The Christian Background of Fyodor Dostoevsky and Religious Motifs in His Novel, *Brothers Karamazov*

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by

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Preface

In writing this work, I have chosen to use the British Geographical Names method of transliterating foreign names and titles in order to remain as consistent as possible with professional works as they appear in the Bibliography. Those names which do vary somewhat are quoted exactly as they appear in print.

All biblical references quoted from the *Brothers Karamazov* appear exactly as translated by Mr. David Magarshack. Those references to which I personally have drawn attention are taken from both Testaments of the *New Jerusalem Bible* edited by Mr. Alexander Jones, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1969.

All quotes from and references to the *Brothers Karamazov* are followed by parenthetical numbers referring to the translated edition by Mr. Magarshack.

Any errors or oversights are solely the responsibility of this writer.

Columbus, Ohio
1973

P.S.
Introduction

The present work is a study of the Christian background of Fyodor M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881) and the methods he used to incorporate religious concepts based on his own interpretation of orthodoxy into his last novel, the Brothers Karamazov.

Chapter One traces his Christian upbringing from Baptism through his adolescent years and deals with his turn towards agnosticism and the life experiences which inclined him towards a later belief in God and authority as represented by the Church and State.

The second chapter examines how some of the basic principles of the Brothers Karamazov were derived from religious material. It explains their essence and the manner in which they were used artistically to develop a theme. This examination covers the Christian attitude toward suffering with its redemptive function and free-will manifested through the freedom of choice by means of character sketches of the principal personages of the novel.

The Christian ideal of love is treated in the final chapter further elucidating the attitude toward suffering and explaining how love, a cognitive force, unites the brotherhood of man with the Kingdom of God.
The Christian Background of Fyodor M. Dostoevsky

Before considering the matter of the religious motifs of the Brothers Karamazov, it is necessary to first examine the religious background of its author, Fyodor Dostoevsky. This approach will effect a better perspective and more lucid comprehension of Dostoevsky's thought processes as he wrote the Brothers Karamazov, his last and greatest novel.

Dostoevsky was born in the parish of SS. Peter and Paul in Moscow on October 30, 1821, and was baptised according to the Russian Orthodox religion on November fourth of that year. His father, Mikhail Andreyevich, an august staff-physician at the Marinsky Hospital in Moscow, where Fyodor was born, was a rather stern individual who attempted to instill in his children a respect for God and for the Church.

Fyodor's training formally began approximately ten years later when his family purchased a country estate, Darovoe, in 1831 in the Province of Tula. It was here that the children were taught by their parents and by two visiting tutors, a Frenchman Souchard (Drashusov) and a priest, mostly from religious books procured for them by their father. During the ensuing years, Fyodor's mother used to take him to church and taught him to read from the book 104 Holy Stories from the New and Old Testament which is autobiographically mentioned in the Brothers Karamazov in
Book VI, Chapter IIb. Thus, it may be easily surmised that Fyodor had a strong religious upbringing and foundation in the Russian Orthodox faith. The premature deaths of his parents could very well have precipitated the loss of his grip on that early training for it was at about this time that he began to turn toward agnosticism.

In 1837 Dostoevsky was affected by the morally hideous life which surrounded him. In that year his mother passed away and his hero, Alexander Pushkin, was killed. Both, he felt, were analogous to Christ and were Christian martyrs. "Pushkin's poetry fused in his soul with the divinely revealed religion of suffering." He later wrote that Homer also "...had a parallel only in Christ...and that it was Homer who gave the entire ancient world its organization of spiritual and earthly life in exactly the same sense as that given by Christ to the new world."

Beyond his early training and familiarity with the Bible, it is not known if Dostoevsky ever regularly attended church services or received any other sacraments while still a young man. At the age of sixteen, he and his brother, Mikhail, were sent to the College of Engineering in St. Petersburg where Fyodor became an agnostic. While at school in the capital city, he met one Ivan Nikolayevich Shidlovsky (1816-1872) who became somewhat of an oracle to the young student. Shidlovsky was a 25 year old romantic poet, a Russian Goethe, whose youth was followed by a
period of debauchery from which he turned in his middle years to enter a monastery. E.H. Carr conjectures that Dostoevsky's later faith in the efficacy of sin as the path to true holiness may be suggested by this experience with I. N. Shidlovsky. It would be fitting to note here that Father Zossima, in the Brothers Karamazov as written by Dostoevsky forty years later, led just such a life of debauchery before entering a monastery.

During his early twenties, Dostoevsky looked toward the West for practical enlightenment and aligned himself with Vissarion Belinsky, the distinguished critic of liberal views, who greatly advanced his career as a novelist, and other members of the Petrashevsky Circle. The actual extent of influence that this group had over Dostoevsky can only be conjectured, but, as it is known, his association with the Circle inspired by Fourier (1772-1830), a Utopian socialist, in itself led to his arrest more so than his active participation within it. Those with whom Dostoevsky associated, such as Belinsky and Petrashevsky himself, respected the Christian ethic profoundly and utilized it for their own revolutionary ideal, but they totally rejected orthodoxy and all religious dogma as being decadent; they were, at the time, called Nihilists. For Dostoevsky, however, Christ was the personification of Christian ethic, but he too rejected the dogmas of the church and was content to remain an agnostic. His spiritual development
was shaken by these associations and he remained a callow youth until his departure for Siberia after his arrest on April 23, 1849.7

It was during his imprisonment at the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg that Dostoevsky began to seek solace and security in the memories of his early training that he received at home and to long for religious support. From his prison cell he wrote to his faithful brother, Mikhail, on August 27, requesting some historical works that, "...would be splendid. But best of all would be the Bible (both Testaments). I need one. Should it prove possible, send it in a French translation. But if you could add as well a Slav edition, it would be the height of bliss."8

A Bible was sent to him. It was the only book that the prisoners were allowed to keep and he read it avidly, rediscovering Christ in the process.9 The remainder of his life was to be a pilgrimage in search of God. That quest, so endless, was an end in itself. Tormented by his position and brush with death,10 Dostoevsky experienced a spiritual revival and was comforted by the words of Christ during his long hours of solitude. He felt that only Christ has the power to raise a sinner, promise new life on earth and to forgive sins, because only He gave His life guiltlessly in the name of all who have sinned, according to the Bible.
In a letter to Mme. N. D. Fonvizina, Dostoevsky wrote that he thirsted for faith like "parched grass." He realized that he was a "child of the age, a child of unfaith and doubt" and that he would remain so to the end of his days. The more he searched for religion, the more proof he had against it and "the more proof I have against it, the more I thirsted for it, the more it tortures me."\textsuperscript{11}

Up to this point, it has been shown through a series of biographic steps how Dostoevsky, born, baptised and raised as a Russian Orthodox youth, turned away from the Church and how he began to doubt the very existence of God either through his own initiative or through outside influence being a "child of the age." After his arrest, trial and conviction, Dostoevsky's pride most surely suffered. After his traumatic experience on the scaffold and escape from his executioner, he must certainly have reflected on his past and questioned to what power did he owe his relatively good fortune. Once removed from society and placed in solitude his ever active thought processes sought reassurance in his past, in the words of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible which comforted him in his suffering and fortified his faith, the faith for which he thirsted like "parched grass."

Dostoevsky entered prison an agnostic, radical youth, yet over a period of the next ten years there was a conversion of his thoughts concerning authority as represented
in the Church and State, a reinforcement of his faith
in the teachings of Christ and a strengthening of his
beliefs in the saving grace of the Orthodox Church in
Russia and the true mission on earth of Holy Russia herself.

How such transmutations in thought processes are pos-
sible may be seen in a few illuminating comments by Dostoev-
sky in his letters concerning those crucial years. First
they reveal who his companions were, what influence they
had on his thinking and how he saw the error of his ways.
The best example of this is a letter to General E. I. Tot-
leben, written in March 1856, when Dostoevsky was no longer
incarcerated, but forced to serve for an indefinite period
of time as a private in the Army at Semipalatinsk:

"I went to prison - four sad, terrible years.
My companions were criminals, men quite with-
out human emotions, and with perverted morals;
for those four years I beheld nothing uplifting -
only the blackest and ugliest 'realities'. I
had not one single being within reach with whom
I could exchange a cordial word; I endured
hunger, cold, sicknesses; I suffered from the
hard labors and the hatred of my companions the
criminals, who bore me a grudge for being an
officer and a well-born person. And yet I
swear to you that none of those torments was
greater than that which I felt when I realized
my errors, and saw that in banishment I was cut
off from my fellow-creatures and unable to
serve them with all my powers, desires and
capacities. I know that I was punished for my
ideas and theories. But ideas and even convic-
tions alter, nay, one's very self alters; thus,
it is very grievous for me to be now expiating
things that are no more, that have indeed,
actually, in me, turned to their very contraries;
to be suffering for my former errors, which I
now perceive in all their folly - to feel that I
have the power and the talent to do something
"which would really atone for the worthlessness of my earlier activities, and yet to languish in impotence."\textsuperscript{12}

And he came to know the core of the Russian people:

"Even among the robber-murderers in the prison, I came to know some men in those four years. Believe me, there were among them deep, strong, and beautiful natures, and it often gave me great joy to find gold under a rough exterior... some inspired respect; others were downright fine."\textsuperscript{13}

Dostoevsky saw truth more clearly when he was unhappy and realized that his belief in Utopias availed him nothing:

"I was guilty, and am very conscious of it. I was convicted of the intention (but only of the intention) of acting against the Government; I was lawfully and quite justly condemned; the hard and painful experiences of the ensuing years have sobered me, and altered my views in many respects. But then, while I was still blind, I believed in all the theories of Utopias. When I went to Siberia, I had at least the one comfort of having borne myself honestly before the tribunal, of not having tried to shift my guilt on others, and even of having sacrificed my own interests, if thereby I thought I could save those others. But I was at that time still convinced of the truth of my opinions; I would not confess all, and so was the more sternly punished."\textsuperscript{14}

And he saw Russia's intended mission on earth as well:

"One's views alter; one's heart remains the same. I have read your letter...but failed to understand the most essential part...about patriotism, the Russian Idea, the sense of duty, national honor, and all those things...I always was inspired by those very emotions and convictions. Russia, Duty, Honor? I always was Russian through and through, and I say it most decidedly...I wholly share your patriotic emotion, your efforts towards the moral emancipation of the Slavs. It is there that Russia's mission lies...our noble mighty Russia, our holy mother."\textsuperscript{15}
This Russia, his Russia, was then ministered by Czar Alexander II whom he idolized: "You write that everybody loves the new Tsar. I myself idolize him." 16

These words of Dostoevsky elucidate not only his past actions and his then present emotions, but also foreshadow his future intentions.

In outlining his plan for a projected novel called Atheism, Dostoevsky wrote to his trusted friend Apollon Nikolayevich Maikov from Florence, Italy, on December 11, 1868, that his hero would be a Russian of his own class, just past middle age, not overly cultured but yet possessing a certain degree of social status. This hero never truly distinguished himself, lost faith in God and aligned himself with the younger generation of atheists, Slavs, Westerners, Polish Jesuits and finally finds salvation in the Russian soil, the Russian Saviour and the Russian God. 17

This plan smacked of the Russian idea of pochva and pochvennichestvo which is a transcendental return to the native soil, a basis for the Slavophile movement of the 1860's. It is interesting to note here that Dmitry Karamazov, one of those characters who achieves salvation partly due to such a return to the Russian soil, bears a name derived from Demeter, the goddess of soil.

All of Dostoevsky's plans for this projected novel are astoundingly autobiographical, for at this time he was forty-seven years of age and had run a very similar gamut.
It was at this time that he fully grasped the saving grace that lay in the Russian soil. About one month later, also from Florence, he wrote to his niece Sofia Alexandrovna that he lacked the advantages in Italy that he knew in Russia, even in Siberia, and he longed to be among the Russians themselves without whom he could not live.18

Dostoevsky felt that Russia had a specific mission on earth to enlighten the world, a messianic mission. She would accomplish this through her own faith and her own Russian Christ.

In a letter to Nikolai Nikolayevich Strakhov, critic, publicist, thinker and future biographer of Dostoevsky, he wrote condoning comments concerning an article by Nikolai Yakovlevich Danilevsky which had appeared in the journal "Zarya." Dostoevsky had, in essence, agreed with Danilevsky wholeheartedly, but wished to comment thusly before the succeeding article appeared in a subsequent issue:

"I am not quite sure that Danilevsky will dwell with sufficient emphasis upon what is the inmost essence, and the ultimate destiny, of the Russian nation: namely, that Russia must reveal to the world her own Russian Christ, whom as yet the people know not, and who is rooted in our native Orthodox faith. There lies, as I believe, the inmost essence of our vast impending contribution to civilization, whereby we shall awaken the European peoples; there lies the inmost core of our exuberant and intense existence that is to be."19

The basic tenet here for Dostoevsky, Danilevsky, and Strakhov lies in their defense of the traditional and
indigenous elements of Russian culture against Western influence which was "nihilistic" and deleterious to mother Russia. Danilevsky, the historian and philosopher, proclaimed that there existed distinct national types emanating from nations which produce specific cultures apropos of their national character. As an example of this national type we may cite the fact that Danilevsky thought the Slavs to be a unique type whose cultural achievement was political absolutism. Since Russia's cultural traditions were so different from the West, she should then remain indifferent to the rest of Europe and unite under a new empire the center of which would be Constantinople. For Dostoevsky, this distinct national character rested in the unexposed "Russian Christ" rooted in the "native Orthodox faith."

Dostoevsky's proposed novel *Atheism* grew into an even greater projected work which was to be called *The Life-Story of a Great Sinner*. It was to be published in five rather lengthy parts the fundamental idea of which would be the question of the existence of God. It is well known that this question tormented Dostoevsky either consciously or unconsciously all his life. When Nikolai Lukich Osmidov, an agnostic, asked Dostoevsky about God, Dostoevsky wrote in answer that words and arguments could not convert an unbeliever and recommended to Osmidov that he read all the epistles of St. Paul in which the question of faith is adequately handled. He did, in fact, recommend
the entire Bible to him for careful attention.

For Dostoevsky every organism on earth existed but to live, and not to annihilate itself. By analogy, humanity as a whole is just such an organism, he theorized, living under its own laws and conditions which human reason is able to comprehend. Now, by 1878, Dostoevsky believed that personal immortality and God were one and the same, an identical idea. Without either personal immortality or God there would be no reason for humanity to live within the law. Crime would be permitted and the human organism would not be subjected to universal law, living with the object of self-annihilation. Only chaos would come of such a society. However, he thought, if the "I" comprehended such ontological concepts, it would stand apart and above all else and would have its own supraterrestrial jurisprudence, transcending earthly law indicating the existence of personal immortality. Without personal immortality, wrote Dostoevsky, there would be no need to bother oneself about the existence of God. It naturally follows that since the "I" does comprehend ontology, there is personal immortality and, therefore, God.

It is reasonable to assume that a digression towards the subject of patriotism, duty, honor and political absolutism in a chapter dealing with religious training and one's concept of religion would be a topical aberration. However, in czarist Russia, nationalism and religion mutu-
ally coexisted. During the 1860's, shortly after Dostoevsky's return from Siberia, his political views underwent a barely perceptible transformation. His idolatry of the Czar and his political zealously imply a political orthodoxy and a step in the direction of religious orthodoxy. During those years, there were no "middle-of-the-roaders" to be found in Russia drifting somewhere between radical materialism and conservative orthodoxy, so perhaps Dostoevsky was still a "child of the age" which caused him to acquiesce, but still not accepting either Christian or Orthodox dogma. Verification of this is to be found in his letter to Doctor Alexander Fyodorovich Blagonravov in which he wrote shortly before his death:

"...I hold all evil to be grounded upon disbelief, and maintain that he who abjures nationalism, abjures faith also. That applies especially to Russia, for with us national consciousness is based on Christianity. 'A Christian peasant-people'; 'believing Russia'; these are our fundamental conceptions. A Russian who abjures nationalism (and there are many such) is either an atheist or indifferent to religious questions. And the converse: an atheist or indifferentist cannot possibly understand the Russian people and Russian nationalism."21

He could find no way to bring the so-called educated class to believe this principle. To believe in it could only alienate a class which has lost contact with reality, but it was better to do so, thought Dostoevsky, than to betray people themselves.

"But a new generation is on the way," he continued in
the same letter, "which will desire union with the people. The first sign of true fellowship with the people is venera-
tion and love for that which the great mass of the people
loves and venerates - that is to say, for its God and its
faith."

This chapter has presented the Christian background of
Fyodor Dostoevsky on the basis of his baptism, his youthful
upbringing, the influences exerted upon him during his
formative years, his life experiences and his inclination
toward the Church and State in his later years.

It is this "true fellowship with the people" and venera-
tion for God and mankind toward which Dostoevsky oriented
himself that will be the topic of the succeeding chapter.
Religious Motifs in the *Brothers Karamazov*

In order to understand and fully appreciate the *Brothers Karamazov*, it is essential to examine how some of the basic principles employed in the novel are derived from religious material and how these elements are applied both artistically and as a basis for reasoning. Thus, this chapter will present an analysis of this religious material as it concerns the novel within the framework of explicit biblical quotes and from implicit reflections from the Bible.

Epigraphs in books are like entrances in homes; they set the mood and prepare the visitor for what is yet to come. Hence, Dostoevsky opened the *Brothers Karamazov* with the following quote from the Bible which was Jesus' reply to Philip and Andrew foretelling His death and subsequent glorification:

"Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (St. John XII:24)

These words and the significance of their accompanying thought became for Dostoevsky a crucial and central point, and his characters are like these very corns of wheat. The epigraph of this novel, which is essentially about salvation through suffering, states the existence, the need and the redemptive quality of suffering. Its basic tenet is
that people who give freely of themselves, who sacrifice
and deny themselves for others and are generally compassionate and aware of the general well-being of their fellow man without personal regard or recompense, are spiritually resurrected to live freely and happily.

A key concept then is that this type of suffering has a redemptive function; but, there are other types which do not. It is possible to divide the major characters into two groups according to their attitude toward suffering which is essential to the plot. Father Zossima, Alyosha, Dmitry, and Grushenka are in the "redemptive" group. They accept God and man, give freely of themselves and accept the type of suffering which has a redemptive quality, thereby availing themselves of peace of mind in the knowledge that they are in accord with God's creation and will achieve salvation through their suffering. Hence, by accepting suffering, they paradoxically lessen it.

In the "non-redemptive" group are Fyodor, a hedonist, Ivan and Katerina. Ivan questions God and rejects man. He is unhappy because the innocent suffer, a suffering which he rejects. His philosophy is contrary to the tenet of the epigraph and, in short, he is a rebellious Luciferian. By rejecting suffering, he paradoxically increases it within himself and also manages to inflict it upon others. He sacrifices his father and Smerdyakov -- but does not sacrifice himself.
The words of the above quote from St. John are repeated by Father Zossima on two other occasions in the body of the novel. Dostoevsky undoubtedly wished to emphasize their meaning by employing them again and desired to use them artistically in order to develop a theme. For the reader it is a déjà vu encounter in that they reflect the epigraph.

In the first instance, Fr. Zossima, foreseeing Dmitry's suffering, attempts to comfort Alyosha (p.334). He virtually says, yes, he will suffer terribly and guiltlessly, but he will achieve salvation through his suffering, he will go on living and be happier. And, on the second occasion, Fr. Zossima produces them to guide the mysterious visitor, a civil servant, who murdered a widow out of jealousy in his youth (p.364). Despite the fact that his guilt went undetected, he was unhappy because an innocent man, who ultimately died, was accused. Thus, he tells Fr. Zossima that the words of the Gospel are true but men did not write them. With this the elder produced the quote: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Hebrews X:31). The mysterious visitor then claims that it has been fourteen years since he had fallen into the hands of the living God and that on the morrow he would entreat those hands to release him, he would confess his crime and seek salvation through the suffering of expiation in order to be happy and re-unite with his fellow man.

For the innocent man who unjustly perished, we may
implicitly reflect on the Eighth Beatitude from the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus said: "Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." And for the mysterious visitor who wishes to expiate his crime, the Fourth Beatitude: "Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied." (St. John V:1-10).

A few brief character sketches at this point will aid in understanding Dostoevsky's primary message to the world. To begin with Alyosha, it is inconceivable to think that he could live as a self-centered introvert. Despite his youthful age of eighteen years, Alyosha is keenly aware of the deepest human emotions and its covert passions. Except for his unshakable belief in God, he would, as Dostoevsky has said, be a Socialist. Instead he strives for perfection and the ideal of liberté, égalité et fraternité in Christ and practices this ideal by continually displaying genuine compassion and living for the well-being of others.

Father Zossima, like Alyosha, is in true fellowship with mankind and gives freely of himself to instruct others so that they too may achieve salvation. Perhaps he even hurts himself by relinquishing his prayer hours for this instruction, but he lives and dies happily in communion with God and man.

Ivan, however, lives only for himself. He is neither genuinely compassionate nor self-sacrificial. He believes
that, "S'il n'existait pas Dieu il faudrait l'inventer," (p.274) reflecting the words of Voltaire\textsuperscript{23} and, "to be sure, man has invented God," he adds, speaking to Alyosha. Ivan states his belief "in the Word to which the universe is striving and which itself was 'with God' and which was God" (St. John I:1). "...I think that in the final result," he says, "I refuse to accept this world of God's, and though I know it exists, I absolutely refuse to admit its existence." Ivan, therefore, refuses to accept the "Thou art" concept\textsuperscript{24} which is a contention that objects and people exist because one can see, feel and communicate with them, and through them, realize their own existence. He accepts God but rejects the world He created partly because he cannot accept the needless suffering of the innocent children he loves. This suffering is manifested in those examples he cites to Alyosha (pp.276-288). In one instance, a young boy is given to Swiss mountaineers like chattel; they do not take the trouble to feed him and, "like the prodigal son of the Gospel, he was so hungry that he wished he could eat the mash given to the pigs," says Ivan, recollecting the words of St. Luke XV:16. In another instance a serf child is torn to pieces by borzoi hounds set upon him by a vindictive General and a young girl is beaten by her parents without mercy. Such actions cannot be permitted in God's world, theorizes Ivan.

In this respect, Ivan has an earthly mind and cannot
contemplate that which is not of this world -- he cannot comprehend the tenet of the epigraph which allows suffering even of the innocent. Despite his love for mankind, he hates man for all his evilness. Thus, he rejects the world and his fellow men without seeking communion with either. Ivan is not happy and could never be happy because he does not in essence endure the words of Christ; choosing to remain on the wheat stalk, so to say, he abides alone in misery and discontent, not wishing to be his brother's keeper. This is evidenced by his harsh statement to Alyosha (p.270) "I am not my brother Dmitry's keeper, am I?" (related to Genesis IV:9). He immediately reinforced this with the bitter comment, "Cain's reply to God about his murdered brother, eh?" In effect, Ivan is Cain's parallel. He is not his brother's keeper -- "brother" in the sense of "mankind" -- in that he has long since divorced himself from mankind, his brothers, and is in reality the cause of his father's death through the hands of Smerdyakov. Like Cain, Ivan also causes the death of his half-brother. Analogous to his father, Ivan is bound to Luciferian isolation and that "self-love" which, in the words of St. Augustine, "ends in the hatred of God."25

Dmitry, however, is quite the opposite of Ivan. Although he is innocent of the parricide with which he has been charged, he feels that he must suffer as though he were guilty and repent not only the sin of hating his
father but for all his sins as well. It was this hatred of his father and the intense desire for his father's death that causes Dmitry to feel morally guilty for his father's death and obliged to atone and suffer the consequences of the sentence imposed upon him. In short, he too, like the mysterious visitor, deeply desires a release from the hands of the living God and is ready to accept the redemptive suffering of expiation so that he will not abide alone but have true fellowship with God and man. Dmitry has that all-important sense of brotherhood. He shares the peasants' attitude toward life and faith and is firmly rooted in the Russian pochva, that mysterious "soil" on which Alyosha experiences the ecstasy of divine enlightenment as he lay outstretched on the monastery grounds after the elder's death.

As representative of the female characters there are Grushenka, who is basically a good, simple and loving person and Katerina, a proud, imperious girl. The difference exists in the fact that Grushenka is capable of freely giving of herself for the good of others. Willing to turn the other cheek, she is prepared to suffer with Dmitry and to follow him to Siberia out of her love for him and for what he is about to do. Katya, on the other hand, loves but only through hate as she hates only through love. This love-hate and hate-love becomes apparent when she is only concerned with her own personal well-being. She was guilty
of the jealousy which arose between father and son leading to the former's death. She is incapable of forgiveness and is largely responsible for incriminating Dmitry falsely for a crime for which she herself was, in part, responsible. In this respect, Katya is much akin to the mysterious visitor who stood by as an innocent man was wrongly accused. She, like Ivan, abides alone and cannot achieve true fellowship with God or man.

Grushenka, however, was not always capable of true Christian love and was, for a time, very much like Katerina. At one point, she bribed Rakitin to bring Alyosha to her so that she may seduce him. Rakitin, like the biblical temptor of Christ in the wilderness, offered Alyosha liquor and meat to eat during Lent, but Alyosha resisted the temptation. Then, under the influence of Grushenka's bribe, he brought Alyosha to her home so that he may "fall" into vice as Christ would have fallen from the mountain top in worship of evilness (related to St. Matthew IV:1-12). Alyosha again resisted the temptation of pleasure, but he did go to Grushenka's of his own free will with Rakitin. While there Alyosha told Grushenka that Father Zossima had died and, upon hearing the news, she devoutly blessed herself. Alyosha, who had been downcast, was greatly relieved and admonished Rakitin saying, "...I came here thinking to find a wicked soul -- I felt drawn to wickedness because I was mean and wicked myself, but I've found a true sister. I've
"found a treasure -- a loving soul. She took pity on me just now...she restored my soul." (p.413). Grushenka, touched to tears, proclaims that she has at last given away "an onion," alluding to an old folk tale. The fact that Alyosha called her his "true sister" and that she had at last done a good deed became Grushenka's turning point. She realized the meaning of true Christian love as Alyosha knew it and told Bakitin, who believes as Katya does that "one loves people for a reason" (p.415), that, "You should love for no reason at all, like Alyosha does." She relinquished her spiteful love for the "little Pole" and eventually took up her redemptive suffering with Dmitry in true Christian love.

Through these characterizations it is possible to realize one of Dostoevsky's most profound messages to the world which he chose to manifest in the words of Christ as they appear in the Bible. It is this principle of true Christian love of God and man that will form the basis of the concluding chapter where it will be dealt with in greater detail.

The examples discussed above are indicative of the manner in which Dostoevsky employed his knowledge of the Bible to express a thought, set a mood or develop a theme. Yet another example of how he derived a simple but important principle from the Bible and applied it to the Brothers Karamazov is found in the thrice quoted statement:
"With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (St. Matthew VII:2). This theme is also repeated in the Gospels of St. Mark IV:24 and St. Luke VI:38.

Dostoevsky used it in the body of the novel on three occasions; first, Fyodor says it to Ivan concerning the thrashing of peasants (p.154), and it appears again twice in the famous courtroom scene being uttered by both Fetuykovich (p.878) and Kirillovich (p.884), who use it polemically.

Its fundamental meaning is that if you love you will be loved in return, if you hate you will be hated in return, or your mirror image will reflect you as you are. Ivan, for example, rejected everyone and was rejected in return; Alyosha loved everyone and was loved by all; Fyodor, the self-loving hedonist, who thrashed peasants, received not love but death in return for his cruelty. Russia is strong, he says, because she has forests thick with birch trees and that if they were destroyed Russia would perish. Although he understands the quote from Matthew, he still condons the beating of peasants, and the use of the birch tree, a symbol of Russia, to beat them into submissive obedience. It is possible to hypothesize that the peasants who do not beat anyone are beaten innocently, or the humble servant who is beaten for naught does not beat in return. They accept the innocent suffering and are saved. Dostoevsky was undoubtedly recalling his father's sad fate, who, while
being especially cruel to his serfs, was murdered by them in retaliation.

Dostoevsky was also adept at using this quote polemically in the courtroom. When Fetyukovich, the defense counsel, speaks he uses the quote for artistic and juridic effect, but, in the same breath, obviously recalling the biblical axiom, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," (Exodus XXI:24), bids, "measure according to the same measure as is measured to you." This, of course, is in direct contradiction to the tenet of the injunction from the Gospel. What Fetyukovich is in fact stating are two biblical laws. The first refers to eternal love which proposes that one should "turn the other cheek," and the second refers to eternal justice suggesting that one should be compensated for injustices. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger," Fetyukovich continues, supporting the reasoning that if the children are provoked, such as in the Karamazov case or in the case of the humble servants who are beaten, then parricide or homicide is justifiable, that is to say they should seek eternal justice. This religious reflection, however contradictory, may have appeared sound to the jurors and Dmitry may not have been convicted by the tribunal if Kirillovich, the prosecutor, had not noticed it. As regards the statement, "measure according to the same measure as is measured to you," Kirillovich correctly warns that "Christ commands us not
to do this, but to beware of doing this, because that is what the wicked world does, while we ought to forgive and to turn the other cheek and not mete out in the same measure as is measured to us" (pp. 884-5). The Lord, according to Kirillovich, does not teach us that it is a prejudice to forbid parricide. Hence, if our fathers do provoke us, we should apply the law of eternal love and accept the suffering meted out to us however unjustly as did Christ and as do the humble servants who are close to the Russian "soil" and the Russian "faith," for through such redemptive suffering, as the epigraph suggests, we shall be saved.

This is by way of example how Dostoevsky derived a major principle of life from religious material; how he applied it artistically, polemically and united it with another equally important biblical statement, all through the words of Christ. His message to the world, that everyone should seek true Christian love of both God and man, and how he derived this principle from religious material will be the basis of the following chapter.
The Christian Ideal of Love in the *Brothers Karamazov*

The preceding chapters have discussed the Christian attitude toward suffering and its redemptive force, Christ-likeness in man as seen in Father Zossima and Alyosha and free-will manifested through the freedom of choice. The ideal of active love, a cognitive force in Dostoevsky's works, will comprise this chapter, disclosing its essence and elucidating the attitude toward suffering, which is unexplainable without love, through an examination of the methods Dostoevsky used to artistically enrich his literary endeavors with this concept.

A key concept of Christianity, the love of God and the love of man, became for Dostoevsky a key concept of life itself. It is embodied in the two main commandments of the Bible emanating from the Law of God. As recorded in the Old Testament, God spoke to Moses saying, "You must love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus XIX:18). Later, Moses instructed the Israelites, "You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength" (Deuteronomy VI:5). These are repeated and united in the New Testament in the words of Christ. When questioned by the Pharisees as to what was the greatest commandment of all, Jesus said:

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind."
"This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also." (St. Matthew XII:37-40).

This theme is also repeated in St. Mark XII:28-34 and St. Luke X:25-28.

The two commandments may be visualized in the form of a Christian cross in which the vertical plane represents the love of God and the horizontal plane represents the love of man. This key Christian concept is not complete unless both planes are present and in an active state for the love of God alone or the love of man alone leads to pitfalls.26

Active love as a Christian ideal is discussed by Christ, for example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (St. Luke X:29-37) in which the Samaritan accepts his fellow man and lovingly assists him without judging him. It is upon this judgement, or rather the lack of it, that this principle of active love is founded. That is to say, if we are willing to help someone while overlooking his faults, we are then said to actively love that person. Doing the same for all of humanity, we would then possess the horizontal plane of the cross. Uniting this feature with a similar love for God, we would then complete our cross of love.

Out of this concept grew Dostoevsky's implementation of religion and life itself. All of the major characters of his chief literary works either stand solidly or enter
the maelstrom of uncertainty on the basis of this principle. The following will be an examination of the presence or absence of the state of active love in some of the personages of the *Brothers Karamazov*.

Both Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor intellectualize about man claiming to love humanity, but their love is in theory alone, a mere figment of their intellect and at quite opposite ends of the scale of suffering. Ivan openly proclaims that the more he loves humanity the more he hates man because of the injustices he witnesses. He sees men in their innocent suffering and rejects all creation because of it, intellectualizing and talking about the alleviation of suffering but doing nothing about it. His love is pure verbiage. Ivan could never accept any man without judging him as he judges his father and others and it is exactly this judgement of man or God that verifies the absence of "true" love. If Ivan loves man, even in his own crude way, he lacks the vertical plane of his cross, but since he stands in judgement over humanity he cannot possess the horizontal plane either.

The Grand Inquisitor, Ivan's literary creation, also intellectualizes about man and is concerned about human suffering. In his attempt to take action, he rejects freedom in the name of happiness and rejects God in the person of Christ. By taking away the freedom given man by Christ, the Grand Inquisitor hopes to make men happy but causes
them to suffer instead. His theory in the rejection of Christ is that Christ failed to provide miracle, mystery and authority, those concepts by which he feels that man achieves happiness. Hence, he may love man as he claims, but he does not display this love in his forthright condemnation of Christ and His activities. He gives mankind bread instead of love. The Grand Inquisitor's judgement of God and man prevents his acquisition of either plane of the cross because love for humanity cannot exist without love for God and for each and every man without exception. In his attempt to remove the Common Father of mankind and place himself in this role, he caused all men to become sub-human and subservient to a pseudo-deity. Thus freedom and happiness are impossible.

Father Ferapont is an example of a man who loves God, but God alone. Thus, he has achieved only the vertical plane. Fr. Ferapont intellectualizes about religion in much the same manner that Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor intellectualize about man and suffering. His desire to be a saint causes him to be a bitter opponent and rival of Father Zossima. Ferapont, whose actions are not motivated by love, rejects and condemns man and his fellow monks all in the name of God, thus verifying that intellectualization leads to thinking which leads to judgement which ultimately begets rejection.

As Ivan, the Grand Inquisitor and Father Ferapont are
seen firmly rooted in their convictions, Alyosha is found to be in a transitory state. At first he loves God and only one man, Father Zossima. In this respect he is the opposite of the Grand Inquisitor who does not love but rejects God in the name of his professed love for humanity. Alyosha, however, at a time of intense suffering and disillusionment visited Grushenka with the intention of committing sinful acts. He previously disdained her in his judgement of man due to her fallen reputation. Having gone to visit her of his own free-will, despite Rakitin's temptations, he finds Grushenka in a similar state of suffering precipitated by her affair with the "little Pole" and the hatred in her heart. Their mutual suffering became a common bond between the two and together they discovered humaness in each other and then the rest of humanity. Grushenka had previously been motivated by a hateful disrespect for her fellow men and intended to "tear Alyosha's cassock off his back" in an attempt to lower him to her level in the eyes of all who knew his saintly ideals. During this visit she gave away her "onion" in her sympathy for Alyosha's suffering, the pains of which she herself knew too well. This good deed precipitated Alyosha's calling her his "sister". He had found another human being, a kindred soul and compatriot in suffering. If he calls me his sister, thought Grushenka, then he must be my "brother". Upon this hypothesis and their mutual suffering, both personages discovered
humanity, their fellow men, and "true" love in their indiscriminate acceptance of each other. Once they ceased to judge man they both discovered and loved God. Thus, through suffering they discovered humanity and through man discovered God and "true" love. Hence, they managed to achieve both planes of the cross and maintained each in an active state.

The foregoing examples have exhibited the manner in which Dostoevsky stated that love for man without love for God is deficient and how love for God without love for man is equally incomplete. He based his theory of active love on the Bible and described the simultaneous love for God and man in his portrayal of Father Zossima who is the personification of these Christian ideals.

Father Zossima loves God intensely and accepts each and every man without prejudgement. He accepts the Karamazovs' despite their debauchery and social faults, he does homage to Dmitry's future suffering and receives Alyosha in his imperfect but transitory state. He accepts, instructs and loves everyone who journeys to his side without exception and, like Christ at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, he performs "miracles" in the service of others despite his own suffering which turns to joy when engaged in such service.

Man is continually tested as to whether he loves God and man and the final outcome of his life and happiness
depends on whether or not he passes the test. Fyodor Karamazov, Rakitin and Perapont, for example, never achieve success through love. Zossima has achieved it and his actions help Alyosha, Dmitry, Grushenka and Katerina, at least indirectly, to do so as well. At the very end there are allusions that Katerina nurses Ivan who suffers from encephalitis and that through his suffering he will be cured also. They too will be compatriots, will discover humanity through each other and God through love.

It is hoped that this thesis has presented an enlightening study into the concepts of freedom, suffering and love, an inseparable trinity, as seen by Dostoevsky and manifested in his literary achievements. In conclusion this writer wishes to remark that although human endeavors encompass an infinite variety of achievements such as the spiritual gifts of knowledge, prophecy, healing, teaching and leadership none is better than the gift of love. Human instinct is to continually strive for higher gifts, but the most important of all is love according to Dostoevsky as well as according to the Bible which states:

"If I have the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever..."
"In short, there are three things that last, faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love" (I Corinthians XIII:1-3 and 13).

And, if love is the greatest gift of all, then the highest form of it is also acknowledged, for: "A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends" (St. John XV:13). Man, in this respect, is the Good Shepherd who lay down his life for his sheep "so that not one of them might be lost" (St. John X).

When all things have failed or become imperfect only love will remain for it knows no end. This in essence was Dostoevsky's ideology.
Notes


Ibid., p. 19.

Ibid., pp. 19-20.


Ibid.


Simmons, op cit., p. 59.

On December 22, 1849, Dostoevsky narrowly escaped when his death sentence was commuted to four years at hard labor by imperial decree while he stood on the scaffold awaiting execution.


19 Letter, F.M. Dostoevsky to N.N. Strakhov, March 18, 1869, Letters, p. 175.

20 Carr, op cit., p. 218.


23. François Marie Arquet Voltaire, "Épître à l'auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs, CXI," 1769, dans les *Oeuvres de Voltaire* (Chez Lefèvre, Libraire), tome XIII, pp. 264-268, MDCCCXXXIII.

An authoritative Soviet edition of the *Brothers Karamazov* has the quote from Voltaire exactly as it appears in the Magarshack translation. However, the authoritative edition of Voltaire's works mentioned above has the quote, "Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer," p. 265.

24. Ivanov, *passim*.

25. Ivanov, p. 121.

26. The concept of visualizing the ideal of active love as a Christian cross was suggested to me by Dr. Mateja Matejić, my adviser, during a consultation while this study was in preparation.
Bibliography


