Dostoyevsky's narrator in The Brothers Karamazov is very similar to Pryzhov's, although Pryzhov does not give childbearing the same prominence.

One particular aspect of Pryzhov's account which would undoubtedly have appealed to Dostoyevsky concerns the fact that klikushi were exclusive to the narod. Pryzhov denies that this is because the women of the narod are coarse or perverted in any way, as some might suggest: rather, he claims that they become klikushi because they are 'capable of experiencing moral sufferings in a very profound way', whereas other women are less sensitive and lack this ability.[33] Pryzhov does not, however, endow klikushi with religious significance, and in this he differs from Dostoyevsky, for whom the women seem to have an air of sanctity in much the same way as female yurodivye. Pryzhov's article is particularly valuable for its revelations concerning the attitude of the official Russian Orthodox Church towards klikushi. They were not really welcomed by the Church, which issued various proclamations warning the clergy to keep a

careful watch over their congregations and to deal with any klikushi who might appear. The Church's hostility seems to have been particularly strong in the eighteenth century, but it continued into the nineteenth century. By not only showing sympathy for klikushi, but by also endowing them with religious significance, Dostoyevsky is thus effectively acting in opposition to the Church, and pushing the definition of what is strictly 'Christian' beyond what was allowed by official Orthodoxy.

The sexual suffering endured by Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye is not always 'natural' in the way that the suffering which accompanies or follows childbearing may be considered natural: it is not infrequently the result of deliberate and violent exploitation of their sexuality. Rape is a fate shared by several of Dostoyevsky's yurodivye. Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya, for example, suffers at the hands of Fyodor Karamazov; and there is a suggestion that the relationship between Alyosha's mother and Fyodor Karamazov was violent too. In addition, although it is nowhere explicitly stated, and although Stavrogin himself claims that Marya Lebyadkina is a virgin, the possibility that the latter was raped by him is hinted at by one particular feature of the woman's appearance: her 'fine, dark hair, gathered up into a bun the size of the little fist of a two-year-old child'.[34] This image is evocative of the angry little fist raised against Stavrogin after what appears to have been his violation of little Matryona, as described in 'At Tikhon's'.[35] There is, of course, nothing unusual in associating yurodstvo with suffering: we have seen that suffering is characteristic of

yurodivye. However, there is no necessary link between yurodstvo and the type of suffering which is a consequence of a woman's sexuality, despite Dostoyevsky's implication to this effect.

The second major feature common to Dostoyevsky's female yurodivye, but not derived from traditional yurodstvo, is the relationship they tend to bear to Mother Earth. Berdyayev, for whom Dostoyevsky's novels are concerned primarily with the fate of men, rather than women, plays down this theme:

> One does not find the cult of the eternal feminine in Dostoyevsky. His special relationship to Mother Earth [mat syraya zemlya] and to the Mother of God is not at all reflected in his feminine characters or in his depiction of love. Only in the depiction of Khromonozhka [the lame girl - Marya Lebyadkina] is something of it visible. But even that is usually exaggerated.[36]

For Ivanov, by contrast, Dostoyevsky's attraction to the myth of Mother Earth is reflected in several of his female characters, and Marya Lebyadkina is prominent in this respect: she is 'the voice of Mother Earth', and she is awaiting 'the heavenly Bridegroom'.[37]

According to the myth of Mother Earth, the people (in the sense of narod) are conceived of as a personality, in which two principles may be distinguished. 'One is feminine and pertaining to the soul; the other is masculine and pertaining to the spirit. The first has its roots in the universal Mother, the living Earth, as a mystical entity': the second is the people's guide, and it determines whether they will be for God or against Him.[38] Some of those features

of Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye which we have interpreted on the level of the suffering inherent in womanhood may be interpreted in terms of Mother Earth: Ivanov writes, for example, that in The Devils Dostoyevsky

> tried to show how the eternally-feminine principle in the Russian soul has to suffer violence and oppression at the hands of those Daemons who in the people contend against Christ for the mastery of the masculine principle in the people's consciousness.[39]

This, then, would account for the suffering of women at the hands of men to which we drew attention above. Dostoyevsky's major representative of Mother Earth is Marya Lebyadkina. Her association with the myth comes to light when she recalls the time she has spent in a convent. We are soon made aware that she does not fit very easily into this conventional ecclesiastical setting: she has apparently quite independently come to some radical conclusions about spiritual matters. Thus she avenges the convent's hierarchy for its uncharitable treatment of the resident yurodivaya, Blessed Yelizaveta, by declaring; 'I think that God and nature are one and the same'.[40] She subsequently does not hesitate to tell a visiting monk from Mount Athos that she has understood not a thing of the lesson of theology which he has delivered to her, and she rudely asks him to stop bothering her. The specific teaching of Mother Earth, and the association between the Earth and the Mother of God, is imparted to her by a nun who is doing penance in the convent for uttering prophecies. When asked by the nun who she thinks the Mother of God is, Marya Lebyadkina replies that she is the great mother, the hope of mankind. The nun develops this idea:

> The Mother of God is the great mother earth /mat syraya zemlya/, and there is great joy in that for mankind. And every earthly grief and every earthly fear is joy for us; and if you water the earth with your tears . . . then you will immediately be joyful about everything.[41]

Dostoyevsky apparently has no qualms about introducing this essentially heretical teaching into his religious thought. He does not try to pretend that it is a mainstream doctrine, making no attempt to hide the fact that the source of the teaching, the nun, is someone who has been rebuked by the Church, and who thus stands in opposition to that Church. Through being associated with this essentially heretical, pagan teaching, Marya Lebyadkina is distinguished from the normal tradition of yurodstvo since, as we mentioned earlier, yurodivye were not schismatics or heretics, but faithful members of the Church. Marya Lebyadkina, however, derives no spiritual inspiration from the official hierarchy of the convent, and shows no inclination to return there when the subject is broached by Stavrogin.[42] The convent is not connected in her mind with genuine spirituality, but means only solitude to her. In any event, she has her own 'cell', as she makes clear in the little song she sings to Shatov.[43]

Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya is another who has a close relationship with the earth, even though it is not expressed directly in terms of the myth. The narrator tells us, for example, that her hair was always matted with mud, 'for she always slept on the ground in the mud'; and when Fyodor Karamazov and his companions come across her sleeping, she is again found on the ground, 'among the nettles and the burdocks'.[44] Even Sonya Marmeladova, whose Bible-reading might encourage

one to see her as being essentially Protestant in inspiration, tells Raskol'nikov to kiss the ground as a penance for his crime: when he does so, significantly, he is crying.[45]

Dostoyevsky's <u>yurodivye</u> are also associated with the Virgin Mary. Svidrigaylov in <u>Crime and Punishment</u> establishes a link between <u>yurodivye</u> and the Mother of God when talking to Raskol'nikov about his sixteen-year-old fiancée: '"You know, she's got a face like Raphael's Madonna. The Sistine Madonna has a really unworldly face, the face of a sorrowful <u>yurodivaya</u>, haven't you noticed?"'[46] In some cases, we are encouraged to associate the <u>yurodivye</u> with the phenomenon of immaculate conception: Marya Lebyadkina, for example, claims that she has had a child, yet Stavrogin, as mentioned above, is insistent that she is a virgin.[47] (It may be noted that 'Marya' is the Russian version of 'Mary'.)[48] The idea of immaculate conception may also be loosely related to Sonya Marmeladova and Yelizaveta in <u>Crime and Punishment</u>, both of whom retain a pure and virginal quality despite their close associations with sexuality: Yelizaveta as someone who is continually pregnant; and Sonya as a prostitute. This particular aspect of the women <u>yurodivye</u> could also, however, be explained in terms of <u>apatheia</u>, the innate protection traditionally enjoyed by <u>yurodivye</u> from being in any way harmed or tempted by the dangerous or disreputable circumstances in which they may find themselves.[49] Finally, Alyosha Karamazov's <u>klikusha</u> mother is associated with the Virgin Mary through her religious devotions: Fyodor Karamazov recalls that she was 'especially keen on keeping the feasts of the Mother of God'; and Alyosha has a vivid childhood memory of his mother clutching him

tightly in her arms 'and praying for him to the Mother of God, holding him out in both arms to the icon, as if giving him to her for protection'.[50] The doctrine of the Mother of God undoubtedly occupies a prominent position in Orthodoxy; and it is closely related to the myth of Mother Earth. But there is no necessary link between the Mother of God and yurodstvo, even though, by repeatedly associating his yurodivye with the Mother of God, Dostoyevsky seems to be inviting us to make such a link.

There are thus two strands in Dostoyevsky's presentation of yurodstvo. First, one finds features of traditional yurodstvo: the meekness and humiliation which represent identification with Christ; a degree of independence from the official Church; innate spirituality which has no need of dogma or theology; a very natural approach to spiritual matters. These features are consistent with the overall tendency of Dostoyevsky's religious thought, which is Christocentric, and in which institutionalized religion is not prominent. But Dostoyevsky does not simply reflect traditional yurodstvo: he shapes it as he himself desires. First, he gives it a peculiarly feminine dimension, by encouraging us to associate genuine and sincere yurodstvo only with the tendency's female representatives. Secondly, he implies an intimate link between yurodstvo and three specific themes: women's suffering; Mother Earth; and the Virgin Mary. Yet, not only is there no necessary link between these three concepts and yurodstvo, but the theme of Mother Earth is actually heretical. While taking a profoundly Orthodox phenomenon as his starting point, therefore, Dostoyevsky does not, apparently, feel bound by the strictly

Orthodox, but seems to feel free to make significant departures from it. The two central characters with yurodivy traits whom we will now examine, Prince Myshkin and Alyosha Karamazov, are both male. In view both of the distinction Dostoyevsky draws between male and female yurodivye so far as spiritual sincerity is concerned, and of the specifically feminine themes he associates with yurodstvo, we will be concerned to see how he adapts yurodstvo to these major male characters.

There is a gap of a decade between the creation of Myshkin and that of Alyosha Karamazov, each of whom represents a stage in Dostoyevsky's efforts to depict the 'positively good man'. The basic role of each may be likened to that of a traditional yurodivy: they turn people's minds away from the earthly and make them think more in spiritual terms. Dostoyevsky's attraction to yurodstvo thus spanned his writing career. There is nevertheless a progression from Myshkin to Alyosha in terms of the nature and extent of their yurodstvo: Onasch, indeed, maintains that Dostoyevsky deliberately distinguishes Alyosha from Myshkin and from the yurodivy tradition in general.[51] In the analysis which follows, we will first examine those yurodivy traits which Myshkin and Alyosha hold in common, then the differences between them, in order to ascertain which features, if any, of yurodstvo Dostoyevsky felt it necessary to adapt or abandon in order to create an effective Christian person.

Fundamental to both Myshkin and Alyosha is the natural attachment to the truth characteristic of yurodivye. Both men

have a yearning for the reign of justice, truth and love, and they are simply incapable of not telling the truth. When Myshkin is informed by an embarrassed Ganya Ivolgin that a note the latter wants him to deliver is unsealed (and could therefore be read by an unscrupulous person), he simply declares: 'Oh, I won't read it', and expects Ganya to believe him, because he always tells the truth. He has no need to make promises: he is the truth. Not only do Myshkin and Alyosha speak the truth: they have an innate capacity to recognize it. Alyosha faces a dilemma at the trial of Dmitry precisely because of this. He asserts repeatedly that his brother is innocent. When the prosecutor asks him how he knows this, he replies: 'I couldn't not believe my brother. I know that he would not lie to me. I could see by his face that he wasn't lying.[53] These 'moral convictions' of Alyosha, as the narrator calls them, are insufficient for the court, which requires conclusive proof. Alyosha, however, has no need of concrete evidence: he recognizes the truth with the whole of his being.

In neither Myshkin nor Alyosha is the emphasis upon formal learning, either secular or theological. Myshkin claims to have studied for four years when in Switzerland, 'although not exactly normally, but following [Schneider's] special system'; and Alyosha has not completed his full period of education at school.[54] In both cases, it is not formal systems which occupy their minds, but people. Their religious faith involves neither excessive dogmatism nor formalism: it is simple and direct. Both Myshkin and Alyosha seem to have been born naturally religious, and have not had

to work at or develop their faith which, in its simplicity and trustfulness, resembles the faith of children. Such a faith is characteristic of yurodivye, for whom formal theology similarly plays little part. There is no formulated yurodivy message as such: yurodstvo is to do with 'being'; it is an assertion of the spiritual principle. Myshkin and Alyosha fulfil their spiritual roles by being themselves.

Both Myshkin and Alyosha are closely associated with children. In the notebooks for The Idiot there are several references to a children's club to be led by the Idiot;[55] and in the final version of the novel, Myshkin is given a band of young followers in Switzerland. Alyosha Karamazov's group, which centres on Kolya Krasotkin, gathers around him at the end of the novel for his speech at the stone. Possession of childlike qualities and contact with children are features of traditional yurodstvo, as is the rather less agreeable experience of being set upon by stone-throwing youths, something endured by both Myshkin and Alyosha.[56] Their experiences in this respect recall an episode in the life of St. Simeon Salos, the first saint to be venerated explicitly as a fool for Christ's sake.[57]

Myshkin and Alyosha follow the traditional yurodivy pattern in being associated with social outcasts. Myshkin befriends the disgraced Marie when in Switzerland; and he becomes engaged to Nastasya Filippovna, who is known as a kept woman. He communicates easily with the lower classes in St. Petersburg, treating the servants as equals; and at one point he acts as a servant himself, opening the door to Nastasya Filippovna and taking her coat.[58] Such behaviour

prompts Aglaya Yepanchina to call him a 'democrat'.[59] Alyosha Karamazov does not have to go far to find social outcasts, since the members of his own family provide ample scope. Neither Myshkin nor Alyosha is affected by contact with morally questionable people: just as Dostoyevsky's female _yurodivye_ retain their virginal quality despite pregnancy, prostitution and rape, so Myshkin and Alyosha are afforded protection by their _apatheia_. When Alyosha enters the home of his sensualist father, he is in no way tempted by what he sees, but he simply withdraws into himself.

Finally, Myshkin and Alyosha share the traditional _yurodivy_ lack of concern for self. They give themselves completely to others, and their role in the novels is essentially one of interaction with other characters. Yet they are always provided for: their goodness strikes a chord with others, who respond immediately, without always knowing why. Thus Rogozhin offers Myshkin clothes and money on the basis of only a brief conversation in a railway carriage.[60] Miusov sums up the effect Dostoyevsky's _yurodivye_ have on people when he remarks that Alyosha is the only person he knows who could be left penniless in a market square and yet would immediately be looked after by someone.[61]

Both Myshkin and Alyosha thus possess many _yurodivy_ qualities. Yet Alyosha is a much more integrated member of the society of Skotoprigonevsk than is Myshkin of St. Petersburg. This is because various _yurodivy_ traits found in Myshkin undergo modification in the case of Alyosha, to make him a less disconcerting character. Clothes constitute one such

difference between the two men. Traditionally, yurodivye often flouted normal standards of appearance either by wearing outrageous clothes or by going around completely naked. The dress of several of Dostoyevsky's female yurodivye is either inappropriate or verging on the indecent: thus Marya Lebyadkina wears a light, flimsy dress in cold weather; both she and Sonya Marmeladova dress in a rather garish manner; and Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya walks around in a shift. Dostoyevsky makes the association between yurodivye and strange clothing in a notebook fragment entitled 'Idea. The yurodivy. (The sworn attorney)', which dates from the time of The Idiot. The holy fool who features in the fragment is 'a lover of old clothing', and he is mocked on account of the clothes he wears:

> Old clothes. The tailors, domestics laugh because they are old. He assures them that they are new. Duel over the clothes.[62]

In The Idiot, Myshkin is similarly distinctive because of his manner of dress. When we first meet him, we read:

> He was wearing a rather wide, thick cloak without sleeves and with a huge hood. ... In his hands was a scraggy little bundle made from old, crumpled cloth, which most likely contained all his travelling effects. On his feet he wore thick-soled boots with spurs - all completely un-Russian.[63]

Myshkin's bundle, which is reminiscent of the old clothes in the notebook extract quoted above, lends him the appearance of an itinerant beggar. The overall effect is to make him stand out awkwardly, and to encourage Rogozhin to offer to reclothe him. Yet even when this is done, Myshkin continues to

stand out: he is constitutionally unable to blend into the background. Alyosha Karamazov also stands out when we first meet him, for the simple reason that he is wearing a monk's robe - by choice, as we are told.[64] His appearance is mocked by Ilyusha Snegiryov, who calls out scornfully: 'Monk in fancy trousers!'[65] Lise Khokhlakova plays the corresponding role to Rogozhin when she plans a complete change of attire for her potential husband.[66] And later we learn that Alyosha has indeed begun to dress according to the dictates of normal fashion.[67] In distinction to Myshkin, however, Alyosha's clothes suit him, and he does not draw undue attention to himself because of them.

A further difference between Myshkin and Alyosha concerns their skill in society. Traditionally, yurodivye operate according to a higher truth, and what society deems clever and skilful has no meaning or value for them. Aglaya Yepanchina expresses this thought when she considers the claim that Myshkin is mentally ill:

> Although you are in fact ill in the mind, . . . nevertheless your main intelligence /glavny um/ is better than that of all the others . . . because there are two types of intelligence: main and secondary /glavny i neglavny/. That's right, isn't it?[68]

Mrs. Yepanchina has already made a similar point earlier in the novel, but her conclusions are less clear-cut than her daughter's:

> The heart is the main thing, and all the rest is rubbish. Intelligence /um/ is also necessary, of course ... Perhaps intelligence is the main thing. Don't laugh, Aglaya, I'm not contradicting myself: a fool with a heart but no intelligence is just as unfortunate a fool as a fool with intelligence but no heart.[69]

Ultimately the confused thoughts of Mrs. Yepanchina seem to be vindicated, as the experiences of Myshkin and Alyosha respectively illustrate. We noted earlier that both Myshkin and Alyosha live for the truth. Yet the truth, though sorely needed, can be unwelcome, as both men are made to realize when they follow the traditional yurodivy practice and speak frankly to those around. Myshkin, for example, unthinkingly delivers to Ganya Ivolgin the most cutting comment possible, simply because it is the truth, and he is accustomed to speaking the truth. He declares: 'In my opinion, you're simply the most mediocre person there could be, very weak, and not in the least original'.[70] It does not occur to him that Ganya might be upset to hear this assessment of himself, truthful though it may be. But people find it difficult to take the truth undiluted, as Aglaya Yepanchina points out to Myshkin: 'You don't have any gentleness: the plain truth, you know, is unjust'.[71] Myshkin himself comes to realize that he lacks the kind of tact which is needed in society and which would make him more effective: 'I don't have a sense of proportion [chuvstvo mery], and that's the main thing, the most important thing of all, in fact'.[72] A contemporary critic of The Idiot shared this opinion, remarking that it was not enough to have meekness, one must also have wisdom.[73] Myshkin's awareness of his problem does not enable him to overcome it, however.

Alyosha Karamazov makes a similar discovery regarding the need for social intelligence as a result of his well-intentioned, but clumsy and unfortunate, attempts to mend relations between his brother Ivan and Katerina Ivanovna.

Watching the farce which is being played out before him, Alyosha seems to undergo some sort of spiritual experience in which the truth of the situation is revealed to him. He himself refers to the experience as an 'illumination' (ozareniye), and declares: 'Someone has to tell the truth ... because no-one here wants to tell the truth'.[74] He proceeds to do just that, but rather than bringing Katerina Ivanovna to a remorseful realization of her wrong-doing, his action only increases her bitterness: '"You, you ... you're a little yurodivy, that's what you are!", Katerina Ivanovna suddenly snapped out, her face pale, and her lips contorted with anger'.[75] Afterwards, Alyosha regrets his impetuous words, and realizes that he should have gone about things differently: '"Though I did it in all sincerity, I must be more intelligent /nado byt' umneye/ in future", he concluded, and he did not even smile at his conclusion'.[76] Unlike Myshkin, however, Alyosha learns from his mistake, and by the end of the novel he is a much more adept member of society. By sacrificing the truth a little, he has become less of a yurodivy, but arguably more effective.

One initially surprising difference between Myshkin and Alyosha is connected with their attitude to the official Church. As was generally true of yurodivye, neither character is closely involved with institutionalized religion. Myshkin admits that he has little knowledge of Orthodox services, for example;[77] and although Alyosha begins the novel in a monastery, the extent of his commitment to official monasticism is open to question, as will be seen in the next chapter. We have no evidence that Alyosha attends church at all once he has left

the monastery, other than to attend the funeral of Ilyusha Snegiryov. Myshkin's relationship to the Church resembles that of a yurodivy in another way: he comes out strongly against the Church's subordination to the State, against the sacrifice of the spiritual principle to the earthly.[78] Admittedly, his attack is allegedly directed not at the Orthodox Church, but at Roman Catholicism, whereas a traditional yurodivy would stand up against the religious establishment around him. But, as we have seen in previous chapters, there are compelling reasons for thinking that Dostoyevsky identified the compromise of the spiritual principle with institutionalized religion in general, not just with the Roman Catholic Church, and to that extent Myshkin fulfils the traditional yurodivy role. Alyosha Karamazov has a similar opportunity to assert the spiritual principle in the ecclesiastical courts debate in The Brothers Karamazov. Yet he remains silent throughout the debate, and in general does not articulate opinions on such questions. He thereby seems deliberately to avoid the confrontation with institutionalized religion which one might reasonably expect a yurodivy to welcome.

It could, of course, be argued that The Brothers Karamazov contains an extremely forceful attack upon institutionalized religion in the form of the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', and that this is more memorable than any yurodivy harangue. Alyosha's work is effectively done for him, by Ivan. Further, it is not in Alyosha's nature to enter into debate about religious matters: as we shall see in the final chapter of our study, his faith is above all active, and his theology is

not really consciously formulated. There is one other explanation of this apparent omission, however: this particular feature of the traditional yurodivy role seems to have been allocated to Alyosha's father, Fyodor Karamazov. Fyodor comes out strongly against the Church when at lunch with the Abbot in the monastery, and he concludes his attack by declaring that the holy fathers 'suck the blood of the narod'.[79] He draws attention to his yurodivy credentials when talking to Zosima: 'I'm an inveterate clown, a born clown, just the same as a yurodivy, your reverence'.[80] Zosima himself subsequently connects Fyodor Karamazov with yurodstvo after the latter has made some particularly flamboyant comments: 'Speak without acting the fool /bez yurodstva/'.[81] Fyodor Karamazov acts as a surrogate for Alyosha with respect to another yurodivy trait, too. It was common for holy fools to be slapped by people, but to refrain from retaliation.[82] This happens to Myshkin, who is slapped by Ganya Ivolgin.[83] Alyosha apparently escapes this fate, but the same is not true of his father who, we learn, was once slapped by an admirer of his second wife, Alyosha's mother.[84] In both of the instances which we have considered, the acts undoubtedly bear Fyodor Karamazov's very individual stamp, but they may nevertheless be interpreted in terms of traditional yurodstvo.

While Alyosha retains the essential yurodivy nature, therefore, many of the outer and more conspicuous features of yurodstvo are diverted from him: they are either toned down, or omitted, or transferred to someone else. The effect

of diverting the more 'scandalous' aspects away from him is to make him a more normal, and consequently more easily acceptable, member of society. Although Dostoyevsky was certainly not a person to favour the 'watering down' of Christianity and was constitutionally drawn to extremes, it would appear that he was more prepared to consider the 'middle ground' for the sake of the Christian transformation of society.

So far as the specifically feminine dimension which we have seen Dostoyevsky introduce into yurodstvo is concerned, there are both similarities and differences between Alyosha and Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye. Alyosha is clearly associated with several of the themes we examined earlier. First, he has a virginal quality reminiscent of the women: he suffered as a boy from the crude taunts of his school-friends; and even as an adult he is embarrassed when confronted with the sensuality of Grushenka.[85] In the chapter 'Cana of Galilee' we see him display the same relationship to Mother Earth as Marya Lebyadkina: he sinks to the earth and waters it with his tears.[86] His association with female yurodstvo is expressed particularly through his close relationship with his klikusha mother: we referred above to his vivid memory of being offered to the Virgin Mary by his mother as a child; and at one stage he actually behaves like a klikusha himself, when he throws a hysterical fit of shrieking.[87]

Yet there is one notable difference between Alyosha and the women yurodivye. The latter, as we have seen, tend to be passive creatures whose religious significance, in

traditional fashion, is hidden from view. Alyosha does not arrogate to himself a position of spiritual authority in the manner of Semyon Yakovlevich or Ferapont, but he nevertheless has a relatively public role as a yurodivy. In fact, this is true of both Myshkin and Alyosha, each of whom operates from within society and is to a greater or lesser extent a functioning member of that society. The men are not social outcasts, deprived of access to other social groups, in the way that Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye tend to be. As a result, they can be more assertive witnesses to the truth, and they confront more people with the spiritual principle. Each has a particular sphere of activity: Myshkin operates in St. Petersburg, Alyosha in the town of Skotoprigonevsk. Yet there is again a process of modification between Myshkin and Alyosha, the result of which is to make Alyosha potentially more effective. In the context of The Idiot, we feel that Myshkin is pitted against the whole of St. Petersburg society. Although we have said that he is a functioning member of that society, he is still basically a 'stranger', an outsider figure, after the manner of traditional yurodivye.[88] Myshkin's mission fails, and he himself perishes (and thereby partakes of the fate of Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye). Alyosha is not given quite the same daunting task as Myshkin: he is not called to take on a city, but is rather a 'domestic' yurodivy, whose sphere of activity is defined by the confines of his own family (and potential family). The difference in scope between the spheres of action of Myshkin and Alyosha respectively seems to be of similar inspiration to the other modifications

we have identified: Dostoyevsky again seems to be demonstrating a commitment to moderation and gradualism, in the interests of the attainment of his Christian ideal.

But do the modifications in yurodstvo which Alyosha represents amount to a compromise? We might think particularly of his decision to 'be more intelligent in the future' and not always follow the spontaneous dictates of his (yurodivy) heart. The word which most accurately expresses the difference between Myshkin and Alyosha is 'adaptation': Alyosha is ready to harness his yurodivy qualities to the conditions of society in order to increase their effectiveness. The sharp division which made Myshkin an outsider is thereby blurred, and the realms of the spiritual and the secular move closer together: we are thus nearer the time foreseen by Zosima when the whole of society will be transformed into a Church. Dostoyevsky has not lost his respect for traditional yurodstvo, as the presence of Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya in The Brothers Karamazov demonstrates. But the modifications which take place between Myshkin and Alyosha, combined with the differences between Alyosha and the women yurodivye, show that Dostoyevsky is selective in those aspects of yurodstvo which he finally appropriates for his ideal, yet real, Christian person. While remaining true to essential yurodstvo, he finds it necessary to adapt yurodstvo to society in order to make Alyosha as effective as possible. He takes a phenomenon from the periphery of the Church, and makes it his own.

A second tendency displayed by Dostoyevsky's religious characters is stranstvovaniye, holy wandering or pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is one of the characteristic features of yurodstvo in Eastern Orthodoxy.[89] It is a manifestation of the essentially eschatological nature of folly for Christ's sake, whereby the fool proclaims the conflict between the present world and the world to come, the Kingdom of God. He does not settle in this world, but wanders around, with no specific destination, free from human ties: his pilgrimage represents a quest for the Promised Land. Such wandering is clearly one possible source of inspiration for Dostoyevsky's own stranniki ('wanderers'). But at least two other forms of wandering should also be taken into account. First, the wandering of the itinerant monk who had left his monastery to travel around Russia collecting money for the Church. Varlaam in Pushkin's Boris Godunov is such a type. Revered by the narod, these monks walked the land, often for many years, passing through towns and villages, and visiting other monasteries. Two poems which were popular in nineteenth-century Russia develop particular aspects of this type of wandering. Nekrasov's Vlas (1855) tells of a sinner who repents and as a sign of his repentance gives away all he has to spend the rest of his days walking around Russia collecting for the Church and living on alms.[90] Tyutchev's These poor villages, this barren landscape (Eti bednye seleniya, eta skudnaya priroda, 1855) introduces the image of Christ Himself wandering around Russia:

> Weighed down by the burden of the cross,
> The King of Heaven, in the likeness of a slave,

Has walked the length and breadth of you, my native land,
Blessing you.[91]

Another form of wandering was practised by the sect known as the Stranniki or Beguny.[92] Founded around 1770-1780 by Euphemius (Yevfemy), the Stranniki were a radical offshoot of the Priestless Old Believers. All Old Believers felt to some extent that the state was in the hands of Antichrist, but the Stranniki took this literally and declared that all true believers should separate themselves completely from any manifestation of the state's power. Only thus, they said, could salvation be attained. They therefore led a vagabond existence in forests and other deserted places, accepting no authority whatsoever, and rejecting such impositions as taxes, conscription and passports. They always used lies and deceit in their dealings with the authorities; and they actively looked for suffering. Euphemius wanted the Stranniki to imitate the hermits of the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. His teaching had a communistic tendency: he spoke against inequality and unequal possession, and was opposed to the use of 'my': 'the phrase "mine-thine" is accursed and profane, for God created everything among you common'.[93] After the death of Euphemius in 1792, it was decided that there would henceforth be two levels of Strannik: 'complete' Stranniki; and Strannopriyomtsy, who took a vow to become complete Stranniki before they died, but in the meantime led a normal life, whilst offering refuge and help to complete Stranniki.

Whatever the reasons behind their wandering, all types of stranniki had certain things in common. They led a

relatively isolated existence, cut off from family and friends. And, even in the case of those collecting for the Church, who attended religious services in the monasteries they visited, their spiritual lives were for the most part independent of the official Church. In the absence of priest and ritual, the natural tendency was towards a more direct relationship with God.

Although, as will be seen below, the theme of stranstvovaniye appears in various forms in Dostoyevsky's writings before A Raw Youth, it is there that the most complete portrait of a strannik may be found, in the person of Makar Dolgoruky. 'Wandering' could in fact be considered one of the main themes of A Raw Youth, since it may also be associated, albeit in a form different from any of those examined above, with the central protagonist, Versilov. It is Versilov who first gives Makar Dolgoruky the opportunity to become a strannik, when he encourages him to go off on 'a journey to the ends of the earth', and offers him financial inducement to do so, so that he himself will be left free to live with Sofya Ivanovna.[94] The sort of journey Versilov has in mind, we may assume, is not necessarily a religious pilgrimage, but rather the open-ended, restless wandering he himself indulges in in later years. Versilov's travels are prompted by a sense of not belonging and by the absence of any firm guiding idea in his life: they symbolize his philosophical wanderings and are reminiscent of the spiritual journey Dostoyevsky planned for his Great Sinner.[95] After Makar's death, Versilov declares that he is again going

off to wander, and he uses the verb stranstvovat to express his intended journey. Tatyana Pavlovna advises the unhappy Sofya Ivanovna not to resist, but to let Versilov 'wander around a bit': the verb she uses, pogulyat', is rather more appropriate to the kind of aimless wandering Versilov will undertake.[96] Dostoyevsky describes such wanderers as Versilov in his Pushkin speech: Versilov, like Pushkin's Aleko, is 'the unhappy wanderer /skitalets/ in his native land', 'the traditional Russian sufferer detached from the people'. The solution may be found, according to Dostoyevsky, in 'humble communion with the people': the advice given to such rootless wanderers is to 'find thyself within thyself'.[97]

When we first meet Makar Dolgoruky, his wandering is at an end, a fact symbolized by his swollen feet, which will no longer serve him.[98] But his own and Versilov's reminiscences enable us to reconstruct his life as a strannik which, as we shall see, reflects the tendencies of Dostoyevsky's religious thought as a whole. Aleksandr Semyonovich, the doctor who attends Makar, tries to account for the latter's wandering in terms similar to those we have applied to Versilov's. The old man's illness is, he claims, nothing more than a longing to be back on the road. He continues: 'Aren't you what they call a wanderer /strannik/? Tramping around /brodyazhestvo/ is becoming a mania among the narod.'[99] When asked indignantly whether he is suggesting that Makar is a common tramp, the doctor defends himself, saying that he is using the word in its wider sense: 'but even a religious tramp, a godly tramp', he continues, 'is still a tramp'.[100] The sensitive Arkady, always ready to take offence, suspects

the doctor of trying to imply that Makar lacks a fixed and guiding idea, and hotly denies that this is the case: 'I assure you that it's us, all of us here, who are tramps, and not this old man . . . because he has something firm in his life, but we, however many we may be, don't have anything firm in our lives'.[101] Makar is thus clearly distinguished from Versilov: his wandering does not indicate a lack of direction but is, on the contrary, associated with a sense of purpose which is sadly lacking in Russian society.

The firm idea which Arkady attributes to Makar has not always been prominent in the latter's life. Although Makar was religious before the incident between Versilov and Sofya Ivanovna which was to prove such a turning point for him, his religion was of a dark and gloomy type, not dissimilar to that of Murin in The Landlady.[102] By formal religious standards, Makar could not be faulted: he knew the Orthodox Church services by heart, and was well-versed in the lives of the saints. His religiosity was admired by those around. At the same time, however, he lacked warmth, and treated other people in a superior manner. His spirituality was more akin to piety and respectability than to the light and joyful religion which characterizes him in later life. It is when he leaves formal religion behind and takes to the road that the transformation begins. The immediate impulse for his wandering is Versilov's affair with Sofya Ivanovna, Makar's lawful wife. Makar's decision to take to the road is thus made in an atmosphere of penitence and contrition. The theme of wandering as a penance is introduced by Makar himself later in the novel, when he relates the story of Maksim Ivanovich,

a merchant who is tormented by the memory of the suffering and, finally, death which he has brought to a little boy.[103] He repents of his ill deeds and marries the dead child's widowed mother: if they have a son, he reasons, it will be a sign that he has been forgiven. A son is born but subsequently dies: Maksim Ivanovich has evidently not been forgiven. The merchant does not turn to the Church for help and comfort: instead, he asks his wife to allow him to go off to 'save his soul', hoping that the griefs he will undergo in his wandering life will be accepted by God as a penance.

A similar transformation from godless exploiter of men to wandering penitent is described in Nekrasov's Vlas, as mentioned above. Dostoyevsky recalls the poem in his Diary of a Writer column in Grazhdanin in 1873, when relating the story of a modern 'Vlas'.[104] The person concerned had been challenged to fire a gun at the Eucharist, and was on the point of pulling the trigger when he had a vision of Christ on the cross. He subsequently, like Vlas, was overcome by his sin and became a wanderer, demanding suffering, and collecting alms for the Church. Dostoyevsky suggests that those like Vlas who turn to God after experiencing the depths of sin, will prove to be the salvation of Russia. Makar Dolgoruky's close association with Nekrasov's Vlas is demonstrated when Versilov uses a line from the poem to describe Makar's physical appearance, referring to him as 'swarthy-faced, erect and tall'.[105] Yet there is an obvious difference between Makar and Vlas, since Makar's pilgrimage is precipitated not by a sinful act he himself has actively perpetrated, but by the sin of Versilov (and Sofya Ivanovna).

Makar nevertheless seems to consider it right that he should have adopted the life of a strannik, as if it is for him to atone the sin. The solution to this paradox lies in Dostoyevsky's adherence to the theology of mutual guilt and sin, a theme which Makar himself introduces when recalling Versilov's seduction of Sofya Ivanovna many years after the event:

> 'I'm the most guilty before God in this affair, for although you were my master, I still shouldn't have allowed this weakness. For that reason neither should you, Sonya, trouble your soul too much, because all your sin is mine.'[106]

We are reminded of Marya Lebyadkina's sense of guilt before Stavrogin in The Devils, even though she has never, so far as we are aware, harmed either Stavrogin or anyone else:

> 'I think I must be guilty of something very great before him, but it's just that I don't know what I'm guilty of, that's my never-ending problem. All the time, always, over the past five years, I've feared night and day that I was guilty of something before him. I prayed and prayed and kept thinking about my guilt before him. And it turns out that I was right . . . I'm just worried that there might be something on his part, too.'[107]

Although it might initially appear that Makar has no reason to become a penitent strannik, therefore, he himself feels a sense of responsibility for what has occurred. In The Brothers Karamazov, the concept of mutual responsibility is developed even further, and we are asked to accept responsibility for sins with which we have no concrete connection at all.

Once Makar has taken to the road, he wanders all over Russia, visiting Sofya Ivanovna six or seven times during that

period. He goes wherever he feels led by God, passing through towns and villages, joining pilgrimages to monasteries and other holy places, and all the time collecting money for the Church. It is Versilov who alerts us to the great difference which he immediately notices in Makar when he sees him again for the first time since his wandering began: 'I met in him something I wasn't expecting at all - a peaceful spirit /blagodushiye/, an even temperament, almost merriment / /vesyolost/'. 108 Gone is Makar's high opinion of himself, and his rather pious and deliberate religiosity: here is a man who, while respecting himself, is yet respectful of others; who speaks wisely and does not, despite the religious nature of his way of life, force religion upon others. This is not so much a transformation from 'sinner' to 'saved', terms which one might apply to Vlas or Maksim Ivanovich, but from outer to inner Christianity: from condemning, bookish religiosity to an embracing and joyful outlook on God and the world. Makar's wandering seems to have enabled him, to use the phrase from the Pushkin speech, to 'find himself within himself'. He has left behind the religion contained in books and Church services to establish, through his wandering, a spiritual communion with God, people and life.

The experiences and awarenesses which have replaced Makar's orthodox religious life and have effected the great transformation in him may be deduced from his reminiscences of his wandering years. Nature has had no small part to play, as is revealed by his memories of a trip he once made to a monastery for a summer religious festival. Makar is one of many

pilgrims heading for the monastery, and they all spend the night in a field. He awakes during the night and is overcome by what he sees:

> 'Inexpressible beauty everywhere! Everywhere was still, the air was light; the grass was growing - grow, grass of God; a bird was singing - sing, bird of God; a child was yelling in a woman's arms - God be with you, little man, grow up and be happy, little babe! And for the very first time in my life I took all this in... I lay down again and went straight to sleep. It's good on earth, my dear! . . . And the fact that everything's a mystery, why, so much the better: it is awesome to the heart, and wondrous - and this fear makes the heart joyful. "All is in you, Lord, and I myself am in you, receive me."'[109]

This is not pantheism, neither is it the 'earth worship' of Marya Lebyadkina, although it may be noted that the name of the monastery to which Makar is going is the Bogorodsky monastery: the 'Mother of God' monastery. Rather, it is an appreciation of the glory of nature, and of nature's witness to God. Nature is not, as it were, doing anything specifically religious: the grass is growing, the birds are singing, a baby is crying. But everything is doing what God intended it to do and what is natural for it. In so doing, it is fulfilling God's plan, His 'secret'. Further, by being true to itself in this way, nature is beautiful and good. We are reminded of Kirillov and his leaf in The Devils: 'The leaf is good. Everything is good.'[110] We might also recall the teaching of Golubov, as presented in the notebooks for The Devils: 'Paradise is in the world, it exists even now and the world is created perfectly. Everything in the world is enjoyment, if it is normal and legitimate.'[111] The lesson Makar draws from his experience of nature is that to please

God he too has only to live naturally: for a man's life to be spiritual and godly, it is not necessary to carry out the formal practices traditionally associated with religion, but merely to live a normal life in the consciousness of God. In so doing one is, as it were, 'living to God' and taking one's place in his 'mystery'. It is appropriate that after this revelation Makar does what is normal and pleasurable: tired, he falls into a comfortable sleep.

A prominent feature of Makar's wandering, and one which stays with him throughout his life, is prayer, although he does not always use the term in its traditionally accepted sense. He implies, for example, that to lead the 'normal' and 'natural' life discussed above is to 'pray'; that living to God, as a part of His creation, is prayer. This may be deduced from the precise point at which Makar chooses to describe his experience of nature and his sudden realization of what constitutes a godly life. He has asked Arkady whether he prays, and Arkady has replied that he does not, since he considers prayer to be 'empty ritualism'.[112] Makar responds by saying that Arkady is mistaken to think like that. It is then that he describes his discovery of the relationship between nature and God, as if in this may be found the secret of true prayer. Prayer in the formal sense is not mentioned in this particular passage. The nearest we come to it is when Makar sighs, exclaims and inwardly takes account of what he sees (vsyo siye v sebe zaklyuchil).[113]

A similar understanding of prayer is demonstrated by Zosima in The Brothers Karamazov. Zosima too has spent many years wandering around Russia, in the company of Father

Anfim, a quiet, uneducated monk who becomes his dearest friend. The immediate purpose of Zosima's wandering is to collect alms for the poor monastery in Kostroma where he begins his monastic life. During his wandering Zosima seems to undergo the same experiences as Makar Dolgoruky, and to point to the same alternative way to God. He too, for example, has an 'experience' of nature. One night, he relates, he and Anfim settled to sleep on the banks of a river, and were joined by a young peasant lad. Zosima and the peasant stayed awake, contemplating the beauty of their surroundings:

> It was a warm, bright, still July night . . . The birds had become silent, everything was still and splendid, everything was praying to God . . . We began to talk about the beauty of God's world, and the great mystery of it. Every blade of grass, every little insect, ant, golden bee, all of them knew their path so marvellously well, even though they could not reason, and they bore witness to the mystery of God, constantly fulfilling it themselves.[114]

Once again we encounter the idea that, by simply being what it is and doing what it is intended for, nature is praying to God. The implication is that man, too, is made for such a life: he also has his 'path', and by fulfilling it he is witnessing to God.

Prayer in the more traditional sense also plays a prominent part in the spiritual life of the strannik Makar. Indeed, it is one of the few features of his wandering life which has a direct equivalent in institutionalized religion. The reason Arkady first becomes aware of Makar's presence is that he can hear someone, who he later learns is Makar, praying:

> Suddenly, in the deep silence, I clearly heard the words: 'Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy upon us'. The words were pronounced in a half whisper and were followed by a deep sigh, and then everything became completely silent again.[115]

Not only the words themselves, but also the deep sigh, seem to express an attitude of prayer, a means of communication with God. On one occasion, when discussing suicides, Makar actually recommends sighing to God to express the ineffable, as if to say that when man is unable to formulate his thoughts into formal prayers, the emotion of a sigh will be interpreted by God.[116] In this he brings to mind the Vozdukhantsy ('Sighers'), who believed that sighing was the only way to communicate with God.[117]

Makar several times tells Arkady that he should pray: prayer is good, he maintains, it makes the heart joyful (serdtsu veselo).[118] It thus brings about that spiritual state which is associated with Makar throughout A Raw Youth, and which is seen to be a necessary condition of the godly heart. Zosima too associates prayer with veselye, telling the monks to pray to God to give them joyfulness.[119] A further important reason for prayer, we learn, is intercession for those who have in some way been separated from God. Makar Dolgoruky tells Arkady that one should pray for all osuzhdyonnye ('accused ones'); for those sinners still living; and for those for whom there is no-one to pray.[120] By thus referring to osuzhdyonnye, he could be seen to be dividing people into sinners and saved, something most unusual for Dostoyevsky's religious figures, who tend not to exclude anyone from the Kingdom of God. However, by praying for them,

and by stating that man cannot know whom God will accept or reject, Makar at the same time distances himself from such harsh theological considerations. Arkady purposely asks Makar for his views specifically on suicides, knowing that he has some 'original views' on certain subjects.[121] He also knows that suicide is considered a great sin in the official Russian Orthodox Church, and that it is forbidden to pray for those who have taken their own lives. Makar does not disappoint Arkady in the reply he gives concerning suicides: suicide is a sin, he says, but men have no right to judge others, and therefore it is right to pray for suicides. Such a prayer will get through (dokhodit) to God.[122] The former Makar, as we have seen, had a strong sense of what was right and wrong, but his wandering has removed any dogmatism from him, and he trusts to no human calculations for dealing with the eternal fate of man - even if the guidelines come from the official Church.

This same tendency to question the Church's policy of dissociating itself from suicides may be detected as early as Crime and Punishment, in the feverish, yet vivid, dreams which precede Svidrigaylov's end. In a flower-strewn room, Svidrigaylov sees a young girl lying in a coffin: 'Svidrigaylov knew this girl. There were no icons, no lighted candles by the coffin, and no prayers could be heard. This girl was a suicide - she had drowned herself.'[123] It initially appears that the girl's situation is hopeless, but there is nevertheless a slight suggestion of optimism from Dostoyevsky: although the suicide has been denied the intercession of formal religion, the

flowers which are strewn around seem to represent residual hope, as if they perhaps will intercede on her behalf. In this instance Dostoyevsky stops short of challenging the Church outright. In The Brothers Karamazov, however, Zosima openly abandons the Church's teaching concerning suicides:

> They say that it's a sin to pray to God for [suicides], and outwardly the Church seems to reject them, but in the secret depths of my soul I think that we can pray for them too. After all, Christ will not be angry with love. I confess to you, fathers and teachers, that I have inwardly prayed for such as these all my life, and I still pray for them every day.[124]

This non-dogmatic attitude to suicide is illustrated particularly well by an incident from Makar Dolgoruky's tale of Maksim Ivanovich, referred to above.[125] The little boy terrorized by the merchant is driven to take his own life. The merchant subsequently asks the boy's former tutor to paint a picture of the boy, and to include in it angels flying down from heaven to meet him. The tutor refuses, on the grounds that since the boy committed suicide and suicide is a great sin, to do such a thing would be to go against the teaching of the Church. He suggests a compromise, however: '"Here's what I've thought of. We won't have heaven opening up like that, and we won't paint angels: instead, I'll paint a ray of light coming down to meet him as it were, a bright ray of light"'.[126] We have already had occasion to comment upon the special place rays of sunlight hold in Dostoyevsky's religious thought.[127] This particular ray, however, seems to epitomize Makar's - and Dostoyevsky's - attitude to suicides: an acknowledgement of the 'rules' as laid down by the Church, but at the same time a steadfast conviction that the love of

God is above such rules.

Even after all his years of wandering, the strannik Makar still devotes time to reading holy writings. Arkady notices the symbolic books and silver spectacles on a table in Makar's room the first time he goes in to see him.[128] Books and spectacles are also a feature of the characterization of Murin in The Landlady and the merchant Andreyev in The Devils, and seem to have been intended by Dostoyevsky as an indication of Old Believer tendencies.[129] Certainly, the Old Believers customarily devoted much time to reading spiritual writings and had a reputation for being learned men. But although Makar still apparently values his books, they do not occupy a prominent position in his spirituality. The many tales he tells are not to do with formal theology as such, and even the Bible is not to the fore in them: rather, they are about human beings caught up in life, and battling with the problem of good and God. They appeal not to reason, but to the heart, through the workings of umileniye. They are based upon experiences Makar has had and people he has met during his wandering, which has had great value as a school of life, bringing him into contact with the whole range of human beings, and endowing him with a profound knowledge of the workings of the human heart. His stories do not seem to be straightforward accounts of his own experiences, however, but to be entwined with the Tradition which forms a part of the heritage of Orthodoxy. Arkady offers the following analysis of them:

> I heard a lot from him, both about his own wanderings and about various legends from the lives of the ancient ascetics /podvizhniki/. I wasn't familiar with all this, but I think he mixed the legends up a lot, having for

> the most part learned them from the oral tales of the simple narod. Some of the things he said were simply inadmissible. Yet, together with the evident reworkings, even lies, there always peeped out some wondrous whole, full of narodny feeling, and always emotional /umilitelny/.[130]

It is most likely that the tale of Maksim Ivanovich, to take but one example, bears the stamp of Makar's reworkings and harmless lies. But it is not presented as being any less valid for that. Dostoyevsky does not seem unduly worried by minor deviations, either in the case of Makar's own alleged experiences or in the case of the strannik's evidently idiosyncratic rendering of Orthodox teaching. He seems to require only that the overall tendency is adhered to, and that what is said conveys the spirit of the original. Further, the criterion applied for judging Makar's words - by Arkady at least - is not the extent to which they are pravoslavny, but whether they are narodny and umilitelny. Finally, we might note the ambiguous position which Makar occupies vis-à-vis Orthodox Tradition. On one level, he continues Tradition, through the legends he relates which have existed for centuries: yet at the same time he himself participates in the creation of Tradition, when he blends in his own experiences and imagination. He does not seem to consider that there is anything wrong in adapting Orthodoxy in this way.

If we think back to the different inspirational sources of stranstvovaniye outlined at the beginning of this chapter, we can see that Makar's wandering life contains elements of the wanderings of the itinerant monk and of the penitent Vlas. We have so far seen little to link him with the radical Stranniki sect. One aspect of his teaching does, however,

resemble the Stranniki: the communistic trend remarked upon by Arkady. Arkady calls Makar a communist after hearing him contrast the hopelessness of trying to bring about the happiness of society without reference to religion, with the social change which will come about when the teachings of Christ are widely adopted.[131] Makar takes Christ's command to 'go, give away your riches and become a servant to others' as the basis for this change. If people did this, he says, they would be happy and rich in love. They would each become one of the family of man, and there would be no orphans or beggars, for everyone would be working for everyone else. Every minute of each person's life would become precious and valuable. An earth where all people were living according to Christ's teaching would be nothing less than the Kingdom of God: '"You will be with God face to face; and the earth will shine like the sun, and there will be no grief, no sighing, but simply priceless paradise"'.[132] According to Makar, therefore, heaven is on earth: it is the transformed earth which will result when the ideal established by Christ has been attained by all. Makar himself has never heard of communism as such: he has obtained his 'communistic' tendencies from his reading of the Bible. Although this aspect of his teaching coincides with the Stranniki, therefore, there is in fact no need to account for it by reference to Euphemius or any other sectarian leader: so far as Makar is concerned, he is merely being true to the teachings of Christ.

And overall, indeed, Makar's wandering life tends to be independent of contact with other religious groups, either sectarian or mainstream. He himself does not deliberately

emphasize the extent to which his religious life is independent of the established Church, and at no point does he follow the Stranniki in claiming that it is imperative to flee from official Orthodoxy in order to attain salvation. As we have seen, the official Russian Orthodox Church is still, broadly speaking, his point of reference, even though he departs from its teachings on occasion. Yet Makar has effectively cut himself off from the Church by becoming a strannik, and he is deprived of the things institutionalized religion traditionally has to offer: the mediation of the Church; the clergy; the spiritual communion of other believers. Yet this has not hindered his spiritual development in any way. He has found replacements for these things in a close awareness of God's world; prayer; and encounters with other people who are forging a relationship with God. And it is only when he has left behind formal religion that his outer, sterile religiosity is transformed into an inner, joyous spirituality which transmits itself to those around.

Makar Dolgoruky is the fullest portrayal of a strannik in Dostoyevsky's novels, although we have seen that Zosima, too, has a period of wandering through Russia. Prince Myshkin in The Idiot becomes a strannik of sorts when he disappears from St. Petersburg for six months to spend time in Moscow and elsewhere. During this period he has several significant encounters, and develops a deep love for Russia and the narod.[133] It is appropriate to The Idiot, in which the action centres on St. Petersburg at the time of the expansion of the railway network in Russia, that Myshkin's 'wandering' seems to have

been done not on foot, in traditional strannik style, but in trains; and that he has his encounters during railway journeys and at railway stations. The relentless spread of the railways is not, apparently, as ominous as the apocalyptically-inclined Lebedev would have us believe, but also has a potential for good. Other characters in Dostoyevsky's novels also 'take to the road', and their journeys, too, may to a greater or lesser degree be examined with reference to the concept of wandering as examined in this chapter. One such character is Mrs Marmeladova in Crime and Punishment. Consistent with Dostoyevsky's original conception of Crime and Punishment as a novel of social protest, it is possible tc interpret Mrs Marmeladova's frenzied journeys around St. Petersburg, children in tow, in terms of her hopeless position in society. By approaching well-dressed people in the street and begging under the window of His Excellency, she forces people to take notice of her plight. But there is also a sense in which Mrs Marmeladova may be linked with the Stranniki sect, and with the search for the Promised Land of the yurodivye. She has rejected the established Church and the state, and has set off to look for truth and justice, to search for a land where people like her will be treated as human beings, with dignity.[134] One is reminded of the striving for 'truth' which, according to Dostoyevsky's analysis, was behind so much of the extreme sectarianism in nineteenth-century Russia.

More directly inspired by the type of wandering which we have seen in Makar Dolgoruky is the final 'pilgrimage' of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky in The Devils. In terms of the

chronology of Dostoyevsky's novels, Stepan Trofimovich precedes the stranniki Makar and Zosima. He may nevertheless be regarded as their follower, since he effectively experiments with wandering as a means to faith. When he first sets off, on a wild and windy night, neither Stepan Trofimovich nor the reader can say with any certainty where he is heading or what he hopes to find. His departure is prompted by the preposterous scenes at the fête in the governor's house: after being publicly humiliated, he decides to leave Skvoreshniki and to make a decisive break with his past life. Initially at least there is no obvious religious dimension to his decision. He does not, like Mrs Marmeladova, declare that he is off to search for 'truth' or 'justice'; and the narrator at first refers to his action as a 'flight', as if to suggest that it may simply be a means of escaping from his humiliation.[135] We know in addition that Stepan Trofimovich is unwell, even feverish, and may not, therefore, be entirely accountable for his actions. But his rather incoherent remarks to Liza, whom he meets as he sets off, contain two clues that there might after all be some purpose to his journey.

First, he refers, in French, to a merchant: 'chez ce marchand, s'il existe pourtant ce marchand' ('to the merchant, if there is such a merchant').[136] He later refers to the merchant using the Russian word kupets.[137] The narrator does not know to whom Stepan Trofimovich is referring, although he seems convinced that the merchant constitutes 'the most terrible question' for him. 'In fact', he says, 'there was nothing more terrible for him than this merchant, whom he

suddenly rushed off to find at breakneck speed, and whom, of course, he was frightened of actually finding'.[138] One merchant with whom Stepan Trofimovich has had dealings is Andreyev, 'a self-taught archeologist and fanatical collector of Russian antiquities', who has 'a grey beard and large silver spectacles'.[139] Several years before, Andreyev had bought some land from Stepan Trofimovich, but had kept back part of the payment at a time when Stepan Trofimovich felt a particular need of money of his own. This annoying circumstance causes Stepan Trofimovich to refer to Andreyev rather disrespectfully as 'a bearded Orthodox fool'.[140] Andreyev's first personal appearance in the novel is as a witness to Marya Lebyadkina's encounter with Varvara Petrovna in the cathedral.[141] Varvara Petrovna does not know who Marya Lebyadkina is, and it is Andreyev, who appears to have been attending the cathedral service, who informs her. As before, we are told that Andreyev has glasses and a grey beard; and in addition we learn that he is dressed in the Russian style, and is wearing a round, cylindrical hat. These details, together with the earlier information about his learning and his interest in Russia's past, suggest that he may well be an Old Believer or (remembering that he has been at the cathedral service) have Old Belief tendencies. It thus is paradoxical that his name, as we shortly learn, is Nikon. In view of our earlier examination of the connection Dostoyevsky saw between Old Belief and more extreme religious sectarianism, it is interesting to note that Andreyev knows all about Marya Lebyadkina and the house of Filippov, the source of so much of the sectarian interest in

It is difficult to see why Stepan Trofimovich should be looking for Andreyev at this crisis point in his life: we are not made aware of any dealings he has had with him since the sale of land years before. It might also be noted that, if he were looking for Andreyev, he would presumably be able to state a definite destination, and would be in no doubt as to whether the merchant existed. The only other notable reference to a merchant in The Devils occurs during a bitter argument between Stepan Trofimovich and Varvara Petrovna. Stepan Trofimovich states his intention of making a speech about the Sistine Madonna at the forthcoming fête, despite Varvara Petrovna's objections. After the fête, he declares, he will leave everything behind and will go off on foot 'to end [his] days as a tutor in some merchant's house [chtoby konchit' zhizn' u kuptsa guvernyorom]'.[142] Here, it would seem, we have found the merchant we are looking for. It must be admitted that the great mystery and foreboding which surround Stepan Trofimovich's later references to 'ce marchand' seem out of keeping with the relatively mundane intention of becoming a tutor in a merchant's household. But it is altogether characteristic of Stepan Trofimovich to try to invest the events of his life with more significance than they actually merit, so he is merely being true to form on this occasion.

The other clue that Stepan Trofimovich's journey is purposeful is his declaration that he is going off 'to look for Russia'.[143] As has been remarked, 'it may legitimately

be objected that he has been in Russia for some considerable time'.[144] But he does not 'know' Russia, hence his quest. The conscious or unconscious decision to go off to deepen acquaintance with Russia is, as we have seen, an essential feature of the religious wandering of Makar Dolgoruky, Zosima and Myshkin. The knowledge and love of Russia which they acquire on their travels strengthen their religious faith: Russia is thus seen to have religious implications. When Stepan Trofimovich states his intention of going 'to look for Russia', therefore, his journey begins to take on a specifically religious character. But the whole episode is cloaked in ambiguity, and frequently there appears to be no real sense of purpose behind his quest. Most of the events which make up his journey, for example, are presented as being largely a matter of chance. The cart upon which Stepan Trofimovich gets a lift just happens to come along, and he almost lets it pass without stopping it. Even when he does catch it up, he goes off into a dream, and it is the peasant woman in the cart who initiates the conversation. Stepan Trofimovich has not thought of asking for a ride himself, and is inwardly amazed at his own tardiness: 'How amazing it is that I've been walking alongside this cow /the cow which is attached to the cart/ for so long, and yet it didn't occur to me to ask if I could have a lift'.[145] This may be seen as an allegory of his life in Russia: he has for so long been unaware of the riches available all around him. The peasants not only provide Stepan Trofimovich with the means for his journey by offering him a lift, but they also point him towards his final destination when they assume that

he must be going to Spasov.[146] It might appear, therefore, that the strannik's decision to go to Spasov is as arbitrary as his initial encounter with the peasants, and that he is not over-concerned to reach 'Salvation'. It should nevertheless be remembered that he firmly rejected the first destination which was suggested to him.[147] The place concerned is Khatov, which seems to have the Russian narodny credentials Stepan Trofimovich presumably is seeking when he decides to 'look for Russia'. (The name of the village is appropriately derived from khata - cottage.) Stepan Trofimovich is not happy with this proposed destination, however, and it is only when Spasov is mentioned that he acquiesces, which suggests that he does, after all, have a subconscious idea of where he wants to go, and that religion has something to do with his quest. As things turn out, he does, of course, go to Khatov, but it is only the first stage of his journey. Dostoyevsky seems to be implying that something more than Russia is needed for Stepan Trofimovich's pilgrimage to be successful. At an early stage in his journey, Stepan Trofimovich discovers one of the two things he is looking for. He finds 'Russia', or thinks he has: he eats bliny and drinks vodka in a peasant hut.[148] This, however, is the sentimentalized, quaint Russia of the poets and the upper classes. Meanwhile, Stepan Trofimovich scorns the less pleasing aspects of the peasants, such as their curiosity. His wandering does not reveal to him the inner workings of the Russian narod in the manner of the wanderings of Makar Dolgoruky and Zosima: indeed, there

is little evidence that he thinks there is anything worth finding.

Stepan Trofimovich does not find a merchant to give him employment as a tutor. He does, however, meet Sofya Matveyevna Ulitina, an encounter which proves decisive for him. Sofya Matveyevna enters at a stage when it is becoming clear that Stepan Trofimovich will not find his salvation in Russia alone, as represented by the peasants in the hut. She is a welcome relief from the less aesthetically pleasing aspects of peasant life. Admittedly, she drinks her tea vprikusku, but she also speaks French, to Stepan Trofimovich's delight.[149] That she will have a religious significance is suggested by the language used in relation to her: we read, for example, that Stepan Trofimovich turns to her like 'a man saving himself' (spasayushchego sebya cheloveka); and later he refers to her as his saviour (spasitel'nitsa).[150]

Although several of Dostoyevsky's women characters have religious significance, as we saw in our examination of yurodstvo, Sofya Matveyevna is unusual because she has consciously adopted a religious role. Her life is a variation upon the type of wandering we have seen so far, since she travels around selling Gospels. She thus reflects the Protestant influence upon Russian religion in the nineteenth century, as illustrated by the existence of such organizations as the Russian Bible Society. The Gospels are Sofya Matveyevna's raison d'être, and Dostoyevsky stresses her familiarity with them: we saw in the previous chapter that,

like Sonya Marmeladova, she has no difficulty in finding a Bible passage when asked.[151] She also resembles the Protestant-inspired Sonya Marmeladova to the extent that the concept of 'Holy Russia' is not particularly prominent in her religion. That she is nevertheless a 'Dostoyevskian' Christian is demonstrated by her ready acquiescence to such remarks as 'each one of us is guilty before everyone else'.[152]

In the course of her encounter with Stepan Trofimovich, Sofya Matveyevna demonstrates that she is an extremely practical person who knows, for example, when she is being overcharged for a room. Such practical common sense is notably absent from the majority of Dostoyevsky's Christian characters, particularly those with yurodivy traits. But she very much resembles Dostoyevsky's women yurodivye in her defencelessness, as shown in the incident concerning the pornographic photographs.[153] Further, she is easy prey to the domineering Varvara Petrovna when the latter arrives on the scene and begins taking charge of events. For all her defencelessness, Sofya Matveyevna has an important role in the fate of Stepan Trofimovich. She enables him to make the second stage of his journey, both on the practical and on the ideological level: she is his companion from Khatov to Ustyevo; and she turns his mind from Russia alone to the Gospels. The name of Ustyevo effectively combines the two dimensions of her role, since it is not only the name of the village, but also evokes the striking image of God spewing lukewarm Christians from His mouth (iz ust), the harsh message conveyed to Stepan Trofimovich in the letter to the Laodiceans.[154] Important though her role is, Sofya Matveyevna

does not presume any particular authority in matters of faith, and, in a manner typical of Dostoyevsky's religious characters, she speaks and acts with great humility and caution. Certainly she does not see herself as a mediator between Stepan Trofimovich and God. Peace notes that her surname is derived from ulita ('snail'), 'and is thus suggestive of her lowly status and her humility'.[155] He sees her role primarily as that of a catalyst. In view of the similarities we have noted between Sofya Matveyevna and other of Dostoyevsky's religious spokesmen, the description 'catalyst' might arguably be applied to several other characters too.

Humble and passive though Sofya Matveyevna's role might be, Dostoyevsky attaches sufficient worth to it to imply that it provides a pattern which might usefully be emulated: there are two other potential Sofya Matveyevnas in The Devils. First, in the person of Dasha. This becomes clear in a conversation between Dasha and Stavrogin, after Stavrogin's duel with Gaganov. Stavrogin reminds Dasha that 'at the very end' he will call her to him, and that she will come. Dasha admits that this is so, and continues: '"If I don't go to you, then I will join the sisters of mercy, become a sick-nurse, look after invalids, or I will become a knigonosha [Bible seller], and sell Gospels'.[156] This apparently isolated remark is brought back to the reader's mind when, two chapters later, Sofya Matveyevna makes her first unfortunate appearance in the novel.[157] Further, at the end of the novel we discover that the various options which Dasha has considered accurately describe the life of Sofya Matveyevna who, after losing the man she loved, first went to serve as a nurse in Sevastopol,

and then began life as a Gospel seller.[158] The other candidate for the life of Sof'ya Matveyevna is Varvara Petrovna, who goes through the same two stages at the end of the novel. First, she is a nurse, nursing Stepan Trofimovich up to the point of his death. (The patronymic Trofimovich may, appropriately, be derived from the Greek trophimos, meaning 'nurseling'.)[159] Having once lost the man she has secretly loved all her life, Varvara Petrovna then declares that she will now go off to sell Gospels with Sof'ya Matveyevna.[160] She thereby not only reveals a link between herself and Sof'ya Matveyevna, but also invites us to draw a parallel between her own relationship with Stepan Trofimovich and the relationship between Dasha and Stavrogin.

A more traditional choice for Dasha and Varvara Petrovna - as, indeed, for Sof'ya Matveyevna herself - would have been to enter a convent when they found themselves alone in life. The sober way in which Sof'ya Matveyevna is dressed is not, in fact, dissimilar to a nun's attire: she wears a 'dark dress, with a big grey scarf over her shoulders'.[161] Further, at one point she is actually referred to as a nun, albeit jokingly.[162] But in view of Dostoyevsky's negative portrayal of the convent in which Mar'ya Lebyadkina resided, it is not surprising that he apparently rejects this possibility in favour of the life of a Bible seller, thereby once more demonstrating his attraction to stranstvovaniye as a religious way of life.

From the point at which Sof'ya Matveyevna appears, the Gospels acquire a position of central importance in Stepan Trofimovich's spiritual pilgrimage. He hears three passages

from the Bible in all: the Sermon on the Mount, chosen by Sof'ya Matveyevna; the letter to the Laodiceans, chosen at random; and the story of the Gadarene swine, chosen by Stepan Trofimovich himself. Although Stepan Trofimovich interprets the last passage in terms of the state of contemporary Russia, there is nothing specifically Russian or Orthodox about any of the three passages. And there is no mention of the umilitel'nye stories, with their blend of narodny wisdom and Orthodox Tradition, which are such an important feature of the wandering life of Makar Dolgoruky. Instead we find the Bible with no specific confessionalist colouring, and passages which directly express the need for the individual to practise essential, committed Christianity. The reason for the difference would appear to be that we are dealing with a representative of Russia's upper classes who, over many years, have scorned and ignored the religion of the narod. Dostoyevsky appears to be saying that the upper classes must now be directly confronted with the plain truths of essential Christianity, uncompromising though they may be. The message of the letter to the Laodiceans certainly comes as a shock to Stepan Trofimovich, who reveals that he did not know the Bible contained such harsh words.[163]

Stepan Trofimovich's wanderings differ from Makar Dolgoruky's in other respects too. For the latter, wandering is essentially a time of learning from Russia, a time of humility and of being open to experiences. Stepan Trofimovich, however, decides that rather than learn from the narod, he has something to teach them:

> The narod admittedly is religious, but they still do not know the Gospel. I will explain it to them ... Through oral explanation one can correct the mistakes of this wonderful book - which I, of course, am ready to treat with the utmost admiration.[164]

In assuming that the narod's understanding of Christianity is deficient, Stepan Trofimovich makes the mistake for which we have seen Dostoyevsky vigorously rebuke the Russian upper classes in his Diary of a Writer.[165] The aspiring strannik clearly still has certain lessons to learn. Neither does Stepan Trofimovich's wandering have the same 'pastoral' quality as the travels of Makar Dolgoruky or Zosima. Not for him profoundly moving encounters with wise narodny types in the midst of God's beautiful creation: instead he struggles along in the mud and rain, conditions which do nothing but aggravate his failing health. But such differences are ultimately of secondary importance: the most important consideration is whether Stepan Trofimovich's wandering is effective in bringing him to religious faith. Varvara Petrovna's sarcastic 'Kakovo pogulyali?' ('Had a nice little walk, then?')[166] poses a serious question.

For all that Stepan Trofimovich's trip verges on a caricature of true stranstvovaniye, it is only by taking to the road that he has been able to take an objective look at the 'devils' which have possessed Russian society, and to free himself from their influence. In the past, he has not really confronted the demands of Christianity. The Russian Orthodox Church has made little impression on him: his opinion of it is probably most accurately reflected in his assessment of Andreyev, 'a bearded Orthodox fool'.[167] But

the encounters and experiences which accompany his wandering encourage him to take stock of his spiritual state. The sentiments he voices differ markedly from the kind of Christianity we might associate with Makar or Zosima. But when he talks of such things as mutual responsibility for sin, and the supreme value of every minute of life,[168] Stepan Trofimovich's words go to the heart of his creator's spiritual convictions. Ultimately, as we saw at the beginning of our study, there is considerable evidence to suggest that Stepan Trofimovich has indeed found faith - although there is, appropriately, room for doubt.[169] Whatever the state of that faith, stranstvovaniye has played a significant part in bringing it about.

In making the spiritual lives of several of his characters either a direct reflection of, or a variation upon, traditional stranstvovaniye, Dostoyevsky again displays a clear tendency to go to the periphery of Orthodoxy for inspiration in spiritual matters. Stranniki like Makar Dolgoruky and Zosima are embodiments of Orthodoxy, and they continue a tradition dear to the Russian Orthodox Church. Yet, like Dostoyevsky's yurodivye, they do not 'need' the Church as such on a day to day basis. They neither rely on the mediation of the hierarchy, nor seek out formal membership of the Church. Indeed, they show very little interest in belonging to the Church 'visible'. Rather, they go about their spiritual lives in an independent manner, establishing a direct relationship with God. In so doing, they rely to a considerable extent upon their own judgements and instincts. But there is no suggestion from

Dostoyevsky that they are thereby in danger of distorting Christianity, despite his negative response when faced with the spiritual freedom exercised by the Protestants or the extreme sectarians. The freedom the stranniki exercise apparently has his complete approval. It would seem that individuals can manage without the guidance of institutionalized religion - provided that they are Orthodox. The fact of being Orthodox seems to prevent them from going astray.

Although Dostoyevsky's stranniki thus enjoy the authority of Orthodoxy to which we have seen their creator increasingly appeal, and although Orthodoxy is their constant point of reference, they are not, apparently, required to adhere to Orthodoxy in all respects. We have seen both Makar Dolgoruky and Zosima go against the teachings of the official Russian Orthodox Church concerning suicides; and Makar, in addition, embroiders Orthodox Tradition to a considerable extent. In behaving in this manner, however, they are merely emulating the rather free attitude towards Orthodoxy of Dostoyevsky himself, as illustrated by his idiosyncratic adaptation of yurodstvo, which both acquires a distinctly un-Orthodox feminine dimension, and becomes entwined with the essentially pagan myth of Mother Earth. While implying that Orthodoxy must be the starting point, therefore, Dostoyevsky feels free to depart from it, and he allows his characters to do the same.

1. The following account of holy folly is based upon J. Saward, Perfect Fools (Oxford, 1980), 1-30. Detailed reference will be provided only in the case of verbatim quotations.

2. Saward, op. cit., 14.

3. V. V. Zenkovsky, op. cit., I, 31.

4. See Chapter Eight, 431 and fn. 86, above.

5. See R. Pletnev, 'Dostojevskij und der Hieromonach Parfenij', Zeitschrift für slavische Philologie, XIV, 1937 (Leipzig) (30-46), 36-8. (Hereafter: Pletnev, Parfenij.)

6. M. S. Al'tman, Dostoyevsky po vekham imyon (Saratov, 1975), 91-102.

7. The visit to Semyon Yakovlevich is described in PSS, X, 254-61. Further detailed reference will not be given.

8. PSS, X, 203.

9. PSS, XIV, 90.

10. Pletnev, Parfenij, 38.

11. PSS, XIV, 303.

12. Ibid., 151.

13. Ibid., 302.

14. Ibid., 301.

15. Ibid., 154.

16. PSS, VI, 248.

17. PSS, XIV, 91; PSS, X, 116.

18. PSS, VI, 419; PSS, X, 122.

19. PSS, VI, 249.

20. PSS, XIV, 91.

21. PSS, VI, 51.

22. Ibid., 65.

23. Ibid., 310.

24. PSS, X, 114; 122.

25. PSS, XIV, 90.

26. See, e.g., PSS, IX, 118; 122; 131. 'Khromenkaya' and 'khromonogaya' sometimes appear as variants for 'Khromonozhka'.

27. PSS, VI, 177.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 54.

30. PSS, XIV, 44.

31. I. G. Pryzhov, 'Russkiye klikushi', Vestnik Yevropy, X, 1868 (641-72). Detailed reference will be given only in the case of verbatim quotations.

32. Ibid., 672.

33. Ibid., 665.

34. PSS, X, 114. Stavrogin's claim that Marya Lebyadkina is a virgin appears in ibid., 194.

35. PSS, XI, 22.

36. N. Berdyayev, Mirosozertsaniye Dostoyevskogo (originally Prague, 1923; YMCA reprint Paris, 1968), 115.

37. V. Ivanov, Freedom and the Tragic Life. A Study in Dostoevsky, trans. N. Cameron (London, 1952), 44.

38. Ibid., 57.

39. Ibid., 60.

40. PSS, X, 116.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid., 217.

43. Ibid., 118. Ivanov (op. cit., 45) considers the song to be Dostoyevsky's 'most tender expression of the innermost longing of the Creature, of the secret anchoretism of Mother Earth, who is the deeply expectant bride'.

44. PSS, XIV, 90; 91.

45. PSS, VI, 322; 405.

46. Ibid., 369.

47. PSS, X, 124; 194. Andrey Dostoyevsky tells of the yurodivaya Agrafena who lived on the Dostoyevsky family estate. According to Andrey, she continually talked of a child she had given birth to, who had died and was now buried in the cemetery. See DVS, I, 73.

48. Another 'Mary' in The Devils, Marie Shatov, is also loosely connected with our theme, since she dies in childbirth.

49. Saward, op. cit., 29-30.

50. PSS, XIV, 126; 18.

51. Onasch, Der verschwiegene Christus, 180. Onasch further develops his views on Dostoyevsky's attitude to yurodstvo in 'Der hagiographische Typus des "Jurodivy" im Werk Dostoevskijs', Dostoevsky Studies (Journal of the International Dostoevsky Society), I, 1980 (111-21).

52. PSS, VIII, 68.

53. PSS, XV, 108.

54. PSS, VIII, 25; PSS, XIV, 20.

55. See, e.g., PSS, IX, 239-42.

56. PSS, VIII, 58; PSS, XIV, 161.

57. Saward, op. cit., 19.

58. PSS, VIII, 86.

59. Ibid., 54.

60. Ibid., 13.

61. PSS, XIV, 20.

62. PSS, IX, 114. The fragment seems to have been written between May and September 1868: see PSS, IX, 190.

63. PSS, VIII, 6.

64. PSS, XIV, 28.

65. Ibid., 163.

66. Ibid., 199.

67. Ibid., 478.

68. PSS, VIII, 356.

69. Ibid., 69.

70. Ibid., 104.

71. Ibid., 354.

72. Ibid., 458.

73. Zamotin, op. cit., 124.

74. PSS, XIV, 174.

75. Ibid., 175.

76. Ibid., 179.

77. PSS, VIII, 485. Significantly, however, Myshkin has a childhood memory of attending a funeral service in a country church: see ibid.

78. At the Yepanchins' dinner party: see Chapter Four, 227-9, above.

79. PSS, XIV, 83.

80. Ibid., 39.

81. Ibid., 66.

82. The Skoptsy, too, made much of giving and receiving blows on the face: see Lord, op. cit., 66.

83. PSS, VIII, 99.

84. PSS, XIV, 126.

85. Ibid., 19-20; 136-40.

86. Ibid., 328.

87. Ibid., 126-7. Pryzhov reveals that men too could be klikushi: see Pryzhov, op. cit., 660.

88. Saward, op. cit., 27.

89. Ibid.

90. N. A. Nekrasov, Sobraniye sochineniy (8 volumes; Moscow, 1965), I, 186-8.

91. F. I. Tyutchev, Stikhotvoreniya (Moscow/Leningrad, 1962), 288.

92. See Chapter Seven, fn. 90, above.

93. See Conybeare, op. cit., 220.

94. PSS, XIII, 107.

95. Pisma, II, 150.

96. PSS, XIII, 409; 410.

97. DP, 1877, 511; 512; 514 (1880 Aug. II).

98. PSS, XIII, 286.

99. Ibid., 300.

100. Ibid.

101. Ibid., 301.

102. The following details appear in ibid., 9.

103. The tale of Maksim Ivanovich may be found in ibid., 313-22.

104. PSS, XXI, 31-41.

105. PSS, XIII, 109.

106. Ibid., 331.

107. PSS, X, 217.

108. PSS, XIII, 108.

109. Ibid., 290.

110. PSS, X, 188.

111. PSS, XI, 121. See Chapter Seven, 386, above.

112. PSS, XIII, 289.

113. Ibid., 290. See fn. 109, above.

114. PSS, XIV, 267.

115. Ibid., 283-4.

116. Ibid., 310.

117. For further details about this sect, see Conybeare, op. cit., 165-72.

118. PSS, XIII, 290.

119. PSS, XIV, 290.

120. PSS, XIII, 310.

121. Ibid., 309.

122. Ibid., 310.

123. PSS, VI, 391.

124. PSS, XIV, 293.

125. See fn. 103, above.

126. PSS, XIII, 319.

127. See Chapter Five, 296, above.

128. PSS, XIII, 284.

129. PSS, I, 277; 280; PSS, X, 24-5. Andreyev will be discussed in more detail below.

130. PSS, XIII, 309.

131. Ibid., 311.

132. Ibid. Cf. Isa. 35: 10 'and sorrow and sighing shall flee away'; and Rev. 21: 4 'and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain'. Makar's words also closely resemble a passage in Parfyony's writings: 'Where there is no pain, no sorrow, no sighing, but only eternal life'. See Pletnev, Parfenij, 34.

133. Myshkin relates his encounters to Rogozhin: see PSS, VIII, 182-4.

134. PSS, VI, 311.

135. PSS, X, 411.

136. Ibid., 412.

137. Ibid., 484.

138. Ibid., 480.

139. Ibid., 24-5.

140. Ibid., 24.

141. Ibid., 124-5. Further detailed reference will not be given.

142. Ibid., 266.

143. Ibid., 412.

144. Davison, Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky, 114.

145. PSS, X, 483.

146. Ibid., 484.

147. Ibid., 483.

148. Ibid., 485-6.

149. Ibid., 488.

150. Ibid., 488; 496.

151. See Chapter Eight, 433, above.

152. PSS, X, 491.

153. Ibid., 251.

154. Ibid., 497-8.

155. Peace, op. cit., 204.

156. PSS, X, 230.

157. Ibid., 251.

158. Ibid., 488.

159. N. A. Petrovsky, Slovar' russkikh lichnykh imyon (Moscow, 1966), 210.

160. PSS, X, 507.

161. Ibid., 486.

162. Ibid., 494: 37.

163. Ibid., 497.

164. Ibid., 491.

165. See Chapter Eight, 418-20, above.

166. PSS, X, 500.

167. Fn. 140, above.

168. PSS, X, 491; 506.

169. See Chapter Two, 90-1, above.

CHAPTER TEN

DOSTOYEVSKY AND MONASTICISM

We are by now familiar with Dostoyevsky's tendency to look to one side of the established Church for inspiration when depicting his religious ideal, while yet ensuring that his characters are firmly anchored in Orthodoxy. We have seen him consistently reject institutionalized religion, both on the conceptual and on the practical plane. His religious characters have tended to be on the periphery of the Church, which has not had a prominent role either in initiating or sustaining their faith. A letter from Dostoyevsky to Pobedonostsev in August 1879 suggests that The Brothers Karamazov might constitute a turning-point in this respect, however. Pobedonostsev had written to give Dostoyevsky his response to the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor'. He was full of praise for its literary qualities, but remarked that the novel so far contained no rebuttal of the ideas expressed in the 'Legend'. Dostoyevsky replied:

> You pose a most necessary question: that I have not yet provided an answer to all these atheistic propositions, and that one is needed. You are quite right, and it is in this that all my anxiety and all my concern now lie. For I intend that this sixth book, 'The Russian Monk'. . . will be an answer to this whole negative side.[1]

Dostoyevsky would seem after all to be placing his hope in institutionalized religion: in monasticism, an institution central to the Russian religious consciousness. However, a warning that the writer's understanding of the concept 'monasticism' might well differ from that traditionally held may be found in a further letter relating to Book Six, written

shortly before that referred to above. Dostoyevsky is writing to his editor, Lyubimov:

> I have called this sixth book 'The Russian Monk' - a bold and provocative title, for all the critics who are hostile to us will immediately cry out: 'Is this what the Russian Monk is like? How dare you place him on such a pedestal!' But so much the better if they shout, isn't that so? (I know they won't be able to restrain themselves.) I don't feel that I have transgressed against reality: not only is it justified as an ideal, but it is also justified as a reality.[2]

Dostoyevsky clearly knew that what he had written was controversial, but at the same time felt that his type of monasticism was what was needed. In this final chapter of our study we will be concerned to establish in what respects 'Dostoyevskian' monasticism differs from traditional monasticism, and how it reflects the overall tendencies which we have identified in Dostoyevsky's religious ideal.

The monastic tradition had long played an important part in the religious life of all Orthodox countries. It has been described as a 'counterbalance' to established Christendom: a reminder to Christians not to confuse the Kingdom of God with any earthly kingdom.[3] In Russia in particular the monasteries were central to the spiritual life of the people. 'They constantly reminded men of that heavenly truth and justice which must be added to the world from within, while the world must be purified and sanctified, in order - thus transformed - to become the Kingdom of God. "The true life", the people were convinced, was lived in the monasteries and it was for this reason that Russians were so fond of "visiting the holy places", to which they were attracted by the longing to share in the

Kingdom of God "manifested" on earth'.[4]

There were two major trends in Russian monasticism, dating back to the debate between the 'Possessors' and the 'Non-Possessors' at the beginning of the sixteenth century.[5] The Non-Possessors, whose main representative was Nil Sorsky, considered that a monk's primary task was to help others by praying for them and by setting an example of holiness. They believed that monks should be detached from the world, and consequently were opposed to monastic landholding. They stressed the need for an inner and personal relationship between the individual soul and God, and rejected the use of force and violence against heretics. They drew a clear line between Church and State. The Non-Possessors' conception of monasticism was directly influenced by the Hesychast movement which first evolved in the early Eastern Church. 'Hesychast' is derived from the Greek hesychia, meaning 'quiet': a hesychast is one who in silence devotes himself to inner recollection and private prayer. Hesychasts emphasized the heart and the efficacy of sentiment, while minimizing the place of the intellect. The goal of Hesychasm was detachment from the world and indifference to its pursuits: the spheres of the sacred and the secular were sharply differentiated. An important feature of Hesychasm was the practice of the 'Jesus Prayer': the constant repetition or remembrance of the name 'Jesus'. The purpose of this was that prayer should become an act of the whole man, not just of the mind. Nil Sorsky's own knowledge of Hesychasm stemmed from a pilgrimage he made to Mount Athos: when he returned to Russia, he broke off all links with the world and began a new form of solitary life in a forest.

In contrast were the Possessors, led by Saint Joseph of Volokalamsk, who emphasized the social obligations of monasticism. The Possessors defended monastic landholding, arguing that the revenue from their land provided them with the means to fulfil their social obligations. (The Non-Possessors argued that alms-giving was the duty of the laity.) They believed in a close alliance between Church and State, and were enthusiastic supporters of the ideal of 'Moscow the Third Rome'. They felt that the aid of the State should be enlisted to deal with heretics. They emphasized the place of rules and discipline in Christianity, and stressed the importance of corporate worship and liturgical prayer.

From 1525-1526 onwards, the Possessors dominated Russian monasticism, and the tradition of Nil Sorsky was largely suppressed. But as a result of the monastic revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Non-Possessor tradition was restored to the centre of the Russian Church's life. An important figure in the Russian monastic revival was Paisy Velichkovsky (1722-1794), who studied theology at Kiev, and later went to be a monk on Mount Athos. While there, he effectively 'rediscovered' for Russian monasticism the Hesychast tradition, with its emphasis upon the Jesus Prayer and starchestvo ('Eldership'). Paisy himself did not return to Russia, but his disciples helped to promote these practices in Russian monasteries. At the time when Dostoyevsky was writing, therefore, the predominating type of monasticism was one which in some ways was hostile to the earthly and institutionalized forms of the Church.

Official monasticism had already made two or three fleeting appearances in Dostoyevsky's writings before The Brothers Karamazov, in The Devils. The monks who appear in The Devils are of minimal importance to the plot. There is the monk who attends Semyon Yakovlevich to collect the offerings, and who regrets the yurodivy's excess of spiritual zeal which deprives the monastery of funds. There is also an anonymous monk who promptly appears with a collecting bowl after the desecration of the town's icon by Fedya the convict, an event which results in a stream of alms-giving visitors: he too is anxious that the local monastery receive as much financial benefit as possible.[7] Although it is nowhere stated, it could well be that both monks hail from the Spaso-Yefimevsky Bogorodsky monastery, the abode of Bishop Tikhon. The chapter 'At Tikhon's' in which this monastery is described does not, of course, appear in the final version of the novel. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the residents of the monastery are portrayed negatively, both in terms of character and appearance, and in terms of their treatment of Tikhon. The monk who takes Stavrogin to see Tikhon, for example, is so over-weight that he is unable to bow properly and is reduced to jerking his head up and down.[8] He proceeds to behave in a very disrespectful manner to Tikhon - as, indeed, do most of the other monks in the monastery.[9] The Archimandrite of the monastery, as we have already seen, unkindly accuses Tikhon (behind his back) of 'careless living and almost heresy'.[10] None of these monks impresses us with the sincerity of his spirituality, and there is little in the way they are presented to suggest that at this stage Dostoyevsky regarded

monasticism as his religious ideal.

There are, of course, not only monks in The Devils, but also nuns: those in the convent where Marya Lebyadkina once lived. In view of Dostoyevsky's tendency, as noted in the previous chapter, to associate spiritual sincerity specifically with women, we might reasonably expect the convent to fare rather better at his pen than does the monastery. Yet this is not the case. We have already remarked that the Mother Superior of the convent does not come across very well: she provides a very uncharitable and unchristian explanation of the yurodstvo of Blessed Yelizaveta.[11] But even the ordinary nuns are portrayed in an ambiguous manner. Their religion contains an excessive proportion of superstition, for example: they are very fond of having their fortunes told with a pack of cards by Marya Lebyadkina, and they attach great importance to the resulting prophecies, sighing and shaking their heads. They are not significantly distinguished from the superstitious peasant women who sigh over Blessed Yelizaveta: both groups show the same propensity to gape and gasp in fearful awe.[12] Thus, although the reasons differ in each case, neither the monks nor the nuns in The Devils commend themselves to us.

The portrayal of official monasticism in The Brothers Karamazov is not as dependent upon caricature as that in The Devils. However, the monastery still contains its fair share of pious monks, who consider themselves superior to mankind in general and to Dostoyevsky's religious characters in particular. Further, there are hostile factions among the monks themselves, with the supporters of the proud ascetic Ferapont eagerly awaiting their chance to bring down Zosima.

The negative aspects of official monasticism do not escape the sharp tongue of Fyodor Karamazov, whose apparently frivolous words so frequently have a serious dimension. Some of what he says about monks is deliberately provocative: thus he mischievously ponders the significance of the fact that monasteries are male preserves, and remarks slyly that on Mount Athos they forbid not only women, 'but every female creature - hens, turkey hens, female calves ...'[13] This is not the first time that Mount Athos, the respected centre of Orthodox monasticism, has been treated with disrespect in Dostoyevsky's novels: it may be recalled that the monk whose teaching Marya Lebyadkina so unceremoniously rejects in The Devils also comes from Mount Athos.[14] The main thrust of Fyodor Karamazov's criticism of monasticism, symbolized by the apt, if unglamorous, image of cabbage eating, is rather more serious, and is closely related to important questions raised in the 'Legend' regarding spiritual élitism and the attainment of salvation. Fyodor Karamazov rebukes the monks for spiritual pride, and equates their observance of fasts with mere ritualism: 'You seek salvation here by eating cabbage and you think you're righteous men! You eat gudgeons, a gudgeon a day, and you think you can buy God with gudgeons.'[15] The idea that monks are concerned only with their own salvation is expressed also by Lise Khokhlakova, who does not hide her surprise when Alyosha agrees to leave the monastery for a while in order to visit her: 'I told Mother you wouldn't come for anything because you were saving your soul'.[16] This conception of monasticism is, as will be seen, decisively rejected in the course of the novel.

The reputation of official monasticism is restored to a

considerable extent by the presence of Fathers Paisy and Iosef. Both men are sincere and committed. They are humble and unassuming, yet forceful enough to deal sharply with the liberal Miusov on the one hand, and the severe Ferapont on the other. They display a healthy lack of patience with the foolings of Fyodor Karamazov, a response which the reader finds rather more satisfying than the sanctimonious slavonicisms of the Abbot when placed in a similar situation. Above all, they are devoted to Zosima, and he clearly thinks highly of them, too, including them in the small group of his dearest friends. It appears that Zosima has decided that after his death the spiritual direction of Alyosha should be transferred to Paisy.[17] Iosef and Paisy combine devotion to Zosima with a traditional understanding of the role of the Church in man's salvation: it is Paisy who declares in the debate on ecclesiastical courts that the only way to Heaven is through the Church.[18] So far as Dostoyevsky is concerned, Iosef and Paisy clearly represent the best features of traditional monasticism, and there is no obvious attempt to undermine their position. Yet it is neither Iosef nor Paisy who stands at the centre of monasticism in The Brothers Karamazov, but Zosima, who is a starets ('Elder'), and as such does not quite belong to the mainstream of monasticism. It is only when this has been taken into account that the apparently positive portrayal of official monasticism in the persons of Iosef and Paisy can be properly assessed. It is to a consideration of Zosima as Elder that we will now turn.

Eldership was still a comparatively new phenomenon in Russian monasticism at the time when The Brothers Karamazov

was written. Dostoyevsky himself learned about Eldership from the writings of Parfyony, who wrote about the monks on Mount Athos; and from the biography of Tikhon Zadonsky, who was himself an Elder. In addition, in June 1878 Dostoyevsky made a trip with Vladimir Solovyov to the monastery of Optina Pustyn, where he had audiences with the Elder Amvrosy.[19] That Dostoyevsky chose specifically to go to Optina Pustyn speaks of his interest in Eldership, since Optino was not the main monastery in the region. The Monastery of the Trinity and Saint Sergius, which Dostoyevsky had visited as a child, and which he went out of his way to visit in 1859 when returning from exile, was far more famous.[20] Optino was, however, renowned for its Elders, and was visited by many writers and thinkers in the eighteen-seventies and eighties for precisely that reason. At the same time it was open to all levels of society, and indeed it was through the Elders that the Russian monastic revival was felt by the people at large: Ware remarks that 'Seraphim of Sarov and the <u>startsi</u> [sic] of Optino exercised an influence far greater than any hierarch'.[21] Of particular relevance to the present study is the relationship of Optina Pustyn to the official Russian Orthodox Church. Optino was never in direct opposition to official Orthodoxy. However, it did not identify too closely with the established Church, and had little to do with the bureaucratic aspects of official religion: it drew its inspiration chiefly from the Non-Possessor tradition of Nil Sorsky. Further, the tradition of Eldership itself effectively constituted a challenge to the official Church, since it was a charismatic ministry, conferred directly by the spirit: no special ordination or appointment to

Eldership existed. It thus by-passed the structure of the established Church. Seen in the context of our study so far, such facts begin to explain why Dostoyevsky might have been attracted to the phenomenon of Eldership.

But what precisely was an Elder? Dostoyevsky himself provides quite a detailed definition. He raises the subject in Diary of a Writer in 1873, where he talks of 'certain ascetics and monks' to be found in Russian monasteries, who are also 'confessors and advisers'.[22] For the purposes of the article, Dostoyevsky distances himself from such Elders, and is careful not to commit himself regarding their alleged gifts. The article nevertheless reveals something of his conception of Eldership. The focus of his attention is an Elder's knowledge of the human soul:

> These monk-advisers are sometimes, it would appear, highly intelligent and educated. That's what people say, anyway - I have no idea myself. Apparently, some of them possess a remarkable gift for penetrating the human soul and mastering it.

Such Elders, says Dostoyevsky, are the resort of those whose sins weigh so heavily upon them that they despair for their salvation, and see no point in turning to their local priest for help. The Elders' ability to penetrate the human soul (prozorlivost') enables them to know what is right for such people, however, and what will bring them spiritual relief.[23] Elders are thus presented by Dostoyevsky as an alternative to the established Church, and as figures who have a far greater understanding of the spiritual workings of man than the official Church hierarchy.

A further dimension of Eldership to which Dostoyevsky draws

attention is an Elder's role as spiritual adviser to individuals who give their own will over to him and undertake a vow of complete obedience, which is effective until the Elder himself dissolves it. Onasch remarks that 'this power of spiritual direction over men competed, either openly or in secret, with the office of Abbot and Bishop, and for this reason Eldership frequently suffered persecution'.[24] The Elder's role as spiritual director is described in some detail by the narrator in The Brothers Karamazov:

> An Elder is someone who takes your soul and your will into his soul and his will. Having chosen an Elder, you renounce your own will and yield it to him in complete obedience and complete self-denial. This novitiate, this harsh school of life, is accepted voluntarily by the person who commits himself to it, in the hope that after a long novitiate he will be able to conquer himself and master himself to such an extent that he will finally, after a whole life of obedience, attain complete freedom, that is, freedom from the self, and so will escape the fate of those who have lived their whole lives without finding themselves within themselves.[25]

This account of Eldership contains two themes which we have previously encountered, and which have assumed a certain prominence in Dostoyevsky's religious outlook: the need for self-control and self-restraint which features particularly in the notebooks for The Devils, in connection with the Old Believer Golubov; and the need to 'find oneself within oneself' to which Dostoyevsky refers in his Pushkin Speech. Eldership clearly catered for needs which Dostoyevsky felt were crucial.

Zosima is not the first Elder to appear in a novel of Dostoyevsky. Bishop Tikhon in The Devils, who himself resembles an Elder (he possesses the gift of prozorlivost'), advises Stavrogin to submit himself in obedience to a local Elder after

reading his confession. Stavrogin equates what Tikhon says with a command to become a monk, and thinks that he is being offered an easy way out:

> 'You're simply proposing that I become a monk in that monastery? Despite my respect for you, I should have expected as much. I confess that in my most cowardly moments it did occur to me that, after making these pages public, I could hide from people for a while in a monastery . . . But to actually become a monk - even at the point of my most cowardly fear that thought didn't enter my head.'[26]

Stavrogin does not realize that submission to an Elder is the most difficult thing Tikhon could have prescribed for him, involving as it does the pacification of the will. Tikhon replies to Stavrogin's indignant outburst by saying that he does not have to be physically present in the monastery or to take monastic vows: 'Just be a secret, invisible disciple: you could even live in society completely'.[27] He thus distinguishes between the outward manifestations of the exercise and its essential nature. His words point forward prophetically to Zosima's command to Alyosha in The Brothers Karamazov.

We do not see the Elder to whom Tikhon is referring. But the Elder Zosima in The Brothers Karamazov occupies a prominent position: it is upon him, rather than the Abbot of the monastery, that attention is focused. Zosima's main concern as an Elder is people. He takes a sincere interest in the problems of those who come to him, as is demonstrated when he goes out to meet the 'devout peasant women' at the beginning of the novel.[28] Like stranstvovaniye and yurodstvo, Eldership occupied a special place in narodny spirituality, and this is reflected in Dostoyevsky's portrayal of Zosima, who is greatly loved and

revered by the women, some of whom have travelled long distances to see him. He is a source of comfort and advice for them, someone on whom they can unload their burdens. Despite the crowd and his own ill health, Zosima does not attempt to deal with the peasant women en masse, but speaks with them one by one, acquainting himself with each individual's circumstances, and using his deep understanding of the human condition to bring peace and spiritual release. He calms a klikusha; sooths a grieving mother; relieves the burden of sin of a young woman who seems to have murdered her husband. He does not linger to be thanked and praised, but moves on to the next with a sense of urgency: 'But the Elder had already turned away'; 'But the Elder had already noticed . . .'[29] The Abbot, by contrast, does not appear to have any contact with the common people: he concerns himself only with the monastery's influential visitors and is content to remain within his quarters.

Zosima seems to know without being told who is most in need of his help, and to be able to sense when something serious is wrong. This capacity to see right to the heart of a person is demonstrated in a particularly vivid manner when, displaying the gift of prozorlivost',[30] he foresees the tragic fate of Dmitry Karamazov. His clear superiority over the official Church hierarchy in dealing with people in the world may best be seen by comparing his treatment of Fyodor Karamazov with the approach adopted by the Abbot. We saw in Chapter Two that the Abbot adopts a pious and humble attitude which is both inappropriate and ineffectual.[31] He has little understanding of the workings of Fyodor Karamazov and those like

him, with the result that his guest develops even more scorn for monasticism than he had previously. The Abbot's consternation when faced with such unruly characters highlights the great divide which exists in his mind between the monastery and the sinful world outside. Zosima, meanwhile, is able to see through Fyodor Karamazov, and he recognizes in particular the part played by pride in the latter's behaviour. The Elder thereby lends support to the conviction expressed by Dostoyevsky as early as The Humiliated and the Insulted, through the character of Jeremiah Smith, that it is pride more than anything else which is an obstacle to spiritual peace.[32] (Nikolay Stavrogin is another eloquent testimony to this conviction.) Zosima understands the problems which beset human beings. Rather than piously floundering when faced with the forceful characters who together make up the Russian narod, he always has an appropriate response, be it compassion, severity or humour. His movements to and fro between his cell and the waiting groups of visitors suggest that what is required is interaction between monasticism and life, not the strict differentiation represented by the Abbot.

In addition to his role as Elder, Zosima also fulfils for the narod the role traditionally attributed to official monasticism, and to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter: he is a reminder of what God intended life to be like, a reminder that

> if there is sin, untruth and temptation among us, then there is still someone somewhere on earth who is holier and superior, someone who has the truth and knows the truth, which means that it is not dead on the earth and will therefore come to us, too, one day, and rule over all the earth, as it was promised.[33]

It is consistent with the overall tendency in The Brothers Karamazov away from institutionalized religion that this particular role is associated with an Elder rather than with the official monastery. Zosima himself effectively removes the role one stage further from the realm of official monasticism when he implies that any righteous person can be an inspiration for sinners in this way: 'If you yourself sin . . . rejoice for the righteous, rejoice in that, though you have sinned, he is righteous and has not sinned'.[34] The optimism which is inherent in such an approach to sin is characteristic of Zosima. He is well aware of the difficult material circumstances of the narod, and he knows that they are weak and prone to go astray. In this he resembles the Grand Inquisitor. In distinction to the Inquisitor, however, he has hope for the weak masses. And he in turn represents their hope in themselves.

Little of what we have so far seen of Zosima is in any way connected with institutionalized religion. Indeed, much has not been specifically religious at all: we seem to have instead been concerned primarily with ways of dealing with people and coping with the vagaries of human nature. This is merely a reflection of the priorities of Zosima's ministry, in which formal religion is not to the forefront. Leontyev was among the first to ponder the precise nature of the relationship between Zosima and the official Russian Orthodox Church. Although on the whole he approved of The Brothers Karamazov, and felt that Zosima was an improvement upon some of the heretical religious characters Dostoyevsky had previously offered his readers, he still had reservations, as we have seen.[35]

Rather more recently, Hackel has suggested that Zosima attaches little importance to the Church. He concedes that the Elder 'speaks briefly of the Church as an agent of reconciliation in society', and that he 'even mentions the sacraments': 'but in general, and certainly in respect of the devotional practices advocated by him, the Church is not involved, recollected or (apparently) required'.[36] Askol'dov similarly notes the absence of 'the continual summons to the Church as a cult and as a mono-ideology' which one might reasonably expect from a monk.[37] He does not, however, suggest that the Church is rejected by Zosima: the Elder does not break with the traditional foundations of religious life, he claims, but merely does not take them alone as his basis. Criticism of Zosima's apparently negligent attitude towards the traditions and teachings of the Church may, of course, be found in The Brothers Karamazov itself. For Zosima's enemies within the monastery, the Elder's whole mode of being constitutes a challenge to official monasticism. Most of the criticisms of him are voiced openly only after his death and the ensuing 'odour of corruption', but they make an impressive list. He is accused of teaching that 'life is a great joy, not tearful humility'; of not believing in a material hell; of not keeping to the required fasts; of pride; of breaking the secret of confession by holding open confession.[38] But to what extent are such criticisms justified? What place does the Church occupy in Zosima's spirituality?

Zosima does in fact observe Orthodox ritual: he makes confession to Father Paisy; he takes communion; he partakes of the sacrament of Divine Unction (soborovaniye).[39] But it is

a question of emphasis: although he apparently treats these practices with all seriousness, they are not accorded centrality in his spirituality, and the reader tends not to notice them. We saw in the previous chapter that Zosima greatly values prayer and encourages the monks to pray for joyfulness.[40] But there is no evidence that he spends the long nights in prayer which one might expect from a Russian Orthodox Elder: indeed, there is altogether little evidence in his life of the traditionally rigorous regime of the Elder as represented by Amvrosy of Optino or Tikhon Zadonsky. Little prominence is given by Zosima to attending church services, a trait which he seems to have passed on to Alyosha Karamazov, as we shall see below. A notable exception is the Elder's fondly recalled childhood visit to church, which seems in any event to belong to an altogether different plane of experience, and which is the only tangible religious experience which we have so far been able to identify in our search for ways in which the Orthodox Church conveys 'right knowledge' to the Russian people.

Yet it would be wrong to dissociate Zosima from the established Church completely. He in fact makes several very orthodox religious statements, as we shall see. But they tend to be mentioned only fleetingly, and to become submerged in his rather less orthodox religious tendencies. We might usefully take his attitude to fasting as an example. Zosima himself, as we have seen, is criticized for not keeping to the necessary fasts in the monastery. It is generally assumed that he thinks himself above such things. In fact, he attaches considerable importance to them, as may be illustrated by his recommendation of prayer and fasting to a young monk who is

troubled by devils.[41] (When this fails, he recommends that in addition a medicament be taken.) However, he defends such disciplines not as ends in themselves, but as means to an end: freedom from the tyranny of the self. Zosima's emphasis becomes clear in the defence of monastic obedience, fasting and prayer which he undertakes in the section 'A Russian Monk':

> 'People even laugh at monastic obedience, fasting and prayer, and yet it is only in them that the way lies to real, genuine freedom: I cut off all superfluous and unnecessary needs, I subdue my proud and vain will and chastise it with obedience, and, with God's help, I attain freedom of spirit and with it spiritual joy!'[42]

Zosima is interested not in the disciplines themselves, but in what they can help to bring about. His attitude to fasting and obedience thus contrasts markedly with the attitude of Ferapont and his admirer, the Obdorsky monk. If one accepts that monastic discipline is a means to an end, then one can also understand why Zosima himself does not adhere strictly to the monastery's regulations. Dostoyevsky is not suggesting, after the manner of some sectarian groups, that there are two grades of Christian: those for whom the rules of institutionalized religion exist and are useful, and those who are above such rules. He looks beyond the rules to the principle they embody: once the rules have produced the required effect, they are dispensable. Zosima has in the past lived a life of obedience and fasting, and has thereby attained freedom from the self. Having once attained this, he is free from the world's bondage, and is consequently enabled to enjoy the world, rather than fear it. There is not, therefore, a gap between what Zosima preaches and what he practises, and his words in

support of traditional monasticism carry the full weight of his conviction.

A similar tendency to look to the essence of monasticism rather than be diverted by the practices which surround it may be observed in A Raw Youth, where Makar Dolgoruky tells of his hermit friend, Pyotr Valeryanych.[43] To all appearances, Pyotr Valeryanych leads an exemplary life as an ascetic. Yet he does not consider himself a true monk, since he knows that he has not fully overcome his will: as we saw in Chapter Seven, he is unable to give up smoking.[44] No amount of fasting and theological study will make him a monk since he lacks the essence of monasticism: complete freedom from the self.

For all the criticism Zosima suffers as a result of his 'casual' attitude to monastic discipline, his positive conception of asceticism is in fact consistent with the Russian ascetic tradition, which 'did not aspire to rejection of the world or disdain for the flesh, but to something quite different - to that clear vision of heavenly truth and beauty which by its radiance makes the injustice which reigns in the world irresistibly clear, and thus summons us to emancipation from the world's bondage'.[45] Makar Dolgoruky's conception of the hermit life is also consistent with such 'joyous asceticism'. He refers to the hermit life symbolically as the pustynya, and ranks it incomparably higher than his own wandering existence.[46] He has great admiration for the self-control to which the hermit attains, and which enables him to withstand the diverting allure of the world: 'In the wilderness a man fortifies himself for every feat'. But Makar is not lending his support to dark and gloomy asceticism, for freedom from the

self brings with it great joy: 'At first you feel sorry for yourself of course (that is, when you go into the wilderness) - but then each day you become more joyful, and at last you see God'.

So far as the traditional monastic disciplines are concerned, therefore, Zosima starts from a position which is consistent with the teachings of the Church, but develops it as he sees fit, and in a way which, in this particular instance, tends to place emphasis upon the inner spiritual state of the individual, while relegating the externals of religion to a subordinate position. A similar pattern may be observed in his teachings as a whole. The point of reference for his teachings is the Russian Orthodox Church, as we saw in the previous chapter when examining his attitude to suicides: 'They say that it's a sin to pray to God for them, and outwardly the Church seems to reject them'.[47] But we also saw that, while thus drawing attention to the Church's teaching, Zosima did not feel bound by it, and in fact abandoned it. One aspect of his teaching which has provoked particular comment in this respect is the prominence he accords to the practices of kissing the earth and watering it with one's tears. When advising the monks how to deal with people who have become embittered, for example, Zosima advocates the following course of action:

> 'If [the embittered ones] all leave you and drive you away by force . . . fall upon the earth and kiss it, moisten it with your tears, and the earth will bring forth fruit from your tears'.[48]
>
> 'Love to fall upon the earth and kiss it. Kiss the earth and love it ceaselessly and unsatiably . . . Moisten the earth with the tears of your joy, and

> love those tears. Do not be ashamed of this ecstasy, but value it, for it is a gift of God.'[49]

Hackel compares the importance attached to these practices by Zosima with the place they occupy in official Russian Orthodox teaching and writings. He admits that Orthodox sources for such teaching may be found: the gift of tears, for example, was possessed by the Elder Amvrosy of Optino, and was written about by Parfyony and Saint Isaac of Syria. However, such tears had a limited place in monastic spirituality, and were only a stage in the process of divinization, not an end in themselves: 'by contrast, Zosima suggests that they themselves must be zealously pursued'.[50] So far as the veneration of the earth is concerned - a tendency we considered in the previous chapter, where we related it to the myth of Mother Earth - Hackel identifies two sources, neither of which, significantly, is Orthodox monasticism: the tradition of Saint Francis of Assisi; and Russian sectarian or popular religious practices dating back to the fourteenth-century Strigolnik heresy.[51]

The prominence accorded by Zosima to the earth and the gift of tears has dual significance for the present study. First, it is a further indication of the liberties the Elder is willing to take with Orthodox teaching. Although on this occasion he does not depart from it completely, he misrepresents it, by emphasizing aspects which should not strictly occupy a position of prominence. Secondly, the practices under consideration constitute very direct, immediate and personal spiritual experiences. They do not require the mediation of the Church, but are on the contrary independent of any official religious structure. They are thus of a similar

inspiration to the type of religious practices we examined in connection with Dostoyevsky's stranniki: it is appropriate to recall at this point that Zosima himself has been a strannik.

The same tendency to bypass the structure of the Church may be noted in Zosima's advocacy of 'active love'. The subject is raised by him during a conversation with Mrs Khokhlakova, who has 'temporarily' lost faith in the immortality of the soul and wants to know how to prove that immortality exists. Zosima implies that abstract speculation about theological questions will lead nowhere. Immortality cannot be proved, but one can become convinced of it 'by the experience of active love':

> 'Try to love your neighbours actively and indefatigably. The nearer you come to achieving this love, the more you will be convinced of the existence of God and of the immortality of the soul. If you reach the point of complete selflessness in your love of your neighbour, you will most certainly regain your faith, and no doubt will be able to enter your soul.'[52]

It is characteristic of Zosima to demand consistency between one's faith and one's life - 'for what is Christ's word without an example?'[53] In the notebooks for The Brothers Karamazov he is given some very harsh words to say about the dual standards of parish priests in this respect, implying that the spirituality they show in church does not extend to other areas of their life: 'What is a priest to the narod? A holy person when he is in church or at communion. But when he's at home - to the narod he's an exploiter.'[54] These blunt words do not, significantly, appear in the novel itself. The concept of active love is far more than an injunction to live out one's Christianity and thereby remove the gap between what is preached

and what is practised, however. Active love is seen to be not so much the result and expression of faith as the means to faith. It is through loving that the individual knows what to believe. Such a concept effectively renders invalid not only abstract theological speculation, but also the Bible, the Church, the Church Fathers and any other channel which purports to be the way to faith. The emphasis is rather upon the experience of the individual.

Although the overall tendency of Zosima's teachings is, as we have seen, to depart from official Church teaching and traditional monastic practices, an important section of his discourses is devoted to a defence of the very notion of traditional monasticism, which in Dostoyevsky's time was increasingly under attack from those who maintained that monks were mere parasites in society with no positive contribution to make. This view is advanced by Arkady Dolgoruky in A Raw Youth, who compares monks unfavourably with people like doctors.[55] Zosima does not pretend that there are no worthless monks, and he certainly does not mince his words in this respect: 'It is true, alas, it is true that there are many parasites, gluttons, voluptuaries and brazen-faced tramps among the monks'.[56] But he does not feel that this constitutes an indictment of monasticism as a whole, and points out that 'meanwhile there are so many meek and humble monks, who thirst for solitude and fervent prayer in silence'. Zosima is here defending the Non-Possessor conception of monasticism, to which we have referred above: the idea that a monk's service to mankind is his life of prayer and meditation. His words are consistent with the view widely held in Eastern monasticism that

'it is not so much what a monk <u>does</u> that matters, as what he is'.[57] Dostoyevsky himself expresses almost identical views about contemplative monasticism in 'Our Monasteries', which appeared in <u>Grazhdanin</u> in 1873.[58] The article is a review of a series of articles about monasteries which had appeared in the journal <u>Beseda</u> (<u>Conversation</u>) in the previous year. <u>Beseda</u> had criticized monks on two counts, saying that they were a financial burden upon the state, and that they did not live the pure, selfless lives fitting to their station. To the first accusation Dostoyevsky responds by saying that the monks do not in fact cost the state anything, since they are maintained by contributions from the <u>narod</u>. He answers the second by saying that of course there are greedy and unscrupulous monks, and that he likes them no more than anyone else. But, 'who knows, perhaps in contemporary Russian monasteries there are many who are pure in heart, who thirst for the spiritual state of tender emotion /<u>umileniye</u>/, who suffer spiritually, and for whom, despite our liberal times, the monastery is an escape, an unquenchable spiritual need'. There is here no hint of criticism for those for whom monasticism is an escape from life: Dostoyevsky seems to consider such action perfectly valid. It may be noted that one of the reasons initially given for Alyosha Karamazov's decision to enter a monastery associates him with the solitude-seeking monks referred to by Dostoyevsky and Zosima: we read that the monastery showed Alyosha 'the ideal way of escape for his soul which was struggling to emerge from the gloom of worldly evil to the light of love'.[59]

Neither Dostoyevsky the publicist nor Zosima ignores the

Josephite monastic tradition with its emphasis upon the social role of the monk. Thus Dostoyevsky expresses the desire that the monks should offer material aid to the poor and should teach the narod, while Zosima draws the monks' attention to the social evils which they must help to eradicate: child labour and drunkenness receive particular prominence.[60] Zosima also urges the monks to teach the narod, and to read to them the great passages from the Bible.[61] We have seen that the Elder himself gets involved with the world through his encounters with different types of people, and is contrasted in this respect with the Abbot of the monastery. After the manner of Paisy Velichkovsky, therefore, Dostoyevsky tries to combine the best of both monastic traditions. But it is the meek and humble monks who thirst for solitary prayer to whom is assigned the most important task: from them, says Zosima, will come the salvation of Russia:

> 'For they are in truth prepared in silence "for the day and the hour, and the month and the year". In their solitude they preserve the image of Christ pure and undefiled for the time being, in the purity of God's truth, which they have received from the ancient Fathers, the apostles and martyrs, and when the time comes they will reveal it to the wavering truth of the world.'[62]

This is the real importance of monasticism for Zosima. The monks are associated with that which we have consistently found at the centre of Dostoyevsky's religion: the image of Christ. They are like a spiritual treasure-house: they are preserving the image of Christ intact for the rest of the world. They themselves have received that image from 'the purity of God's truth, which they have received from the

ancient Fathers, the apostles and martyrs'. It might reasonably be objected that there is little evidence that the monks in the monastery in The Brothers Karamazov are particularly aware of the important task assigned to them, but this does not detract from the support Zosima is giving to traditional monasticism.

Having once said that salvation will come from the monks, because they have preserved the image of Christ, Zosima then reveals Dostoyevsky's populist/messianic tendencies by declaring that salvation will come from the narod. The monks are told to 'take care of the narod and guard their heart', for 'this is a God-bearing narod'.[63] The role of the monastery has thus changed: the monks are now an instrument which must bring the narod to fruition so that the narod in turn can fulfil its salvific potential and be the vessel of grace. It should not surprise us that the monks are told specifically to guard the hearts of the narod: we have seen earlier that this is where the image of Christ may be found.[64]

Although we have indicated that in various ways Zosima acts to narrow the divide between the monastery and the world, we are still at this stage left with two distinct spheres: the monastery and the world; the religious and the secular. Zosima makes some important statements concerning the relationship of monks to the world. One interpretation of monasticism which he decisively rejects is that monasteries are for the spiritual élite. On the contrary, he makes a claim which must greatly have surprised Dostoyevsky's readers at the time, to the effect that a person's decision to become a monk amounts to an admission that he is 'worse than all the worldly and than

all men and all things on earth...'[65] An explanation for this unexpected claim is at hand as Zosima proceeds to expound the theology of mutual sin: a monk is worse by virtue of his deep conviction of his own responsibility for the sin in the world. Monks are thus not asked by Zosima to achieve superhuman feats which are beyond the capabilities of others, but, on the contrary, to realize the extent to which they are exactly the same as other people and inextricably linked with them. The concept of the shared experience of a monk and other men is developed even further when Zosima declares that it is not just monks but all men who must come to this awareness of mutual responsibility for sin: 'This awareness is the crown of a monk's way of life, indeed, of every person on earth. For monks are not special people, but merely such as all men on earth ought to be.'[66] Alyosha Karamazov is inspired to a similar realization that Christendom is not meant to be divided into a spiritual élite and the rest of mankind when he reflects upon the shining example presented by Zosima. Despite his extreme love and devotion for the Elder, Alyosha does not regard him as someone whose holiness can only make the rest of humanity despair. Zosima might appear as a solitary example whose spirituality is beyond the reach of ordinary people, but 'in his heart is the secret of renewal for all'.[67]

In the words of both Alyosha and Zosima there is thus a strong underlying tendency to promote that which there is, or should be, in common between monks and mankind. This is not merely a restatement of the controversy between the Possessors and the Non-Possessors: however much the Possessors

participated in the world, they remained monks, and were outwardly distinguished from those among whom they worked. Rather, it is a reinforcement of the tendency we noted earlier when examining Zosima's attitude to fasting and monastic discipline: a movement away from monasticism as an institution towards monasticism as a concept, a set of attitudes and spiritual experiences. The most forceful statement of this tendency is Zosima's command to Alyosha to leave the monastery and 'be like a monk in the world /v miru prebudesh' kak inok/', and it is to this that we will now turn.[68]

Alyosha Karamazov's relationship to the official monastery might accurately be defined by the phrase 'in it, but not of it'. He has not taken formal monastic vows: his wearing of a cassock is purely voluntary; and he is free to come and go as he pleases.[69] Despite the latter freedom, he still spends a considerable amount of time within the monastery. Yet he does not give the impression that he has - or, indeed, either wants or needs - any close ties with it. First, he has no close friendships with any of the other novices, with the possible exception of Rakitin, whose own reasons for being in the monastery stem more from his career plans than from any sincere religious conviction, and who is hardly a source of Christian fellowship. Alyosha does not, apparently, need the encouragement and support afforded by membership of a Christian community of this sort, but seems happy to lead a relatively isolated spiritual existence - with one notable exception, as will shortly be seen. Second, like Zosima, Alyosha appears to participate in relatively few Orthodox

services. On one occasion, indeed, he may be seen deliberately absenting himself from a service: deeply troubled by the significance of the 'odour of corruption', Alyosha walks out of the monastery and ignores the bells calling him to worship.[70] The most memorable service which Alyosha attends, the funeral of little Ilyusha, occurs after he has left the monastery, and, as will be seen below, is set in a distinctly non-Orthodox context. The only services Alyosha is actually seen to attend while still in the monastery are those surrounding Zosima's death. This is entirely appropriate, since it is Zosima who is of central importance in his religious life. This has not always been the case: Alyosha's initial impulse towards monasticism arose before he had encountered Zosima. One reason why he first decided to enter a monastery has already been mentioned: his desire to escape from a dark and bewildering world.[71] He also, we learn, felt that the monastery would enable him to fulfil his desire to 'participate' in the truth and to 'live for immortality'.[72] He wanted to follow Christ sacrificially, with the whole of his being, and he initially approached the monastery with the intention of finding out whether those in it were similarly committed. Whether Alyosha found sincere commitment to the teachings of Christ in the official monastery we are not told, since as soon as he arrives his attention is taken by Zosima. Henceforth the official monastery is of little relevance to him.

The narrator proposes several reasons for Alyosha's immediate attraction to Zosima. Zosima had no doubt impressed Alyosha by 'some special quality of his soul', he says.[73] He suspects that the power and the fame surrounding Zosima might

also have influenced him. Perhaps more significant, we learn that Alyosha is particularly struck by Zosima's joyfulness, and by his ability to transform people's sadness and fear into happiness.[74] He is specially thrilled when Zosima comes out to the narod, since he knows how much he means to them. It would appear that the loving and joyful Christianity of Zosima corresponds to Alyosha's own spirituality, and that Zosima represents the 'truth' he is seeking. Zosima himself was pointed towards the monastic life by the joyful and beautiful spirituality of an individual: his brother Markel. Now his own spiritual beauty is playing a similarly crucial determining role in Alyosha's life.

It is nowhere explicitly stated that the relationship of Zosima to Alyosha is that of Elder to disciple. Such a formal declaration would indeed be inappropriate where two such spontaneous beings are concerned. The bond between them is felt rather than spoken or even thought: we read that Alyosha 'attached himself to Zosima with all the burning first love of his unquenchable heart'.[75] But the bond is as strong as any formal one: Alyosha knows, for example, that he has no choice but to comply with Zosima's decision that he should leave the monastery. Apart from the obedience Alyosha shows on this occasion there is, however, little in common between his relationship to Zosima and the typical Elder-disciple relationship as outlined by the narrator at the beginning of the novel. The narrator, as we have seen, refers to submission to an Elder as a 'harsh school of life', and talks in terms of years of obedience. He stresses the long struggle involved in attaining freedom from the self.[76] We might expect such a life

to be impossible for Alyosha, since we have been told that he is by nature unprepared for this kind of long and unglamorous sacrifice: like so many of his contemporaries, he is interested rather in performing an immediate act of heroism (skory podvig).[77] Yet there is no sign that Alyosha experiences any difficulty in his relationship to his Elder. The reason is twofold. First, Alyosha's Christianity seems to come naturally to him, and a selfless life is part of his nature. Linnér has remarked that there are no signs of inner tension in Zosima's spirituality, and the same is even more true of Alyosha: in the latter's case the absence cannot even be filled in by reference to a tumultuous youth.[78] In Alyosha the long struggle has been by-passed, and he does not really need the help of Eldership in the normal sense. The second reason may be found in the spontaneous spiritual bond which exists between Zosima and Alyosha. Devotion to Zosima is a joy for Alyosha, not a duty. This certainly is not true for many of the other young novices, who resent the authority Zosima has over them, and who abuse such features of his spiritual direction as open confession, by inventing sins to confess. That they consider that they have no real sins to confess is paradoxical indeed in the light of Zosima's theology of mutual sin: clearly these young monks have a long way to go.

Monastic life and obedience to Zosima thus pose no problems for Alyosha. On the contrary, the only thing he finds difficult is acceptance of the Elder's command that he must leave the monastery and go into the world: perhaps, paradoxically, this is why he needed to be bound to Zosima in the first place.

The actual phrase 'go and be like a monk in the world' is

not pronounced by Zosima until a relatively late state in the novel.[79] But the concept of 'monasticism in the world' is present from an early stage, when Zosima declares to Alyosha: 'I bless you for great service [poslushaniye][80] in the world'. The word poslushaniye is that traditionally used to denote the life of a monk, and its use indicates that Zosima does not intend Alyosha to leave his monasticism behind him when he leaves the monastery. In thus attempting to link the monastery with the world, Zosima is again defying the strong distinction between the two spheres which exists in the minds of many of the characters in the novel. The fears expressed by Paisy when he learns of Zosima's command to Alyosha represent the views of the official monastery in this respect. Although puzzled by Zosima's decision to send Alyosha into the world, Paisy does not question the wisdom of it: his devotion and confidence in Zosima are complete. But he does not have the same confident attitude to the world as Zosima: instead, he sees the world as a place hostile to Christianity, ready to lure Alyosha away with its vain frivolities and worldly pleasures, and to undermine his faith with its science which has ruthlessly analyzed and rejected all that was once held sacred.[81] For Paisy the world is full of snares, and Alyosha must arm himself against it. Zosima, on the contrary, has no doubts about Alyosha. He is aware of the nature of life in the world, but has confidence in his disciple, a confidence which in turn stems from his confidence in Christ: 'Christ is with you. Do not abandon Him, and He will not abandon you.'[82]

The reader is to an extent prepared for Zosima's command

to Alyosha, since in the history of Eldership provided by the narrator he has already read of an Elder who sends a monk away from him with the words: 'Your place is there and not here'.[83] The words of Zosima to Alyosha are very similar: 'Henceforth your place is not here'.[84] But even though both incidents are superficially similar, involving as they do an Elder's authority over a disciple who is initially unwilling to leave him, there is an important difference between them. The unknown monk in the story is being sent from a place renowned for its monasticism, Mount Athos, to what appears to be a modest and isolated monastic community in the North. He thus will still be in a monastic institution. Alyosha, on the contrary, is being sent completely away from anything resembling institutionalized monasticism. His experience is similar to the real-life experience of Vasily Chebotaryov, who was a novice of the Elder Tikhon Zadonsky. Although a formal monk, and in this differing from Alyosha, Chebotaryov died as a layman, because Tikhon allegedly did not give him his blessing to remain in the monastery.[85] Dostoyevsky was well-acquainted with the life of Tikhon Zadonsky, and it seems unlikely that this incident would have escaped his attention. It is possible that it inspired Zosima's command to Alyosha.

In the context of the novel itself, Zosima's decision to send Alyosha away seems to be the result of seeing him among his friends and family. The first indication that he is thinking along such lines comes when Alyosha is with Mrs Khokhlakova and Lise. Something strikes Zosima about this sight: 'the Elder turned and all at once looked attentively

at Alyosha'.[86] Perhaps it is at this stage that he first has a vision of what Alyosha's future should be. The command itself comes after the Church courts debate and the accompanying scandal, which amply demonstrates to Zosima the moral and spiritual chaos of Alyosha's family. First Zosima sends Alyosha to the table of the Abbot where his family is to dine. Even this is a heart-rending task for Alyosha, attached as he is to Zosima, and Zosima is aware of this. But the Elder shows no mercy, and goes on to say: 'Leave the monastery. Leave completely.'[87] It is as if he has decided that for Alyosha to progress as a Christian he must be forcibly removed from the comfortable confines of the monastery and made to apply his beliefs in the conditions of real life. As if to accustom the reader to the idea of Alyosha leaving the monastery, the decision of his spiritual father is shortly endorsed by his real father: 'Aleksey! Come back home today for good! Bring your pillow and mattress with you, and don't let me catch you here again.'[88] The paradox is that Fyodor Karamazov's words are intended as a restatement of the distinction between the monastery and the world. By physically removing Alyosha from the monastery, he thinks he is preventing him from being a monk. Zosima on the contrary sees the world as a continuation of Alyosha's monasticism.

If Alyosha can continue to be a monk when he is living in society, then such monasticism can by definition have little to do with seclusion within monastery walls, the wearing of a monk's habit, hours spent in solitary prayer and communal worship, or even with celibacy, since Zosima tells Alyosha to marry. Instead we return to the idea of monasticism as a

spiritual concept which exists independent of formal trappings. It might reasonably be objected that if such is Zosima's conception of monasticism, there was no real reason for him to enter a monastery himself: he too could have become a 'monk in the world'. Zosima declares that he was led to the monastic life by God (elsewhere, as we have mentioned previously, he attributes this role to his brother, Markel.)[89] Cynics might suggest that he became a monk rather in order to avoid the taunts of those who found his behaviour at the duel cowardly. It cannot be denied that by entering a monastery Zosima effectively gave in to the pressures of society to keep spiritual values where they belong: in spiritual institutions. Society is happy to accept that monks live according to a different set of values, providing that the monks do not try to apply those values in society itself. Any attempts to break this unwritten rule, such as Zosima's refusal to follow the social code for duelling, arouse resentment. When Zosima reveals that he is to become a monk, on the other hand, everything is neatly back in place, and there are no worrying intrusions from one sphere into another.[90] Yet, by thus endorsing the distinction between the spiritual and the secular spheres, Zosima seems to have acted in a manner contrary to his own subsequent teaching.

Pascal, certainly, considers that Zosima's presence in the monastery constitutes a weakness: 'Zosima is the perfectly good man always sought for, but like his predecessors he is once more an incomplete model, since he is by vocation retired from the world. He is completed by Alyosha.'[91] It is wrong, however, to think of Zosima as someone whose activity is confined to the

monastery precincts, as may be illustrated by reference to what may be termed the 'cyclical' presentation of three of the key religious figures in the novel: Markel, Zosima and Alyosha.

On one level, Markel, Zosima and Alyosha are three distinct characters, who follow one another chronologically. Yet on another they seem to form one composite character, and there is a cyclical quality about their presentation. Thus Markel is presented as the spiritual mentor and advisor of Zosima, and Zosima himself plays the same role for Alyosha. Yet at the end of his life Zosima reveals that Alyosha bears such a striking spiritual resemblance to Markel that he has often regarded him as his brother who has come back to him 'as a reminder and an inspiration'.[92] Alyosha thus becomes Zosima's mentor. Meanwhile, Zosima himself seems to live on in Alyosha. Mrs Khokhlakova declares that now the Elder is dead, Alyosha will take his place for her, and she confides in him 'as I would to Elder Zosima at confession'.[93] The idea of Alyosha as a reincarnation of Zosima is also suggested by events after the Elder's funeral. On the day that Zosima is committed to the ground in burial, Alyosha too enters into communion with the ground when he kisses the earth and waters it with his tears after his vision of Cana in Galilee.[94] Although of the two only Alyosha, strictly speaking, rises again, in a sense Zosima goes with him into the world. The Markel-Zosima-Alyosha circle is completed by the suggestions in the novel that Alyosha will return to the monastery to take up Zosima's place as Elder. When Zosima first gives Alyosha the order to leave the monastery, he makes it clear

that it is not for good: 'Your place is not here <u>for the time being</u>' (my emphasis).[95] Paisy confirms that Zosima has said Alyosha should spend 'some time' in the world.[96]

It is not only by being reincarnated in Alyosha that Zosima is enabled to 'be like a monk in the world', as may be seen by reference to his previous life. There is a tendency to think of Zosima's life as comprising two distinct parts: his time 'in the world' as a cadet; and his time as an Elder. Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, Zosima has spent many years 'wandering' around Russia: indeed, he entered this life shortly after first becoming a monk. In some respects, therefore, he too has been a 'monk in the world'. To draw a parallel between Zosima's 'wandering' and Alyosha's 'monasticism in the world' in this way is justified since, when first sending Alyosha from the monastery, Zosima himself mentions 'wandering'. He says to Alyosha: 'You still have a lot of wandering to do <u>[mnogo tebe yeshcho stranstvovat']</u>'.[97] As a contemporary youth the place for Alyosha to 'wander' is in the society around him rather than through the Russian countryside. For Zosima, wandering was a stage to becoming an Elder: thus it seems that Alyosha, too, will end life in a monastery.

Although <u>The Brothers Karamazov</u> as we have it represents only the first stages of Alyosha's life, what we see of him in society both before and after he finally leaves the monastery enables us to assess what Zosima meant by living 'like a monk in the world'. First, the role of Alyosha in society may usefully be compared with the role we have seen Zosima assign to the monasteries: to be a repository of the image of Christ,

and to present that image to the world as a reminder of what man and life were intended to be like. This in essence is what Alyosha does for those among whom he moves: they in turn respond to the good they see in him, and may be inspired to change their lives. A vivid illustration of this is provided by Grushenka. Grushenka has ominously declared that she will 'rip [Alyosha's] cassock from his back' when she sees him, and when he arrives at her home she begins in an appropriate fashion, by sitting herself upon his knee and plying him with champagne.[98] She is accustomed to being treated by all as a kept woman, and is playing the role expected of her. But events do not work out as she has planned. She has already discovered that the presence of Alyosha acts as a gentle rebuke to her: he acts as her conscience, and she begins to feel ashamed of herself.[99] This highlights a further way in which Alyosha resembles a monk when he is in the world: it is still not so much what he does that matters as what he is. Throughout it is his presence which is decisive rather than his words or actions. His very nature acts upon people: Grushenka expresses what happens by saying that Alyosha 'spoke to [her] heart, turned [her] heart over'.[100] Other characters too feel that Alyosha reaches right inside them, to their spiritual centre. Thus in the presence of Alyosha Ivan feels guilty for his treatment of Dmitry, and cries: 'Am I my brother Dmitry's keeper or something?'[101] Alyosha has not uttered a word: his mere presence has been sufficient. Grushenka's response to the pangs of conscience which Alyosha has aroused in her is a desire to avenge herself for the discomfort she has suffered. When Alyosha arrives, however, his manner towards

her causes her to change her plans, for he shows no condemnation, and instead treats her with respect and love. This works a transformation: she has never been treated like this before:

> 'He's the first and only one to have had pity on me, that's what! Why didn't you come before, my cherub? . . . I've been waiting all my life for someone like you, I knew that someone would come and forgive me. I believed that someone would love me too, vile me, not just for shameful reasons...'[102]

While thus recalling the inspirational role of the monasteries for the narod, Alyosha's role also differs from it. His own mission field is not the narod, but people in the town. These people belong to a range of social groups and classes, but they are united by one thing: they have become detached from the values embodied in the monasteries and are no longer drawn to them, either literally or metaphorically speaking. Unlike the monasteries, however, Alyosha is not 'static': he takes Christian values out to people, into their midst, rather than waiting for the people to come to him. Like the yurodivy he essentially is, he confronts people with the spiritual principle and begins to break down the barrier between the sacred and the secular spheres.

There is one very specific way in which Alyosha is like a monk when he is in society: he displays several characteristics of an Elder. He resembles Zosima in the understanding he shows of the complexities of human nature and the problem of pride: his analysis of Captain Snegiryov, for example, prompts Lise to exclaim: 'So young, yet he already knows what is in the soul...'[103] In his dealings with his brothers immediately after the murder of his father, Alyosha seems to have an Elder-like vision of the depths of their souls which

enables him to say that neither of them committed the killing. When Dmitry first asks him whether he thinks he is the murderer, Alyosha hesitates. But then something takes over him, and his declaration is made almost independently of his own efforts: '"Not for one moment did I believe you were the murderer", Alyosha's trembling voice suddenly blurted forth /vdrug vyrvalos' iz grudi Alyoshi/'.[104] He undergoes a similar experience shortly afterwards, when Ivan asks him who he thinks is the murderer. Again the reply comes from Alyosha by some other force:

> Alyosha suddenly realized he was shaking.
> 'You yourself know who', he helplessly blurted forth /bessilno vyrvalos' u nego/. He began to gasp for breath.
> 'But who, who?'. . .
> 'I know only one thing . . . You didn't kill father.'[105]

Reminiscent of Zosima as Elder too is Alyosha's role in the novel as the person to whom the characters make their confession. As Peace remarks, 'it is as though Alesha, in the world, is carrying on a tradition of Zosima within the monastery: the tradition of confessing the brotherhood aloud'.[106] These Elder-like characteristics displayed by Alyosha reinforce the suggestions we examined above to the effect that he will later return to the monastery to assume formally the role of Zosima.

By apparently marking out Alyosha for Eldership in this way, Dostoyevsky again demonstrates a clear commitment to the concept of essential monasticism. Although strictly speaking Elders could be laymen and need not hold a formal position in the Church, Dostoyevsky had made Zosima a monk and a priest. These institutionalized aspects are not to the fore in the presentation of the Elder, as we have seen, but they nevertheless form part of the background. Alyosha had very few formal links

with the monastery or with institutionalized religion generally when he was in the monastery, and he has even fewer once he has left. He will be taking to the position of Elder only himself and his inner spiritual qualities. This is entirely consistent with what we see of him in the world. For although we have been able to discuss specific aspects of his role in the world with reference both to the role assigned to monasteries by Zosima and to the traditional role of contemplative monasticism, the essence of his role is very simple: he lives in the world according to spiritual values. From the time of Zosima's initial order to him to leave the monastery, Alyosha gradually has more contact with people and events 'in the world'. At first, his role is entirely passive and he is essentially a messenger, whose movements are decided by the activities of others. As he gains in confidence, he begins to initiate rather than merely respond. He is frequently an unwilling participant, certainly inexperienced, and his interventions occasionally have disastrous results, as when he naively attempts to reconcile Ivan and Katerina Ivanovna.[107] Within a relatively short time, however, his varied experiences initiate him into the complexities of life. Yet no matter how competent Alyosha might be in society by the end of the novel, he is hardly one of the narodnye deyateli to whom Zosima refers.[108] His activities remain modest and related to the domestic sphere. This is consistent with Alyosha's own understanding of what Zosima intended him to do in society: 'The Elder sent me to reconcile and to bring together'.[109] It is this modest, yet vitally important, role which he undertakes. He is thus not called upon to do extraordinary things, merely to live according

to Christian values. Ultimately, this is what being 'like a monk in the world' amounts to. It seems hardly to differ from simply being a Christian.

Precisely because Alyosha's role is ultimately so simple, it does not invite detailed description. In order to conclude our investigation of his 'monasticism in the world', however, let us take a closer look at his part in the closing scenes of the novel: Ilyusha Snegiryov's funeral and the 'speech at the stone'.[110] Dostoyevsky attached considerable importance to Alyosha's final speech. 'In it', he wrote to Lyubimov, 'is partly reflected the meaning of the whole novel'.[111] Alyosha's activity in the scene is characteristically undramatic, yet important. He is primarily occupied with comforting and upholding people. He asks the housekeeper to stay with the deranged Mrs Snegiryov when the others go to the funeral. He calms Captain Snegiryov by concentrating his mind upon specific tasks which he knows will assume the utmost importance for the grieving father: taking flowers from the coffin to his wife; feeding the birds. Alyosha shows the same compassion and understanding for the bereaved as did Zosima when faced with the peasant woman whose child had died. He knows that there is no cure, but that grief must run its course. 'Let them cry', he says to Kolya Krasotkin, 'there's no point in trying to comfort them'.[112]

On one level, the Church is conspicuous in the final scenes of the novel. The various stages of the funeral are all mentioned by Dostoyevsky: the mass; the New Testament reading; the chant; the funeral service itself; the graveside ritual. Alyosha, we learn, is one of those who insisted that

Ilyusha be buried in an official Church cemetery, rather than by the stone where Captain Snegiryov intended the grave to be.[113] One particularly conspicuous reference to the Church occurs when Kolya Krasotkin, puzzled by the contrast between the sadness of a funeral and the apparent frivolity of the meal afterwards, remarks: 'how unnatural it all is in our religion'.[114]

The association of Dostoyevsky's religious characters with the teachings and practices of the Church in this direct and familiar way (nasha religiya) is, as our study has shown, unusual and unexpected. The Church has had little to do with Alyosha's own faith, as we have seen. Nevertheless, he seems to assume its presence on occasions such as these. It is perhaps appropriate to remember that Dostoyevsky himself had buried two children: his baby daughter, Sonya, in 1868; and, more recently, his three year old son, Alyosha.[115]

The final speech of Alyosha Karamazov is, however, distinguished by the absence of any reference to the Church or to specifically Orthodox beliefs. This is despite the fact that two details relating to the speech contrive to evoke an event central to the Christian faith: Christ's Sermon on the Mount. First, Alyosha has with him his band of twelve 'disciples', as did Christ Himself when He went to the multitudes to preach.[116] Further, the image of Alyosha preaching by a large rock recalls the mountain on which Christ preached. Alyosha's teaching differs from Christ's, however. Central to it is the importance of 'good memories'. Alyosha appeals to the boys to take with them into life the memory of this moment when they were all united in love through their love for Ilyusha. He declares: 'Know that there is nothing higher, or stronger, or healthier,

or more useful in life than a good memory, especially one from childhood, from your family home'.[117] Alyosha even assigns to such memories the role of bringing salvation - although it may be noted that his conception of 'salvation' seems to be rooted very much in this life: there is no suggestion of the 'other worlds' of which Zosima speaks.[118]

> 'By gathering many such memories to take with him into life, a person is saved for his whole life. And even if only one good memory stays with us in our heart, even that can bring us salvation at some time.'[119]

At the very moment he speaks these words, Alyosha is himself helping to create a 'good memory' for his young friends. We have already considered in some detail the role played for Dostoyevsky's characters by a beautiful memory of a childhood visit to church.[120] And indeed, the visit to the poor, old church in which Ilyusha's funeral service takes place is an important part of the day for Alyosha's band of followers. But when Alyosha speaks of 'good memories', he seems to be referring above all to the sense of unity which the boys have experienced, and which has been inspired by the person of Ilyusha. The beautiful place Ilyusha will occupy in the boys' memories is reminiscent of the place occupied by Markel in Zosima's spiritual life. Since Zosima attributes his espousal of the monastic life to Markel,[121] we might say that he too has been 'saved' by a 'good memory'.

At no point in his speech does Alyosha mention Christ or God. The qualities he urges the boys to show in life are kindness, courage and honour: admirable as these may be, they do not relate specifically to Christianity. At the end of his speech,

Alyosha does appear to come back to more specifically Christian ground. He is prompted by Kolya Krasotkin's question whether 'it is really true, what religion says, that we will all rise from the dead and come back to life, and see each other again'. Alyosha's response is immediate: 'Of course we will arise, of course we will see each other and will happily, joyfully tell each other all that has happened'.

Superficially this would appear to be a straightforward declaration of Christian faith in the resurrection of the dead, and orthodox Christianity would appear to have been restored to a position of centrality. At the same time, the whole of Alyosha's speech is reminiscent of a thinker whose philosophy differed in some dramatic respects from mainstream Christianity: Fyodorov. Dostoyevsky had become acquainted with Fyodorov's ideas at the time he was writing <u>The Brothers Karamazov</u>. Central to Fyodorov's philosophy was the idea that all living sons should direct their forces to the physical resurrection of their dead fathers. This could be achieved, he thought, when the strife which divided people had been removed and mankind was united in love. The attention Alyosha Karamazov pays in his speech to the loving unity of people and the memory of the dead, together with his declaration of belief in a physical resurrection, suggest that Fyodorov's ideas may have been in Dostoyevsky's mind as he wrote the closing pages of the novel. If that is indeed the case, then we have moved a considerable distance from the traditional Russian Orthodox monasticism with which this chapter opened. Such a diversion from mainstream Christian teaching certainly goes far beyond anything that Zosima says.

Even taken at its face value, however, the speech at the stone signals a considerable move away from orthodox Christian thought. We would not expect Alyosha to refer to formal religious systems or to well-worn theological formulae. But even Zosima mentions God and Christ, whereas Alyosha appeals only to the highest human qualities of love, kindness and honour - qualities which we can only assume arise spontaneously in man, since Alyosha reveals no other source. The sentiments expressed by Alyosha are reminiscent of the type of 'religion' to which Stepan Trofimovich in The Devils turns at the end of his life.[124] There is little which could be identified as specifically Christian in Stepan Trofimovich's spirituality, either: his conversion amounts to little more than a spiritual uplift. In defence of Dostoyevsky it might be argued that it would have been out of keeping with the character's background as a liberal of the forties if he were suddenly to express explicit Orthodox or Christian sentiments. The experience of Versilov in A Raw Youth is similar to that of Stepan Trofimovich in this respect. Versilov too undergoes a spiritual conversion after a 'rootless' liberal existence. No one doubts that his conversion is sincere. Yet he can only go so far in committing himself to specific beliefs and rites: when Easter approaches, for example, he finds himself incapable of performing sincerely the ritual required of him, and declares: 'My friends, I love God very much, but... I can't manage this'.[125] Unlike both Stepan Trofimovich and Versilov, Alyosha Karamazov is closely associated with Russia, and European liberalism plays no part in his character. Yet even he is no closer to specifically Christian,

let alone specifically Orthodox, spirituality in his speech. It is not just Dostoyevsky's liberals, therefore, whose spirituality is imprecise: it is as if Dostoyevsky were unable to take any of his characters beyond this point, even the person who turns out to be his final word, the 'monk in the world' Alyosha Karamazov.

The findings of the present chapter have justified our initial suspicion that Dostoyevsky's conception of monasticism might well differ from that traditionally held. Dostoyevsky's decision to make two 'monks' the carriers of the positive spiritual load in The Brothers Karamazov does not, after all, contradict the message of the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor' concerning institutionalized religion since, as we have seen, neither Zosima nor Alyosha Karamazov is a monk in the normally accepted sense of the word. Zosima's official status as a monk and priest is of little relevance to his real significance, which is as an Elder. In this latter capacity he does not claim to be a mediator, bridging the gap between men and God either through his own efforts or through the structures of the Church. Indeed, it would be entirely out of character for him to focus upon what separates men from God. He rather inspires people by his own spiritual beauty, which reaches out to the good which is in them and effects a response. The context for Zosima's spirituality is Russian Orthodoxy, and the Russian Orthodox Church is his point of reference. But, like so many of Dostoyevsky's religious characters, he does not feel bound by Orthodoxy, and makes some significant departures from it, most often in the direction

of a more spontaneous and more personal spirituality. Zosima does not purposely set himself up in opposition to the official Church. We have seen, however, that it is difficult not to make comparisons between him and the official monastery hierarchy, comparisons which are far from advantageous for the latter.

Traditional monasticism has both good and bad representatives in the novel. Dostoyevsky seems to favour a blend of the Non-Possessor and Possessor traditions, with the first acting as a basis for the second. An important role is assigned to official monasticism by Zosima: the monasteries are spiritual store-houses, and the monks' task is to preserve the image of Christ pure and intact for the world. Yet while thus lending his support to traditional monasticism, Zosima also challenges it. He decisively rejects the concept of monasticism as a place for the spiritual élite where individual monks work out their own salvation. And we are soon made aware that the traditional monastic disciplines are not sacrosanct: Zosima looks beyond the ritual to the essence of monasticism, which is freedom from the self. Once this has been attained, the disciplines are dispensable. The Elder looks to what there should be in common between monks and other people, and implies that there should be integration between monasticism and the world. Indeed, he strips monasticism of all of its institutionalized aspects when he sends Alyosha Karamazov to be 'a monk in the world'.

Alyosha is thus the embodiment of Dostoyevskian monasticism. He has no links with institutionalized religion, and formal religious practices play no part in his spirituality. He seems to acknowledge the authority of the Russian Orthodox Church, but

he says and does little which is specifically Orthodox, and even departs from Christianity altogether on occasion. Alyosha takes with him into the world only his faith and his inner spiritual qualities. Ultimately it is these qualities which, for Dostoyevsky, constitute monasticism and which alone provide the answer to the 'whole negative side' in The Brothers Karamazov.

1. Pis'ma, IV, 109. An extract from Pobedonostsev's letter may be found in ibid., 398.

2. Ibid., 91.

3. Ware, op. cit., 45.

4. V. V. Zenkovsky, op. cit., I, 32.

5. A fuller and more subtle account of the debate between the Possessors and the Non-Possessors may be found in N. A. Kazakova & Ya. S. Lurye, Antifeodal'nye yereticheskiye dvizheniya na Rusi XIV-nachala XVI veka (Moscow/Leningrad, 1955).

6. See Chapter Nine, 449, above.

7. PSS, X, 253.

8. PSS, XI, 5.

9. The same fate was suffered by the real-life prototype for Tikhon, Tikhon Zadonsky, Bishop of Voronezh: see Komarowitsch, op. cit., 70.

10. See Chapter Two, 95, above; and PSS, XI, 6.

11. See Chapter Nine, 454, above.

12. PSS, X, 115-16.

13. PSS, XIV, 35.

14. See Chapter Nine, 463, above.

15. PSS, XIV, 69.

16. Ibid., 50.

17. Ibid., 156.

18. See Chapter Two, 110, above.

19. Komarowitsch, op. cit., 64-5.

20. Pis'ma, I, 271.

21. Ware, op. cit., 254.

22. The Elder's role is discussed in PSS, XXI, 33-4. No further detailed reference will be given.

23. Lossky remarks that 'to accomplish this charismatic operation it is not enough to have that profound knowledge of human

nature which is given by long experience. One must each time have a vision of the person; and a person cannot be known except in a revelation.' V. Lossky, 'Le Starets Léonide', Contacts, XXXIV, 1961 (99-107), 102.

24. Onasch, Der verschwiegene Christus, 198.

25. PSS, XIV, 26.

26. PSS, XI, 29.

27. Ibid., 30.

28. PSS, XIV, 43-9.

29. Ibid., 47.

30. Ibid., 69; 258-9.

31. See Chapter Two, 101, above.

32. Ibid., 68.

33. PSS, XIV, 29.

34. Ibid., 291.

35. See Chapter Three, 165, above.

36. S. Hackel, 'The Religious Dimension: Vision or Evasion? Zosima's Discourse in "The Brothers Karamazov"', New Essays on Dostoyevsky, ed. M. V. Jones & G. M. Terry (Cambridge, 1983) (139-68), 149.

37. S. Askol'dov, 'Religiozno-eticheskoye znacheniye Dostoyevskovo', F. M. Dostoyevsky. Stat'i i materialy, (1-32), 17.

38. PSS, XIV, 301.

39. Ibid., 148.

40. See Chapter Nine, 491, above.

41. PSS, XIV, 303.

42. Ibid., 285.

43. PSS, XIII, 288-9.

44. See Chapter Seven, 373, above.

45. V. V. Zenkovsky, op. cit., I, 25.

46. Makar's comments on the hermit life may be found in PSS, XIII, 310-11. Further detailed reference will not be given.

47. See Chapter Nine, 493, above.

48. PSS, XIV, 291.

49. Ibid., 292.

50. Hackel, op. cit., 146.

51. Ibid., 147-9.

52. PSS, XIV, 52.

53. Ibid., 267.

54. PSS, XV, 253.

55. PSS, XIII, 310-11.

56. For this and the following quotation, see PSS, XIV, 284.

57. Ware, op. cit., 46.

58. PSS, XXI, 137-9. Further detailed reference will not be given.

59. PSS, XIV, 17.

60. PSS, XXI, 138; PSS, XIV, 286.

61. PSS, XIV, 265-7.

62. Ibid., 284.

63. Ibid., 285.

64. See Chapter Four, 242-4, above.

65. PSS, XIV, 149.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., 29.

68. Ibid., 259.

69. Ibid., 28.

70. Ibid., 305.

71. See 542, above.

72. PSS, XIV, 25.

73. Ibid., 28.

74. Ibid.

75. Ibid., 18.

76. See 529, above.

77. PSS, XIV, 259.

78. Linnér, op. cit., 47-8.

79. PSS, XIV, 259.

80. Ibid., 71.

81. Ibid., 145; 155.

82. Ibid., 72.

83. Ibid., 27.

84. Ibid., 71.

85. Komarowitsch, op. cit., 97-8.

86. PSS, XIV, 50.

87. Ibid., 71.

88. Ibid., 84.

89. Ibid., 283; 259.

90. Ibid., 272.

91. Pascal, Dostoïevski, 89.

92. PSS, XIV, 259.

93. PSS, XV, 13; 16.

94. PSS, XIV, 328.

95. Ibid., 71.

96. Ibid., 145.

97. Ibid., 71.

98. Ibid., 74; 315-7.

99. Ibid., 317.

100. Ibid., 323.

101. Ibid., 211.

102. Ibid., 323.

103. Ibid., 197.

104. PSS, XV, 36.

105. Ibid., 39-40.

106. Peace, op. cit., 221-2.

107. PSS, XIV, 174-5.

108. Ibid., 285.

109. Ibid., 178.

110. PSS, XV, 189-97.

111. Pisma, IV, 139.

112. PSS, XV, 194.

113. Ibid., 191.

114. Ibid., 194.

115. Anna Dostoevsky, Reminiscences, 146-7; 291-3.

116. Matt. 5: 1.

117. PSS, XV, 195.

118. PSS, XIV, 290.

119. PSS, XV, 195.

120. See Chapter Two, 71-7, above.

121. PSS, XIV, 259.

122. Ibid., 197.

123. See Chapter One, 43, above.

124. PSS, X, 505-6.

125. PSS, XIII, 447.

The present study has demonstrated that Dostoyevsky's attitude to institutionalized religion was a complex matter. His personal commitment to institutionalized religion, in the form of the Russian Orthodox Church, was not constant throughout his life, as we saw in Chapter One. This inconstancy was there attributed to fluctuations in the intensity of his religious faith and to Utopian Socialist ideas he first encountered in the eighteen-forties regarding the relationship between Christianity and the Church. Towards the end of his life, however, Dostoyevsky appeared gradually to return to the Church in which he had been brought up. He was increasingly willing to be identified with the Church in public life; and when he was dying he performed the rites expected of a sincere Orthodox believer.

In Chapter Two, we examined the presentation of the Russian Orthodox Church in Dostoyevsky's writings, looking in detail at his treatment of three specific areas: visits to church; the role of priests; and the desired nature of the Church, as revealed in the Church courts debate in The Brothers Karamazov. It was observed that while Dostoyevsky's writings contained few accounts of visits to church, those which existed had certain features in common. Most notably, the visits tended not to occur in the present, but were recalled as a memory from childhood. What the character remembered - indeed, re-experienced - was the sacred beauty of the church service. The essentially aesthetic impression made upon him as a child had remained through the years and was rekindled in later life. The possession of such memories

seemed to signal hope that, no matter how far from spiritual values a person might apparently have wandered, all was not lost. Experiencing such memories did not, however, seem to entail any resumption of Church attendance for those involved. Indeed, the prospect of any of Dostoyevsky's central religious characters becoming regular Church attenders and faithful observers of the Church's rites diminished as our study continued. Almost the only people we encountered who attached importance to attending Church regularly were the high society ladies in The Devils, whose religious sincerity was in any event suspect.

Russian Orthodox priests were seen to have no positive part at all to play for Dostoyevsky's characters. Summoned at crucial moments, usually at death, they were characterized by their irrelevance on both the human and the spiritual levels. They displayed a distinct lack of human warmth and understanding, while the spiritual aid they offered was formalistic and insincere. But it was not just the insincerity of the priests which caught our attention. The behaviour of Mrs Marmeladova and Stepan Trofimovich on their respective deathbeds suggested that man did not anyway need the help of the Church hierarchy to get to God, but that the way was direct. When examining the death scene of Mr Marmeladov, we drew attention to the part played by his daughter, Sonya, in particular to the way she presented an unconscious challenge to the official Russian Orthodox priest. Dostoyevsky seemed to be questioning the distinction between laity and clergy, and perhaps to be pointing in the direction of the 'priesthood of all believers'. Bishop Tikhon in The Devils differed

significantly from the other priests we had seen. He did not claim spiritual superiority, and did not put himself forward as a mediator. His role was rather to help people to come to terms with themselves. In some ways he resembled an Elder, more 'earthly' and to one side of the official hierarchy. In all those respects Tikhon could be seen as Dostoyevsky's ideal priest. While enjoying Dostoyevsky's approval he was not, however, popular with his colleagues in the official Church.

The Church courts debate in The Brothers Karamazov was unusual in the context of Dostoyevsky's novels: in it, the desired nature of the Church was discussed openly. We noted that the idea of the Church as an institution was not given prominence by Dostoyevsky's spokesman in the debate, Zosima. For Zosima, the term 'Church' did not signify a hierarchical body, but rather described a society, where everything was infused by the spirit of Christian love: not only the relationships between people, but also the functions of the State. Whether in fact the traditional functions of the State continued to exist in such a society was not made entirely clear by Zosima. They certainly were not clearly in focus, and this led us to suspect that Zosima was in fact advocating the abolition of the State. Father Paisy referred to the Church's role as mediator, declaring that the only way to heaven was through the Church. This point was not, significantly, taken up by Zosima. The Church of which he spoke was not a means, but an end: a world-wide body of people living Christian lives of love for one another.

Our preliminary investigation provided strong grounds for suspecting that institutionalized religion did not occupy a

position of importance in Dostoyevsky's religious thought. Dostoyevsky's characters frequently did not demonstrate the same commitment to the Church as their author apparently did when he created them. There was even the suggestion that the Church might, indeed, be dispensable. As yet, however, there had been no outright statements to this effect from Dostoyevsky, and no clear indication why he might hold such a negative view of institutionalized religion. A further result of our preliminary investigation was the emergence of certain guide-lines for our study. It had become clear that as much attention must be paid to what was absent from Dostoyevsky's treatment of religious themes as to what was there. Sometimes he would emphasize one particular dimension while paying little attention to others. Certain aspects were completely ignored. Had this occurred only on one or two isolated occasions, one might have been inclined to give Dostoyevsky the benefit of the doubt and to fill in the gaps. These were not isolated occurrences, however: the role of institutionalized religion was consistently underplayed or ignored by Dostoyevsky. It could not, therefore, be assumed that the reader had the right to supply what was missing. All the evidence suggested that Dostoyevsky's omissions were deliberate.

The contemporary Russian Orthodox Church itself was for the most part blissfully unaware that anything might be amiss in Dostoyevsky's religious ideal. The vast majority of those ecclesiastical commentators to whom we referred were swift to claim the great writer for the Russian Orthodox fold, and their articles were full of praise. Some were slightly offended by Dostoyevsky's tendency to concentrate upon monasticism at the

expense of the white clergy; while others would have preferred him to be rather more precise about the role of the Church in the realization of his ideal. Undeterred, however, they furnished the missing details themselves, little suspecting that in so doing they were seriously misrepresenting Dostoyevsky's religious views. It was left to some of the more perspicacious secular critics and to extremists like Konstantin Leontyev to draw attention to the less than Orthodox elements in Dostoyevsky's religious ideal, and to realize that the dearth of references to institutionalized religion might not be merely fortuitous. Such critics were in a minority, however, and Dostoyevsky continued to be fêted by the established Church.

We next turned to Dostoyevsky's presentation of religion in Western Europe, remarking that in depicting the Western Churches he was free, should he so desire, to make implicit criticisms either of his own Church or of institutionalized religion in general. We noted that Dostoyevsky's presentation of Roman Catholicism reflected the enmity traditionally felt by Russians for Rome. He was scornful of the idea of Papal Infallibility and of the Pope's claims to be the supreme Head of all the Christian Churches. Central to his bitter attack, however, was the accusation that the Roman Catholic Church had effectively turned into a state. To speak in the terms used by Dostoyevsky himself, Rome had given in to the third temptation of the Devil and had accepted the sword of Caesar, claiming that Christianity could not stand without it. This accusation was made both in the novels and in Dostoyevsky's publicistic writings, and at first sight seemed to be directed

specifically against the Roman Catholic Church. In the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', however, this criticism of Rome was elevated into a general principle which applied to all Churches.

The 'Legend' told us that Christ's act of withstanding the temptations in the wilderness constituted a rejection of the very concept of institutionalized religion as the work of the Devil. We saw that the Grand Inquisitor himself knew this: no more than Christ did he believe that a religious institution could mediate between men and God. The disagreement between the Inquisitor and Christ was not about institutionalized religion, but about the ability of men to cope in its absence. Dostoyevsky implied that men could indeed cope, guided by the image of Christ which seemed to be innate in their hearts.

It appeared that the bold rejection of institutionalized religion in the 'Legend' held the key to Dostoyevsky's presentation of the Church. Support for the concept of a direct and immediate religious faith, independent of religious bureaucracy, seemed appropriate coming from a writer like Dostoyevsky, whose novels abounded in characters who repeatedly challenged what was accepted as normal. Certainly the 'Legend' accounted for the important omissions from Dostoyevsky's presentation of the Russian Orthodox Church which had been noted in our preliminary investigation. Those aspects of the Church's role which had not been prominent or had effectively been ignored by Dostoyevsky were those which, broadly speaking, corresponded to the Church's role as a mediating body - the role decisively rejected in the 'Legend'.

The radical message of the 'Legend' ran like a thread through Dostoyevsky's presentation of religious matters. His

characters were consistently seen to by-pass the official Church and to enjoy a direct and immediate relationship with God. The 'Legend' clearly had profound implications for all Churches: Dostoyevsky was denying their right to exist. Yet, no sooner had Dostoyevsky been identified as nothing less than a destroyer of institutionalized religion, than a more conservative side of his attitude to religious matters came to light. We discovered that although he had effectively rejected institutionalized religion as a mediator between Man and God, he could not relinquish completely the idea of a Church. The tension between these two apparently irreconcilable stances informed the remainder of our study.

It first came to light when we examined Dostoyevsky's presentation of Protestantism in the light of the 'Legend'. The 'Legend' had in some respects seemed to point in the direction of Protestantism. Although men had been denied an institutionalized Church and the assurance provided by miracle, mystery and authority, an alternative road to God had been given. Their guide was to be the image of Christ. They were to follow Christ 'by faith alone': an essentially Protestant motif. We discovered, however, that Protestantism was not the answer. As was the case with Roman Catholicism, there were effectively two levels to Dostoyevsky's treatment of Protestantism. First, the 'confessionalist' approach: Dostoyevsky showed an unwillingness to see anything positive in the Protestant confession. He claimed that it was merely a negative phenomenon, a response to the extremes of Roman Catholicism, simply one stage in the German nation's eternal protest against Rome. He criticized what he saw as Protestantism's

concentration upon the spiritual side of man at the expense of his physical life. This one-sided approach seemed to be particularly associated in Dostoyevsky's mind with Swiss Protestantism. Beneath this essentially hostile confessionalist treatment could be noted implications for institutionalized religion in general. Specifically, we identified an attempt to retract the bold claims of the 'Legend' regarding Christianity's ability to exist without a structure, and Man's ability to remain a Christian in the absence of a Church. Dostoyevsky claimed that religion needed a 'container' if it were not to evaporate completely like a precious liquid spilt onto the ground. It must be embodied in a structure. Similarly, Man needed a Church. If people were left to work out their own salvation, they would founder helplessly. Religious freedom was too great a burden for them: they needed something firm to cling to. The 'Legend' had told us that this 'something firm' was available to Man in the form of the image of Christ in his heart. Dostoyevsky apparently did not associate possession of the image of Christ with Protestantism.

Dostoyevsky's presentation of Judaism illustrated both the more radical and the more conservative tendencies in his attitude to institutionalized religion. We looked at two aspects of Judaism as it appeared in Dostoyevsky's writings: Jewish characters; and the theme of Jewish messianism. Dostoyevsky's most detailed portrait of a Jew, Isay Fomich Bumshteyn, appeared in a relatively early work, Notes from the House of the Dead. We decided that Dostoyevsky's treatment of Isay Fomich was consistent with his general attitude to different religious creeds when the book was written: he looked

beneath credal differences to what was sincere and good in each religion, and appealed to people of other faiths to do the same. We questioned the opinion of some critics that Dostoyevsky's vivid and amusing description of Isay Fomich at prayer was an expression of anti-Semitism: to condemn someone on the basis of ritual would have been contrary to the spirit of Dostoyevsky's religious thought at the time, because he attached no absolute importance to ritual. We demonstrated that rather than Isay Fomich being a function of his religion in the prayer scene, his religion was a function of his extremist and enthusiastic character. Of more significance in Dostoyevsky's assessment of Isay Fomich, we suggested, was the way the character was made to respond to the religious festivals of non-Jews. He displayed a dogmatic and exclusivist mentality, refusing to acknowledge other faiths. In this he was contrasted with the Muslim Aley, who belonged to Dostoyevsky's line of 'positively good men'.

In his later writings, Dostoyevsky concentrated upon the Jews' messianic claims. He tried to consign the Jews to history, and to appropriate the messianic role for Russia. When the Jews refused to be thus disposed of, they were subjected to a bitter attack. Dostoyevsky portrayed them as exploiting capitalists, destroying Russia and civilization in general. He blasphemously depicted the Jewish God as malicious and uncharitable, choosing to forget that the God of the Jews was his own God, too. One aspect of Dostoyevsky's treatment of the Jews to which we drew particular attention was his allegations regarding the existence of a Jewish <u>status in statu</u> in Russia. He claimed that the Jewish

messianic consciousness could not have survived for as long as it had merely as an intangible concept, but that there must be a secret organization, a formal structure, upholding it. Once again, therefore, Dostoyevsky seemed to be expressing reservations about the ability of men to respond to purely conceptual spirituality, and to be suggesting that they needed an organization to give concrete expression to their beliefs, and to give them a tangible identity. Yet 'Russian messianism', as expounded by Myshkin and Shatov, allegedly needed no such internal structure. It rendered the Russian Orthodox Church obsolete, since it functioned through the Russian narod, who acquired their faith from the soil, rather than through any of the more traditional ecclesiastical channels. Although doubting the ability of the Jews to sustain their messianic faith without recourse to institutionalization, therefore, Dostoyevsky suggested that the Russians could do precisely that. This confidence was extended to the Orthodox Slavs under Turkish rule, whose faith had similarly been preserved without recourse to a Church. Their only use for a Church, according to Dostoyevsky, was as a vehicle for national identity: it was 'the only and last remnant of [their] national identity and particularity'. [1]

Dostoyevsky's tendency to support 'Churchless' spirituality for some groups (usually Slavs), while undermining it in the case of other groups (usually 'foreign'), prompted us to ask whether his criteria might not be nationalistic in origin. In Section Three, therefore, we returned to religion in Russia itself, and examined Dostoyevsky's response to those dissenting groups which had to a greater or lesser extent dissociated

themselves from the official Russian Orthodox Church. We were concerned to see Dostoyevsky's reaction to the abandonment of institutionalized religion by the 'God-bearing' Russian people, and to discover whether he would again retract on the message of the 'Legend' as he appeared to do when considering Protestantism. The first aspect of Russian religious dissent which we considered was Old Belief. We discovered that Dostoyevsky was greatly attracted to Old Belief, and generally considered its adherents to be sincere and committed believers. In the light of our findings up to that point, such an attraction was potentially paradoxical, since Old Belief was traditionally associated with a ritualistic and canonical conception of the Church. Indeed, we noted that in his presentation of Old Belief Dostoyevsky occasionally came across more as a reformer of the Church than as a destroyer of institutionalized religion. This was the case, for example, with his support for the idea of a Church free from state interference. Overall, however, it was not the Old Believers' conception of the Church which interested Dostoyevsky, or their deeply-felt convictions about correct ritual, which he tended to dismiss as 'temporary' differences of opinion. Rather, he was attracted to Old Belief teaching on the need for each individual to become inwardly transformed. We referred in particular to his interest in the teachings of the Old Believer Golubov on self-control and self-perfection. This emphasis upon the individual regardless of and even in opposition to a formal framework was to become a feature of Dostoyevsky's religious ideal.

Although the more extreme sectarian groups had developed from Old Belief, the form taken by their religiosity was often

radically different. We were concerned to see whether Dostoyevsky considered that sectarianism in Russia corresponded to the 'Churchless' Christianity advocated by the Christ of the 'Legend'. We first noted that in many respects he did not consider the more extreme sectarian groups to be religious groups at all. He tended to attribute their existence rather to sociological factors and to the extremist temperament which he regarded as characteristically Russian. On one or two occasions, however, he offered a religious explanation for the success of sectarianism. When accounting for the rise of Stundism, for example, he implied that the Russian Orthodox Church had not been doing its job of deepening and strengthening the faith of the narod, and had left them with only a very superficial understanding of Orthodoxy. It was because the foundation was so insecure, he suggested, that the narod had been led astray. This explanation was surprising, since elsewhere Dostoyevsky claimed that the narod instinctively possessed precisely such a deep and secure understanding of even the most complex theological concepts, and that this instinctive understanding rendered formal religious education unnecessary. Indeed, the narod themselves were a source of faith: at least, it was through losing touch with the narod that the upper classes had been lured away by people like Lord Radstock. We suggested that Dostoyevsky laid the blame upon the Church in this instance so that he could more easily come to terms with the narod's desertion of Orthodoxy. Certainly this was the first time he had suggested that the Russian Orthodox Church had a teaching role to perform.

We then examined Dostoyevsky's response to the form of the

'sectarians' religiosity, recalling that he had shown great caution about Protestantism's attempts to remove the institutionalized framework of religion. We discovered that he was not merely sceptical, but highly sarcastic about the extreme sectarians' attempts to reach the truth of religion without the authority of a Church. He questioned the free rein often given in sectarianism to the spiritual inspiration of the individual. He cast doubt upon the sincerity of the sectarians' 'holy men' and attributed the success of the latter to the gullibility of the narod. Allegorical interpretations of the Bible were seen as devious attempts to extract from the Scriptures whatever meaning one might have need of. We remarked that this scepticism regarding the sectarians was, paradoxically, being demonstrated by Dostoyevsky at a time when many of his own religious characters seemed to be demonstrating a divergence from the official Church.

Dostoyevsky's rejection of the Russian sectarians' claims to represent essential Christianity constituted an important stage in our study. It demonstrated his conviction that even in Russia some central authority in religious matters was required. It was not just a question of nationalism: the mere fact of being a Russian did not guarantee a correct conception of the image of Christ. Something more specific than this was needed. An appeal by Dostoyevsky to 'the image of Christ given by the Church' revealed where this authority was to be found: institutionalized religion had been formally reinstated. The role allotted to it was not a complete contradiction of the message of the 'Legend': the Church was not proposed as a mediator. But it was an important qualification of the

'Legend'. There Dostoyevsky had implied that the image of Christ was to be found in the hearts of men. Here he was saying that the Church too had a part to play in its preservation. In the light of this discovery, the blame Dostoyevsky had attached to the Russian Orthodox Church for the rise of Stundism was justified: the Church did, after all, have a duty.

In the final two chapters of our study we turned from an analysis of Dostoyevsky's response to different religious movements to look more closely at three specific religious tendencies which featured in his writings and which he seemed positively to advocate: yurodstvo, stranstvovaniye and monasticism. We first looked at yurodstvo and stranstvovaniye. What was the relationship between these types of spirituality and the apparent paradox of Dostoyevsky's rejection of institutionalized religion on the one hand and his appeal to the authority of the Church on the other? The answer was that they satisfied both of these apparently conflicting tendencies. First, both phenomena, while also occurring in the other major Churches, were firmly rooted in Russian Orthodox spirituality, and were especially revered by the narod. They were embodiments of the Russian Orthodox way of looking at the world: Orthodox spirituality informed the whole of their being. They thus had the authority of Orthodoxy to which Dostoyevsky had been appealing all along. At the same time they had little if anything to do with the institutionalized Russian Orthodox Church. Dostoyevsky's yurodivye and stranniki did not go to God through the medium of the Church, but seemed to have a direct relationship with Him. Their only ritual was prayer: their spirituality was inner and essential, not embodied in formal religious

practices. They were independent individuals, who had no need of the Church as a communal institution.

'Essential', 'Churchless' Christianity of the type advocated in the 'Legend' could exist, therefore: but, paradoxically, it was dependent upon the existence of a Church - the Russian Orthodox Church. This was because central to essential Christianity as presented in the 'Legend' was a correct knowledge of the image of Christ, and this had been maintained undistorted only by the Russian Orthodox Church, so far as Dostoyevsky was concerned. The conviction of Orthodox Christians throughout the centuries that pravoslaviye really did mean 'right worship' thus informed the very essence of Dostoyevsky's thinking on institutionalized religion. This explained why the rejection of institutionalized religion by the Protestants and even by the Russian sectarians had not, in Dostoyevsky's opinion, led to the essential Christianity promised in the 'Legend': these groups did not possess the image of Christ vouchsafed to the Russian Orthodox through their Church.

Having identified the profoundly Orthodox nature of stranstvovaniye and yurodstvo as an important reason for Dostoyevsky's attraction to these forms of spirituality, we then made the paradoxical discovery that the theology of the stranniki and yurodivye in Dostoyevsky's novels occasionally departed significantly from the teaching of the Orthodox Church. We noted, for example, that while Makar Dolgoruky seemed to acknowledge the authority of the Church, he had some very un-Orthodox views on suicides. Dostoyevsky's whole presentation of yurodstvo bore a very individual stamp: he effectively gave the impression that genuine yurodstvo was an exclusively feminine domain; and he combined it with a cult of women's

suffering at the hands of men, which could also be interpreted in terms of the myth of Mother Earth. This did not accord with the teaching of the Orthodox Church, but it was characteristic of the way Dostoyevsky used Orthodox teaching in his novels. Although he appealed to the authority of the Orthodox Church, and took Russian Orthodox spirituality as his point of departure, he did not feel bound by specific teachings of the Church, and seemed to feel free to develop his religious thinking as he wished. It was as if he extracted from Orthodoxy the Orthodox image of Christ, while considering all other Orthodox teaching to be inessential and ultimately dispensable, or at least open to modification. Where this eventually led to would become apparent when the content of Alyosha Karamazov's 'speech at the stone' was examined.

The problem remained of how this 'essence of Orthodoxy' was conveyed to Russian Orthodox people. The point of departure of our study had been Dostoyevsky's abandonment of the channels to which one might normally look to perform this function: priests, Church attendance, faithfulness to ritual. While appealing to 'the image of Christ given by the Church', Dostoyevsky had not reinstated any of the Church's traditional tools. The only thing to which one could point with any certainty was the essentially aesthetic experience of a childhood visit to an Orthodox church. Apart from this, one could only assume that the image of Christ was in the air exhaled by the Russian Orthodox Church. Perhaps the example of Lizaveta Smerdyashchaya, who was not a practising member of the Russian Orthodox Church, but who seemed to acquire her Orthodoxy through sleeping in church porches, most accurately

expresses the kind of relationship to the Church which Dostoyevsky envisaged for people.

Dostoyevsky's treatment of monasticism in The Brothers Karamazov was a confirmation and culmination of the trends we had established in our study. Overall there was seen to be very little institutionalized religion in the novel. All the more institutionalized aspects of monasticism were effectively invalidated by Dostoyevsky. He chose as his central character in the monastery not the Abbot, but the Elder Zosima, who was favourably compared with the official Church hierarchy. As had been the case with Dostoyevsky's stranniki and yurodivye, the point of reference of Zosima's theology was Russian Orthodoxy, although again there were some notable departures from it: we noted in particular the prominence he accorded to the veneration of the earth and the gift of tears. No prominence was given in Zosima's teachings or in his life to the rituals of the Church. He concentrated instead upon the individual and upon the need for inner renewal. He did not claim to be a mediator: instead, his spiritual beauty acted as an inspiration to men.

An important aspect of Zosima's teaching was his desire to see the integration of the spiritual and the secular spheres. He challenged the strict differentiation between religious institutions and secular society: true Christianity was not just for monks, but for all men, who were to live the Christian life and to present the image of Christ in that life. This was what Zosima meant when he told Alyosha Karamazov to 'be like a monk in the world'. The role assigned to the monastery by Zosima was notably not connected with the Church

as an institutionalized means of attaining God. It was, however, consistent with Dostoyevsky's fundamental appeal to the rightness of Orthodoxy's conception of Christ: the Orthodox monks were told to preserve the image of Christ intact and untainted for the Russian people and for mankind in general.

We saw that the 'monk' Alyosha Karamazov had no links with institutionalized religion at all. His Christianity was his life, his whole being: formal religious practices had no part in it. In the speech at the stone, which was the image of Alyosha we were left with, Russian Orthodoxy was not prominent. It is tempting to contrast the unimportance of institutionalized religion in this closing scene of Dostoyevsky's final novel with the prominence it enjoyed in the closing scene of his own life. Much of what Alyosha said was not even specifically Christian. It was, however, reminiscent of the spirituality of an earlier character of Dostoyevsky: it resembled the religiously-tinged humanism professed on his deathbed by Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky in The Devils. Dostoyevsky seemed ultimately unable to take any of his characters - and perhaps himself - beyond this point, and incapable of committing them to specific beliefs. If Alyosha's speech at the stone was as important to the novel as Dostoyevsky claimed in his letter to Lyubimov,[2] then it provides a vivid demonstration of just how amorphous the author's idea of Christianity had become, and how far removed it was from the Orthodoxy to which, paradoxically, he continued to appeal as the only correct point of departure in religious matters.

The spiritual role which Alyosha Karamazov was called upon to play in The Brothers Karamazov was not at all extraordinary. It contrasted greatly with the highly dramatic plot

of the novel as a whole. In its very ordinariness it might be considered untypical of Dostoyevsky - although we had arguably been prepared for it by the modifications we had seen Dostoyevsky introduce into the yurodstvo of Alyosha, which had indicated that the author was in fact ready to consider the 'middle ground' where Christianity was concerned. Alyosha turned out to be Dostoyevsky's last word. He demonstrates that for Dostoyevsky Christianity was ultimately something very simple and very ordinary, a striking contrast with the turmoil and drama, the eccentric and the bizarre which so vividly characterize his novels and which, in the last analysis, prove to be superficial and dispensable. At the same time, however, the stance adopted by Alyosha when delivering his deceptively modest speech at the stone accurately symbolizes the radical strain which underlies Dostoyevsky's attitude to Church matters: Alyosha and his band of twelve children point back to the time when there was no institutionalized religion, no Churches, but just Christ and His twelve disciples.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Chapter Six, 343-4 and fn. 72, above.
2. See Chapter Ten, 560 and fn. 111, above.

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