APPENDIX
A MEETING WITH ROZANOV

By N. N. ROUSSOV

I RECEIVED an invitation from him to come to see him. And on 24 September 1918, I took a train to Sergiev Posad. I had not to search very long for Polevaya Street: it was on the very outskirts of the quiet monastery town. And in priest Belyaev's two-storied house Rozanov and his family lived.

Rozanov himself opened the door, on which was nailed the worn-away brass plate "V. V. Rozanov," the one of the possessions he had brought with him from Petersburg. He met me with embraces and exclamations:

"What events!... What events!"...

I could hardly recognize him, not having seen him for nearly ten years. He had become very old, thin, and shabby. He looked like an old country beadle....

In the evening Rozanov took me to the monastery church. ... As we could not stay out the whole night service, we walked home, and on our way, in the autumn moonless night, we talked of Orthodoxy. Rozanov loved Orthodoxy just as he loved Russia, as something native, our own. We agreed that Orthodoxy was not Christianity; but the worse it was for Christianity. ... "The Old Zossima in Dostoevsky's Brothers Karamazov," said Rozanov, "is a false Christian; the genuine Christian there is the
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silent, fasting, crazy Ferapont. Generally, Dostoevsky confused Christ with Orthodoxy; he did not differentiate them, and went no further than the arithmetic of Christianity.” . . .

We supped on rye bread, which I had brought with me from Moscow, and on potatoes which Nadya, Rozanov’s daughter, had cooked for us. After supper he took me to his working room, where I was to sleep that night.

“You lie down on the couch,” he said, “and I’ll have a look at my papers on the table.”

And as I slept I heard him rummaging among his papers and books for a long time. . . .

I woke about six o’clock, and from the window I saw Rozanov, at some distance from the house, pumping water from the well. . . .

The following day we went together to Moscow. He stayed the night with me, and tremendously enjoyed his coffee in the morning; and asked me if I could get some milk curds for lunch.

At coffee, Rozanov being in a very happy mood, puffing a cigarette, I asked him:

“Do tell me, Vasili Vasilievich, who of Dostoevsky’s characters is nearest and dearest to you?”

Without thinking for a second he replied, impulsively and gently:

“Shatov, of course.” . . .

I pondered over the answer. Was it not Shatov who maintained that Christ was dearer to him than truth? . . .

Rozanov regarded Dostoevsky as an atheist. Dostoevsky had no faith, he only furiously sought after faith with the great anguish of a desperate atheist. “Dostoevsky’s faith is rather a thirst for faith. It is full of analysis, and there is no greater menace to religion, as an established cult, than its
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ardent defenders. Such was the faith of Lermontov, Gogol, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky, in whose Legend of the Great Inquisitor, the most profound declaration which was ever made about man and life, terrifying unbelief and most profound ecstatic faith are inconceivably mingled.

No man, according to Rozanov, has so deeply probed the human soul as Dostoevsky, and no one has discovered there such a mass of unexpectedly new, strange, inconceivable things. No one knew man or delved into the future more deeply than he did. And in this is the great tragedy of Dostoevsky’s life, that he was understood by no one, nor could he be understood, since the disintegration of spirit, which to him was a thing of the past, has yet to come to others, in the future. . . . There is a great deal which Dostoevsky expressed for the first time on earth, and a great deal that had already been expressed before him he presented with greater force than any one else has done. Such, for instance, is his discovery of the capacity of the human soul for containing opposites at one and the same time. “The great horror of the human soul consists in this, that while thinking of the Madonna it at the same time does not cease thinking of Sodom and of its sins; and the still greater horror is that even in the very midst of Sodom it does not forget the Madonna, it yearns for Sodom and the Madonna, and this at one and the same time, without any discord.” This has never been said before, and it is true, not only in a general sense, but in the literal sense—indeed of Sodom and of the Madonna, of which the soul being perfectly aware, yet yearns for, and yearns for them simultaneously. It is a sort of polarity of the human soul—not division, which has been known since Shakespeare, but a longing for
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opposites, a longing for the greatest holiness and purity, that is, the awareness of them and the capacity for them in oneself. And along with this and simultaneously a longing for what is terrifyingly base, the mere thought of which chills the blood, that is, also the awareness of it and the capacity for it in oneself. . . . Again, the presentation of atheism, although done in literature before, has never been made with such overwhelming force as by Dostoevsky. . . . And Rozanov referred me to a passage in The Devils—Kirillov’s talk before he commits suicide—where it says: “There was a moment when amid the earth stood three crosses and three men crucified on them; one of them so much believed that he said to the other: to-morrow thou shalt be in paradise with me. But they both died, and found neither paradise nor hell.”

“When Dostoevsky wrote these words,” Rozanov went on, “you feel that through his soul, through a single human soul, there passed such a terrifying atheism as never has been experienced by man before; or, if experienced, has not been uttered in words.” . . .

Rozanov did not think that Dostoevsky was a great artist. He said that the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor was the most powerful utterance that has ever been made about man and history. In this respect it has no equal, there is nothing as powerful in the literature of the whole world. But it is a mere episode, and the whole, in which that episode is contained, is inferior to many other writings in the literature of the world. The whole book is only a presentiment, only a flash of what our literature is capable of becoming in the future. Such, for instance, is the description of the future atheistic state of mankind (in The Adolescent), incomparable for the
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gentle, poetic light diffused in it, and for the deep sadness with which the vision is permeated. “If those ideas were not mere ideas, but bodied forth in artistic creations with the same genius with which Schiller, Goethe, or Byron bodied forth their ideas, we should have had the highest achievement in literature.” . . .
SOME OF ROZANOV'S LETTERS TO E. GOLLERBACH

Sergiev Posad,
Maundy Thursday. Night. May 9, 1918.

I have just stood "with the candles." And experienced again the old elation. But as I have already written about "the candles" in my Apocalypse, I listened with particular attention and concentration. And here is my impression: Yes, the choice must be made—either the Old Testament or the New. And if so, it must be either the New alone or the Old alone. Here, in the twelve Gospels, everything is so interwoven, everything bound with such iron, so welded together (apart from the Gospels, there is also the great work of the Church where everything is arranged so wisely, so well selected: the lessons, the canticles, the music of the anthems) that certainly such a great curse is being pronounced on all "Caiaphases"—a damnation "unto the other world," "unto the abyss of hell," a curse on very Jerusalem, with all its Baals, with its stout pregnant bellies, with the "gorging of sacrifices offered to idols," and generally all "sacrificial flesh" (their hosts)—that certainly either Christianity, and then trebly cursed, a hundred times cursed are all Jerusalems! And, do you know, along with them cursed are also Athens, Rome, Pergamus, "all Hellenism." And we shall remain only with "our pure virgins," with our Verochkas (my daughter, the nun,\(^1\)) and—I observe

\(^1\) Vera Rozanov committed suicide soon after the death of her father.
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—my Tanya is taking the same course: she finds comfort only in the Church, and always hurries to the services to be there before they start), and . . . cursed also are Messieurs Voltaire and all the “Voltaireans.” . . . What a fate (I speak of Europe): either the monastery, or, if denial—then it is such a devilish denial, with giggling, cynicism, filth, and . . . the Revolution . . . . Do you know, my friend, had not that terrible religious cynicism prevailed in Europe, I should perhaps have stood all my life long “with the candles,” quietly and peacefully, and experienced none but “Christian (Orthodox) elations.” But this giggling at God has long, long astonished me, the giggling of the priests themselves, the giggling of the clergy itself, the giggling and . . . [words illegible]. Florensky once said that they, the priests, are engaged in theology for this sole reason that there are “books on theology,” that there is a “literature of theology,” and for no other reason. Such atheism is rooted in their souls that nothing like it could ever have occurred to the atheist Dobrolyubov; they are all dirty, religious cynics, with little stories. Now then, my Vera and Tanya, absolute children, are holy. Whence then those blackguards? And I keep on thinking, thinking all the time, thinking since 1898, since the publication of Sharapov’s Russky Troud; in fact, even before that, for didn’t I begin with The Historical Position of Christianity (my speech on the occasion of the Ninth Centenary of the Conversion of Russia)? Indeed, my whole life has been devoted to the theme of Christianity. Well now: whence come “Voltaire and the Voltaireans”? And can you imagine any Jew giggling like that at Moses? Never, never! But let us proceed further, probe more deeply. You know that Alcibiades was condemned to exile for
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having dared to scoff at the statues of the gods at night (they are said to have been phallic statues) in the society of his boon companions. The time of Alcibiades was the time of Athens’ disaster, the time of the Hellenic decadence, the time of the Peloponnesian war = to our present world war. And it means that not only in Jerusalem, but even in Athens “Voltaire would not have been allowed to exist.” Why then was Voltaire possible in Paris, together with Diderot, Helvetius, etc., and prior to these—Boccaccio and his “jokes”? You remember the intolerable filth of the Decameron, that salaciousness, that dirt, that nasty giggle, indeed so much worse than the giggle of old Fiodor Karamazov. Well now, whence does this come: either “pure holy virgins,” or “there is no God nor do we want one”? And, I say, my whole life has been devoted to the theme: whence does this filthy giggling at God come in Europe? And I decided: Yes, it comes from this, that in Europe there prevails not Providence, but Christ, not Fate, but the martyr of Golgotha, with His “casting to the devil” of Jerusalem, Athens, the Tree of Life, and generally of all the sanctities-profanities, which are basically phallic. In Judaism these two elements are mixed: sanctity and profanity are one. In a story from life Efron tells that a Rabbi, or Zadik or Melamed, being in a temper, called out to his hosts: “Fetch me some water, I must wash my hands, because I am in a temper and am afraid I shall not be able to refrain from uttering the Name (i.e., Jehovah).” As I read that story I said: “Oh, that’s how it is! You may not pronounce the Name without washing your hands immediately afterwards.” This is just identical with what took place in the famous . . . [word illegible] Council, at which the “canons” of 176
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Judaism were fixed, i.e., when the genuine, God-inspired books were separated from the dubious God-inspired books. And it was settled in this way: “what books are they, the touching of the parchment of which with one’s hands pollutes them.” . . . The Council took place just before the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus. You see, there is a connexion here, a likeness to Alcibiades’ prank when he struck off the phalli from the phallic gods. The historians did not guess anything here, but Rozanov perceived that what in Athens was a shadow was in Jerusalem a substance, that, strictly speaking, behind the back of Jerusalem and in the security of Jerusalem there was preserved intact the whole ancient world, all those “Baals,” “Astartes” . . . [word illegible], “Dionysi,” and all the rest of them. That, essentially, it was not Dionysus that was of account, but “the burning bush” which Moses saw and which was and is burning, just like the sun, eternally burning and never consumed. And on the whole:

Give whatever name you will
To my poem half-wild. . . .

but at the bottom of all there is the phallus. After I had moved to Sergiev Posad, I took up Friedlaender’s Koptos, and suddenly came across a reproduction of God the Son . . . [words illegible]. Astonishing: the statue holds in its right hand the phallus. Do you remember, I wrote you from Petersburg that the essence of religiousness springs from a certain vice. When I, with an astonishment which I can’t describe, examined that strangely quaint statue . . . [word illegible] I became suddenly convinced that my divination was absolutely true: “God” was
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approximately addicted to that "vice." Well, what could I do? Surely I could not invent things. What concern is it of mine that the ancients, from the time of Moses, and certainly also before Moses, made statues, like the one found by Friedlaender. "It is not my fault," I mean, it is not I, Rozanov, who did it. Christ certainly knew all this ("Omniscient"), and it was enough for Him to aphasisicize Himself and religion in order to destroy religion altogether, its very essence, its source, the Tree of Life (=phallus). It was enough for Him to do what Alcibiades did in Athens in order that all Solomon's temples should go flying to the devil. Now, what are "the 12 candles, i.e., the 12 gospels, to which we listen with a candle in our hands"? It is a story of unbearable suffering, of unutterable nobility of soul, of the majesty and beauty of the Word and of the word. Indeed, Christ raised the symbol of the Word in order to overcome the Phallus for ever, and for this, for this alone, hath He come. And He said all, and He did all. This is the noemenal side of Christianity. I don't even know if Christ existed (there is no mention of him in Josephus Flavius; astonishing!)—only there lies before us the miraculous Book of the Gospels. At moments it seems to me (or it used to seem) that there was no Christ, but that there is a story about Christ, a story which destroys the phallus. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy-laden and I will give ye rest." At such words—"pardon me, you can't think of eroticism"; "pardon me, there's no smack of Venus here." Generally, from the text of the Gospels there naturally emerges the monastery. The monastery, avitalism. "There is no life, nor is it needed." Sorrow and sorrow overflows everything. But then what shall we do? We must live,
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we are meant to live. Surely we are destined to live and must live. . . . Well, life goes on, but it is the blackguards who live: Boccaccio, Voltaire, Hertzen. . . . They live . . . [words left out] mean, vile. No more Alcibiades, but Gogol’s Chichikovs of the Dead Souls. There is no longer the butterfly, its golden wings are torn off. And facing it sit the sturdy sneaks and . . . I can’t make out why, with your understanding, you fail to bring it all into one picture. To me the godlessnesses of life are explained only in that way. And now look: there is Dostoevsky with his Kamazovdom, there is K. Leontiev with his aestheticism—what an anti-Christianity all this is already! What a new Athens and Sinai it all is! Do you know and do you guess that it is indeed in Russia that the anti-Christ is destined to arise, i.e., simply to restore the phallus again, which had been struck off by Alcibiades . . . [word illegible], and finally by Christ. Dostoevsky is a return to theism, Leontiev is a new impetus of faith—oh, not a bit like the “evangelical” Tolstoy with his Tchertkovs. And Rozanov naturally continues or crowns the work of Leontiev and Dostoevsky. Only what in them was merely hinted and vague, becomes with me a clear idea. I speak straight out what they dared not even suspect. I speak because after all I am more of a thinker than they. That is all.

But the problem (in the case of Dostoevsky and Leontiev) is and was about anti-Christianity, about the victory over the very essence of Christianity, over that terrible avitalism. Whereas from him, from the phallus everything flows (circumcision). I have got tired. Oh, will this letter reach you?

¹ For fear of the Bolshevik censorship all references to current events and persons are left out by the Russian publishers.
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Let me know if you get it safely. "I have read the MS., but disapprove of its contents."
I am tired. Addio.

V. ROZANOV.

Sergiev Posad,
August 26, 1918.

... In the course of fourteen years the State Duma, the Russian Parliament, has squandered all that the Kiev Princes, the Moscow Tsars, the Petersburg Emperors, and all their courageous helpers had acquired and accumulated in the course of a thousand years.

Oh, it is here where the "Dead Souls" were to be looked for. And people kept on looking for them in all sorts of places. The Russian performance is over. "Time to put on our overcoats and to go home." They looked round. But no overcoats nor houses were there.

Russia is a desert. Lord, what a vast wasteland Russia has become. They have sold her, sold, sold. The State Duma has sold the nation, sold the faith, sold the land, sold Russia's whole labour.

They sold her as though Russia was the serf-woman of the Duma. The Duma generally sold anything which people wanted to buy from it. And the astonishing thing is this: the Duma does not in the least consider itself at fault, and no "penitent nobleman" is to be found among them. The Duma even now considers itself perfectly right and perfectly innocent.

"The greatest Parliament in the world!" How those Chichikovs went over to London and jabbered
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away! "Our peacock, too, must show himself off." And then they boasted of their reception.

And now only the Slavophiles turn out to be right. Katkov alone.

Leontiev alone.

The latter said: "Russia is no longer a youth. She is a respectable old lady. She is a thousand years old. And you can rarely find a kingdom which has lived as long as that." It is astonishing that during the Revolution these aspects of our consciousness were not even mentioned. As though these ideas never existed at all. There were only Socialists and non-Russians at work.

And what about the Russians?

They were finishing their sleep of "Oblomov" and sitting in "The Lower Depths" of Maxim Gorky. And over all the land the Chichikovs spread themselves. . . .

* * *

"Food, the prime necessity! First food!"—that was always the object of my speculation. Well, suppose the "sons of the prophets" abstained from food, how then would they manage to live? For man eats three times a day. And the "son of the prophet" cannot do anything for himself. He is helpless. He is troubled. For verily God hath called him to speak, and to speak. The "son of the prophet" is a sleep-walker. He walks over steepleys. He rings the bells. Glides over house-tops. Peeps through garret-windows. And teaches, teaches all the while. "The son of the prophet is not in his own power." This is his essence, and were there no one to give him a hand, to keep him safe, he would fall to the earth and be shattered.

He would die.
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Well? What then? Without prophets the earth will become frozen. . . .

* * *

From the days of my youth, from my childhood, I have been such a sleep-walker. Save "inner voices" which I heard within myself, I heard nothing else, I saw nothing else. "How do I manage to go on?" This was always a matter of wonder to me. "God saved me," for verily I had no means of saving myself. And whirlwinds arose in me. People, help me! Surely it is for you that I live; surely for myself I want nothing. . . .

* * *

And I blazed up, but dared not speak. How should I say it? How should I put it? How should I utter it? . . . And then came a woman. I don't know her, but she is from my native Kostroma.

Oh, my childhood! Oh, my desolate childhood!

And she has sent me six pounds of the purest oatmeal—dry, wholesome: three spoonfuls to be taken in a glass of hot milk. And I trust that, when in two months' time this will have been used up, she will send me more. It is nourishing food. Good for one . . . [words illegible]. Thanks to thee, dear, lovely, not-to-be-forgotten woman. Kostroma I left fifty years ago and never once returned there.

Evidently our "fellow-men," if they are not of stone, must . . .

* * *

I "dared not speak," but the woman "dared act." From my native and dear Kostroma she has sent me six pounds of oatmeal, most palatable oatmeal to be prepared with hot milk. This will last me a month, two months. Thanks to the dear
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woman. And now I am eating . . . [words illegible]. And shall be able to work. Two months will pass—and she will send me more. . . .

Sergiev Posad, October 6, 1918.

And the gaze of the serpent, starkly mad.\(^1\)

This line of yours has somehow hypnotized me, and (silently, to myself) I keep on repeating it at tea and dinner and during the night—I can’t get rid of it. I am sure it must be a memento of the Hospital of All the Sorrows, and I am sure there is no such a line anywhere. Tell me its origin.

Of my letters you liked only two: the first letter—the world is a little girl and a stone. Do you know that it is “you” and “I”? The last letter (the long, drawn-out one) is disgusting. I ought to have sparkled like a ruby, like the brightest of stones; and I made it look like a little mound.

How wonderful Mme. Mourakhin’s letter is! Before I received that letter she had only seen me once or twice. I shan’t conceal it from you: she has written much better than you, although she is obviously not “congenial” to me, and almost at “the opposite pole.” But she has divined everything (the old woman is fifty-five). I dared not, I did not allow myself such a definition. “It is too fine: how can I put on such a vestment!” And now the old, but active, energetic, old woman has arrayed me in the night in that vestment, arrayed me in purple, arrayed me in a star. I did feel within myself, and with a feeling no longer ashamed of itself, that it was just like that, that it was the noûmenal worlds that

\(^1\) From a poem by E. Gollerbach.
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I was holding in my hands. I am quiet and modest, and besides so plain; but I feel in myself a certain dominion over the world. Apropos, do you know the mysterious words which Rasputin said to me? But let me first tell you about the saying of Theophanes the Just (he's indeed a just man), the Inspector of the Theological College in Petersburg. Several writers, and I among them, were once sitting in Father Antoninus' house. Theophanes came in; but left in a quarter of an hour. It seemed as if not he, but we had come in. When Antoninus on a later occasion asked him the reason why he had left so soon, he replied: "Because Rozanov came in, and he is the Devil."

Now about Rasputin. He was dancing with a married woman, with whom he "lived," and in the presence of her husband was talking of it: "See, his wife loves me, and her husband too loves me!" I came up to him and said: "Why did you leave so soon last time?" (That was in the house of Father Yaroslav, with whose wife Rasputin also lived, and Father Yaroslav approved of it. Altogether it was a sort of paradise, the Eden of a community of wives and children.) And he replied: "Because I got frightened of you." Upon my word, I felt bewildered.

But when I think that I began to perceive Egypt where the people worshipped Apis; when I think that Rasputin was among women just a sacred Apis, Adonis (Adonai, as it is reproduced in a certain Egyptian atlas, standing near a chariot which holds a scarabaeus—and Adonai is the Jewish God, who is also Jehovah, who is also "the burning bush"), Dionysus; that generally "all this" had become understood by me and had become my own—then I think that when Rasputin penetrated meos circulos
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("Noli tangere meos circulos," said Archimedes to the Roman soldier who burst into his room-laboratory-study) he naturally became troubled, having caught sight of a superior in the same Rasputin-Dionysus-Adonai theogony, cosmogony. I remember him coming in. I had been sitting there for some time. A glass of tea was handed him. Silently he drank the tea. Then placed the glass upside-down in the saucer, and left the room without saying a single word either to his hosts or to myself. Well, if this is so, if he did not lie to me at the Bohemian dance party—and he hardly knew anything (certainly he did not know) about Apis and antiquity—then how could he, who was seeing me for the first time in his life, define me, by a mere glance at me, at my face, define the whole of me in my noûmenal depth, a depth of which I myself was unaware, particularly unaware at that time? I knew that I was reviving Egypt; everything about Egypt, in its atlases (owing to the labours of scientific expeditions), was clear to me. I burst into tears in the Petersburg Public Library, saying to myself: "Yes! Yes!! Yes!!! I too might have done like that, drawn like that, had a 'drawing' come into my mind"; but the drawing itself did not occur to my mind, there was no boldness in my thought, no courage, no daring to utter, but the feeling was there within me. . . . Well, now, is not Rasputin's fear of me, is not it also Rasputin's miracle? The miracle of knowing, as it were through the earth, or rather of knowing my future, which at that time was only "the present." You must agree that this recalls, or rather that this testifies to the "Dignity of Apis" in its eternal truth. That is, that I and Rasputin, Rasputin and Apis is a something indeed, and not a myth. I must add also this. Four girls: two
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students, one a teacher of music, and one "neither this nor that," yet more sympathetic than all girl students on earth; and even one more, a fifth, "almost one" in the Caucasus (who had never seen me before)—all wanted to give themselves to me, and gave themselves to me on the ground of my boundless respect for woman, on the ground indeed that I myself look at woman, respect and honour her as a She-Apis. One of them saw me only once; she had a Lesbian friendship with another girl, a most noble girl, and that other girl, with whom she was connected, left me with her friend "for caresses." Is not this a miracle, is not this a real miracle? The miracle of noûmenal affinity. I swear to you, oh, I do swear, that of the four, even of the five, there was not one even slightly depraved, slightly loose, slightly free and easy. As one of them expressed herself about her brother: "Oh, Do-ma-sha! Oh no! oh no! oh no!" That is, that her brother would never think of her in that way. And all our delights came only to ... [words illegible] sexual contacts. Neither love, nor declarations. And yet both love and tenderness.

In the foundation, at the very bottom, there is my boundless respect. Respect for what? For woman, for Thee, O God. But in Thy female essence. And, through this, also for the soul. At moments it seems to me that I have reached the noûmenon of the world, that I "hold a star," but somehow cannot concentrate on it or even pay the proper attention to it through the literary "I've no time now."

I have got tired. Keep well.

V. ROZANOV.

Something more about "fore-knowledge." About four years ago there was a party at Michael Souvorin's.

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In the passage between two rooms a fortune-teller was placed. She was there, among the other entertainments, to amuse the guests. All showed their hands to her, the fortune-teller. She told futures. As I passed I held out my hand to her, and what do you think she told me?

She began to look for the “line of life,” and, gazing at it, muttered in surprise: “You will live long... very long. I can’t see the end of your line of life... You will live many, many years. And up to the very end of your life you will be loved” (i.e., by women). I believe she did not say “women,” but the word implied women. And considering that “I could not” any longer, yet women—one of 19, the other of 19, the third of 23, the fourth of 29, and the fifth of 39 or 40—gave themselves to me—evidently there is “a something” in me, and that something comes indeed from Apis. “Honour Apis,” and thyself shalt be Apis. Something of this sort. I am not thinking of myself. But I honour Apis very, very much...

I am sure that the whole universe is parcelled out of “the body of Apis,” i.e., the whole universe consists of modes and modes, of parts and parts... [words illegible], of one unutterable and indefinable Apis, “Apis-noūmenon,” and strictly, only of his genitalia, and still more strictly, of his eternally gushing semen, of storms of semen, of whirls of semen. Electricity, volcanoes, light, thunder, “the hammer”—all these come from the phallus and nothing but the phallus. Cosmogony, the symbols of the world—all is phallus. The fir, the spruce, the pine tree, especially the pine-cone, the “form of a tree,” the cupola of heaven, is all phalloid. Everything is “he,” “he” is everywhere. “And without him nothing can be.” I’ve got tired.
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And now we are coming to what we started with:

And the gaze of the serpent, starkly mad. . . .

There is generally a great deal of fetishism in me. Do you know which passage in your letter I liked best? That in which you say that you would like to see my material setting, and especially “to see and touch my things and my books.” I think you would also like “to have a look at my furniture,” on “what” and “how” I sit. That is the principal thing, the Egyptian. And all the rest is rubbish. “Europe” and nonsense. All the rest is mere newspaper stuff.

V. ROZANOV.
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