

The second book, *The Invisible Child*, has not quite the same simple charm, though it is still very pleasing. Its theme is similar to the first, the interpenetration of the supernatural with the natural, the invisible with the visible, which is shown in a series of short stories in which the Christ Child appears in different centuries to such varied people as SS. Perpetua and Felicitas, a sixth century recluse near Paris, a medieval Franciscan, a sixteenth century Kaffir boy and a twentieth century roistering seaman.

K. M.

THE RUSSIAN RELIGIOUS MIND: KIEVAN CHRISTIANITY. By George P. Fedotov. (Harvard University Press; London, Cumberlege; 32s. 6d.)

As he is at pains to make clear in his introduction, the word 'mind' of Professor Fedotov's title has not a mainly intellectual connotation but is used in the sense of the whole content of consciousness: he has embarked on a history, not of Russian religious thought, but of Russian religious consciousness on its subjective human side; and this first volume (complete in itself) deals with the subject during the Kievan epoch, i.e., from the conversion to Christianity of Vladimir to the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century. The enterprise and the book are most welcome, especially from one as qualified as Professor Fedotov, who was for years on the staff of the Russian theological institute in Paris and is now a professor at the Russian seminary in New York. There has been a certain amount of fugitive writing on the subject in English, and it has of course received attention in the books of Dr Nicholas Zernov and in such works as Nicholas Arsenyev's *Holy Moscow* and Mme Gorodetzky's *Humiliated Christ in Modern Russian Thought*: but that somebody should undertake for Russia, in the same spirit if not at the same great length, what Brémond did for France, was overdue. No doubt Christian religious consciousness can be subdivided almost indefinitely on a basis of civilizations and cultures, but there would seem to be four main streams, the Greek, the Roman (in the sense of Western), the Eastern (or Syrian) and the Russian. French religious consciousness, for instance, is a species developed within the Roman stream; but the Russian, though a derivative of the Byzantine Greek, developed for centuries almost in isolation within the wide borders of Rus and Muscovy, and is a genus on its own.

The first of the four parts of this work is concerned with the religious background of the Russians, viz., pre-Christian paganism and the religion of Byzantium. To the first Professor Fedotov concedes more continuing influence than most Western Christian writers are disposed to allow among other peoples, except such as the Ethiopians (whose religious consciousness developed—if it can be said to have developed—in isolation from its Egyptian Greek parent). About the definitive influence of Byzantium there can of course be no question: the people of the Kievan state received Christianity from Constantinople at the end of the tenth century, and 'the whole Russian mind and heart were shaped by this Eastern Christian mould. After 1054

official ecclesiastical relations with Western Catholic Europe became practically impossible: after the Mongolian conquest of 1240 the political and cultural ties with the West were almost severed. These two facts are the source of both the originality and the limitations of Russian culture; both of its greatness and its flaws'. But with Greek Christianity it did not receive the Greek language. What was wanted was translated into Slavonic (mostly in the lands of the Southern Slavs), and if the whole of the Byzantine liturgy and canon law, all the New Testament, the Psalter, and much of the Old Testament (and biblical apocrypha) and numerous legends of the saints were thus early received, Professor Fedotov makes clear how very much of importance was wanting of the works of the Greek fathers. And if one of the two doctors who most deeply influenced Russian Christianity was St John Chrysostom, the other was St Ephrem the Syrian (whose works underwent a double translation).

In his second part Professor Fedotov examines the life and work of scholars and saints, and first of the three Byzantines, Clement Smoliatich, St Cyril of Turov, and Hilarion of Kiev, the second being one of the great preachers and 'a unique example of theological devotion in ancient Russia'.¹ But it is among the saints rather than scholars that the religious ideal is more clearly expressed, and Professor Fedotov examines some of them under the heading of 'kenoticism', ascetic ideals, and eschatology. The royal brothers SS. Boris and Gleb, who suffered (for purely political reasons) violent death innocently and without resisting, were at once seen by the people as martyrs, bearers of a Christlike passion: the Greek ecclesiastical authorities resisted this new ideal, and did not readily confirm the popular canonization (Pope Benedict XIV made no difficulty about doing so when it was brought to his notice seven hundred years later). The 'kenotic' poverty and humility of St Theodosius Pechersky are a bridge to the examination of ascetic ideals, for Theodosius completed and enlarged the work of St Antony Pechersky (a very different, dour character) in founding the monastery of the Caves at Kiev in the middle years of the eleventh century: he widened and enlarged that work, literally as well as figuratively, and taught physical and spiritual service of the poor and needy to be of the essence of monastic life. The saints written of in the Kiev *paterikon* on the whole illustrate the narrower, more extravagant school of Antony, which may have had its inspiration from Mount Athos; but the ideas of St Theodosius clearly derive from St Sabbas and the Palestinian monks, and from St Theodore's Studion. St Abraham of Smolensk, who has a chapter to himself, is an almost unique figure in Russian

¹ This Cyril is one of the score of 'after 1054' Russian saints recently included in the kalendar of the Russian Catholics; so is Abraham of Smolensk, mentioned below. Vladimir, Olga, Boris and Gleb, and Antony and Theodosius Pechersky have always been in the Catholic Ruthenian kalendar.

hagiology, but his eschatology is characteristic of the mind of his people. It is well set out in the 'Sermon of the Celestial Powers', which is quite probably Abraham's composition, wherein mercilessness is represented as the worst of sins and the consummation of the Last Judgment is the transfiguration of the physical earth.

The third part is called 'The Ordinary Christian', and its first chapter, on 'The Ritualism of the Clergy', provides some curious and unhappy reading. For the religion of the laity Professor Fedotov has recourse chiefly to certain formal admonitions (including that of Prince Vladimir Monomakh to his sons) and to the chronicles. This is the longest section of the book and the most interesting, both because of its intrinsic importance and the unfamiliarity of its contents. These cannot be summarized adequately in a review; but compared with Greek patterns, e.g., the Hundred Chapters of Pseudo-Gennadius, the Russian admonitions are distinguished by 'a certain warmth of tone, the predominance of the *Agape* motive over *Phobos*, and the greater development of liturgical and ritual prescriptions. . . . This is the general impression. . . .' But the fundamental Byzantine contradiction between the 'Church of the Desert' and the 'Church of the Empire' is at work, and in the chronicles can be seen a progressive deterioration from a high ideal of Christian life, with the breaking of secularism into politics accompanied by the worldly concepts of honour, glory and revenge, 'the recession of the Cross'.

After several chapters devoted to the *Tale of Igor's Campaign*, wherein Christian influence seems so slight, and to heathen survivals, Professor Fedotov in a final section seeks to unify the evidence he has previously analysed; he sums up the feeling for the religious significance of the created world and beauty, the importance given to history, with its eschatological trend, the moderate ideal of asceticism and the absence of mystical contemplation, the ethical dualism of severe and mild, fear and love, the emphasis on social ethics, and the role of the state and religious nationalism. Kievan Russia, he concludes, 'was never dimmed in the memory of the Russian nation. In the pure fountain of her literary works anyone who wills can quench his religious thirst; in her venerable authors he can find his guide through the complexities of the modern world. Kievan Christianity has the same value for the Russian religious mind as Pushkin for the Russian artistic sense: that of a standard, a golden measure, a royal way'.

This summary of the contents of *The Russian Religious Mind* may give some idea of its scope, but it can give none of the ease with which Professor Fedotov handles his materials, of his deep-minded tolerance, and of his attractive and objective presentation of much unfamiliar matter. This is a work of scholarship that can be read by the ordinary reader as well as the student. It is an important book; and the importance of the work will increase in geometrical progression as other volumes are added.

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