

THE DOCTRINES AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE DOUKHOBOR SECT.

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IV.

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On the Trinity —On the Fall of Man—On Jesus Christ—On the Afterlife—On the Church—On Holy Scripture—On Church Hierarchy—On Sacraments—On Rituals—On Icons—On Saints—On the Sign of the Cross—On Fasting—On Sacred Tradition—On the Burial of the Dead—On Holidays—On Earthly Authorities—On War—On Oaths and Swearing—On Preaching the Word of God—On Revealed Religion.

The best primary source for insight into the doctrines and ritual teachings of the Doukhobors undoubtedly belongs to the "Written Confession of the Teachings of the Yekaterinoslav Doukhobors," submitted by them in 1791 to the then Yekaterinoslav governor Kakhovsky. In this confession, the Doukhobors speak on behalf of their entire community, and at the end, they include an apology for the lack of skill in their presentation. *"In language, we are very awkward before everyone,"* says the confession, *"scribes are expensive, and for us sitting in prison, it is inconvenient to seek them out; that is why our writing is not very coherent. Seeing this, we humbly ask you not to judge strictly the disorder of thoughts, the lack of clarity, the incompleteness of expressions, and the roughness of speech. If we have clothed eternal truth in coarse garments and thereby tarnished its face, we ask you not to despise us for it."*

The aforementioned conversation in 1802 between Metropolitan Eugene of Kyiv and the Doukhobors sent to the Alexander Nevsky Lavra for consideration constitutes a historical

document deserving full attention. Among these sources, not including the testimonies of the Doukhobors to the government contained in various archival records, the confession of faith of the Yekaterinoslav Doukhobors from 1791 is undoubtedly very characteristic. The teachings presented in it are outlined in a certain system, not only in general terms but also in detail, as follows:

The Teachings of the Doukhobors

I. On the Trinity.

The Doukhobors recognize the unity of God in the Trinity; they call Him Spirit, but understand the Trinity in their own peculiar way: — God is the Spirit of power; the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of will, said the followers of Siluan; and the "Tambov Doukhobors" — when asked: Do you recognize the Holy Trinity? — answered: The Holy Trinity is an incomprehensible essence: the Father — light, the Son — life, and the Holy Spirit — peace, and in man it is established: the Father — memory, the Son — reason, the Holy Spirit — will. God in the Trinity is one.

II. On the Fall of Man.

The human soul is the image of God and the heavenly likeness; this image *is nothing else in us* but memory, reason, and will. The soul existed before the creation of the visible world and even before creation — it fell together with other, then fallen, spirits in the spiritual world — in the heights. Therefore, the fall of Adam and Eve, described in the Holy Scriptures, should not be understood in the ordinary sense. This is a picture in which is depicted: a) the fall of man before he came into this world, in the light of the highest purity of the Spirit, b) the fall repeated by Adam at the beginning of the days of this world figuratively, in our understanding; c) the fall is now repeated by us spiritually and physically, and will be repeated until the destruction of the world. Initially, our fall was from love for ourselves and from voluntary exaltation; in Adam, it was from the tempting serpent, i.e., the evil corrupted will of the flesh; and now it occurs in us from the temptation of the same serpent and the tasting of the forbidden tree — the love of glory in the spirit and luxury in the flesh; now everyone falls when, forgetting their own insignificance and the greatness of the Creator, they seek not the glory of God, but their own, and do not surrender themselves to God in the spirit of love, but in the blindness of self-love try to please themselves.

The consequence of the initial fall was the loss of the image of God: man's memory weakened, and now he has forgotten what he was before; reason became darkened, and will became corrupted. Thus, Adam appeared in this world with a weak recollection of the former world, without a bright mind and right will. His sin, resulting from the fall repeated by him on earth, does not pass to his descendants: everyone sins or is saved by themselves. However, despite the fact that the root of sin lies not in Adam's fall but in the actions of each individual, no one is

exempt from falling and sin; for everyone entering the world has already fallen before and brings with them a tendency to new falls.

After our fall in the heights — God created this world for us and, in His justice, expelled us from the light of the purity of the Spirit into this world as a prison for our transgression; and now our spirit, confined in this prison, is immersed in the cauldron of elements boiling within it. On the other hand, it is brought down into this world as a field of testing, so that by clothing itself here with flesh and following its own understanding and will, it may sow within itself — either good or evil, and through this either obtain forgiveness of the former guilt or be subjected to final punishment for all eternity. When flesh is formed for us in this world, our fallen spirit from above enters into it, and man comes into being. Our flesh is the cell in which our soul is held and in which it loses the memory and feeling of what we once were before our incarnation; in the boiling cauldron of this world, our spirit must be purified into pure, eternal spirit, better than before.

III. On Jesus Christ.

Since God from eternity foresaw that our souls, confined in flesh, would be subjected to new attacks, they would never cleanse themselves of the former guilt and satisfy His divine justice, then, to show love to all of us descending into hell, He from eternity predetermined to descend to earth, incarnate, and by His suffering satisfy eternal justice, which He fulfilled in the person of His Son; and therefore Jesus Christ, the restorer of the human race, was both God and man. Jesus Christ was the Son of God and God Himself. But it should be noted that the Son of God — write the Yekaterinoslav Doukhobors — if viewed in the Old Testament, is nothing else but the pre-eternal, eternal, and incomprehensible spiritual wisdom of God Almighty, which in the beginning was embodied in the nature of the world, and then in the letters of the revealed word; He is the Word of God, speaking to us in the book of the world and in the Scriptures: the power shining through the sun in creation and in living creatures miraculously, moving all, giving life to all in number, weight, and measure, omnipresent; the power of the Godhead in the forefathers, as now in us, variously manifested. If viewed in the New Testament, then He was and is nothing else but the Spirit of incarnate wisdom, the knowledge of God, and truth, the Spirit of incarnate love, philanthropy, condescension, the Spirit from above incarnate divine, ineffable, most sacred joy, consolation, gladness of heart, the Spirit of chastity, sobriety, moderation in food, drink, clothing, and all the pleasures of the flesh; He resounds in the soul of man, dwells in the wilderness — in his flesh; is tempted by Satan with the bread of pleasures and the glory of the world; being strengthened, He utters the word of teaching, being persecuted, He endures and suffers unto death on the cross; He is laid in the tomb of the flesh; He rises on the third day in the light of glory, in the soul of those enduring sorrow until the tenth hour, He lives forty days; He kindles love in their hearts and, ascending, He raises them and brings them to the throne of glory as a sacrifice of light, honor, and fragrance; we believe that He performed miracles; we ourselves were dead in sins, blind, deaf, and He revived us, and forgave our sins, and gave us commandments; but we do not know of bodily miracles.

In accordance with these concepts of the internal birth of Jesus Christ, internal faith in Him is required for our salvation; without this faith, even if someone by nature is God-loving and lives virtuously, they cannot be sinless, they will not be justified in eternity before the justice of God; faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation. Those who have not heard of Him with external senses can know Him with internal senses; for He Himself is the eternal and living Gospel, the internal word, which, even without external help, enlightens and teaches every person.

This word, the internal Christ, is also called the voice of God, internal enlightenment, and light and Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit into the heart, the testimony from the Spirit, etc. This outpouring of the Spirit is a supernatural gift of God, which does not belong to the essence of man and is communicated to him not through creation, but is introduced into the dark depths of the human heart by the direct influence of the Divine. It is always one and the same with God and Christ, from whom it proceeds and shines. Infants are incapable of this enlightenment, but only those who are of mature mind, adults; each of them perceives this internal light if they seek to be enlightened by it and do not resist its outpouring by sowing evil in their heart. The internal word, though not to all, but at all times continuously enlightens the chosen ones. In the Old Testament, God enlightened with rays of light, radiance, fire, His Holy Spirit the so-called people of God, who were scattered throughout the world, and now the true worshippers are unspeakably gloriously anointed in their hearts with the internal outpouring of the Spirit and exist in the world under various titles of confessions. Only he is a true Christian who is born again in the heart from the Spirit of the word and the holy mysteries, who receives from above the testimony given to his spirit that he is indeed a child of God. In the action of the direct outpouring, God, as the Father, strengthens our memory, vast, holding much and thought striving into infinity, — as the Son, being born in us, enlightens our reason, distinguishing what is fixed in memory, — as the Spirit, pouring out in us, sanctifies our evil will by His actions. Therefore, in the wise by nature, sound reason comes from the nature of heaven. Silently, as if enlightened from above, the wise read the destinies and actions of the Lord, events before the composition of this world, happening and destined to happen in eternity, as if present; for these enlightened wise men, all the heavenly bodies, all the beasts, birds, fish, mountains, plants on earth — are letters, vividly inscribed by the hand of the Lord, which they read the kind of various gifts descending from above. The mind, illuminated by the internal light, is Abel, and the fleshly is Cain; the mind of Christ strives to subdue the flesh under His eternal law, under the law of faith, hope, and love, and therefore patience, meekness, humility, the fear of the Lord, and other virtues in man serve as a sign that he is enlightened by Christ, or the internal light.

IV. On the Afterlife.

Those enlightened by Christ will rise, having risen, they will rise in spirit, but not in flesh, said the Tambov and Yekaterinoslav Doukhobors; after the resurrection of people, the present world will change from corruptible and unclean to eternal and bright. This regeneration will be like a flood, but not streams of water will pour then, but fiery waters approaching the earth will pour and flow over various kinds of soils found in the world; then, having been clothed in an eternal

body, every animal and every plant and everything according to its kind and order will be transformed with the sons of the Most High, who have passed away from eternity, to form a new, eternal kingdom of the Lamb. The foundation for future bliss or torment lies in sowing oneself in this life with good or evil, for if through love for God we sow here in our spirit with the Spirit of the Lord, Jesus Himself, then in eternity we will be unspeakably glorious, God-like, but if our soul is sown with the evil of Satan, then it will be cast into various elemental fires of hell, which will be the present world, continuously burning and never burning out. The sowing of evil in the spirit will produce in it torments incomparably higher than the sensual. Sowing is every attachment to something in this world, and as many as there are attachments of hearing, sight, pleasant smells, unclean touches, so many seeds for future torment. If the desire for honors now torments the ambitious, the attachment torments the drunkard, then how they must torment and torment passion in the future life, when there will be no possibility to satisfy them, and meanwhile they will grow more and more, just as they grow in man and in this still life: but all the details of their growth in eternity cannot be explained in words. As a small apple seed contains in itself in a concomitant way the whole tree, its height, width, branches, flowers, fruits, so every passion contains in itself the fullness of future torments; but in the present world, no matter how strong it is, it is nothing more than a small seed of hell, destined to grow in eternity to its measure.

V. On the Church.

The Church is the assembly of those whom God Himself calls from among worldly people to walk in light and life. These chosen ones are not distinguished by any special symbol, not united into one society separate from others, not bound by any common signs of worship; they constitute the first invisible, scattered throughout the world and exist under various titles of confessions. Thus, the Church includes those who do not benefit from and do not know about Jesus Christ, it can include people of various nations, different tribes and languages; not only among Christian sects, but even among the Jews themselves, there are members of this Church — those who are guided by internal light and strive to sow good.

VI. On the Holy Scriptures.

The Holy Scriptures are all given by God, but much must be understood in them in an unusually mysterious sense, under the literal words of the Old and New Testaments, there is often a mysterious designation, only pictures, in which one must see the expression of the spiritual. For example: The history of Cain is an image of the sons of wrath, persecuting the true Church, or Abel of Babylon. Confusion is nothing else but the division of churches; the drowning of Pharaoh with his army in the Red Sea is an image of the future drowning of the devil with all his forces in the Red Sea, through which the chosen ones will pass unharmed. And in the New Testament, for example, the transformation of water into wine by Jesus Christ at the wedding signifies that Christ at the mystical wedding with our soul transforms in our heart the water of tears, repentance into sacred-paradise, spiritual wine, into angelic nectar, the drink of all joy, all

comforts; the parable of the robber expresses that at the initial fall in the heights, every soul, having loved itself, fell into robbers, tormented by evil passions; the Levites and priests, not healing it, passed by; only the Lord took it upon Himself by His suffering on the cross, washed it with His blood, and healed it. All descriptions, narratives, parables, miracles, inscribed in the external Scripture, are not so much images of what was, but indications of what should happen inside in man, in spirit and faith; the mind of the Lord in all His word variously depicted the whole, completely new man Jesus, His wisdom, which the Christian must feel comfortingly in his heart; to spiritually understand the words of the Lord, parables, images, deeds, and all expressions, the Lord Himself teaches John, saying that all My expressions and deeds before all are spirit and life; sometimes parables were expressed not only morally, but in all their fullness, as for example about the sower and the seeds (Luke VIII, 5-15), about the loaves (John VI) and about the two sons of Abraham (Gal. IV, 22 and 9). Therefore, the children of God should direct all their efforts to, having begun with the outpouring from above in the hearts of the All-Holy Spirit, spiritually understand and vividly write in themselves all the pictures and figures, skillfully inscribed in the revealed word of the Lord. At the same time, it is revealed that in explaining the Scriptures, one should not be guided only by the judgments of one's own mind, and even less by the generally accepted opinions of the external Church; the rule and measure of the interpretation of the external word should be internal enlightenment, the outpouring from above of the Spirit into the heart of man; and consequently, this internal enlightenment, or word, in its dignity is higher than the Holy Scriptures.

VII. On Church Hierarchy.

The internal word is as necessary for the interpretation of the external word as it is for the priesthood. Jesus Christ, as the very Word, is the only archpriest and priest, from whom salvation of souls must be expected; likewise, His successor in the priesthood can only be one who feels within himself the actions of the Word; and since this Word does not remain in man without fruit, but is expressed in his very activity: therefore, the successor of Jesus must be only one who is pure in deed and body, humble and meek and obedient to good deeds, and removed from evil. To truly be a priest of the internal Church, for this, one's own will and simple desire and the consent of others are not enough, it is not necessary to belong to any known rank and class, although sometimes external preparation of oneself, or mental education, is necessary. The true priest is one who is called by internal prompting from above, whom Jesus Himself chooses from among the common people, or from the priests of the external Church, or from the authorities of the world, and whom the invisible Christ Himself prepares to act, directly enlightening his mind and heart; thus, the calling, election, and preparation for the priesthood must be more internal, and not only external.

The true priest is appointed to this position when various gifts of the Holy Spirit from above are poured into his soul, essentially anointing him, as Christ, sanctifying him and giving him a supernatural mind, while the ministers of the external Church are appointed only ritually and are not at all consecrated in mind from the perfect external ritual action over them; therefore,

archbishops and other ministers of the Church, made by hands, should not be unconditionally considered what they are usually recognized as, accepted in the form in which they exist among worldly Christians. The duty of the true clergyman is to preach to others the word that he himself feels internally, so that by his conversation he may reveal to the erring his error, bring his mind to pure knowledge and his heart to sincere repentance. The minister of the handmade Church performs only external rites, reads various sermons to the people, or pronounces his own, but since he himself does not have internal light, his teachings remain ineffective and useless, and the people with them become hardened in ignorance and blindness, stopping all their attention on the rites alone. Therefore, the priests of the external Church, who do not have internal enlightenment, cannot lead to salvation.

VIII. On the Sacraments.

The true Church, elevating everything to the internal actor Christ, does not have a special need for external worship, and the sacraments themselves must be understood spiritually, for their externality has no power.

a) On Baptism.

Thus, baptism, performed only with water, is useless and superfluous among worldly Christians, especially when administered to young children. Those ritually baptized in infancy do not understand or feel anything that is formed by their baptism; growing up, they remain also without knowledge of Jesus, without renunciation of themselves from the world and the devil, and without walking in a new life; what benefit will baptism bring them after death, when they are not baptized by the Spirit and fire and are not reborn in memory, mind, and will? Water baptism is true when the infant, having come to full age and knowing who he is and to whom he owes his being and the salvation of his soul, baptizes himself with the word: in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; only then is he invisibly and essentially baptized by the action of the true priest Jesus, in the Spirit and fire of ineffably great divine love; only then is he washed from all filth, immersed not in water, but in the blood of the Lord, renouncing himself and choosing to live for God alone; only by this internal baptism does he come to the knowledge of truth, grows into a new creature, and is sealed in the Spirit as an eternal son to God the Father.

b) On Chrismation.

Externally performed chrismation, without the manifestation from the Holy Spirit, also produces nothing, and God knows whether it will have any power beyond the grave. They are truly chrismated when all the gifts of the Lord in living baptism from above are poured into the body, soul, and spirit and are sealed by the Holy Spirit in memory, mind, and will forever.

c) On Confession.

As for confession, the Church has no power to bind and loose sins; true confession is the contrition of the heart before God, although one can sometimes confess one's sins to one another.

d) On Communion.

External communion alone is not strong enough to save a person, for Jesus Christ wants from people not signs, but their strength; and true living communion with the life-giving mysteries of Christ Himself occurs through the word, thought, and faith: — for only then by faith and love do we feel that we are justified, cleansed by the blood of Jesus shed for us, and by the measure of the gifts of the Spirit, we give birth in our flesh and blood to the eternal King of glory — the internal Christ.

e) On Marriage.

Marriage can be performed without great ceremony — only the will of those who have come of age, mutual love of the marrying, and an oath in the soul before the Most High God that the marrying will remain faithful and inseparable are required; the external ceremony of marriage, without the internal, means nothing, produces only the effect that, being performed in the presence of witnesses, it maintains the bond of the spouses by saving shame.

f) On the Priesthood.

The priesthood is not a sacrament. Teaching can be accepted by some specially chosen. — Ministers as a special class may not exist; a truly enlightened Christian by the word can and should perform prayer to God himself for himself.

g) On Rituals.

The worship rituals of all external churches in the world, the differences in their establishment, all the ranks of their ministers, their clothes and actions were invented at different times, after the apostles; in themselves, they are nothing else but dead signs, they are figures, expressing externally that sacred-mysterious, invisible, living, and intelligent power of the purest being of God, which in the likeness of solar rays shines and pours into the soul of the chosen ones, lives in them, and acts. Therefore, all church rituals are indifferent actions, and the children of God can leave all these external institutions, which are only the salt of living, eternal blessings, just as the Old Testament tabernacle of Moses. The followers of Siluan Kolesnikov say that Christ allows the members of His Church, existing for us throughout the world, to enter different churches — whether papal, Greek, Lutheran, or Calvinist, and freely walk in their external institutions, forming good: He did not forbid His disciples to walk in the fulfillment of the traditions of the fathers; He Himself was circumcised, He Himself walked in perishable temples, was baptized by John in the Jordan, etc. But He did not oblige anyone to the confession of external ritual actions of worship. As a thing of little use, it is much better to leave them; the Lord is not and cannot be attached to any time, place, or any rituals or anything. Let some rituals

have their spiritual significance? But here is the trouble, almost all, especially the common people, thinking that salvation depends on the fulfillment of external rituals, stopping at them, do not understand at all what they are doing, and thus find in them an obstacle for themselves to approach the Lord with their mind, from the knowledge of which would inevitably follow a holy life. Hence, among those who bear the name of Christ and preserve the external signs of worship, real idolaters, ritualists, who have no knowledge of the Lord and themselves in their minds, are born, develop, and fill the world — fearless and quick to any evil. Thus, external church rituals perhaps do more harm than good.

The Savior said: When you pray, go into your closet, and shut your door, pray to your Father in secret.

IX. On Icons.

God commanded through Moses: Do not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness, etc. Idols of silver and gold are the work of human hands.

X. On Saints.

The servants of God should not be called saints and invoked in prayers. Angels and other great ascetics can be respected only for their virtues, and for the fact that, being good people, they pleased God and themselves. The Mother of God gave birth to the Word of God, and therefore she is accepted as the one who gave birth to Christ the Savior of the human race.

XI. On the Sign of the Cross.

The Doukhobors do not make the sign of the cross on themselves, because prayer is pleasing to God not through the hand, but through thought, spirit, and word.

XII. On Fasting.

Fasting, say the Doukhobors, is very necessary for us, weak in soul and body, but they understand it not in the generally accepted sense. Spiritual fasting, in their opinion, is the observance of God's commandments, renunciation of evil desires, avoidance of idleness, idle talk, etc. Bodily fasting is abstinence from drunkenness and all luxury, removal from games, God-opposing dances, etc. The duty to fast lies on a person especially when he does not feel in his soul the presence of the bridegroom (Matt. IX, 14, 15); and to keep fasting in abstinence from a certain kind of food and on certain days, the Doukhobors say, there is no commandment.

XIII. On Sacred Tradition.

The tradition, the decrees of the ecumenical and local councils, the Doukhobors recognize as true, but do not accept them: for they, according to their words, come from people; and from people there is nothing sacred; such is possible only from God; the Church, say the Doukhobors, also has no power to judge and condemn anyone to hell, — for no one can know by what spirit

someone is led in all their deeds; by the spirit of love for themselves or for God; and whether the good Lord is sown within them. Only God, who searches the hearts and reins, clearly sees man and all his deeds; to Him alone belongs the judgment. But God wants nothing more from us than that we love Him and avoid evil; and for inaccuracies of understanding and some places of the revealed word, for ignorance of any natural objects, we firmly believe that He does not judge anyone and does not condemn to perdition. Therefore, those who do not follow the Lord in this, and who force their neighbor to follow their mind, presenting it as the true mind of Christ, act unjustly.

XIV. On the Burial of the Dead.

At the burial of the dead, the Doukhobors do not have special rituals; having bid farewell to the deceased with a feeling of condolence and love for the neighbor, they commit the deceased to the earth, with the singing of various psalms and with the addition of a prayer for his acceptance into the kingdom of heaven.

XV. On Holidays.

Every day for the Doukhobors is the 7th or Sabbath, in a spiritual sense; and therefore they do not have obligatory holidays, but consider it a holiday when one comes to another for a visit, and then they see off the guests with spiritual singing. However, sometimes they distinguish the holidays of Christ and even Sundays, and during their continuation, freeing themselves from work, men and women spend time in singing psalms, in conversation and instruction of each other from the Holy Scriptures; to all questions regarding faith, they answer with words from the Holy Scriptures; they teach their children in conversation to refute their rules with texts from the Holy Scriptures, and for this purpose they study them. Relying on the concept of their spiritual worship of God, the Doukhobors consider themselves more enlightened than all those who think differently and try to present themselves as such before other Russian settlers in their dealings with them and their way of life.

XVI. On Earthly Authorities.

The Doukhobors say that one must obey the authorities and lords of this world, not only the good and meek, but also the stubborn, obey all, even in evil deeds, by force. The Yekaterinoslav Doukhobors expand on the authorities more extensively. Human society, they wrote, is full of evil people, driven by rebellious, harmful passions: a society of evil cannot stand, the evil would mutually destroy each other; for this reason, the wisest established among themselves various authorities, so that they would restrain lawlessness: in this respect, the authorities are beneficial and are established on earth for the sons of the world by God Himself. But the Lord says: I am not of the world, and My followers are not of the world; and for those who are not of the world, worldly authorities are not needed. The children of God (i.e., the Doukhobors) themselves avoid evil not out of fear, but in order to be reborn in their souls with eternal good, they themselves strive to live as Jesus Christ commanded them; therefore, He freed them from all human laws

regarding their will: He gave them His Holy Spirit, creating in them a new heart, having free will in fulfilling all royal needs — but of the flesh and God-pleasing deeds, according to the Spirit without any coercion. The Tambov Doukhobors dared to make a distinction between good and evil authorities and distinguish their origin; the merciful are from God, they asserted, and the unmerciful are of unknown origin. The Melitopol Doukhobors did not reason about the origin of the authorities, but directly asserted that on earth there must be a king over the evil, fierce, and robbers to curb them with punishment. Therefore, although they do not rebel against the established authorities. Why do they need courts, they say, if they themselves do not want to offend anyone?

XVII. On War.

This spirit of peacefulness, the Doukhobors want to extend to public enemies, and they consider war impermissible, relying on the evangelical teaching of love for the enemy (Matt. V 38 and 9).

XVIII. On Oaths and Swearing.

Swearing is not permissible, according to the word of God, and therefore the Doukhobors refuse to take an oath in any case.

XIX. On Preaching the Word of God.

The Doukhobors consider it their duty to defend their teachings, for the children of God, according to their assurance, have a command from their Father to teach each other, and the servant of the Lord always and in every way strives to give to the one who does not have his talent, as much as he himself received from above and as much as the other can bear it (Matt. XXV, 14-30).

XX. On Revealed Religion in General.

The concept of the Doukhobors about revealed religion in general is revealed in the spirit of the direction of all their teachings. This religion is, in their opinion, nothing else but the knowledge of God by internal feeling and by experience — the enlightenment of man in God, inspiration from above explaining to him the religion that is revealed to man directly through the word of God, or the Holy Scriptures. Such a religion, according to the opinion of the Doukhobors, is not the lot of all mankind, and the Holy Scriptures are understandable and intelligible only in the light of direct revelation. Religion, generated by this revelation, is accessible to everyone who is capable of accepting it.

III.

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Doukhobor Psalms—Their Meaning and Significance—Doukhobor Prayers—Public Worship—
Some Rituals—Their Spiritual Symbolism—Doukhobor Tradition—The Living Book—
Doctrinal and Moral Teachings of the Living Book.

The German scholar and traveler Baron Haxthausen, who visited Doukhobor settlements in Russia, received the following psalms from the Doukhobors, which they sing in churches, gatherings, and private meetings.

Psalm 1. "Who will save us if not John, the new Moses, born of the incorruptible Virgin, from the Word of God, Jesus Christ? God has proclaimed to us great wisdom: 'The flesh must be crucified, and man redeemed,' says the new Moses concerning the redemption of mankind. But for eternal redemption, it is necessary that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, become man, and that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and man.

The Lord speaks through human lips: 'Hearken, now the Kingdom comes! Look to the East, where Mount Zion stands—go there and behold it! From the midst of the mountain flow springs that wash away the impurity from the sons and daughters of Israel. The heavens above Mount Zion are covered with benefactors. O children clad in white robes, adorned with fiery stars! These very heavens proclaim the glory of God; their sound spreads across the earth, and their voice reaches the ends of the universe.

When the end of this world comes, the heavens shall open, thunder shall roar, and lightning shall flash. People shall tremble, and the Kingdom shall be set in motion. Then all nations shall gather in the land where the Kingdom of the Most High King is—there shall appear the throne of the new David. Great terror shall fill the house of David when the Lord descends from Heaven and sits upon the throne to judge the living and the dead. Then the Archangel Michael shall sound the great trumpet; he shall wage war against the ancient serpent. The serpent shall fall, Abel shall strike him with the living scripture, cast down Satan—who brought sin into the world—from his throne, and destroy his dominion, and his glory shall perish.

Then the Lord shall say: 'Amen, amen! Open, O heavens!' The Lord, known by His servants in spirit and not in dead ritual, shall reign in His children forever and ever!"

Psalm 2. What is a Doukhobor if not one who embodies John, Moses, and Christ? What is said about the incarnation of Christ has been fulfilled in him. Divinity dwells in the flesh, which is the Word of God, through which great wisdom is spoken and proclaimed. Though the flesh suffers affliction here from men, the inner being will pass through transformation into a better body and

thus be redeemed. It is necessary for this exalted being, this Son of God, Jesus Christ, to bear flesh and also be man, for God speaks through human lips. The Eastern kingdom and Mount Zion symbolize the community of Doukhobors; the midst of the mountain represents the one among them endowed with supreme wisdom and power. From him flows a spring of bliss for his faithful, whose virtue is covered with blessings; they are adorned with splendor, and their whiteness shines. These virtues spread glory among people devoted to worldly vanity, whose end will come, but the faithful will appear in great power and spread light among those who understand only dead rituals... Now the Doukhobors endure sorrow and need, but they will overcome the world with their inner strength; their spiritual battle is great, but they will prevail, and the world will heed their spiritual understanding of the Christian religion...

Doukhobor Prayers

The Doukhobors also have the following prayers, which they sing in church gatherings.

Prayer 1. Where shall I go from Your presence, O Lord? If I ascend to heaven—You are there; if I descend to hell—You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. To whom shall I go, to whom shall I turn, O eternal life, if not to You alone, my Creator? Where shall I flee, and where, apart from You, shall I find comfort, joy, refuge, and peace for my soul? To whom shall I go from You, O Lord my God, for You are the Word of eternal life, which is in me; You are the fountain of life, the giver of great good. My soul thirsts for You, O God of my life! Sweeten us with Your holy name, our sweet Lord Jesus! My soul, my heart is wounded; in all my life, there is nothing more pleasing to me than Your most holy Spirit. Your words are sweeter than honey to my throat and lips; Your righteousness, O Lord, is dearer to me than gold and precious stones, and far sweeter than honey and the honeycomb...

Prayer 2. Whom shall I call upon, whom shall I love, if not You, O Lord my God? You are my life, my salvation, my honor and glory! You are my wealth, my eternal treasure, my hope and expectation, my joy, my eternal rest! Shall I love vain, unknown, perverse, destructive, false things more than You, my true life? You are my life, my salvation, and therefore in You alone I place my hope, all my trust, all my desires, all my prayers. I seek You, O Lord, with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength; from the depths of my heart I cry out to You; my heart pours itself out to You alone, and I shall be wholly in You, and You in me! I call upon and acknowledge in You the one true God and Him whom You sent, Jesus Christ; in Your light, we shall see the light of Your holy Spirit's grace. Amen!

Worship Practices

Like the Molokans, the Doukhobors have no visible sacraments, and strictly speaking, they should not have them, nor any formal public worship. Nevertheless, in their church gatherings, they engage, like Protestants, in mutual teaching of the Word of God and singing. Clearly, the innate human impulse for community is stronger than principles! Thus, the Doukhobors also

have, in their own way, public worship. In the Simbirsk province, where we recently encountered a small group of them near the border of the Saratov province, they have prayer rooms without any decorations or icons; there is neither a cross nor any other symbol in these rooms. In the middle of the room, as far as we could see, stands a table with bread and salt placed upon it. The Doukhobors gather in such rooms on appointed days. The Doukhobors generally, and the Simbirsk group in particular, do not observe the Sabbath, Sundays, or holidays. Yet they have a mysterious division of time and festive days. During worship, the men stand in rows on one side according to seniority, and the women on the other. They begin by singing a hymn composed of fragments, mostly from the prophets. All their hymns, psalms, and prayers are borrowed from the Bible but are compiled from individual verses of David's psalms. After singing, the second man approaches the eldest, and both bow deeply to each other, kiss, and make a third bow. Then the third bows to the first two and kisses them, and so on until the last. The women then repeat the same ritual among themselves, which, by their hints, signifies the confession of the divine Trinity and the recognition of this Trinity in each of them. They greet each other similarly during visits, saying, I am the Lord your God; you shall have no other gods before Me. Some Doukhobors, as Haxthausen testifies, conduct their worship outdoors, with men and women forming separate circles. During gatherings, the greeting is performed by taking each other's right hands, bowing three times, and kissing three times, while uttering sacred words. These three bows and three kisses are called a reminder of the Trinity, and the joining of hands symbolizes the bond of love, the good news, the knowledge of wisdom, and the recognition of the hidden God. Haxthausen notes that some outsiders admitted to Doukhobor meetings observed in Novgorod in 1800 that the psalm-reader of the Sophia Church, who was then the Doukhobor elder, Ivan Ivanov, read the Gospel to them. After reading a chapter, all began to sing. This alternation of reading and singing was repeated four times. Then they bowed to each other, asked for mutual forgiveness, and finally tasted something from a cup—though the observers could not discern what it was. When questioned, the psalm-reader gave evasive answers.

The Living Book

The Doukhobor sect places great importance on its tradition, based on the words of Psalm 43:1: "Open to us the gates of righteousness." This tradition is called the "Living Book"—a book alive in the memory and hearts of the Doukhobors, in contrast to the Bible, which, they say, is contained in dead letters that must be taught to understand. The "Living Book" consists of Doukhobor psalms, which are compiled from fragments of David's psalms, sayings from the Old and New Testaments, and prayers and chants of the Orthodox Church. The Doukhobors have countless psalms; no single Doukhobor can know them all. Thus, the "Living Book" exists in its entirety not in each Doukhobor individually but in the whole community, distributed among their hearts and memories, so that by combining all their memories and hearts, the complete "Living Book" emerges. The book is passed down orally from generation to generation. The origin of the "Living Book" is traced back to the time of Christ's earthly life. The Doukhobors say that one of

His disciples, hearing Christ's teachings, wished to record them but, due to forgetfulness, wrote incompletely and inaccurately (these are the Evangelists). Others did not write but preserved the teachings whole in their memory and hearts, passing them down intact to subsequent generations. This is the true teaching of Christ in its spirit and direction! In the lineage of the true Christians—the Doukhobors—Christ Himself invisibly dwells and, therefore, will not allow the "Living Book" (the true understanding of Christ's spirit, not external letters and rituals) to be corrupted or forgotten. Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, has remained and will remain eternally in true Christians, enlightening and guiding them into all truth. The Doukhobor psalms contain truths taken verbatim from Scripture and consistent with its spirit, though most are filled with biblical sayings and narratives. The "Living Book" includes theoretical teachings—truths of absolute faith and theological reflections, forming a kind of philosophical-mystical tradition.

Key Doctrinal Teachings of the Living Book:

1. God: He is the Creator of the world, the Sustainer, the Redeemer of man, the punisher of sinners, and the rewarder of the righteous. God is one but in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is spirit, God is the Word, God is man. The Father is memory, the Son is reason, and the Spirit is will. The Doukhobors seem to envision God as inseparably united with the chosen lineage, so that without it, He could not be glorified.
2. Angels and the Devil: There are angels of God and the devil, the cause of the fall of the first humans and sin in the world. There are holy saints—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and other Old Testament patriarchs and prophets, as well as New Testament apostles. Veneration of saints should consist not in praying to them but in emulating their lives.
3. Saints vs. Angels: Saints are higher and closer to God than angels. Of the former, it is said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," while of the latter: "Upon whom even the angelic ranks dare not gaze."
4. Jesus Christ: He is the Son of God, born of the Holy Virgin and the Holy Spirit, to destroy sin and the kingdom of the devil.
5. Christ's Suffering: He suffered and died on the cross not by His own will ("Father, let this cup pass from Me"). The purpose of His suffering was solely to set an example of enduring suffering for truth.
6. Christ's Crucifixion: The Jews crucified Him, and now their descendants continue to crucify Him—those who worship the dead Christ (the cross and wooden icons). The living Christ, hiding from them, has moved into the lineage of chosen Christians, who worship the living Christ, not the dead letter and rituals.
7. Christ's Presence: After the Apostles' deaths, Christ passed into their Apostolic successors—the chosen Christian lineage. Since then, He has dwelt invisibly in true, spiritual Christians,

passing from ancestors to descendants, and will remain until the end of the age, after which He will appear visibly.

8. The End Times: At the world's end, sinners will perish from the earth, cast into hell for eternal torment, while the righteous will live with Christ.

9. Resurrection: There will be no resurrection of the corruptible; only souls will remain alive, and the world will not end but continue eternally.

10. Baptism: Baptism is suffering. As Christ was baptized not by water but by suffering, so true believers are baptized, following His example, by suffering—or, if not suffering, by the Word of God.

11. Salvation: There are many faiths on earth, but salvation is possible in any faith, provided there are good works.

Moral Teachings

The moral teachings of the "Living Book" are intertwined with its doctrines. The Doukhobors acknowledge all Ten Commandments but recite them not in sequence but scattered among psalms. These psalms contain no expressions or words contrary to pure morality. Gross vices are sternly rebuked: drunkenness, fornication, theft, and all injustice. The punishment of the whore of Babylon and similar sinners is pronounced; evil thoughts and desires are condemned. Piety in thought and deed is prescribed, and works of mercy are preached: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, etc. Meekness and temperance are praised. The Doukhobors strive to uphold these teachings through communal measures, particularly where public scandal or blatant vice undermines them. For example, divorce is permitted in cases of irredeemably bad moral qualities in the husband, though the community first urges reconciliation. If divorce occurs, sons remain with the mother, and daughters with the father. Those repeatedly caught stealing, debauchery, drunkenness, or disobedience to authorities are, after futile attempts at correction, excommunicated and handed over to civil authorities.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ said, "There shall be one flock and one shepherd," and His words will undoubtedly come to pass. Under what conditions and circumstances? After what upheavals in humanity's fate? That is known to Him alone. But that it will come to pass is guaranteed by His words: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away!"

Christianity of all times and places has not been devoid of aspirations for mutual unity. True, in most cases, these efforts were not in the spirit of Christ's new commandment—not in the name of love but driven by human passions, the deadliest of which is the lust for domination. Such strivings led to division among Christians, where not only the commandment of love was forgotten but all human rights were trampled, and mutual hatred reached irreconcilable levels,

unappeased by any bloody sacrifices. Yet the idea of uniting all humanity in Christ's name and on Gospel foundations has never died among men, nor could it die, for only in this thought can humanity find some reconciliation amid divisions caused by myriad strivings.

We must marvel that the Doukhobors, these simple Russian people, preach that salvation is possible in any faith, provided there are good works and moral perfection—a principle not even recognized by so-called civilized confessors of Christ, the self-interested Catholics. The thirst for religious truth among the Molokans and Doukhobors is too deep and strong for anything to stop them from satisfying it. Under such conditions, is the transition from words and reasoning to action so difficult?

The future historian of these sects must, based on various investigations (of which we have made a beginning), delve deeper into the structure of their religious life, showing how their religion influences their entire way of life—family and social, their education, charitable works, etc.—and study those aspects of life and national traits that particularly aid or hinder the development of their religious strivings. In short, they must paint a full picture of the religious life of these sects, highlighting its bright sides and impartially noting the darker aspects of such a unique existence.

There is no doubt that women give society its true significance. Nowhere in Russia among the common folk is a woman more honored than among the Molokans and Doukhobors, and nowhere, perhaps, does she more deserve it... Their aspiration to be tireless housewives does not prevent them, upon leaving the kitchen, from studying the Word of God and becoming ornaments of religious gatherings... What is this phenomenon? Why has this handful of sectarians surpassed 50 million Orthodox in their views on women? Why has America outpaced all Europe on this question, while we sinful Russians, who keep our fists ready for women's faces and our whips in hand, are beyond comparison!.. In America, women stand in line for public carriages, and all men rise to offer them the best seats. A young girl can travel across all states in any direction, in the boundless cars of the railways (which have only one class and one compartment), without the slightest risk of hearing even one unpleasant or improper word. She is under the best protection—that of the whole society. If some European, still accustomed to our ways, dared to show her any lack of respect, he would be ejected at the first station, or even in the open field. Clearly, the foundation of all this is "biblical strictness" and discipline, and this strictness is the result of their unshakably strong religious convictions, which have permeated their habits, feelings, and the entire inner life of the nation...

With the exception of Washington and New York—two almost European cities—American towns breathe an "atmosphere of innocence" utterly unknown in our Old World, let alone Russia!.. From this perspective, the "biblical way of life" of the Molokans and Doukhobors is instructive and worthy of our attention...