V. V. ROZANOV
A CRITICO-BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY
BY E. GOLLERBACH

VASILI VASILIEVICH ROZANOV was born on 20th April 1856 in the town of Vetluga, in the Kostroma province. The Rozanov family moved to Kostroma when Vasili was three years old, and there he spent his early childhood. His father died when Vasili was about five. The mother, who had to work hard, had no time to take proper care of the children, and young Vasili grew up in an atmosphere of poverty and discontent. The pension of 300 roubles, which his mother used to receive, was not enough to keep a large family. And the family had no good influence on young Vasili. He grew up a lonely boy, and found no support in anyone; soon there developed in him a sense of weakness, helplessness, estrangement. Love and tenderness were neither near him nor in him.

In Solitaria Rozanov says: "When my mother died, I merely realized that I could now smoke a cigarette openly. And I lighted a cigarette." And

1 A translation of E. Gollerbach's The Life and Works of V. V. Rozanov, 1922, Petersburg, very considerably abridged.
further: "throughout our house I can't remember any one ever smiling."

The hard work in the kitchen garden in which young Rozanov had to take part was to him intolerable, for he was forced to labour, without any word of encouragement or affection. His elder brothers did not like him and did not help him in his work.

In one of his letters to me (of 26th August 1918) Rozanov describes his childhood as follows:

"The very last stage of poverty arrived when we lost our cow. Up till then we drank milk and were contented. The garden was a large one, and the work in it for a boy of seven was very arduous. . . . Altogether life physically was terribly difficult, 'hard-working,' and this at a time when I was beginning to go to school."

"I worked along with Voskressensky, who took an interest in our house, and was a sort of step-father; and he compelled me to work. He was a nihilist, a 'seminarist,' a 'populist,' and a 'Bazarovist' (see Turgenev's Fathers and Children). My mother, innocent and fine, got to love him with an old, impotent, unhappy love. He had completed his studies at the Seminary, he was a painter, not at all a bad one, and also studied at the Academy of Art in St. Petersburg. Perhaps he was not at all a bad man, but his badness consisted in this that we all hated him too much. He used to flog me for smoking, but could not stop me.

"And then our cow died. She resembled my mother, and also came as it were ' of the Shishkin
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family.' Not a strong cow, yet she gave us milk. Then something happened to her. The butcher was called in. I was looking on from the hayrick. He tied the cow's horns to the cart . . . then put the knife to her throat: the cow fell down, and I too at that moment fell down from the hayrick. . . .

"I used to carry milk to the neighbours to sell it; also raspberries, gooseberries, and cucumbers. All was well so long as the cow lived. . . .

"One of my childhood's traits was my absorption in imagination. It was not fantasy, but dreaming. It seems to me that such a 'thoughtful boy' as myself never existed. I 'thought eternally,' but what of, I do not know. Yet the dreams were neither silly, nor empty."

Rozanov entered the public school at Simbirsk. In his third form he read most carefully Buckle's *History of Civilization*, as well as Karl Fogt and Pisarev, and he used to make notes on the books he had read. His enthusiasm for materialism made him quarrel with his eldest brother, who used to laugh at Buckle and Pisarev. Yet Rozanov's infatuation for materialism did not last long. . . . In his sixth form, at the Novgorod public school, he no longer could stand Pisarev's writings. . . .

The university played no important part in Rozanov's life. "Formal," "academic" instruction could not satisfy him. "It is not the universities," he says in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. i, "that have brought up the genuine Russians, but the good, old, illiterate nurses."
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The Russian public schools and universities Rozanov regarded as "nihilism, negation, and a jibe at Russia."

"How nice it is," he says in Fallen Leaves, vol. i, "that I slept through my university course. At the lectures I used to pick my nose, and at the exams I answered from cribs. What university man does not know that our 'Russian Imperial Universities' were in olden times a kind of foundling home, and in our time they become a factory for manufacturing diplomas, a department of patent mediocrities."

Rozanov considered that the autonomy of the universities did not at all signify the freedom of teaching and the independence of the professorial corporation, a corporation which had neither a credo nor an amo; but just signified the autonomy of the students, which was the causa materialis and causa finalis of that institution.

"Of what do those men think," Rozanov said indignantly in a private conversation about Russian professors. "The fellow has been sitting for twenty-five years, like a log, in his chair, and repeating what he has once fished out from German text books. And you never see one taking a pen in his hand and writing something of his own." . . .

Yet Rozanov completed his studies at the Moscow University, in the faculty of history and philology, and became a teacher of history and geography. But teaching was not his vocation, and he did not feel fit for the part. In one of his notes on Strakhov's letters (Literary Exiles, vol. i), Rozanov says: "I never
could control my attention (hence naturally I was an impossible teacher); on the contrary, a mysterious attention, with its autonomous laws, either completely unknown, or not revealed to me, controlled me. And not a single intention in my life was fulfilled by me. But I did fulfil and perform with fervour, with passion just what I did not want or imagine, or what I almost did not desire or desired very little. I must remark that ‘doing everything with passion,’ I, mysteriously, did it also coldly; and nothing could prevent me from passionately participating, say, in a patriotic procession and passing immediately (under a momentary influence) into participation in a cosmopolitan procession.”

Only an extreme individualist could have made the following admission (in the same note on Strakhov’s eighty-eighth letter): “a ‘sympathetic face’ could drag me into the Revolution, as it could drag me to the Church; and I, strictly speaking, always went to people and after people, but not to a ‘system’ and not for a system of convictions. For instance, all my polemics (bitter and lasting many years) against Vengerov and Kareyev arose from this that they both were fat, and I simply can’t stand fat writers. But their ‘labours’ were not at all unpleasant to me (or were ‘all the same,’ to me).”

In another passage (in Fallen Leaves, vol. ii), Rozanov says again of Vengerov: “His labours are to be respected. And the fact that he has been working all his life on Pushkin is even touching. In personal contact (once) he produced on me an
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almost pleasant impression. But I have only to glance at his belly and I am already writing (in my mind) a fiery article.” And further: “Why don’t I like Vengerov? It is, strange to say, simply because he is so fat and black (like a big-bellied beetle).”

Rozanov’s subject to a “mysterious attention” was all through his life “a very painful peculiarity” of his. That “mysterious attention,” directed as it were to something deep down in himself, to something eternally listening, is a typical characteristic of mystically attuned, dreamy, self-probing natures.

Rozanov thought that this “peculiarity” of his practically shattered his whole life: “I could never say to myself;” he declared, “you must listen;” and actually do so; “you must do something;” and—do it. Strange as it is, yet for forty years I have lived “by chance,” “from moment to moment”; it has been a forty-years-old chain of accidental and unexpected things; I married “by chance,” I fell in love “by chance.” I got into the conservative movement in literature “by chance”; some one (the Merezhkovskies) came and took me into the very advanced Mir Iskusstva and Novy Pout, where I collaborated “by chance,” i.e., in the chain of facts of my inner life, “I did not foresee it even yesterday,” “I did not look for it to-day.”

In 1886 appeared Rozanov’s book On Understanding, the result of five years’ labour. That book, according to Rozanov, was a polemic of 737 pages directed against the Moscow University.
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The book was ignored and unappreciated. The author received from the bookseller a sack of unsold copies (the edition consisted of 600), and a second sackful Rozanov sold at the Sukharev market for fifteen roubles for wrapping up novels.

After the publication of On Understanding Rozanov had meant to write On Potentiality and its rôle in the physical world and the world of man—a book which was not destined to be written. This is what he wrote in a note on Literary Exiles.

"Potentialities are invisible, half-existing, quarter-existing, co-existing forms (substances) round the visible (real). The world 'as it is' is only a particle and moment of the 'potential world,' which world is the proper object of a complete philosophy and a complete science. The study of the transitions from the potential into the real world, the laws of the transition and the conditions of the transition, generally, of all that emerges in the stage of transition, filled my thought and imagination.

"And, in a word, it seemed to me that my philosophy would embrace the angels and trade."

Rozanov's work as teacher in provincial public schools was uncongenial to him. The relations between him and his pupils were not bad, but apart from the "lovely faces and dear souls" of the pupils, everything in his teaching disgusted him, was strange, and annoying beyond measure. "Teaching," he wrote, "is form, and I am formless. In teaching there must be order and a system, and I am systemless and even disorderly. There is duty,—and to me
any duty at the bottom of my heart always seemed comical, and on any duty at the bottom of my heart I always wanted to play a trick (except tragic duty)...."

"Every hour, and on every turn the 'teacher' denied me, and I denied the 'teacher.' There was a mutual destruction of the 'work and the worker.' Something hellish! It seemed to me that I could collect all the pupils and fly away with them into the regions of philosophy, fairy tales, stories, adventures 'in forests and at night time,' to the angels and the devils, and above all into dreaming. But at nine in the morning—'I stand at prayers, take the class register; listen to the rivers which fall into the Volga, then to the system of the great lakes in North America, the States and their cities, Boston, Texas, Salt Lake, the number of pigs in Chicago; the steel industry in Sheffield; then kings, tsars, popes, generals, peace treaties, 'on which river this battle took place,' 'from which hill that general looked,' 'what Napoleon said when he stood by the pyramids,' and finally... 'the director is looking from the door to see how I conduct my lesson.' "..."

Rozanov spent thirteen years teaching in provincial public schools. And during that period he wrote his Twilight of Enlightenment, The Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, The Aesthetic Conception of History, The Place of Christianity in History, and a series of small articles. As years went by he was more and more drawn to problems of religion and Christian mysticism, to the revelation of the invisible things. A
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real longing for religion seized him at the time when it became clear to him—as he says in his note on Strakhov’s fifty-fifth letter, that

Sunt destinationes rerum,
Sunt metae rerum.
Prima sunt divinae,
Secundae sunt humanae;

and when he suddenly distinguished the divine world in nature from the accidental-arbitrary-human world. According to Rozanov, this happened at that truly sacred hour, the hour “when having suddenly stopped making my cigarettes, I fixed my glance on the distance, and in my mind the destinationes and metae separated and showed the gulf that existed between them. From that moment until today (until the age of fifty-seven), my conception of the world was being unfolded: I boundlessly gave myself to the destinationes . . . and looked with hostility at the metae. . . . For two years I have been happy with ‘that hour,’ for two years I have been ‘in Easter,’ ‘in the pealing of bells,’ truly ‘arrayed in white vestments,’ for I saw the destinationes, eternal, ascending from the earth to heaven, and as plants the tops of which were held by God, the Holder of All. Hence, as I can remember, came my solemn style; for he to whom the destinationes have been revealed has no right to speak in the ordinary language of the market place, but only in the language of the temple, for he is a priest, appointed not by men, but chosen by God: i.e., it is to him alone that the divine will
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(the _destinationes_ in the world) had revealed itself. . . . I remember perfectly well and distinctly that from that moment I became religious, definitely and deliberately religious; whilst up to that moment I had only 'played about with atheism, public-school atheism,' not knowing what to do with it, and above all how to get rid of it. 'How to get rid' was solved in that hour.'

The state thus described bears all the character of a mystical experience, with its typical features: intuition, ecstasy, momentariness, and almost inarticulateness. To a religious nature there is no more important experience than a mystical one. In the life of the greatest mystics there have been experiences identical with the one described by Rozanov. . . .

Owing to Strakhov's efforts Rozanov, who for years had longed to live and work in the capital, was finally appointed to a post in the State Control Office in Petersburg, and accordingly moved there in 1893, when after years of correspondence the two men at last met. In his note on Strakhov's letter of 15th May 1893, Rozanov says: "After all it must be that I am more sympathetic in person, than I am in my writings. . . . Now with my arrival in Petersburg, Strakhov adopted a much warmer attitude towards me. Hence this reminder for my critics: 'not everything in Rozanov is as bad as it seems in his writings.' After all man is better and more genuine than his books'!"

At that time a circle of writers had been formed in
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Petersburg to which belonged N. P. Aksakov, I. F. Romanov (Rzy), S. F. Sharapov, and A. Vassiliev. Strakhov, too, eventually joined that circle of "living Slavophiles"; for after the death of N. Y. Danilevsky and K. N. Leontiev, Strakhov remained the sole representative of pure Slavophilism. In 1894 Rozanov brought out, at his own expense, his Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, which owing to his poor circumstances—his salary being one hundred roubles a month—was a severe strain on his resources. Those difficult circumstances were reflected in his work and mood of that time.

In his letter of July 1894, Strakhov reproves Rozanov for his "hurried articles." In a note on that letter Rozanov says: "All those hurried articles are to be explained by my extreme material want, the like of which I never before experienced in my life; and I look back now at the years 1893-1899 with horror (I started work in the Novoye Vremya in 1899, having left my post in the Control). Our soul is in the clutches of life; in the clutches of a flat, of dinner, in the clutches of debts to the butcher and grocer." . . .

Rozanov regarded Strakhov with love and respect. "The secret of Strakhov," he says, "was in his wise life and in the wisdom of his way of thinking." Strakhov had a very high opinion of Rozanov's brilliant talent, but feared that he was unstable and ill-balanced.

On his photograph, presented by Strakhov to Rozanov, we read: "I love your talent very much,
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Vasili Vasilievich, but I am afraid that nothing will come of it” (October 1895).

To this time also belongs Rozanov’s friendship with the young writer, the student F. E. Shperk, whom he considered more gifted, more original than himself (see *Solitaria*). Shperk died from tuberculosis at the age of twenty-six, and as a writer is quite unknown. Evidently under Rozanov’s influence Shperk became a Slavophile and then embraced Orthodoxy. “I loved him madly,” says Rozanov in *Fallen Leaves*, vol. ii.

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Towards the end of the ’nineties Rozanov began to work for the *Novoye Vremya*. The invitation to write for that paper he had received as long ago as 1893, but somehow paid no attention to it. In his note on Souvorin’s letter of 17th August 1893, he says: “Only now, reading the letter in proof, have I noticed the definite suggestion contained there to write for the paper, of which I, inexplicably to myself, never availed myself till 1899; *i.e.*, for six whole years I overlooked this suggestion; and yet those six years were positively poisoned by material want (as was also my literary activity). If I could have thought of writing ‘notices’ for the paper, I should have been saved; but at that time I could not write ‘notices,’ only ‘treatises.’” Of one of such “treatises” Souvorin, in his letter of 12th August 1898, writes to Rozanov: “It is either a sermon from the pulpit, or a profound philosophy, which requires commentaries. Do agree, that if Burenin and myself
cannot make it out, the great mass of our readers are sure not to understand it either."

All his life long Rozanov regarded Souvorin with deep respect, valuing in him his "rare modesty and nobility." As an illustration, he relates the following fact. After Mikhailovsky's\(^1\) death Rozanov wrote a very cordial article on him on the ground of "de mortuis, etc.," although he had for years carried on a most severe polemic against him. Souvorin passed that article, although under some pretext he might have suppressed it.

In the beginning of his infatuation for Egypt Rozanov wrote in the Novoye Vremya under the pseudonym of "Ibis." The articles were varied in their themes and rich in their contents; but Souvorin had at times to protest against certain passages or too outspoken expressions.

When Rozanov's book In the World of the Indefinite and the Unsolved was published, E. L. Radlov drew the attention of D. Kobeko to some of the concluding pages of the book. Kobeko was in a fury and told Witte of it. Witte, who was Minister of Finance at that time, forwarded the book to K. P. Pobedonoszëv, the Procurator of the Holy Synod, drawing his attention to the last three pages of the book. Pobedonoszëv sent the book to the chief of the Press Department. Both Witte and Stolypin considered Rosanov "a terrible pornographic writer."

As a result the book was suppressed a month after its publication.

\(^1\) Mikhailovsky, an advanced socialist and influential literary critic.
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"Yet," writes Rozanov in his note on Souvorin's thirty-first letter, "the religion of 'the opening bud' is the complete denial—a denial to the very root, and to the end of time—of pornography, a complete denial of the bourgeois and low, salacious and hooliganish attitude towards sex, towards sexual organs, towards sexual acts. It is sex 'transfigured,' where the objects and names are the same as in pornography, but at the same time they are perfectly different, regarded under a different aspect, in a different spirit. They are as much related to one another as a Petersburg brothel, say, and the Bible story of Ruth and Boaz. To Russians this can be explained by saying that in certain moments one and the same thing is done by Artsybashev's Sanin and by Pushkin's Tatyana—but what a difference there is in what is done! The same thing is done in marriage and in a 'gay house,' but again what a difference! Society, the public, the critics, finally the official censorship cannot and do not wish to distinguish that difference, and they accuse me of talking of a 'brothel' when I am speaking of the Egyptian 'bud' (marriage)."

In 1902 two books of Rozanov's, mostly consisting of his published articles, and entitled *Nature and History* and *Religion and Culture* were published. A year later appeared his two volumes on *The Family Question in Russia*. In 1909 he brought out *The Russian Church*, along with *When the Officials Retired* and *Italian Impressions*.

In 1911 appeared the first part of his *Metaphysics of*
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Christianity, entitled The Dark Image, and later its continuation, entitled Men of the Moonlight.

In 1912 Solitaria was published; Fallen Leaves, part I, made its appearance in 1913, and Fallen Leaves, part II, in 1915.

The three last-named books furnish abundant material for making an acquaintance with the personality of their author. In concise fragments and notes Rozanov fixes separate outstanding moments of his life and of the life of his intimates. Solitaria and Fallen Leaves are permeated by that “spirit of trifles, charming and light” which better than any solemn chronicle reflects the soul of the author and of the epoch. To careless and inattentive readers these books will yield very little, or perhaps nothing. But he who would be guided by the penetrating principle of the mystics—“ab exterioribus ad interiora”—will soon see that Rozanov is one of those few writers in whom the “continual fiens” is for ever and always overcome by the “eternal ens.”

In trying to understand Rozanov on the principle of ab exterioribus ad interioria we soon realize that it needed the true penetration of genius, the clairvoyance of genius to see in the thousand trifling, everyday occurrences, which nearly everyone passes by with utter indifference, to see in these the imprint of the “other world,” to find their profound significance, to divine their fleeting value. We soon realize that the author of these as it were incoherent and absurd notes written now while “examining my coins,” now “on the back of the lined sheet,”
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now "in the street," now "on the heel of my slipper (while bathing)," now even "in the W.C."—that the author is a most unique observer and thinker in the full and perfect sense of the word.

In Solitaria we read: "I am choked in thought. And how pleasant to me to live in that choked state. That is why my life, despite its thorns and tears, is after all a joy." He has no desire for fame, or popularity: "I longed for nothing as much as for humiliation. 'Fame' at times gladdened me with a purely piggish pleasure. But this never lasted long (a day or two); then would come the former longing—to be humiliated." But neither has he got that assumed modesty, in which there is more hypocrisy than virtue: he knows his worth quite well: "I may be a 'fool' (there are rumours); perhaps even a 'swindler' (there is gossip to that effect); but the width of thought, the incommensurability of horizons revealed—no one has had that before me in the way I possess it. And all of it came from my own mind, without borrowing an iota even. I am simply a wonderful man." People accuse Rozanov of inconstancy, perfidiousness, even of lying, and this is what he says about it: "It is surprising how I managed to accommodate myself to falsehood. It has never worried me. And for this odd reason: 'What business is it of yours what precisely I think? Why am I obliged to tell you my real thoughts?' My profound subjectivity (the pathos of subjectivity) has had this effect that I have gone through my whole life as though behind a curtain, irremovable, untear-
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able: 'Nobody dare touch that curtain.' There I lived, there with myself I was truthful.'

And from this most profound subjectivity springs Rozanov’s attitude to morals: “I am not such a scoundrel yet as to think about morals.”

But completely ignoring the conventional notion of morality, Rozanov is drawn with his whole being to religious problems. To him they present the only interest, profound and acute: “Do you know,” he asks, “that religion is the most important, the most essential, the most needful? With the person who does not know this, not the alpha of discussion or conversation should be entertained. Such a person should simply be ignored. Passed over in silence. Yet who does know it? Are there many who do? That is why in our time there is almost nothing to speak about, nor anyone to speak with.”

Positivism, and everything connected with positivism, was revolting to Rozanov.

The puzzle of Rozanov’s attraction to the subject of sexual life is solved in the following words: “The connexion of sex with God—greater than the connexion of the mind with God, greater even than the connexion of conscience with God—is gathered from this that all a-sexualists reveal themselves also as atheists. Such gentlemen as Buckle or Spencer, as Pisarev or Belinsky, who have said about ‘sex’ no more words than about the Argentine, are at the same time so astonishingly atheistical as though there had not been before them or near them any religion.”

After the publication of Fallen Leaves the critics
began more and more to accuse Rozanov of "pornography." But those accusations came from people to whom sexual life and the cult of sex appeared nasty and evil. To Rozanov, on the contrary, sexual life breathes of the fragrance of religion, and shines as brightly as the sun. His accusers should be reminded of the Apostle: "there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean," and also: "unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

The indifference to morality, characteristic of Rozanov, does not mean his indifference to truth. . . . And to Rozanov, a thorough Russian, with all the great qualities and great defects which are peculiar to the Russian spirit, to him truth is above everything: "Truth is higher than the sun, higher than the heaven, higher than God: for if God too began not with truth, then he is not God, and heaven is a swamp, and the sun a brass plate."

No one would accuse Rozanov of banality, but he is often accused of cynicism. But this is almost praise, for cynicism and banality are essentially opposing categories: mediocre natures are incapable of cynicism, but can be utterly banal. Cynicism after all requires a good soil for its growth. Cynicism, I should say, grows up on a soil of spiritual abundance. It is a morbid reaction to the monstrosities and grimaces of life. . . . A morbid reaction, yet needing courage and wit. Short-sighted observers often
confuse cynicism with banality. Banality can be compared to a dead nettle or a thistle or a weed—common, to be found everywhere and very ordinary. Cynicism may be compared to a cactus, the strange form of which, in spite of its ugliness, is fascinating. "Cynicism through suffering. . . . Did it ever occur to you?" Rozanov asks in Solitaria, and the fact that this question is still unanswered, shows that no one had thought of propounding it previous to the writing of Solitaria. In Fallen Leaves, part II, we read: "There are people who are born 'rightly' and others who are born not 'rightly.' I was born not 'rightly'—hence such a strange, prickly 'biography,' and yet rather 'interesting.' And feeling that lack of 'rightness,' a writer knows that only 'disturbance' comes from him." . . . "I could fill the world with crimson clouds of smoke. . . . But I don't want to do it." About his critics (whose names are legion now), Rozanov says: "They have no divination of me at all. They either make me out a 'Byron' soaring up, or a 'Satan,' black and in flames. But there is nothing like this in me: I am quite a nice fellow. What a lot of black beetles have I dragged out from my bath, so as not to drown a single one of them, when turning on the water. Choukovsky was the only one who guessed, or rather was able to name the 'composition of my bones,' my nature, blood, temperament. Some of his definitions are astonishing. My themes?—they are visible to everyone, and indeed they don't matter a damn. 'There are all sorts of themes,' I shall say cynically this time. But
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he has not guessed my intimate secret—which is pain, pain without cause, indefinite and ceaseless. It seems to me that this is my most striking—at any rate, inexplicable characteristic. It seems to me that I was born with pain.” . . . (Fallen Leaves, part II). In Solitaria we read: “I am not needed; of nothing am I more convinced than of this that I am not needed.”

Without declaring himself the possessor of lofty truths, Rozanov confesses: “I do not want truth, I want peace.” Not only is he not attracted by abstract truth, but even to its themes he is indifferent: “I fled round themes, but did not fly towards themes. The very flight—that is my life. As to themes—they are just like a dream. One, two, many . . . but I have forgotten them all. I shall forget them as I near the grave. In the other world I shall be without themes. And God will ask me: “What have you done?” “Nothing,” will be my reply.

That “nothing” must be taken as Rozanov’s disgust with all that is dogmatic, planned, and systematic. . . . Rozanov’s creation represents something chaotic. A systematic approach to that creation is almost impossible, so scattered, so dispersed are his works. Often the basic idea is hidden under a heap of fragmentary sketches and notes. Rozanov’s philosophy is a confused piling up of hasty ideas. But in it there is none of the pernicious pedantry, and dogmatic deadliness, which is characteristic of most philosophical works. His living thought,
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multifaced, multicoloured, multitonned, pulsates in every line of Rozanov's. In his thought there may be morbidity, perversity, a great deal of the spirit of Dostoevsky, its lapses are serious and its flights high. The "Dostoevsky" element in Rozanov is so strong that at one time the critics were inclined to regard Rozanov as the "shadow" of Dostoevsky, even as his imitator. But, in fact, Rozanov was incapable of imitation. And to Dostoevsky he was bound by a basic spiritual kinship. Many times in the press and in talks with friends Rozanov spoke of his close, intimate, psychological bond with Dostoevsky's creations. Once I remember he said to me, as he stroked a volume of The Journal of an Author: "learn to value this book. I never part with it." Dostoevsky was always on his table.

Declaring that writers who stand alone and belong to no parties or groups might indeed hail our progress with the words Morituri te salutant, Rozanov maintained that if the millions of reading Russians were to read, with the same attention, ardour, and passion—to read carefully and to reflect on every page of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, as they now read and reflect on every page of Gorky and Andreyev, then our public would grow into a tremendously serious entity; for, even without any school instruction, the mere reflection on the whole of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky would make one a Socrates or an Epictetus. His personal impression of the creation of these two titans of Russian literature Rozanov formulated thus: "Tolstoy surprises; Dostoevsky
moves.” Tolstoy’s works he compared to a perfectly planned building. Of Dostoevsky he said that he was “a rider in the desert with one quiver of arrows. And blood flows wherever his arrow strikes.”

Rozanov disliked Tolstoy’s tendency to preach, to teach. There was nothing in Tolstoy which was dear to him; but Dostoevsky ever lived within him: Dostoevsky’s music ever played in his soul. Knowing his feeling for Dostoevsky, I once asked him: “Who of Dostoevsky’s heroes is most dear to you, whose psychology is nearer and more akin to yours?” Without hesitating a moment, Rozanov answered, with his peculiar impulsive and soft intonation: “Shatov, of course.”

There is no doubt that with all his much talked-of “anti-Christianity” Rozanov loved Christ with that living, passionate, boundlessly devoted love with which one can love only a unique, incomparable being. In Rozanov’s opinion it is no matter that Christianity has turned the world into ashes, has dried up the flowers of joy, that Golgotha has dimmed the sunlit vistas of the universe; for it is just because Jesus the Sweetest was so inexpressibly sweet that life has become so flavourless. Here is Rozanov’s secret thought, here is his consolation. Yes, he loved “the green voices of the spring” and the “gummy leaves”; yes, he adored the fruitful womb (by the way, he loved Dostoevsky just because, as he put it, Dostoevsky is “a pregnant big-joined writer”). Rozanov grieved that Christ never laughed, never smiled, never took a lyre or reed into his hand; that there are no music or songs in Chris-
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tianity, that the life of the flesh is driven out from the cycle of evangelical joys. But in his withdrawal from Christ, in his denial, he delicately felt the personal fascination of Christ and closely approached the most intimate traits of Christ’s personality. To the “non-accepting” Rozanov Christ was as essential, needed, and personal as he was to the “accepting” Dostoevsky.

Rozanov and Dostoevsky approached Christ from different, but equally close angles. A certain hint of that intimacy, the psychological likeness of that intimacy, is contained in the mystical love which some people feel for one another, sometimes quite hopelessly, but always boundlessly and irresistibly. Such a love exists in Shatov’s relations to Stavrogin, with such a love Aliosha Karamazov loved his father. But these are only mere allusive images of what Rozanov and Dostoevsky contained in the subtlest complication of their souls.

The complication and tangle of Rozanov’s religious position consisted in this that, most intimately and mystically loving Christ, he did not accept Him with his mind. But there is no doubt that the spiritual bond between Dostoevsky and Rozanov just consisted in that “contact” with Christ. The difference being that in Dostoevsky’s religious probings the “contact” was manifested in a positive form, while in Rozanov’s penetrating anti-Christianity it found expression in a negative form.

* * *

However you may regard Rozanov’s views, you
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can’t help being charmed by his style, a style not exempt from grammatical errors and inexactitudes, yet remarkably vigorous and direct, colourful, and picturesque. After Pushkin and Turgenev, who seemed to have created the final expressiveness of the Russian language, Rozanov has revealed in it new beauties, has made it a quite different language, and this without any effort, without any care for style. *Solitaria* and *Fallen Leaves* are the summits of Rozanov’s stylistic mastery. . . . “The best in me,” wrote Rozanov in his letter to me of 16th July 1915, “is *Solitaria.*” In another letter, in the autumn of 1918, not long before his death, he dwells on his style, on the meaning and significance of his *Fallen Leaves*. . . . “Mysteriously and beautifully, mysteriously and egotistically I gave in *Fallen Leaves* the whole of myself. Indeed, *The Apocalypse of Our Times* is also *Fallen Leaves*—only on one definite subject—on the rebellion against Christianity; and so are also my *Oriental Motifs*, which disclose the secret of the ancient religions. . . . And I have simply lost any other form of literary work: ‘I can’t do it,’ ‘there’s nothing doing.’ And yet this is the simplest and only form. Anything simpler cannot be invented. ‘The form of Adam’—in paradise, and since paradise. Since paradise there has only been added the chair, on which the writer sits down and begins to write. Indeed, what else are poets doing than writing ‘fallen leaves.’ And you, writing of Rozanov, indeed do not at all write of him, but you write your own fallen leaves; what ‘I think,’ ‘feel,’
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‘live,’ ‘do.’ This form is both full of egoism and yet without egoism. Essentially, everything is man’s concern, and nothing is his concern. Essentially, occupied with himself alone, he is occupied at the same time with the whole world. I remember quite well, from my childhood, that I had no concern with anything. And yet this mysteriously and fully merged with ‘everything is my concern.’ Now through this peculiar fusion of egoism and non-egoism *Fallen Leaves* is particularly fine.”

“I do not remember who it was, Gershenson or V. Ivanov, who wrote to me that ‘people thought that the forms of literary work had already been exhausted,’ ‘that the drama, poem, and lyrics were exhausted’ and nothing could be found, invented, discovered there, and that to the existing forms I had added the ‘11th’ or ‘12th’ form. Gershenson also said that it was quite classical in its simplicity, artlessness. This delighted me, for he is an expert. And along with this, what happened? Not a single Pharaoh, not a single Napoleon immortalized himself like that. In a pyramid there is a void which is not filled; Napoleon had days of non-existence. Yet *Fallen Leaves* will appeal to a small man, to a small life. This for the small as well as for the great soul is as it were the achievement of the boundary of eternity. And it simply consists in this that ‘the river should flow as it does’; that ‘everything should be as it is.’ Without inventions. Yet ‘man is always inventing.’ And here is that peculiarity that even the inventions do not violate the truth, the

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facts: every dream, wish, cobweb of thought has its place here. It is by no means a ‘Journal,’ or ‘Memoirs,’ or a penitent confession—it is just only ‘leaves,’ ‘fallen,’ ‘it was’ and ‘is no longer,’ it lived and ‘ceased to live,’ it is less than a pyramid and more than a pyramid; above all, it is more complex, and at the same time ‘you can put it in your pocket.’ And when I think that I have done this on my own, have done it since 1911, then certainly not a single man will to such an extent and in such a way express himself, in such a way and yet subjectively. And it seems to me that it is God who has granted me this as a reward for my whole labour and sweat and for truth.”

The continuation of Fallen Leaves is The Apocalypse of Our Times, published in 1918 in Sergiev Posad. With The Apocalypse, and his unfinished work Oriental Motifs, Rozanov’s creative work was concluded. To Rozanov the destiny of his books, that is, of his ideas, was his personal destiny. Therefore in the examination of his life the biographical data must not be separated from his literary activity. His life was not rich in external events. His travels in Italy, France, and Germany gave him a series of occasions for interesting articles; but those were only occasions, which awakened in his soul certain motifs, moods, ideas—but yielded nothing essentially new. Rozanov’s soul did not need external impulses—it was rich by nature, and created out of itself. The Vatican and the Coliseum were to Rozanov’s creation just of the same importance as any flat in any Petersburg street. He lived wholly
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"within himself." And "within himself" he remained till the end of his days. Sergiev Posad, whereto he moved in the beginning of 1918, brought nothing new to his moods; in the stillness of a thoroughly Christian and Orthodox little town, Rozanov wrote his perhaps most "anti-Christian" pages—*The Apocalypse of Our Times*. He thought that we all were slowly but surely dying, passing into the night, into non-being, and yet doing this as "braggarts," as "actors," without a cross or prayer. And that we were dying from this sole cause—from disrespect for ourselves, from nihilism.

The theme of the *Apocalypse* is interwoven of religious-philosophical and social-political problems. The title, according to Rozanov, needs no explanation in view of the events in Russia which have not a sham but real apocalyptical significance. From the former Christianity have been formed gigantic voids, into which thrones, classes, groups, labour, riches are tumbling. All this is tumbling down into the emptiness of the soul, deprived of its old contents. In his article, *The Disrupted Kingdom*, Rozanov laments over the fall of Russia, blaming Russian literature for it, and fixes his gaze on the ages gone by, on the Apocalypse, that mysterious heart-searing book. He thinks that the Apocalypse is not a Christian book, that the Christ of the Apocalypse has nothing in common with the Christ of the Evangel. Rozanov particularly attacks Christianity for its impotence to help man, for its abstractions, for its ignorance of the cosmos.

The sun was lighted before Christianity and it will
not be extinguished, were even Christianity to come to an end.

"Try to crucify the sun," he says in a note, "and you will see which is God."

In this, to him, is the limitation of Christianity. With Christianity alone man can't live. . . . The sun is greater than Christ, and more than Christ does it desire man's happiness. . . . Speaking of the works of the spirit as opposed to those of the flesh Christ thereby showed that He and the Father were not one. The Father's teaching differs from the Son's by its ceaseless solicitude for man, which envelops and embraces him. To Rozanov this is significant and valuable, for he is convinced that that solicitude, and, generally, the physiology with which the Old Testament is permeated, is cosmical. To him the earthly is the pledge, and not the antithesis of the heavenly. The heavenly emerges from the earthly, as a butterfly from a caterpillar.

In his adoration of the earthly Rozanov does not see that his view is correct only in the category of the earthly, material, concrete, and empirical; and that his so very simplified conception cannot be applied to the noûmenal world. If the Father is a noûmen, then the Son is a phenomenal image, i.e., not the completion, but the reflection of the Father. Love and hatred of Christ lived inseparably in Rozanov's contradictory soul. "Thou alone art beautiful, Lord Jesus," he exclaims, "and Thou hast profaned the world by Thy beauty." And he adds: "And yet the world is God's." He believes
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that Christ has arisen, but he does not rejoice in it: Christ terrifies him. Christ, according to him, has "emasculated God," "He is terrifying." He is not the lover of men, but a seductive enemy. Perfectly different is Moses, "the greatest of the ancients"; he was not eloquent and fascinating like Christ; on the contrary, he was tongue-tied, and stammered; and "by this combination of the innocent and funny we recognize the Divine book and the Divine acts."

Rozanov in his *Apocalypse* dwells at length on the destinies of the Russian people. It seems to him that the Russian people cannot rule, has no talent for ruling: it is just satisfied with mere gossip and talk.

One of the numbers composing *The Apocalypse of Our Times*, ends with the following words: "I am exhausted. I can't go on any longer. Two or three handfuls of flour, two or three handfuls of buckwheat, or five hard boiled eggs can often save my day... Reader, save your writer"... (and then follows Rozanov's address). There were people who laughed, in the Press, at this request, and who accused Rozanov of "begging." This "begging" was merely the desperate cry of a man, who passionately wanted to live and to work, but could not; for he was starving, suffering from hunger, cold, and exhaustion. Rozanov dreamed of crowning his life-work with a grandiose elaboration of his theme. He believed in the coming regeneration of Russia, in spite of everything. The apocalyptic revolution was taking place before his very eyes, and yet he believed in the value of that revolution. To one
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of his friends he wrote that he wanted to write such an apology for the Revolution, as the Revolution itself could not dream of.

Love and hatred were strangely combined in his enigmatic soul. Duality existed in his attitude to Russia, to the Revolution, to the Jews; in a word, to everything his active, inquiring, rebellious soul came into contact with. In that contradictoriness there was no lie, nothing double-faced, insincere, casual: he just strove to fathom the depths of things, their very essence; and the ultimate secrets surely are antinomian, and cannot be known by mere assertion or negation. . . . In his most intimate, in his religious profundity, he tenderly loved Christ, and yet rejected historical Christianity. . . .

* * *

Rozanov was more interested in the private affairs of writers, than in their works. He knew quite well where to find the key to the understanding of the individual peculiarities of authors. And doubtless he was right in raising the question of "under-clothing," although this indiscreet question often leads to revolting answers. . . . And indeed to differentiate "the author" from "the man" is as strange as to differentiate a flower from its roots, and to maintain that these are two completely different growths.

That is why I should like to fix as distinctly as I can Rozanov's "face," to record his words, habits, sympathies.

My first meeting with Rozanov took place in
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Vyriza, a summer resort, at his bungalow, where I arrived in July 1915, in response to his invitation.

He had just got up from his afternoon doze, and I could hear him splashing his face behind the wall of the little study where I sat waiting for him. Soon there came in an elderly man, not tall, of a most peaceful and genial appearance. I had expected to see a tall "Oblomov," with a ginger-coloured mane and blue eyes. Instead, there stood before me a straight, energetic, rather thin man with a grey head, with a yellow-grey moustache and a little beard. In his mobile face black (brown) eyes shone cunningly and sensibly. He seemed to me restless and concentrated at the same time. The first words he said were: "I'm glad to make your acquaintance. . . . You're a German, a Lutheran, aren't you?"

At the very opening of our conversation it became clear that Rozanov valued most in man his attraction to religion, and repulsion from positivism.

The conversation turned on the Church, on the University, students, on Vladimir Soloviov, Bergson, Maeterlinck. I looked at Rozanov eagerly. "So this is the man," I thought, "around whom three or four years ago (before his expulsion from the Religious Philosophic Society in 1913) the Petersburg aristocracy of mind and talent used to gather; the man in whose study, as one witness put it, used to go on the most 'amazing' conversations, conversations unique in their content, originality, and heat."
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Rozanov read to me a few passages from *Fallen Leaves*, part II, which was just out. . . .

Everything in Rozanov seemed to me then extraordinary, except his appearance. His appearance was rather ordinary, the type of an old official or schoolmaster; he might also have passed as a beadle or verger. Only his eyes, deep, probing, seemed not those of an official or of a schoolmaster. He had the habit of getting into another’s soul at once, without preliminaries, just “in his overcoat and goloshes,” without hesitating for a second.

“The overcoat and goloshes” habit in him was bewildering and not always pleasant. As to the rest he was fascinating: the fireworks of his uttered words, of which each had its perfume, taste, colour, weight, is unforgettable. He was in a state of unceasing, continuous creation, so that in his company it was rather difficult to think: all the same you could not keep time with his ideas; the torrent of his own ideas overflowed any one else’s ideas, and I think he never listened to others. But to hear him was sheer delight.

He did not in the least “play the part” of a famous writer, he did not show off, coquet. In everything he was simple, unconstrained, without any fear of being tactless or “bad form.” He passed sharply from one mood into another, from tenderness to irritation, from sadness to merriment. His thought (in conversation) always proceeded in zigzags, in bumps. At times he would say something so unexpected and odd that he just seemed crazy,
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silly, or abnormal. One of his habits was continuous smoking, almost without a break: nearly all day long he was rolling short cigarettes, and smoked one after another. His way of walking was peculiar—quick and almost shy, yet direct. He usually sat with one leg under him, and shaking the other.

After our meeting at Vyriza I often went to see Rozanov in Petersburg. In 1917 he was completely absorbed in his *Oriental Motifs*, which he began then to publish in small numbers (it stopped with the third issue). He was engrossed in Egyptian art, he loved and pondered over each detail, was in raptures over the various symbols and rites of ancient Egypt, abusing the learned Egyptologists, particularly Maspero and Champollion. . . . His, the Rozanovian, Egyptology was, indeed, original; it was a sort of phallic lyricism (the image of the phallus drove him to ecstasy); it was an almost actual contact with the sanctities of the ancient world, a feeling for it which bordered on real tenderness. . . .

Rozanov's flat resembled the host: there was nothing banal in it, and it was difficult to say which was the drawing-room, or study, or bedroom. In the drawing-room there was a library, a mass of books, a mask of Strakhov, a statuette of the Madonna, a collection of old coins. Here visitors used to sit; it was a place for talking. Rozanov's study (which was also his bedroom) was his workroom and the place for friendly and intimate conversation.

In his study were only his most favourite books. Dostoevsky's *Journal of an Author* was on his table, also
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the Bible. Over the table was a large portrait of A. A. Rudnev, his mother-in-law, on the table stood photographs of his daughters.

Of Tolstoy Rozanov spoke variously, now with irritation, now with reverence. "The old man was wonderful," said Rozanov to me, describing a meeting with Tolstoy. "When I said good-bye to him, I embraced him and kissed his hand, the noble hand which had written War and Peace and Anna Karenin and so many other things, which made people happy and say to one another 'how good it is that I am alive, whilst he lives, not before, not before him; and now I am so happy with these pages of art and wisdom.'" Yet this did not prevent Rozanov from declaring (in Solitaria) that "Tolstoy has lived an utterly banal life." He tries to persuade us that Tolstoy knew no suffering, no crown of thorns, and no heroic struggle for his convictions, and that people loved him very little and that his death did not really upset anyone.

Once showing me Tolstoy's photograph, Rozanov said: "He sent me this photograph through Strakhov, but did not inscribe it. Never mind. After all, you know, he was a giant!"

The same duality marked Rozanov's attitude to Vladimir Soloviov. Certain of Soloviov's ideas he stubbornly ignored, despised, or rather was bored by them. He said that Soloviov "lacked the Russian spirit," "Russian warmth," and he considered him an "international, European writer, brilliant, cold, steely." Soloviov, according to
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Rozanov, was a “strange, very gifted and terrible man.” . . .

When Rozanov was working on his Oriental Motifs, and was wholly absorbed in Egypt and spoke of nothing else, he once repeated the story, told him by Soloviov, of how he, Soloviov, once drank champagne, seated at the base of a pyramid. “What sacrilege!” Rozanov said in agitation. “A pyramid, ancient wisdom, beauty, religion—everything is there!—and he in his top-hat gulping down champagne! Think now, how could I help abusing him!”

Of Tchekhov Rozanov once said: “Tchekhov?—nothing particular in him. He looked at life, and what he saw he wrote down. A very fine writer, people got to like him, and began reading him. But he is a cold one, and there’s nothing particular in him. I understand his success, but don’t enjoy it.”

Certain ideas held in common created a bond between Rozanov and A. L. Volynsky, the critic and philosopher. But in their ways of thinking, in their very minds they were always strangers to one another. “You are too logical,” Rozanov would say to Volynsky, “you polish your ideas too finely. And besides, you have a Roman nose, and we Russians love a potato-shaped nose. It’s that Roman nose of yours that stands in the way of our friendship.” He called Volynsky “a Jew of the Greek Orthodox faith”; he valued his interest in Orthodoxy, in the personality of Christ, in the destinies of the Russian Church, etc. Especially dear to

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Rozanov was Volynsky's campaign against the radical and socialist literary critics. Once Volynsky and Rozanov happened to be present at a performance by Isidora Duncan at the Maly Theatre in Petersburg. Suddenly Rozanov ran from his box to the stalls where Volynsky sat, and embracing him, said: "I suddenly remembered your great exploits against the critics and I came running here to give you a kiss."

He avoided talking of the Merezhkovskies. Only once he said with terror about Mme. Merezhkovsky (Hippius): "I say, she is not a woman, but the real devil—both in her mind and in all the rest.... Don't let us talk about her."...

During the years I used to go to Rozanov's house (1915-1917) the members of the Religious Philosophic Society no longer came to his Sundays. Many writers ceased their acquaintance with Rozanov on so-called "moral" grounds, which, however, had nothing in common with real morality. Of the writing fraternity there still at times used to come to see him: A. Remizov, K. Choukovsky, M. Kuzmin, N. Lerner, A. Izmailov, and a few men from the "Conservative camp."...

Rozanov was magnificent in polemics. It was not "argument" (for how could you argue with Rozanov?), but a mental tournament, wrestling. I remember one Sunday at-home, when Rozanov was in particularly high spirits. It was a mixed company: many lady "admirers," a painter from the Crimea, Professor Souslov, Tigranov, and many
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others. The conversation was lively, all the "heat" coming from Rozanov, who was pouring out a stream of ideas, images, mimicry, gestures. At moments he went so far as to lose all sense of "decent." "What? An autonomous Ukraine?" he shouted at a girl, who devoutly gazed into his face. "Here, take your autonomy!" and he made an obscene gesture. . . .

If in the process of his idea he had to touch on very intimate matters he spoke with perfect freedom, without any restraint. Once he even said that when he was at work, "for the sake of inspiration" he used to touch with his left hand "the source of all inspiration" ("I then write better").

It is typical of Rozanov that in discussing literary or public men he was above all interested in the personality, in the "physiognomy" of the man. "What does he look like?" Rozanov would inquire. "Is he married? Has he any children? Is he well-off, or poor?" The physiognomy of a person was to him the paramount thing, and from this he arrived at conclusions as to the rest of the man. Many of the "left" were physiologically antipathetic to him, and consequently "their works deserved no attention." In a man he above all loved and respected the man, and only afterwards his "complexion" and the "various other things."

The problem of sex (in its religious-philosophic aspect) was Rozanov's favourite theme of conversation. But he preferred to talk on that theme in private, and not in company. "You know, as a rule," he used to say, dropping his voice and almost
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shrinking, "one has to speak about these things in a whisper, yes, in a whisper, as one speaks of what is most mysterious and sacred. . . . And we, impudent fellows that we are, shout it all out and write books about it." . . .

His preoccupation with the problem of sex was regarded by his wife and daughters without any sympathy at all. Once he began speaking rapturously of a new article on sex which he had just published. "What you have written is filthy and nothing else," exclaimed one of his daughters with a grimace. Rozanov shook with noiseless laughter and said: "She will go on like that for another five years, repeating 'filthy, filthy'; then she will understand and, oh, how well she will understand." . . .

His daughters often argued with him, and one of them used now and then to have recourse to hysterics, as the most irrefutable argument. His wife simply used to fall asleep during such conversations, either because of weak health or perhaps from sheer boredom: she evidently was outside the sphere of Rozanov's ideas. But he valued her very much, considered her a "moral genius," and took very great care of her. At times he was brusque with her. Once he answered some question of hers rather rudely. But when she left the room, he suddenly got alarmed: "I say, I believe I have hurt mother—I'll go and ask her forgiveness." And with his shuffling, quick walk he went to the next room. He whispered there for a while, and returned with a radiant face: "it is all right now."
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Whereas Rozanov’s literary sympathies and antipathies were distinct and unequivocal, his social and political tastes were very difficult to make out. After the revolution of 1905, “when the officials retired,” he began abusing the authorities. When, with the suppression of the revolution, the “officials returned,” he began criticizing their opponents. Now he was in raptures over the revolution, now in ecstasies over the monarchy. Very curious in Rozanov was his combination of psychological love for the Jews with political anti-semitism. Sympathizing instinctively with Jews, he at the same time advocated pogroms against them for “the Christian boy tortured by the Jew Bailis.” In the same breath he cursed and blessed the Jews. Not long before his death he repented, and requested that all his books containing attacks on the Jews should be burnt; and he wrote penitent letters to the Jewish nation. Yet these letters are puzzling: there are in them “compunctions of conscience,” tenderness along with derision. This, however, is beyond a doubt, that Rozanov’s anti-semitism and the anti-semitism of the Novoye Vremya were utterly different. On the whole, Rozanov found himself in the “conservative camp” quite accidentally: he did not try to “accommodate” himself there, but was just “thrown up” on the right bank. “I am a writer, not a journalist,” Rozanov said more than once. “My business is to write, and I am quite indifferent as to who publishes my articles.”

I remember his ecstasy in 1917 after the February
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Revolution. He was agitated, excited, and yet enraptured by the events, saying that all would be well, that "now Russia would reveal herself," etc. "I shall develop the ideology of the Revolution," he said in one letter, "and give it such a justification as the Revolution itself never dreamt of."

That ecstasy did not last long. Soon came dire poverty. More than once he had to humble himself to get a mere piece of bread. He, who ceaselessly worked all his life long, had to pick up cigarette ends outside public houses and at the railway stations, and of a dozen ends thus collected he would make one cigarette. "Out of charity" some bookseller would let him have a cup of tea.

And yet his thought was bubbling over, he wanted to live, he felt a keen interest in people. As a man, owing to hunger and cold, he "gave in." But as a writer he did not give in, and did not try to "adapt" himself. Rozanov's flight to Sergiev Posad in 1918 was explained by many as a cowardly desire on his part to disappear from the horizon. This is partly true. Rozanov experienced a state of desperate panic. "The time has come when one has to pack up quickly and fly," he said. But he was not a coward.

. . . In the autumn of 1918, walking with S. N. Dourylin in Moscow, he spoke in a loud voice, addressing himself to the passers-by: "Do show me, please, a real live Bolshevik, I should very much like to see one." As they entered the Moscow Soviet, he said: "Show me the head of the Bolsheviks—Lenin or Trotsky. I'm awfully interested. I am Rozanov,
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the monarchist," Dourylin, put out by Rozanov’s inadvertent frankness, begged him to keep silent, but he did not succeed.

*   *   *

I believe Rozanov never wrote more inspiring, fiery letters than those he wrote during the last few months of his life. . . . These letters breathe an indefinable tenderness and are saturated with the bitter poison of poverty, hunger, dire want, and exhaustion.

His last days were a continuous Hosanna to Christ. Bodily pain could not suppress his spiritual joy, his glorious transfiguration.

"Embrace one another," he said, "let us embrace one another in the name of the Risen Christ. Christ has arisen! What joy, what delight! Indeed miracles are happening to me, and what these miracles are I will tell you some time, later." . . .

Before his death his pains ceased. At his own request he received the last sacrament four times, Extreme Unction once, and three times the prayers for the dying were read over him. During the last prayer he passed away, without pain, quietly and peacefully, on 23rd January, old style, 1919.

Rozanov, who fought against Christ, who rejected His teaching, which seemed to him to reduce to ashes the flowers of life and to drive away the joys of life, died in a splendid contradiction with himself. . . .

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