

SOME ASPECTS  
of  
ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY

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1958.



## SOME ASPECTS OF ORTHODOX SPIRITUALITY.

The word Orthodoxy comes from two Greek words meaning **right glory**. So Orthodoxy means right worship, and that implies right belief and right thinking. We are reminded of what our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: "God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

People sometimes say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live a good life". That is a very unthinking remark. In fact, it isn't true. The truth is that it is of vital importance what we believe, because:

- 1) "without faith it is impossible to please God," still less to be saved (Heb. 11:6);
- 2) "the devils also believe, and tremble," i. e. they are terrified, having neither hope nor love, but believing that what we love and hope for will come true (Jas. 2:19);
- 3) if we do not believe in God we cannot receive His life and power to worship, love and glorify Him. Then, deprived of grace, we fall into idolatry and immorality (Rom. 1:29-32; Wisdom, chs. 13 and 14);
- 4) our character and conduct depend on what we believe. Character is what we are. Conduct is what we do. What we are and what we do makes up the whole of our life. So our whole life depends on what we believe (Gal. 3:11).

An illustration: a mother tells her child that fire hurts, but the child does not believe it. The mother goes away. Left to itself, the child crawls to the fire and puts its hand in. It screams, cries and changes its faith, and consequently changes its conduct.

The Orthodox Church is very rich in dogma, doctrine, dogmatic belief. Where does this revealed truth come from? Orthodox dogma comes from Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture, and is to be found largely in the Church Service books. I suppose the Orthodox Service books are the richest in the world, and these services are

based primarily on the twin sources I have just mentioned. In a sense there is only one source, for Holy Scripture is really part of Holy Tradition. It is a form of written tradition. In the life of the Church and the life of the individual, tradition comes first. From Adam for many centuries there were no books. Religion was dependent on the traditions handed down from father to son. Even in N. T. times, our Lord wrote nothing. How did the Apostles and early Christians get their faith and knowledge? By tradition handed on by the word of mouth. It was not until 397 A. D. that the Canon of the N. T. was fixed as we have it today. And in the life of the individual, each of us gets his first knowledge of life and religion normally from his parents. Long before we can read we learn from their lives and lips. So the Apostle Paul says: "Hold the traditions which you have been taught by word or letter" (2 Thess. 2:15; Cor. 11:2)

Public worship holds a very large place in Orthodox life. The centre of Orthodox worship is the Holy Liturgy or Holy Eucharist or Holy Sacrifice or Lord's Supper, the various names indicating different aspects of the service. Here we are reminded of the nature of the Gospel, of the heart of redemption. For in the Liturgy the whole of Christ's life and Passion is commemorated and re-enacted by word, symbol and action from His humble birth in the stable in Bethlehem to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension and the sitting at the right hand of the Father. In addition to all the other aspects of the service, the Liturgy is a deep sermon in itself. That is why in the Orthodox Church it is not such a tragedy as it is with other Christians if the priest is a poor preacher or for some reason cannot preach, for the service in itself is a most profound and vivid sermon.

At a meeting of Presbyterian ministers, while discussing the Virgin birth of Christ one minister said, "There are many in this Presbytery who do not believe in that particular fable. I myself am one who does not accept it".

One of them asked, "Then how did you become a Presbyterian minister?"

He replied, "I did accept it when I was much younger. But I have since become educated and no longer hold my previous belief".

One asked, "Do you mind telling us just why you do not believe in the virgin birth?"

He said, "I don't believe in that doctrine because it is only found on two pages of the N. T. Matthew and Luke are the only ones who ever mention it. In all the writings of Paul he never introduced the question of the virgin birth. Peter never mentions it in his writings, and Jesus was utterly ignorant of any such suggestion. You never find it in a single sentence or statement uttered by Jesus Himself".

"Then tell us," one minister asked, "what do you teach and preach?"

"The Sermon on the Mount", was the instant reply. "That is enough Gospel for anyone".

"Not for me," answered the other minister, "because I don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount!"

If a bomb had been dropped, it could not have created more excitement. Somewhat bewildered, the first minister asked, "What do you mean when you say that you don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount?"

The other replied, "I don't believe that Jesus ever uttered the words that you call the sermon on the Mount".

Greatly astonished, he said, "Whyever not?"

"Because it only occurs on two pages of the N. T. Matthew and Luke are the only men who ever mention it. Paul never talked of the Sermon on the Mount. Peter says nothing about it. James, John and Jude are equally ignorant of it. Now following your line of reason, if Matthew and Luke lied about the virgin birth, why should I believe them concerning the Sermon on the Mount?"

Of course, it is not true that St. Paul knew nothing of the Virgin Birth, for he never once calls Jesus "Son of Man" but constantly calls Him the Son of God. And where did Matthew and Luke get the information they give us in the Gospels if not from Jesus and Mary? That, however, is not my subject for the moment. The point I want to make is this. There are many people in the world today who think that the Sermon on the Mount is the essence and heart of the Gosptl. "Give us more of the Sermon on the Mount and less theology," they say. Even such a great man as Mahatma Ghandi said: "The message of Jesus is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, unadulterated and taken as a whole". It is one of the popular heresies and it needs to be answered.

The Sermon on the Mount is not the Gospel that the early Church taught. When St. Paul wanted to recall the Corinthians to

the foundations of Christianity, he did not say: "Blessed are the peacemakers. Do not resist an evil person. Love your enemies. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Do to others what you would like them to do to you. Be perfect". These are magnificent principles. They could be called good advice. They could not possibly be called good news. No, St. Paul wrote something quite different. Here are his words: "I delivered to you among the fundamentals what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than 500 brothers at once, then to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all He appeared to me" (1 Cor. 15:1-9).

And here is what St. Peter preached: "The God of our fathers raised Jesus Whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree. It is this Jesus Whom God has exalted at His right hand to be our Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit Whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:30-32).

In any case the original Gospel was not a sermon, and not just the Beatitudes. It was thrilling news, glad tidings of great joy for all the peoples of the world. It was Jesus Himself, the divine Saviour, His Life, His death, His Cross, His empty Tomb, His Kingdom, His love and forgiveness, His power and His glory. It is this great truth that our salvation depends on the act of God, on what God in His great love has done for us, that Orthodox Spirituality insists upon and emphasizes in a remarkable way. In order to fix in the minds and hearts of the faithful what God has done for us, the Orthodox Church, besides the Creed, has twelve great annual Feasts commemorating events in the drama of Redemption.

A recent writer has said that the Orthodox Church, through concentrating on the Creeds and neglecting the Beatitudes, has become fossilized. Actually the Orthodox Church only uses one Creed in public worship, but almost daily throughout the year in all Russian Churches the Beatitudes are sung in full at the Divine Liturgy.

I said that there are 12 Great Feasts. You may be surprised to learn that Easter is not one of the 12. So is the Resurrection in the mind of the Church that it is in a class by itself and is called "the Feast of Feasts and the Triumph of Triumphs". Easter is always celebrated at midnight and the service usually takes till

about dawn. To attend an Orthodox Easter Service is an unforgettable experience. Many people, including R. C. priests and monks, have told me that they have never seen any service to compare with it. The singing, especially as performed in the Russian Church, is uplifting in the extreme. One detail: at certain points in the service the priest greets the people in a loud voice with the words, "Christ is Risen," and the congregation responds, "He is risen indeed!" This is also how people greet one another at Easter time. Instead of saying Good Day or Namaskaram, or Hullo, one says "Christ is Risen" and the response is "He is Risen Indeed." Besides the annual Easter service, every Sunday is also a Day of Resurrection, and there are 8 services with 8 different tunes used in rotation throughout the year. On Sundays and at Easter there is a rule that prostrations to the ground are not to be made, as the joy of the Resurrection overwhelms even the sense of penitence. Also at Easter the psalms are not used for a whole week, and there is no fasting. There is a custom at Easter to colour eggs red and have them blessed in Church, and then to give them away as Easter gifts. This dates from the early days of Christianity. After Christ's Resurrection, St. Mary Magdalene went to Rome and visited the Emperor Tiberias. She presented him with a red egg, saying: Christ is Risen. She then preached a burning sermon to the pagan Emperor and explained the meaning of her gift, the red colour recalling the blood of redemption, the egg a symbol of birth, death and resurrection. After that it became a general custom to give coloured eggs at Easter.

To name some of the 12 feasts: On January the 6<sup>th</sup> the Baptism of Christ by John the Baptist (Theophany or Epiphany) is celebrated. On February the 2<sup>nd</sup> is the Meeting or Presentation of Christ in the Temple. On August the 6<sup>th</sup> is the Transfiguration. On March the 25<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of the Annunciation when the Angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and which commemorates the Incarnation. Nine months later is the Nativity or Birthday of Our Saviour (Christmas). Moveable feasts are Palm Sunday commemorating Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem; Ascension, 40 days after Easter; and 10 days later Pentecost (Trinity).

No days are blank in the Orthodox calendar. Every day some saints are remembered. Saints are of various classes. The Greek word **Martyr** means a witness. The martyrs bore witness to Christ with their blood. It is possible to be a martyr in various ways. Would you like to be a martyr? "Feel the tortures of conscience,"

says St. Athanasius, "die to sin, amputate sinful desires, and you will be a martyr in will. The martyrs struggled with the torturers, kings and princes. You have a torturer, the devil; he is the king of sin. There are also prince-persecutors, namely demons. If you refrain from these passions and from sinful desires, it will mean that you have trampled on the idols and become a martyr". So much for St. Athanasius.

Every Saint glorifies Christ, so in all things God is glorified. St. Tikhon of Zadonsk was a Russian bishop (1724-83). Here is a sample of how he spoke to the people of his time: "God will not ask whether you taught your children French, German or Italian, or of politics of society life — but you will not escape the divine reprobation for not having instilled goodness into them. I speak plainly, but I tell the truth: if your children are bad, your grandchildren will be worse . . . . and so evil will increase. And the root of all this is our thoroughly bad education".

Typical of Orthodoxy is the group of saints called Fools for Christ's Sake. These were men and women who, for the love of God and in response to a special call, pretended to be mad or mentally abnormal. I think the earliest was a nun of Tabenna in the Egyptian desert, St Isadora (380). She was never known to eat proper food. She lived on the scraps the nuns left. It was a large community and she was mostly treated with disdain and abhorrence. But such was her humility that she never refused to serve and obey everyone in the lowliest tasks.

Another fool was St. Basil of Moscow who died in 1552, aged 88. One of the most magnificent churches in the world was built in his honour and can be seen in Moscow today. Once the Russian Emperor was building a new palace on Sparrow Mountains. One day he went to church, but instead of praying he was thinking about beautifying the new palace. St. Basil went to the same church and stood in the corner unnoticed. But he saw what the Emperor was doing with his mind. After the Liturgy the Emperor went home and Basil followed him. The Emperor asked him, "Where have you been?" "There, where you were, at the Holy Liturgy". "How was that? I didn't see you". "But I saw you and I saw where you really were". "I was nowhere else, only in church," said the Emperor. "Your words are not true, O Emperor, for I saw you in spirit on Sparrow Mountains building your palace". Deeply moved,

the Emperor said: "It is true, that is just what happened to me". That is typical of the spiritual insight to which the saints attained.

The prophets and saints of the Old Testament form another class commemorated in the calendar. Some, like John the Baptist and Elijah, have feast days of considerable importance. Another class is what is called the Unmercenaries. These are doctors or physicians who, at a call from God, gave up using all material means and dispensed spiritual healing in the name of Christ to all who came to them free of charge.

Here it may be good to mention that monasticism has always been highly regarded in the Orthodox Church. It is based on Christ's words: "He who is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Mat. 19:10-12). And "sell what you have and give to the poor, and come and follow Me" (Mat. 19-21). And the promises to those who renounce everything (Mat. 19:29). Monks are pledged to battle with evil. Monasticism is not an escape from service. As Evagrius says: "Better is a layman who serves his neighbour than a monk who has no compassion for his brother". The desert has given us great treasures which are still primary sources of spirituality: "The Life of St. Antony" by St. Athanasius the Great. "The Lausiak History" by Palladius, "The Spiritual Meadow" by St. John Moschus, "The Ladder of Paradise" by St. John Climacus; the Writings of St. Basil the Great, St. John Chrysostom, St. Gregory the Theologian, St. Macarius, St. Isaac the Syrian, St. Ephraim, St. Cassian; also the Philokalia and the Patrologies which are anecdotes of the Desert Fathers.

A great virtue in Orthodox Spirituality is dispassion (Gk. *apatheia*), which is often misunderstood and mistranslated as "apathy", "indifference", or "insensibility" in a stoic sense. But true dispassion is freedom from passion through being filled with the spirit of God as a fruit of divine love. It is a state of soul in which a burning love for God and man leaves no room for selfish and human passions. How far it is from the cold stoic conception we can see from the fact that St. Diadochus can speak of "the fire of dispassion". Here is an illustration from a patrology. Two elders lived together in the Egyptian Desert, and there had never been a quarrel between them. One said: "Let us have a quarrel like other people". The other said: "I do not know how quarrels take place". The first said: "Look, I put a brick between us and say: 'That is mine'. And you say: 'No, it is mine'. And that will be



the beginning". And they did so. One of them said: "That is mine". And the other said: "No, it is mine". And the first said: "Yes, yes, it is yours. Take it and go". And they gave it up as they were quite unable to start a quarrel between them.

The thought of deification may seem strange, yet that is a word constantly met in Orthodox works. It is based on Holy Scripture, of course. St. Peter tells us that God has given us His "great and precious promises that through them we may be partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). And St. Athanasius explains that it is through the Incarnation that "the flesh has been deified". This deification is worked out, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, by the indentification of our human will with divine will. That prevents all pantheism. It is union with the divine life and activity, not with the divine being and essence. Iron placed in a fire becomes red hot and fiery, but it remains iron.

Everyone of you who are listening to me is hungry for life and happiness. That is just what Jesus Christ came to give. "I have come," He said, "that you may have life and may have it abundantly". There is nothing wrong in being hungry for life and happiness, because that is the way we are made. Yet it is one of life's paradoxes that the pursuit of happiness, like the pursuit of pleasure, defeats its own purpose. We find happiness only when we do not directly seek it. So God gave us the spiritual law: "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 12:31). Then He promises that all our needs will be supplied. So Orthodox Christians have seasons of special seeking by penitence, prayer and abstinence that they may partake more fully of that life and happiness which constitutes the Kingdom of God. People think that wealth and honours mean happiness. But God tells us that a man's life and happiness does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Lk. 12:15). In the Orthodox view, so great is the human heart that nothing less than God can satisfy it. And the truth is that God is man's happiness. So all men are really seeking God. But it is one thing to try to get happiness for yourself, and quite another to try to establish God's Kingdom of divine power and happiness in the hearts of all men everywhere.

When Our Lord began His public life, the gist of His message was: "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). To repent means, according to the Greek, to change our mind, our outlook, and so consequently our life.

Instead of thinking thoughts of fear, revenge, anxiety, depression, acquisitiveness and sickness, it means to live and think in terms of the heavenly kingdom which is all around us, and in which we live and move and have our being. Man is a spirit, housed in a body. So he lives at once in Time and Eternity. Eternal life begins here and now. Our business is to live in Time and Eternity at once. According to Orthodoxy the temple or church is heaven on earth. The ikons or pictures remind us of things not of this world. "Our life, our home is in Heaven" (Philip 3:20). We are surrounded by Saints and Angels and all the heavenly inhabitants. A prayer that occurs daily in Lent reads: "Standing in the temple of Thy glory, we think that we are standing in Heaven". "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (Lk. 17:21), so unless you take Heaven with you in your heart, you will never go there.

Man is a spirit. Every spirit has wings. To develop and use our wings of faith and prayer more than our legs at certain fixed periods is not something negative; it is a very positive and definite step towards integration and fuller living. Repentance means to live as if we were primarily spirits, instead of conducting our life as if we were 90 percent flesh which is the way most people live. The first Christians lived in the fervent expectation of the Second Coming of Christ. An extract from a letter of St. Tikhon will give you a typical Russian view of the implications of Christ's Coming and the need for repentance, and shows how Orthodoxy today maintains the attitude of the early Church. Here is the letter: "Christ's Judgment draws near. Like a thief in the night this day will come unexpectedly, and with whatever it surprises us, with that each will appear at this dreadful trial. One man will be surprised in fornication, and he will appear with it. Another will be surprised in murder, and he will appear with it. Another in evil speaking or calumny or lying, plotting or hypocrisy, or insulting his neighbour; and each will stand trial with these sins. Some will be surprised during feasts and banquets or at card playing, or at the theatre; and they will stand there for trial. Others will be surprised in quarrels and disputes and will thus appear at judgment. Still others will be surprised in bribery and corruption or during dancing and revelling and other such licentious amusements and excesses, and will face judgment under these circumstances. I implore you, beloved, in the name of Christ, to spare your souls

and repent, that you may not be lost for all eternity. Listen to Christ Himself Who hungers and thirsts for our salvation”.

God made the world of Time as a school for Eternity. During this brief spell on earth, we are meant to be schooling ourselves to live with God our Father in perfect joy for ever. But many people find this world so beautiful, so attractive, that they get attached to it and even do not want to leave it. So St. John says: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For . . . the world passes away and the desire for it; but he who does the will of God lives for ever” (John 2:15).

We are meant to find God in His creation, to pass through the visible to the invisible, to “look at the rainbow and praise Him who made it” (Ecclus. 43:12). In order to be attached to our Creator we must be detached from creatures. Detachment is a virtue which holds a high place in Orthodox thought. “A small hair disturbs the eye, and a small care prevents detachment,” says St. John of the Ladder. To love creatures instead of the Creator is idolatry. And so the Orthodox Church has wisely divided the year into seasons of meat-eating and seasons of abstinence when Christians are detached from their meat-eating. This gives a kind of rhythm to life. Actually the Orthodox Church has four Lents or Fasts: The Great Fast in preparation for Easter with Passion Week lasts 48 days. Meat, eggs, and dairy products are given up, and even fish is allowed on only two days, one day being Palm Sunday. Another period is the Advent Fast in preparation for Christmas. There is also a Fast in June and another in the first two weeks of August. But do not think that Lent is a burdensome time of sadness, even though it is a way of taking up the cross. The cross is the sweetest and lightest burden to those who love. It is no more a burden than wings are to a bird or sails to a ship, for it bears those who bear it to their destination and unites them with Christ. In a large part of the world today a perpetual fast is being observed. During every war thousands die of starvation. But the real war is always on. It is the war between light and darkness, between good and evil. As Christians we are fighting for our life. People gladly deny themselves for the short-lived joy of winning a national war. Shall we not do so for the far greater cause of the triumph of God’s Kingdom of Truth and Justice and Love?

A remarkable feature in the Orthodox Church is what may be called her sacramentalism. In order to train her children and teach them to pass through the visible to the Invisible, she uses pictures, crosses, various symbols and sacraments. The Orthodox Church calls sacraments mysteries. What does the word mystery mean to you? A mystery is not something of which you can understand nothing, something which is all darkness; it is more like a circle of light surrounded by darkness. So we speak of the mystery of the Holy Trinity, because we can understand how God must be three in One because He is love; we can understand that up to a point, but we cannot fully grasp God because He is infinite and we are finite.

For convenience we say that there are 7 Sacraments or Mysteries in the sense of visible actions conveying spiritual life and grace. But there is no hard and fast rule about the number. Many saints have taught that the service of monastic profession is a sacrament equal to marriage, because a monk needs grace to live the monastic life just as much as a married couple need it to live a holy and happy family life. The Holy Mysteries or Sacraments are neither the end nor the essence of the spiritual life. They are means of grace, and only means. But these means have a great importance in the life of the Church. Because God has clothed our spirits in material bodies, He binds Himself to use material things in communicating with us. And so His law and practice in nature and grace is to give us His Gifts through the hands of His creatures. In other words God works through agents. So our life comes through a human father and mother, light through the sun, breath through the air, food through the earth. It is the same with spiritual things. The science of the Sacraments is through the material to the spiritual, through the visible to the Invisible. They teach us to find God through His creatures, to find Life through matter. The wonderful works of creation all tell us of the divine Presence, Power, Beauty, and Love. If it is not unworthy of God to have made material things, it is not unworthy of Him to use them. So from the cradle to the grave the Church provides for us through the Mysteries. In Baptism, through three-fold immersion in water a child of nature is made a child of grace, dies with Christ and rises for eternal life. In Chrismation or Confirmation the Gift of the Holy Spirit is given. In Confession sins committed after baptism are washed away in the blood of Christ. In the

Orthodox rite the priest and penitent stand together before the Book of the Gospels and the Cross, and in the prayers the priest says: "Christ stands here invisibly present. I am but a witness". So the priest doesn't stand between the penitent and God. But as sin is an offense against God and man, the priest stands as a witness to represent God and man, in accordance with the Word of God: "Confess your sins one to another" (Jas. 5:16). In the Eucharist or Liturgy, through Holy Communion the soul is fed on the Bread of Heaven and the "medicine of immortality". In ordination, through the laying of a bishop's hands, special grace is given for the work of the ministry. And last of all Unction is the mystery in which, through anointing with consecrated oil, the sick receive forgiveness of sins and healing of the body and soul.

As man is soul and body, so Orthodox worship requires the homage of both. An Old Testament ideal, of course: "That you may worship the Lord our God by everything that you do" (Jos. 4:24)\*. Says St. Isaac the Syrian: "Every prayer in which the body does not participate and by which the heart is not affected is to be reckoned as an abortion without a soul". So in Orthodox worship we bow with our will and with our body as well, that is we make prostrations to the ground. Another feature is the sign of the cross. Just as the Name of Jesus is made by a movement of the tongue, so the sign of the cross is made by a movement of hand and arm. The cross is the sign of faith, hope and love; it is the Christian sign, which God wants us never to forget so He puts it everywhere. Every tree, every telegraph pole is a cross. What a book is to a literate person, a picture is to an illiterate. It brings him understanding.

And we believe in the Communion of the Saints, because there is now no death and all are alive in God. We ask the Saints to pray for us, and we pray for those who are not yet saints. Do you ever ask anyone to help you do anything? Well, when you make any request of a friend, you may as truly through him pray to God as in formal worship (Mt. 25: 24-44). It is the will of God to give us help and life through His creatures.

One of the most popular of Russian Saints is St. Seraphim (1760- 1833). He was canonized only in 1903. He had a wonderful conversation with a layman in winter with the snow on the ground.

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\*) Orthodox version of Bible (Septuagint).

He told him the aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God. All that we do for Christ's sake are only so many means for acquiring the Holy Spirit. Then, whilst standing in the forest with the snowflakes still falling, they were both flooded with light so that it was difficult for Motoviloff to look at St. Seraphim. In spite of the cold they were warm, and there was a wonderful heavenly fragrance. What was then revealed is full of deep truth. It is certainly on a level with the revelations made to the holy prophets of old. But as the conversation covers about thirty pages I cannot speak of it more now. Many of the Saints regained something of the power over creatures that Adam had before the Fall. St. Seraphim fed wild bears from his hand, and one even obeyed him — would come and go when he told it. In them "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

I will end with an incident from contemporary life. Not long ago in Soviet Russia, a big meeting or demonstration was staged and crowds of people came together. In the centre was a wooden platform from which Communist speakers spoke of the benefits and advantages of being a Communist, of what a wonderful Super-State world communism would be, and of how all religions were mere superstition, a hindrance to progress, and that Christian faith is a kind of opium that sends people to sleep, so that they live in a false world; and that believers are a danger to an atheist state. After the communists had spoken, believers were invited to speak for five minutes each, to prove the wonderful freedom that they pretend exists in the Soviet Paradise. One simple man came forward, a village priest. As he mounted the platform he was warned, "Mind, not more than five minutes!" To which he replied, "I won't need as much as that". Now, it is the custom in the Orthodox Church at Easter time for the priests at certain points in the church services to greet the congregation in a loud voice with the words, "Christ is risen!" to which the people reply, "He is risen indeed". This simple priest simply went to one edge of the platform and in a loud voice said, "Christ is risen!" The response came from the crowd as one man like a clap of thunder, "He is risen indeed!" In the four directions of the compass the priest repeated his message, his Gospel, his greeting, and the same response was repeated like a lion's roar each time. Then he stepped down from the platform. There wasn't a shadow of doubt who won the day, or on whose side the crowds were. And the Communists

quickly closed the meeting. That is the state of affairs in darkest Russia today, the modern slave-state. It only goes to prove that wherever men have true faith in the Risen and Crucified Christ, He continues to work His miracles and to manifest His victorious power and glory that triumphs over all obstacles.

